

A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL FOR NEW TESTAMENT
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: RHETORICAL STRUCTURE THEORY
AND ITS APPLICATION TO JOHN 8:31–59

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Abstract: Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST), which was originally developed by William C. Mann and Sandra A. Thompson as a functional theory to describe the text structure of written discourse, has been further advanced and incorporated into Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen. This study aims to introduce this new method to New Testament discourse analysis by integrating the features of New Testament Greek. This study also demonstrates the application of RST by conducting a rhetorical-relational analysis on John 8:31–59 to verify that RST can serve as an effective tool for New Testament interpretation and will offer new insights relevant to New Testament studies. (Article)

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1. *Introduction*

New Testament discourse analysis has been actively developing and gradually gaining importance for the last thirty years.¹

1. Although modern linguists might define this notion in slightly different ways, discourse analysis at its broadest level refers to the study of human communication. As a synthetic model, discourse analysis intends to integrate various areas of linguistic investigation, especially the three traditional ones, namely syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, into a coherent and unifying framework. Different areas of linguistic investigation may be integrated in different ways, thus various models of discourse analysis are

Discourse analysis has great potential for New Testament studies because this discipline itself is textually based. The New Testament was written and transmitted as Greek text. It is true that New Testament studies may involve many factors, including historical background, social environment, and theological tradition. However, the primary task of this discipline is to examine the Greek text of the New Testament.² Discourse analysis has recently become an important interpretive approach in the field of New Testament studies. Various models of discourse analysis have been constructed and applied to interpret the New Testament text. The implementation of these discourse analysis models has greatly contributed to New Testament studies. Among the five major forms of New Testament discourse analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), South African, Continental European, and eclectic, SFL is probably the most helpful and productive one.³

As an integrative discourse analysis model, SFL offers great value to New Testament studies. First, as a theory primarily dealing with the text, SFL is applicable to New Testament studies since this discipline is oriented around the examination of a particular collection of Greek texts. Second, SFL is a semantically driven grammar and is able to connect semantics with lexicogrammar, which is crucial for New Testament interpretation. Third, New Testament studies deal with ancient texts, the situational context of which is at best only partially understood. A discourse analysis using the SFL approach may yield important clues for the reconstruction of that context.⁴

constructed in the discipline of linguistics. Recently, many biblical scholars have adopted discourse approaches in the field of biblical studies. See Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 1; Porter, "Discourse Analysis," 17–18; Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 17; Stubbs, *Discourse Analysis*, 1, 9–10.

2. Porter, "Discourse Analysis," 14; Porter, "Linguistics," 35.

3. Porter, "Discourse Analysis," 17–18; Porter and Pitts, "New Testament Greek Language," 235–36; Porter and Reed, "Discourse Analysis," 15.

4. It is worth noting that the concept of situational context must be distinguished from material situational setting. According to Hasan's

Fourth, SFL provides a firm theoretical foundation and a systematic framework to analyze the New Testament text within its context. Fifth, it is through a rigorous analytic procedure that SFL scrutinizes each stratum of language and generates reliable data for exegetical work. Sixth, the New Testament is composed of both written texts and dialogues that have originated as spoken texts. SFL develops theories for both spoken and written language.

The goal of this paper is to introduce Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST), a functional theory of textual structure that has recently been incorporated into SFL.⁵ Rhetorical relations are closely related to and have a diverse range of effects on all three (or four) metafunctions of SFL, namely the ideational (which can be further divided into the experiential and logical sub-metafunctions), interpersonal, and textual metafunctions; therefore, this paper argues that a rhetorical-relational analysis based on RST can be combined with the theory of SFL for a more comprehensive interpretation of New Testament texts. As a functional theory, RST can be remodeled for different languages, including New Testament Greek, by taking into account their particular features. This study will construct a discourse analysis model according to the framework of RST, integrating the theory

conceptualization, material situational setting is the actual physical setting in which a text is produced. There is overlap between these two constructs, but material situational setting always has elements that are absent from situational context. Cloran further explains the distinction between the two concepts, noting that material situational setting is the actual physical space containing actual physical elements whereas situational context is a theoretical construct abstracted from material situational setting. Cloran also demonstrates that one single material situational setting can act as the site of different relevant situational contexts. See Hasan, "Code," 241; Hasan, "What's Going on," 108–10; Cloran, "Context," 178–207.

5. Discourse analysis can include the study of both spoken and written communication, thus written text is only one medium of discourse. In this study, a discourse analysis is conducted on a written text only and the term *discourse* refers to this written text. The discourse analysis model in this study is constructed primarily to deal with the written text. For discussion of different mediums of discourse, see Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 17; Stubbs, *Discourse Analysis*, 1, 9–10.

of SFL, and will demonstrate the application of this new method by conducting a rhetorical-relational analysis on John 8:31–59. In this way, this paper will verify that RST can serve as an effective tool for New Testament interpretation and can offer fresh insights.

2. A Methodological Proposal

This section will construct a discourse analysis model according to the framework of RST, integrating the theory of SFL. First of all, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of SFL since RST has been incorporated into SFL and will be used together with the theory of SFL in this study. Then the framework of RST will be presented, with an explanation regarding why and how RST can be combined with SFL. Lastly, this section will outline the procedure used in a rhetorical-relational analysis.

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

The SFL school is mainly founded on the work of M. A. K. Halliday and has been developed by a number of linguists such as Ruqaiya Hasan, Jonathan J. Webster, Christian M. I. M. Matthiessen, and J. R. Martin. Viewing language as a form of linguistic behavior and a social tool for communication, SFL emphasizes the functions of language within its social contexts.⁶ A theory of language in its functional use and with the notion of text as a semantic unit, SFL adheres to almost all the major tenets of discourse analysis and employs many elements in conducting discourse analysis.⁷ Most importantly, SFL demonstrates that the context of situation is encapsulated in the text through a systematic relationship between the social

6. Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 3–86; Porter, “Discourse Analysis,” 27–28.

