SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR:
A FIRST STEP INTO THE THEORY

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1. Into systemic-functional theory of grammar

1.1 General: [lexico]grammar & the study of grammar ('grammatics')

This is an introductory account of a particular theory of grammar, namely systemic-functional theory. Grammar is one of the subsystems of a language; more specifically, it is the system of wordings of a language. It is a phenomenon that can be studied, just like light, physical motion, the human body, and decision-making processes in bureaucracies; and just as in the case of these and other phenomena under study, we need theory in order to interpret it. So for instance, the physical phenomenon of the atom has been interpreted theoretically in terms of Democritus' theory, Rutherford's theory, Bohr's theory, and so on. We distinguish between the phenomenon itself (the atom) and various theoretical models of it. What kind of thing the atom is thought to be will of course vary considerably as we move from one theory to another. Democritus' atom was very different from Bohr's atom, in that it was indivisible, not a configuration of subatomic particles; that is, Democritus' theory allowed us to see much less of the atom than Bohr's theory does. A well-known example of the way theory determines how we interpret phenomena is light. Light can be interpreted either as particle or as wave; there are two alternative theories. In this case, the alternatives turn out to be complementary, in the sense that each reveals something about light that we need to account for. This situation is quite typical in science: we need complementary theoretical perspectives to account for the rich diversity of properties we uncover in the phenomena being studied.

Grammar as a phenomenon of study is thus interpreted according to different theories. So as to maintain the distinction between grammar and theories of grammar, we shall call theory of grammar grammatics. The distinction is analogous to that between language and linguistics, or between society and sociology. The difficulty is that people often use the same term for both the phenomenon and its study: e.g. we speak of the "grammar of English" (the phenomenon) but also of "traditional grammar" (one theory of the phenomenon). We could clarify this situation if we called the second "traditional grammatics". Our concern here is thus with systemic-functional grammatics; and we shall illustrate how it can be used in the study of grammar with examples from the grammars of Chinese, English, and Japanese.

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and give access to knowledge) and in computation (how to achieve the automatic processing of

text). We are also in a position to learn more about grammar thanks to technical innovations:
the tape recorder allows us to store and examine spoken language, and the computer allows us
to manipulate vast amounts of text (spoken or written) for the purpose of grammatical study.

Systemic-functional theory is one response to these demands. The theory was first developed
in work on the grammar of Chinese; and it has been used in educational and computational
contexts from an early stage. Unlike the theory of grammar that is still the received tradition in
school, systemic-functional grammatics takes the resource perspective rather than the rule
perspective; and it is designed to display the overall system of grammar rather than only
fragments. We hope to bring this out in the discussion which follows.

1.2 Grammar as resource; systems & their realization in structure

We use language to interact with one another — to construct and maintain our interpersonal
relations and the social order that lies behind them; and in doing so we interpret and represent
the world for one another and for ourselves. Language is a natural part of the process of living;
it is also used to ‘store’ the experience built up in the course of that process, both personal and
collective. It is (among other things) a tool for representing knowledge — or, to look at this in
terms of language itself, for constructing meaning.

Grammar is ‘part of’ this resource. But the relation of grammar to other ‘parts’ of the linguistic
system is not a part to whole relation; rather, it is a symbolic one. Grammar is a resource for
creating meaning in the form of wordings. Let us illustrate this point by reference to one
broad area of semantics and grammar — an area that we shall characterize as interpersonal:
this is one of three such general areas, the other two being ideational and textual.

In interacting with one another, we enter into a range of interpersonal relationships, choosing
among semantic strategies such as cajoling, persuading, enticing, requesting, ordering,
suggesting, asserting, insisting, doubting, and so on. The grammar provides us with the basic
resource for expressing these speech functions, in the form of a highly generalized set of clause
systems referred to as MOOD.

A system, in this technical sense, is a point of choice. In the grammars of Chinese, English,
and Japanese, the most general choice in mood is that between ‘indicative’ and ‘imperative’
clauses. These two are the options or terms in the system. The following examples illustrate the
contrast between ‘indicative’ and ‘imperative’ in English:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>systemic option (term)</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 'indicative'           | the spy/ I/ you came/ comes/ will come in from the cold;  
                        | who came &c in from the cold?;  
                        | did/ does/ will the spy/ I/ you come in from the cold? |
| 'imperative'           | [You] come in from the cold!     |

Any grammatical choice can be represented as a system with two or more alternative terms or
features, as shown graphically in Figure 1.
How do we know that this system is part of the grammar of English? There are three parts to the answer. (i) If we look at the wording of the examples given in the table above, we can see that there are systematic differences between the 'indicative' ones and the 'imperative' ones. The former have a Finite verb, whereas the latter do not; and the former have a Subject, whereas the latter may or may not have one — it is typically absent. (ii) If we look at the system itself to consider what choices are available for 'indicative' clauses, we find that they have a choice in tense ('past/ present/ future'), expressed through the Finite verb; and also in person, expressed through the Subject. In contrast, if we look at the system to consider the choices that are available for 'imperative' clauses, we find that they have no choice in tense and the Subject can (in principle) only be the addressee, 'you'. (iii) If we look at the distinction in meaning that the system makes, we find that the choice has to do with the nature of what is being negotiated in the dialogue: either information ( 'indicative', e.g. Did the spy come in from the cold? — Yes, he did.), or goods-&-services ('imperative', e.g. Come in from the cold! — OK). These three parts to the answer illustrate three general angles of approach to any system in the grammar: (i) 'from below', (ii) 'from around', and (iii) 'from above' — see Figure 2. (We return to this point below in Section 3.3.) We now explore the system from different angles, beginning 'from below' — from the point of view of how the systemic contrast is created in the wording.

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1 The system name is not a formal part of the system; it is merely a convenient index.
Fig. 2: Perspectives on a system

(i) Systemic contrasts are created by some aspect of the wording: the terms of the system are differentiated by means of grammatical structure (e.g. the absence vs. presence of an element of structure such as Subject), by means of grammatical or lexical items (e.g. the grammatical item كا in Japanese indicating interrogative clauses), or, as a further step, by means of a phonological feature (e.g. rising vs. falling intonation). We say that systemic terms, or features, are realized (expressed, coded) by aspects of the wording. The choice in the MOOD system between 'indicative' and 'imperative' is realized structurally: only indicative clauses normally have a Subject. We can indicate the presence of the grammatical function Subject in indicative clauses as in Figure 3.

(ii) When we come to explore 'from around', we find that, through their entry conditions, a number of systems come together as an inter-related set, called a system network. We can illustrate again from the grammar of MOOD. The choice between 'indicative' and 'imperative' is
the most general one in this area of the grammar; but each alternative leads to further choices. For instance, indicative clauses are either 'declarative' (they rode horses) or 'interrogative' (did they rode horses; who rode horses); declarative clauses are either 'untagged' (e.g., they rode horses) or 'tagged' (e.g., they rode horses, didn't they), and interrogative clauses are either of the wh-type (e.g., who rode horses?) or the yes/no type (e.g. did they ride horses?). See Figure 4.

![Fig. 4: Network of MOOD systems (realization statements in boxes)](image)

In the diagram in Figure 4, the grammatical resources are represented as a network of interconnected systems, each of which is a choice point. The systems in the network are ordered from left to right, starting with the most general option and moving towards more specific ones: if 'clause', then 'indicative' or 'imperative'; if 'indicative', then 'interrogative' or 'declarative'; if 'declarative', then 'tagged' or 'untagged'; if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'wh'. This is the scale of delicacy (degree of detail, specificity, granularity).

In the example in Figure 4, each entry condition is a simple feature, 'clause'; but entry conditions can also be complexes of features, involving conjunction and/or disjunction. Such features likewise are always terms in other systems. Let us illustrate disjunction in an entry condition. Consider again the MOOD grammar of Figure 4. It has one system, MOOD TAG, whose entry condition is 'declarative'. However, this system is actually not restricted to declarative clauses; it is also open to imperative ones (e.g., [you] saddle the horses, will you; let's saddle the horses, shall we). Consequently, we need to be able to state "if either 'declarative' or 'imperative', then 'tagged' / 'untagged'." That is, we need a disjunctive entry condition: see Figure 5.

![Fig. 5: Disjunctive entry condition](image)

The same systemic feature or complex of features may occur as the entry condition to more than one system in the system network. In this case, the systems are simultaneous. For example, the primary MOOD system (MOOD TYPE) is simultaneous with the system POLARITY — the choice between 'positive' and 'negative' clauses: see Figure 6.
Two simultaneous strands in a system network define a two-dimensional paradigm. It is often useful to present examples in the form of a matrix table, with one system represented by the columns and another by the rows. Thus MOOD TYPE and POLARITY intersect as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOOD TYPE:</th>
<th>indicative</th>
<th>imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POLARITY:</td>
<td>positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spy came in from the cold.</td>
<td>Come in from the cold!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The spy didn't come in from the cold.</td>
<td>Don't come in from the cold!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such matrices can be used in probing the accuracy of a complex system network: if it is not possible to find examples for one or more of the cells of a matrix, this means that the system network predicts a combination of systemic terms that does not exist.

Let us summarize what we have shown about the concepts of system and structure, and the relation between them. These concepts theorize the axes of organization in language, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic. The systemic, paradigmatic, axis is primary in the particular sense that it defines the overall organization of the grammar of a language; and the structural, syntagmatic, axis is secondary in the particular sense that it is specified locally in the environment of the various terms of the systemic axis. Figure 7 shows the intersection of the two axes in the grammar of MOOD, with the systemic axis providing the overall organization. This bifurcation into the paradigmatic axis and the syntagmatic axis makes it possible for the system to relate both to what is above and to what is below — in other words, both to what the system realizes and to what it is realized by.

(iii) Looking at the system from above, we are asking what it means: in other words, what semantic features are being realized by this particular set of options in the grammar. As already noted, in the case of MOOD the meaning has to do with the negotiation of speech-functional roles in dialogue: with basic categories such as statement and question (exchange of information), command and offer (exchange of goods-&-services), and the complex network of variable and more delicate categories of verbal interaction. We shall not pursue the semantic analysis here; but we may note that the resources and methods for representing semantic categories are formally identical with those used in the lexicogrammar.

1.3 Example: MOOD

The grammar of a language is a very rich and complex system; the grammatics must bring out that richness and complexity, and not obscure it. This means recognizing the different vectors along which the complexity is ordered, and exploring one step at a time.

Here we have introduced only one 'corner' of the grammar, and only in the most general terms: the primary systems of MOOD, as these are found in English. Because grammar is viewed as a resource rather than as a set of rules, it is interpreted in systemic-functional theory as a system network; this represents the grammatical potential available to the language user. The system network allows us to map out the overall organization of the grammar of a language, with delicacy as the main principle for ordering the various systems relative to one
another. Naturally such networks soon get very large; in the systemic grammars of English stored in computers, there are somewhere around 1000 systems. We have illustrated such a map of the grammar of English with fragments from the MOOD grammar, as in Figures 4 and 5.

The partial English MOOD grammar we have presented is a systemic-functional description of one particular language, cast in the theoretical terms of systemic organization with associated structural realizations. That is, while the type of organization embodied in the system network is part of the theory, and is a general feature common to all languages, the particular systemic features and structural realizations are part of our descriptive interpretation of English. They are not part of the general systemic-functional theory of grammar (see further Section 3.3 below).

Fig. 7: The systemic (paradigmatic) and structural (syntagmatic) axes intersecting

As a descriptive generalization about interpersonal grammar, we can assume that all languages have a system of MOOD: i.e. grammatical resources for the interaction between speaker and addressee, expressing speech functional selections in dialogue. Further, the semantic categories of giving information (statement), demanding information (question), and demanding services or goods (commands) are very likely enacted in the grammars of all languages. However, the organization of the MOOD system, and the realizations of the various options, differ from one language to another. For instance, the degree to which there is a distinct grammatical category corresponding to commands is variable: there may or may not be a distinct form of the imperative, and even where there is, there are usually many other
possible realizations. Similarly, while all languages probably have a basic opposition between statements and yes-no questions (polarity questions), which it is often (though not universally) possible to express by means of the distinction between falling and rising intonation, questions demanding a specific element of information (other than the value of the polarity) may be grouped systemically either with statements or with yes-no questions. It is easy to see why: they are like statements in that their polarity is certain, but at the same time they are like yes-no questions in that they demand information. Different languages organize their MOOD grammars around different generalizations in this way. Furthermore, languages differ considerably with respect to more delicate options, such as those concerned with how interactants position one another in dialogue (e.g. by indicating expected responses) and with how they assess the information being exchanged (e.g. by indicating degree of probability or source of evidence).

At the least delicate end of the grammar, Chinese, English, and Japanese have similar MOOD systems. All three distinguish 'indicative' vs. 'imperative' clauses, and within the former, 'declarative' vs. 'interrogative', with one interrogative subtype for querying elements and another for querying polarity. Examples are tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>indic.</td>
<td>decl.</td>
<td>Tailing shang xue qu</td>
<td>Taro is going to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tailang dao nali qu?</td>
<td>Where is Taro going?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tailang shang xue qu ma?</td>
<td>Is Taro going to school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imper.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shang xue qu!</td>
<td>Go to school!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But while the three MOOD systems are congruent up to the point in delicacy shown in the table above, they also differ from one another in more delicate terms. For instance, in (Mandarin) Chinese, ‘polar’ interrogatives are further differentiated according to the speaker’s expectation regarding the polarity of the proposition: they are biased (positive or negative) or unbiased; e.g. ‘Do you want it?’, positive bias Ni yao ma?, negative bias Ni buyao ma?, unbiased Ni yao buyao?.

English has only the biased forms: positive (semantically neutral) did you see him?; negative (semantically, positive bias) didn’t you see him?; negative (semantically, positive bias) didn’t you see him? English has no unbiased form, other than the highly marked (peremptory) did you see him or not?

The basic MOOD system we have discussed is concerned with (i) the nature of the commodity being exchanged (information vs. goods & services) and (ii) the orientation of the exchange (giving vs. demanding). But there are other aspects of the exchange that may be grammaticalized in this part of the grammar, in particular aspects of the tenor of the relationship between the interactants engaging in the exchange, i.e. between speaker and addressee. In Japanese, this area is perhaps more highly codified in the grammar than in either Chinese or English. For instance, alongside the “plain” imperative (as in Hanase! ‘Talk!’), there are also polite options for situations where the speaker is superior to the addressee (as in Hanashi-nasai! or inferior to the addressee (as in Hanashite-kudasai!). The elaboration of the grammar of Japanese in the areas of politeness and honorification is well-known. It is an important characteristic of the grammatical system — one that makes very good sense in terms of the interpersonal metafunction. At the same time, we have to recognize that the grammars of both Chinese and English also have created considerable potentials for enacting a wide range of subtly different tenor relationships. These potentials are perhaps not immediately obvious because they rely to a large extent on a cryptic feature of the system, viz. grammatical metaphor. Thus alongside the congruent Come in from the cold!, there are also various metaphorical variants where the command is realized not as an imperative clause but as if it was a statement or a question. For example: I’d like you to come in from the cold; I want you to come in from the cold; you should / must /will come in from the cold; Would / Could you come in from the cold. Such expansions of the system are of course characteristic of Japanese as well.

What generalizations can be made about the realization of systemic options in mood? MOOD options are typically realized in various ways, including intonation (direction of pitch movement), mood particles, relative sequence of elements (usually involving a finite verb), and
special verbal categories. It seems that interpersonal systems in general tend to be realized by some prosodic mode of expression; and the realizations of MOOD that we find across languages can often be shown to be prosodic (e.g., interpersonal mood particles that serve as juncture prosodies). These particulars are not, of course, part of the general theory of grammar — they are empirical descriptive generalizations covering a number of different languages. And here Chinese, English, and Japanese illustrate nicely a general principle of crosslinguistic similarity. While their basic mood systems are congruent with one another, their systemic contrasts are created in different ways, deploying somewhat different subsets of the realizational resources. The basic patterns are tabulated below (leaving out realization by intonation, which is used by all three languages):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOOD TYPE</th>
<th>imperative</th>
<th>indicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>+ Mood (Subject, Finite)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>(Predicator: &quot;imperative&quot; verb-form)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>+ Negotiation = ka ^ #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIC. TYPE</th>
<th>declarative</th>
<th>interrogative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Subject ^ Finite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>+ Negotiation = ma ^ #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>+ Negotiation = ka ^ #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT. TYPE</td>
<td>polar</td>
<td>elemental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Finite ^ Subject</td>
<td>+ Wh; # ^ Wh ^ Finite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>+ Negotiation = ma ^ #</td>
<td>+ &quot;Wh&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>+ Negotiation = ka ^ #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the realizational table indicates, English differs from Chinese and Japanese in its mood structure. It has a Mood element, which consists of Subject + Finite. This Mood element plays a central role in the realization of mood options, in terms of both its presence and its internal organization. In the unmarked cases tabulated above, it is present in ‘indicative’ clauses (e.g. Mood: You will / Will you + come in from the cold), but not in ‘imperative’ ones (e.g. Come in from the cold). Further, ‘declarative’ clauses are distinguished from ‘polar’ ones by the relative ordering of Subject + Finite — Subject ^ Finite (will you) and Finite ^ Subject (you will), respectively. The significance of the Mood element in English is also shown e.g. in tags, where the Mood element is picked up at the end of the clause as the Moodtag, consisting of Tagfinite ^ Tagsubject (e.g. You will come in from the cold, won’t you?) Neither Chinese nor Japanese has a distinct Mood element. It follows that they do not rely on the sequence of Subject + Finite in realizing mood options. In fact, neither language has a separate function Finite in the mood structure of the clause. Chinese has no system of verbal finiteness at all, and Japanese does not separate out finiteness from the rest of the verbal group in its clausal structure as English does. Instead, both languages deploy mood particles at the end of the clause serving the function we have called Negotiation, since it determines the clause’s negotiatory value in dialogic interaction. The difference is that Japanese Negotiation = ka is a property of ‘interrogative’ clauses in general, whereas Chinese Negotiation = ma is a property of ‘polar’ interrogatives in particular. (Chinese also has another type of ‘polar’ interrogative, where the Predicator is repeated with a negator as in shi bu shi. We referred to it above when we discussed differences in more delicate mood systems.) In fact, these mood particles are part of more extensive sets of interpersonal particles in both languages, including ne, ba in Chinese and ne, yo in Japanese; the closest equivalent of the English option of tagging a clause is a particle of this kind. The generalization is that the grammars of Chinese and Japanese provide the resource for indicating how the speaker intends the addressee to take his/her move in the dialogue as s/he is about to ‘hand over’ to the addressee. (Such interpersonal particles are common around the languages of the world; for example, we find them clause-initially in Arabic (hāl, ?a) and in French (est-ce que), and we find them in various (South-)East Asian languages, e.g. in Korean, Thai (clause final màj, rìi; nà etc.), Vietnamese (clause final phông, a, u, chu, di etc.). Such particles may also
realize options in interpersonal systems having to do with tenor, such as the sex of speaker and addressee and the status and power relations between them.)

The function Subject is not referred to in the table above in the realization statements of Chinese and Japanese. Does this mean that these languages do not have a Subject; or that their Subjects derive from different metafunctions? Asking these questions is in fact not the best way of exploring the grammars of Chinese and Japanese. The category of Subject was posited in the description of English and other languages; and in English its interpersonal nature is very clear once you begin to study dialogue. However, this does not mean that we should go looking for Subject in Chinese, Japanese or any other language we interpret systematically. Rather, we should ask more abstract questions that are less likely to prejudge the answer. Thus we ask how the clause in Chinese or Japanese is organized as an interactive move in a dialogue, as an exchange between speaker and addressee; and we can go on to ask whether there are elements in the clause that are given some special status in this interaction, as when an element is given the status of being the point of information demanded from the addressee in an 'elemental interrogative' clause. In English, the Subject is such an element: it is the element given the status of modal responsibility; that is, it is responsible for the success of the clause as an interactive move. This is perhaps easier to see in 'imperative' clauses than in 'indicative' ones; but it applies to both types. In an 'imperative', modal responsibility means responsibility for complying with or refusing to comply with the command, as in: Behave yourself!, Be polite!; Don’t be fooled by his pleasant demeanour!; Be guided by your parents! — I will/ I won’t. As these examples indicate, modal responsibility is quite distinct from actorhood; it can even be assigned to an element in a passive clause. It is also in the environment of an 'imperative' clause that we are perhaps most likely to find a similar type of status in Chinese and Japanese (and in other languages as well): they both give one element in the clause the special interpersonal status of responsibility for complying with the command in an 'imperative' clause. The question is then whether there is an indicative variant of this status of modal responsibility assigned to a clausal element in dialogue — or some other status of special interpersonal significance. Since this would require a lengthy exploration, we leave the issue open.
2. Expanding the (dimensions of) lexicogrammatical space

Figure 8 locates the MOOD 'corner' of the grammar in relation to the other most general systems, according to the two dimensions of metafunction and rank. Metafunction refers to the different modes of meaning construed by the grammar; rank refers to the different 'sizes' of the grammatical units (layers of constituency). We shall discuss each of these concepts in turn (Sections 2.1 and 2.2), followed by a short account of the third dimension, that of delicacy (Section 2.3).

![Figure 8: The view of the grammar so far, relative to expansion by metafunction and rank]

2.1 (1) By metafunction: from MOOD to TRANSITIVITY & THEME

We begin our move from the MOOD corner of the system located at the intersections of 'clause' rank and 'interpersonal' metafunction by moving along the dimension of metafunction.

2.1.1 The three metafunctions

Let us introduce these metafunctions in two steps. The grammar creates meaning within two highly generalized metafunctions that relate to phenomena outside language: (i) interpersonal and (ii) ideational.

(i) The interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee(s) — the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general, and speech roles in particular, in dialogic interaction; i.e. for establishing, changing, and maintaining interpersonal relations. One of its major grammatical
systems is MOOD, the grammaticalization of speech function that we have already met.

(ii) The **ideational** metafunction is concerned with 'ideation' — grammatical resources for construing our experience of the world around us and inside us. One of its major grammatical systems is TRANSITIVITY, the resource for construing our experience the flux of 'goings-on', as structural configurations; each consisting of a process, the participants involved in the process, and circumstances attendant on it. For example: [Location:] in the open glade [Actor:] the wild rabbits [Process:] danced [Accompaniment:] with their shadows.

These two metafunctions orient towards two 'extra-linguistic' phenomena, the social world and the natural world; we construe the natural world in the ideational mode and to enact the social world in the interpersonal mode. For instance, we can construe a picture of what can participate in an action (ideational) and we can enact who gives orders to whom (interpersonal). In addition, there is a third metafunction, intrinsic to language (that is, orienting towards the phenomena created by language itself, viz. meanings) — the textual metafunction.

(iii) The **textual** metafunction is concerned with the creation of text — with the **presentation** of ideational and interpersonal meanings as information that can be shared by speaker and listener in text unfolding in context. One of the major textual systems is THEME, the resource for setting up a local context for a clause by selecting a local point of departure in the flow of information (or perhaps rather 'swell of information', since it is not a uniform flow). Thus the spatial Location is given thematic status in the example analysed for TRANSITIVITY above: [Theme:] in the open glade [Rheme:] the wild rabbits danced with their shadows.

The role of the textual metafunction is an enabling one. It serves to enable the presentation of ideational and interpersonal meaning as information that can be shared: it provides the speaker with strategies for guiding the listener in his/her interpretation of the text.

