

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS AND TRANSLATOR EDUCATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: Previous studies have shown that Systemic Functional Linguistics has a significant role in providing an in-depth analysis for translation purposes (Kim et al., 2021). Studies explored the effect of analyzing certain aspects of register analysis when training translators. Comparisons of the source texts with the target texts were conducted by using SFL as a tool for text analysis. The current paper is set to provide a full review on SFL and translation studies. The aim of this review is twofold: it aims to review how theories and empirical studies of translation and applied linguistics are interrelated; it also focuses on how SFL has been investigated in translation studies. The review shows that research has focused more on comparative analysis to evaluate translations even when used for translator education. Further research on applying full register analysis as a pedagogical tool for translator education is needed.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistics; translation studies; translator education; register analysis; thematic progression

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Translation and Applied Linguistics

Defining and assessing translation is a controversial matter due to the interdisciplinary feature of translation where many theories can be applied (Marais, 2013). This has led scholars such as Toury (2012) to argue that scholars should agree not to define translation. Marais (2013) followed this view and contends that assessing translation must be aligned constructively in translator education due to the fact that there cannot be a universal assessment if there is no universal definition of translation. In the endeavor to describe the different types of TS, Toury (2012) discussed the map of TS created by Holmes which categorized TS into theoretical, descriptive, and applied studies. Figure 1 shows that translator training, as the focus of this review, was categorized under applied TS.

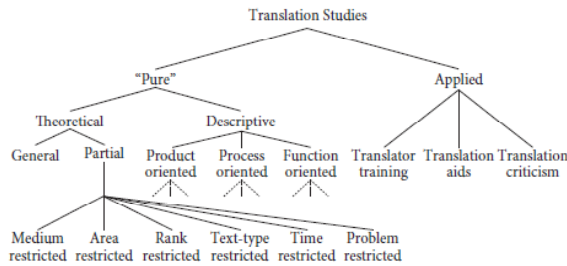


Figure 1. *Map of Translation Studies by Holmes (Toury, 2012, p. 4)*

Munday (2016) has also considered translator training under applied TS and branched it to involve teaching methods, methods of assessment, and curriculum design (Figure 2). This map also supported the fact that translator training is a branch of applied translation.

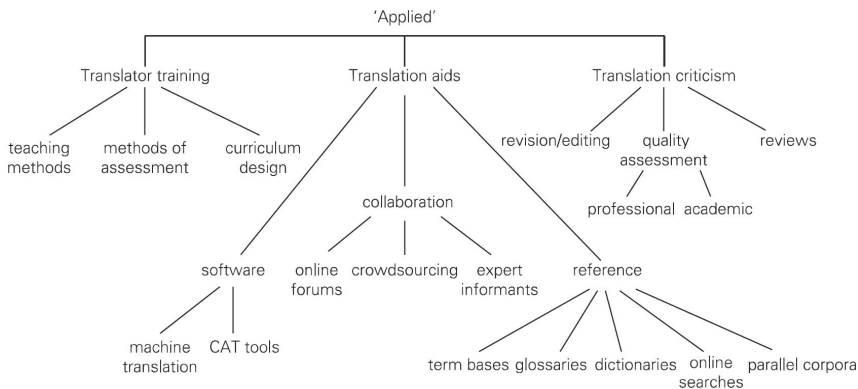


Figure 2. *Munday's Map of Applied Translation Studies (Munday, 2016, p. 20)*

TS, in which a crucial interaction between theory and practice occurs, is considered an interdisciplinary field with a substantial focus on linguistics (Manfredi, 2011). That is because of the diversity of theories (especially linguistics theory) that can be applied to explain the translation process and to justify the choices made in the translation product. Bell (1992) has also acknowledged translation as an interdisciplinary field combined with linguistics studies. Bell (1992) investigated translation thoroughly by creating a model and incorporating applied linguistics and psycholinguistics to understand translation through meaning and language processing. House (2015) incorporated different fields of linguistics to assess the quality of translation such as contrastive pragmatic discourse studies, psycholinguistics, corpus linguistics and neurolinguistics. Jmila (2014) added that linguistics provides translators with a framework to choose and defend linguistic choices in addition to equipping them with the appropriate metalanguage used to evaluate and criticize other translations. The aforementioned theories acknowledge the significance of applied linguistics in translation studies. Applied linguistics theories are able to provide an in-depth analysis of the translation process, justify translation choices, assess translation quality and understand translation through language processing.