7. As Reed outlines, the major tenets of discourse analysis include analysis of the production and processing of discourse, analysis beyond the sentence, analysis of social functions of language use, and analysis of cohesiveness. See Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 24–32; Westfall, *Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews*, 23.

environment and the functional organization of language. This relationship between text and its context of situation means that determinations can be made concerning both the meaning of a text through knowledge of its context and of the context through the features of the text.⁸ As many linguists acknowledge, an obvious advantage of SFL for discourse analysis is that it can “draw explanatory links between lexicogrammatical choices in the text and the relevant contextual factors in which the text is situated.”⁹

In SFL, system refers to the choices available in the lexicogrammar of language. These choices are semantic in essence and can be realized by lexicogrammatical forms.¹⁰ Function refers to the semantic roles of linguistic forms in both immediate situation and broader culture, which emphasizes the situational aspect of language use.¹¹ As a theory focusing on the functional use of language, SFL mainly concerns how the text functions within its context and demonstrates that the text and its context are mutually defining. SFL indicates that any text has two environments, the linguistic environment and the extra-linguistic environment.¹² The term co-text is used for the linguistic environment of the text, while the term context is used for the extra-linguistic environment that may influence the formation of the text, which can be further differentiated as the context of situation and the context of culture. A text must be interpreted within both its co-text and its contexts of situation and culture.¹³

8. Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 11–12.

9. Hasan, *Linguistics*, ix; Thompson, “Acting the Part,” 101–2.

10. Halliday, *Language*, 192; Halliday, “Systemic Theory,” 12:444; Berry, *Structures*, 142–44.

11. Halliday, *Language*, 46–47; Halliday, “Systemic Theory,” 12:445; Berry, *Structures*, 22–23.

12. This is the dominant view in SFL. Leckie-Tarry has a different view which classifies the meaning-making process into three levels of context, namely the context of text (instead of co-text), the context of situation, and the context of culture. See Leckie-Tarry, *Language and Context*, 17.

13. Matthiessen et al., *Key Terms*, 74; Porter, “Dialect,” 198; Reed, *Discourse Analysis of Philippians*, 42.

SFL employs the concept of metafunction to define the basic functions of language and to analyze the different strata of language, a terminology that indicates function as an integral component of language. SFL identifies three (or four) metafunctions of language, namely ideational (which can be further divided into the experiential and logical sub-metafunctions), interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The ideational metafunction concerns the reality construed in the text; the interpersonal metafunction concerns the interaction taking place between people by means of the text; the textual metafunction concerns the way that the text is organized into a cohesive whole so that the interpersonal and ideational metafunctions can be effectively presented. Each metafunction comprises networks of semantic choices that are realized in the lexicogrammar of language. Accordingly, the semantic system of language can be categorized into four functional components, namely the experiential, logical, interpersonal, and textual semantic components. These semantic components are interwoven in the fabric of the text. Because every text is multifunctional, all three (or four) metafunctions are instantiated simultaneously in every text although the relative prominence of each metafunction may vary in different texts.¹⁴ All these metafunctions collaborate in the production and processing of discourse, each dimension of which thus contributes towards the total interpretation of the text.¹⁵

2.2 *Rhetorical Structure Theory*

RST was originally developed by William C. Mann and Sandra A. Thompson as a functional theory to describe the text structure of written discourse.¹⁶ Their descriptive theory of textual organi-

14. Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 30–31; Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 18–23; Matthiessen et al., *Key Terms*, 115, 126, 138, 220–21; Porter, “Discourse Analysis,” 27–28.

15. Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 23.

16. Although RST was primarily developed for analyzing written texts, it has also been applied in the analysis of dialogues. However, Martin criticizes this practice since the deep structural embeddings required by RST do not align with the clause combining types in spontaneous speech. For the application of

zation was then further refined by Matthiessen.¹⁷ Although RST has been developed independently of Halliday's clause complexing theory, both accounts assume the same kind of relational organization, which developed out of the approaches of Joseph E. Grimes and Robert E. Longacre.¹⁸ The general principle is that a text is organized as rhetorical complexes at the semantic stratum. In other words, passages are linked through rhetorical relations such as projection and expansion; within each of these passages, clause complexes and clauses are linked through rhetorical relations as well. Because of this kind of relational organization, RST, and also Halliday's clause complexing theory, can be used to interpret the text by examining its rhetorical structure.¹⁹

On account of their similar theoretical foundations, Matthiessen believes that RST can be incorporated into the framework of SFL and endeavors to undertake this incorporation. Matthiessen utilizes RST to investigate clause complexing, cohesive conjunctions, grammatical metaphor, and the choice of Theme in SFL.²⁰ Moreover, Matthiessen contends that RST can be adopted to analyze the semantic organization of a text on the basis of logico-semantic relations.²¹ By integrating RST with logico-semantic relations, Matthiessen specifies RST as the rhetorical system, a part of the logical system in SFL. This integration considers rhetorical relations as an extension of logico-semantic relations, providing an elaborate system for

RST to dialogues, see Fawcett and Davies, "Monologue," 151–66; Maier and Sitter, "Extension," 968–73; Daradoumis and Verdejo, "Using Rhetorical Relations," 56–71. For Martin's criticism, see Martin, *English Text*; Bateman and Delin, "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 12:591.

17. Mann and Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 243–44; Mann et al., "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 42.

18. For details of Grimes and Longacre's discourse analysis approaches, see Grimes, *Thread of Discourse*; Longacre, "Sentence Structure," 783–815; Longacre, *Anatomy of Speech Notions*.

