

中青年学者外国语言文学学术前沿研究丛书

# 詹姆斯·马丁 访谈录

王振华  
编

INTERVIEWS WITH  
JAMES R. MARTIN

Wang Zhenhua

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# Preface

It is a great honour for me to interview Professor James R. Martin, an internationally renowned linguist in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Professor Martin was elected a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 1998, and was Head of its Linguistics Section from 2010-2012; he was awarded a Centenary Medal for his services to Linguistics and Philology in 2003. Since 2014, he has been Director of the Martin Centre for Applicable Linguistics, Shanghai Jiao Tong University. His research interests include systemic theory, functional grammar, discourse semantics, register, genre, multimodality and critical discourse analysis, focusing on English and Tagalog – with special reference to the transdisciplinary fields of educational linguistics, forensic linguistics and social semiotics.

His recent publications include *The Language of Evaluation* (with Peter White, Palgrave 2005); with David Rose, a second edition of *Working with Discourse* (Continuum 2007), a book on genre (*Genre Relations*, Equinox 2008) and an introduction to the genre-based literacy pedagogy of the ‘Sydney School’ (*Learning to Write, Reading to Learn*, Equinox 2012); with Clare Painter and Len Unsworth, a book on children’s picture books (*Reading Visual Narratives*, Equinox 2013); and a book on system network writing (*Systemic Functional Grammar: a next step into the theory – axial relations*, Higher Education Press, Beijing 2013). Eight volumes of his collected papers (edited by Wang Zhenhua) have recently been published (2010-2012) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press.

Professor Martin is my supervisor, mentor and friend. I studied Systemic Functional Linguistics under his supervision in the University of Sydney from 1997 to 1999. His generous and engaging character, and his work on APPRAISAL systems and discourse semantics have exerted a profound influence on me. When I left for China, I made up my mind to continue my SFL research and teaching and to be a ‘Martian’. Thereafter, we contacted each other frequently and talked over our plans for collaborations. At my invitation, he came to

China and gave a talk at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Appraisal Systems in 2005, delivered lecture series in 2008, 2010 and 2012, and made a plenary speech at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference of Language, Law and Discourse in 2013, to name just a few. It is during his 2008 visit that we agreed to have his papers collected and published (see above). And his 2013 visit to Shanghai Jiao Tong University laid the cornerstone for the launch of the Martin Centre for Applicable Linguistics in April 2014.

As Director of the Martin Centre, Professor Martin is responsible, in consultation with the Dean of the School of Foreign Languages of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, for selecting staff for the Centre, recruiting visiting professors and selecting post-doctoral fellows. He also teaches three intensive five-day courses offered annually for Chinese PhD students and recent graduates in SFL, presides over three one-day research symposia organized during the intensive teaching, and organizes on a yearly basis an SFL research forum.

I conducted interviews with Professor Martin during his previous visits in 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2012. These interviews are arranged in chronological order in this collection. Some topics have been dealt with more than once; this is because they involve my interests, or they are hot topics in the Chinese SFL circle, or they are questions I was frequently asked by students or young scholars in China. For example, APPRAISAL was covered in all the four interviews. Since I (王振华2001) published a paper introducing and reviewing his APPRAISAL systems in *Journal of Foreign Languages* (《外国语》), APPRAISAL has attracted increasing attention of Chinese scholars to either apply it or question it. I have presented the interviews according to the years in which they were conducted because it can help readers familiarize themselves with Martin's ideas and thoughts on the SFL theory.

Professor Martin is a dedicated scholar of SFL theory and its application. He is the one who has contributed most to the evolution of discourse-level meaning theory out of its foundation in clause-level meaning theory (See his *English Text: system and structure* (1992), *Working with Discourse: meaning beyond clause* (with David Rose 2003/2007), *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (with Peter White 2005), *Genre Relations: mapping culture* (with David Rose 2008)). He has also made important contributions

to other areas, such as genre, register, multimodality, grammatical metaphor, critical discourse analysis, language of education, and forensic linguistics (see the 8 volumes of *The Collected Works of J. R. Martin*, edited by Wang Zhenhua, published by Shanghai Jiao Tong University Press). I firmly believe that this collection of interviews will help usher the readers into the colourful and attractive world of a thriving Systemic Functional Linguistics paradigm.

