Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics
By Halliday

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Learning objectives

In this lecture, students will be introduced to Functionalism

-Functional-Systemic linguistics by Halliday

- Functional Grammar

- Halidays model of language

Introduction

- Two major schools of grammar emerged in the 20th century, namely **American Structural Grammar represented by Bloomfield** and **Transformational-Generative Grammar (TGG) represented by Chomsky**. Structural grammar and Transformational-Generative grammar represent the **two main stages of the development of modern linguistics.**

- The former focuses on **the systematic analysis and description of language forms** and **advocates the behavioristic theory of language** while the latter aims at revealing the universal grammar in the human brain. Chomsky's theory is based on the idea that all languages hold similar structures and rules, also known as a **universal grammar** with specific options and limits for variation in grammar and features between languages.

Linguistic Functionalism

Functionalism, in linguistics, is an approach which emerged as a response to formalist theories of language (such as structuralism and generative grammar), which were more concerned with the formal rules of language rather than how language is used in practice.

This theory prioritize the social and communicative functions of language, suggesting that linguistic forms and structures evolve primarily to serve practical communicative needs.

The Prague School, with its emphasis on the communicative function of language, played a significant role in the development of linguistic functionalism, influencing later approaches like **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)** by **Michael Halliday**.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Michael Halliday):

One of the most influential schools of functionalism is **Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**, developed by Michael Halliday. SFL views language as a system of choices that speakers make in order to fulfill different functions.

SFL emphasizes the functional aspects of language, focusing on how language serves to communicate and perform various social functions.

Unlike formalist approaches that prioritize abstract structures or rules, SFL views language as a tool for interaction, meaning-making, and achieving specific communicative goals within social contexts.

Functional Grammar

Functional grammar is a specific theoretical approach within functional linguistics. It focuses on the analysis and description of language from the perspective of its functions—how linguistic structures (such as syntax, morphology, and phonology) are used to fulfill communicative goals.

The **Systemic Functional Grammar** (SFG) by **Michael Halliday** is one of the most well-known models in this field. Halliday identified three main meta-functions of language.

- **Ideational**: Concerned with the representation of experience and the world.

- **Interpersonal**: Focused on social interactions and relationships between speakers.

- **Textual**: Concerned with organizing and structuring information to make discourse coherent.

The language system consists of three macro-functions known as meta-functional components: the interpersonal function, the ideational function, and the textual function, all of which make a contribution to the structure of a text. According to Halliday, it is called functional grammar because the conceptual framework on which it is based is a functional one rather than a formal one.

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Halliday's Model of Language

- Halliday proposed that language operates on three levels:

  o **Lexicogrammar**: The set of choices that combine lexical items (vocabulary) and grammatical structures (syntax). It is the system that helps convey meaning and fulfill communicative functions.

  o **Phonology**: The system of sounds used in spoken language.

  o **Semantics**: The system of meaning, which includes how words, phrases, and sentences are used to create and communicate meaning.

Michael Halliday

* The first four functions Halliday calls them:	Instrumental: This is when the child uses language to express their needs (e.g.'Want juice')	Regulatory: This is where language is used to tell others what to do
Interactional: to make contact with others and form relationships	Personal: use to express feelings, opinions and individual identity	* The next three functions are:
Heuristic: is used to gain knowledge about the environment	Imaginative: to tell stories and jokes, and to create an imaginary.	Representational: to convey facts and information.

References

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JRhttps://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/content_store/WWW_Content/9780631204978/13.pdf

Systemic functional linguistics:

https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/linguistics/15._pragmatic_and_discourse_analysis/05._systemic_functional_linguistics/et/8498_et_5_et.pdf