

Getting Started with Functional Grammar

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Contents

Acknowledgements

About this book vi

CHAPTER 1 Starting out with Functional Grammar

Exploring text and context 1
Structuring language for use 10

CHAPTER 2 Experiential Meanings

Transitivity

Analysing processes, participants and circumstances 15
Troubleshooting: processes, participants and circumstances 23
Going further with processes, participants and circumstances 34

Nominal groups

Analysing nominal groups 42
Troubleshooting nominal groups 46
Going further with nominal groups 51

CHAPTER 3 Interpersonal Meanings

Language as interaction

Analysing Mood and Residue 57
Troubleshooting: Mood and Residue 66
Going further with Mood 70
Modality 72

Appraisal

Analysing Attitude 75
Troubleshooting: Attitude 84
Analysing Graduation 86
Analysing Engagement 90
Going further with Appraisal 99

CHAPTER 4 Textual Meanings

Thematic structure

Analysing Theme choice 103
Troubleshooting: Thematic structure 111
Going further with Thematic structure 115

Thematic progression

Analysing patterns of Thematic progression 122

Nominalisation: moving towards abstraction

Spoken and written language 129
Identifying and forming nominalisations 131
Nominalisation as a textual resource 133

CHAPTER 5 Bringing it all together

Texts for independent analysis 139

Answers 142

References 163

About this book

In this book we draw upon our experience of both introducing a functional grammar to students and dealing with the complexities encountered when they go further with grammatical analysis.

The features of this book are:

- a wide range of engaging texts selected to illustrate particular aspects of the grammar
- comprehensive and accessible grammar summaries and troubleshooting guides
- exercises which focus on the grammatical analysis of clauses in terms of how they realise meanings in whole texts
- clearly set out tables for students' analysis
- questions and answers which model ways of commenting on analysis

How the book is organised

In Chapter 1, we look at some aspects of the relationship between language and context, both the context of culture and the context of situation. We also look at how language is structured for use, by introducing the concepts of rank scale and constituency and by further exploring the clause as the basic unit of analysis. This provides a valuable starting point for analysing texts in the following chapters.

In Chapter 2, we examine the grammatical resources which realise the experiential meanings in a text by looking at the Transitivity system. We also look at how the choices in the nominal group contribute to the experiential meanings in a text.

Chapter 3 takes us into the grammar of interpersonal meaning where we look at Mood and modality. We then introduce the system of Appraisal as an additional framework for the analysis of interpersonal meaning. The exercises in this section are more heavily scaffolded, as this is a relatively 'new' area of the grammar and there are only a few available references.

In Chapter 4, we look at the realisation of textual meanings. We introduce the grammatical system of Theme and consider how Theme choice makes an important contribution to how we organise meaning and to how we organise text. In this chapter, we also explore patterns of Thematic progression and look at nominalisation as a textual resource.

Chapter 5 gives a brief summary of how the language choices which realise these meanings are systematically related to certain features of the context and includes some longer texts for independent analysis.

Example texts

In selecting example texts, we have kept the field 'constant' for the Analysing and Troubleshooting sections in each chapter. For example, in Chapter 2 the texts focus on the natural world, in Chapter 3 they deal with a range of social issues and in Chapter 4 they are taken from the visual and performing arts.

References to texts

At the beginning of each new topic, there is a list of useful references. These point to the relevant sections in a range of commonly used and readily available texts. These texts are:

Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., and Yallop, C. (2000) *Using Functional Grammar: An Explorer's Guide*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language and Teaching Research (NCELTR).

Bloor, T. and Bloor, M. (1995) *The Functional Analysis of English: A Hallidayan Approach*. London: Arnold.

Eggins, S. (1994) *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Pinter.

Gerot, L. and Wignell, P. (1995) *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Sydney: AEE.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1994) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar: second edition*. London: Edward Arnold.

Lock, G. (1996) *Functional English Grammar: An introduction for second language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, J.R., Matthiessen, C., Painter, C., (1997) *Working with Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

Thompson, G. (1996) *Introducing Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

White, P. (2001) <http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/>

We have sometimes needed to refer to a source other than these. The publication details for these references can be found in the list of References at the end of the book.

For teachers

This workbook is designed to support your existing teaching program and can be used alongside any of the texts listed above. It is best suited as a workbook for use in tutorials where students can work collaboratively on the exercises and where discussion of analysis can take place. If you supervise students studying by flexible delivery or distance education, then this workbook will provide those students with valuable additional support.