19. Matthiessen, "Combining Clauses," 281–82.

20. Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 44.

21. Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 609.

discourse analysis and enabling the application of RST.²² Recently, Bo Wang and Yuanyi Ma, Matthiessen's students, have attempted to link RST with various dimensions of SFL. Regarding the metafunctions, RST is located in the logical sub-metafunction of the ideational metafunction, but it is closely related to Configuration in the experiential metafunction and Progression in the textual metafunction. Concerning stratification, RST serves as a semantic resource for fields of activity, being realized by lexicogrammatical systems. Respecting instantiation, RST belongs to the instance pole of the cline of instantiation as a semantic unit, but it also extends to the potential pole of the cline of instantiation as a system of rhetorical relations.²³

There has been no agreement as to which semantic system rhetorical structure belongs in. Halliday proposes that rhetorical structure is part of the textual semantic system.²⁴ Initially following Halliday's perspective, Matthiessen first explored rhetorical relations within the textual semantic system by means of RST.²⁵ However, Matthiessen has since changed his view and he now classifies rhetorical structure as part of the logical semantic system.²⁶ Stanley E. Porter suggests that rhetorical structure fits the interpersonal semantic system because rhetoric seems to deal with participant relationships.²⁷ Nevertheless, no matter which semantic system the rhetorical structure belongs in, RST is actually associated with all three (or four) metafunctions. As mentioned above, although Wang and Ma locate RST in the logical sub-metafunction of the ideational metafunction, they acknowledge that RST is closely related to the experiential and textual metafunctions as well.²⁸ Moreover, the research of Mann and Thompson affirms that rhetorical relations have a diverse

22. Matthiessen, *System*.

23. Wang and Ma, *Rhetorical Structure Theory*.

24. Halliday, *Language*, 223; Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 12.

25. Matthiessen, "Interpreting the Textual Metafunction," 61–62, 71–72.

26. Matthiessen et al., *Key Terms*, 185; Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 609; Matthiessen, *System*.

27. Porter, "Dialect," 203–4.

28. Wang and Ma, *Rhetorical Structure Theory*.

range of effects on all three (or four) metafunctions, including ideational or argumentation effects, interpersonal or social effects, and textual or presentational effects.²⁹ Therefore, this paper believes that a rhetorical-relational analysis based on RST can be combined with the theory of SFL for a more comprehensive interpretation of the text across all of the metafunctions.

Today, RST continues to be an active field in the discipline of linguistics. Many linguists acknowledge RST as an advantageous analytical tool for text organization and apply RST to a wide range of text types and different languages. Considering that RST has already been validated across many languages such as Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese,³⁰ this paper proposes that this new method can be adapted for the discourse analysis of New Testament Greek as well. RST provides a linguistic framework for describing the text structure of written discourse according to the rhetorical relations among text spans, paying particular attention to the way that a text is structured so as to be accepted and understood by the reader. As a descriptive theory of text structure, RST is able to facilitate discourse analysis by identifying hierarchic structures in a text, characterizing the rhetorical relations between text spans (whether or not grammatically or lexically signaled) in functional terms, recognizing the transition point of a relation, and assessing the extent to which text spans are related. It is capable of investigating both the stated and inferred relations in a text, because it effectively connects the meanings of conjunctions, the grammar of clause combining, and non-signalized parataxis.³¹

RST indicates that a text is hierarchically organized by text spans which range from the text as a whole down to its individual constituent clauses. Within this hierarchical

29. Mann and Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 250.

30. Bateman and Delin, "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 12:590–91.

31. Mann and Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 243–44; Mann et al., "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 42, 46–47; Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 208.

organization, the text as a whole is the semantic unit at the top of a hierarchy and each individual constituent clause is the most basic lexicogrammatical unit at the bottom of the hierarchy. As functionally significant parts, text spans together constitute the rhetorical structure of the text, with each text span contributing to the overall meaning of the text. The term nucleus refers to those text spans that play “a more significant role as part of the core meaning of the text,” whereas the term satellite refers to those text spans that are “more peripheral to the overall meaning of the text.” Each text span is related to another text span as intended by the author. The relations between text spans hold the text together and contribute to the overall coherence of the text. That is to say, these relations not only function at the clause level but also apply to larger units further up the hierarchy. Each relation is defined by constraints on the nucleus and satellites(s) and by the intended effect of the author on the reader.³²

RST uses the notion of rhetorical structure in the sense that the text structuring relations reflect the author’s choices of organizing and presenting the text.³³ These text structuring relations are functional in essence, which can be represented in terms of the author’s purposes, the author’s assumptions of the reader, and certain propositional patterns in the subject matter of the text. In accordance with the theory of RST, there are two major types of relations between text spans: asymmetrical (hypotactic) and symmetrical (paratactic) relations. An asymmetrical relation has one text span as its nucleus and some other text span as a satellite, while a symmetrical relation has two text spans as nuclei.³⁴ In principle, the former is realized by hypotactic links and the latter is realized by paratactic links.³⁵

32. Mann and Thompson, “Rhetorical Structure Theory,” 245; Mann et al., “Rhetorical Structure Theory,” 47–48; Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 198–99, 207–8.

33. The notion of rhetoric in RST must be distinguished from that in classical rhetoric or other text theory. See Ilie, “Rhetoric,” 12:573–79; Murphy, “Rhetoric,” 12:579–82; Lotman, “Rhetoric,” 12:582–89.