Wang Zhenhua  
Shanghai  
June, 2014

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## 2005

### (1) Lexicogrammar and discourse semantics<sup>1</sup>

**Q:** In *Working with Discourse: meaning beyond the clause* (Martin & Rose 2007; 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2003), you used the three metafunctions to organize your discourse semantics, as Halliday did for grammar in his *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985a; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1994; 3<sup>rd</sup> edition with Matthiessen 2004; 4<sup>th</sup> edition with Matthiessen 2014). Do you see this as a development of systemic functional grammar or as something different?

**Martin:** I think a generational perspective is instructive here. Halliday's teacher Firth was a specialist in phonology – prosodic analysis in particular (Palmer 1970). Halliday, as he has acknowledged many times, is a grammarian (e.g. Halliday 2013). I am a discourse analyst. So the three generations are concentrating on different levels of abstraction (phonology, lexicogrammar and discourse semantics), with successive generations building on the work of earlier ones. The concept of metafunction comes from Halliday's work on grammar, on the grammar of English clauses in particular. I deploy the same concept at the level of discourse semantics as an organizing principle (Martin 1992). I also use it, once again following Halliday, as an organizing principle for what I call register (with ideational meaning by and large construing field, interpersonal meaning enacting tenor and textual meaning composing mode).

It is interesting to compare strata from the perspective of metafunctions. In phonology there are recognizable strands of textual meaning and interpersonal meaning, but ideational meaning is not a basic organizing principle there. And

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1 I am much indebted to Yaegan Doran for his help in editing these interviews.

my stratum of genre operates in a sense above and beyond metafunctions, packaging as it does ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning into the stages and phases through which texts unfold. So genre theory for me is the part of my theory of context which transcends metafunctions. When I am relating genres to one another, typologically or topologically, I don't want to be constrained by having to consider genre relations from the perspective of ideational meaning alone, or interpersonal meaning alone or textual meaning alone – in typologies or topologies situated only in field or only in tenor or only in mode. Genres integrate meanings from all these metafunctions, and for me what is interesting is how these integrations relate to one another. This has been crucial for our work in education.

That said I have explored genre structure from the perspective of different types of structure (particulate – orbital and serial, prosodic and periodic; Martin 1996); and this perspective on types of structure derives from Halliday's (1979) association of types of structure with metafunctions (particulate with ideational meaning, prosodic with interpersonal meaning and periodic with textual meaning). But I do not push this association through to my conception of genre as system, since I don't describe genre relations in terms of three different metafunctions (for me that is a matter of register, not genre). In this respect my model differs from that of say Hasan, whose obligatory elements of genre structure derive from field, and who therefore has to describe genre relations as primarily a matter of field. In Matthiessen's recent work (e.g. Matthiessen 2012, Matthiessen & Teruya in press), inspired by Ure, genre relations are also positioned as a dimension of field. I don't agree that genre relations are primarily a matter of field; I don't agree that they are primarily ideational.

As I noted above, I deploy metafunctions as a basic organizing principle at the level of discourse semantics; I position IDEATION and CONJUNCTION as ideational systems, NEGOTIATION and APPRAISAL as interpersonal systems and IDENTIFICATION and PERIODICITY as textual ones. It is important to contrast this perspective with Halliday & Hasan's 1976 work on cohesion, which Halliday (1973: 141/2009: 85) has positioned as non-structural textual meaning. This is a reasonable perspective for a grammarian: cohesion is conceived as the glue which sticks pieces of grammar together to form a text, and is therefore textual (alongside THEME and INFORMATION systems). My discourse semantics

on the other hand, reconceives cohesion as discourse semantic structure (I am influenced by my teacher Gleason in this respect; Gleason 1968), operating on a higher level of abstraction than lexicogrammar. This makes it possible to reconceive LEXICAL COHESION and CONJUNCTION (my IDEATION and CONJUNCTION) as ideational, not textual; and it makes room for my interpersonal dimensions of discourse structure (NEGOTIATION and APPRAISAL); this leaves REFERENCE (my IDENTIFICATION) and THEME and INFORMATION (my PERIODICITY) as discourse semantic textual systems. So my reconceptualization of cohesion as discourse semantics is an important difference between my discourse analyst perspective and Halliday's grammarian one. My semantics is concerned with the organization of discourse; its focus is not simply or primarily the meaning of a clause.