As Figure 8 suggests, the three metafunctions are simultaneous; this simultaneity applies to both axes of organization, the systemic and the structural. (i) **Systemically**, this means that MOOD (interpersonal), TRANSITIVITY (ideational), and THEME (textual) are simultaneous strands within the system network of the clause: see Figure 9. That is, the metafunctions are manifested as clusterings in the overall system network of the clause (and other grammatical units). The figure shows a fragment of the English network; similar simultaneous strands are found in Chinese and Japanese — although, as we shall see below, MOOD and THEME relate in somewhat different ways in the three languages, and the operation of the system of VOICE in mapping structural functions from the different metafunctions onto one another is also varied. Around the languages of the world, we can expect considerable variation in these systems which relate the different metafunctions to one another. There are languages which have no equivalent of the VOICE system we find in e.g. Chinese, English, and Japanese; and where languages have both VOICE and THEME, we find variation in the division of labour between them, in particular in how the choice of an unmarked thematic status is achieved. Further, systems deriving from the different metafunctions may also be distributed along the rank scale (constituency hierarchy; see below) in different ways, particularly across the ranks of clause, verbal group and verb.

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2 That is, no system which is functionally similar enough to suggest that it should be called by the same name.
(ii) **Structurally,** the metafunctional simultaneity is manifested as three simultaneous strands or layers in the structure of the clause: see Figure 10, which shows the three metafunctional perspectives on our earlier example. The structural functions from the different metafunctional strands are conflated with one another; for example, Subject is conflated with Actor (represented as Subject/Actor; see the Appendix). The example of structural simultaneity is from English. Structures are also metafunctionally layered in this way in Chinese and Japanese, but the organization within each strand may be different from what we find in English. We referred above to the differences in the interpersonal layer, which is probably where the main structural differences lie. Figure 11 presents an example from Japanese of an 'elemental interrogative' clause. There is no Mood element and we have not posited a Subject function, but the clause ends with the Negotiation function where its negotiatory or interactional contribution is realized. Negotiation is preceded by Predicator, the interpersonal perspective on the verbal group serving in the clause: the Predicator carries assessments of mood and polarity; and it also carries degrees of 'politeness' and 'formality' (such as the difference between *desu* and the plain form *da*). The Wh element\(^3\) is in the position it would have in an unmarked declarative clause; Wh and Theme are not conflated 'by default', as they are in English. Chinese is like Japanese in this respect. The two are also similar in that functions that are recoverable from the text or the context for the addressee may be left implicit; for example, a Theme that is continuous with preceding Themes is likely to be left implicit. This also means, of course, that any structural functions from the other metafunctional layers which are conflated with it are also left implicit.

Around the languages of the world, we can expect to find considerably more variation in the way the three metafunctional contributions to structure are mapped onto one another. The main variable here is most probably rank. Languages differ in the way that the realizational domains of THEME, MOOD, TRANSITIVITY, and related systems are distributed across ranks. For example, many languages do much more work in the verb or verbal group than languages such as Chinese and English.

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\(^3\) It would be more appropriate to call this the "D element", since most interrogative items begin with d- in Japanese.
2.1.2 Ideational (at clause rank): TRANSITIVITY

The ideational metafunction engenders resources for construing our experience of the world around us and inside us; the ideational system at clause rank is TRANSITIVITY. TRANSITIVITY is concerned with construing one particular domain of our experience — our experience the flux of 'goings-on', as configurations of a process (of some general type: material, mental, relational), the participants involved in it (Actor, Goal; Senser, Phenomenon; Carrier, Attribute; and so on), and the circumstances attendant on it (Cause, Location, Manner (including means and instrument), Accompaniment, and so on).

There are two types of variable in systems of transitivity:

(i) The type of process.
(ii) The type of participation in process.

(i) The type of process is represented in the system network in Figure 9. The transitivity system of a language will construe experience into a small set of domains of meaning which differ according to the process itself and the nature of the participants involved in it.

In English, the primary options in PROCESS TYPE are 'material/ mental/ verbal/ relational': for a more detailed account of the transitivity system, see Figure 12. This system is motivated by criteria (i) 'from above', (ii) 'from below', and (iii) 'from around'. Some of these criteria are set out and illustrated in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS TYPE</th>
<th>(i) from above:</th>
<th>(ii) from below:</th>
<th>(iii) from around:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>category meaning</td>
<td>structural realization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material</td>
<td>doing &amp; happening</td>
<td>Actor: <em>the company</em></td>
<td>Process: <em>is giving</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mental</td>
<td>sensing</td>
<td>Sensor: <em>conscious my aunt my aunt</em></td>
<td>Process: <em>wants wants</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbal</td>
<td>saying</td>
<td>Sayer: <em>symbol source the company's letter the company's letter</em></td>
<td>Process: <em>says</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationa</td>
<td>being &amp; having</td>
<td>Carrier: <em>this teapot</em></td>
<td>Process: <em>is</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identified: <em>this</em></td>
<td>Process: <em>is</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are different clause types; a number of verbs can serve in more than one type, in different senses. For example, the verb *make* can serve in a material clause in the sense of 'produce' and in a relational clause in the sense of 'be' (or 'cause to be'). Thus *it made a good drink* is ambiguous between material 'it (e.g. the appliance) produced a good drink' and relational 'it (e.g. the mixture) was a good drink'. Such ambiguous instances can always be probed 'from above', 'from below' and 'from around'. Let us take 'material' and 'mental' in the system of PROCESS TYPE as illustrations of the three perspectives that motivate this system.

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4 Unmarked tense for representing present time.
(1) PROCESS TYPE: 'material'. (i) Looked at 'from above', a material clause construes doings & happenings — including actions, activities, and events; configurations of a process and participants involved that require some input of energy to occur and where one participants is likely to undergo a change. (ii) Looked at 'from below', a material clause is characterized by particular structural configurations, such as Process + Actor + Goal (+ Recipient), and Process + Range. There is always an Actor, which can be realized by a nominal group representing any 'thing' or even a non-finite clause representing a 'macro-thing' (as in the boy with green hair broke the window, and the earth moving broke the window respectively), but not by a 'meta-thing' (a fact...
— that the earth moved broke the window is not possible). Further options determine whether the process is 'directed', in which case there is a Goal as well ([Actor:] the policeman [Process:] hunted [Goal:] the demonstrator), or not ([Actor:] the policeman [Process:] ran). If the process is directed, it may be 'benefactive'; and if it if is, there may be a Recipient ([Actor:] the judge [Process:] gave [Recipient:] the demonstrator [Goal:] a legal document). (iii) Looked at 'from around', a material clause is the entry condition to a number of further systems; we have already referred to directedness and benefaction as two examples. It does not lead to a system of PROJECTION (a system with an option of reporting or quoting speech or thought, which we find with verbal and mental clauses, as in The paper said “The building collapsed”); it is thus not possible to say the earth moved: “The building collapsed”: there can be a causal relation between these two clauses (the earth moved so the building collapsed), but not a semiotic one where the clause the earth moved would project the clause “The building collapsed” onto a more abstract plane as its content. If we explore around PROCESS TYPE but outside the TRANSITIVITY systems themselves, we find that in reports of present time, there is an unmarked correlation with different TENSE selections for the different process types. In material clauses, the unmarked tense is the present-in-present rather than the simple present, as in The cat’s waving its tail rather than The cat waves its tail. (The simple present is used to construe a different time frame, such as generic or habitual time, as in The cat waves its tail whenever it’s uncertain.) This systemic association between PROCESS TYPE and TENSE is semantically motivated: processes are phenomena that unfold in time and hence have a tense system; but different process types have different temporal profiles and hence different unmarked present tense selections.

(2) PROCESS TYPE: ‘mental’. (i) Looked at ‘from above’, a mental clause construes sensing — perception, cognition, intention, and emotion; configurations of a process of consciousness involving a participant endowed with consciousness and typically a participant entering into or created by that consciousness. (ii) Looked at ‘from below’, a mental clause is characterized by a particular structural configuration, Process + Senser + Phenomenon. There is always a Senser, which is realized by a nominal group denoting a being endowed with consciousness (e.g. she in she saw them crossing the road). It is thus much more constrained than the Actor; in fact, it is the most constrained of all the participants in any of the process types.5 In contrast, the Phenomenon can be not only any kind of thing or macro-thing, but also a meta-thing (as in she saw them, she saw them crossing the road, she saw [the evidence] that they had crossed the road). (iii) Looked at ‘from around’, a mental clause leads to a system of PROJECTION. A mental clause can project the content of consciousness, ‘thought’ or ‘ideas’, as another, separate clause (as in He thought —> the moon was a balloon). Such a clause is not a participant within the mental clause; for example, it cannot serve as the Subject in a passive variant (we do not get That the moon was a balloon was thought by him). Further, unlike a material clause, a mental clause does not lead to a benefactive option (there is no He thought me —> the moon was a balloon; examples such as He thought to himself —> “The moon is a balloon” are not prototypical, but are ‘mental as if verbal’ — inner speech). With respect to TENSE, the unmarked selection for present time is the simple present rather than the present-in-present (for example, He thinks the moon is a balloon rather than He is thinking that the moon is a balloon).

TRANSITIVITY, then, offers a network of inter-related options for representing different types of experience — our experience of the material world, of the world of our inner consciousness, of the world of symbolization, and so on. The criteria from above, from below, and from around which we have illustrated together motivate the PROCESS TYPE system in the grammar of transitivity. That is, in our description of this area of the grammar, these types yield the most powerful generalizations. But their differences in the overall system are not immediately obvious. There are no overt markers differentiating the process types; for example, there are no transitivity particles at the end of the clause realizing the selection in process type (as we illustrated for MOOD in Section 1.3 above), and there are no differences in verbal morphology. The process types are covert systemic types in the transitivity system — in many cases, cryptotypes in Whorf’s terminology. We recognize that they are ‘in the system’ exploring them from the three perspectives we have illustrated. When we explore them in this way, we see how the overall system is ‘affected’ by their presence — how it ‘reacts’ to their

5 In an example such as The building saw them leave in a hurry, the nominal group the building comes to be interpreted metaphorically as representing a conscious being by virtue of being construed as the Senser in a mental clause.
For example, we find that the TENSE system 'reacts' to the distinction between the material and non-material process types. Whorf called such properties reactances. We have exemplified some reactances to PROCESS TYPE such as TENSE and PROJECTION. Others include classes of verb that can serve as the Process in clauses of the different process types, and a set of reactances outside the ideational metafunction. For example, the textual metafunction includes the option of substitution whereby one piece of wording is substituted for by a particular substitute form (such as nominal one and verbal do in English) to present that information as continuous (in the environment of contrast, as in Which towel would you like? — The red one, please). The verbal substitute do (to/with) can only be used in material clauses, not in mental, verbal or relational ones. Thus we can get 'material' What the company did with the teapot was give it to my aunt, but not 'mental' What my aunt did with the teapot was want it, 'verbal' What my aunt did with the story was tell it, and 'relational' What my aunt did with the director was be her. Reactants are often outside the metafunctional domain of the system they 'react to', and even when they fall within the same metafunction, they can be a considerable distance away from the system they 'react to'.

Chinese and Japanese seem to have the same primary PROCESS TYPE system as we have just illustrated in English. They differ in the kinds of reactance that provide evidence for the different process types. For example, the temporal issues are different for English and Chinese since English construes time in the process on a tense model whereas Chinese construes it on an aspect model. They also differ in more delicate process types. For example, both Chinese and Japanese bring possession and existence closer together than English does.

In Japanese, material, mental, verbal and relational clauses differ for example with respect to patterns of postpositional marking, options in voice and the resultative construction, and projection. There is always one participant marked by the postposition ga (or wa if it is thematic); and there may be one or two more participants marked by the postpositions o (or wa if it is thematic) or ni (or ni wa if it is thematic) or left without a postposition if the clause is an unmarked relational one. Thus in an active material clause the Actor is marked by ga, the Goal by o 7 and the Beneficiary by ni:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{Sensei} & \text{watakushi} & \text{hon} & \text{kudasaimashita} \\
\text{'teacher'} & \text{'I'} & \text{'book'} & \text{'give'} \\
\text{Actor} & \text{Beneficiary} & \text{Goal} & \text{Process}
\end{array}
\]

'The teacher gave me a book'

whereas the Attribute or Value of an unmarked relational clause is without a postposition:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{Watashi} & \text{sensei} & \text{desu} \\
\text{I} & \text{'teacher'} & \text{'be'} \\
\text{Carrier} & \text{Attribute} & \text{Process}
\end{array}
\]

'I am a teacher'

PROJECTION is an option for mental and verbal clauses. They can project a clause as the 'content' of the mental or verbal processing and the projected status of this clause is marked by to, ka or the like. For instance, the following example is a combination of two clauses, a projecting mental one of thinking and another one representing the idea projected by thinking: 8

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6 We should note that these are correlations, not relations of cause-&-effect.
7 Unless the Process has a feature such as desire or potentiality which lowers the actual impact on the Goal, in which case it is marked by ga rather than o.
8 As in English, the projected clause is not a constituent part of the projecting mental clause. This is shown for example by the fact that it cannot be the focus of THEME IDENTIFICATION (a textual construction of pattern 'X no wa Y da'). In contrast, this textual option is available for a clause serving as the Phenomenon of a mental clause downranked in a nominal group with a Head such as no, koto, shirase.
Watashi wa basu de ikoo to omou

'I think I will go by bus'

Verbal clauses are similar with respect to projection; but in addition, they can have a Receiver (marked by *ni*) representing the addressee of a move in dialogue.

Around the languages of the world, we can expect more variation in process type than is evident with Chinese, English or Japanese. It seems plausible that we will find prototypical material, mental, and relational process types in the transitivity systems of most languages, but there will be considerable variation in how they construe more intermediate categories (such as behavioural and existential) precisely because of their more indeterminate status. The central reason for recognizing verbal processes as a distinct type in e.g. Chinese, English and Japanese is their ability to project quoted or reported clauses. However, some languages such as Tagalog may use a relational strategy (cf. English his statement was that the moon is a balloon) while others may exact projection interpersonally as "mood projection" with a special quotative mood. And just as we find considerable variation in the realization of mood types across languages (as illustrated above), we will find considerable variation in the overt markers and covert reactances of process types. The criteria we tabulated above are thus specific to English (as we already noted with respect to unmarked present tense selection).

(ii) The second major variable is the mode of participation in the process — how participants affect one another through their involvement in a process. The interpretation in traditional grammar is in terms of of the concept of transitive derived mainly from material clauses. We have in fact already alluded to it: it is concerned with whether the Actor impacts another participant (the Goal) through the process — transitive — or not — intransitive. Since this model is oriented towards one type of clause, it leads to an interpretation in which process types are have to be differentiated. That is, while the material model operates with an Actor potentially impacting a Goal, once the description is broadened, other process types have to be recognized: these are mental, verbal, and relational (in e.g. Chinese, English, French, Japanese and Tagalog).

But there is an alternative to the type of model that was recognized in traditional grammar — the ergative model of transitivity. This represents a process not in terms of of impact but in terms of causation. There is always (in all process types) one participant that is most closely associated with the process, the Medium (since it is the medium through which the process is manifested); and the basic option is whether to represent the combination of Medium + Process as being externally caused by an Agent or not. So the combination ‘door + open’, can be represented as (say) [Medium:] the door [Process:] opened, without specifying what brought the occurrence about, or as [Agent:]the wind [Process:] opened [Medium:] the door, with a specification of the Agent bringing about the occurrence. A clause with Process + Medium without the Agent is known as 'middle', and a clause with an Agent (explicit or implicit) is known as 'effective'.

These two transitivity models do not represent mutually exclusive sets of phenomena, but rather complementary perspectives on the same set of phenomena. In any given language, some areas will display more features of the transitive and others more features of the ergative. The balance between them is clearly a major point of variation in transitivity systems around the world. English is a typically mixed system. The ergative pattern, with the contrast between ‘middle’ and ‘effective’, is found with all the process types except for verbal processes, which are 'middle' only; for example (Agent in bold, Medium in italics):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS TYPE</th>
<th>AGENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>middle (Medium + Process)</td>
<td>effective (+ Agent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We can now see that the existence of pairs of mental clauses such as she liked the new musical : the new musical pleased her can be accounted for by reference to the system 'middle' vs. 'effective' of the ergative model. They manifest the same ergative pattern as we find in material and relational clauses. They differ in one respect. Both middle and effective mental clauses have the same set of participants, Senser + Phenomenon; and the difference lies in the assignment of ergative roles: in the effective the Phenomenon is construed as an Agent bringing about the Senser's sensing (emotion of pleasure in our example), whereas in the middle it is construed non-agentively. Middle and effective thus constitute two complementary perspectives on mental processes; they can be seen from two different angles — either as the Senser engaging in sensing which ranges over (or creates) a Phenomenon, or as the Phenomenon bringing about sensing which impinges on a Senser.

Around the languages of the world, the degree to which one of the two models of transitivity dominates may be different, and we can see this variation in the increasing foregrounding of the ergative model in the history of English. Chinese and English are very similar in the balance between the models in their transitivity systems; but Chinese does not have a systematic contrast between 'middle' and 'effective' mental clauses — these exist only in the middle type. Japanese and English also appear to be very similar in the balance of the transitive and the ergative.

There is variation across transitivity systems beyond what we have suggested so far. On the one hand, there may be yet other transitivity models. In his interpretation of the transitivity of Tagalog, Martin (to appear) identifies a transitive pattern where different process types are distinguished, and a complementary one which construes a clause nucleus consisting of the Process and one participant, the Medium, through which it is actualized. There may or may not be another participant; if there is, it is either drawn into the clause nucleus or repelled by it. The common theme seems to be that transitivity systems embody a complementarity between two perspectives on experience: one in which happenings are distinguished into different types, the other in which they are treated as all alike.

### 2.1.3 Textual (at clause rank): THEME

The textual metafunction engenders resources for presenting interpersonal and ideational meanings as information organized into text that can be ongoingly exchanged between speaker and listener. This involves transitions in the development of text (conjunctive relations) and the assignment of different textual statuses (thematicity, newsworthiness, continuity and contrast, recoverability). These transitions and statuses enable the exchange of information; the speaker is guiding the listener in interpreting the unfolding text. At clause rank the major textual system is THEME.

THEME is a resource for organizing the interpersonal and ideational meanings of each clause in the form of a message. Each clause will occur at some particular point in the unfolding of the text; this is its textual environment. The system of THEME sets up a local environment, providing a point of departure by reference to which the listener interprets the message. With this system the speaker specifies the place in the listener's network of meanings where the message is to be incorporated as relevant. The local environment, serving as point of departure, is the Theme; what is presented in this local environment is the Rheme. The clause as a message is thus a configuration of two thematic statuses, Theme + Rheme.

In English, thematic status is expressed by position in sequence. Theme is realized by initial position and Rheme is realized by non-initial position: e.g. [Theme:] In 1791 [Rheme:] John Macarthur arrived in Sydney. There are a number of thematic options, including (i) the choice between 'marked theme' (as in the example above) and 'unmarked theme' (the Subject in a declarative clause: [Theme:] John Macarthur [Rheme:] arrived in Sydney in 1791.); (ii) the option
of theme predication (e.g., *It was John Macarthur who arrived in Sydney in 1791*), typically to identify a particular theme out of a(n implicit) set of potential candidates; and (iii) the option of theme identification, foregrounding some part of the message by means of nominalization (e.g., *what John Macarthur did in 1791 was arrive in Sydney*). Since THEME is a textual resource, it relates the clause to the overall development of text in context in particular: here the text in question was being developed as a chronological sequence.

We have just presented the organization of the textual organization of the clause as a configuration of two discrete constituents, Theme ^ Rheme. This makes it possible to show how they map onto functional elements within the other metafunctional strands of the clause. However, all textual statuses are really degrees of prominence; what we have here is a cline, a gradual move from thematic prominence to non-prominence. We can thus construe the clause as a ‘wave’ in the flow of information, starting with a thematic peak and moving into a thematic trough. Such wave-like or periodic organization is the mode of expression engendered by the textual metafunction: see further Section 3.1 (ii) below.

Thematicity is one of a set of textual statuses or kinds of prominence. The clause also displays a complementary kind of prominence — degree of newsworthiness. This is a cline from given information to new information, represented as a configuration of Given + New. Prominence as news is realized by intonational prominence: while the movement of pitch in a tone group (intonation unit) is a continuous contour, there will be some major movement, e.g. a major rise or a major fall; and this major movement is prominent against the background of the movement overall.

Clause and tone group are not necessarily co-extensive; one clause may be realized by more than one tone group, and one tone group may realize more than one clause. This in fact reveals the existence of another grammatical unit alongside the clause — the information unit. This unit is realized by the tone group; and it is the domain of the system of INFORMATION FOCUS, realized by Given + New. In the unmarked case, a clause is co-extensive with an information unit, so that Theme + Rheme and Given + New complement one another within the domain of a single clause. While Theme is realized sequentially, New is not; it is realized intonationally. Consequently, thematicity and newsworthiness are independent variables. In the unmarked case, the New is mapped onto the last element within the Rheme that has a lexical content. Consequently, the unmarked message is a combination of two textual waves: Theme shading into Rheme and Given shading into New, with Theme falling given and New falling within Rheme. See Figure 13 for an example (assuming a moment in the information flow corresponding to ‘where did John Macarthus go in 1791?’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION FOCUS</td>
<td>Given</td>
<td>&lt;--------&gt; New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 13:** Theme + Rheme and Given + New in unmarked combination

In the unmarked case, the clause thus unfolds from prominence as Theme to prominence as New. From the listener's point of view, s/he is thus given guidance as to where to integrate the message with his/her interpretation of the text so far and what to zoom in on as the main point. This swell of information within the clause also tends to correlate with a move within the elements of the clause from elements whose referents are presented as specific and so recoverable to the listener to elements presented as non-specific and so non-recoverable to the listener. But, in English, choices in REFERENCE vary independently of thematicity and newsworthiness, so the pattern just described is only a tendency.

The distribution of information in the clause we have just discussed also helps explain the textual aspect of VOICE, ‘active/ passive’, in English. From a textual point of view, this system provides alternative options for participants as unmarked Theme and unmarked New. Thus for example in an ‘effective’ clause (see Figure 12 above), the active version will have Agent/Subject as unmarked Theme and Medium as a candidate for unmarked New, whereas the passive version will have Medium/ Subject as unmarked Theme and Agent (if present) as a candidate for unmarked New. Thus VOICE has to be understood in relation to the textual metafunction.
All languages will have textual resources for organizing the presentation the clause as a message, assigning different textual statuses to different parts of the clause. When we explore the clause from a textual point of view, we have to study it as a message in the unfolding text—a message that is adjusted to, and which helps create, the 'flow of information' in the text. Because this view has only rarely been taken in reference grammars, there is lack of information on textual systems. No doubt a good deal of insight into various languages is lost through claims that they are "free word order" languages since textual options are often realized by sequence (as we indicated for English above) and through absence of accounts of intonation systems. But textual statuses can also be indicated by other means such as adpositions (e.g. the preposition ang in Tagalog and the postposition wa in Japanese).

There is variation in how textual systems relate to clausal systems from the other metafunctions. On the one hand, languages differ in how they relate the textual metafunction to the interpersonal one. As we have indicated, unmarked Theme in English is determined by the mood type (declarative: Subject, wh-interrogative: the Wh-element, yes-no interrogative: Finite ^ Subject, and imperative: Predicator); but many languages do not orient THEME to MOOD in this way: this is true of Chinese, Japanese and Tagalog. On the other hand, languages differ in how they relate the textual metafunction to the ideational one. As we have indicated, English has a system of VOICE for giving participants different textual potentials. Many other languages have a similar system, but they may take up the passive option less frequently than English does or restrict the system of voice more in relation to transitivity. But a language may also achieve the mapping between textual systems and transitivity roles without a separate voice system. For instance, Tagalog has a general system for selecting different participants and circumstances as Theme; but there is no separate system of voice. In English, Theme generalizes across the interpersonal and ideational metafunctions and it may also contain contributions from within the textual metafunction itself—conjunctive and continuative parts of the Theme. Other languages may separate out ideational Themes (i.e. thematic participants and circumstances), giving them a clearly distinct status—as in Tagalog (where ideational Themes are marked by ang ) and Japanese (where ideational Themes are marked by wa).