34. Mann et al., “Rhetorical Structure Theory,” 44–45; Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 198–99.

35. Matthiessen and Thompson, “The Structure of Discourse,” 308;

Most relations are obviously signaled through certain linguistic devices. Normally, these explicit rhetorical relations between text spans are lexicogrammatically marked by means of cohesive or structural conjunctions. However, not all relations are clearly signified. Some relations, especially motivation and evidence, can only be inferred in the light of an understanding of the author's intention and the likely effect on the reader. These implicit rhetorical relations between text spans are not explicitly marked but are implied from other lexicogrammatical patterns such as the selection of theme and lexical cohesion.³⁶

2.3 *Rhetorical-Relational Analysis*

In general, a rhetorical-relational analysis based on RST requires two steps. The first step is to divide a text into text spans, the size of which can be individual clauses or larger units depending on the purpose of the analysis. The second step is to identify the rhetorical structure of the text by describing the rhetorical relations between individual text spans either from the top down or from the bottom up, with reference to the definitions of RST relations.³⁷ Explicit rhetorical relations between individual text spans should be described on the basis of the conjunctions that connect the text spans, whereas implicit rhetorical relations between individual text spans should be described in the light of the subject matter and lexical cohesion of the text spans. Given the rhetorical relations between individual text spans, the rhetorical structure intended by the author can be identified.³⁸

This paper proposes to integrate the theory of SFL into the framework of RST for the identification of implicit rhetorical relations between individual text spans. The subject matter and lexical cohesion of text spans are determined by examining the

Matthiessen, "Combining Clauses," 283.

36. Mann et al., "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 46; Matthiessen, "Combining Clauses," 282; Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 202–3, 208.

37. For definitions of all RST relations, see Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 209–12.

38. Mann and Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 248–49; Mann et al., "Rhetorical Structure Theory," 51–53.

relevant linguistic components under the three (or four) metafunctions. Subject matter can be recognized in accordance with a transitivity analysis under the ideational metafunction, which is related to the interaction among participants, the action, and circumstances and is expressed by the lexical choice of various semantic domains and grammatical elements.³⁹ The subject matter of a text span can also be discerned with the help of the participant structure of the text under the interpersonal metafunction, including the specification of participants as well as the grammatical persons and the mood of Greek verbs.⁴⁰ The lexical cohesion of a text span can be inspected under the textual metafunction, such as the use of words from the same semantic domain in close proximity, the selection of lexis related in some way to previous lexemes, the use of pronouns, and the repetition of certain words, word groups, or even clauses.⁴¹

This discourse analysis model constructed based on the framework of RST, integrating the theory of SFL, is able to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the text. These two forms of linguistic analysis can complement each other for different areas of linguistic investigation. The New Testament text can be analyzed at the clause level and above, which allows for a broader examination at higher levels of discourse. According to the rhetorical structure as intended by the author, the way that each text span contributes to the flow of information at the discourse level can be demonstrated. The strength of this methodological framework is its capability to assess the various linguistic features of the text, and then from the outcome of such assessment to determine the important evidence for the meaning of the text and the intention of the author. This capability is

39. Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 30–31; Porter, “Dialect,” 207; Porter, “Register,” 226–27.

40. Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 31–33; Porter, “Dialect,” 205; Porter, “Register,” 224–25.

41. Halliday, *Halliday's Introduction*, 642; Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion*, 274–92; Halliday and Hasan, *Language*, 34; Porter, “Dialect,” 201; Porter, “Register,” 219–22.

essential for the appropriate interpretation of the New Testament text.

3. *Application to John 8:31–59*

This section will demonstrate an application of the above discourse analysis model by conducting a rhetorical-relational analysis on John 8:31–59.⁴² First, John 8:31–59 as a discourse unit will be ascertained by identifying the discourse boundary using various boundary markers, namely connective words, temporal expressions, locative expressions, participant switches, shifts in verb tense-forms, and circumstance changes.⁴³ Second, the text of John 8:31–59 will be divided into text spans in accordance with the main clause. Third, the rhetorical relations between individual text spans in John 8:31–59 will be described from the top down, with the reference to the definitions of RST relations.⁴⁴ The explicit rhetorical relations will be described on the basis of the Greek conjunctions that connect the text spans. The implicit rhetorical relations will be described in the light of

42. The 28th edition of *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* edited by Aland et al. is used for the Greek text of the New Testament. NRSV is used for the English translation of the New Testament.

43. Porter identifies shifts in grammatical person, shifts in verb tense-forms, connective words (e.g. *ἀλλά, γάρ, δέ, καί, οὖν*, and *τότε*), and time words (e.g., *μετά, νύν, νύνη, ὅτε, πρίν, πρό, and πρότερος*) as boundary markers of discourse. Drawing from the theory of narrative analysis, Longacre identifies temporal expressions, locative expressions, circumstance changes, and participant switches as transition markers of episodes. Given that the genre of the Gospel of John can be classified as narrative, these transition markers will also be used to identify discourse boundaries. There is overlap between Porter's boundary markers and Longacre's transition markers. Temporal expressions include time words and other indications of time. Participant switches can be indicated by shifts in grammatical person or changes involving names, designations, and pronouns. Therefore, this study will adopt connective words, temporal expressions, locative expressions, participant switches, shifts in verb tense-forms, and circumstance changes as boundary markers. See Longacre, "A Top-Down, Template-Driven Narrative Analysis," 145; Porter, *Idioms*, 301.

44. For the definitions of all RST relations, see Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 209–12.

the subject matter and lexical cohesion of the text spans, which will be determined by examining the relevant linguistic components under the three (or four) metafunctions. Fourth, the rhetorical structure of John 8:31–59 intended by the author will be identified according to the rhetorical relations between individual text spans. Fifth, the implication of this rhetorical-relational analysis for the interpretation of John 8:31–59 will be summarized.