## (2) Genre and context of situation

**Q:** What is the relation of your genre theory to earlier work on context of situation?

**Martin:** My personal history is important here. I was first trained to work on context by Michael Gregory at York University (Glendon College) in Toronto. At the time Gregory was developing his register theory in the early to mid 1960s (Gregory 1967), Halliday's concept of metafunctions was just being developed and metafunctions weren't a basic organizing principle of Gregory's own work on scale and category grammar (inspired by Halliday's 1961 'Categories of the theory of grammar' paper). Gregory in fact proposed a four term model of context, comprised of field, mode, personal tenor and functional tenor (comparable to categorization by Ure & Ellis, e.g. 1977). When I began teaching in Sydney, I used this model in my first courses on register and genre, with students who were also working with Halliday, who had introduced them to his field, mode and tenor model. My stratified model of context, as register (field, tenor and mode) and genre is an attempt to resolve this tension.

It seemed clear to the group of research students I was working with at the time that while field could be correlated with ideational meaning, tenor with interpersonal meaning and mode with textual meaning (as far as my model of discourse semantics was concerned), functional tenor was the odd one out –

since it could be correlated with any or all of ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. This led us initially to treat functional tenor as a more abstract category, influencing field, tenor and mode (and thereby ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning). Then to avoid confusion with the term personal tenor, we changed its name to genre and made it responsible for generating what we called the schematic structure of texts (comparable to Hasan's text structure; Hasan 1985a). This established genre as the controlling variable in my model, responsible for coordinating the combinations of field, tenor and mode variables a given culture organizes as stages and phases of a genre.

Soon after this, in a paper I was writing for teachers (Martin 1984), I suggested that we might use Malinowski's terms context of culture and context of situation to think about my stratified model of context (as genre and register). And educational linguists drawing on my work found it useful to think of register (field, tenor and mode) as a model of context of situation and genre as a model of context of culture. In doing this they are treating context of culture as realized through context of situation (since genre in my model genre is realized through register). I originally did not intend this gesture towards Malinowski's (1935) work to be any more than a helpful way of thinking about register and genre; but my model is often presented, especially in education work, with context of culture and context of situation as technical terms, referring to genre and register respectively.

This has become very confusing within systemic linguistics, because that kind of realisational relation between context of situation and context of culture was not the way Halliday came to use the terms (see Matthiessen 1993 for clarification). For Halliday, context of situation instantiates context of culture, in the same way that text instantiates system. Once I realized the possible confusion, I tried to stop using the analogy to Malinowski's terms. This was not a problem for me since context of culture and context of situation were never technical terms in my model (whereas they are technical terms in Halliday's). But my model is still often presented as context of culture (genre) realized through context of situation (register). So it is important to keep clear when reading work on context whether the terms of being related as a matter of realization or instantiation. It is important not to let this difference get in the way of appreciating the difference between my approach to context and that

of Halliday's. There is no difference as far as the concepts of realization and instantiation are concerned. What is different is that I use a stratified model of context (as genre and register, with register comprising field, tenor and mode) and he does not (he works with one stratum, called context, comprising field, tenor and mode). Informally speaking, I model culture as a system of genres (which is realized, in turn, through register); formally speaking, he models culture as systems of field, tenor and mode (realized through language).

Another important difference in terminology, but not in conceptualization, has to do with my use of the term register as a cover term for field, tenor and mode. Obviously in a stratified model of context you have to find names for the different strata, and for this we adopted the terms register and genre. Halliday doesn't have a stratified model so doesn't need two terms. And for him, the term register refers to the way language choices are affected by contextual ones (by field, tenor and mode). So the term register is at the level of language, not context as in my model. Once again, this is simply a difference in terminology. There is no conceptual difference as far as the relation of field, tenor and mode to language is concerned across the two models.

