

EDITORIAL PREFACE

The bulk of this issue of *OPSL* is taken up by a lively debate between, on the one hand, Christian Matthiessen and James R. Martin, who have drawn up a lengthy defence against a review in the *Journal of Linguistics* of Michael Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, and, on the other hand, the author of this review, Rodney Huddleston, who is replying here to the points raised against him by Matthiessen and Martin. The editors of *OPSL* wish to make clear that, in having agreed to publish a response to the review by Huddleston, and in having invited a reply to this response, they neither agree nor disagree with any of the authors involved. Sole responsibility for the views presented in all papers published in *OPSL* lies with their authors themselves. We have allowed this debate to take place within the pages of *OPSL* because we firmly believe in the need for criticism and 'countercriticism', witness our publication of Margaret Berry's 'Johnny' paper¹ in Volume 3 in reply to criticism levelled against it elsewhere.² Nor are we taking a stand on the nature of this kind of criticism, which is very much at issue here. More will probably be said on it in a later volume.³

Our belief in the necessity of criticism is also our main motivation for including the paper by Alan Garnham, which, though it does not explicitly address systemic linguistics, could be read as a criticism of the work by systemicists on the relationship between cohesion and coherence. We would welcome their responses to Garnham's paper and would only be too glad to publish them in a future volume.

There is more criticism in Peter Ragan's paper, who scrutinizes Communicative Language Teaching, finds it failing, and suggests ways in which the systemic notion of 'function' could help to amend it.

Carol Taylor Torsello, finally, illustrates how stylistics can benefit from systemic-functional grammar by means of an in-depth study of the beginning of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

Dirk Noël
Co-ordinating editor

¹ Margaret Berry (1989) They're all out of step except our Johnny: A discussion of motivation (or the lack of it) in Systemic Linguistics. *OPSL* 3: 5-67.

² Notably in the introduction to Michael Halliday and Robin Fawcett (eds.) (1987) *New Developments in Systemic Linguistics*. London: Frances Pinter.

³ Volume 7 of *OPSL*, planned for mid-1992, will probably contain another paper by James Martin, entitled 'Theme, method of development and existentiality: the price of reply'.

A RESPONSE TO HUDDLESTON'S REVIEW OF HALLIDAY'S INTRODUCTION TO FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

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The polemicist...proceeds encased in privileges that he possesses in advance and will never agree to question...the person he confronts is not a partner in the search for truth, but an adversary, an enemy who is wrong, who is harmful and whose very existence constitutes a threat. For him, then, the game does not consist of recognizing this person as a subject having the right to speak, but of abolishing him, as interlocutor, from any possible dialogue; and his final objective will be, not to come as close as possible to a difficult truth, but to bring about the triumph of the just cause he has been manifestly upholding from the beginning. The polemicist relies on a legitimacy that his adversary is by definition denied. ...Has anyone ever seen a new idea come out of a polemic? And how could it be otherwise, given that here the interlocutors are incited, not to advance, not to take more and more risks in what they say, but to fall back continually on the rights they claim, on their legitimacy, which they must defend, and on the affirmation of their innocence? [Foucault, from Rabinow [ed.] 1984: 382-383]

I. General considerations

Huddleston (1988) has produced a fairly detailed review article on certain aspects of Halliday's (1985) Introduction to Functional Grammar (henceforth IFG). In his review, Huddleston criticizes IFG on a number of points; this paper* is a response to his review, which we consider seriously flawed for reasons that will emerge below. Martin (1991) addresses the specific issue of existential Themes taken up in Huddleston's review and the general question of Huddleston's review as a manifestation of the dismissal genre. Since we find Huddleston's review very disappointing, let us begin by emphasizing that we value his work in general highly and that he has made many important contributions both within and outside of systemic linguistics.

In our discussion in Section II of the issues Huddleston brings up, we have followed his organization. However, there are a number of issues that are of general importance and we will address them by way of introduction here: it is crucial to identify the major themes in the debate, since they are the motivation behind the more detailed issues. In particular, we will discuss different conceptions of grammar (Section 1), the development of grammatical theory for the purpose of text study (Section 2), the question of how we approach grammar (Section 3), and the nature of 'problems' and 'counter-examples' (Section 4). We will return to some of these themes later on in the discussion. Our discussion presupposes familiarity with both Halliday's IFG and Huddleston's review; to build in that background here would simply take far too long.