Furthermore, additional empirical studies highlighted the significance of textual analysis in training translators. Dooley (2008) emphasized the role of the relevance theory in analyzing a text for translation training. The relevance theory which was proposed by Wilson and Sperber (1999) argues that relevance is a mental process where one uses contextual features to reveal the intended message of the communicator and the interpretation of the hearer. Dooley (2008) argued that applying the relevance theory in textual analysis was able to help translators focus on the context and the message being delivered and also help them analyze mismatches in contextual information in translation. Way (2012) has also supported the use of discourse analysis in translator training.

Way (2012) guided the trainees in the translation process by analyzing the ST by following Fairclough (2003)'s "members' resources" which has to do with the internalized social structures and conventions of a text. This helped the trainees understand the social practice of the source text. After that they explored whether there was an equivalence in the target language and culture to produce a similar meaning. Way (2012) argues that textual analysis helped translator trainees to understand the ST and guide them to choose suitable equivalences in the TTs.

In line with using textual analysis for translation purposes, studies have theorized and applied Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in translation. The following reviews SFL as a tool for text analysis, in addition to the theoretical and empirical research related to the usage of SFL in TS and in translator education.

SFL as a tool for text analysis

SFL is a theory of language which was developed by Halliday (Martin, 2016). It is unique for combining situational context and cultural context and it merely focuses on how language is used to convey meaning (Halliday, 1978). According to Martin (2016), Halliday's SFL was first based on theories dating back to the 1950s and the 1960s particularly the level of form and substance (Hjelmslev, 1961, as cited in Martin, 2016) and the level of context (Firth, 1957 as cited in Martin, 2016).

According to SFL theory, language is understood through its global and local context and is viewed through different levels (Eggins, 2004). These levels are the context of situation and the context of culture, semantics, lexico-grammar, and phonology/graphology (Halliday, 2001).

SFL views language as a phenomenon that construes human experience into categories and taxonomies (Halliday, 2001). SFL considers functionality as an intrinsic feature in language and hence the term "metafunction" was developed to emphasize this idea. The metafunctions of language proposed by SFL are categorized into three main metafunctions (see Table 1) which are the ideational metafunction (involving both experiential and logical), the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction (Eggins, 2004). These metafunctions are recognized through register analysis involving field, tenor, and mode which are recognized respectively through lexico-grammatical analysis, through transitivity, mood and modality, and theme and rheme (Halliday, 2001).

Table 1. *SFL's register (field, tenor, and mode) and metafunction (adopted from Martin, 2016)*

Extrinsic Functionality (context)	Reflected in	Intrinsic Functionality (metafunction)
Field	Construed by	Ideational
Tenor	Composed by	Interpersonal
Mode	Enacted by	Textual

FL has been used extensively in research as a tool for text analysis with different approaches and across various fields (Martin, 2016). SFL has been evident in second language education research and was used as a pedagogical tool to help second language learners to communicate in a new language and across different cultural contexts (Troyan et al., 2022). SFL analysis was also investigated as a discourse analysis tool of writing essays by students at different educational levels and across different fields and discourses. Alyousef (2016, 2020) explored marketing and accounting discourses by employing SFL and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). Alyousef (2016) investigated marketing plan reports

of tertiary students by focusing on thematic progression patterns, composition of information value, and logico-semantic expansions between the visual semiotic resources and the surrounding text. Alyousef (2020) investigated how postgraduate business students used lexical and cohesive devices in individual assignments in English. In both studies, SFL was able to provide an insight to the understanding of the field by students and was able to provide insights and implications for teaching English to business students.

The clause level and the text level of discourse in SFL are considered in the analysis (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). It could be a top-down approach or a bottom-up approach if the meaning of constituents and the overall meaning are taken into consideration. Kim (2007) argues that this focus on meaning on both the clause and context level is what makes SFL applicable in translation. The following part reviewed how SFL and translation were combined in research.