There is also variation in the division of labour among different textual systems. We suggested that there is a tendency in English for Themes also to be given and specific. This tendency may be stronger in a language where there is no obligatory marking of specificity within nominal groups, as in Chinese. In such languages there may be a closer relationship between 'participant tracking' in discourse and textual systems within the clause than there is in English.

2.1.4 Ideational: logical (at clause rank): COMPLEXING

The metafunctional components of the grammar discussed in 2.1.1 to 2.1.3 have one significant feature in common: their structural reflexes are in the broadest sense configurational. That is to say, the structural realization of selections in the systems of transitivity, of mood, and of theme is some organic configuration of distinct functions, like Actor + Process + Goal, or (Subject + Finite) + (Predicator + Adjunct). We have pointed out that these are not always clearly defined, or bounded, as segmental constituents; the critical characteristic that they share is that of organic solidarity—each part fulfills a distinctive function with respect to the whole.

There is one further component in the grammar, one whose structural reflex is of a different order: this is what we refer to as the logical metafunction. There are in every language systems of logical relations: relations such as 'and' and 'or' and 'if ... then' and 'because ... so', which construe the links between one piece of the discourse and another. These systems are realized not by configuration but by iteration: one clause bonded with another clause, or one group or phrase with another group or phrase. The characteristic feature of these relationships is that they do not create closure; each element (each clause, each group, and so on) can always be followed by another one of the same. We refer to these structures as complexes: clause complexes, group complexes, and so on. Each bond in such a complex is called a nexus.

Here, as elsewhere in this chapter, we shall direct our attention to the clause—which means, in the present section, to the clause complex. The general form of systems of this "complexing" kind, known as recursive systems, is shown in Figure 14; a set of options x/y/ ... is combined
with a simultaneous choice of 'stop' or 'go round again'. As far as the clause complex is concerned, the former is itself a combination of two simultaneous systems: (1) interdependency and (2) logical-semantic relation.

The system of interdependency specifies the relative status of the two clauses in a nexus. (A prototypical nexus consists of just two elements; we shall assume this for purposes of discussion.) The two may have equal status, neither being dependent on the other (hence each in principle independent); this relationship is paratactic. Or, one may dependent on the other, where the relationship is hypotactic. In our notation, parataxis is shown by Arabic numerals, hypotaxis by letters of the Greek alphabet.

The system of logical-semantic relations specifies what its name suggests: the particular kind of logical interconnection. It is important to stress that "logical" here refers to the logic of natural languages, a common-sense logic characterized by flexibility and "fuzz". This is, of course, the ultimate source of logic in its formal and symbolic sense; but since such systems of logic are derived from natural language, not the other way round, it is not very profitable to try and interpret natural-language logic as an imperfect copy of a logic that has been designed. The basic distinction in the English system, in the logical-semantic relations of the clause complex, is between the two types expansion and projection.

In a nexus related by expansion, the secondary clause picks up the message of the primary one and expands on it. It may do this in any one of three ways: by elaborating, by extending, or by enhancing. Elaborating means saying the same thing over again, either by direct repetition (the limiting case!) or, more "elaborately", by rewording it, clarifying it, or giving an example. This is the relationship that is signalled by expressions such as in other words, that is to say, for instance; or by abbreviations such as i.e., e.g. and viz. Extending means adding something, varying, replacing or taking away — expressed by and, or, instead, except, and also but in its adversative sense. Enhancing means giving some further information that is related in a systematic way by a semantic feature of (typically) time, cause, condition, or concession: here we find conjunctions such as (and) then, (and) so, in that case, otherwise, nevertheless, and but in its concessive sense. All of these may be combined with both types of interdependency, parataxis and hypotaxis. We have illustrated so far with paratactic conjunctions; but enhancing relations, in particular, are often construed hypotactically, with conjunctions such as when, because, if, unless, although.

In a nexus related by projection, the secondary clause is instated by the primary clause as what somebody said (locution) or thought (idea). This relationship is the "direct and indirect speech and thought" of our traditional grammars. Here also the interdependency may be paratactic ("direct") or hypotactic ("indirect"); in other words, projection, like expansion, may combine with either of the two relationships in status.

An example of a clause complex is given in Figure 14. The system network, showing just these first steps in delicacy, is shown in Figure 15.
if you go into a bank
if you walked round to Barclays
for instance
and said
will you look after my investments
or even if you went off to Hambros
or one of the famous banks of that
nature
they would every year value your
securities
as we do of course
but they would charge you
they'd send you a bill for a
percentage of what they were worth

Fig. 14: Analysis of clause complex from casual conversation (Svartvik & Quirk, 1980)

Fig. 15: System network for the clause complex (excluding more delicate options)
2.2 (2) By rank: from clause to phrase and group

Constituency is built on the part-whole relation; it presupposes a whole of which we identify constituent parts. Wholes which display an organic constituency structure are called grammatical units. Units have syntagmatic integrity: they are fully accounted for by their structures, and they are not structurally mixed with other units.

Grammatical units are identifiable in functional terms. This means that (i) they are the points of origin of system networks (such as those of transitivity and mood in the clause) and (ii) they function as constituents in their entirety. We can arrive at functionally determined units if we adopt a rank-based type of constituency.

Rank orders units into a hierarchy according to their constituency relation: the highest-ranking units consist of units of the rank immediately below, these units consist of units at the next rank below, and so on, until we arrive at the units of the lowest rank, which have no internal constituent structure. Rank is thus a theory of the global distribution of the units of the grammar. The English grammatical rank scale is

```
clause
| group/phrase |
| word |
| morpheme |
```

That is, a clause consists of groups, a group of words, and a word of morphemes. (For more on the phrase, see below.) For instance, the ranked constituency structure of *newborn calves are easy prey* is as shown in Figure 16. Figure 17 shows the analysis of a clause with systemic features, function structure and preselections of group features.

![Fig. 16: Rank-based constituency](image_url)
We can treat the type of constituency tree above as the norm: all constituents of a unit of the rank next below. However, the theory also needs to allow for rankshift, whereby a unit one rank serves as if it were a unit of a lower rank — i.e., it is downranked. For instance, a clause may serve as if it were a group as in (double-barred square brackets, [ ] mark the rankshifted clause):

They’d send you a bill for a percentage of [what they are worth]

Rankshifted units differ from ranking ones in various ways — both in their own make-up and in the selections that are open to them. For example, a rankshifted clause is typically not available for argument — it cannot be confirmed or denied. It is thus important that the theory should distinguish between ranking units (units functioning according to their rank) and rankshifted ones (units serving as if they were units of a lower rank).

The metafunctional organization of the grammar that we illustrated above for the clause applies to the other ranks as well. For example, the nominal group has ideational systems of THING TYPE, CLASSIFICATION, EPITHESIS and QUALIFICATION, interpersonal systems of PERSON and ATTITUDE, and textual systems of DETERMINATION (cf. Figure 19 below). But the way the metafunctional contributions map structurally one onto another varies; in particular, groups are organized both as organic wholes and as logical complexes. Figure 21 below shows an example of an English nominal group.

Languages differ both with respect to the number of ranks and with respect to the division of grammatical labour between the different ranks. For example, Chinese and English do fairly little grammatical work at word rank — and Vietnamese even less. In contrast, many languages favour word rank as the domain of realization for e.g. nuclear transitivity and modality. Languages also differ with respect to the nature of the rank that is intermediate between words and clauses. Both Chinese and English ’derive’ the units of that rank from both ends, as it were: groups are expansions of words (groups of words, with a Head and Modifiers) whereas phrases are contractions of clauses (mini-clauses, with a configuration of Process + Range). The preposition is thus a verbal kind of word, as is shown by English prepositions such as regarding, concerning. In Chinese this principle is even more pronounced; items such as zai serve either in phrases or in clauses: we can interpret the items in phrases as a class of verb, postpositive verb (cf. Figure 20 below). Japanese also has phrases, but the phrasal relation comes after the nominal group (i.e. nominal group + wa, ga, o, ni, o, kara, made etc.), just as the Process of a clause comes at the end of the clause; the phrasal relation is a post-position rather than a pre-position. Some languages have both phrases and nominal affixes for realizing the function served by the nominal group, morphological cases, often using cases alone for participants and preposition or postposition (adposition) + nominal group marked by case for circumstances (as is the tendency in German). Other languages tend to use case-marked nominal groups for both, as Finnish does. Yet other languages have no phrases at all, but draw on logical sequences of dependent verbs instead to bring certain participants or circumstances into the clause (e.g. Akan). Languages may also use the Process of the clause as the site for marking transitivity roles, as Tagalog does for the Theme of a clause.

As grammars evolve, there is a tendency for items to move down the rank scale, becoming phonologically reduced in the process. For example, pronouns (word rank) may slide down the rank scale to become pronominal affixes (morpheme rank) serving as parts of verbs, and auxiliaries (word rank) may similarly be reduced in rank to become affixes (morpheme) rank serving as parts of verb to indicate tense/aspect, modality and the like. As an intermediate step, such items may be cliticised to other elements before they become bound morphemes. This downranking over time is one aspect of grammaticization, a process whereby categories become more tightly integrated into the grammatical system and the lexicogrammatical system
creates new meanings within some grammatical subsystem. Another aspect of grammaticization is reduction in delicacy: see below.

2.3 (3) By delicacy: from more general to more particular

Rank can be interpreted as a principle for distributing a lexicogrammatical system into a number of different domains or units organized into a constituency hierarchy, or hierarchy of organic wholes and their parts (a 'holarchy', as it has been called with reference to biological and other non-semiotic systems). This factoring of the overall system into subsystems according to rank makes the overall system both simpler and more powerful. It makes the overall system simpler precisely because it is factored or partitioned into subsystems that are relatively independent of one another and interact through preselection rather than 'wiring' in a system network. Each subsystem thus has its own domain of responsibility. It makes the overall system more powerful because since each subsystem has its own domain of responsibility, the different subsystems are in principle freely variable with respect to one another so that the overall potential of the lexicogrammatical system is the total intersection of all possible features within all subsystems. This total intersection is, in fact, infinite since, when a system is ranked (i.e. factored into subsystems according to rank), its potential can expand through rankshift (see above): for example, a clause can serve as if it were a group or word, thus opening up the full clausal subsystem at group or word rank.

As an organizational principle, rank is reasonable easy to detect (although, in linguistics, it has sometimes been confused with other principles of organization, notably stratification: sometimes morphemes have been wrongly thought to consist of phonemes instead of being realized by [sequences of] phonemes); rank represents a fairly overt or explicit kind of order — that of a whole to its parts, and it is even reflected partially in many writing systems. However, lexicogrammar is also organized in a more covert or implicit kind of way. We have already referred to this kind of organization: the ordering of the systems of a system network in a relation of delicacy. For example, the systems PROCESS TYPE, TYPE-OF-BEING, and RELATION TYPE in Figure 12 are ordered in increasing delicacy. This kind of lexicogrammatical order is more covert in that it is not directly reflected in the wording of a grammatical unit; rather, it is a more abstract kind of order that is imposed on the systems whose options that wording realizes.

Delicacy is a very simple yet powerful principle of organization. It orders systems on a cline from the most general systems of options to the most specific ones; and at the same time, it orders realizations of these options according to their systemic environment. This means that the realizational properties of a clause or any other grammatical unit can be 'placed' in the system so that it applies only to the appropriate subset of units. For example, only 'yes-no interrogative' clauses have the realizational property of Finite preceding Subject (i.e., Finite ^ Subject); it does not apply to interrogative clauses in general, nor to indicative clauses in general, nor to major clauses in general. By the same token, if 'indicative' clauses have the realizational property of having an explicit Subject (i.e., + Subject), then all more delicate options accessible from 'indicative', such as 'yes-no interrogative' also have that property (cf. Figures 4 and 7 above). That is, realizational properties are inherited along the cline of delicacy from less delicate to more delicate. Delicacy can thus be interpreted as a general principle for organizing lexicogrammar, just like rank; more specifically, it is a principle for distributing information in lexicogrammar according to taxonomic domain of application.

But delicacy is, in fact, more than an ordering of systemic options and, by implication, the realization statements associated with them. It is also the principle according to which the two 'parts' of lexicogrammar, lexis (vocabulary) and grammar are related. Looked at from the point of view of grammar, lexis is most delicate grammar; and looked at from the point of view of lexis, grammar is least delicate (most general) lexis. In other words, the systemic options of the more general systems in the system network (such as 'declarative/ interrogative'; 'wh-/yes-no'; 'material/ mental/ verbal/ relational'; 'existential/ expanding relational'; 'intensive/ possessive/ circumstantial'; 'specific/ non-specific') are realized by grammatical structure fragments (e.g. Subject ^ Finite, Process + Existential) or grammatical items (e.g. interpersonal particles ka, ne, yo in Japanese or ma, ne, ba in Chinese; determiners such as the/ this/ that and auxiliary verbs such as do, be, have in English), whereas the more delicate options are realized by lexical items (e.g. lexical verbs be/ represent/ mean/ indicate/ symbolize; and lexical nouns man/
boy/woman/girl. As we have noted, delicacy is a cline, so there are regions intermediate between grammar and lexis, such as prepositions in English and phase in Chinese. Such intermediate regions serve to reveal the gradual move between grammar and lexis along the scale of delicacy. And one aspect of the semogenic process of grammaticization is the move over time of items from lexis to grammar as they are generalized; for example, it is common in languages for some lexical items of motion to be generalized in delicacy to serve as grammatical items realizing options in tense systems (cf. English going to, French venir de, Swedish komma att) and for some lexical items of material manipulation: grabbing, taking to be generalized in delicacy to serve as grammatical items marking Goals (under certain conditions; cf. Chinese ba, originally a lexical verb 'take'). Figure 18 gives a very simple example of the move towards lexical delicacy in the system of PROCESS TYPE in English within relational clauses.

Fig. 18: Towards lexical delicacy in intensive ascriptive relational clauses

Grammar and lexis are never totally divorced from one another. On the one hand, small lexical sets are often associated with little 'local grammars', i.e. delicate variations in grammatical potential, as is the case with the lexical set of perceptive processes in English (see, notice, glimpse, espie, hear, overhear, feel, taste, smell; sense, experience), which can combine with different kinds of Phenomenon than cognitive or affective processes. (For example, we can say I saw somebody crossing the street but not I thought somebody crossing the street.) On the other hand, collocations between small lexical sets typically occur between lexical items realizing closely bonded grammatical functions such as Process + Medium (neigh + horse, bark + dog; age + wine, mature + cheese), Process + Range (wreak + havoc, do + dance, make + mistake; go + mad/ crazy/ insane/ bananas/ bonkers; fall + ill/ sick), Process + Manner (regret + deeply, understand + completely), and Facet + Thing (gaggle + geese, school + fish, flock + birds); and in Chinese also Event + Result and Measure + Thing.

In the description of the lexicogrammatical systems of various languages, delicacy has proved a helpful conceptual resource for managing complexity. Lexicogrammatical systems are explored and mapped out at a fairly low degree of delicacy so that the overall distribution and organization of the system can be established. This overview that is limited in delicacy provides the map that can guide subsequent excursions into more delicate systems. This also applies to the move from grammar to lexis: lexical organization can be investigated in terms of the categories of the grammatical part of the system; that is, grammar construes the general parameters in terms of which lexical distinctions are made.
3. System and text

3.1 Function and rank

The grammatical system of every natural language can be summarily presented as a function/ rank matrix, where function is used in the sense of metafunction (see Section 2.1). So for English we can construct such a matrix as in Figure 19.
Translating Text and Context:
Translation Studies
and Systemic Functional Linguistics

Volume 1: Translation Theory
Volume 2: From Theory to Practice

By Marina Manfredi

Series Editor: Donna Rose Miller
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Prof.ssa Donna R. Miller, Chair of English Linguistics at the University of Bologna and Editor of this Series, for her numerous helpful observations and suggestions, to which the final version of the volume is indebted.
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Foreword to the first three books in the Series (2004)

Donna R. Miller
Series Editor

It is with great pleasure that I present the first three e-books of this new series of Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of English, which is contained within the superordinate: Quaderni del Centro di Studi Linguistico-Culturali (CeSLiC), a research center of which I am currently the Director and which operates within the Department of Modern Foreign Languages of the University of Bologna.

The first three volumes of this series:

• M. Freddi, *Functional Grammar: An Introduction for the EFL Student*;

• M. Lipson, *Exploring Functional Grammar*, and

• D.R. Miller (with the collaboration of A. Maiorani and M. Turci), *Language as Purposeful: Functional Varieties of Texts*.

have as their primary ‘consumers’ the students of the English Language Studies Program (ELSP) in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature of the University of Bologna, for whom they are the basic course book in each of the three years of the first-level degree course. They are the fruit of from 2 to 4 years of trialling, which was a vital part of an ‘ex-60%’

* In 2006, these first two volumes were revised and published in hardcopy by CLUEB of Bologna; on the request of the authors, they were simultaneously taken off line. The third volume remains on line and is also published in hardcopy (Bologna: Asterisco, 2005).
research project, financed in part by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, that I first proposed in 2002 and that is now into its third and final year, but which had already been initially set in motion when the reform of the university system was first made known back in 1999.

Without going into undue detail about what the reform meant for language teaching in the Italian universities, I’ll just say that in the first-level degree course our task is now twofold: parallel to the many hours of traditional EFL practice with mother-tongue speakers, there are lectures which aim at providing, over the three years, a metalinguistic description of English grammar in a functional, socio-semiotic perspective. The contents of these volumes are thus progressive and cumulative. In the first year a ‘skeleton’ of the Hallidayan Functional Grammar model is taught; in the second it is ‘fleshed out’, and in the third it is ‘animated’, as it were, put into practice, being made to work as a set of analytical tools for the investigation of the notion of register, or functional varieties of texts. A fourth volume on translation of text-types in this same perspective is also in the planning stages.

This kind of metalinguistic reflection on the nature of the language being taught and on how it works is thus relatively new for Faculties of LLS in the Italian university system. Its justification is essentially the premise put forth by F. Christie (1985/1989) apropos of the L1 learner’s education: i.e., that explicit knowledge about language on the learners part is both desirable and useful. It is our conviction that such an insight not only can but should be extended to the L2 learning situation. In short, foreign language learning at the tertiary level should not be merely a question of the further development of students’ competence in communicative skills; it should involve learning not only the language, but
about the language. Indeed, what scholars define as the ‘good’ adult language learner has long been known to readily attend to language as system and patterns of choice (Johnson 2001: 153). To design and implement this component of the syllabus and try to create the required synergy with the more practical work being done by the native speaker collaborators, so as to lead to better and more holistic L2 learning, needed, however, serious reflection and experimentation. Hence the project mentioned above, in which both Lipson and Freddi and other researchers and teachers took part.

Developing what began as sketchy class notes into proper course books that would serve the needs not only of those coming to lessons, but also of those many who, alas, don’t was one important aim of the project. Another was monitoring the success of the new dual pedagogical syllabus by means of various quantitative and qualitative studies, the details of which I will not go into here. I will, however, say that the revised curriculum has apparently proved to have a rate of success that I don’t dare yet to quantify. Moreover, a significant proportion of the students who have reached the end of their degree course report not only that they have understood what it was we are trying to do, but that they are actually convinced that our having tried to do it is valuable! Some even add that by the end they actually came to enjoy what at the beginning seemed to them a slow form of torture!

But what was it that we were trying to do, and by what means? As already said or at least implied above, we wanted, firstly, to get the students to reflect on the workings of language, tout court, and the specific functions of the English language, in particular. To do that, we wanted to investigate with them the grammar of English, but we knew we’d have to chip away at the die-hard myths surrounding the study of grammar that see it as a
boring, or even elitist, enterprise, one that is basically meaningless. We chose a functional grammar as we are firm believers in the language-culture equation. We chose the Hallidayan model because its lexicogrammatical core is inextricably tied to meaning-making on the part of human beings acting in concrete situational and cultural contexts, and we believe our students must be offered language awareness in this wider and richer perspective.

Our approach in these e-course books is consistently language-learner oriented: we have tried, in short, to keep in mind the fact that our students are L2 learners and take account of their practical learning experiences, and not only that of the complementary EFL component of their English courses. In aiming at helping them develop as learners and more particularly at empowering them through an increasing awareness of the functions of the English language in a variety of more, but also less, dominant socio-cultural contexts, we obviously aimed at working on their intercultural consciousness as well. These considerations dictated the choice for an explicit critical pedagogy that would make the workings of language as visible, and as attainable, as possible to our students (Cf. Martin 1998: 418-419). At the same time it also dictated the choice of the linguistic framework we’ve adopted, as it sees language as a vital resource not only for behaving, but also for negotiating and even modifying such behavior, and views the study of language as an exploration of “…some of the most important and pervasive of the processes by which human beings build their world” (Christie 1985/1989: v). It is our hope that we are helping our students to be able not only to participate actively in these processes, but also to act upon them in socially useful ways. Such a hope is conceivably utopistic, but some amount of idealism is eminently fitting to a concept of socially-accountable linguistics conceived as a form of political
action (Hasan & Martin (eds.) 1989: 2). It is also surely indispensable when attempting to break what is, in terms of our specific pedagogic setting, wholly new ground. We leave aside the thorny issue of English as global lingua franca, acknowledge merely that it is, and propose that these materials are proving to be effective teaching/learning resources for improving English literacy outcomes in that particular setting (Cf. Rose 1999).

From what has been said, it follows that the linguistic theory we adopt here is, at the same time, a social theory. The same cannot be said of the course that our students take (and that is obligatory in most degree courses in foreign languages and literature in Italy) in General (and generally formalist) Linguistics. As most of the students in our degree course opt to study English, this series was also conceived as a way to ensure they are provided with another way of looking at what a language is. Undoubtedly, the contrast in frameworks often slips into conflict, but we feel that their being rather uncomfortably caught between sparring approaches is a crucial part of their education – and we are starting to see that it has its positive payoffs too.

Donna R. Miller
Bologna, 10 November, 2004

Cited References:

Foreword to the fourth volume (2008)

Donna R. Miller
Series Editor

This Volume 1: Translation Theory – the first of a two-volume work by Marina Manfredi, entitled Translating Text and Context: Translation Studies and Systemic Functional Linguistics – is the latest, and very welcome, addition to the series of Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of English, within the Quaderni del Centro di Studi Linguistico-Culturali (CeSLiC). Translation Studies has recently become a central discipline for the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature of the University of Bologna, in particular since the setting up, and immediate success, of the graduate degree course in Language, Society and Communication (LSC) three years ago. The present volume is, indeed, the admirable result of three years of intense experimentation of students’ needs and desires on the part of the teacher of the course: Marina Manfredi herself. As the author states in her Introduction, the

[…] book has been conceived as a resource for graduate students of a course in Translation Studies, focused both on the main theoretical issues of the discipline and on the practical task of translating, in particular from English into Italian. Within a wide range of different contemporary approaches and methods, the purpose of Translating Text and Context is to offer a particular perspective on the theory and practice of translation, that of the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which, we believe, can prove valuable for the study of a phenomenon that we consider “[...] a complex linguistic, socio-cultural and ideological practice” (Hatim & Munday 2004: 330).
Nearly four years ago I wrote that in starting up this Series we were showing our concern with the language-learner, aiming at helping our EFL students develop as learners and, more particularly, at empowering them through an increasing awareness of the functions of the English language in a variety of socio-cultural contexts, and that in so doing we obviously aimed at working on their intercultural consciousness as well. What better way to continue that aim than to host a project that brings Functional Grammar and SFL into contact with the pre-eminently intercultural interdiscipline of translation? Manfredi is not the first translation studies scholar to do this of course, but she is the first we know of to perform a systematic account of who has, how, and why.

