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# 功能语言学 年度评论

Annual Review  
of Functional Linguistics

主 编 黄国文  
常晨光

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Gongneng Yuyanxue Niandu Pinglun

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# 功能语言学年度评论

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# **The Annual Review of Functional Linguistics and Functional Linguistics Studies in China**

Huang Guowen, Chang Chenguang, and Lü Dairong  
Sun Yat-sen University, China

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## **1. Introduction**

There are many approaches to the study of language and linguistics and different schools of linguistics have distinctive and specific aims, assumptions, beliefs, methodologies and ways of presenting ideas and arguments. However, we believe that there are two general approaches to the study of language, the formal paradigm and the functional paradigm. This *Annual Review of Functional Linguistics (ARFL)* is to publish studies in the broad area of functional studies, with the focus on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The aim of this annual review is to explore language and linguistic issues from a functional and meaning-oriented perspective.

Unlike linguistics-related publications in countries in the West, publications of this kind in China do not normally focus on a single academic discipline or a specific research area, which means that scholars working within different theoretical frameworks (are invited to) read the same book. But this collection has a clear group of intended readers and they are functional linguists/researchers/students, most of whom are likely to be systemicists.

## **2. The First Volume of ARFL**

The first volume of this annual review, published in early 2010, includes nine papers, all written in Chinese, on different aspects of functional linguistics. Papers (1) to (6) are SFL-based, and papers (7) to (8) belong to the area of cognitive approaches to language. Paper (9) investigates the notion of “intertextuality.” The next few paragraphs briefly summarize each of these papers.

Paper (1) by Liu Shisheng (Department of Foreign Languages, Tsinghua University) and Liu Lihua (School of Foreign Studies, University of Science and Technology Beijing), “Appraisal Studies and Discourse Analysis,” argues that the Appraisal framework evolves from the interpersonal metafunction of SFL. The focus of the paper is on the origins, developments, basic notions and applications of the Appraisal

framework to discourse analysis. The paper also identifies some problems in applying the Appraisal framework to studies of texts.

Paper (2), "A Review of Studies on Multimodality" by Yang Xinzhang (College of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Xiamen University) and Xin Zhiying (School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University) gives a review of studies on multimodality in the past twenty years. The paper discusses the semiotic basis of studies on multimodality, and then conducts an analysis of four perspectives taken in the studies (i.e. the interactive sociologic perspective, the cognitive perspective, the stylistic perspective and the functional semiotic perspective). The authors also highlight the important role of the theory of SFL in the study of multimodality.

Paper (3), "Genre Analysis: Traditions and Frontiers" by Ding Jianxin (School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University) reviews the development of genre analysis as an approach to discourse analysis. It regards genre as a frame and an institution, and as an essential aspect of social life. It also argues that genre classification can be viewed in light of the concept of family resemblance and that genre is very similar to biological species in its evolution. The paper concludes that the genrification of modern social life, the marketization and technologization of genre, the politics and power in genre can be new research topics of genre analysis.

Paper (4), co-authored by Wang Hongyang (Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ningbo University) and Huang Guowen (School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University), "Thirty Years of Systemic Functional Linguistics Studies in China," outlines the SFL studies in the mainland of China in the past three decades. The focus of the review is on analyzing the kinds of activities that have taken place in China in the advancement of SFL, such as publications, academic activities, research organizations and the Chinese scholars' contributions to the development of SFL as a theory of language. An important aim of the paper is to identify existing problems and to suggest directions for further studies.

Paper (5), "A Survey of Functional Syntactic Studies in China," by He Wei (School of Foreign Studies, University of Science and Technology Beijing) reviews the study of functional syntax within the SFL framework by Chinese scholars. The paper takes the view that functional syntax, in the broad sense, studies the grammatical systems and structures of TRANSITIVITY, MOOD, THEME and INFORMATION of the clause and other linguistic units as well, such as the group, group complex and clause complex, and that it also involves the study of cohesive devices. The paper also discusses problems related to the study of functional syntax within the SFL framework.