**Q:** Does the theory of genre help us focus on the question of types of discourse?

**Martin:** Both levels of context, register and genre, are tools for modeling types of discourse. Register allows us to explore kinds of discourse from the perspective of field (the institutional focus of a text), tenor (the kind of power and solidarity relations involved) and mode (the texture of the information flow afforded by the channel of communication). Genre allows us to explore the combinations of field, tenor and mode choices a culture deploys. This involves mapping a culture as families of genres (Martin & Rose 2008).

For English, we've only begun to explore some of these genre families – stories, procedures and protocols, explanations, reports, arguments, reports, service encounters and counseling among others. It's by no means a complete picture; it is not comparable to the more comprehensive picture we have for English phonology, grammar or discourse semantics. One striking aspect of this work for me has been the idea that whereas ideational, interpersonal and textual systems combine relatively freely with one another within language, at the level of context, field, tenor and mode variables don't freely combine. As

far as kinds of genre are concerned, a culture appears to deploy just a fraction of the possible text types any language affords. It is as if our culture is like the universe – mostly empty, with galaxies (i.e. genre families) dotted around here and there. In a sense, our cultures, conceived as systems of genres, are mainly empty. We live our lives through just a few of the possible text types that might have evolved, and by and large we feel pretty busy doing that. We don't usually miss what we could mean. This allows us to habituate ourselves and relate to one another by and large beneath consciousness. The goal of genre theory is to bring these possibilities and limitations to consciousness.

### (3) APPRAISAL system

**Q:** In earlier work on appraisal you opposed 'inscribed' to 'evoked' attitude; later, in *The Language of Evaluation* (Martin & White 2005) the term 'invoked' was proposed for 'evoked'; why the change?

**M:** Let's begin with the issue that these terms are addressing, namely that attitude can be explicitly encoded in a text through evaluative lexis (inscribed), or implied by a selection of ideational meanings (invoked). In *The Language of Evaluation* we preferred the term 'invoke' to 'evoke' to reinforce the point that a speaker or writer is being rhetorically active as far as evaluation is concerned when selecting ideational meanings. They take into account, in other words, how a reader will react, even where feelings are not explicitly inscribed. Invoked then functions as a cover term for the different ways in which feelings can be implied, including lexical metaphors (provoke), intensification (flag) and ideational selections that are not highlighted as interpersonally subjective in any way (afford).

The opposition of inscribe and invoke is a very important one rhetorically speaking, because when we inscribe a feeling we are in effect challenging a listener or reader to agree with us. We are generally assuming in effect that they are onside (we are 'preaching to the converted' as we say in English). Negotiating feelings with people who don't share them is an alienating enterprise and normally we use appraisal resources to affiliate with people, not alienate them. When we can't assume that people are onside, we can be more careful, and develop a text that more gradually wins them round. Invoking

attitude is more appropriate as texts unfold in situations of this kind, because it is less confronting. Invoking discourse invites an audience to react, without telling them precisely how to; it makes room for discretion.

More recently we have been reconsidering inscribed and invoked attitude from the perspective of instantiation – the degree to which meaning is committed in a text (Martin 2010c). So we can set up a scale, beginning with inscribed attitude where the evaluation is fully committed (*calm*), and move on through idioms (Chang 2004), where the type of attitude is clear but indirectly lexicalized (e.g. *cool as a cucumber*), then lexical metaphors, where we know we have to infer attitude but the type depends on our decoding of a live metaphor (e.g. *At night I wake up with the sheets soaking wet/ and a freight train running through the middle of my head/ Only you can cool my desire/ I'm on fire*<sup>1</sup>), then intensified ideational tokens (*I couldn't sleep at all the whole night long*), then unsubjectified ideational tokens (*I didn't sleep*). There is still important work to do in this area, especially in terms of the complementarity of inscribed and invoked attitude as a text unfolds (see Hood 2010 on this interplay in academic discourse).

**Q:** In your appraisal work, you used the term 'evidentiality', and I wonder is there a close relation between the term and the appraisal theory?