Confident that the students of LSC will benefit enormously from this account, which demonstrates impeccably that one needn’t turn one’s back on a cultural approach to translation in embracing a linguistics one, we await with enthusiasm the completion of *Volume 2: From Theory to Practice*, the outline of which is included in this first volume.

Donna R. Miller
Bologna, 27 February, 2008
We would not translate a personal diary as if it were a scientific article (Halliday 1992: 20).

**Introduction and Purpose**

This book has been conceived as a resource for graduate students of a course in Translation Studies (henceforth TS), focused both on the main theoretical issues of the discipline and on the practical task of translating, in particular from English into Italian. Nevertheless, its aim is not that of providing students or anyone interested in this field with an overview of the main theories of TS, even though select references and connections will be mentioned where relevant\(^1\). Rather, within a wide range of different contemporary approaches and methods, the purpose of *Translating Text and Context* is to offer a particular perspective on the theory and practice of translation, that of the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL), which, we believe, can prove valuable for the study of a phenomenon that we consider “[…] a complex linguistic, socio-cultural and ideological practice” (Hatim & Munday 2004: 330).

We do not assume that our translation students, who will inevitably come from different backgrounds, have any thorough familiarity with SFL; therefore we have tried to explain briefly some of the fundamental notions, taking care to refer to the other books of this series (Freddi 2006; Lipson 2006; Miller 2005), where those issues are much more closely examined.

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The present book is essentially rooted in the following beliefs:

(1) In translation, there is an essential interplay between theory and practice;

(2) TS is necessarily an *inter*discipline, drawing on many different disciplines, with a linguistic core;

(3) SFL can offer a model for translating language and culture, text and context;

(4) A model of translation can be valid for a wide range of text-types, from popularizing to specialized, and also literary.

Thus, we move from the strong belief that translation theory *is* relevant to translators’ problems, and not only for academic purposes, but also to the practice of a professional translator, since it can offer “[…] a set of conceptual tools [that] can be sought of as aids for mental problem-solving” (Chesterman, in Chesterman & Wagner 2002: 7).

Secondly, we recognise that TS is an interdisciplinary and do not deny the multiple insights it provides the theory of translation, especially after the so-called “cultural turn” which occurred in TS at the end of the Eighties, to which we will be coming back below, and the many important issues raised by Cultural Studies or Postcolonial Studies, for example. At the same time, we hold that linguistics in particular has much to offer the study of translation. Moreover, we argue that culturally-oriented and linguistically-oriented approaches to translation “are not necessarily mutually exclusive alternatives” (Manfredi 2007: 204). On the contrary, we posit that the inextricable link between language and culture can even be highlighted by a linguistic model that views language as a social phenomenon, indisputably embedded in culture, like that of SFL.
As is typical (see, e.g., Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997), we will focus our study on written translation and, according to R. Jakobson’s typology, on “Interlingual Translation”, or “translation proper” only (Jakobson 1959/2000).

Translating Text and Context consists of two distinct yet complementary volumes. The first one is of a theoretical nature, whereas the second one is concerned with the connections between theory and practice and the application of the SFL model to the actual practice of translating. The volumes are divided into four major interconnected parts, i.e., “On Translation”, “SFL and TS, TS and SFL”, “From Theory to Practice” and “Practice of Translation”.

The first Chapter starts with an attempt at answering such basic, but always challenging, questions as: “What is translation?” and “What is Translation Studies?”.

Chapter Two describes TS in terms of the way it has evolved into an interdisciplinary field. Then, within this framework, it moves to the assumption that linguistic studies, which offered the first systematic enquiry of the emerging discipline, can still be considered the fundamental core. In particular, we will attempt to propose the SFL approach as a viable and valid contribution to these studies.

In Chapter Three, some key terms and concepts in TS are introduced, such as the notions of ‘Equivalence’ and of ‘The Unit of Translation’, the latter strictly connected to the practice of translating.

In Chapter Four, M.A.K. Halliday’s own contribution to the theory of translation is presented.

Subsequent chapters focus on some of the key names in the discipline of TS: those who base certain aspects of their theoretical approach on the SFL framework, like J.C. Catford (Chapter Five) and, for
select issues, also P. Newmark (Chapter Six). Then, theories proposed by contemporary translation scholars working firmly in an SFL perspective are dealt with, from B. Hatim and I. Mason (Chapter Seven) to J. House (Chapter Eight).

The volume concludes with some final considerations.

In the second volume, Chapter Nine will present some examples of theoretical models which can be applied to the practice of translation, such as those proposed by scholars drawing on SFL, e.g., House (1977/1997), Bell (1991), Baker (1992) and Steiner (2004).

Chapter Ten will be concerned with a practical application of Functional Grammar (henceforth FG) to translation practice, with the aim of illustrating how the analysis of different lexico-grammatical structures, realizing three kinds of meanings and being activated by certain contexts, can prove useful to the concrete task of translating.

Chapter Eleven will be divided into seven sections, each presenting a selected Source Text (ST), representative of a range of different text-types: Divulgative (both scientific and economic), Tourist, Specialized (both in the field of politics and sociology), Literary (in the areas of postcolonial and children’s literature). A pre-translational textual and contextual analysis focusing on the main translation problems will be offered, as well as a guided translation through a discussion of possible strategies. Activities will be based exclusively on authentic texts, and every task will be preceded by a short presentation of the communicative situation and by a translation ‘brief’, in order to grant the translator a specific purpose within a given socio-cultural environment. Finally, with the patent presuppositions that, 1) translation is a decision-making process and that,
2) different ‘adequate’ solutions can be accepted, a possible Italian Target Text (TT) will be proposed.

At the end of volume 2 a Glossary will be supplied; this will contain the main terms used in the book, both in the field of TS and, to some extent, in SFL.

Tasks are designed for work in groups or individually. The main standard abbreviations that will be used throughout the two volumes are:

TS: Translation Studies
SFL: Systemic Functional Linguistics
SL: Source Language
TL: Target Language
ST: Source Text
TT: Target Text.

Ideally to be used together with a book providing an overview of the main theories of TS (e.g., Munday 2001), Translating Text and Context hopes to meet its goal of offering students the benefits that, we believe, a theoretical approach and a metalinguistic reflection can give to their practice of translation.
PART I – On Translation

1. Preliminaries on Translation

The activity of translation has a long-standing tradition and has been widely practiced throughout history, but in our rapidly changing world its role has become of paramount importance. In the new millennium, in which cultural exchanges have been widening, knowledge has been increasingly expanding and international communication has been intensifying, the phenomenon of translation has become fundamental. Be it for scientific, medical, technological, commercial, legal, cultural or literary purposes, today human communication depends heavily on translation and, consequently, interest in the field is also growing.

1.1 What is Translation?

In everyday language, translation is thought of as a text which is a “representation” or “reproduction” of an original one produced in another language (see House 2001: 247).

Let us now go into defining the phenomenon of ‘translation’ from different angles, starting from the general and moving to the more specialized.

If we look for a definition of translation in a general dictionary, we can find it described as:

• the process of translating words or text from one language into another;
• the written or spoken rendering of the meaning of a word, speech, book or other text, in another language [...] (The New Oxford Dictionary of English 1998).

As Hatim and Munday point out in examining a similar definition (2004: 3), we can immediately infer that we can analyse translation from two different perspectives: that of a ‘process’, which refers to the activity of turning a ST into a TT in another language, and that of a ‘product’, i.e. the translated text.

If we consider the definition offered by a specialist source like the Dictionary of Translation Studies by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997), we can find the phenomenon of translation explained as follows:

An incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways. For example, one may talk of translation as a process or a product, and identify such sub-types as literary translation, technical translation, subtitling and machine translation; moreover, while more typically it just refer to the transfer of written texts, the term sometimes also includes interpreting. [...] Furthermore, many writers also extend its reference to take in related activities which most would not recognize as translation as such (ibid.: 181).

This more detailed definition of translation raises at least four separate issues:

(1) Translation as a Process and/or Product;
(2) Sub-types of translation;
(3) Concern with written texts;
(4) Translation vs Non-translation.

2 Items highlighted in bold print, if not indicated otherwise, are considered key words/expressions.
First of all, we can explicitly divide up the distinction seen above into two main perspectives, those that consider translation either as a ‘process’ or a ‘product’. To this twofold categorization, Bell (1991: 13) adds a further variable, since he suggests making a distinction between translating (the process), a translation (the product) and translation (i.e., “the abstract concept which encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process”).

Secondly, it is postulated that translation entails different kinds of texts, from literary to technical. Of course this can seem quite obvious now, but it was not so for, literally, ages: for two thousand years, at least since Cicero in the first century B.C., until the second half of the twentieth century, even though the real practice of translation regarded many kinds of texts, any discussion on translation focused mainly on distinguished ‘works of art’.

From Shuttleworth and Cowie’s definition it is also clear that nowadays translation includes other forms of communication, like audiovisual translation, through subtitles – and, we may add, also dubbing. Nevertheless, and also due to space considerations, we will not take these into consideration in our two volumes.

The reference to machine translation in the quotation above makes clear that today translation is not seen as exclusively a human process and that, at least in certain professional areas, input from information technology has also had an impact, through, for instance, automatic or machine-assisted translation. Moreover, thanks to advances in new technologies, today we can also incorporate into TS the contribution of corpus linguistics, which allows both theorists and translators analysis of large amounts of electronic texts, be they STs, TTs or so-called ‘parallel
texts’ (the concept of ‘parallel texts’ will be tackled in the second volume, when dealing with the translation of specialized texts).

What Shuttleworth and Cowie indicate as being the most typical kind of translation – of the written text – is the focus of *Translating Text and Context*, which will concentrate on conventional translation between written languages, and only on ‘interlingual translation’, considered by Jakobson, as said in the Introduction, to be the only kind of ‘proper translation’ (Jakobson 1959/2000). Thus, following the main tendency (see, e.g., Hatim & Munday 2004; Munday 2001, to cite but two), interpreting is excluded as being more properly ‘oral translation of a spoken message or text’ (Shuttleworth & Cowie: 83).

Indeed, the famous Russian-born American linguist, Jakobson, in his seminal paper, “On linguistics aspects of translation”, distinguishes between three different kinds of translation:

1) “Intralingual”, or rewording;
2) “Interlingual”, or translation proper;
3) “Intersemiotic”, or transmutation


The first of these refers to “[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language” (*ibid.*: 139, emphasis added). In other words, the process of translation occurs within the same language, for instance between varieties or through paraphrase, etc.

The second kind concerns “[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language” (*ibid.*, emphasis added). In this case – the

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3 Throughout the volumes, we will avoid the common term ‘original’ to refer to the text that is being turned into another language and will rather use the more technical and precise term “Source Text” (ST). We will restrict the term ‘original’ to a text not involved in a translation process.
case of *translation proper* – the act of translation is carried out from one language to another.

The third and final kind regards “[…] an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems” (*ibid.*, *emphasis added*), such as for example through music or images.

We will thus exclude from our investigation both subtitling and dubbing, which function within a multimodal semiotic, and so would seem to belong more properly to the third category of Jakobson’s typology. In limiting ourselves to the examination of the ‘traditional’ kind of translation, between an exclusively written text translated from one language into another, from a systemic-functional perspective, we will be concentrating on ‘verbal’ language, i.e. “as opposed to music, dance and other languages of art”⁴ (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 20).

Finally, we will not include in our study those “[…] related activities which most would not recognize as translation as such” (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 181), such as translation from a metaphorical point of view or other forms of ‘transfer’ such as ‘paraphrase’, ‘pseudotranslation’, etc.

Let us go on now with our exploration of definitions of translation at different levels of systematicity. Bell starts with an informal definition of translation, which runs as follows:

> The transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as is possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text (Bell 1991: xv).

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⁴ Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) also include spoken language, which, for our purposes, as explained, will not be taken in consideration.
Clearly, every definition reflects the theoretical approach underpinning it. Bell, working within a systemic functional paradigm, even in a general description like the one above, puts forth the importance of ‘equivalence’ (see section 3.1 below for an exploration of the notion) connected with the ‘functional’ roles of the ST.

As Shuttleworth and Cowie observe (1997), throughout the history of research into translation, the phenomenon has been variously delimited by formal descriptions, echoing the frameworks of the scholars proposing them.

Thus, at the beginning of the ‘scientific’ (Newmark 1981/2) study of translation, when translation was seen merely as a strictly ‘linguistic’ operation, Catford, for instance, described it in these terms:

[…] the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) (Catford 1965: 20).

That his concern was with maintaining a kind of ‘equivalence’ between the ST and the TT is apparent.

Thirty years later, in Germany, the concept of translation as a form of ‘equivalence’ is maintained, as we can see from W. Koller’s definition:

The result of a text-processing activity, by means of which a source-language text is transposed into a target-language text. Between the resultant text in L2 (the target-language text) and the source text in L1 (the source-language text) there exists a relationship, which can be designated as a translational, or equivalence relation (1995: 196).
C. Nord’s definition, conversely, clearly reflects her closeness to ‘skopos theory’ (Reiss and Vermeer 1984); hence the importance attributed to the purpose and function of the translation in the receiving audience.

Translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanding function of the target text (translation skopos) (Nord 1991: 28).

We will conclude our brief survey of definitions concerning translation with what M.A.K. Halliday takes translation to be:

In English we use the term “translation” to refer to the total process and relationship of equivalence between two languages; we then distinguish, within translation, between “translating” (written text) and “interpreting” (spoken text). So I will use the term “translation” to cover both written and spoken equivalence; and whether the equivalence is conceived of as process or as relationship (Halliday 1992: 15).

Halliday thus proposes distinguishing the activity of ‘translation’ (as a process) from the product(s) of ‘translating’, including both ‘translation’ (concerning written text) and ‘interpreting’ (regarding spoken text). This of course reflects his notion of ‘text’, which “[…] may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of” (Halliday in Halliday & Hasan 1985/89: 10).

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In the ‘skopos theory’ of translation, ‘functional’ refers to the ‘purpose’ of the TT with reference to the target audience.
1.2 What is Translation Studies?

_The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies_ (Baker 1998) defines ‘Translation Studies’ as “[…] the academic discipline which concerns itself with the study of translation”.

Emerging in the 1970s, developing in the 1980s, and flourishing in the 1990s (Bassnett 1999: 214), TS has evolved enormously in the past twenty years and is now in the process of consolidating.

The term ‘Translation Studies’ was coined by the scholar J.S. Holmes, an Amsterdam-based lecturer and literary translator, in his well-known paper, “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”, originally presented in 1972 to the translation section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen, but published and widely read only as of 1988.

As Baker points out, although initially focusing on literary translation, TS “[…] is now understood to refer to the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation” (1998: 277).

As Snell-Hornby affirmed at the end of the Eighties, TS must embrace “[…] the whole spectrum of language, whether literary, ‘ordinary’ or ‘general language’, or language for special purposes” (Snell-Hornby 1988: 3). We agree.

Following Hatim’s definition of TS as the discipline “[…] which concerns itself with the theory and practice of translation” (Hatim 2001: 3), in _Translating Text and Context_ we deal with both. As said in the Introduction to the present volume, we firmly believe in the interconnections between theory and practice: the practice of translation without a theoretical background tends toward a purely subjective exercise,
and a theory of translation without a link to practice is simply an abstraction. As C. Yallop reminds us (1987: 347), one of Halliday’s main contributions to linguistics is his desire to build bridges between linguistic theory and professional practice. When dealing with translation, we firmly believe that this need is even stronger. Proficiency in two languages, the source one and the target one, is obviously not sufficient to become a competent translator.

Since Holmes’ paper, TS has evolved to such an extent that it has turned into an interdiscipline, interwoven with many other fields.

2. Translation Studies: “A House of Many Rooms”

For too long hosted within other fields, being merely considered a sub-discipline of some other domain, TS has gradually evolved into a discipline in its own right, or rather, as said, into an ‘interdiscipline’, which draws on a wide range of other disciplines and hence could be effectively described as “a house of many rooms” (Hatim 2001: 8).

2.1 TS: An Interdiscipline

For a long time dismissed as a second-rate activity, the study of translation has now acquired full academic recognition. As we have seen, in Europe translation was seen for many decades either as simple linguistic transcoding (studied as a sub-discipline of applied linguistics, and only focusing on specialized translation), or as a literary practice (viewed as a
branch of comparative literature and only concerned with the translation of canonical works of art). Even though such categorisations still survive – bringing back certain old and, one had hoped, surmounted issues – today TS occupies its rightful place as an interdiscipline. The disciplines with which it is correlated are multiple, as Figure 2 clearly shows:

One of the first moves towards interdisciplinarity can be considered M. Snell-Hornby’s “integrated approach”, which she called for at the end of the Eighties in her *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (1988/1995). The approach was meant to bridge the gap between linguistic- and literary-oriented methods, aiming at proposing a model which would embrace the whole spectrum of language and cull insights from other
disciplines, such as psychology, ethnology, philosophy, as well as cultural history, literary studies, sociocultural studies and, for specialized translation, the study of the specific domain involved (medical, legal, etc.).

In spite of some problems inherent in the model (see Munday 2001: 186), it is generally considered to have been an important step towards an interdisciplinary endeavour. Working towards the same goal, she later co-edited *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline* (Snell-Hornby *et al.* 1994).

At the end of the twentieth century, Ulrych and Bollettieri Bosinelli described the burgeoning discipline of TS as follows:

The term ‘**multidiscipline**’ is the most apt in portraying the present state of translation studies since it underlines both its **independent nature** and its **plurality of perspectives**. Translation studies can in fact be viewed as a “**metadiscipline**” that is able to accommodate diverse disciplines with their specific theoretical and methodological frameworks and thus to comprehend areas focusing, for example, on linguistic aspects of translation, cultural studies aspects, literary aspects and so on (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli 1999: 237).

Their account of TS is akin to Hatim’s view that “[t]ranslating is a multi-faceted activity, and there is room for a variety of perspectives” (Hatim 2001: 10).

### 2.2 TS and Linguistics

Along with the conviction that a multifaceted phenomenon like translation needs to be informed by multidisciplinarity, we strongly believe that, within this perspective, linguistics has much to offer the study of
translation. Indeed, we share British linguist and translation theorist P. Fawcett’s view that, without a grounding in linguistics, the translator is like “[…] somebody who is working with an incomplete toolkit” (Fawcett 1997: foreword).

Among a multitude of approaches, there are not many scholars who would completely dismiss the ties between linguistics and translation (Taylor 1997). This is because, as C. Taylor elsewhere puts it, “[…] translation is undeniably a linguistic phenomenon, at least in part” (Taylor 1998: 10).

Since linguistics deals with the study of language and how this works, and since the process of translation vitally entails language, the relevance of linguistics to translation should never be in doubt. But it must immediately be made clear that we are referring in particular to “[…] those branches of linguistics which are concerned with the […] social aspects of language use” and which locate the ST and TT firmly within their cultural contexts (see Bell 1991: 13).

As Fawcett suggests (1997: 2), the link between linguistics and translation can be twofold. On one hand, the findings of linguistics can be applied to the practice of translation; on the other hand, it is possible to establish a linguistic theory of translation. Bell even argues that translation can be invaluable to linguistics: “[…] as a vehicle for testing theory and for investigating language use” (Bell 1991: xvi)\(^6\).

One of the first to propose that linguistics should affect the study of translation was Jakobson who, in 1959, affirmed:

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Any comparison of two languages implies an examination of their mutual translatability; the widespread practice of interlingual communication, particularly translating activities, must be kept under constant scrutiny by linguistic science (1959/2000: 233-34, emphasis added).

In 1965, Catford opened his, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, with the following assertion:

Clearly, then, any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language – a general linguistic theory (Catford 1965: 1).

After centuries dominated by a recurring and, according to G. Steiner, ‘sterile’ (1998: 319) debate over ‘literal’, ‘free’ and ‘faithful’ translation, in the 1950s and 1960s more systematic approaches to the study of translation emerged and they were linguistically-oriented (like for example those of Vinay and Darbelnet, Mounin, Nida, see Munday 2001: 9). Thus linguistics can be said to have “[…] had the advantage of drawing [translation] away from its intuitive approach and of providing it with a scientific foundation” (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli 1999: 229). To borrow Munday’s words, “[t]he more systematic and ‘scientific’ approach in many ways began to mark out the territory of the academic investigation of translation”, represented by Nida, and, in Germany, by Wills, Koller, Kade, Neubert (see Munday 2001: 9).

Over the following years, as Ulrych and Bollettieri Bosinelli emphasize, the ties between translation and linguistics got even stronger, thanks to the development within linguistics of new paradigms which considered “[…] language as a social phenomenon that takes place within specific cultural contexts”, like discourse analysis, text linguistics, sociolinguistics and pragmatics (Ulrych & Bollettieri Bosinelli 1999: 229).
And we argue that Hallidayan linguistics occupies a rightful place among these models.

In spite of all this, on many sides the relevance of linguistics to translation has also been critiqued, or worse, neglected. In 1991, Bell showed his contempt for such a sceptical attitude. He finds it paradoxical that many translation theorists should make little systematic use of the techniques and insights offered by linguistics, but also that many linguists should have little or no interest in the theory of translation. In his view, if translation scholars do not draw heavily on linguistics, they can hardly move beyond a subjective and arbitrary evaluation of the products, i.e. translated texts; they are, in short, doomed to have no concern for the process (Bell 1991).

Similarly, Hatim warns against those (not better specified) introductory books on TS which tend to criticize the role of linguistics in the theory of translation and blame it for any, or all, failures in translation. Indeed, he says, their argument seems to focus on abstract, i.e., far from concrete, structural and transformational models only, and that these, admittedly, do not offer many insights to the practice of translation. Yet, they seem to ignore those branches within linguistics which are not divorced from practice and whose contribution to translation is vital (Hatim 2001: xiv-xv).

However, despite this scepticism, born primarily of a failure to distinguish between a linguistics practised in vitro and one that is rooted in the social, a genuine interest in linguistics does continue to thrive in TS. Indeed, even though Snell-Hornby takes her distance from it, recently TS seems to have been characterized by a new ‘linguistic turn’ (Snell-Hornby 2006).
Denigration of linguistic models has occurred especially since the 1980s, when TS was characterized by the so-called ‘cultural turn’ (Bassnett & Lefevre 1990). What happened was a shift from linguistically-oriented approaches to culturally-oriented ones. Influenced by cultural studies, TS has put more emphasis on the cultural aspects of translation and even a linguist like Snell-Hornby has defined translation as a “cross-cultural event” (1987), H.J. Vermeer has claimed that a translator should be ‘pluricultural’ (see Snell-Hornby 1988: 46), while V. Ivir has gone so far as to state that “translating means translating cultures, not languages” (Ivir 1987: 35).

Nevertheless, we would argue that taking account of culture does not necessarily mean having to dismiss any kind of linguistic approach to translation. As we have seen, even from a linguistic point of view, language and culture are inextricably connected (see James 1996; Kramsch 1998, among others). Moreover, as J. House clearly states (2002: 92-93), if we opt for contextually-oriented linguistic approaches – which see language as a social phenomenon embedded in culture and view the properly understood meaning of any linguistic item as requiring reference to the cultural context – we can tackle translation from both a linguistic and cultural perspective. We totally share House’s view that it is possible,

[…] while considering translation to be a particular type of culturally determined practice, [to] also hold that it is, at its core, a predominantly linguistic procedure (ibid.: 93).

Thus, as suggested by Garzone (2005: 66-67), in order to enhance the role of culture when translating, it is not at all necessary to reject the fact that translation is primarily a linguistic activity. On the contrary, if we
aim at a cultural goal, we will best do so through linguistic procedures. And we feel that an SFL approach makes a worthwhile contribution towards just this purpose.

2.3 Why Systemic Functional Linguistics?

We conceive translation “[…] as a textual practice and translations as meaningful records of communicative events” (Hatim 2001: 10) and we are pleased to locate ourselves within what Hatim calls the ‘contextual turn’ occurring in linguistics (ibid.).