The translation of Chinese classics into other languages has a history of over 400 years, but the study of such practice has far lagged behind, and functional linguistic approaches to the study have been undertaken only in the past ten years or so. Paper



(6), “A Review of Functional Linguistics Approaches to the Translation of Chinese Classics,” by Chen Yang (Foshan University) is a survey of functional studies in the field of translation with special attention paid to the systemic functional and functional discourse approaches. The paper gives a fairly comprehensive account of the research situation in China and indicates gaps that need to be filled in the study of the translation of Chinese classics within a general functional framework.

Taking the view that there are only two main streams of linguistics — the functional and the formal, we regard cognitive approaches to language and linguistic studies as functional approaches. Therefore, the first volume of *Annual Review of Functional Linguistics* includes two papers in the area of cognitive linguistics. Paper (7), “Survey of Cognitive Linguistics,” by Liu Zhengguang (School of Foreign Languages, Hunan University) gives a survey of Cognitive Linguistics (CL), giving information on the research background, and the motivation of CL studies, its development, its view on the nature of language, its theoretical goals, research subjects and methodology, major branches and their representative scholars as well as the potential areas for communication between CL and Generative Linguistics. The paper also points out that every new theory develops out of a critical inheritance of former theories, and that theory construction should not go to the exclusion or denial of other theories, which will do more harm than good.

Paper (8), “Development and Challenge: A Critical Review of Cognitive Linguistics Both Home and Abroad Over the Past Thirty Years” by Wang Fufang (School of Foreign Languages, East China Normal University) looks at the development, trend and inadequacies of CL both in China and abroad over the past thirty years. The author argues that three striking stages can be distinguished: the early stage (which is characterized as the introducing and shaping of all sorts of theoretical frameworks in the CL paradigm), the development stage (which is characterized as the further development of those major theoretical frameworks of the early stage and the wide expansion of the research scope of CL), and the establishment stage — the winning of the status of a linguistic school. The author argues that the current Chinese research situation of CL studies can be subsumed under the following categories: testifying research, theoretical development, application from the perspective of typology, and the trend of questioning research, and that there are inadequacies in the Chinese approach to CL studies.

In the literature to date, intertextuality is usually regarded as a phenomenon of text. Paper (9), “A Review of Research on Intertextuality,” by Xu Jiujiu (Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) reviews the concept of “intertextuality” from a historical perspective, observing that the concept of intertextuality was first initiated and developed by Kristeva in the 1960s, and was used to refer to a phenomenon in literature. The concept has been elaborated over the years and it has been widely

used by scholars in different research areas. In particular, as intertextuality is closely related to language usage, text linguists and discourse analysts such as de Beaugrande and Dressler applied the concept of intertextuality to linguistic studies. This paper mainly reviews the historical development of intertextuality and its new trends, and also provides a comprehensive literature review of the research inside and outside China.

### 3. The Second Volume of *ARFL*

This second volume of *ARFL* consists of four papers, all written in English. The first paper, "Systemic Functional Linguistics Developing", by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University) is concerned with the evolution and development of SFL as a theory of language. The author points out the central features that have characterized the development of SFL, such as the ongoing "territorial expansion" in different fields of activity (theory, description, comparison, analysis, application, and so on). Matthiessen also offers a "SWOT analysis" of the current state of development of SFL. The paper suggests that SFL is "evolutionary" rather than "revolutionary" in the course of its development.

The second paper entitled "The History and Theoretical Development of *Context of Situation* in Systemic Functional Linguistics" by Wendy L. Bowcher (Sun Yat-sen University) is concerned with an important concept in SFL: "context of situation." The paper surveys the historical and theoretical development of the concept "context of situation" in SFL. Bowcher not only identifies early references to the term "context" but also illustrates how the conceptualization of the relation between "context of situation" and language evolved from that of a somewhat deterministic relation to that of a metaredundant dialectic one. The paper closes with some details regarding the current contextualization system networks.

