

BOOK REVIEW

Ivan Shing Chung Kwong, *The Word Order of the Gospel of Luke: Its Foregrounded Message* (Library of New Testament Studies, 298; Studies in New Testament Greek, 12; London: T. & T. Clark, 2005). xi + 251 pp. Hdbk. US\$150.00.

The linear and syntactic flexibility of Ancient Greek has led to several recent studies, both in Classical and New Testament scholarship, investigating the significance and function of Greek word order. The diversity of opinion and procedure in this vast amount of research may leave the casual observer with a sense of utter frustration at the lack of consensus and the confusion that seems to be inherent in the multiplicity of perspectives.

Kwong goes some way toward bringing clarity to this discussion by offering a study which, though limited in its application, is methodologically precise. He opens by briefly canvassing the wide assortment of linguistic approaches to word order typology (Chapter One), including a brief but telling critique of H. Dik's recent study of word order in Herodotus. The theoretical portion of his work (Chapter Two) reads much like an expansion of Stanley Porter's article on word order in Philippians ('Word Order and Clause Structure in New Testament Greek: An Unexplored Area of Greek Linguistics Using Philippians as a Test Case', *FN* 6 [1993]: 177-205), with an application to Luke's Gospel (Chapters Three to Four). Like Porter, he organizes his results according to clause type (independent, dependent, and participial/infinitival) and attempts to understand word order functionally as order of constituents within the clause instead of through grammatical relations. In the place of the more traditional Subject-Verb-Object terminology, therefore, Kwong describes word order phenomena through the syntactic terminology of functional grammar—subject, predicate, complement, and circumstantial adjunct (a set of terminology not yet

fully incorporated by Porter, however). He also follows Porter in establishing a catch-all category for clauses that do not fall within his list of clause types, usually rank-shifted qualifiers of a noun-phrase (i.e. embedded clauses) such as relative clauses (labeled ‘other clauses’).

Unfortunately, his treatment of embedding (where a clause is embedded or contained in the component of another clause at a higher rank) is unclear, especially in relation to infinite structures and rank-shifting as it relates categorically to prominence. While embedded clauses are accounted for within the analysis of constituent order across various clause types in Luke, the discussion of embedding is altogether lacking in terms of theoretical development. For Kwong, embedding actually falls into the catchall category (‘other clauses’) (p. 37) while infinite structures are given independent status, along with dependant and independent clauses. A tidier, more comprehensive representation of the data would incorporate clauses with infinite verbs in the predicators under embedded clause types with other nominal modifiers (this has been the approach of the OpenText.org project). As embedded structures, participial and infinitival forms also have a rank-shifted status within Greek clause structure which, it seems, would have pragmatic implications regarding the marked status of those orders. At least, as I see it, infinite clauses should not be treated within the same component of the rank scale as independent and dependant clauses which typically (as some clauses do not grammaticalize a predicator) have a finite verb in the predicator slot. In his treatment of adjuncts (p. 89) he talks about ‘other embedded clauses’ which may indicate that he recognizes the embedded status of infinite forms, but later he understands participles as predicators of independent clauses (p. 94). If so, why not spell this out and why not include infinitives and participles with other embedded structures?

The detailed study of the problematic adjunct component (which ‘gives circumstantial information at the level of experiential meta-function’, p. 40), however, is certainly welcome. Typically the recognition of adjuncts as clausal constituents is neglected in New Testament study—probably as a result of the employment of grammatical over functional terminology—but fortunately this neglect has not permeated the study of language more generally. There has been much recent discussion in modern linguistics revolving around disambiguation criteria for distinguishing complements from adjuncts. Kwong

does not enter this discussion, but his explorations offer much-needed comment on a surprisingly underdeveloped area of Greek linguistics, given the large amount of attention that has been devoted to word order and clause structure in Ancient Greek. Kwong classifies adjuncts under twelve functional headings: spatial, temporal (1), temporal (2), manner, cause, result, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter, angle, and agent. He then devotes an entire chapter to investigating their role and position within the clausal structure of Luke.

Kwong concludes (p. 62) that the unmarked word order is typically a fronted predicate as the basic element and the subject, when it is grammaticalized, occurring first. The only exception to this is to be found in certain infinitival clauses. The predicate, however, has a tendency to be placed first in a genitive absolute construction within a dependant clause. If the adjunct component of a clause is grammaticalized then it is typically after the predicate. The only exception to this occurs in temporal (where the time reference is 'earlier') and quality adjuncts (in these cases, the adjunct precedes the predicate). These standard, unmarked orders then become the basis for making a series of linguistic comments upon deviant (i.e. marked) orders throughout Luke's Gospel (Chapters Five to Eight) which makes up (exactly) the second half of the book.