1. Different conceptions of grammar

The kind of grammar Halliday presents in IFG is clearly a departure from the traditional conception of grammar in a number of respects -- for instance, in its coverage of all of the metafunctional spectrum (ideational, interpersonal and textual) and its text-based nature. In other words, Halliday's general theory of grammar and descriptive interpretations of English are not just alternative ways of doing grammar as usual; they represent a re-interpretation of both grammatical theory and the role of grammar in a linguistic system. Halliday sees grammar as a resource for making and expressing meanings and he tries to *explain* it in this perspective, in terms of the functions it has evolved to serve in the development of text in context. For instance, while the traditional notion of Subject as a function to be recognized in terms of case and agreement is part of a description of English grammar, but it explains nothing at all: in contrast, Halliday's interpretation of Subject as part of the Mood element within the interpersonal structure of a clause, the part serving to assign 'modal responsibility', is an attempt to explain the category by showing its contribution in exchange and argumentation in discourse. One fundamental way of understanding the grammar is to look at it ontogenetically (e.g., Halliday, 1975, 1984; Painter, 1984).

In principle, whenever Halliday's analysis departs from the traditional one, Huddleston finds objections; the following are examples of departures from the traditional notion of grammatical structure. These departures are rejected by Huddleston:

- (i) Rank-based instead of Immediate Constituency analysis: no.
- (ii) Multi-layered structure (e.g., Theme/ Subject/ Actor) instead of uni-functional structure: no (only the traditional 'purely' grammatical functions such as Subject).
- (iii) Theme as an element of grammatical structure: no.
- (iv) Ideational functions as part of grammatical structure rather than only part of semantics: no.
- (v) Mood - Residue instead of Subject - Predicate: no.
- (vi) Subject as a text-based function: no.
- (vii) Differentiation of hypotaxis vs. embedding instead of only 'subordination': no.

One might simply say: well, then, Halliday is wrong on these points and should stick to the tried and true. Or one might observe that any early challenge to tradition is likely to have to wait for another generation or two before it is taken seriously -- there is simply too much inertia in our scientific systems for rapid change. There are certainly numerous examples of this in the history of ideas. So if one believes, as we do, that Halliday is right in what he says, should one simply sit back and wait for another generation or two before following up his work? The answer is very clearly no: there is already a generation of linguists in place doing research related to the ideas of the Prague School and Systemic Linguistics in many respects; it is very strange indeed that Huddleston does not mention that there are very many aspects of IFG one cannot dismiss without also dismissing the new growing body of functional and discourse oriented work that seriously calls into question a number of received interpretations of language -- traditional interpretations that were recoded in the analyses of recent formal grammars (such as the Subject - Predicate analysis from traditional logic and linguistics, recoded as NP + VP).

We will return to particular examples in our detailed discussion and will simply give a few references indicating work outside systemic linguistics at this point:

- metafunctional diversification and functional components of the grammar: Dik (1978), Givón (1984)
- the semantic naturalness of grammar: Langacker (1987); Haiman (1985)
- text-based nature of grammar: DuBois (1987);

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- a semantically rich interpretation of the grammar of transitivity: Hopper & Thompson (1980); various papers in Hopper & Thompson (1982).
- the thematic aspect of Subject (i.e., Subject as a text-based function rather than a 'purely grammatical' function): Givón (1984); Tomlin (1983); Thompson (1987); Schachter (1976; 1977).
- a rejection of the traditional notion of subordination and a re-evaluation of clause combining: Haiman & Thompson (1983); various papers in Haiman & Thompson (1989); Foley & Van Valin (1984)

We have noted the contrast between a traditional conception of grammar and recent fundamental challenges to this conception on a number of points in terms of work outside of the systemic tradition. But it is also crucial to note what kind of conception of systemic grammar Huddleston seems to work with: it is essentially the version from the 1960s, which is also the version reflected in Huddleston's (1984) own description of English grammar. While it is true that the grammar has not changed since then in the way transformational grammar has by rejection and replacement of earlier proposals, it has evolved in significant ways largely through a process of progressive recontextualization. That is, as other aspects of the overall theory are filled out and the domain of the theory has been expanded, our understanding of the grammar grows. In this context, it is significant to note that none of Huddleston's references to the substantial body of work in systemic linguistics are to contributions after the mid 1970s. In fact, most of the points of contact are with the 1960s.¹ It's not that the issues from the 1960s are no longer relevant; but if they are to be reviewed in the late 1980s in connection with a work from the mid 1980s they really have to be reviewed in their current context.² (One of the topics Huddleston deals with at length -- total accountability -- isn't even raised in IFG.) A more current evaluation of IFG in systemic terms might include topics such as the following:

- the ecological matrix of the grammar -- how it relates to other levels and how it is deployed with different institutional foci (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1985);
- the relationship between grammar and discourse (Fries, 1981; 1985; Halliday, 1982; 1983; Hasan, 1984; Matthiessen & Thompson, 1987);
- the relationship between grammar and ideology (Martin, 1986; Threadgold, 1988b);
- the continuity between lexis and grammar (Hasan, 1987);
- the relationship between use and function in child language and the metafunctions of adult grammar (Halliday, 1975; Painter, 1984);
- the ineffability of grammatical categories (Halliday, 1984);
- cryptogrammatical categories (Halliday, 1984; Martin, 1988; Threadgold, 1988);
- the grammars of spoken and written modes (Halliday, 1985; Halliday, 1987);
- dynamic systems (Martin, 1985; Ventola, 1984; Bateman, 1989);
- grammar as part of a system for producing text by computer (Mann, 1984; Matthiessen, 1983; Bateman et al, 1987; Patten, 1988)

Most of these are directly relevant to Huddleston's critical reading of IFG. For instance, when Huddleston dismisses a criterion for a grammatical distinction as being a statement about the structure of the lexicon, this has to be read against the background of Halliday's (1961) suggestion that lexis is most delicate grammar and Hasan's (1987) work in this area.

2. Grammar and text

IFG has been written to serve a number of different uses (cf. IFG, p. xxix-xxx), including both the interpretation of languages other than English and the generation of English text by computer; but text analysis and the relationship between grammar and text can be highlighted as a very central and general concern. It is reflected in the choice of examples -- there is a good deal of analysis of naturally occurring examples (cf. Hudson's, 1986, remarks). Furthermore, a number of natural texts are presented as aids in reasoning about the categories that are identified -- for example Theme and Subject. One appendix is devoted to a detailed analysis and interpretation of one text in terms of the various grammatical resources explored in IFG.

One might expect that this text-based nature of the grammar should also be reflected in any review of it, especially since the need to interpret grammar in the light of discourse has come into focus very clearly in linguistics in general in the latter part of the 1970s and the 1980s (the importance of this approach has been argued very convincingly outside systemic linguists in a growing number of publications by linguists such as Chafe, DuBois, Fox, Givón, Hopper, Longacre, Ochs, and Thompson).³ Now, if we look at Huddleston's discussion, we find that he makes no reference to the texts Halliday presents as a way of understanding the various grammatical categories. (The only use he makes of the texts is as a source of analyses he wants to criticize but which are not discussed in the body of IFG.) Furthermore, at a number of points Huddleston criticizes the extravagance of Halliday's **functional labelling** (dismissing experiential functions such as Actor and Senser completely and expressing considerable dissatisfaction with textual ones such as Theme) without taking into consideration **the role labelling** of this kind **plays** in textual analysis. In fact, such labelling has been critical to the development of educational linguistics and social semiotics in Australia⁴ and in construction of computational systems.

It's not just Halliday's micro-functional labelling that causes Huddleston difficulties. There are two points, one concerning the interpretation of box diagrams and the other concerning slashes used in transcription.

(i) **Box diagrams.** Huddleston, for example, refers to the analysis given in Figure 3-13 in IFG as 'bizarre' constituent structure; it is reproduced here as Figure 1.

But Huddleston seems to be misinterpreting Halliday's diagram as implying three levels of constituency where Halliday's analysis only posits one. Huddleston treats the labels continuative, structural, and conjunctive as constituents of textual, which along with interpersonal and topical is interpreted as a constituent of Theme. But in fact these glosses simply represent a more delicate interpretation of thematic progression within the clause. Halliday, it should be noted, does not capitalize the initial letter of these labels as he does systematically with all functional constituents (whereas Huddleston rewrites these with initial capitals in his Figure 22 on p. 161, as with 'Textual' instead of 'textual'). The point is that the more delicate labelling which Halliday provides is crucial to many types of textual analysis. This labelling was not offered as a development of Halliday's interpretation of constituency within the clause (witness his discussion of the non-constituency mode of organization associated with the textual metafunction in Halliday, 1979). Furthermore the constituency structure which Halliday actually proposes, i.e. Theme ^ Rheme, is surely not bizarre; it was fundamental to the Functional Sentence Perspective developed by the Prague School and has been crucial to numerous grammatical interpretations of various languages since the original formulation, e.g. Schachter & Otnes (1972), the various studies in Li (1976), and the current research on 'information flow' and 'information packaging' (which includes both Theme - Rheme and Given - New).

(ii) Halliday proposes a notation for marking unit boundaries in **transcription** of text, including 'III' for clause complex boundaries and 'II' for ranking clause boundaries; it is obviously not part of grammatical theory. This notation for transcription is clearly redundant with respect to Halliday's **interpretation** of logical, experiential, interpersonal, and textual functions in the group, phrase, and clause. Yet, as we will see below (Section II:2.1), Huddleston uses these