Preface

doi https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.64.02pre

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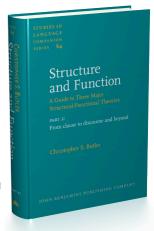In Part 1 of this work I set out to establish criteria for a truly functional approach to language, and then successively narrowed down the focus, first delineating a set of structural-functional approaches which give due weight to both structure and function in theory and description, then recognising, within these approaches, a smaller set of **structural-functional grammars** which attempt to formulate a set of rules by means of which the structure of any stretch of language can, at least in principle, be generated. I argued that three theories were central to this set: Functional Grammar (FG), Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG).

I then went on to present overviews of each of these theories, concentrating on their aims, assumptions, methodologies and overall structure, within the context of the simplex clause. There followed a chapter in which the theories, as presented up to this point, were explicitly compared and contrasted.

The last three chapters of Part 1 were devoted to particular areas of the grammar of the simplex clause: the structure and meaning of phrases, the ways in which the theories accounted for situation types as represented in language, and their accounts of tense, aspect, modality and polarity.

Part 2 of the work moves from the analysis of individual clauses towards the study of discourse, and then situates the previous material in the context of wider issues by discussing approaches to language acquisition and to the application of linguistic descriptions, before rounding off with a review of the three theories discussed in Parts 1 and 2, and suggestions for the development of an integrated model.

Part 2 starts with three chapters which deal with aspects of clauses of particular significance for their role in discourse. Chapter 1 is concerned with illocution, discussing the ways in which FG, RRG and SFG approach the structure and meaning of clauses in their function as speech acts, and how speech acts fit into the overall discourse. Chapter 2 is devoted to the area of information distribution in the clause or units of similar size, and discusses the concepts of topic and focus, given and new information, theme and rheme, etc., and their contribution to the analysis of discourse. Chapter 3 deals with ways in which clauses can be combined into larger units, and so covers not only coordination and subordination (e.g. Halliday on the 'clause complex'), but also work within a more strongly typological perspective which seeks to show that this dichotomy is too simple (e.g. RRG on cosubordination, etc.).

Chapter 4 then covers further perspectives on discourse. Here, I summarise the recent proliferation of models of discourse structure in FG, relationships between focus structure and syntax in RRG, and the wealth of work in systemic linguistics on cohesion, on discourse and text in relation to metafunction, and on the relationship between discourse and the social contexts in which it is embedded, involving the concepts of register and genre.

Chapter 5 looks at structural-functionalist accounts of language acquisition and at the work done in systemic linguistics on language in education. I then consider applications of structural-functional descriptions of languages to computational linguistics, stylistics, translation and contrastive studies, and language pathology.

Chapter 6 presents a final evaluation of the three theories with respect to the standards of adequacy they set for themselves, and then discusses the limitations of individual theories, pointing out the dangers inherent in simply accepting a partial set of standards of adequacy. The work ends with a discussion of criteria of discoursal, sociocultural, psychological/cognitive, acquisitional, typological and possibly computational adequacy in relation to a more comprehensive model, the implications of such criteria for the shape of the model, and how the theories reviewed in the two books might contribute to such an integrated approach.

As in Part 1, the discussion is illustrated throughout with authentic examples taken from corpora of English and Spanish, with occasional material also from Dutch and Gooniyandi. The Gooniyandi examples are taken from taped narratives in the material collected by McGregor and published as McGregor (1990), which is not, to my knowledge, available in computer-readable readable form. Details of the corpora used in Part 2 are given in the table below.

Examples in this work taken from the British National Corpus cite their source by means of a three letter code and the sentence number within the text. The source texts are, for the most part, copyright and may not be cited or redisseminated except as a part of the corpus. Full bibliographic details of the source concerned are available from the BNC project, or on the world wide web.[1] For the London-Lund corpus, the reference consists of the text category number, text number (and subtext identification where present) and tone unit numbers. For the HCM corpus, the number of the text and the page number in the written version of the corpus (Esgueva & Cantarero 1981) are given. For the Corpus de Referencia and the ECI Dutch corpus, the filename only is cited, since no other suitable reference categories are given in the texts.

Corpora used to provide examples

Corpus	Language	Approximate size (words)	Brief description
British National Corpus (BNC)	English	100 million	90% written, 10% spoken. Mainly from 1975–1993. Tagged with part of speech for each word.
London-Lund Corpus (LLC)	English	½ million	Spoken, 1960s/1970s. Has prosodic annotations.
El Habla de la Ciudad de Madrid[2] (HCM)	Spanish	150,000	Spoken, in conversations with interviewer, also spontaneous recorded conversations. 4 generations of speakers. Collected 1970s.
Corpus Oral de Referencia de la Lengua Española Contemporánea (Referencia)	Spanish	1 million	Spoken, various subgenres. Early 1990s
European Corpus Initiative Multilingual Corpus on CD-ROM (ECI)	Large number of languages represented. Used in this book for Dutch data.	98 million in all	Wide variety of material, mainly written. Dutch component used was from the Leiden Corpus of Dutch, consisting of newspapers, transcribed speech, etc.