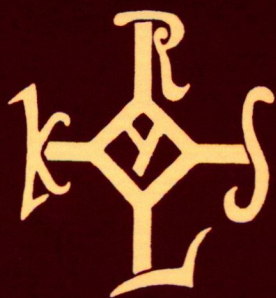


Stella Neumann / Rebekah Wegener /
Jennifer Fest / Paula Niemietz /
Nicole Hützen (eds.)

Challenging Boundaries in Linguistics

Systemic Functional Perspectives



PETER LANG
EDITION

**Stella Neumann / Rebekah Wegener / Jennifer Fest /
Paula Niemietz / Nicole Hützen (eds.)**

Challenging Boundaries in Linguistics

Linguistics, like any discipline, is full of boundaries. However, in nature, as Ruqaiya Hasan points out, there are no clear cut boundaries. The participants of the 42nd International Systemic Functional Congress held at RWTH Aachen University addressed and challenged the notion of boundaries in linguistics in many creative ways. Twenty-one of the papers presented at the congress are collated in this volume. The six sections cover topics that challenge theoretical notions and stances, and explore historical, interpersonal and lexicogrammatical boundaries as well as

those between languages and in language development. The volume presents a state of the art overview of systemic functional linguistic theorising with extensions into other theoretical frameworks.

The Editors

The editors, Stella Neumann, Rebekah Wegener, Jennifer Fest, Paula Niemietz and Nicole Hützen, work together at the chair of English linguistics at RWTH Aachen University and share a research interest in systemic functional linguistics.





Challenging Boundaries in Linguistics

Neumann / Wegener / Fest / Niemietz / Hützen (eds.)

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Paula Niemietz / Nicole Hützen (eds.)

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Challenging boundaries and bending rules: An introduction

"The power gained from abstraction is to have to define data in such a manner that it does not include everything that may be going on, for in nature there are no clear cut, given boundaries." (Hasan 1995, 187)

"In nature", Hasan (1995) contends, "there are no clear cut, given boundaries". And yet, for cognitive efficiency, if nothing else, we appear to need to reflect on existence as a series possessing boundaries. The same pressure to define the day by hours, minutes and seconds is reflected in our division of the flow of social processes into bounded contexts, but these boundaries are socially constructed and open to challenge.

Linguistics, like any discipline, is full of boundaries. We set boundaries, we live with boundaries, we push boundaries and we challenge and break boundaries. In theories which are organised around meaning, the boundaries that we work with are in most cases fuzzy. While most structural approaches can concentrate on language as an isolate, a meaning-based approach must go outside language and this, as Halliday (2003, 28) suggests, means working with fuzzy boundaries at all levels.

To challenge a boundary is not always to criticise it or tear it down. Challenging a boundary is a process of testing, and there are many boundaries that one might want to test or explore: we might, for instance, challenge boundaries of segments in sequences of language use, boundaries of categories when we are not certain whether a phenomenon is best characterised as categorical or gradual. We might want to explore the boundaries between modalities and semiotic systems or the boundaries between literary and non-literary language use. We might also want to challenge the boundaries of stages in the development of a given language or the boundaries between languages.

Boundaries are also something that we construct and learn from an early age and we might wish to understand and challenge the ways that we learn about and act within boundaries, or the ways that we teach boundaries to others. Regardless of our specific focus, most of these questions involve challenging the traditional fields of interest of linguistics – our own categories – and questioning and perhaps redefining the boundaries of what it means to be a linguist now and in the future.

*The participants of the 42nd International Systemic Functional Congress held at RWTH Aachen University in July 2015*¹ took up the notion of boundaries in linguistics in many ways. Twenty-one of the papers presented at the Congress are collated in this volume. Like the Congress itself, these papers span many of the topics systemicists are concerned with world-wide: several papers discuss appraisal, several deal with language development and education from various perspectives, grammatical metaphor is investigated or at least touched upon variously, Theme and Theme structure are examined and, lastly, multimodality is taken into consideration. There is a welcome focus on historical analyses as well as on translation-related issues. Acting on the invitation in the call for papers, most papers discuss links between systemic functional linguistics and other functional frameworks, many of which with a cognitive orientation. While there is an overwhelming focus on the analysis of English, languages covered also include Arabic, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish.

We begin the volume with a section addressing some theoretical questions before zooming in to more fine-grained areas of linguistic inquiry, only to zoom out again to applied fields that cover a wider range – and combination – of linguistic phenomena. The volume is framed by two plenary papers.