Let us now explain why we are convinced that SFL can prove itself useful to the theory and practice of translation and why we thus propose to explore the theoretical problems of translation through a systemic-functional perspective and to adopt FG as an instrument of text analysis and of the production of a new text in the TL.

As said, we are following the systemic-functional model of grammar as proposed by M.A.K. Halliday, the central figure of SFL (Halliday 1985/1994; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004).

Although folk notions might still at times claim that proficiency in a foreign language – and, we wish to point out, of two languages at least! – along with a couple of dictionaries are all that one needs to produce a translation, we know that it is not so. As Hatim observes, I.A. Richards once described translation as “[…] very probably the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos” (Richards, in Hatim 2001). Apart from proficiency in two languages, the source and target ones, translation presupposes much knowledge and know-how – together with
the flexibility, and capacity, to draw on a wide range of other disciplines, depending on the text being translated.

Even though the most evident problems that come up when translating may seem to be a matter of words and expressions, translation is *not* only a matter of vocabulary: grammar also plays a large and important role. Indeed, FG prefers to talk in terms of lexico-grammar, which includes both grammar and lexis (Halliday 1978: 39). With reference to its important role in translation, C. Taylor Torsello has this to say:

> [...] grammar should be a part of the education of a translator, and in particular functional grammar since it is concerned with language in texts and with the role grammar plays, in combination with lexicon, in carrying out specific functions and realizing specific types of meaning (Taylor Torsello 1996: 88).

After this revealing statement, we might say that we have just found a quite convincing answer to our question: why SFL? However, it is better for us to proceed gradually as we enter the realm of FG; it is best for us to illustrate, step by step, why we consider it relevant to the study of translation.

The main focus of FG should become clear from the definition offered by Halliday himself:

> It is functional in the sense that it is designed to account for how the language is used. Every text [...] unfolds in some context of use [...]. A functional grammar is essentially a ‘natural’ grammar in the sense that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used (Halliday 1985/1994: xiii, emphasis in the original).
FG is not, therefore, concerned with a static or prescriptive kind of language study, but rather describes language in actual use and centres around texts and their contexts. Since it concerns language, and how language is realised in texts, in consequence it is also fit to deal with the actual goal of a translator: translating texts (see Taylor Torsello 1996: 91).

But what is text? Halliday and Hasan define it as “[…] a unit of language in use” (1976: 1) and Miller as “[…] a fragment of the culture that produces it” (Miller 1993, quoted in Miller 2005). Thanks to these two complementary definitions, we may say that our purpose is clear. We are not interested in a linguistic framework that advocates a static and normative kind of approach to language and text, but rather in one that sees language as dynamic communication and language as “social semiotic” (Halliday 1978). Indeed, SFL concerns itself with how language works, how it is organized and what social functions it serves. In other words, it is a socio-linguistically and contextually-oriented framework, where language is viewed as being embedded in culture, and where meanings can be properly understood only with reference to the cultural environment in which they are realised.

Even simply from your own study of a foreign language, you will realise that language is not a simple matter of vocabulary and grammar, but that it can never be separated from the culture it operates in and is always part of a context. And, if you know the words, but do not recognise and understand the meanings, it is because you do not share the background knowledge of a different language/culture. Or, if you have problems knowing which lexico-grammar is appropriate for a particular event, then you may have problems with situated communication, since language use will vary according to different contexts. All this is even more evident when dealing with the activity of translation, when you are faced not only
with recognising and understanding a different social and cultural source context, but also with being able to reproduce meanings in a totally different environment, the target one. And this is true both for languages that are culturally ‘close’ and for those that are culturally ‘distant’.

In short, a translator deals with two different cultures, the source and the target one, and is often faced with the problem of identifying culture-specificity, which obliges finding a way to convey those features to his or her cultural audience. As a result, we believe that an approach which focuses on language embedded in context can prove itself to be a real help in the act of translating.

When faced with the translation of a text, of any kind, be it literary or specialized, if a translator is able, working Bottom-Up, to go from the lexico-grammatical realizations to the identification of the meanings these realize in the text and also to reconstruct the ‘context of situation’ and ‘of culture’ which activated such meanings and wordings, then s/he will also be able to translate it accordingly, taking into account both the source and the target contexts. Before moving on, we wish to make clear that, in SFL, by ‘context’ we do not refer to the general meaning of ‘text around our text’, for which we use the term ‘co-text’, but we refer to a precise and specific concept that we will now explore further.

It was Malinoswki, an anthropologist, who in 1923 first proposed the notions of ‘Context of Situation’ and ‘Context of Culture’. And it is interesting for us to observe, as Halliday reminds us, that Malinowski’s insights came after his own work on translation problems, in particular those connected with texts from so-called ‘exotic’, or ‘primitive’, cultures, gathered during his research in Melanesia (Halliday 1992: 24). The notions were then further developed by Firth (Halliday and Hasan 1985/1989: 8) and then incorporated into the FG model by Halliday.
The common notion of ‘context’, not unknown to general language studies and various schools of linguistics, is viewed in FG from two different perspectives: firstly, from the point of view of the immediate and specific material and social situation in which the text is being used, and secondly, from the perspective of the general ‘belief and value system’, or ‘cultural paradigm’, or ‘ideology’ (Miller 2005: 2) in which it functions and with which it is aligned, or not. Visually, we could represent these two kinds of context as in figure 2:

So that “[…] a text always occurs in two contexts, one within the other” (Butt et al. 2000: 3). Any text is therefore strictly related both to the immediate context enveloping it, i.e. the Context of Situation, and to the ‘outer’ Context of Culture. In other words, any text is an expression of a
specific situation and of a wider social, historical, political, ideological, etc. environment. Culture can be defined as “a set of interrelated semiotic (i.e., meaning) systems” (Miller 2005: 2).

In SFL, the Context of Situation is seen as comprising three components, called ‘Field’, ‘Tenor’ and ‘Mode’. Let us see briefly what they consist of.

‘Field’ concerns the kind of action taking place and its social nature; ‘Tenor’ regards the interactive roles involved in the text creation (who is taking part, his or her status and discourse role), and ‘Mode’ refers to the function of language in the organization of the text.

A thorough and correct understanding of these three variables is fundamental, we believe, for the translator. A translator who is capable of identifying these different dimensions and is able to reproduce them in a different language, the TL, is better able to offer a text which is ‘functionally equivalent’ to the source one, even though the structures be different – because languages are different.

The concept of Context of Situation is strictly linked to the notion of ‘Register’, defined as a ‘functional variety of language’ (Halliday 1985/89: 38 ff). At the centre is the issue of language variability according to ‘use’ (Halliday & Hasan 1985/89). But we will explore this important issue and the questions it raises that specifically relate to translation when presenting the theoretical model of two translation scholars who draw heavily on SFL: Hatim and Mason (1990, see chapter 7 below). Likewise, the aspect of variation according to ‘user’ (Halliday & Hasan 1985/89), a further input offered by SFL to TS, will also be dealt with in reference to the specific problem of rendering dialect into a TL, as proposed by translation theorists.

7 For a thorough discussion and illustration of the issue, see the other books of the series, in particular Lipson (2006) and Miller (2005).
such as Catford (1965), first, and, again, Hatim and Mason (1990), later (see chapters 5; 7).

Until now we have focused on the extra-textual notion of context. The fact that a text is contextually-motivated, however, does not help us to understand all its layers, in order to be able to produce a translation in a TL. When translating, we are constantly confronted with the issue of meaning. Halliday posits that

Grammar is the central processing unit of language, the powerhouse where meanings are created; it is hardly conceivable that the systems by which these meanings are expressed should have evolved along lines significantly different from the grammar itself (Halliday 1985/1994: 15).

A functional approach to grammar that views “[…] language essentially as a system of ‘meaning potential’” (Halliday 1978: 39), i.e. as a “resource for making meaning” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 23) can be extremely useful for our purposes. As Taylor puts it, “[…] the translator is primarily concerned with conveying meaning through the vehicle of language” (Taylor 1993).

The three variables of the Context of Situation illustrated above, i.e. ‘Field’, ‘Tenor’ and ‘Mode’, affect our language choices because they are linked to the three main functions of language that language construes, which Halliday calls ‘semantic metafunctions’, i.e. the ‘Ideational’, ‘Interpersonal’ and ‘Textual’. Very briefly\(^8\): the ‘Field’ of discourse is seen as activating ‘Ideational Meanings’; ‘Tenor’ as determining ‘Interpersonal Meanings’ and ‘Mode’ as triggering ‘Textual Meanings’. To put it briefly, ‘Ideational Meanings’ are the result of language being used to represent

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8 For a fuller illustration of the metafunctions of language, see the other books of the series, in particular, Freddi (2006); Lipson (2006).
experience, ‘Interpersonal’, of language which is used for human interaction, and ‘Textual’, of the need for a text to be a coherent and cohesive whole. Figure 3 gives us an overview of the extra-linguistic and linguistic levels in the process of text-making:

![Diagram of the multi-coding system of language](image)

**Figure 3: The multi-coding system of language (Adapted from Butt et al., 2000: 7)**

It is our firm conviction that a translator must attempt to translate all three different kinds meanings, because, as Steiner and Yallop assert, texts are “[…] configurations of multidimensional meanings, rather than containers of content” (Steiner & Yallop 2001: 3).

Even though on the surface it might seem that the essential task of a translator is that of preserving and conveying ‘ideational meanings’, this is
not the whole story, as Halliday clearly points out when dealing with translation himself (2001: 16). In certain kinds of contexts, for example, matching the relations of social power and distance, or the patterns of speaker evaluation and appraisal (all expressions of interpersonal meanings), as construed in the ST, may be even more vital to a translation than the exact preservation of the propositional content (ibid.). At the textual level, the method of topic development can be important for emphasis and to construct the discursive unwinding of the text. A translator, in other words, must in any case work, and simultaneously, at several levels of meaning.

Obviously, in order to identify these different strands of meaning, we need to work with grammar, or lexico-grammar, but always keeping in mind that, in an SFL perspective, lexico-grammar is selected according to the purposes a text is serving; thus it is a question of the choices that a speaker makes from within the total meaning potential of the language, i.e., its systems. As Halliday and Matthiessen put it:

A text is the product of ongoing selections in a very large network of systems [...]. Systemic theory gets its name from the fact that the grammar of a language is represented in the form of system networks, not as an inventory of structures. Of course, structure is an essential part of the description; but it is interpreted as the outward form taken by systemic choices, not as the defining characteristic of language. A language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 23).

Thus we come to another key concept in SFL: the notion of ‘system’ – hence ‘systemic’. “Structure is the syntagmatic ordering in language: patterns, or regularities, in what goes together with what […]” (Halliday
1978: 40-41), which corresponds to the paradigmatic ordering in language (ibid.: 22, emphasis in the original). In other words, systemic linguistics examines what people actually ‘do’ with language with reference to what they ‘could’ do, in terms of choices among systems. Any language offers a speaker or writer a set of alternatives along the paradigmatic axis, and the so-called “condition of entry” determines systems based on different choices. A writer might opt for a positive or negative polarity, or for a particular kind of Process, material, say, rather than mental, etc. His or her choice will then contribute to the realization of ‘Structure’.

But what has all this to do, practically speaking, with the translator?

Through an analysis of grammatical realization, a translator can identify different kinds of meanings. In order to understand the meaning of a text and reproduce it in another language, a translator needs to divide the text up into translatable units (see section 3.2). If s/he employs FG, s/he will be able to divide the flow of discourse into lexicogrammatical units and hence into “meaningful chunks” (Taylor 1987). That is to say, s/he can start for example with breaking down the English clause into Processes/participants/Circumstances, which are the concrete expression of certain ideational meanings which have been activated by a certain Field. In a semantic and functional perspective, the way events are represented by linguistic structures reflects what they represent in the world of experience. As Taylor says, units of meanings are universal, whereas lexicogrammatical structures are various; they can, however, be transferred from one language into another through functional ‘chunks’. Rarely will the translator be able to transfer the same linguistic elements from a ST to a TT, while s/he will most probably be able to transfer meaningful chunks.
Let us just offer a simple example taken from a literary text, in particular from a dialogue between a mother and son:

“Are you going to loaf about in the sun?”
“Certainly not”, he replied curtly.

According to traditional grammar, we would identify three adverbs suffixed in ‘ly’ (in bold). We think that, in order to translate the three adverbial groups into Italian, it would be more useful to think of them in terms of Circumstances of Manner, thus focusing on their function, instead of on the class of words they belong to, which could cause an unnecessary focus on the Italian ‘equivalent’ of English -ly: -mente. A possible translation, which we consider ‘functionally equivalent’, would then be:

“Stai andando a zonzo sotto il sole?”
“No di certo”, tagliò corto lui.

Translating the adverbial group ‘certainly’ into the prepositional phrase ‘di certo’ could help to convey the very brief answer given by the character, which the direct equivalent ‘certamente’ would not. An analogous strategy is the rendering of the verbal + adverbial group ‘replied curtly’, translated into ‘tagliò corto’, where the semantic function of Circumstance of Manner is expressed both in the Process (‘tagliò’) and in the Circumstance ‘corto’. In addition, the translation of the Adverbial Group ‘recklessly’ into the functionally equivalent Prepositional Phrase
‘senza riguardi’ could even be seen to best preserve the propositional meaning conveyed by the morpheme ‘less’, in a way that simply aiming at maintaining the class of ‘adverb’ would not.

Another illustrative example of the usefulness of an FG approach to translation choices, borrowed from Taylor (1993:100), follows: when the English ‘brown bear’ must be translated into Italian, in order to decide between the solutions orso marrone or orso bruno, the translator will have to decide whether the adjective ‘brown’ functions as an Epithet or a Classifier. In the former case, ‘brown’ will simply be referring to the colour of the animal and will be best translated into ‘marrone’, while in the latter case it will classify it according to a zoological distinction and thus will best be rendered as ‘bruno’.

Even though we have been moved from Context to Text in our discussion, that is to say, have worked in a Top-Down fashion, we will not follow this line in our practical applications of the model in the second volume. Although a Top-Down approach, starting with the context in which a text is situated, is valid from a theoretical point of view for many purposes, we think that a translation student who has to translate an actual text should start with that text. After all, as Halliday acknowledges:

A text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one. But meanings are realized through wordings; and without a theory of wordings – that is, a grammar – there is no way of making explicit one’s interpretation of the meaning of a text (Halliday 1985/1994: xvii).

That is to say, text is a meaningful unit, but in order to guide students towards meaning(s), we prefer to start from the bottom, i.e. from the
analysis of the lexico-grammatical realizations. We will then look at STs and their possible translation from a micro- to a macro-level. As Taylor observes, the translator’s “[…] problems can be said to start with the word and finish with the text” (Taylor 1990: 71).

It is for this reason that, for the practice of translation, we will adopt a Bottom-Up approach, in keeping with the following steps:

(1) Text-analysis of the lexico-grammar of the ST;

(2) analysis of the three strands of meanings realized by lexico-grammar;

(3) analysis of the context of situation and of culture;

(4) analysis of possible translation strategies aimed at producing a ‘functionally equivalent’ TT.

We are of course aware that, for the professional and expert translator, these steps can sometimes, even often, be dealt with at the same time.

All of the theoretical issues outlined here will be taken up again and explored further in the second volume, where our aim is that of illustrating how linguistics and the theory of translation can be fruitfully applied to the actual practice of translating.

In the second part of this volume, we will see how SFL has been related to the theory of translation, from the standpoint of both linguistics and of TS. We will start with Halliday’s own comments on the theory and practice of translation and will proceed with a series of translation scholars who, working in the framework of translation theory and TS, have
appropriated specific SFL notions in formulating their own views on translation: Catford, Newmark, Hatim and Mason, House⁹.

3. Some Issues of Translation

3.1 Equivalence

The notion of ‘equivalence’ has definitely represented a key issue throughout the history of TS. A central concept in the theories of most scholars working within a linguistic paradigm, it has been particularly criticized by theorists invoking a cultural frame of reference.

House notes that in point of fact the idea of ‘equivalence’ is also reflected in our everyday understanding of the term ‘translation’: non-linguistically trained persons mostly think of it as a text which is some sort of ‘reproduction’ of another text, originally written in another language (House 2001: 247).

Basically, ‘equivalence’ is “[a] term used by many writers to describe the nature and the extent of the relationships which exist between ST and TL texts [...]” (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 49); usually, the relationship “[...] allows the TT to be considered as a translation of the ST in the first place” (Kenny, in Baker 1998: 77). Nevertheless, the concept remains controversial and opinions vary radically as to its exact meaning.

⁹ In the second volume, where our focus is on moving “From Theory to Practice”, we will be concretely illustrating diverse translation models informed by SFL, and seeing how they can be practically applied to the process of translation (e.g., Bell 1991; Baker 1992; Steiner 2004). Indeed, we consider them particularly useful to our purpose: demonstrating to students how theoretical notions, both in the field of Linguistics and of Translation Studies, can be strategically and effectively applied to the real practice of translation.
It is not the goal of this study to investigate these differences in detail, but it seems necessary to offer at least an overview of the heated debate carried out in TS with reference to this plainly central concept.

After centuries dominated by the argument over ‘literal’ and ‘free’ translation, the 1950s and 1960s saw the focus shifting to the key issue of ‘equivalence’, conceived as a sort of *tertium comparationis* between a ST and a TT (Munday 2001; Snell-Hornby 1988).

As Munday reminds us (2001: 36), Jakobson dealt with “[…] the thorny problem of equivalence” with his famous definition of “equivalence in difference” (*ibid.*: 37). According to Jakobson, due to inevitable differences between languages, there could never be a “[…] full equivalence between code-units” (*ibid.*: 36).

Ever since Jakobson’s approach to the question of equivalence, it has become a recurrent theme of TS (*ibid.*: 37). For many years the concept was considered essential to any definition of translation and, as Snell-Hornby observes (1988), all definitions of translation could be considered variations on this theme: Catford’s and Koller’s are illustrative examples of the mainstream trend (see section 1.1 above).

Similarly, Nida and Taber (1969) defined the phenomenon of translation in these terms:

> Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (1969: 12).

Catford too clearly advocated a theory of translation based on equivalence (for his specific theory, see 5.2 below):
The central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence (1965: 21).

The distinction between two different kinds of equivalence postulated by Nida was to prove influential: that is, ‘formal’ vs. ‘dynamic equivalence’, the former aiming at matching as closely as possible the elements of the SL, the latter at producing, for the target reader, an ‘equivalent effect’, very similar to the one afforded the source audience\(^\text{10}\) (Nida 1964).

Up to the end of the 1970s, as Snell-Hornby reports (1988: 15), most linguistically-oriented theories were centred around the concept of equivalence (e.g., Kade 1968; Reiss 1971; Wilss 1977). Subsequently, attempts were made to develop typologies of equivalence. For instance, in Germany, Koller (1979), who made a distinction between \textit{Korrespondenz} (the similarity between language systems) and \textit{Äquivalenz} (the equivalence relation between ST-TT pairs and contexts), proposed to distinguish between five kinds of equivalence: ‘Denotative’, ‘Connotative’, ‘Text-normative’, ‘Pragmatic’ and ‘Formal’ (see Munday 2001: 47).

In the 1980s, the concept reappeared in a new light, ‘resuscitated’, as it were, by Neubert (1984), who put forward his idea of ‘text-bound equivalence’ (see Snell-Hornby 1988: 22).

On the other hand, Reiss and Vermeer (1984) rejected the concept of translation as aiming at being an equivalent version, while Hermans described it as a ‘troubled notion’ (1995: 217).

Particularly critical among non-linguistically oriented scholars, however, was Snell-Hornby, who totally rejected the notion of equivalence

\(^{10}\) For an investigation of Nida’s theory, see Munday (2001), chapter 3.
as resting “[...] on a shaky basis: it presupposes a degree of symmetry between languages” (1988: 16).

Actually, as Kenny points out, criticism was essentially limited to a concept of equivalence between language systems, and thus to “[...] incompatibilities between the worlds inhabited by speakers of different languages and on the stuctural dissimilarities between languages” (Kenny, in Baker 1998: 78-79). Once the focus of attention was moved to actual texts, with their co-text, with both seen as being embedded in a context, the notion became less problematic (ibid.: 79).

Baker herself centred her whole course-book, *In other Words* (1992), around the concept of equivalence, but considering it at different levels: of the word, phrase, grammar (meaning syntax), text and pragmatics. At the same time, she recognized that it “[...] is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors and is therefore always relative” (Baker 1992: 6). Similarly, Ivir defended the concept of equivalence as relative and not absolute, being strictly connected to the context of situation of the text (1996: 44).

In the past fifteen years or so, scholars working within an SFL perspective have revitalized the notion of equivalence as a relative concept being underpinned by the idea of ‘function’. Bell, for example, supported a functional equivalence according to the purpose of the translation (Bell 1991: 7). House adopted the concept in her model, both “[...] as a concept constitutive of translation [...]” and as “[...] the fundamental criterion of translation quality” (House 2001: 247). Aware that equivalence cannot have to do simply with formal similarities, she called for a ‘functional, pragmatic equivalence’ (House 1997).

Halliday, who based his definition of translation on the notion of equivalence (see 1.1 above), has more recently reassessed the centrality of
equivalence in translation quality and proposed a categorization according to three parameters, i.e. ‘Stratification’, ‘Metafunction’ and ‘Rank’ (Halliday 2001: 15). These aspects will be examined in chapter 4 below).

On the concept of ‘functional equivalence’, Steiner has argued against a need for stringent register feature equivalence:

For something to count as a translation, it need not have the same register features as its source text, but register features which function similarly to those of the original in their context of culture (Steiner 2001).

Yallop has gone even further and has tackled the dilemma of equivalence from a very different perspective. Given that, he says, everything in the world is unique, from material objects to texts, all we can do is to construe “equivalence out of difference”: if two things are identical, it will be within limits, “for relevant purposes” and “in a particular functional context” (2001: 229ff, emphasis added). He provides the example of an adaptation of Alice in Wonderland into the Australian language, Pitjantjatjara, where he attempts to fit correspondences and “[...] similarities into relationships that we are willing to accept as equivalent for the occasion and purpose” (ibid.: 231).

3.2 The Unit of Translation

The point is that ‘meaning’ is realized in the language of the source text and must be realized subsequently in the language of the target text, and it makes no more sense to suggest that translators can ignore linguistic units than it would to suggest that car drivers can ignore the steering mechanism when turning corners (Malmkjær, in Baker 1998: 287).
The previous discussion on the concept of ‘equivalence’ is strictly linked to another crucial notion in the study of translation: the ‘unit of translation’. If we accept that a translation should aim at some sort of ‘equivalence’, even though contextual and functional, are there any linguistic elements that absolutely must be taken into consideration during the translation process? And, if so, which are they?

As for the first question, we can answer that a division of the ST to be translated (or of a translated TT) into linguistic (and semantic) units, before analysis, can be illuminating for the very process of translation.

Let us first define the notion of ‘translation unit’. By ‘unit of translation’, we refer to “[…] the linguistic level at which ST is recodified in TL” (Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997: 192). To put it simply, we mean the linguistic level used by the translator in his or her act of translating. Translation theorists have proposed different kinds of unit.

In the earlier stages of the debate on ‘equivalence’, opinions differed as to what exactly was to be equivalent. Words? Or longer units? If we go back to the age-old translation strategies ‘literal’ vs ‘free’, the former was most evidently centred on the individual word, while the latter focussed on a longer stretch of language (Hatim & Munday 2004: 17). Progressively, among translation scholars there emerged the concept of the ‘translation unit’.

If we consider how words are organized within a dictionary, we will think of the word as the main unit of translation, since each entry is treated for the most part in isolation. However, across languages, translation is not usually fixed to an individual word. In the 1950s, Vinay and Darbelnet rejected the word as a unit of translation and alternatively proposed the
concept of ‘lexicological unit’ or ‘unit of thought’, linked to semantics (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958, in ibid.: 18).