SFL and Translation

SFL has provided a dense theoretical framework for TS (Manfredi, 2011). Catford (1965) acknowledged the importance of considering the levels and categories in language recognized by SFL in TS. Newmark (1988) argued that the translator can benefit from SFL as a tool for text analysis because they both focus on the centrality of meaning. SFL has been used in assessing translated texts (House, 2015) and understanding the semiotic implications of discourse in translation (Hatim & Mason, 1997). Models based on SFL were created to understand the process of translation (Bell, 1992) and SFL was used as a framework for training translators (Trosborg, 2000). Halliday (2001) has also contributed to the theory of incorporating SFL in TS and supported judging the quality of a translated text by using SFL tools.

Newmark (1988) highlighted the mutual interest of SFL and translation in their focus on the centrality of meaning. Newmark (1988)'s work focused on the importance of grammar in translation such as constituents, grammatical metaphor and cohesion. Newmark (1988) also emphasized the significance of register in text analysis, assessing translation and training translators.

House (2015) made a significant contribution to assessing the quality of translation based on SFL. The assessment of translated texts included language, register and genre. It starts from a bottom-up approach starting with textual metafunctions including field, tenor and mode. Then the communicative purpose of the text is evaluated which identifies the genre of the text. Since House (2015)'s focus was on translation, Halliday's SFL theory was adapted to consider more detailed classifications of register such as classifying tenor to four components which are stance, social role relationships, social attitude, and participation. House (2015) also emphasized the importance of considering the role of context

and purpose in determining translation choices which is recognized in the type of translation intended whether it was a covert or an overt translation.

Catford (1965) applied the concepts of SFL in translation by conceptualizing the notion of “translation shifts” which has been considered a crucial concept in TS. Catford identified translation shifts as a deviation from the ST when producing the TT. This shift can be between categories or levels of language, i.e. between levels of grammar and lexis (Catford, 1965).

Hatim and Mason (1997) adapted register analysis in translation to analyze ideological, cultural, and social aspects. They concentrated on variations in language use in translated texts. They differentiated between dialect and register and argued that language varies according to the user and the language use as stated by Halliday. Their approach is a top-down approach focusing on the ideational and interpersonal metafunction in determining textual choices in translation because the top-down approach analyzes a text from the context unlike the bottom-up approach which focuses on the lexico-grammatical elements.

Halliday (2001) argued that the quality of a translation is determined by the equivalence of the TT to the linguistic features which are favorable in the ST. He emphasized the importance of matching the ideational metafunction in the source and the TT. However, he mentions that sometimes even if the ideational is equivalent, the interpersonal and textual may be different which would affect the quality of the translation. Therefore, it is important to know the valued meanings in the ST and match those in the translation in order to have a good translation (Halliday, 2001). This is shown in a translation study by Anis et al. (2022) where analyzing theme and rheme has been applied to analyze the relationship between the translation ideology, method and technique. The findings were able to show that there is significant relationship between them.

Acknowledging the interdisciplinary feature of translation, Bell (1992) explored translation by focusing on model, meaning, and memory. Bell (1992) incorporated applied linguistics, discourse analysis and psycholinguistics to set a yardstick for understanding and evaluating the process and product of translation. Bell (1992) based his model on SFL analysis. The focus on meaning included analyzing ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings through field, tenor, and mode.

Furthermore, scholars in SFL and TS came together in a volume compiled by Kim et al. (2021). It composed various research articles where SFL and TS were interconnected. Steiner (2021) contributed to this volume by investigating the reading of the text in the pre-translation phase and analyzed the role of the translator and how it is similar to reading in SFL. That is because they both look at the language system as a whole and they also consider specific

elements of the text. Neumann (2021) also contributed to the intersection of SFL and TS in regard to register. Neumann (2021) argues in this volume that the register of every language is different linguistically and culturally. Hence, some translation equivalents which refer to cross-cultural register variation may affect identifying lexicogrammatical translational shifts especially in some corpus-based methodologies in TS which only consider text types. Neumann (2021) then asserts that SFL accounts for these register variations. As for Munday (2021), the focus of his article was on interpersonal meaning and the SFL system of Appraisal (specifically graduation which is a type of appraisal analysis that is concerned with the force and focus) and how it was investigated in TS. The contribution of Munday showed how TS is a crucial element of the linguistic system.