3.1 *Discourse Boundary*

In the main clause of John 8:31, the verb ἔλεγεν with the imperfect tense manifests a shift in verb tense-forms from the three verbs ἔγνωσαν, εἶπεν, and ἐπίστευσαν with the aorist tense in the main clauses of John 8:27–30.⁴⁵ The conjunction οὖν in John 8:31 is a connective word, which is normally used for its inferential sense and implies a conclusion or result.⁴⁶ The nominal group τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους in John 8:31 suggests a participant switch from οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in John 8:22–29. As stated in John 8:30, many Jews believed in Jesus because of His speech, and then Jesus addressed the Jews who had believed in Him in John 8:31 rather than the Jews in general terms in John 8:22–29. These markers demonstrate that John 8:31 introduces a discourse unit. In the main clause of John 8:59, the prepositional group ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ is a locative expression that implies a different location for John 9:1. The conjunction καί in John 9:1 is a connective word, and it most likely signifies the start of a new episode in this verse.⁴⁷ The nominal groups ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς in John 9:1 and οἱ μαθηταί in John 9:2, introducing new participants into the scene, suggest a participant switch from the Jews who tried to stone Jesus in John 8:59. These markers demonstrate that John 8:59 closes a discourse unit. Therefore, John 8:31–59 constitutes a discourse unit, the rhetorical structure

45. The speeches of Jesus and the Jews are viewed as embedded and thus do not count as main clauses.

46. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 782; Porter, *Idioms*, 214.

47. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 810; Porter, *Idioms*, 211.

of which will be examined in the following rhetorical-relational analysis.

3.2 Text Span

The size of a text span can vary depending on the purpose of an analysis. This study conducts a rhetorical-relational analysis at the sentence level and accordingly divides the text of John 8:31–59 in line with main clauses in the narrative into 15 text spans as follows:

- (1) 31 Ἐλεγεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους· ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταὶ μου ἔσθε 32 καὶ γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς.
- (2) 33 ἀπεκρίθησαν πρὸς αὐτόν· σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐσμεν καὶ οὐδενὶ δεδουλεύκαμεν πώποτε· πῶς σὺ λέγεις ὅτι ἐλεύθεροι γενήσεσθε;
- (3) 34 ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δοῦλος ἐστὶν τῆς ἁμαρτίας. 35 ὁ δὲ δοῦλος οὐ μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ὁ υἱὸς μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. 36 ἐὰν οὖν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμᾶς ἐλευθερώσῃ, ὄντως ἐλεύθεροι ἔσεσθε. 37 Οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐστε· ἀλλὰ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐμὸς οὐ χωρεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν. 38 ἂ ἐγὼ ἐώρακα παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ λαλῶ· καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν ἂ ἠκούσατε παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ποιεῖτε.
- (4) 39 Ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ ἐστίν.
- (5) λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ τέκνα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ ἐστε, τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ ἐποιεῖτε· 40 νῦν δὲ ζητεῖτέ με ἀποκτεῖναι ἄνθρωπον ὃς τὴν ἀλήθειαν ὑμῖν λελάληκα ἣν ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ· τοῦτο Ἀβραάμ οὐκ ἐποίησεν. 41 ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν.
- (6) Εἶπαν οὖν αὐτῷ· ἡμεῖς ἐκ πορνείας οὐ γεγενήμεθα, ἕνα πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν θεόν.
- (7) 42 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἦν ἠγαπᾶτε ἂν ἐμέ, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἦκα· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ ἐλήλυθα, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνός με ἀπέστειλεν. 43 διὰ τί τὴν λαλίαν τὴν ἐμὴν οὐ γινώσκετε; ὅτι οὐ δύνασθε ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμόν. 44 ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ οὐκ ἔστηκεν, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν αὐτῷ. ὅταν λαλῇ τὸ ψεῦδος, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, ὅτι ψεύστης ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ. 45 ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω, οὐ πιστεύετε μοι. 46 τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐλέγχει με περὶ ἁμαρτίας; εἰ ἀλήθειαν λέγω, διὰ τί ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετε μοι;

47 ὁ ὢν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούει· διὰ τοῦτο ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀκούετε, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστέ.

(8) 48 Ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· οὐ καλῶς λέγομεν ἡμεῖς ὅτι Σαμαρίτης εἶ σὺ καὶ δαιμόνιον ἔχεις;

(9) 49 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· ἐγὼ δαιμόνιον οὐκ ἔχω, ἀλλὰ τιμῶ τὸν πατέρα μου, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀτιμάζετε με. 50 ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ ζητῶ τὴν δόξαν μου· ἔστιν ὁ ζητῶν καὶ κρίνων. 51 ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐάν τις τὸν ἐμὸν λόγον τηρήσῃ, θάνατον οὐ μὴ θεωρήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

(10) 52 Εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· νῦν ἐγνώκαμεν ὅτι δαιμόνιον ἔχεις. Ἀβραάμ ἀπέθανεν καὶ οἱ προφῆται, καὶ σὺ λέγεις· ἐάν τις τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσῃ, οὐ μὴ γεύσῃται θανάτου εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. 53 μὴ σὺ μείζων εἶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ, ὅστις ἀπέθανεν; καὶ οἱ προφῆται ἀπέθανον. τίνα σεαυτὸν ποιεῖς;

(11) 54 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· ἐάν ἐγὼ δοξάσω ἐμαυτὸν, ἡ δόξα μου οὐδὲν ἐστίν· ἔστιν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ δοξάζων με, ὃν ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστίν, 55 καὶ οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν, ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα αὐτόν. καὶ εἶπω ὅτι οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν, ἔσομαι ὅμοιος ὑμῖν ψεύστης· ἀλλ' οἶδα αὐτόν καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ τηρῶ. 56 Ἀβραάμ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ἠγαλλίασατο ἵνα ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμήν, καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη.