The third paper, "Texture Beyond the Clause," by Jonathan J. Webster (City University of Hong Kong) reviews Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) and illustrates with examples of text analysis — how a text is structured in such a way as to be accepted and understood as a text by its readers/listeners. Although the focus of the paper is on the application of RST to text analysis, the discussion may help readers to think of questions related to SFL's illustration of the system of interdependency and the logico-semantic system of expansion and projection.

With the rapid development of technology, the study of e-language and e-discourse has attracted more and more attention within the SFL circle. The paper by Lu Dairong (Sun Yat-sen University), "Negotiation of Role Relations in E-discourse: A Case Study of an Online Travel Forum", studies the newly established online role relations encoded in the linguistic choices within the framework of SFL. One of the important findings

of Lu's study is that despite the lack of physical and nonverbal cues that may serve to reveal the preestablished social identities of the participants, a ranking system has been established to index online users' level of participation and contribution in the forum, and as a result, the basic rank-based online social roles are built up. The paper concludes that social hierarchy and rank-based social roles are well established and maintained in the forum discourse.

#### **4. The Annotated Bibliography**

For the past few years, Professor Halliday has been suggesting that we in China should try to let non-Chinese scholars know what has been done in China concerning SF studies. In the interview with Professor Hu Zhuanglin and Professor Zhu Yongsheng during the 36th International Systemic Functional Congress (July 14-18, 2009, Tsinghua University, Beijing), Professor Halliday (see Halliday, 2010: 8) expresses his point again, this time in public:

Professor Huang Guowen and his colleague Professor Chang Chenguang have taken seriously a complaint that I have been making for a number of years, that in China you read all the materials published (at least those that are in English, not necessarily in other languages); but outside China people are not trained to read the materials in Chinese. So we need a digest of publications which tells, in English, what work has been published in Chinese in SFL during the year, with email addresses showing how you get access to it — and this is now in hand, which is fantastic. So this will solve one problem: at least the material written in Chinese will be accessible to those outside, who can follow up what seems to them to be interesting in one way or another. In the longer term, of course, more foreigners will learn Chinese; but most of them are not going to learn characters; so you would have to devise a system whereby any Chinese text is immediately transcribed from characters into pinyin.

It is in response to Professor Halliday's strong suggestion that we have included the part entitled "Systemic Functional Linguistics Studies in China: An Annotated Bibliography." We believe that this annotated bibliography will make some of the writings known to non-Chinese scholars who are interested in what has been done in China in the study of SFL.

#### **5. SFL Studies in China**

There have been a number of survey articles whose purpose is to inform readers of the developments of SFL studies in China, some written in Chinese and some in English.

As for those written in English, we have Huang's (2002) "Hallidayan Linguistics in China" and Zhang *et al.*'s (2005) paper "The Development of Systemic Functional Linguistics in China." Wang's (2010) *Systemic Functional Linguistics Studies in the Chinese Context* is a monograph also written in English but published in China. These publications can give readers a brief overview of the SFL research situation in China.

The inclusion of review articles and annotated bibliographies in *ARFL* will reflect the developments of functional linguistics studies in China, because from these one can gain an up-to-date overview of the research situation in China. The official journal of the Chinese Association of Functional Linguistics, *Studies in Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis* (published by Higher Education Press, Beijing), also includes papers that reflect the studies and development of SFL studies in the Chinese context.