To conclude, in addition to what has been mentioned above, the significance of SFL in TS was highlighted in a recent published interview with Matthiessen (Wang et al., 2017). Matthiessen emphasized that translation is a linguistic and a metalinguistic process which needs a theory that accounts for both the ST and the TT from both a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach considering both context, meaning and lexico-grammatical features such as those recognized in SFL (Wang et al., 2017). Therefore, this study agrees with Matthiessen on his definition of translation and acknowledges the significance of SFL in translation. This significance was further investigated in research by applying it as a tool for translator education as reviewed in the following part.

Applying SFL for translator education

Empirical studies have highlighted the significance of using SFL in translation courses by focusing their analysis on certain aspects of SFL analysis. SFL was used as a pedagogical tool for analyzing the ideational, textual, and interpersonal metafunctions of the source and target texts (Kim & McDonald, 2012) and for error analysis (Aghagolzadeh & Farazandeh-pour, 2012). SFL analyses issues such as thematic progression, modality, ideational grammatical metaphor, and appraisal systems were also investigated in the classroom to convey the underlying meanings of both the source and TT (Manfredi, 2011). Thematic progression patterns in translator education were analyzed to investigate and show students the effect they have on the quality of translation (Alshehri, 2017; Kim, 2007; Sofyan & Tarigan, 2018). Other aspects were investigated by using SFL analysis such as the interrelation between clauses and context in translating logical links (Choi, 2013) and the effect of cohesion on the quality of translation (Khany, 2014; Kostopoulou, 2007; Jun, 2018).

SFL as a tool in translator education

Translator education refers to training translation students in university classrooms (Cui & Zhao, 2015). Kim and McDonald (2012) conducted a case study using SFL as a tool for text analysis in teaching translation and interpretation. The study aimed to create a model for a translation course that facilitates SFL as a tool for analyzing a text to understand the connection between contextual and textual variables and lexico-grammatical patterns. This study discussed the pedagogical benefits of applying SFL in translation education and its limitations. The study was an ongoing project based on the participants' reflective journals, text analyses and assignments, and course evaluations. The participants of the study (n = 40) had different linguistic backgrounds such as Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Russian, German, French, and Spanish. The common language between them was English. The teacher provided the participants with an introduction to register, genre, texture, and cohesion. In addition, textual and interpersonal metafunctions at the text and clause level were discussed. Text analysis was then demonstrated and practiced in tutorials. Then, the journal assignment was conducted before any assignment on text analysis was given. The journal assignment ensured that the participants were able to express their understanding of the tools used for text analysis as a theory and were able to apply it. The study found that the most challenging aspect for the participants was the shift from a view of language as a set of structures to one with a wide variety of options. Also, the participants found that applying the theory to translation and interpretation was challenging.

Aghagolzadeh and Farazandeh-pour (2012) also explored SFL as an objective tool for error analysis of translated legal texts. The participants of the study (n = 15) were selected randomly from 400 participants in an English-Persian translation exam for a translator position at the Iranian Judiciary. The participants were asked to translate 735 words in 4 separate texts. The translated texts were analyzed for meaning at sentence level. The categories used in the error analysis included interpersonal, textual, logical, and experiential metafunctions. The experiential metafunction included participants, processes, and circumstances. The categories also included mistranslation, omission, and word choice. The findings support the benefits of using SFL as an objective tool to evaluate a translated text objectively.

Saridakis (2016) suggested that combining corpus linguistics, descriptive TS and SFL can benefit translation practitioners and trainee translators. Although this study focused on using computational tools, it highlighted the significance of using a multidisciplinary approach when training or teaching translation courses. It also highlighted the significance of SFL analysis for translator education.

Manfredi (2011) used SFL text analysis in a translation classroom in Italy. The study focused on the reflection of the teacher's experience in teaching translation courses. The teacher started each class with a translation brief following Nord (2014) to explain the purpose of the task and the communicative situation of the task. Then, the teacher provided authentic texts from different genres such as journalistic, tourist and specialized texts each of which was about 300 words. The students were asked to translate it individually or in a group. At Other times, the teacher provided both a ST and its published TT and analyzed both with the students.

The analysis was a bottom-up approach starting from lexico-grammatical analysis leading up to the context. The analysis involved modality, ideational grammatical metaphor, thematic progression and appraisal systems. The findings support the effectiveness of SFL as a tool for translation teaching.