(12) 57 εἶπον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι πρὸς αὐτόν· πενήτηντα ἔτη οὕτω ἔχεις καὶ Ἀβραάμ ἐώρακας;

(13) 58 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί.

(14) 59 Ἦραν οὖν λίθους ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ' αὐτόν.

(15) Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐκρύβη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ.

3.3 Rhetorical Relations

The subject matter of John 8:31–59 can be recognized by an analysis under the ideational metafunction, especially the lexical choices of various semantic domains and grammatical elements. Words from domain 33 “Communication” are the most frequently used in John 8:31–59.⁴⁸ Obviously, this discourse unit

48. This semantic domain analysis of John 8:31–59 does not include function words. For details, see Appendix 1 “Semantic Domains in John 8:31–59.”

is primarily concerned with the communication between Jesus and the Jews. John 8:31–58 plays a more significant role for the core meaning of John 8:31–59 since these verses focus on the dialogues between Jesus and the Jews and the actions of Jesus are highlighted by the marked imperfective aspect using the present tense in John 8:39. Text spans 1–13 are the nucleus. John 8:59 is more peripheral to the overall meaning of John 8:31–59 because this verse describes the actions of Jesus and the Jews resulting from their dialogues and these actions are depicted by the unmarked perfective aspect using the aorist tense. Text spans 14–15 are a satellite. The conjunction *οὖν* in John 8:59 is normally used for its inferential sense and implies a result.⁴⁹ Therefore, the rhetorical relation between text spans 1–13 and text spans 14–15 can be defined as “Volitional Result.” The presentation of text spans 1–13 is more central to the author’s purposes, which causes the volitional action in text spans 14–15.⁵⁰ In John 8:59, the conjunction *δέ*, a marker of contrast, indicates a contrast between the Jews’ actions in John 8:59a and Jesus’ actions in John 8:59b.⁵¹ Hence both text span 14 and text span 15 are nuclei, and the rhetorical relation between them can be defined as “Contrast.”⁵²

Given the frequency of words from domain 13 “Be, Become, Exist, Happen,” domain 93 “Names of Persons and Places,” domain 12 “Supernatural Beings and Powers,” and domain 10 “Kinship Terms” in John 8:31–59, especially within the speeches of Jesus and the Jews, the subject matter of this passage is most likely related to identity.⁵³ This subject matter can be further clarified with the help of the participant structure of the text under the interpersonal metafunction by observing the specifica-

49. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 782; Porter, *Idioms*, 214.

50. For a definition of “Volitional Result,” see Appendix 4 “Definitions of Subject Matter Relations.”

51. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 793; Porter, *Idioms*, 208.

52. For a definition of “Contrast,” see Appendix 5 “Definitions of Multinuclear Relations.”

53. This semantic domain analysis of John 8:31–59 does not include function words. For a detailed analysis, see Appendix 1 “Semantic Domains in John 8:31–59.”

tion of participants and the grammatical persons of the Greek verbs. In John 8:31–59, there are two categories of participants. Jesus and the Jews are the major participants who actively interact with each other in the discourse unit, whereas Abraham, God, the father, the Father,⁵⁴ the demon, descendants, the son, the slave, the prophets, the disciples, the children, the devil, the Samaritan, and the ancestor are secondary participants who are invoked in the dialogues between Jesus and the Jews. The first person and the second person are the most frequently used grammatical persons, signifying Jesus and the Jews as the major participants, namely the addresser and addressee of the dialogues. Among these two major participants, Jesus is always denoted by the grammaticalized and reduced form, reflecting the author’s emphasis on Jesus.⁵⁵ The subject matter thus seems to be the identity of Jesus.

The conjunction οὖν in John 8:57 is normally used for its inferential sense and implies a conclusion.⁵⁶ The dialogue between Jesus and the Jews in John 8:57–58 explicitly reveals Jesus’ divine identity as ἐγὼ εἰμὶ, which is probably a conclusion of the elaboration on the identity of Jesus in John 8:31–56.⁵⁷

54. The Greek word πατήρ in John 8:38 (the first one), 8:42, 8:49, and 8:54 is used for God the Father. NRSV translates the second πατήρ in 8:38 also as “the Father,” probably because the Greek verb ποιεῖτε is understood as imperative, which can be discerned from its translation of the clause as “you should do what you have heard from the Father.” In light of the co-text, ποιεῖτε is better to be understood as indicative and the clause is better translated as “you are doing what you have heard from your father.”

55. For detailed analysis, see Appendix 2 “Specification of the Major Participants in John 8:31–59.”

56. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 782; Porter, *Idioms*, 214.

57. According to the clause structure of New Testament Greek, the structure of the ἐγὼ εἰμι saying in John 8:58, namely this phrase by itself without plausible antecedent or stated predicate or complement, is incomplete and indicates prominence. Almost all biblical scholars agree that the absolute ἐγὼ εἰμι in John 8:58 is used to portray Jesus’ divine identity, which most likely alludes to the divine name in the Old Testament. In the Septuagint, the Greek phrase ἐγὼ εἰμὶ is used as the divine name and divine self-revelation in Exod 3:14, Deut 32:39, Isa 41:4, 43:10, 25, 46:4, 48:12, 51:12, and 52:6. See Ball, “*I Am*” in *John’s Gospel*, 195–98; Beasley-Murray, *The Gospel of John*, 139–40;