## 6. SFL Studies at Sun Yat-sen University

The editors of *ARFL* are teachers at Sun Yat-sen University and the members in the editorial board are closely connected to the Functional Linguistics Institute, Sun Yat-sen University (SUFLI) in one way or another. The Institute was founded in April 2003, and it has been playing a very active role in the SFL studies in China, with its director, Professor Huang Guowen, serving as the Chair of the Chinese Association of Functional Linguistics since 2003. For the past eight years or so, the Institute has organized a series of SFL activities, including international conferences, symposiums, and Systemics Weeks. There are nearly 20 staff members of the University whose main research interest is SFL and who are actively associated with the Institute, and there are nearly 20 PhD students whose studies are SFL-informed or SFL-oriented. There are also about 80 MA students in the University who are working within the SFL framework. Staff (among whom six are full professors), post-doctoral fellows and research students are either working within the framework of SFL as a general linguistics or that of SFL as an applicable linguistics. International SFL scholars are among the frequent visitors to the Institute, including Professor M.A.K. Halliday, Professor Ruqaiya Hasan, Professor Robin Fawcett, Professor James R. Martin, Professor Christian Matthiessen, Professor Jonathan Webster, Professor Paul Thibault.

## 7. Concluding Remarks

As the editors of the *Annual Review of Functional Linguistics (ARFL)*, we would like to express our gratitude to the support from international scholars, who either offer advice to us or encourage us or contribute papers to the *ARFL*. We would also like to invite contributions to the course. With the warm support and encouragement of scholars in China and abroad, we believe that we can improve our work and do more for the

development of linguistics studies in general and for the improvement and development of functional linguistics studies in China in particular.

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# Systemic Functional Linguistics Developing

Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

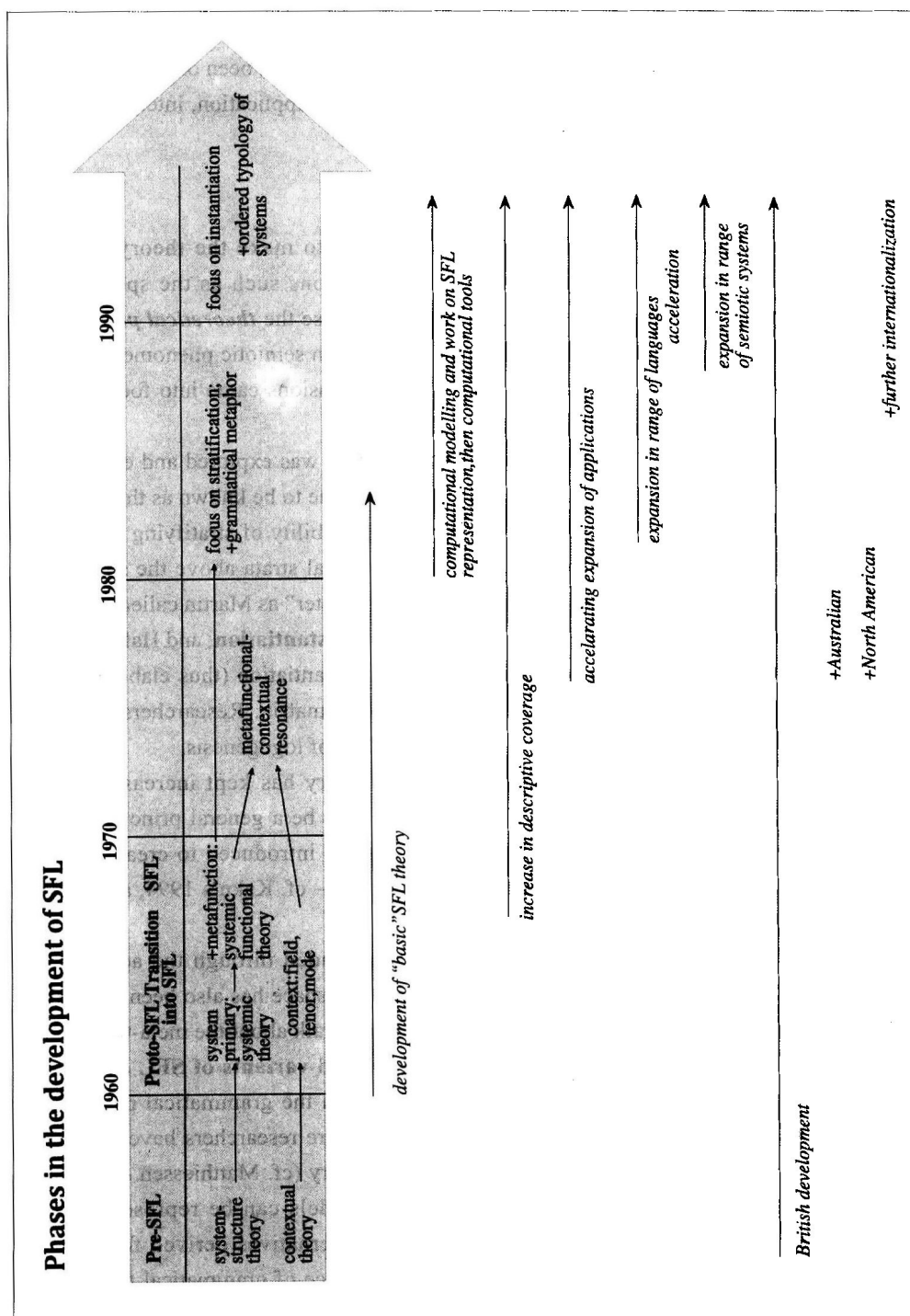
## 1. Beginnings

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has been “under construction” for several decades. In the development of any system of ideas, there are always various significant strands that are woven together to create the fabric of new ideas, and these strands can be traced back to different starting points.

For example, we could trace back Darwin’s theory of evolution to the publication of his *On the Origin of Species*, which would make sense in terms of the public engagement with his theory. But we could also explore strands that are brought together in this book — like his fascination with collecting beetles (discussed in his autobiography), like Charles Lyell’s work on the principles of geology, like the motif of evolution inherent in the Romantic movement.

Similarly, we can treat Halliday’s (1961) “Categories of the theory of grammar” as the starting point of the development of SFL — proto-SFL, or “scale and category linguistics” as it came to be known. At the same time, we can explore the immediately preceding developments that were in a sense distilled in this article — Halliday’s experience with field work on dialects of Cantonese in the Pearl River Delta, carried out under the guidance of Wang Li in the late 1940s, and Halliday’s subsequent early work on Chinese (e.g. 1956a, 1959). We can go further back to identify salient features of J.R. Firth’s (e.g. 1957) system-structure theory that informed Halliday’s (1961) theory of grammar; or we can go even further back to trace Firth’s and later Halliday’s development of Malinowski’s (1923 onwards) theory of context.

The general principle is clearly that when we trace the history of any system of ideas, this will turn out to be an intellectual fabric made out of strands with very different starting points. There will thus always be many ways of representing the weaving of this fabric. In Figure 1, the development of SFL is represented as a succession of phases characterized by different strands of activities and concerns.



**Figure 1: Phases in the Development of SFL**

## 2. Areas of Expansion

As Figure 1 indicates, the mode of development in SFL has been one of continuous *expansion* of its “territory” in terms of theory, description, application, interdisciplinary engagement, and so on.

### 2.1 Theory

Systemic functional linguists have always tried to make the theory as *comprehensive* as possible, adding new semiotic dimensions such as the spectrum of metafunctions when required; the goal has been to increase the *theoretical potential* to give it more power to model, analyse, describe and explain semiotic phenomena. As the diagram in Figure 1 indicates, successive semiotic dimensions came into focus, as the theory was developed from the 1960s.

Thus in the 1980s, the **hierarchy of stratification**<sup>[1]</sup> was explored and elaborated; for example, Martin (1992) and his group, which later came to be known as the “Sydney School” (see Martin & Rose in prep.), explored the possibility of stratifying context to take account of genre and ideology as different contextual strata above the stratum of situation type (field, tenor and mode parameters), or “register” as Martin called it.