In general, throughout the 1970s, especially within linguistic frames of reference, equivalence was aimed at obtaining between translation units, which were seen as cohesive segments “[…] lying between the level of the word and the sentence” (Snell-Hornby 1988: 16). However, with the rise and development of text-linguistics, the unit of translation was sought at higher levels, such as that of the text (Hatim 2001: 33).

In the 1980s, Newmark indicated the sentence as the best unit of translation (for a closer treatment, see chapter 6 below).

In the 1990s, while Bassnett argued that the text should be the unit of translation, especially when dealing with literary prose texts (1980/1991: 118), Snell-Hornby went even further, contending that the notion of culture was to be taken as the unit of translation (Hatim & Munday 2004: 24).

In an SFL perspective, we basically adopt the clause as a unit of translation. Halliday regards it as a sensible unit to deal with, because it is at clause level that language represents events and is “[…] perhaps the most fundamental category in the whole of linguistics” (1985: 67). Together with Matthiessen, he asserts that “[...] the clause is the primary channel of grammatical energy [...]” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 31). Indeed, the two functionalist scholars maintain that

The clause is the central processing unit in the lexicogrammar – in the specific sense that it is in the clause that meanings of different kinds are mapped into an integrated grammatical structure (ibid.: 10).
Nevertheless, the unit of translation could also be treated more flexibly. As Newmark remarks, “[...] all length of language can, at different moments and also simultaneously, be used as units of translation in the course of the translation activity [...]” (Newmark 1988: 66-67).

When dealing with written translation, especially when translating literary texts, we too will refer to the sentence as a unit of translation\(^{11}\). As Hatim & Munday point out, with legal texts for example, as well as with some literary texts, sentence length plays a stylistic and functional role. Taylor too assumes that “[...] perhaps it is only really at the level of the sentence that translation equivalence can be found with any degree of certainty” (Taylor 1993). Think of Hemingway, for example, and his legendary pithy sentences (Hatim & Munday 2004: 24). On the other hand, advertisements or poetry can sometimes be best translated at the level of text, or even of culture, or of intertextual relationships (*ibid.*).

As K. Malmkjær points out, close attention to fixed-size units during the translation process – or the analysis of TTs – does not exclude the translator’s also seeing the text as a whole, or as part of a culture. We wish to stress once more, therefore, that our approach will start from the bottom, with the analysis of lexicogrammar in text, but will then move to the top, to consider the Context of Situation and then of Culture in which our text, of any kind, is functioning. Letting Malmkjær speak for us:

> Selective attention does not mean attention to units in isolation from the rest of the linguistic, cultural, or textual world in which the units are situated (Malmkjær, in Baker 1998: 288).

\(^{11}\) In SFL, ‘sentence’ refers to a graphological unit, so typical of written texts: it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 6).
PART II – SFL and TS, TS and SFL

4. M.A.K. Halliday and Translation

In this chapter we will not focus on M.A.K. Halliday’s Systemic Functional model; that, as we have already indicated, readers can go into and explore in the other books of this series. Rather, what we wish to offer here is an outline of Halliday’s own view on translation, as this emerges in particular from some articles where he offers his insights on the phenomenon. As we know, Halliday is not a translation scholar, but a linguist, or as he is fond of defining himself, a ‘grammariam’, one who, however, has also shown interest in “[...] some aspects of linguistics which relate closely to the theory and practice of translation” (1992: 15).

We will focus in particular on three articles that Halliday wrote at different times. Back in the 1960s, he approached the topic of translation in the paper, “Linguistics and machine translation” (1966) [1960]. About thirty years later, at the beginning of the 1990s, his article “Language theory and translation practice” was hosted in the newly published Italian journal, Rivista internazionale di tecnica della traduzione (1992). At the beginning of the new millennium, he appeared as the first contributing author of the volume, Exploring Translation and Multilingual Text Production: Beyond Content, edited by E. Steiner and C. Yallop (2001), with the chapter, “Towards a theory of good translation”\(^\text{12}\). Let us now look at the main issues raised by Halliday in these contributions.

Halliday’s interest in translation thus goes back to the 1960s, the early days of experiments on, and enthusiasm for, machine translation. With “Linguistics and machine translation”, he proposed a model for computer-assisted translation. Later he commented that, as far as he knew, that approach had never been adopted (Halliday 2001: 16). However, what is relevant to our topic of translation is that there he defined translation equivalence with respect to the concept of ‘rank’ (*ibid.*). In the article, he put forward the idea that

It might be of interest to set up a linguistic model of the translation process, starting not from any preconceived notions from outside the field of language study, but on the basis of linguistic concepts such as are relevant to the description of languages as modes of activity in their own right (Halliday 1966: 137).

Thus, as a linguist, he aimed at exploiting linguistics in order to construct an analytical model of the translation **process**.

In his study, based on examples from Russian and Chinese, Halliday’s discussion centred around grammatical hierarchies: in particular, he was looking for rank-bound correspondences. His idea was to list a set of equivalents at the lowest level of the rank scale (i.e., the morpheme), ranged in order of probability, then to modify the choice by moving upwards, to the context of the next higher unit, that is the word, then the group and phrase, and finally the clause. In other words, the context of any morpheme would have been the word in which it occurred, likewise, the word would have been put in a group, and so on.

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13 Halliday uses the term ‘context’ in this paper, but he is clearly talking about ‘co-text’.
With reference to his proposal for machine translation, his model was thus concerned with lexicogrammar only. He suggested that the process of translation proceeded by three ‘stages’:

(1) selection of the ‘most probable translation equivalent’ for each item at each rank;

(2) reconsideration in the light of the lexicogrammatical features of the unit above;

(3) final reconsideration in the light of the lexicogrammatical features of the TL.

He specified that these ‘stages’ were not meant as steps to be taken necessarily one after another, but rather only as abstractions which could be useful to understanding the process of translation (ibid.: 144).

It is, we think, noteworthy that the first issue (n. 0) of the translation journal, Rivista Internazionale di tecnica della traduzione, published by the School for Translators and Interpreters of Trieste University (1992), included an article warmly solicited from Halliday on “Language theory and translation practice”. The paper is rich with insights which we would examine by degrees.

At the beginning, Halliday makes the reason for his title, which avoids the expression ‘translation theory’, clear. As a linguist, he means to offer a language theory that could be useful for the practice of translation, through an analytical model of the translation process, i.e., of what happens when translating. In his view, the kind of linguistic theory which could serve this purpose is not a traditional formal grammar, one which offers prescriptive rules, but rather must be a functional grammar, conceived as an ‘explanation of potentiality’. All this is strictly connected to his notion of
‘choice’, which involves what is possible to mean, and, within this, what is more likely to be meant (Halliday 1992: 15).

He immediately states that “[i]t is obviously a key feature of translation as a process that it is concerned with meaning”, in other words, “[t]ranslation is a meaning-making activity, and we would not consider any activity to be translation if it did not result in the creation of meaning” (ibid.). Naturally, he acknowledges that the production of a meaningful text is also the goal of any kind of discourse. What distinguishes translation from any other kind of discourse activity, he points out, is that it is not only a ‘creation of meaning’, but rather a ‘guided creation of meaning’ (ibid., emphasis added).

For Halliday, a language theory which is relevant to translation thus has to be “[…] a theory of meaning as choice” and, to be this, “[…] it must embody a functional semantics” (ibid.). And, by ‘functional’, he specifies, he does not mean a vague sense of ‘use’, but rather ‘metafunction’, i.e. “[…] function as the fundamental organizing concept around which all human language has evolved” (ibid.) – which brings us to a key point: “[a] linguistics for translation must be concerned with functional semantics” (ibid.: 16).

Halliday immediately makes clear that he does not mean to imply that he is not interested in formal patterns. Indeed he is, but he insists that these become relevant only through a functional semantics. If we recall the inextricable connection between wording and meaning posited in FG, this only makes sense.

Of course, he adds, ‘semantic equivalence’ between languages and texts cannot be absolute. It can only be ‘contingent’, or ‘with respect’: i.e., “[…] with respect to the function of the given item within some context or
other” (*ibid.*, *emphasis added*). And this takes us to the notion of context (co-text, see note n. 13 above).

At this point, the key concepts of ‘meaning’, ‘function’ and ‘context’ build up Halliday’s own view of the concept of ‘equivalence’: “[i]f meaning is function in context, [...] then equivalence of meaning is equivalence of function in context” (*ibid.*). This means that the translator, when engaged in his or her activity of translating, “[...] is taking decisions all the time about what is the relevant context within which this functional equivalence is being established” (*ibid.*).

Any translator knows that if s/he is supposed to translate an SL ‘item’\(^\text{14}\) into a TL one, it will have a range of potential equivalents in the TL, and these will be not ‘free variants’; they will be ‘contextually conditioned’. This does *not* imply that a translator must opt for one solution only, that s/he has *no* choice: it only means that if s/he chooses one option instead of another, then the meaning of that choice will inevitably differ, according to the kind of context s/he is dealing with. At that point s/he will have to decide what the relevant context which conditions his/her choice is, in order to translate the given ‘item’ in the most relevant way.

But you may well now ask: what kind of context are we talking about?

The simplest case of an equivalent context (or context of equivalence) can be considered a word, as you can find it in a dictionary. But, a the full meaning of any word is, of course, only *in use*, no dictionary, not even a good one, can hope to exhaust all the factors to be taken in consideration in order to choose a most appropriate translation! As Halliday notes, linguistics can offer a theory of context, but not of translation equivalence.

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\(^{14}\) By ‘item’ Halliday means not necessarily a word, but also a morpheme or a phrase.
A first model of context that linguistics can offer the translator, he explains, derives from the functional notion of ‘constituency’ (ibid.: 17). In SFL, and as Halliday had explained with reference to his proposal for machine translation, ‘constituency’ represents the part-whole relationship in grammar, according to which larger units are made up of smaller ones, along a hierarchy: the ‘rank scale’ (Halliday 1985/1994: 3ff).

Following this model, one could move up one or more levels in the scale, although sometimes, as he says, we do not need to go beyond the immediate grammatical environment, that is the context (co-text, once again, see note n. 13 above) of wording. Nevertheless, Halliday points out, this modelling is not the whole story. Besides merely extending the grammatical environment, there are also other aspects of context that must be taken into account (ibid.: 20).

Firstly, even remaining within the level of lexicogrammar, metafunctional variation must be built in. As we have already seen in section 2.3, a piece of discourse represents a mapping of three simultaneous structures realizing three different strands of meaning (i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual). When faced with the translation of a text, as we have already mentioned, Halliday recommends examining all of them (ibid.), including, for example, the “[…] writer’s construction of his or her own subjectivity and that of the audience, of attitude to and distance from the subject-matter and so on” (ibid.), that is, what he calls interpersonal meanings.

As the epigraph with which we began this volume demonstrates, we would appropriate Halliday’s words and make them our maxim as translators: “[...] we would not translate a personal diary as if it were a scientific article” (ibid., emphasis added). But all this is leading us out of grammar and into the level of discourse semantics. And indeed, “[...] we
have to move outside the text altogether to engage with the ‘context of situation’ (ibid.: 21), or that of culture (ibid.: 23). What Halliday is calling for then is a ‘first order’ and a ‘second order’ context (ibid.), both of which the translator has to take into account.

At this point he takes us back to the key concept of his article, i.e., translation as a ‘guided creation of meaning’. Through what? Through the construction of the context of situation on the basis of the results of the analysis of the text. This context of situation will then be essential to – will ‘guide’ – the creation of the new, translated, text.

Halliday concludes this important article by summarizing what we see as being the fundamental process of translation with the following words:

In each case, we are putting some particular item in the text under focus of attention, asking why it is as it is, how it might have been different, and what effect such other choices might have made (ibid.: 25).

In his “Towards a theory of good translation” (2001), he focuses in particular on the concept of translation equivalence, which, he argues, is ‘the central organizing concept’ of translation (Halliday 2001: 15). But, we might ask, with respect to what?

In answer, he proposes a **typology of equivalences** (ibid.), in terms of a systemic functional theory, which centres on three ‘vectors’:

1. ‘Stratification’;
2. ‘Metafunction’;
3. ‘Rank’.

These are detailed in figure 4 below:
(1) ‘Stratification’, he explains, concerns “[…] the organization of language in ordered strata”, which means the phonetic/phonological, lexicogrammatical, semantic and, outside of language ‘proper’, contextual levels of the multi-coding system of language, each of which becomes accessible to us through the stratum above it.

(2) ‘Metafunction’, a term we have already been introduced to above, regards the organization of the strata concerning content, that is, concerning lexicogrammar as realising semantics, the (meta)functional components, i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual.
(3) Finally, ‘Rank’, as we’ve already seen, deals with “[…] the organization of the formal strata”, i.e. phonology and lexicogrammar, in a hierarchy (remembering that, in the grammar of English, it is made up of: clause complexes, clauses, phrases, groups, words and morphemes). This, as pointed out above, corresponds to the model adopted by Halliday when working on machine translation.

Halliday stresses that, as far as ‘stratification’ is concerned, “[…] equivalence at different strata carries differential values” (ibid.). Generally, he says, the ‘value’ is related to the highest stratum: for instance, semantic equivalence is usually granted more value than lexicogrammatical, and contextual perhaps more than anything else. However, he adds, these values need to be considered relative, since they will vary according to the specific translation task at hand.

Likewise, equivalence at different ranks will also carry different values; the highest value will tend to be assigned to the higher formal level: e.g., the clause. That is, in a sense, to say, “[…] words can vary provided the clauses are kept constant” (ibid.: 17). However, again, particular circumstances can mean that equivalence at lower ranks may have a higher value (ibid.: 16). When, in stratal terms, equivalence is sought at the highest level, i.e. that of context, the ST will have “[…] equivalent function [....] in the context of situation” (ibid.). We will be seeing concretely how all this works in volume 2 when applying the model.

As for the third vector, that is, ‘metafunction’, Halliday warns that the case is different, insomuch as there is no hierarchical relationship among the three metafunctions, at least in the system of language. As regards translation in particular, he comments, it is true that the ideational metafunction is typically thought to carry the highest value, simply because
translation equivalence is often defined in ideational terms, to such a
degree that, if a TT does not match the ST ideationally, it is not even
considered a translation. However, this is not all that counts. Criticisms are
often made of a TT that is equivalent to a ST from an ideational point of
view but not interpersonally, or textually, or both. In this case, Halliday
says that we cannot assign a scale of value, unless we posit that “[...] high
value may be accorded to equivalence in the interpersonal or textual realms
– but usually only when the ideational equivalence can be taken for granted
[...]” (ibid.: 17).

He concludes the paper by stating, rightly we think, what the actual
value of a translation relies on:

A “good” translation is a text which is a translation (i.e. is equivalent) in
respect of those linguistic features which are most valued in the given
translation context (ibid.).

5. J.C. Catford and SFL

One of the first theorists to appear in many surveys of TS (see, e.g.,
Hatim 2001; Munday 2001) is J.C. Catford, a British linguist and
translation theorist who, in the 1960s, proposed a linguistic theory of
translation where he acknowledged his debt to Firth and Halliday, both of
whom he knew.

In his well-known book, A Linguistic Theory of Translation (1965),
he became the first translation theorist to base a linguistic model on aspects
of Halliday’s early work on Scale and Category Grammar (such as Halliday
Indeed, he too considered language as working *functionally* on a range of different levels (i.e. phonology, graphology, grammar, lexis) and ranks (i.e. sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme).

Even though translation scholar Snell-Hornby later dismissed Catford’s work as “[…] now generally considered dated and of mere historical interest” (Snell-Hornby 1988: 14-15), other scholars (like, e.g., Hatim 2001; Hatim & Mason 1990; Taylor 1993) showed that they recognized the value of his contribution to the theory of translation and his insights into some linguistic aspects which had not yet been taken properly into account.

Taylor (1993) suggests that possibly Catford’s most important insights begin with his idea of ‘unit’, i.e. “[…] a stretch of language activity which is the carrier of a pattern of some kind” (1965: 5), and continue with his own application of Halliday’s notion of the hierarchical structure of units, in descending order: sentences, clauses, groups and words. Many languages are ranked in the same hierarchical way but, Taylor adds, it was Catford who first understood how the ranks at which translation equivalence occur are constantly shifting, from ‘word for word’ to ‘group for group’ (*ibid.*: 8). Furthermore, by suggesting that, when translation equivalence problems are generalised, they can provide translation rules that are applicable to other texts within the same variety or register (*ibid.*: 94), Catford was moving towards the important conclusion that “[…] for translation equivalence to occur, […] both source language and target language texts must be relatable to the *functionally* relevant features of the situation” (1965: 94, *emphasis added*).

As Hatim & Munday point out (2004: 29), Catford seems to have been the first to use the term ‘shift’ in translation. What are ‘shifts’? They
are basically small linguistic changes that occur between ST and TT (*ibid.*). In his model, Catford distinguished between two kinds of translation shifts: level shift (occurring between the levels of grammar and lexis) and category shifts (unbounded and rank-bounded). He then moved outside the text to such higher-order concepts as variety and register (Taylor 1993).

As mentioned previously, Catford sees translation as a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in a different language. However, as Fawcett notes (1997), according to Catford we do not ‘transfer’ meaning between languages, but we rather replace a SL meaning by a TL meaning – one that can function in the same or a comparable way in that situation.

According to Catford, as we have already seen, one of the central tasks of translation theory is that of defining a theory of translation that is based on equivalence (Catford 1965: 21), which he takes to be the basis upon which SL textual material is replaced by TL textual material. In Catford’s model, this can be achieved through either ‘formal correspondence’ or ‘textual equivalence’.

A formal correspondence is defined by Catford as “[…] any TL category (unit, class, structure, element of structure, etc.) which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the ‘same’ place in the ‘economy’ of the TL as the given SL category occupies in the SL” (1965: 27). Thus, a noun such as *fenêtre* may be said generally to occupy a similar place in the French language system as the noun *window* does in English – and as *finestra* does in Italian. Formal correspondence, therefore, implies a comparison between the language systems but not of specific ST-TT pairs.

When ‘formal equivalence’ is not possible, Catford suggests to aim for ‘textual equivalence’, which can be carried out through the translation ‘shifts’ we spoke of above (*ibid.*: 73). A textual equivalent is defined as
“[…]. any TL text or portion of text which is observed [...] to be the equivalent of a given SL text or portion of text” (ibid.: 27). In simple terms, ‘translation shifts’ are “[…] departures from ‘formal correspondence’ in the process of going from the SL to the TL” (Catford 1965: 73).

Catford’s book was sharply, and widely, criticized in the field of TS as being too highly theoretical and as putting forward what was essentially a ‘static’ model. The main criticism lay in the nature of his examples, which were said to be for the most part abstract, idealized and decontextualized (Agorni 2005: 15), and never related to whole texts (Munday 2001). Venuti, for example, attacked his theory for being chiefly focussed on the levels of word and sentence, and as using manufactured, i.e., unauthentic, examples (2000/2004: 327). Hatim also observes that, according to many critics, Catford saw equivalence as a phenomenon which is essentially quantifiable and thus was also criticized for what was called his ‘statistical touch’ (Hatim 2001: 16).

Newmark questioned specifically the ultimate usefulness of Catford’s listings of, for instance, sets of words that are grammatically singular in one language and plural in another. In his estimation, by illustrating issues from contrastive linguistics he may have been giving helpful tips to students needing to translate, but he certainly was not offering a valuable contribution to translation theory (Newmark 1981/82).

Fawcett remarks that even Catford himself was not unaware that his definition of textual equivalence could pose problems: the concept of sameness of situation (1997: 52), for example, is a thorny one, especially in those cases when very different cultures are involved. Nonetheless, other scholars, like Munday (2001) and Hatim (2001) point out his contribution to TS which remains, in the latter’s words “[…] one of the very few original attempts to give a systematic description of translation from a
linguistic point of view” (Fawcett 1997: 121). That alone bears witness to the merit of his work.

Moreover, as Fawcett notes, although certain scholars (see, e.g., Larose 1989; Hatim 2001) would censure him for decontextualizing the translation process, the accusation is not wholly a valid one. That is to say, Catford does make reference to context and even uses the concept of social contextual function to suggest solutions to dialect translation (Fawcett 1997). And Hatim himself admits that “[…] a glance at how Catford […] uses the concept of social-contextual function in discussing dialect translation […]” reveals that he is no stranger to a linguistics of context (Hatim 2001: 17).

And indeed he is not. In his *Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965), Catford devoted a chapter (n. 13) to the topic of “Language varieties in translation”. He defined a ‘language variety’ as “[…] a sub-set of formal and/or substantial features which correlates with a particular type of socio-situational feature” (84) and argued that in dialect translation “[…] the criterion […] is the ‘human’ or ‘social’ geographical one […] rather than a purely locational criterion” (86-87).

Catford distinguished varieties which he dubbed ‘more or less permanent’, with reference to a given performer (or group) and other ones that for him were ‘more or less transient’, i.e. that “[…] change with changes in the immediate situation of utterance” (*ibid.*: 84, *emphasis in the original*). Within the first group, he then identified ‘Idiolect’ and ‘Dialect’, sub-dividing the latter category into the following types: (proper) or geographical, temporal and social. By ‘Register’, Catford means a variety “[…] related to the wider social rôle being played by the performer at the moment of utterance: e.g., ‘scientific’, ‘religious’, ‘civil-service’, etc. (*ibid.*: 85). By ‘Style’, on the other hand, he indicates a “[…] variety related
to the number and nature of addressees and the performer’s relation to them: e.g. ‘formal’, ‘colloquial’, ‘intimate’ (*ibid.*). Catford includes in what he called ‘transient’ varieties also the notion of ‘mode’, related, in his view, to the medium of utterance, i.e. ‘spoken’ or ‘written’, what Halliday considers the ‘medium’ of the message. Halliday of course would subsequently theorise register as language variation according to use, and dialect as variation according to user: his or her geographical and social provenance (1978: 35). Style, in a literary sense, he would see as a question of de-automatised grammar (1982). However, in the 1960s, Catford’s contribution to a typology of language varieties, when applied to translation, could be considered as being quite instructive:

The concept of a ‘whole language’ is so vast and heterogeneous that it is not operationally useful for many linguistic purposes, descriptive, comparative and pedagogical. It is, therefore, desirable to have a framework of categories for the classification of ‘sub-languages’, or varieties within a total language [...] (*ibid.*: 83).

And it will be from this same quotation that, twenty-five years later, Hatim and Mason will start their own investigation into language varieties (see chapter 7).
6. Peter Newmark and SFL

In the UK, translation scholar Peter Newmark referred to Catford in his early research, then was influenced by Fillmore and case grammar, and eventually turned his attention to SFL (Taylor 1993).

In his 1987 paper, “The use of systemic linguistics in translation analysis and criticism”\(^\text{15}\), Newmark praised Halliday’s work, declaring that since the appearance of his “Categories of the theory of grammar” (1961), a functional approach to linguistic phenomena had appeared to him to be useful to translation analysis, surely more than Chomsky’s, Bloomfield’s or the Montague Grammarians’ theories (Newmark 1987: 293). He expressed his admiration for Hallidayan linguistics, opening the article with the following remark:

> Since the translator is concerned exclusively and continuously with meaning, it is not surprising that Hallidayan linguistics, which see language primarily as a meaning potential, should offer itself as a serviceable tool for determining the constituent parts of a source language text and its network of relations with its translation (ibid.).

In particular, Newmark’s closeness to Halliday is reflected in his approach to constituents, as well as to two specific aspects of grammatical analysis which, in his view, can offer valuable insights to both the translation analyst and the translator: Grammatical Metaphor and Cohesion.