Consequently, text spans 12–13 are the nucleus while text spans 1–11 are a satellite and the rhetorical relation between them can be defined as “Elaboration.” Text spans 12–13 present a generalization of Jesus’ divine identity, whereas text spans 1–11 offer specific details about his identity.⁵⁸ In John 8:57, the Jews ask Jesus a question. In John 8:58, Jesus answers the question of the Jews. Which is to say, text span 12 as a satellite raises a problem, and text span 13 as a nucleus provides a solution to this problem. The rhetorical relation between these two text spans can be defined as “Solutionhood.”⁵⁹

In John 8:31–56, there are five dialogues between Jesus and the Jews in succession, namely the dialogues in John 8:31–38, 8:39–41a, 8:41b–47, 8:48–51, and 8:52–56. Yet the focal points of the two dialogues in John 8:31–41a and the three dialogues in John 8:41b–56 are slightly different. Jesus always identifies God as his Father, but the Jews identify Abraham as their father in John 8:31–41a and then attempt to identify God as their father in John 8:41b–56. As a result, both text spans 1–5 and text spans 6–11 are nuclei, and the rhetorical relation between them can be defined as “Sequence.”⁶⁰ Similarly, text spans 1–3 and text spans 4–5 are nuclei with a “Sequence” rhetorical relation, and text spans 6–7, text spans 8–9, and text spans 10–11 are three nuclei with a “Sequence” rhetorical relation as well.

Within each of the five dialogues, the Jews ask a question or initiate an issue in John 8:31–33, 8:39a, 8:41b, 8:48, and 8:52–53 and Jesus responds to the question or the issue in John 8:34–38, 8:39b–41a, 8:42–47, 8:49–51, and 8:54–56 respectively. In other

Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 205–6; Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 358; Harner, *The “I Am” of the Fourth Gospel*, 39–42; Lincoln, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 276; Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 534–35; Morris, *The Gospel according to John*, 419–20; Porter, *John*, 137–40; Williams, *I Am He*, 53–62, 275–83.

58. For a definition of “Elaboration,” see Appendix 4 “Definitions of Subject Matter Relations.”

59. For a definition of “Solutionhood,” see Appendix 4 “Definitions of Subject Matter Relations.”

60. For a definition of “Sequence,” see Appendix 5 “Definitions of Multinuclear Relations.”

words, text spans 1–2, text span 4, text span 6, text span 8, and text span 10 are satellites that raise a problem, whereas text span 3, text span 5, text span 7, text span 9, and text span 11 are the nuclei that provide solutions to these problems. The rhetorical relations between each of these pairs of text spans can be defined as “Solutionhood.” In John 8:31–32, Jesus instructs the Jews that the truth will make them free. In John 8:33, the Jews reject Jesus’ instruction on grounds that they have never been slaves. The contrast between the views of Jesus and of the Jews is evident. Thus text span 1 is a nucleus and text span 2 is a satellite, with an “Antithesis” rhetorical relation between them. The reader’s comprehension of text span 2 and the incompatible contrast between these two text spans increases their positive regard for text span 1.

3.4 Rhetorical Structure

According to the rhetorical relations between individual text spans described above, the rhetorical structure of John 8:31–59 intended by the author is represented graphically below. For asymmetrical relations, a nucleus is indicated by a vertical bar above, and a satellite is indicated by an arc pointing to some nucleus. For symmetrical relations, both nuclei have a straight line above. As the graphical representation of the rhetorical structure demonstrates, text span 13 has only vertical bars above with all arcs pointing to it. Which is to say, text span 13 always acts as a nucleus and is never a satellite. Therefore, text span 13 is the essential nucleus of text spans 1–15.

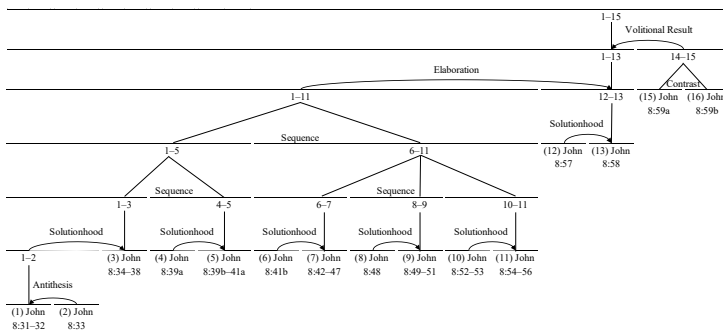


Figure 1. Rhetorical Structure of John 8:31–59

3.5 Interpretation

The rhetorical structure of John 8:31–59 clearly illustrates the way that the author of John’s Gospel intends to organize and present the text so that the reader is able to properly accept and understand John 8:31–59. From this rhetorical-relational analysis, it can be perceived that John 8:58, namely text span 13, is the core verse of John 8:31–59. The most important message that the author aims to convey to the reader is Jesus’ divine identity as *ἐγὼ εἰμὶ*. This message is first elaborated in John 8:31–56, then revealed in John 8:57–58, and lastly confirmed in John 8:59.

In John 8:31–38, Jesus’ instruction about the identity of his true disciples is rejected by the Jews, who identify themselves as the descendants of Abraham. Jesus identifies himself as the Son of God and declares that the real desire of the Jews is to kill him. In John 8:39–41a, the Jews again identify Abraham as their father, but Jesus does not accept this and implies that they have another father due to their desire to kill him. In John 8:41b–47, the Jews deny their identity as illegitimate children and even attempt to identify God as their father. However, Jesus disagrees and identifies the devil as their father since the Jews have the same desires as their father who is a murderer and a liar. In John 8:48–51, the Jews turn to identify Jesus as a Samaritan who has a demon. Nevertheless, Jesus refutes their identification and again identifies God as his Father. In John 8:52–56, the Jews again identify Jesus as having a demon, whereas Jesus once again identifies God as his Father. Then in John 8:57–58, the Jews ask for Jesus’ self-identification and Jesus reveals himself as *ἐγὼ εἰμὶ*. Lastly in John 8:59, the Jews immediately try to kill Jesus, just as Jesus had previously predicted. This reaction of the Jews confirms Jesus’ self-revelation of his divine identity.⁶¹

61. Based on the Mosaic Law, stoning is the punishment for blaspheming the Name of God. As prescribed in Lev 24:16, “Anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord is to be put to death. The entire assembly must stone them. Whether foreigner or native-born, when they blaspheme the Name they are to be put to death.” Therefore, the response of the Jews indicates that they understand Jesus’ proclamation of *ἐγὼ εἰμὶ* as a divine claim.