In the 1990s, the focus shifted towards the cline of **instantiation**, and Halliday (e.g. 2002 [written in 1995]) intersected stratification and instantiation (thus elaborating on Halliday, 1991) to produce a stratification-instantiation matrix. Researchers explored processes of instantiation, in particular under the heading of logogenesis.

In this way, the **multidimensionality** of the theory has kept increasing since the 1960s (cf. Matthiessen, 2007a). (This would seem to be a general principle in the development of scientific theories: new dimensions are introduced to create a more powerful but simpler theory of the phenomena in focus — cf. Kaku’s 1994, account of the development of physics since the 19th century.)

The theoretical space of SFL has thus been expanded through the addition or exploration of new semiotic dimensions. This theoretical space has also been expanded in another way — though here it would be appropriate to talk about the meta-theoretical space of SFL. Over the decades, scholars have developed **variants of SFL** or derived alternative frameworks from it. Let me use the work on the grammatical part of the theory, SFG, as an illustration since this is one area where researchers have produced explicit and clearly articulated representations of the theory (cf. Matthiessen & Nesbitt, 1996) — even to the point where the theoretical models can be represented and implemented computationally. Variants of SFG and alternatives derived from it are charted for the period when researchers explored that space of grammatical theory and the versions that are still around emerged — the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s — in Figure 4.



By the end of this period, Halliday and his colleagues had been developing SFG for around three decades, since the early 1960s (cf. the phases in Figure 1 above). By the late 1960s, “modern” SFG had emerged: it was both **systemic** and **metafunctional**. It is mainly this version of SFG that has served as a reference framework for the development of versions of, or alternatives to, SFG (cf. Matthiessen, 2007b). It is also the version used by Halliday and others to develop increasingly comprehensive descriptions, first of English and then also of other languages — descriptions that have made possible systematic text analysis at the stratum of lexicogrammar.

This version of SFG also became the foundation for extensive work in **computational modelling**, starting with the Nigel grammar of the Penman text generation project at USC/Information Sciences Institute<sup>[2]</sup> in 1980 (for an early account, see e.g. Mann, 1982; for a later overview, see Matthiessen & Bateman, 1991; for more recent overviews of computational SFL, see O'Donnell & Bateman, 2005; Teich, 2009). In this project, linguists, computational linguists and programmers worked out the computational modelling of **system networks**, **realization statements**, and **system traversal**. In the course of this work, we developed a grammar-based interface to semantics, the **chooser-&-inquiry framework** (as opposed to a semantics-based interface: see Matthiessen, 1990) and used it to explore the semantic distinctions needed to control the grammar in the course of generation (see Matthiessen, 1987b), we identified representational issues — areas where the theoretical representation is not explicit or detailed enough to support computational modelling without further development (e.g. Matthiessen, 1988, and see e.g. Teich, 1999, for subsequent research), and Kasper (e.g. 1988) drew on a version of Kay's **Functional Unification Grammar** (see below) to develop a systemic functional parser. The SFG computational grammar that began as the Nigel grammar of the Penman generation system is now maintained and developed as part of the KPML system by John Bateman at the University of Bremen<sup>[3]</sup>.

Towards the end of the 1960s, Richard Hudson was working on a variant of SFG in an attempt to create a non-transformational generative grammar in response to Chomsky's work (e.g. Hudson, 1971). By the mid 1970s, he had produced **Daughter Dependency Grammar** (DDG, e.g. Hudson, 1976), drawing on European dependency theory as well as on his earlier work on SFG. DDG was taken up by Paul Schachter (e.g. 1981) at UCLA for a while, but Hudson himself took dependency further and transformed DDG into **Word Grammar** (WG; e.g. Hudson, 1984, 2007). While WG was no longer “systemic,” unlike DDG, it was closer to SFG in certain important respects (partly reflecting Hudson's work on sociolinguistics), for example in taking a more meaning-oriented approach to grammar (Hudson, p.c., around 1980).

In the early 1970s, Robin Fawcett began to develop a variant of SFG (e.g. Fawcett,