Section 1 *Challenging boundaries in theory* opens with Lise **Fontaine's** plenary paper on "Fluid boundaries and the categorization of nominal expressions". In this paper, Fontaine puts the discussion of boundaries and the role of categories in linguistics at the center stage for the discussion of nominal expressions. Her discussion proceeds in three successive steps. First she shows how nominalisations are not necessarily – or even often not at all – linked in terms of word formation to the verbs to which they may still be semantically related. Second she discusses the distribution of nouns and verbs in noun-verb conversion, reporting results that indicate a prevalence of the nominal elements in the pairs. In the last step, she looks at the broader context of nominal groups and compares them to clauses. Fontaine provides a compelling argument for the fluidity of boundaries between accepted categories. In her discussion of the connections between systemic functional linguistics and communication linguistics Karen **Malcolm** addresses challenging boundaries between different linguistic schools. In particular, her paper "Communication linguistics as a social and cognitive semiotic" considers the way in which communication linguistics, extending beyond linguistics to all kinds of modalities and taking on board cognitive aspects as well, can enrich the analysis

1 The editors gratefully acknowledge financial support by the German Research Foundation (DFG) under project number NE 1822/3-1.

of humour. The last paper in this section, “Post-Deictic and grounding” by Monika **Kavalir**, returns to the nominal group. Kavalir takes the post-Deictic, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 373) a second deictic element in the nominal group that further specifies the identification of the head noun, as a test case for challenging the boundaries between the systemic functional account of the structure of the nominal group and Langacker’s account in the framework of cognitive grammar. Kavalir’s paper is especially welcome in showing how breaking boundaries between different functional theories can enrich our understanding of linguistic phenomena.

The papers in Section 2 *Challenging boundaries over time* adopt a diachronic perspective. Michael **Cummings**’s contribution “Systemic functional diachronic linguistics: Theory and application” opens the section with a diachronic exposition of the verbal system of English, proposing four principles for diachronic description and showing how they apply to the verb group simplex. He concludes that much of verbal deixis in Present-Day English is an expansion of possibilities formed by the early Modern English period and represents a modern phenomenon. In “The dawn of the eighteenth century: A challenging boundary for the academic article”, David **Banks** uses metafunctional analysis to evaluate the similarity of linguistic features among three journals, two French and one English, all published in 1699. His study compares Thematic structure, Process Types and modality across the journals, illustrating the close relationship between texts and their contexts. With the study “On the contentfulness of Themes in English historical medical texts”, Ana Elina **Martinez-Insua** contributes a diachronic characterization of medical writing from several perspectives. She analyses textual variation in the organisation of clause constituents in Early Modern English medical texts addressed at different types of audiences, providing evidence for the existence of an interconnection between aspects of tenor and intra-genre variation in weight and reference of Subject Themes and confirming that Subject Themes in medical texts addressed at a learned audience exhibit a high degree of contentfulness. Claire **Urbach** and Christopher **Land**, in the final paper of the section, contribute to biblical research in the sub-discipline of epistolary research in “An applicable linguistics indeed: SFL and the structural potential of ancient letters”. After an initial survey of descriptions of the register of the ancient letter, they provide a multidimensional analysis of five early Pauline letters, examining Mood, Polarity, Agency and Process Type. The results are used to identify semantically coherent segments of the text.

Section 3 *Exploring boundaries of interpersonal expressions* addresses interpersonal meanings with a focus on Appraisal. Haeyeon **Kim**’s paper on “Interper-

sonal meanings of the free-standing *really* in conversation” characterises the use and meanings of free-standing *really* in a range of interactional contexts. Kim extends previous research to view *really* as an indicator of the need for additional information within the conversation. The work suggests that interactional context is an important component in explanations of the interpersonal functions of discourse markers. In “Attitude in student texts: Analysis of verbal, mental and relational clauses in Spanish”, Natalia **Ignatieva** draws on features across the boundaries between ideational and interpersonal meanings to examine how writers – in her case academic novices in a Spanish-speaking context – exploit different Process Types to express Attitude in Spanish. She provides corpus-based evidence for the ‘judgemental’ voice of student writers. In the final paper in this section, María **Aloy Mayo**’s “From Cosmogirl to Cosmovoter: Appraisal analysis of Cosmopolitan’s coverage of the 2014 US midterm elections” analyses linguistic features carrying positive and negative semantic meaning with the aim of evaluating linguistically the role of women in politics as presented in a series of articles in the magazine Cosmopolitan. Within the framework of Appraisal Aloy Mayo shows differences in negative Attitude and Intensification in the respective discourses of Cosmopolitan which are related to particular topics focussing on women’s rights.

The four papers in Section 4 *Challenging lexicogrammar* are concerned with lexicogrammar and challenging some accepted categories. The first two papers take stock of grammatical metaphor. In their corpus-based study “On the overlap of grammatical metaphor and conceptual metaphor in political discourse: A reconciliatory approach” Timo **Lothmann** and Tatiana **Serbina** examine instances of metaphors exhibiting potential intersections of two different theoretical approaches. They show that the systemic functional and the cognitive approach to metaphor combined offer a fruitful way to present a more diverse picture of different degrees of metaphor complexity. They emphasise the complementarity of systemic functional and cognitive frameworks and propose an integrative model for metaphor analysis, taking into account multiple discourse-functional layers. Lucia **Rottava** and Sulany **Silveira dos Santos** report on the preliminary findings of a qualitative-interpretative study examining how novice writers deal with academic literacy and focussing on the concepts of rewriting and grammatical metaphor. By focusing on the changes students introduced into the rewritten excerpts of their texts, the authors show that rewriting is most often conceived of as text expansion, and further, that ideational grammatical metaphors are used in the first version of the text, but not in the rewritten excerpts, where students instead show a preference for interpersonal metaphors. Foreshadowing Section 6, these