Kwong's application of his study of Lucan word order to individual passages in the Gospel yields several interesting results. First (Chapter Five), in Luke 7–8 there is a high density of indirect speech connected with the semantic chain of ignorance, a feature typically infrequent in other parts of the Gospel. This feature is used to place prominence upon the disciples' lack of understanding, further enunciated by marked word-order patterns accompanying Jesus' rebukes and confrontations. Second (Chapter Six), Jesus consistently appears as the complement in the marked complement-predicate (CP) order, all of which highlight people's attitude toward Jesus. These include (1) those who wrongly support Jesus; (2) those who reject Jesus; and (3) those who genuinely support Jesus (p. 129): 'the first member of each of these three categories (6.46; 9.48 and 10.16) is highlighted with contrasts and parallelisms with their surrounding passages' (p. 144). Of these three, the third category is most marked, emphasizing the semantic weight and importance of genuinely supporting Jesus and not rejecting his mission and ministry. Kwong's third observation (Chapter Seven) is based in Luke 2 and centers around six pairs of temporal

clause complexes. An interesting analysis of thematization patterns at the clause level is employed using Danes's taxonomy (pp. 155-58): (1) re-iteration in thematic progression; (2) zigzag pattern in thematic progression; and (3) multiple themes in thematic progression. The first category involves a linear progression of thematization from 'theme' constituent (the first element of a clause) to 'theme' constituent in each clause. The second occurs when the 'rheme' (which supports the theme as the second element of the clause) of the previous clause becomes the theme of the next. The third involves a clause which has several elements in its rheme which are distributed throughout the themes of subsequent clauses (e.g. element [a] of the rheme would be the theme of clause 1, element [b] of the rheme would be the theme of clause 2, and so on). Thematic progression along these lines and interaction of various marked orders and patterns between two intra-textually-related passages in Luke 2 (2.8-20 and 2.43-52) places prominence on Luke's foregrounded message within the six temporal clause complexes which Kwong investigates: 'the failure of Jesus' parents, their failure to understand Jesus' mission and God's planned salvation' (p. 173).

Fourth (Chapter Eight), and finally, discontinuities in the conversations of Lk. 22.24-38 are discussed in light of a variety of patterns relating given (assumed) and newly-introduced information. One inconsistency of his study at this point is the employment of the term 'sentences' in his descriptions of the structure of Luke, since Halliday's notion of the 'clause complex' is enlisted in the previous chapter to describe temporal notions in complexes of clauses. As a lexicogrammatical notion, Halliday actually promotes replacing the 'sentence' with the 'clause complex' (neither of which is clearly defined by Kwong) with the English sentence serving only as the 'highest-ranking graphological unit of punctuation' (M.A.K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 3rd edn, rev. by M.I.M. Matthiessen [London: Arnold, 2004], p. 371). Kwong clearly intends to use the sentence in a lexicogrammatical context (e.g. p. 187), not just as a graphological notion—which seems to me irrelevant to Greek, in any case. This highlights (at least) a clear terminological—if not conceptual—inconsistency in Kwong's study. Although this use of terminology has been incorporated by other Greek linguists working with the New Testament (e.g. Jeff Reed), I am still skeptical of the use of Hallidayan process-types (pp. 187-89) since these semantic notions seem to lack

solid formal criteria in the Greek language. Kwong uses these categories as the basis for a functional analysis of given-new information structure in Luke 22. The problem for me is that Halliday's process types are in many ways similar to the case roles popularized by Fillmore in the 1970s (he actually incorporated some of Halliday's insights in the development of his Case Theory). While Halliday's account is more convincing than most, his categories, nevertheless, fall prey to many of the classic definitional problems that led to the demise of Case Grammar shortly after it was introduced (see for example Miriam Butt, *Theories of Case* [Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], pp. 29-33).

Apart from these difficulties, Kwong's study of the conversations in Luke 22 is enlightening. Given-new patterns indicate a tightly knit conversation in 22.25-34 and various marked structures (specially the use of more and less specific information) support the foregrounding of Luke's message: 'Jesus is the one specified to face future sufferings, while Peter is the one specified for his future failure' (p. 196).

Although Kwong could have been clearer (and perhaps more consistent) at certain places, his overall methodology and application is explicit and welcome. He provides a valuable contribution to the continually expanding field of Greek linguistics. The limited scope of his work allows him to explore a range of semantic and pragmatic implications of word order in some detail. His work is also thoroughly documented and reflects a rich knowledge of secondary sources, both in linguistics and biblical studies. Though his study is rigorous at times, his results are laid out very neatly and are easy to process. Apparently his research was done almost entirely apart from the aid of computers, which is a commendable (Herculean!) task in itself. With the clausal and syntactic annotation of the entire New Testament recently completed by the OpenText.org project, Kwong's results for Luke can (and hopefully will) now be tested across the entire New Testament. *The Word Order of Luke*, therefore, is deserving of serious consideration and expansion by those with interest in the language of the New Testament and will prove to be a resource worthy of consultation and review by those working within Greek linguistics and, even to some degree, within Lucan studies.

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