\(^{15}\) The paper was first included in the volume Language Topics: Essays in honour of Michael Halliday, edited by R. Steele and T. Threadgold (1987). A revised version was then integrated into Newmark’s own monograph About Translation (1991) and became Chapter 5, entitled “The Use of Systemic Linguistics in Translation”.
Going back to Halliday’s **hierarchical approach** (i.e., a ‘rank scale’ made up of morphemes, words, groups and clauses), Newmark found that “[...] systemic grammar enables us to demonstrate the flexibility and multiplicity of grammatical variations” (1987: 294). On the basis of this, for instance, a SL nominal group may translate into a TL nominal group, but it may also be ‘rank-shifted’ – upward into a clause or downward into a word. Even though Newmark argued that ‘literal translation’ should be the first option of the translator (1981/82), he also admitted that there could be contextual reasons for preferring another solution. In his view, most ‘linguistic shifts’ (Catford 1965) or ‘transpositions’ (as Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) call variations from a grammatical point of view) could be described in this way.

Newmark simply extended Halliday’s descriptive hierarchy into: text, paragraph, sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme. In agreement with Halliday, Newmark asserted that, from an abstract point of view, none of these are more ‘important’ than another, even though in practice, “[...] the text is the ultimate court of appeal, the sentence is the basic unit of translating (not of translation), and most of the problems are centered in the lexical units, if not the words” (Newmark 1987, emphasis in the original). Thus, while Halliday’s focus is on the clause as a representation of meaning in a communicative context, Newmark identified the **sentence** as the ‘natural’ **unit of translation**. As Taylor observes, his ‘constituents boundaries’ seem, therefore, to be marked by punctuation.

Newmark stated that ‘transpositions’ and rearrangements may often occur, but that a sentence would *not* normally be divided unless there was good reason (1988: 165). He is careful to insist that any ‘rearrangements’ or ‘recasting’ must respect ‘Functional Sentence Perspective’ (Firbas
In addition, he introduced the issue of text ‘authority’, holding that “[…] the more authoritative the text, the smaller the unit of translation” (Newmark 1988: 66), and made his clear his agreement with Haas (1962) that “[t]he unit of translation should be as short as possible and as long as is necessary” (see Newmark 1987: 295). As Taylor suggests (1993), Newmark’s fundamental choice of the sentence as a basic unit of translation could be said to be linked to his admiration for the chapter on Cohesion in Halliday’s _Introducing Functional Grammar_ (1985). He is, of course, not alone.

As a matter of fact, with reference to _An Introduction to Functional Grammar_ (1985), Newmark drew our attention to two chapters in particular, i.e. “Beyond the Clause: metaphorical modes of expression” and “Around the clause: cohesion and discourse”, since, he argued, these are very much related to the very nature of translation.

As regards the first of these two chapters, which deals specifically with the concept of ‘grammatical metaphor’, Newmark went so far as to state that “[a]s I see it, this chapter could form a useful part of any translator’s training course where English is the source or target language” (1987: 295).

According to Halliday, a ‘grammatical metaphor’ is a “[…] variation in the expression of a given meaning” with reference to the more ‘congruent’ realization’, i.e, ‘non-metaphorical’ (Halliday 1985/94: 342)\(^\text{16}\). Congruent does not mean ‘better’; nor does it mean ‘more frequent’. It

\(^{16}\) For more illustration of Grammatical Metaphor, see Freddi (2006) and Lipson (2006) in this series.
simply means less metaphorical, and, perhaps, a more typical and also historically prior way of saying things. In the final analysis, it is an instance of language in which “[…] the speaker or writer has chosen to say things differently” (1994: 343). A typical example is represented by the phenomenon of ‘Nominalization’, connected with what Newmark (1987: 294) calls a “[…] non-physical figurative use of verbs”.

According to Newmark, when translating metaphors translators always have a choice. He argues that the numerous examples of metaphorical forms and ‘congruent’ rewordings included in Halliday’s valuable chapter could sensitize a translator to the need for ‘recasting’.

An example from Halliday and his own rewording are provided:

(1) The argument to the contrary is basically an appeal to the lack of synonymy in mental language (1985: 331).

(1a) In order to argue that this is not so (we) simply point out that there are no synonyms in mental language (ibid.)

Newmark comments that the second, more ‘congruent’ version could well be a ‘normal’ translation of the same sentence into French or German.

The removal of verb-nouns such as ‘argument’, ‘contrary’, ‘appeal’ and ‘lack’, especially when translating informative texts, is a common ‘shift’ (Catford 1965) or ‘transposition’ (Vinay and Darbelnet 1959), as Scarpa also points out (see Scarpa 2001).

Thus according to Newmark, Halliday’s advice to the linguist seeking to ‘de-metaphorise’ grammatical metaphors, i.e. to unscramble as far as is needed (Halliday 1994: 352-53), could even be more pertinent for a translator faced with such tasks.
In the same chapter, Halliday offers a further example of a grammatical metaphor, which, as Taylor notes, “[…] is superbly economic in English” (Taylor 1993: 94):

(2) The fifth day saw them at the summit (1994: 346)

This is congruently reworded by Halliday as:

(2a) They arrived at the summit on the fifth day.

Newmark proposes a translation of the example above into French, where the ‘incongruent’ form, i.e, the grammatical metaphor, has been turned into a more ‘congruent’ one:

(2b) C’est au cinquième jour qu’ils sont arrivés au sommet (Newmark 1987: 295)

Taylor proposes a congruent solution in Italian which “[…] could be arguably more concise”, adding that such a result is not however so common when translating into this language (1993: 94):

(2c) Al quinto giorno sono arrivati al vertice (ibid.).

The other chapter of Halliday’s *Introducing to Functional Grammar* (1985), which Newmark recommended as useful for translators, is that on Cohesion. He stressed the relevance of the chapter with the following words:
The topic of cohesion, which may have first appeared in Hasan (1968), was expanded in Halliday and Hasan (1976), and revised in Halliday (1985), has always appeared to me the most useful constituent of discourse analysis or text linguistics applicable to translation (1987: 295).

Although Halliday’s account of cohesion is wide, including both structural (Thematic and Informational structure) and non-structural elements (reference, ellipsis/substitution, lexical relations and intersentential conjunction), Newmark was interested in particular in the examination of the use of connectives and, more to the point, in the phenomenon of ‘missing’ connectives between sentences, which obliges the translator to interpret the logical connection. Connectors and prepositions cover a wide range of meanings and may thus often cause ambiguity (translating from English, yet and as are classic examples). Their meaning and function will clearly depend on the co-text they operate in. Newmark argued that, at least in the case of an ‘informative’ or ‘social’ text (i.e., as opposed to the expressive one), Halliday’s treatment could offer translators a useful tool to guide them towards deciding how far to intervene.

Finally, Newmark’s focus on the importance of grammar in translation should be remarked. In his Approaches to Translation (1981/82), in discussing the concept of “synonyms in grammar” (Newmark 1981/82: 101), or what may be more easily glossed as grammatical equivalences, he states that they are “[…] often closer and more numerous than in lexis”. Basically what he is warning against is a carefree overuse of lexical synonyms. As he notes: “[…] any replacements by lexical synonyms […] are further from the sense than the grammatical synonyms.
This becomes a plea for more grammatical dexterity and flexibility, and against lexical license, in translation practice”. If we wish to relate this concept to Italian, we can think of the possibility of tackling the problem of translating Circumstances of Manner from English into Italian through a lexicogrammatical analysis of the ST following a SFL approach (see section 2.3 above and volume 2, where the issue will be be seen at work through the actual practice of translation).

Newmark’s appreciation of Halliday’s work can be ultimately confirmed by his comment regarding his notion of register, a familiarity with which was recommended, as an “[…] invaluable [tool] both in analyzing a text, in criticizing a translation, and in training translators” (Newmark 1987: 303)17. Again, we cannot but agree.

7. Basil Hatim, Ian Mason and SFL

In the 1990s, translation scholars Basil Hatim and Ian Mason acknowledged Halliday’s and, generally speaking, SFL’s contribution to TS as follows:

 [...] a new approach developed by Michael Halliday and his colleagues in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s provided translation studies with an alternative view which approached language as text (Hatim & Mason 1990: 36).

17 Newmark’s comments on the translation of ‘restricted registers’ (Halliday 1973) will be given in volume 2 (chapter 11), when discussing the practical translation of different kinds of ‘Registers’. 
Working within a linguistic framework, they employ a Hallidayan model of language to analyse translation as communication within a sociocultural context. In particular, they offer influential insights on the issues of Register, Dialect and Ideology as applied to translation.

Their aim was to develop a theory of translation centred upon the role played by those ‘situational factors’ that, they note, translators themselves had in fact been aware of for a long time (1990: 38). Employing a social theory of language and viewing texts as expressions of communicative events, they were particularly sensible to the issue of variation in language use, which they explored in relation to translation. They examined texts as expressions of such variation, according to two dimensions, that is, following Halliday’s distinction between ‘Dialect’ and ‘Register’. Indeed, as we noted in discussing Catford’s sub-divisions of the category of dialect, for Halliday language varies ‘according to the user’ and ‘according to use’ (see Halliday 1978: 35, and also, in Halliday & Hasan 1985/89: 41). Hatim and Mason represent the distinction as you can see in Figure 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE VARIATION</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>USE</strong></td>
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<td>Registers, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. field of discourse</td>
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<td>2. mode of discourse</td>
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<td>3. tenor of discourse</td>
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Figure 5: The use-user distinction (Adapted from Hatim & Mason 1990: 46)
In their *Discourse and the Translator* (1990), Hatim and Mason deal with both kind of varieties, presenting illustrative examples connected with the activity of translation. As they clearly illustrate (Hatim & Mason 1990: 39), **User-related varieties**, that is, ‘dialects’, are linked to ‘who the speaker or writer is’. According to the user, language can vary with respect to diverse aspects, including: geographical, temporal, social, (non-) standard or idiolectal (*ibid.*) factors. Each of these features can inevitably pose problems for a translator having to tackle with it, not least because the linguistic aspect will be inextricably linked with sociocultural considerations and thus his or her decisions will have inevitable cultural implications.

Let us offer an illustrative example concerning a much-debated theme in TS, that is the translation of geographical dialects. We premise that, as Hatim and Mason unequivocally state, “[a]n awareness of geographical variation, and of the ideological and political implications that it may have, is […] essential for translators” (1990: 40). They report a particular case which occurred in the field of TV drama translation, where the problem of rendering accents is particularly manifest, as it also is in the theatre. In Scotland, a controversy had been provoked by the adoption of a Scottish accent to convey the speech of Russian peasants (*ibid.*). Clearly, linking Scots pronunciation to lower social class Russians was not exactly appreciated by the local population.

In general, as Hatim and Mason clearly demonstrate, translating geographical accents into a TL is always problematic and ‘dialectal equivalence’ is almost ‘impossible’ to achieve (*ibid.*: 41). Which dialect in the TL should be chosen, if any? If the translator renders a ST dialect into a standard variety, s/he will be taking the risk of losing the effect of the ST.
If s/he translates a SL dialect into a selected TL one, the risk will be that of causing unintended effects (or resentment!) with respect to the target audience. A further option would be that of aiming at a sort of ‘functional’ equivalence instead, modifying the standard itself, without necessarily adopting a particular regional variety: in this case a marked effect through different means would also be reproduced in the TT (ibid.: 43). Similar problems will be faced by a translator tackling other kinds of dialects, such as ‘social’ or ‘non-standard’ ones, with all of their sociocultural implications.

The second dimension of language variation which Hatim and Mason theorise with reference to translation concerns use-related varieties, i.e., ‘registers’ (see ibid.: 45). As Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964) had already pointed out back in the 1960s, language varies as its context varies and there is a relationship between a given situation and the linguistic choices which will be made within it. ‘Register’ is the term adopted to indicate this kind of variety ‘according to use’. Registers are defined according to their differences in lexicogrammar. Such differences are likely to be found in discursive activities as unlike each other as, for example, a sports commentary and a church service (ibid.: 46). As we have already seen with relation to the Hallidayan model of the context of situation (see…above), three main categories of register variation can be distinguished, that is: the Field of discourse, its Tenor and its Mode. Any discrepancy between any of these three contextual variables will make for diverse lexicogrammatical choices being made. From a translator’s point of view, Hatim and Mason suggest, it is important to establish the conventions of the situation-use in the TL, to see if the linguistic choices being made are appropriate to that ‘use’ (ibid.). But it is
vital to consider *all* register variables; and with reference to this crucial point, Halliday comments:

[… ] they determine the register collectively, not piecemeal. There I snot a great deal one can predict about the language that will be used if one knows *only* the field of discourse or *only* the tenor or the mode. But if we know all three, we can predict quite a lot (1978: 223)

Hatim and Mason’s register analysis also encompassed their investigation into the **hybrid nature of texts**, based on the assumption that, although texts are basically hybrid in their rhetorical purposes, one particular function always tends to predominate over the others (1990: 146-147). When faced with the multifunctional nature of texts, translators need to examine whether any shift might be substantially tipping the scales towards one function or another (see Hatim 2001: 118).

In a wider perspective, Hatim and Mason also brought cultural considerations into their linguistic perspective, relating linguistic choices to ideology, their definition of which, following scholars who work in a Hallidayan framework (e.g., Miller 2005: 3), is a very broad one, having nothing to do with particular *-isms*. In their view, ‘ideology’ embodies “[…] the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups” (1997: 144). They interestingly distinguish between ‘the ideology of translating’ and ‘the translation of ideology’. The former refers to the kind of orientation followed by a translator when operating within a specific sociocultural context, while the latter concerns the extent of ‘mediation’ (i.e, intervention) carried out by a translator of

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what might be thought of as being ideologically ‘sensitive’ texts (ibid.: 147).

In particular, they adopt a linguistic approach based on register analysis for the express purpose of getting insights into the all-important and interrelated cultural, social and ideological aspects of translation. For example, their invaluable investigation of a historical text concerning Mexican peoples (1997: 153-59), in which they probe the less than ‘neutral’ lexicogrammatical choices made by the translator of the text – especially with reference to the experiential meanings enacted through transitivity and the textual ones constructed in and by cohesion – skilfully reveals the ideological assumptions which were the undeniable result of those choices, so often ‘hidden’ from the untrained eye.

8. Juliane House and SFL

German linguist and translation theorist Juliane House developed a functional model of translation, first in 1977/1981). It was primarily based on Hallidayan systemic-functional theory (Halliday 1985/1994), but also drew on register linguistics (following, e.g., Biber 1988; Biber & Finegan 1994), discourse analysis and text linguistics (e.g. Edmondson & House 1981). Her functional-pragmatic model for evaluating translations first proposed in the mid-seventies was then revised in the late nineties (House 2001).

We totally agree with Hatim that House’s systemic-functional translation evaluation model has not only “[...] shed light (often for the first time) on a number of important theoretical issues” (Hatim 2001: 96), but
has also “[...] provided translation [...] **practitioners and researchers** with a **useful set of tools**” (*ibid.*, _emphasis added_). For this reason we have decided to ‘confine’ ourselves here to briefly outlining some of the fundamental notions at the base of her theory of translation, in order to reserve a deeper illustration of her remarkable model to the second volume, where we will make an attempt at applying some of the theoretical assumptions and distinctions proposed by House to the analysis and translation of concrete texts.

House stated that SFL is not only useful, but also the ‘best’ approach to apply to translation¹⁹. House’s systemic-functional translation evaluation model offers an analysis of texts in terms of three levels, that is ‘Language’, ‘Register’ and ‘Genre’ (House 2002). It starts from a textual description of the text under scrutiny along the three contextual variables of Field, Tenor and Mode. As a second step, the text is linked to other texts through the identification of its ‘Genre’, which in House’s view corresponds to “[…] a socially established category characterized in terms of the text’s communicative purpose” (*ibid.*).

As mentioned above, her model is essentially based on Halliday’s, although presenting some differences²⁰. For example, the three contextual components, Field, Tenor and Mode, are slightly refashioned (see House forthcoming), according to her translation goal. According to House, Field refers to “the nature of the social action”, with degrees of ‘generality’, ‘specificity’ or ‘granularity’ in lexical items (see House 2006). With respect to Halliday, House’s model, since concerned with translation,

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¹⁹ Personal communication, on occasion of the Conference *Lexical Complexity in Translation*, held at Pisa University on March 20th-21st, 2006.

²⁰ A detailed analysis of the model is beyond the scope of this book hence will be only briefly outlined.
presents more detailed taxonomies, even concerning vocabulary. Tenor, in her model, consists of four components: ‘Stance’ (concerns the writer’s attitudes towards the subject matter, the participants and the addressees); ‘Social Role Relationship’ (concerning roles of both writer and addressee); ‘Social Attitude’ (regarding the social distance and the level of formality between writer and addressee); ‘Participation’ (regarding the degree of emotional ‘charge’). The variable of Mode, including, as in Halliday, the component of medium for example, is also a bit more, and differently, articulated (House 2002).

House (1977; 1997) distinguished between two different types of translation: ‘Overt’ translation and ‘Covert’ translation. She herself (House 2004) acknowledged that these terms could be related to Friedrich Schleiermacher’s (1813) distinction between “verfremdende und einbürgernde Übersetzungen” (‘alienating’ and ‘integrating’ translations), a distinction which has been widely imitated – and here we think, for example, of Newmark’s distinction between ‘Semantic’ and ‘Communicative’ translation or to Lawrence Venuti’s ‘foreignizing’ and ‘domesticating’ translation strategies, just to quote a few examples in the history of TS. However, she states that her overt-covert distinction distinguishes itself from the others because “[…] it is integrated into a coherent theory of translation, within which the origin and function of these terms are consistently explicated and contextually motivated” (House 2006, emphasis added). Indeed, the choice of which kind of translation to perform is, she says, dependent on the context.

An ‘Overt’ translation, as its name suggests, is ‘overtly’ a translation and is not supposed to act as though it were a ‘second original’ (...); hence the target readers are ‘overtly’ not being directly addressed. In an overt

\[21\] For an overview on these translation strategies and methods, see Munday (2001).
translation, the ST is strictly tied to the culture in which it is rooted, and perhaps even to a specific occasion, and, at the same time, it has an independent value in its source culture. In other words, a text which calls for an ‘overt’ translation is both culture-bound and potentially of general human interest, so ‘timeless’, as it were, and offering a message that can be seen as a generalisation on some aspect of human existence. STs which call for an overt translation are, for example, works of art such as literary texts, that may transcend any specific historical meaning, or aesthetic creations with distinct historical meanings, or political speeches and religious sermons. It is for this reason that, according to House, these texts can be more easily transferred across space, time and culture, despite being marked by potentially problematic culture-specific elements.

A ‘covert’ translation, on the other hand, is a translation which presents itself and functions as a second original, one that may conceivably have been written in its own right. For House, texts which lend themselves to this second type of translation are not particularly tied to their source culture context, they are not so culture-specific, but they are, potentially, of equivalent importance for members of different cultures. As examples House offers tourist information booklets and computer manuals. However, she warns that the TL communities may have different expectations regarding communicative conventions and textual norms; in such cases the translator may have to apply a ‘cultural filter’, adapting the text to these expectations, and aiming at giving the target reader the impression that the text is an original and a translation at all.

While House sees an ‘overt’ translation as being embedded in a new speech event within the target culture, it also and at the same time co-activates the ST, together with the discourse world of the TT. By contrast, in a covert translation the translator tries to re-create an equivalent speech
event, i.e. s/he would reproduce the function(s) that the ST has in the target context. Whereas, according to House, an ‘overt’ translation could be described as a ‘language mention’, ‘covert’ translation could be likened to the notion of ‘language use’.

According to House’s analytical model, especially in the case of ‘overt’ translation, equivalence can be passably achieved at the levels of Language/Text, Register and Genre, but not at that of Function. As a matter of fact, she claims, an ‘overt’ translation will never achieve ‘functional equivalence’, but only a “second-level functional equivalence” (House 1997: 112). And she clarifies this central concept in her theory as follows:

[...] an original text and its overt translation are to be equivalent at the level of LANGUAGE/TEXT and REGISTER (with its various dimensions) as well as GENRE. At the level of the INDIVIDUAL TEXTUAL FUNCTION, functional equivalence is still possible but it is of a different nature: it can be described as enabling access to the function the original text has (had) in its discourse world or frame. As this access is realized in the target linguaculture [sic] via the translation text, a switch in the discourse world and the frame becomes necessary, i.e., the translation is differently framed, it operates in its own frame and discourse world, and can thus reach at best what I have called “second-level functional equivalence” (Ibid., emphasis in the original).

By contrast, a covert translation aims at being ‘functionally equivalent’, at the expense, if necessary, of Language/Text and of Register. For such reasons, a covert translation can also be deceptive.

House’s method aims at a sort of ‘re-contextualization’, in view of her notion of a translated text as being
a text which is doubly contextually-bound: on the one hand to its contextually embedded source text and on the other to the (potential) recipient’s communicative-contextual conditions (House 2006).

Our treatment of House has been but a thumbnail sketch of the theoretical and methodological richness of her work. As said, however, we will be coming back to that work in volume 2 repeatedly when dealing with applications of theory to translation practice.

**Some Concluding Remarks**

We would like to conclude by tracing a sort of diachronic pathway of the linkage between SFL and TS which we have attempted to demonstrate throughout this volume of our book.

In the mid-nineties, E. Ventola closed an article in which she had employed an SFL approach to the study of translation, by expressing the fervent hope that “[...] functional linguists, translation theorists and translators can look forward to having serious ‘powwows’ to plan how the theory best meets the practice” (Ventola 1995: 103). At the start of the new millennium, C. Taylor and A. Baldry were commenting, to their chagrin, that, even though “[…] a number of articles have been written on the subject […] [i]nterest in the role that systemic-functional linguistics might play in translation has never been feverish” (Taylor & Baldry 2001: 277). In the summer of 2007, C. Matthiessen presented a paper at the ISFC 2007 entitled “Multilinguuality: Translation – a “feverish” phase in SFL?”. Even though our own research had started much earlier on its own route through
enthusiasm, and difficulties, on the topic, we immediately realized that our ‘fever’ had come of age.

Yet, as we have tried to say more than once throughout this volume, this does not mean that we totally exclude ourselves from the cultural wave (or fever?) that has been exerting its influence on many fields within the human sciences and had, with the ‘cultural turn’ in TS, occurred in the late 1980s. Nevertheless, as we have tried to make clear, our aim is to bring together that turn with a linguistic approach that locates texts in the social and cultural context in which they operate: the SFL approach. Thanks to this perspective, we firmly believe, the parallels between what are only apparently different views might become more clearly observable, even to the skeptics.

And in order to be consistent with our beliefs in the need for interdisciplinarity and dialogue within TS, we wish to conclude with a comment offered by a translation scholar much quoted throughout the volume, although not always in complete agreement: M. Snell-Hornby. Although we are not displeased to find ourselves in what she considers one of the ‘U-turns’ which has occurred in TS, that is, a return to linguistics, (2006: 150-151), we concur with her view on translation and TS, expressed in the following words:

[...] Translation Studies opens up new perspectives from which other disciplines – or more especially the world around – might well benefit. It is concerned, not with languages, objects, or cultures as such, but with communication across cultures, which does not merely consist of the sum of all factors involved. And what is not yet adequately recognized is how translation (studies) could help us communicate better – a deficit that sometimes has disastrous results (ibid.: 166).
Indeed, we could not agree more. And we hope that our students – who we trust will carry on, with their own ‘feverish’ enthusiasm with “[…] one of the most central and most challenging processes in which language is involved, that of translation” (Steiner 2004: 44) – will also agree. But to a great extent, that is up to us.
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Systemic Functional Linguistics as a tool for translation teaching: towards a meaningful practice

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the centrality of meaning in the practice of translation. Since this major concern is also shared by Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004), which considers language a meaning making resource, it is argued that such an approach could serve as a helpful tool for translator education and training. After a theoretical first part, where the relevance of Systemic Functional Linguistics to the activity of translating is discussed and a cursory sketch of its key notions is outlined, the paper moves on to present illustrative segments from a small selection of English sample texts and of their translation into Italian. Dealing with different text types, and drawing on authentic teaching assignments, some lexicogrammatical features are analysed in order to identify the multidimensional meanings being realized. Special focus is on modality, ideational grammatical metaphor, thematic progression and also on APPRAISAL SYSTEMS, a model for evaluation recently developed within the framework of Hallidayan linguistics (Martin & White 2005). The empirical examples are offered to show that a textual analysis based on this perspective might represent for the translator an ideal “set of resources for describing, interpreting and making meaning” (Butt et al. 2000: 3).

