

Introduction

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Functional Grammar and Verbal Interaction

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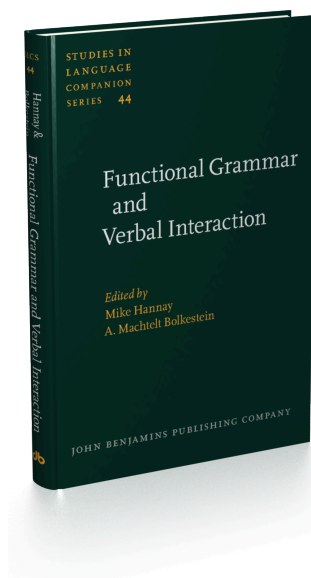
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Introduction

The contents of this volume are with two exceptions a selection from the papers given at the Seventh International Conference on Functional Grammar, which was held at the University of Cordoba, Spain, from 23 to 27 September 1996. The Functional Grammar referred to in the conference title is the model proposed by Simon Dik and set out in most detail in the two-volume work *The Theory of Functional Grammar* (Dik 1997a,b), which appeared posthumously edited by Kees Hengeveld.

A fundamental aim of FG continues to be that it should qualify as a module of an integrated model of the natural language user. As such, the grammar should contribute to an understanding of how people communicate with each other through verbal interaction. In his final chapter, entitled *Towards a functional grammar of discourse*, Dik (1997b: 409) claims that such a grammar must in fact be a grammar of discourse, since people do not “speak in isolated sentences or clauses, but combine these into longer and more complex structures”. The difficulties in developing such a grammar relate not only to showing how clauses may be combined into coherent text but also to capturing the discourse factors which have an effect on the internal structure of clauses.

As shown by various contributions in Connolly et al. 1997, different approaches have been taken when attempting to formalize the relationship between the model of clause structure and a model of discourse structure and discourse production. Two in particular have received attention. The first approach involves what may be termed upward layering (cf. Hengeveld 1997), whereby the current layered clause structure is expanded by means of a rhetorical level. The second involves introducing separate modules for the grammatical and pragmatic domains (cf. Kroon 1997); the latter is responsible both for representing higher level discourse planning and for expressing speaker's illocutionary intentions determined within the framework of wider communicative aims. Both approaches are to be found in the contributions to the present volume, but the emphasis is particularly on the latter.

Related to the formal embedding of FG in a more encompassing theory of verbal interaction are specific implications for the actual task of the grammar.

Two areas of concern stand out here. First of all there is the matter of the interpersonal level. Thus far the grammar has had the pretension of offering an account of various features of speaker attitude; the question now arises as to the most appropriate domain for dealing with such phenomena. Similarly, much work has been done within FG in the area of pragmatic functions, but without the relationship between the pragmatic domain and the underlying utterance structure being made truly explicit.

These issues are all addressed in the contributions to this book, which is accordingly divided into three parts. Part 1, *Discourse and grammar*, contains contributions which offer different perspectives on the question of developing FG into a functional grammar of discourse. Part 2, *The interpersonal level*, deals with the tension between the propositional and in particular the illocutionary layer of the layered clause model on the one hand and speech act theory on the other. The third and final part, *Information structure*, offers contributions on what has been traditionally seen as the pragmatic component of the FG model, matters relating to pragmatic functions and pragmatically prominent positions in clause structure.

Each of the three parts starts off with a paper which challenges the existing assumptions concerning the division of labour between the grammatical domain and other components of a model of the natural language user. The papers which follow then offer analyses of particular discourse phenomena, yielding confirmation of the value of a grammatical model which is discourse sensitive and in a number of cases offering refinements to the existing model. A dominant feature of these papers is that they make proposals based on real linguistic data from English, French, Polish and Spanish, both spoken and written. Finally, each part ends with a paper which broadens the horizon, either by making proposals for FG taking on board new concepts from other theories or by adapting an approach which differs markedly from mainstream FG practice.

Part 1 deals with the relationship between discourse and grammar. Both approaches referred to above - the expanding, upward-layering approach and the modular approach - are represented here. In the opening paper, Vet highlights the actual contribution of the illocutionary operators on the fourth layer. The conclusion is that the basic distinction between the illocutionary force of an utterance and the choice of basic sentence type forces an approach to linguistic expressions which separates these two notions. A fundamental division is required between a non-grammatical module relating to communicative action and a grammatical module relating to linguistic form.

By contrast, Moutaouakil takes an upward layering approach. His analysis leads to a proposal for introducing a text type operator which not only accounts for features of clause structure but also predicts certain co-occurrence proper-

ties of clauses and even whole passages of text. A treatment of such scope phenomena is seen as by Dik (1997b: 414) as a major task for a functional grammar of discourse. In a similar vein, Jadir adopts an expanding approach in his analysis of the role of perception in creating textual cohesion. At the same time, Jadir recognizes the value of a modular approach for explaining various textual phenomena in French literary discourse.