4. Conclusion

As a rhetorical-relational analysis of John 8:31–59 demonstrates, RST can be adapted for New Testament discourse analysis by integrating features of the Greek language. Moreover, a rhetorical-relational analysis based on RST can be combined with the theory of SFL for a more comprehensive interpretation of a New Testament text. The discourse analysis model constructed in this study provides a linguistic framework for describing the rhetorical structure of a New Testament text according to the rhetorical relations among its text spans, paying particular attention to the way that the text is organized and presented. Focusing on the linguistic features of a text at the lexicogrammatical level, RST facilitates New Testament discourse analysis by ensuring that the examination of the Greek text includes both lexical and grammatical elements. In conclusion, a rhetorical-relational analysis based on RST can serve as an effective tool for New Testament interpretation and will offer new insights of relevance to New Testament scholars.

5. *Appendixes*Appendix 1: Semantic Domains in John 8:31–59⁶²

Semantic Domain	Instance
92 Discourse Referentials	172
89 Relations	96
33 Communication	45
13 Be, Become, Exist, Happen	25
93 Names of Persons and Places	24
69 Affirmation, Negation	23
12 Supernatural Beings and Powers	16
72 True, False	14
67 Time	12
10 Kinship Terms	11
90 Case	9
36 Guide, Discipline, Follow	8
28 Know	7
24 Sensory Events and States	7
15 Linear Movement	7
87 Status	6
37 Control, Rule	5
25 Attitudes and Emotions	5
23 Physiological Processes and States	5
57 Possess, Transfer, Exchange	5
85 Existence in Space	4
88 Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behavior	4
31 Hold a View, Believe, Trust	4
42 Perform, Do	3
20 Violence, Harm, Destroy, Kill	3
53 Religious Activities	2

62. This paper identifies semantic domains with reference to Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

68 Aspect	2
60 Number	2
7 Constructions	2
70 Real, Unreal	2
59 Quantity	1
2 Natural Substances	1
32 Understand	1
74 Able, Capable	1
78 Degree	1
9 People	1
30 Think	1
64 Comparison	1
27 Learn	1
71 Mode	1
58 Nature, Class, Example	1
Grand Total	541

Appendix 2: Specification of the Major Participants

Form	Jesus	The Jews
Grammaticalized Form	John 8:31	John 8:31
	John 8:34	John 8:48
	John 8:39	John 8:52
	John 8:42	John 8:57
	John 8:49	
	John 8:54	
	John 8:58	
	John 8:59	
	Reduced Form	John 8:31
John 8:33		John 8:42
John 8:39		John 8:58
John 8:41		
John 8:48		
John 8:52		

	John 8:57	
	John 8:59	
Implied Form		John 8:33
		John 8:39 (2x)
		John 8:41
		John 8:59 (2x)

Appendix 3: Definitions of Presentational Relations⁶³

Definitions of Presentational Relations			
Relation Name	Constraints on either S or N individually	Constraints on N + S	Intention of W
Antithesis	on N: W has positive regard for N	N and S are in contrast (see the Contrast relation); because of the incompatibility that arises from the contrast, one cannot have positive regard for both of those situations; comprehending S and the incompatibility between the situations increases R's positive regard for N	R's positive regard for N is increased

63. This is an excerpt from the table "Definitions of Subject Matter Relations." For definitions of all subject matter relations, see Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 209.

Appendix 4: Definitions of Subject Matter Relations⁶⁴

Definitions of Subject Matter Relations			
Relation Name	Constraints on either S or N individually	Constraints on N + S	Intention of W
Elaboration	none	<p>S presents additional detail about the situation or some element of subject matter which is presented in N or inferentially accessible in N in one or more of the ways listed below. In the list, if N presents the first member of any pair, then S includes the second:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set :: member • abstraction :: instance • whole :: part • process :: step • object :: attribute • generalization :: specific 	R recognizes S as providing additional detail for N. R identifies the element of subject matter for which detail is provided.
Solutionhood	on S: S presents a problem	N is a solution to the problem presented in S	R recognizes N as a solution to the problem presented in S

64. This is an excerpt from the table “Definitions of Subject Matter Relations.” For definitions of all subject matter relations, see Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 210–11.

Volitional Result	on S: S is a volitional action or a situation that could have arisen from a volitional action	N could have caused S; presentation of N is more central to W's purposes than is presentation of S	R recognizes that N could be a cause for the action or situation in S
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Appendix 5: Definitions of Multinuclear Relations⁶⁵

Definitions of Multinuclear Relations		
Relation Name	Constraints on each pair of N	Intention of W
Contrast	No more than two nuclei; the situations in these two nuclei are (a) comprehended as the same in many respects, (b) comprehended as differing in a few respects, and (c) compared with respect to one or more of these differences	R recognizes the comparability and the difference(s) yielded by the comparison is being made
Sequence	There is a succession relationship between the situations in the nuclei	R recognizes the succession relationships among the nuclei

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65. This is an excerpt from the table "Definitions of Multinuclear Relations." For the definitions of all multinuclear relations, see Halliday and Webster, *Text Linguistics*, 212.

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