1 Unless otherwise specified, italics signal added emphasis.
Since the translator is concerned exclusively and continuously with meaning, it is not surprising that Hallidayan linguistics, which sees language primarily as a meaning potential, should offer itself as a serviceable tool for determining the constituent parts of a source language text and its network of relations with its translation (Newmark 1987: 293).

1. Introduction

Complexity of translation lies in a constant challenge with the issue of meaning. By this assertion we obviously do not wish to locate ourselves within the age old ‘form vs content’ debate that, admittedly – and, we may add, regretfully – has continued until modern times. Indeed, in our view, ‘meaning’ is not synonymous with ‘content’: we share Steiner’s and Yallop’s belief that texts are “configurations of multidimensional meanings, rather than […] containers of content” (Steiner & Yallop 2001: 3, emphasis in the original) and believe that a translator should seek to render them in their entirety. It is easy to see how an approach to language study which views grammar as a resource for making meaning, such as Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL), can be considered a viable and valid contribution to a textual practice like that of translation, whose products are “meaningful records of communicative events” (Hatim 2001: 10).

Interestingly, the first issue of Rivista internazionale di tecnica della traduzione (N. 0) included an insightful article by Halliday on “Language theory and translation practice”, where the linguist strongly recommended an SFL approach to translation, which he saw as a “guided creation of meaning” (Halliday 1992: 15). At the dawn of the new millennium, Taylor and Baldry (2001: 277) were commenting, to their chagrin, that, even though “[…] a number of articles [has] been written on the subject […] [i]nterest in the role that systemic functional linguistics might play in translation studies [has] never been feverish”. After a decade, and more articles on the topic published around the world (see § 2), we still maintain that SFL can represent a fruitful instrument for text analysis and for the production of a new text in a target language (see Manfredi 2008 and forthcoming).

This paper draws on the author’s personal experience as a teacher of courses in Translation Studies (henceforth TS), addressed to graduate students at the University of Bologna over the last few years. Its aim is to demonstrate that, from a pedagogic perspective, just as a theory of translation without a link to practice is simply an abstraction, so the practice of translation without a theoretical background tends toward a purely subjective exercise.

2. Linguistic theory and translation practice: why SFL?

Yallop (1987: 347) reminds us that one of Halliday’s many contributions to linguistics is his wish to build bridges between linguistic theory and professional practice. If this issue is fundamental to language studies, in an activity inextricable from practice, such as translation, it is paramount.
Although a theorized practice of translation has been neglected for many years by both linguists and translation scholars (cf., e.g., Bell 1991), we agree that theory is highly relevant to translators’ problems. To the question, “can theory help translators?”, we would answer affirmatively and appropriate the TS scholar Chesterman’s words that it can “[...] offer a set of conceptual tools [that] can be thought of as aids for mental problem solving” (Chesterman in Chesterman & Wagner 2002: 7).

In particular, without denying the interdisciplinarity of TS, we hold that the discipline of linguistics has much to offer. In other words, we share Fawcett’s view that, without a grounding in linguistics, the translator is like “somebody who is working with an incomplete toolkit” (Fawcett 1997: Foreword). It is necessary to point out, however, that when we argue for the key role of linguistics within TS, we are referring to those branches concerned with language in use, like discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and, most notably, SFL.

A growing interest has been shown, over the last twenty years, in a translation theory informed by Hallidayan linguistics. After an early article by Halliday himself on machine translation (1966), and studies by translation scholars who based certain aspects of their theoretical approach on SFL like Catford (1965) and Newmark (1987), it was from the 1990s on that a variety of systemically oriented TS works appeared, such as House (e.g., 1997; 2006), Taylor (e.g., 1990; 1993), Hatim & Mason (1990; 1997), Bell (1991), Baker (1992), Taylor Torsello (1996) and Steiner (1998; 2002; 2004). A landmark publication dealing with the links between TS and SFL has been no doubt Steiner and Yallop (2001). More recently, Kim (2007a; 2007b; 2009), focusing on the language pair English/Korean, has applied SFL to translation for didactic purposes.

But why SFL? We believe that the epigraph with which we began this article might best answer this question. An activity like that of the translator who invariably must contend with meaning, and an approach to grammar that views “language essentially as a system of meaning potential” (Halliday 1978: 39), can clearly interact. Halliday (1992: 15) points out that “[t]ranslation is meaning making activity, and we would not consider any activity to be translation if it did not result in the creation of meaning”. Hence, he adds, a language theory which is relevant to translation has to be “a theory of meaning as choice” (Halliday 1992: 15). In an SFL paradigm, a speaker makes choices from within the total meaning potential of the language, i.e., its system. Each utterance encodes different kind of meanings, which are related to the functions of language. However, the grammatical resources responsible for realizing such meanings most often work differently across languages. Thus a translator, in order to accomplish his/her delicate task of interpreting and rendering a source text (henceforth ST) into a meaningful and effective target text (henceforth TT), needs to understand all these meanings, and reproduce them in another language.

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2 For a more detailed account of it, see Steiner (2005) and Manfredi (2008).
3. Theoretical framework

Although a detailed account of the SFL framework is beyond the scope of the present paper, before turning to the practical application of the SFL approach to the analysis of concrete translation tasks, we will sketch very briefly some key terms and concepts underpinning this theory. Its tenet is that “[...] language provides a theory of human experience, and certain of the resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to that function” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 29). At its core, lie two basic principles, i.e., “stratification” and “metafunction” (see Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 24ff and 29ff).

According to Halliday (1994: 15), “[a] language is a complex semiotic system composed of multiple levels, or strata”, that can be symbolized in a series of circles, where semantics is embedded in context, and lexicogrammar in semantics, as represented visually in Figure 1:

![Fig. 1. Stratification (adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 25)](image)

Moreover, the model identifies three main functions that speakers/writers use language for: to represent experience, to encode interaction and to organize the previous functions into a coherent whole. Halliday calls these functions the “ideational”, the “interpersonal” and the “textual” metafunctions, where the ideational is subdivided into two components, i.e., “experiential” and “logical”. They convey different ways of meanings, as the diagram in Figure 2 shows:

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3 For a comprehensive overview of the SFL model and of appraisal systems, see Martin & Rose (2007).

4 It should be noted that this represents a simplification of the concept: an analogous stratification concerns the expression plane, i.e., phonology and phonetics (see Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 25).
Such meanings operate simultaneously in any text. Each of these metafunctions is realized, in the lexicogrammar, in different systems of wording and is activated by a specific variable of the context (of situation). Let us attempt to see, in the most general way, a schematic overview of these layers in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>SEMANTICS (meanings)</th>
<th>LEXICOGRAMMAR (systems of wording)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Ideational:</td>
<td>TRANSITIVITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experiential</td>
<td>TAXIS; LOGICO-SEMANTIC RELATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Logical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>MOOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MODALITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>APPRAISAL SYSTEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>THEMATIC STRUCTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COHESION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Register variables, metafunctions and lexicogrammatical realizations (based on Halliday 1994)

In short, ideational meanings – construed to represent experiences, either to encode them (experiential) or to show the relationships between them (logical) – are activated by field, which concerns the activity of discourse, and are realized in lexicogrammar by the systems of TRANSITIVITY (Participants, Processes and Circumstances) and of TAXIS and LOGICO-SEMANTIC RELATIONS. Interpersonal meanings are triggered by the variable of tenor, which deals with the relationship between interactants and their attitudes, and are construed in grammar by the systems of MOOD, MODALITY and APPRAISAL. Finally, textual meanings are activated by the mode of discourse and are realized by structural cohesive devices, such as thematic structure, and non-structural ones, like cohesion. A note of caution has to be added here: although this correspondence between the elements of the strata is typical, it should not be assumed that this is an “automatic ‘hook up’ hypothesis” (Miller 2005: 27): indeed, it is the combination of contextual variables which tends to be responsible for the lexicogrammatical choices made and the meanings these construe.
3.1 Ideational grammatical metaphor

A few words to illustrate briefly one particular aspect of ideational meanings which will be exploited in our analysis, that is grammatical metaphor (henceforth GM), which is defined as “variation in the expression of a given meaning” (Halliday 1994: 342). In Halliday’s view, each utterance has a more “congruent” realization, i.e., non- or less metaphorical, and more “incongruent” ones. To make this concept clear, Table 2 offers an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GM</th>
<th>GM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensor</td>
<td>mental Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>material Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Ideational grammatical metaphor (based on Halliday 1994: 344)

To report a successful expedition to the mountains, a speaker could choose an incongruent realization such as (1), where the time (the fifth day) functions as a participant, a Sensor, who ‘sees’ the climbers when they reach the top, or a more congruent realization like (2), where the climbers are the Actors, their concrete action is realized through a material Process and both time and place are congruently encoded by Circumstances. Although (1) and (2) are not synonymous, Halliday puts forward that they can be said “corepresentational, and in that respect form a set of metaphoric variants of an ideational kind” (Halliday 1994: 344).

Being aware that ideational meanings are not the whole story, we will see how the skill at demetaphorizing a GM can prove particularly useful for a translator faced by the difficulty to recast it in a TT (see § 4.2.2).

3.2 Appraisal systems

Appraisal theory is a more recent approach developed within an SFL framework and extends the account of the grammatical resources which realize interpersonal meanings (Martin & White 2005) to include evaluation.

Appraisal identifies three systems: ATTITUDE, GRADUATION and ENGAGEMENT, dealing with the kind of attitudes, their amplification and the ways in which they are sourced and addressees are aligned with the addressee’s stance. The system of ATTITUDE is further subdivided into three sub systems, concerned with the evaluation of feelings, behaviour and phenomena, namely AFFECT (dis/inclination; un/happiness; in/security; dis/satisfaction), JUDGEMENT (of two types: social esteem – normality, capacity, tenacity; social sanction – veracity, propriety) and APPRECIATION (reaction: impact/quality; composition: balance/complexity; valuation). Evaluation can be expressed through different parts of speech and can be either “inscribed” (explicitly expressed) or “evoked” (implicity conveyed), negative or positive. Importantly, appraisal is not only a

5 Halliday also identifies interpersonal metaphors of mood and modality.
matter of single instances, but is also construed “prosodically” through the text (cf. Martin & Rose 2007: 31).

We claim that **appraisal systems**, a fundamental resource of language in many text types, might represent a fruitful line of inquiry to pursue in the area of TS, where so far, as Munday (2010: 78) observes, they have been “relatively overlooked”.

Let us now move from theory to practice and see how different layers of meanings are realized in the sample texts at issue.

4. **From theory to practice**

As we have seen, any text encodes multidimensional kinds of meanings. Traditionally, translators and evaluators of translations have mostly focused on one aspect of meaning, i.e., the ideational, in particular experiential. However, as Halliday reminds us:

[...] “translation equivalence” is defined in ideational terms; if a text does not match its source text ideationally, it does not qualify as a translation [...]. For precisely this reason, one of the commonest criticisms made of translated texts is that, while they are equivalent ideationally, they are not equivalent in respect of the other metafunctions – interpersonally, or textually, or both (Halliday 2001: 16).

4.1 **Material and methods of investigation**

The authentic material used for this study consists of a small selection of examples taken from English STs and their published TTs representing a variety of text types: 1) a ‘journalistic’ text – an article dealing with an economic topic, appeared in the US weekly *Encounter* and translated for *Internazionale*; 2) a ‘tourist’ text – a Lonely Planet guidebook about Miami and 3) a ‘specialized’ text in the field of Urban Studies (henceforth referred to as Text A, B and C). The labels ‘journalistic’, ‘tourist’ and ‘specialized’ are merely used as general classifications. Of course a more specific criterion for classifying texts would be based on functional ‘Register’ (Halliday & Hasan 1989) and/or ‘Genre’ (cf. Martin & Rose 2008) theories, which are not our focus of attention here. However, we take into account the ‘hybridity’ of texts and, for determining translation strategies and decisions, find useful Hatim and Mason’s (1990: 153ff) well known taxonomy, which focuses on the rhetorical purpose of texts, i.e., argumentative, expository, instructional.

In the classroom, either a sample ST (around 300 words) is proposed for practical individual or group work, or both ST and its published TT are presented for analysis. In both cases, every task is invariably preceded by a short introduction on the communicative situation, and by a translation “brief” (Nord 1997: 30), in order to offer a purpose for the translation task, thus a plausible professional situation. The primary step is a textual analysis, informed by SFL and conducted in a bottom-up perspective, i.e., from the lexicogrammatical
realizations to the identification of the meanings these realize and of the context that has determined them.

### 4.2 Analysis and Translation

Due to constraints of space, we cannot offer an exhaustive survey of all the grammatical resources at work in each text, of the different strands of meaning which they realize and of the wide range of problems relating to their translation. Focus will need to be selective.

#### 4.2.1 Text A: Interpersonal meanings – modality

In SFL, modality is “a resource which sets up a semantic space between yes and no” (Martin & Rose 2007: 53). Let us analyse an example taken from the beginning of Text A, where the journalist reports a statement made by the interviewee and then offers his own comment:

(1) ST A (p. 28): “When we started,” Rajiv Shah recalled over a late evening coffee at the Serena Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, “developing-world agriculture seemed very much out of fashion.” [...] Agriculture *may* have been unfashionable four years ago, when Shah and others on the foundation’s “strategic opportunities” team began discussing an agriculture initiative, but it is fashionable now. [...] As typical of argumentative texts, the writer introduces his countering statement, and in doing so he makes use of the modal operator *may*, which, in functional terms, expresses modalization: low probability and, from the point of view of the appraisal resource of engagement, leaves space for negotiation. Such modality is not conveyed in the published TT, which reads:

(1) TT A (1) (p. 38): [...] Quando è arrivato al dipartimento il lavoro del suo team era abbastanza marginale, ma oggi non è più così. [...] This is an interpersonally inaccurate choice, since the function of the ST has not been rendered. If we consider the actual translation provided by the professional translator of the article, Astrologo, before final editing occurred, we can identify an effective solution in rendering interpersonal meanings of this piece of text:

(1) TT A (2): [...] *Sarà anche vero* che l’agricoltura era fuori moda quattro anni fa [...] 

Astrologo had skillfully identified the function of the modal operator *may*, and, rather than translating it into the direct equivalent *poteva* – which would have produced an unnatural TT –, had conveyed its meaning through different linguistic resources, adopting a strategy of Substitution. *Sarà anche vero* (i.e., *It might well be true that*) is an effective example of modality realized through an

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6 The author is grateful to Marina Astrologo for her kind permission to use her own material, indicated as TT A (2).

7 The taxonomy of translation strategies is Malone’s (1988).
interpersonal metaphor. The fact that the published TT has failed to accurately deliver the interpersonal meaning might be in part explained with the more divulgative purpose of the target issue. However, the meaning conveyed is quite different and might even imply an ideological stance.

4.2.2 Text A: Ideational grammatical metaphor

Journalistic texts tend to use nominalization – a typical resource for GM (Halliday 1994: 352) – to a large extent, and this frequently poses translation problems. For a translator, as Steiner (2002) suggests, grammatical demetaphorization can often be of help, firstly in the process of understanding, secondly in solving difficulties arising from contrastive reasons.

Text A is rich in instances of GM. By way of illustration, let us consider the following example:

(2) ST A (p. 28): That was before the food riots and rice tariffs and dire predictions of mass starvation that accompanied the global rise in food prices last spring.

A transitivity analysis of the sentence reveals one clause characterized by heavy ‘packaging’ (nominalization, embedding), and no ‘Agency’: the participant That functions as Carrier, and was as a relational Process: attributive: circumstantial. The rest of the clause (before...spring) instantiates, incongruently, one single Circumstance as Attribute. A more congruent utterance could be expressed through a sequence of verbal structures, like:

(Clause 1) That (Actor) happened (material Process)
(Cl. 2 – hypotactical: temporal) before a crowd of people (Actor) protested (material Process) violently (Circumstance of Manner: Quality) for food (Circumstance of Cause: Purpose),
(Cl. 3) before the Government (Actor) charged (material Process) taxes (Goal) on rice (Circumstance of Matter),
(Cl. 4) and before we (Senser) could grimly (Circumstance of Manner: Quality) predict (verbal Process)
(Cl. 5) that many people (Behaver) would have starved (behavioural Process)
(Cl. 6 – hypotactical: causal) because food (Actor) cost (material Process) more (Circumstance of Manner) in the world (Circumstance of Location: Space) last spring (Circumstance of Location: Time).

In such a congruent representation, Actors become explicit and actions concrete. Another instance of more congruent formulation of the ST, but which keeps the lack of agent roles through the use of the passive form, is that of the published TT:

(2) TT A (p. 38): È stato così almeno finché, la primavera scorsa, sono state imposte tariffe doganali sul riso, sono scoppiate le rivolte per il cibo, hanno cominciato a circolare le previsioni di carestie di massa e i prezzi dei generi alimentari sono aumentati in tutto il mondo.

In this case, the Italian TT provides an example of helpful unpacking of the grammar, although textual meanings change substantially. Nevertheless, a clumsy translation typically deriving from direct rendering of English
nominalizations into Italian, requiring a strategy of Diffusion for contrastive reasons, has been avoided:

(2) (Draft translation) Prima dei tumulti per il cibo, dei dazi sul riso e di fosche previsioni di carestia di massa che hanno accompagnato l’aumento globale del prezzo del cibo la scorsa primavera [...]

We cannot but underwrite Newmark’s recommendation of Halliday’s (1985)\(^8\) chapter on GM as a “useful part of any translator’s training course where English is the source or target language” (Newmark 1987: 295).

4.2.3 Text B: appraisal systems

Text B offers an example of the hybridity of text types. If at first glance it seems to display the typical promotional features of a tourist guide, closer examination reveals a number of basically negative connotations, which are not totally surprising, given the particular context: Lonely Planet guidebooks, in fact, are said to “provide independent advice” (Greenfield 2005: 13). Let us see the following text extract in the light of appraisal:

(3) ST B (p. 21)
The Glamorous Life

Playgrounds, of course, breed vanity, and vanity is a big part of what makes Miami go round. Blame the heat, the skimpy bikinis, the fabulous nightlife scene or the influx of celebrities who vacation here. Either way, folks who live in Miami or Miami Beach want to look their hottest. This is, after all, the inspiration and setting for the popular Nip/Tuck plastic-surgery drama series, and it is truly a plastic-surgery hotspot [...]. Miami is also a model magnet, boasting both on-location spots for photo shoots, from expansive beaches to glitzy hotel lobbies, and plenty of nightclubs for the skinny minnies to unwind and party down with the various other celebrity beauties who vacation here – Paris Hilton, Cameron Diaz, J Lo and Jessica Simpson among them. [...]

Starting from the _glamorous_ in the title, an evoked negative judgement: social sanction: propriety, with reference to the overall hedonism that this place represents, unfolds through the text (_breed vanity...round; Blame...here, etc._). Again, space constraints prohibit lengthy analysis, but let us note that if boasting, a typical instance of the language of tourism, implicitly realizes positive appreciation: valuation of the place, the _glitzy hotels_ and the _skinny minnies_ convey a negative, albeit ironic, connotation of superficiality and exaggerate thinness. Such meanings are not rendered in the TT, which runs as follows:

(3) TT B (p. 10)
Glamour, bisturi e carta patinata

[...] Miami è anche una specie di calamita che attira fotografi da tutto il mondo, che possono scegliere come set sia le vaste spiagge sia le _elegant_ lobby degli alberghi, e amanti della vita notturna, che possono passare da un locale notturno all’altro per concedersi rilassanti chiacchiere confidenziali oppure per partecipare ai party con le

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\(^8\) Reference is to Halliday’s _An Introduction to Functional Grammar_ first edition.
diverse celebri bellezze qui in vacanza – Paris Hilton, Cameron Diaz, Jennifer Lopez e Jessica Simpson fra le altre. [...] 

The epithet eleganti as a translation of glitzy does not render the sense of “attractive but with no real value” inherent in the English term and the skinny minnies are totally missing. Possible solutions in an attempt at conveying the ST evaluative meanings might have been, for example, sfavillanti and bellezze pelle e ossa. On the other hand, we believe that the Substitution + Amplification of the title which anticipate the topics in a more explicit way, seem to reinforce the negative implicit judgement, which might contrast with the author’s appreciation of “the bold and beautiful new Miami”, announced at the opening of the guidebook (Greenfield 2005: 13).

4.2.4 Text C: Textual meanings – thematic progression

As Ventola (1995: 85) lamented in the nineties, and Kim (2007b: 223-24) has confirmed more recently, the area of thematic patterns when a text undergoes a translation process still needs to be thoroughly investigated in TS. We concur that an SFL approach could offer a useful contribution. In the following example, taken from Text C and typically characterized by an argumentative style, the thematic development of the ST is immediately made evident:

(4) ST C (p. 27): [...] These old pillars of wisdom (THEME) need to be demolished, for at least four reasons (RHEME). The first (THEME) has already been established [...] (RHEME). Second, citizens (THEME) have increasingly rebelled against [...] (RHEME). Third, developments in social theory across the humanities and social sciences over the past two decades (THEME) [...].

The ST presents an interesting pattern of thematic progression, called “split rheme” (Daneš 1974), where the element of rheme of the first clause, for at least four reasons, is subsequently “split” into themes which function as the points of departure of the following statements. This pattern has been rendered in the TT through a combination of strategies of Substitution + Amplification at the level of grammatical structure:

(4) TT C (p. 54): [...] È (THEME) necessario demolare questi vecchi pilastri di saggezza per almeno quattro ragioni (RHEME). La prima (THEME) è stata già provata [...] (RHEME). La seconda ragione (THEME) deriva dalla circostanza che i cittadini si sono ribellati [...] (RHEME). La terza (THEME) risiede nel fatto che gli sviluppi della teoria sociale prodotti nel campo delle scienze umane e sociali negli ultimi due decenni [...] (RHEME).

The ST’s multiple themes (textual themes Second, Third, followed by topical themes, citizens, developments...decades) have been transformed in the TT into topical themes (La seconda ragione, La terza), with the addition of verbal forms (deriva dalla circostanza che, risiede nel fatto che) and thus the creation of new clauses. Despite the structural difference, we believe that textual meanings are effectively conveyed, in line with the higher level of formality required by similar specialized Italian texts.

Systemic Functional Linguistics ...
In this paper we have attempted to demonstrate that the theoretical framework of SFL can offer a productive metalinguistic toolkit in translation teaching, both from an analytical perspective and in the actual practice of translation.

What might partially explain a certain resistance to a more solid exploitation of the paradigm in the didactics of translation might consist in the somewhat elaborate nature of the linguistic model. However, we posit that such an instrument, because of its delicacy and highly systematic structure, is eminently suited to the analysis of the intricacies of language and of the multilayered meanings in texts which inevitably pose translation problems. Consequently, we think that the informed translation decisions that can be made as a result of dissecting texts are well worth the effort.

Matthiessen, in a talk delivered at Hong Kong University, in October 2007, commented on an international network of research and teaching translation based on an SFL approach around the world, from East Asia to South America, from Australia to Europe (http://www.hallidaycentre.cityu.edu.hk). We hope this tendency will undergo a further process of consolidation, to improve educational training, to empower translators and to arrive at a meaningful practice of translation.

**ILLUSTRATIVE TEXT SOURCES**


**REFERENCES**


