**Mick O'Donnell**:

Some early responses to Halliday are in:

Postal, P. M. (1969), “Review Essay on Angus McIntosh and M. A. K. Halliday, Patterns of Language: Papers in General, Descriptive and Applied Linguistics, London: Longman”, Foundations of Language 5, 409-26.

Matthews, P. H. (1966), “The concept of rank in ‘Neo-Firthian’ grammar”, Journal of Linguistics 2, 101-110.

Halliday responded to the last:

Halliday 1966 "The concept of Rank: a reply"

Journal of Linguistics, 2(1), pp. 110-118, 1966.

I don't have them, but the following may or

may not critique Halliday's approach.

Langendoen, D.T. (1967), “Review of R.M.W. Dixon (1965), What is Language, London: Longman”, Language 43, 742-751.

Langendoen, D.T. (1968), The London School of Linguistics: A study of the linguistic contributions of B. Malinowski and J. R. Firth, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Matthews, P. H. (1965), “Review of R. M. W. Dixon (1963), Linguistic Science and Logic, The Hague: Mouton”, Journal of Linguistics 1, 61-68.

Postal, P. M. (1966), “Review of R. M. W. Dixon (1963), Linguistic Science and Logic, The Hague: Mouton”, Language 42, 84-93.

More recently, there were the Huddleston attacks and responses:

1) The first paper by Huddleston attacking Halliday in various ways.

* HUDDLESTON, Rodney 1988 ‘Constituency, multifunctionality and grammaticalization in Halliday”s functional grammar’. In: Journal of Linguistics nr. 24, p. 137-174. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
* https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-linguistics/article/constituency-multifunctionality-and-grammaticalization-in-hallidays-functional-grammar/BDCD9CAE54F27A285E3DB2D9FCE2DDC8

2) There was then a reply by Matthiessen and Martin, and in the same volume, a response to that from Huddleston.

* CM I M Matthiessen & Martin JR. "A response to Huddleston's review of Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar." Occasional Papers in Systemic Linguistics 5. 1991. 5-74.
* Rodney Huddleston "Further remarks on Halliday's Functional Grammar - A reply to Matthiessen & Martin" Occasional Papers in Systemic Linguistics 5. 1991. 5-74.

3) And in the next Occasional papers, two papers from Martin/Matthiessen, and a response from Huddleston.

* Martin J.R. and C M I M Matthiessen (1992) “A Brief Note on Huddleston's reply to Matthiessen and Martin's response to Huddleston's review of Halliday's Introduction to Functional grammar”. *Occasional Papers in Systemic Linguistics* 6. 1992. 185-196.

http://www.isfla.org/Systemics/Print/MartinPapers/OPSL\_V6\_p185-195.PDF

* Martin J.R. (1992) “Theme, method of development and existentiality - the price of reply.” *Occasional Papers in Systemic Linguistics* 6. 1992. 147-184. [detailed apology for Fries in relation to Huddleston]
* Rodney Huddleston (1992) "On Halliday's Functional Grammar: a reply to Martin and to Martin and Matthiessen". *Occasional Papers in Systemic Linguistics* 6. 1992.

http://www.isfla.org/Systemics/Print/MartinPapers/OPSL\_V6\_p196-212.PDF

And a further response from Martin:

* Martin, J.R. (1995) “More than what the message is about: English Theme”.  In M Ghadessy (ed.) *Thematic Development in English Texts*.  London: Pinter (Open Linguistics Series). 223-258. [reprinted in SFL Theory 2010. 301-342]

**Diana ben-Aaron**:

Wallace Chafe responds critically to Halliday's ideas on information structure and flow (Theme/Rheme, Given/New, etc.) in \_Discourse, Consciousness, and Time\_. Specifically, Chafe sets forth his own ideas in the bulk of the book and then compares them to other people's theories (separate sections on Halliday, Prague School, etc.) in Chapter 13.

NICK MOORE:

A thorough comparison of Halliday's linguistics with other functional approaches can be found in:

* Butler, C., (2003) Structure and Function. Part 1 and Part 2 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins)

In a similar, of comparing like with like, but far shorter vein is:

* Davidse, K. (1987) "M.A.K. Halliday's functional grammar and the Prague school" Functionalism in Linguistics - Dirven & Fried (eds) (Amsterdam: John Benjamins)

which can be usefully compared with:

* Halliday, M. (1974) "The place of "functional sentence perspective" in the system of linguistic description" Papers on Functional Sentence Perspective - Danes (ed.) (Prague: Academia)

One SF linguist who makes it explicit where his views diverge from Halliday's is Robin Fawcett, exemplified here in:

* Fawcett, R. (2000) "In place of Halliday's 'verbal group': part 1: evidence from the problems of representations and the relative simplicity of the proposed alternative" Word 51/2 p.157-203
* Fawcett, R. (2000) "In place of Halliday's 'verbal group': part 2: evidence from generation, semantics and interruptability" Word 51/3 p.327-375
* Fawcett, R. (2000) A Theory of Syntax for Systemic Functional Lingustics [Current Issues in Linguistics Vol. 206] (Amsterdam: John Benjamins)
* Fawcett, R., Tucker, G., Lin, Y. (1993) "How a systemic functional grammar works: the role of realization in reealization" New Concepts in Natural Language Processing: Planning, Realization and Systems - Horacek and Zock (eds.) (London: Pinter)

An interesting comparison of scholars from the 'same school' is:

* Stubbs, M. (1996) "British traditions in text analysis: Firth, Halliday and Sinclair" in Text and Corpus Analysis (Oxford: Blackwell)

In this paper, serious questions are posed about one of the ranks in Halliday's theory:

* Quereda, L. (n.d.) "The unit "group"" online paper at http://www.ugr.es/~lquereda/the\_unit\_group.htm accessed on 16 Sep. 2002.

I do not know if there are published versions of this paper.

It is certainly interesting to conjecture why it is difficult to find critical reviews of Halliday's work. Certainly within SFL, while there is great respect for Halliday's body of work, there are frequent attempts to improve, develop and even disprove parts of his work - all of which is encouraged. Perhaps one reason why it is difficult to quote direct refutations of Halliday, or indeed any of the major linguists working in SFL, is explained in:

* Halliday, M. & Fawcett, R. (1987) "Introduction" in New Developments in Systemic Linguistics Vol. 1: Theory and Description - Halliday & Fawcett (eds) (London: Frances Pinter)

That is, there has been a tendency to avoid confrontational attacks on SFL work, as is common in some schools of formal linguistics.

Most of the above references compare SFL with other functional schools. The only published source of direct comparison between SFL and formal linguistics that I have seen is Tom Bloor's course notes at Aston. (Is there a book in there Tom?) It would be good to see how functional and formal theories square up. I would very much like to read a direct comparison of analyses in SFG and other functional schools of linguistics as compared to formal approaches which tend to attract far greater research grants. I would expect to find more 'findings per buck' in functional schools.

For me, however, perhaps the most insulting response of many linguists, especially those working in formal schools, to Halliday's work is the way it is ignored. Considering the consistency with which Halliday and SFL has been working in linguistics for 20-30 years, (without the need for constant dramatic renaming or reinvention of old concepts!!), and the huge impact it has had on discourse analysis, one would expect that other schools would have caught up with the idea that you can leave the metaphysical questions of the way language works in the mind to a later time - when we understand a lot more about the mind - and just get stuck in working out how it works in context. We may even find out more about the mind this way. (Having said that, I think that a lot of SFL plays a tit-for-tat game of ignoring a lot of formal work ;>)

Hope this gets a few responses! Some may see this as a naive response, some may be able to correct me on a number of points raised above - I really hope so, as this is all part of a healthy debate I would expect of a self-aware group of academics (after all, we even know what a discourse community is).

JOHN BATEMAN

This could lead to quite a nice discussion of some issues

that need discussing. It is, I would agree, but perhaps

only from the outside, curious that there are so few

direct comparisons across linguistic approaches.

I think one reason for this currently is not particularly

historical, but rather one of different questions being

asked. If workers in different areas are asking different

questions, then they expect different answers, and may not

necessarily recognised answers to other questions as

relevant. I think this is very much the case in the so-called

formal/functional area.

> I would very much like to read a direct comparison of analyses in SFG

> and other functional schools of linguistics as compared to formal

> approaches which tend to attract far greater research grants. I would

> expect to find more 'findings per buck' in functional schools.

I think this would not be the case at all. And is one reason why

there is a problem of sides mutually ignoring each other. But it is

going to depend on what is taken as the relevant questions and, indeed,

what a "finding" is. If one is looking for findings per buck, and

then attempts to quantify how much a finding is "worth" financially,

then it is clear that functional approaches are loosing seriously.

And this is a further reason why their research grants are smaller

and they are not playing an equal role in certain areas of linguistic

development.

The reasons for this are not often not very interesting linguistically:

take a simple style checking programme such as is available in

Microsoft Word, horrible thing that it is. It does not run on

functional principles, but on very simple formal ones. Work out

the revenue that this brings in for Microsoft in terms of 1000s

(millions?) of copies sold, and the "findings per buck" figure

comes out depressingly high for the non-functional view. Add on top

of these other simple things like search engines and other places

where extremely simple "linguistic" knowledge is applied, and

the figures go up astronomically.

I think functional linguistics can do better. But it won't manage

it without the formal side being adequately covered as well.

> In this paper, serious questions are posed about one of the ranks in

> Halliday's theory: Quereda, L. (n.d.) "The unit "group"" online paper

> at http://www.ugr.es/~lquereda/the\_unit\_group.htm accessed on 16 Sep.