findings suggest that there is a need for explicit teaching of lexicogrammatical resources to better equip students with the skills necessary for evaluating their own writing and the writing process. By way of linking the analysis of discourse Moves to metafunctional distinctions, Margaret **Berry** adopts the most literal meaning of the Congress theme in her contribution "Challenging Moves and Supporting Moves in discourse". In her discussion of Moves in discourse that challenge the previous speaker's Move, Berry also challenges existing classifications of Moves in discourse. Drawing on a wealth of instructive examples from different sources she argues that this type of Move, along with Queries and Dispreferred Moves, cross-classifies with the metafunctions and shows Challenges in operation in various contexts.

The two final sections broaden the scope to cover applied areas of linguistics. As its title suggests, Section 5 *Treading boundaries in translation* focusses on translation-related questions. Waleed **Othman's** chapter "Explicitational enhancement in translation" draws on systemic functional linguistics to analyse aspects of translation and puts forward a model for identifying and classifying optional translational shifts of explicitation. Using a 50-page sample from translated data, he identifies recurrent patterns of optional explicitational shifts involving experiential enhancement and uses them to determine the extent to which translators differ in their tendencies toward explicitation. His preliminary analyses provide evidence for shifts that lead to meanings more explicit than in the source texts, with tendencies varying according to enhancing functions and translators. Marilena **di Bari** examines Appraisal, a framework already taken up in Section 3, from a multilingual and translation-related point of view in "Operationalizing Appraisal multilingually". She reports on combined quantitative and qualitative analyses of a translation corpus consisting of English originals and translations into Italian and Russian as well as a comparable component containing originals in all three languages. Di Bari's analysis shows differences in the expression of Appraisal in the three languages as well as shifts in the use of Appraisal devices in translations, especially in what she calls force, namely the intensity of a modifier. In "Shifts in Theme and Subject realization in English-German translation" Paula **Niemietz**, Stella **Neumann** and Jonas **Freiwald** offer insights into contrastive differences in Theme, using corpus data from the register of popular-scientific writings. Given that English and German show some incompatible constraints in the mapping of Subject and Theme, the focus is on the preferred choices made by translators in order to contend with these diverging restrictions. Their results show that translators have a range of options for changes in the Theme as a reaction to the requirements of the target language. In his contribution "Text production and

produced texts”, Daniel **Couto-Vale** takes stock of elements in the translation process and how best to conceptualise these, drawing on systemic functional notions. Using data from keystroke logging experiments, he delineates different types of transformations during the text production process that allow the capturing of the notoriously hidden cognitive processes during translating.

At the Congress, questions of language development, literacy and education played an important role. This includes work on genre and education presented by Bart van der Leeuw and Theun Meestringa published elsewhere (Van der Leeuw and Meestringa, 2015). This complex of topics is also the focus of the final Section 6 *Learning: Boundaries and beyond*. In their study “Language objectives beyond vocabulary: Working with content area teachers for linguistically responsive instruction”, Margaret A. **Berg** and Jingzi **Huang** investigate teacher progress in understanding language objectives for classroom tasks during their professional development using the SFL perspective. Within this framework language development is not restricted to the mere teaching of specialised vocabulary, but also takes into account sentence patterns and specialised discourse properties. Their findings show that a systemic functional approach to teacher development can help to improve instructional practices. Academic success in higher education in South Africa in its relationship to expansion is explored in Jumani **Clarke’s** “Expansion in law student essays: The relationship between success and logical reasoning in the Legal Problem Question Answer genre”. The study is concerned with the closer qualitative investigation of two essays of undergraduate law students in terms of systemic functional linguistics and rhetorical structure theory and illustrates the extent of rhetorical differences in essays considered successful. Shifting to child language development A. Jesús **Moya Guijarro**, in “Processing reality in picture books: A multimodal systemic functional and cognitive study”, combines cognitive and social semiotic approaches to explore the occurrences of visual metonymic character depictions in picture books for children, focussing on those designed for children at three different stages of cognitive development. The stages examined are the sensory-motor stage (0–2 years old), the pre-operational stage (3–6 years old) and the concrete operations stage (7–9 years old) and three books are selected for each stage. He tests the relationship between the use of metonymic manifestations and the age group for which picture books are initially intended and finds that there is an association between the presence of metonymic representations and the targeted developmental stage of development. The volume is concluded by Heidi **Byrnes’s** plenary paper “Meeting the challenge of instructed language development: Reflections on systemic functional contributions”. Addressing second language development, she emphasises the centrality