**Martin:** Evidentiality is not a technical term in appraisal analysis; it belongs to other approaches to evaluative meaning. In these approaches it is generally used to refer to the basis upon which information is presented – as something directly known by the speaker, or heard from someone else, or inferred; and if directly known, via visual or non-visual queues. These meanings may be realized lexically or grammatically as a typological variable across languages. In Tagalog for example the clitic particle *daw/raw* indicates that the basis for what I am saying is what someone else said; but I don't specify who, as I would normally do if I was using projection (e.g. *sinabi ni Kent* 'Kent said...'). The relevant part of appraisal theory is ENGAGEMENT, which Peter White and others have developed, in part recontextualizing the notions of heteroglossia and dialogism generally attributed to Bakhtin. In appraisal theory ENGAGEMENT develops out of a concern with the source of

1 From 'I'm On Fire'; track #6 on the Bruce Springsteen album *Born in the U.S.A.*

attitudes (who is feeling emotion, or judging or appreciating) and comes to refer more generally to the play of voices in discourse. The key resources for the realization of ENGAGEMENT, from the perspective of lexicogrammar, include MODALITY, PROJECTION, CONCESSION, NEGATION and various comment adjuncts. You could say that ENGAGEMENT represents a discourse semantic perspective on evidentiality, stance, hedging and related categories in other theories. We have to be a little careful here because of the distinction appraisal analysis makes between ENGAGEMENT and GRADUATION, resources which might not be clearly distinguished in other approaches.

#### (4) MA/PhD dissertation writing

**Q:** Could you please offer some advice to MA or PhD students on writing their thesis?

**Martin:** Perhaps all I can do here is talk about how I work with my own students in Australia. Let's begin with the overall structure of the thesis. For Chapter 1 I suggest a short chapter, about half the length of the following ones. This is your introduction to the thesis and your job is to get the reader to see why the problem you are working on is an interesting one. I prefer this chapter not to be too technical. It should welcome the reader into the field in terms of shared understandings.

The next chapter is what I call the foundations chapter. Some people refer to it as a literature review. But I don't want my students to simply review the relevant literature. I want a chapter that distills what is relevant to the thesis. Let's say they are doing a thesis informed by SFL, CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) and MDA (Multimodal Discourse Analysis). They need to encapsulate what is important from each of these fields for their research, not simply review the work that has been done in these fields as a kind of catalogue of what they've read. Towards the end of the chapter the key ideas need to be brought together as an edge of knowledge that the student is going to move forward from. At this point data and methodology can be discussed, the succeeding chapters of news previewed. I prefer not to have a separate data and methodology chapter because I want considerations of data and methodology to arise directly from the distillation of foundations in relation to



the new knowledge the thesis is going to present. One helpful way of thinking about this chapter is that it is your application for a license to teach in tertiary education; it shows you can read the relevant literature and distill what is important – which is just what you need to do as a lecturer.

After that you have the chapters of news. I prefer two or three chapters; we have to be careful here because our PhD theses in Australia can't be more than 100,000 words. The nature of these chapters depends on the nature of the study. Your analysis and findings and discussion of their significance all have to be covered here, but not necessarily as separate chapters. I generally find it better to have two or three thematised chapters, each covering analysis, findings and discussion, rather than having an analysis chapter, followed by a findings chapter, followed by a discussion one.

This brings you to the final chapter, where again, I prefer a short one. This pulls together the news in the preceding two or three chapters and highlights the significant contribution it makes to the field. This is where in effect you promote your work, showing why your findings are important. It is important in this chapter to qualify what you have done. By the end of a thesis you know so much more than when you started that it is invariably easy to see how the thesis could have been undertaken differently – if only you had known at the beginning what you know at the end! This is of course why some students never finish and supervisors have to be careful about this syndrome. This has to be managed in positive terms, not by apologizing about what could have been done but wasn't, but more in terms of what kind of research can be undertaken now that the contributions of this thesis have been made. The chapter thus has to look forward to what the student, or students that follow them, can do on the basis of this thesis. You need to keep in mind here that a PhD is your application for a license to do research. So you have to convince readers that the research you have done was worthwhile and that you are ready to do more as you move on in your career.

In the Australian system your relationship with your supervisor is very important. Our institutions don't generally prescribe coursework as part of their PhD programs. A PhD is a research degree and you start your research project from day one. So your interactions with your supervisor are critical. Regular one-on-one mentoring of this kind is a new experience for most students and