Steuten is concerned with building an all-encompassing discourse model for business conversations and considers the embedding of FG as the grammatical component of such a model. Her top-down analysis of a particular type of telephone conversation leads to an application of FG as a component of a model of dialogical discourse. Finally, Van den Berg elaborates the idea of modularity in a wider perspective by building FG into an integrated pragmatic grammar. His analysis of each component in the model and the relationships between them offers considerable insight into the complex procedures involved in the production of linguistic expressions.

The opening paper in Part 2, which deals with the interpersonal level, and thus with phenomena connected with the speaker's attitudes, commitments and intentions, is by Liedtke. Liedtke discusses the relation between the relation between basic sentence type and notions from speech act theory such as illocutionary force and different types of illocutionary indicators. He argues for distinguishing clearly between a grammatical module, which is responsible for properties such as sentence type, and a pragmatic one, in which the speaker's intention and the hearer's inferences and interpretations concerning his interlocutor's intentions are located.

Crevels on the other hand finds confirmation of the upward layering account of utterance structure on the basis of an examination of the functioning of concessive clauses in conversational Spanish. Apart from an illocutionary layer the model is to be expanded with at least one higher, textual, layer on which concessives may function. A second paper by Vet looks at certain phenomena connected with the interpersonal level of the layered utterance structure. If, in accordance with the suggestion in his first contribution, various illocutionary features are now dealt with outside the layered model, this has implications for the propositional and the illocutionary layers of the model itself. This is demonstrated by an investigation of some expressions used for what is often alluded to as subjective and objective epistemic modality in French. Vet suggests a revised mechanism for dealing with such modal distinctions.

The final paper in this part by Connolly is a confrontation between situation semantics and Functional Grammar centred around the question what the notion transmission of information stands for, and how different aspects of information may be described. Connolly shows that the two approaches are compa-

rable and compatible, FG having a richer notional apparatus with which to account for properties of utterances. He illustrates several types of information and concludes that certain types of non-propositional information may well be accounted for in a modular approach in which Functional Grammar forms the grammatical module.

The central concern of part 3 is information structure. What is alluded to as the pragmatic component of FG distinguishes a number of pragmatic functions, and over the years a steady stream of publications has looked into the relevance of such notions for grammatical phenomena. Once discourse phenomena are included in the domain of research, the question arises as to the status of the pragmatic component with respect to the layered structure ascribed to utterances. Bolkestein comes to grips with the grammar-based, language specific notions of Topic and Focus central to Dik 1978 and the discourse-based notions of topicality and focality figuring in Dik 1989 and 1997. After pointing out the sometimes considerable terminological confusion and heterogeneous practice within the FG community she takes the step of positioning topicality and focality firmly in a pragmatic module and thus outside the layered structure underlying utterances, arguing at the same time that the concepts concerned are useful in describing cases of syntactic variation.

Martinez Caro provides an analysis of a particular type of Focus, namely Contrastive Focus, in real data from samples of spoken Spanish and spoken English. Comparing the way in which these languages express the pragmatic property concerned she finds that the linguistic realization of contrastive Focus differs considerably for the two languages. Her data also suggest a refinement of the details of the concept of Parallel Focus. Siewierska considers data from a corpus of written Polish against the background of Prague and Givonian analysis of constituent order. She finds that the FG concepts, such as topicality and focality and New Topic provide more insight in to Polish word order than do other models. If one were to follow suggestions made in the paper by Bolkestein, Siewierska's conclusions may be interpreted as an encouragement to further refine the notions involved within a pragmatic module.

Mackenzie discusses attested instances of syntactically 'incomplete' but frequently used (one-word) utterances. In his view, ascribing a fully layered underlying structure to such utterances is not only not very revealing but also unmotivated. Analysing such chunks as units in which the first position of a functional pattern is filled, he comes to the conclusion that they are best characterized in terms of a number of distinct but clearly recognizable discourse functions or communicative needs for which they are exploited in verbal interaction. This analysis may well be interpreted as a relativization of the value of the layered clause approach in the sense that while perhaps satisfying as a

(partial) characterization of full clauses it applies to only a subset of the utterances which speakers actually produce. This somewhat more modest view of the role of the underlying clause model is not incompatible with the modular approach pleaded for in several of the contributions in the book (Vet, Van den Berg, Liedtke, Bolkestein), in which there is a division of labour between the grammatical module and a pragmatic module which in terms of a discourse production model has a prior position.

The challenge set out in the final chapter of Dik (1997b) 'Toward a functional grammar of discourse' is an immense one. It envisages Functional Grammar in its current form as one of the components of such a functional discourse grammar. The contributions in the present book explore two different directions in which Functional Grammar can play such a role: the model of the FG underlying utterance structure constituting the lower part of a larger hierarchical upward layered structure, or FG as a grammatical module in service of a pragmatic component with its own set of notions. These are directions, and perhaps not the only possible ones. This book will hopefully encourage further lively discussion concerning Functional Grammar and verbal interaction at the end of this and the beginning of the next millenium of linguistic research. For us as editors of the present volume, this discussion has already begun, and much to our enjoyment.

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