Trosborg (2000) applied textual analysis for training translators. Trosborg focused on both the process of translation and the product of a selected text. The administration of the process of translation was demonstrated and analyzed in a process-oriented approach to translation. The textual analysis followed Halliday's SFL register analysis in addition to considering Vermeer (1998)'s Skopos theory of translation (explaining the translation brief which is the communicative purpose and the audience of the TT) following Nord (2014).

Li and Kim (2021) explored the ideational metafunction and the logical meanings of language by comparing four English translations of a Chinese novel. The results showed that analyzing translation shifts through explicitness and types assist in comparing translation choices. Al Herz (2021) set a model for translator trainees on how to use SFL as a tool. Al Herz focused on the interpersonal meaning through modality by evaluating English-Arabic translation shifts using SFL.

The mentioned studies supported the significance of using SFL as an objective analytic tool for translator education. More studies investigated specific aspects of SFL in translation such as thematic progression which will be reviewed in the following section.

Thematic progression in translator education

Kim (2007) conducted a study on the use of SFL as a tool for teaching translation. The focus of the analysis in the study was specifically on Theme. The participants of the study were 24 Korean students who were taught to apply text analysis in translating. The perceptions of the students were measured quantitatively and qualitatively through learning journals and a survey. The survey results were positive, and the learning journals showed the advantages and challenges that the students faced. The material used in the study was a short expository text

about fuels in the human body. Following Nord (2014), the teacher started to brief the students with the communicative purpose of the translated text. The teacher explained that the TT was for secondary students in Korea. Then the students were asked to translate the text individually. The translations were marked and two were selected for class discussion to analyze textual meaning in translation. The two selected translations were presented anonymously, and the students were asked to choose the most suitable text for a secondary textbook. Then, the teacher analyzed four texts. They were the ST, which was in English, and two TTs, which were translated into Korean by the students in addition to a comparable TT. After that, the teacher discussed why the textual meaning is different and why one is considered better than the other. The clause was considered the primary unit of analysis and the clause-level meaning was used as a point of orientation for the text-level meaning. The study concluded that the use of SFL as a tool for teaching translation was beneficial and emphasized its significance in providing students with tangible analysis which will help them explain their choices and not rely on their instinct.

Alshehri (2017) examined the thematic progression, which can be identified by analyzing thematic patterns, in texts translated from English to Arabic. The study investigated the variations in textual meaning by analyzing six Arabic translations of the same ST in English. It also investigated to what extent thematic patterning is similar or different. The findings showed that the intended textual meaning was changed, and translational shift occurred due to the translator's lack of understanding of the thematic patterns and the textual meanings they imply. Despite the fact that this study focused on analyzing the participants' translation and discussing the results instead of explaining the process of analyzing the text prior to translating it, it still supported the benefits of analyzing theme for translation analysis and translation education.

Sofyan and Tarigan (2018) analyzed thematic progression in TTs translated from English into Bahasa Indonesia by student translators. The study aimed at finding the most dominant pattern of thematic progression used and the translation problems student translators faced. The participants (n = 15) were asked to translate a news text from English to Bahasa Indonesia. The ST was an authentic text composed of 236 words and published by BBC online. The ST was measured for readability and supported the level of the participants who were university students with an advanced level of English as a foreign language. Translog was used to collect the data for the study. Translog is a software used to record keystrokes in time and to reflect the typing process of translators and to study cognitive processing through the recorded pauses and modifications (Jakobsen, 2011). The findings showed that hyper-theme progression was the most dominant type used. It also showed that the students had a problem with idea organization. The cause of this problem ascribed to the fact that students tried to imitate the thematic progression in the ST. Students tend to imitate the

style of the ST and focus less on the meaning transferred which resulted in a less cohesive TT. The study emphasized the significance of thematic progression as a tool for conducting a well-organized text.

Investigating thematic progression has supported translator education in providing instructors and translators with an objective tool that can justify translation choices and errors. It has also emphasized the differences and similarities between languages and how imitating the same thematic progression from one language to another may affect the cohesiveness of the TT. The importance of investigating cohesion in translator education studies will be mentioned in the following part.