> 2002. I do not now if there are published versions of this paper.

I am adding this link to the systemic bibliography I maintain; if there is a published version somewhere, I would appreciate it greatly if this information could be added.

ED MCDONALD

I agree with John that these questions are ones that urgently need opening up, not only within linguistics but in the wider community. When I read in a newspaper article that "When we think of linguists, we normally think of Chomsky or Pinker (sic)", and when I recall the latter's dismissal of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in three words "Wrong, all wrong" (sic: as a dog!) I know that there a lot of important ideas that are not getting across.

To look at this problem from within linguistics, I think there are three main areas we need to be aware of. First of all a sense of historical perspective is essential, not only for contextualising what it is we do within systemic functional linguistics, but also for interpreting and explaining our work to people based in other approaches. The complete works of Michael Halliday currently being published - which were the original topic of this thread! - provide a marvellous resource for seeing the development of his own thinking over time, helped by the thematic arrangement into volumes; while on a more micro scale, Robin Fawcett in his latest book on syntax gives a potted history of the rank controversy which is very useful for understanding the pros and cons on that particular issue. Outside the functional field, the work of Charles Hockett has always seemed to me analytic and self-reflective in this what seems to me a much-needed way, and his 1987 volume published by Benjamins (with the significant subtitle "Reevaluating our Foundations") is a marvellously perceptive and luminous summing up of one of the key traditions in American linguistics.

My second point here would be that, in line with Halliday's characterisation of a theory as a "form of action", we need to always understand the context of application for particular theories. The work of Chris Butler referred to in a previous mail is an outstanding example of this sort of contextualisation, where he not only compares three major functional theories, but evaluates them critically in terms of how they deal with the same descriptive issues. The fact that SFL perhaps has a wider field of application that Functional Grammar (Dik style) or Role and Reference Grammar (van Valin) doesn't take away the fact that all three stand or fall by the usefulness of their descriptions, and this is where any theory should be able to be fruitfully compared with other theories.

My final point has to do with the role of argumentation within and across theories. As David Butt pointed out in a recent paper, the network formalisation has always played the major role in SFL in justifying descriptive constructs, because it gives the linguist a consistent way of linking meanings with forms, but it has not always been recognised as such within much less outside the theory. There is no need for everyone to play by formalist rules, where falsification is the only test of descriptive validity, but then again we do need to create a discursive space for allowing others to critique our work, and do so in a way that gets away from aggressive point scoring. It think the laudable desire to let people speak within SFL, as well as the many negative examples of destructive criticism from other schools, has meant a shying away from the difficult business of critique. We need critique not only for our own purposes but also to link in with and benefit from the field as !

a whole.

So in a word - well, three - it's all about "context, context, context".

**John Bateman** added (2018):

There is also Teun van Dijk's ongoing and in many respects well motivated critique of the SFL notion of context, which reflects a lot of frustration with the SFL approach and its lack of engagement with certain issues, such as cognition:  
  
van Dijk, Teun (2009) Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach.

**John Bateman (2018)**

You might try:

* Bateman, J. A. The place of Systemic-Functional Linguistics as a linguistic theory in the 21st Century. In:
* Bartlett, T. & O'Grady, G. (Eds.)  The Routledge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics, Routledge, 2017, 11-26.

as a discussion which at least adopts a certain 'distance' as well as providing further references to follow up...

It would also depend considerably on the particular areas that you want to address.

**Nick Moore** (2018)

In addition to these fine suggestions, I would add the fairly recent work by Chris Butler. In his impressive and highly detailed two volume "Structure and Function" he compares all areas of the theory of grammar and discourse in SFL, including its main variants or 'dialects', with other functional linguistic theories. (see <https://benjamins.com/catalog/slcs.63>  & <https://benjamins.com/catalog/slcs.64>)

You can find aspects of his arguments in

* Butler, C.S. (2005). Focusing on focus: A comparison of Functional Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar and Systemic Functional Grammar. *Language Sciences*, 27, 585–618
* Butler, C.S. (2008). Cognitive adequacy in structural-functional theories of language. *Language Sciences*, 30(1), 1-30
* Butler, C.S. (2009). Criteria of adequacy in functional linguistics. *Folia Linguistica*, 43(1), 1–66
* Butler, C.S. (2013). Systemic Functional Linguistics, Cognitive Linguistics and psycholinguistics: Opportunities for dialogue. *Functions of Language*, 20(2), 185 –218

For a specific focus on Halliday's view of tense, see

* Bache, C. (2009). *English Tense and Aspect in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar - A Critical Appraisal and an Alternative*. Sheffield: Equinox

I would argue that these critiques are very much from an 'insider's' perspective; the authors are very knowledgeable about SFL and, in my opinion, are attempting to strengthen the theory.