Cohesion and logical links in translator education

Using SFL for translation education can be evident in studies exploring analyzing texts for cohesion (Khany, 2014; Kostopoulou, 2007; Jun, 2018; Alshalan & Alyousef, 2020). The knowledge of lexical cohesion patterns and translation quality was investigated by Khany (2014). It was found that there was a positive correlation between them. Kostopoulou (2007) emphasized the interrelation between text linguistics, cognition and translation by investigating coherence of the ST.

Kostopoulou found that focusing on the ST and analyzing it for coherence can assist translator trainees to understand the communicative message of the text and improve the quality of their translations. Semantic coherence in TS was also investigated by Jun (2018). The study supported the idea that the quality of translated texts improved when semantic coherence was achieved.

SFL was used in a study by Choi (2013) to explain translating logical links between clauses and the functional descriptions of the grammatical resources used to express meaning. This was done by using a sample from scientific texts and narrative texts. Three STs and their translations were analyzed. The STs were an everyday story, a scientific text, and a government administrative text. First, the story text and the scientific text were compared in terms of lexical density specifically grammatical metaphor, and the type of clauses used which determines how close they are to spoken or written language. Then the grammatical metaphors in the STs were compared with their translations in the TTs. After that, the published translation of the scientific text was compared with the translations of the participants who were trainee translators (n = 10). This was done to demonstrate how to translate the clause type favored in a text. Finally, the administrative text and the translations of the participants were analyzed thoroughly, and a suggested alternative was extracted to suit the target readership. This study concluded that clause combination and context whether genre or register or both are interrelated in producing logical meanings in translation texts. This interrelation can be useful for translation education. The

study also supported the benefits of SFL in providing specific tools to analyze a text before translating it and the benefits of combining SFL with other translation theories such as the Skopos theory which helps provide more information about the context of a text.

Alshalan and Alyousef (2020) analyzed 500 business texts (20,000 words in total) for cohesive features collected from the administrative website “Investopedia”. The aim was to investigate their suitability as STs to practice translation skills in the field of finance and administration. The framework used was Halliday’s (1978) SFL approach to language and Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) cohesion analysis scheme. The results showed that the most prominent type used was lexical cohesion, followed by reference and conjunctions. Ellipses and substitution were the less used. Cohesion analysis was able to assert that the texts can be used for translation practice because they are full of various textual features that can fulfill the needs of translation instructors and the participants in the field of finance and administration.

Studies investigating cohesion for translator education supported the impact of cohesion analysis of a text on the quality of translation. Studies have also shown that logical meanings in TTs were affected by register and genre analysis.

SFL and English-Arabic translator education

As has been mentioned above, SFL has been investigated for translation purposes and also for translator education; however, research has been scarce especially for English-Arabic translation classrooms. SFL has been applied to describe the Arabic grammar by Bardi (2008). Although the study was detailed and specific, it was not able to fully account for the Arabic language due to the complexity of Arabic and the fact that SFL was designed to describe the English language (Bardi, 2008). Bnini (2007) investigated training English Arabic translators. He focused on using text analyses and discourse analyses. The results supported the effectiveness of these analyses. SFL was not considered except in a study conducted by Althumali (2021) who investigated the effect of SFL on training English-Arabic translators. The participants in this study received SFL-based translator training where short English to Arabic translated extracts of fiction were given to the participants to analyze the English ST. The results showed that SFL helped the participants improve their translation due to their better understanding of the ST when learning how to use SFL to analyze a text and understand the underlying meanings intended. This study was conducted in Taif University, Saudi Arabia. Although this study has shown the effectiveness of SFL in translator training, it was a case study and generalizing the outcomes was not possible which requires further investigation of SFL in other translation classrooms. Further studies should benefit from these past experiences and

further investigate SFL for translator education in the language combination of English and Arabic.

Conclusion

From what has been reviewed, it can be deduced that SFL has a significant role in providing an in-depth analysis for translation purposes. Research investigated SFL as a tool for text analyses for translator education. Studies used different aspects of SFL to analyze and evaluate translations. They focused on investigating theme, cohesion, and other aspects of register analyses. Applying full register analysis is still scarce. Studies need to address how SFL can assist translators in understanding the underlying meanings of texts prior to translating them. The focus on the product has been thoroughly investigated; however, focusing on the process is still under investigated. Further studies are needed to explore the effect of applying full register analysis for translation education purposes. This will provide a detailed perspective on the benefits and challenges of using SFL as a pedagogical tool in translation education.

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