The exercises may be easily adapted to suit the needs of your students. For example, you may choose to adapt the level of delicacy for some exercises or revisit text examples for other purposes. Built into the book are some exercises which you may like to use for assessment purposes (ie. there are no answers for these). These can be found in the Going Further sections of each chapter and in Chapter 5.

For those new to teaching a functional grammar or for those wanting to develop a new course, this workbook provides a framework which we have found to be most successful in our own teaching - for example, a weekly teaching context of 2hrs lectures, 1 - 2hrs tutorial over a semester of 13 weeks (including some self-study).

For students

This workbook is designed to support you in a course of study in functional grammar. If you are attending face-to-face lectures, then the exercises in this book are best done after you have been introduced to an area of grammar in a lecture. If you are studying by distance education, then make sure you read your course notes and complete any set tasks first.

Each chapter is organised in the following way:

Analysing . . .

The initial exercises in each topic focus on developing a set of grammatical tools for analysis. The exercises are text-based and are followed by questions which will help you identify some of the grammatical features of these texts.

Each topic contains a Grammar Summary. These are basic summaries of the main options in each system of the grammar and are a useful point of reference for the exercises. It is assumed that your lectures, course notes and reading will provide a more detailed introduction to these systems.

Troubleshooting . . .

The troubleshooting section addresses many of the difficulties experienced by students when analysing texts. The Troubleshooting Guide provides explanations, examples and further references where necessary, while the exercises give you an opportunity to practice these more difficult aspects of analysis.

Going further . . .

In this section, we have included some more difficult texts for you to analyse. They incorporate many of the features covered in troubleshooting and include a range of questions asking you to reflect upon your analysis, commenting on some of the relationships between text and context.

Answers

You will find an answer key for the analysis exercises in the back of the book. We have also included model answers for commenting on some of the features of your analysis. Note that there are no answers for the exercises in the Going Further section. We have done this to give your teacher the option of using these exercises for assessment purposes.

Exercise 1.5

Read through the two texts below and use Table 1.8 to note aspects of the context of culture and context of situation.

Text 1.7

A: So, what was Tokyo like?

B: Amazing! It's just massive - the suburbs go on forever. Well, with all those people you'd expect that, wouldn't you? The business district, where we were staying, is really crowded and busy, just like any city but there's all this open space in the middle where the Imperial Palace and some of the big hotels are. It's really peaceful! You can walk forever.

A: And where are the shops?

B: Oh, the main shopping centres seem to be in a circle around the middle, but they're easy to get to. You'd just love the Ginza shops - honestly you could spend a week there.

Text 1.8

Tokyo is one of the world's most highly populated cities. Most of the nearly 30 million people live in its sprawling concrete suburbs, however, an extensive transport network allows commuting to the centre. The central business district, Marunouchi, has the headquarters of all Japan's major companies. Major shopping centres include Ginza and Shinjuku.

Table 1.8

	Text 1.7	Text 1.8
Social purpose		
Genre		
Field		
Examples of language which tell you about the field.		
Tenor		
Examples of language which tell you about the tenor.		
Mode		
Examples of language which tell you about the mode.		

that trees and powerpoles were uprooted along an area of five kilometers

and witnesses in Folkstone saw a tree in mid-air.

i. How do the circumstances contribute to the meaning of the text?

.....
.....

ii. What do you notice about the Sayer role in the verbal clauses?

.....
.....

Text 2.4

Example: Rainforests are a valuable resource

Rainforests	are	a valuable resource
Participant Token	Process relational identifying	Participant Value

and they should be protected.

Rainforests provide a habitat for many species of rare plants and animals,

and logging destroys these habitats.

Table 2.6**Grammar Summary - The nominal group**

A nominal group consists of a main noun or 'head' word and has the potential to be expanded by adding information before the head word (premodification) and after it (postmodification). For example, we could say *my dog loved **those bones*** or we could say *my dog loved **those three smelly lamb bones from the butcher shop***. In the second example, the nominal group provides a more detailed description of the 'bones' because of the pre- and postmodifiers.

My dog	loved	<i>those three smelly lamb bones from the butcher shop</i>
		Premodifiers Head Postmodifier

We can use probe questions to examine the kind of information provided by each element in the nominal group. We can also describe each element functionally. The tables below provide a summary of the choices available or the **potential** of the nominal group for naming and describing.

Table 2.6.1

Probe	Example	Functional Label
What?	bones (Head Word)	Thing
Which one/s or whose?	those bones	Deictic
How many?	those three bones	Numerative
What like?	those three smelly lamb bones	Epithet
What kind?	those three smelly lamb bones	Classifier
More details after the Head?	those three smelly lamb bones from the butcher shop	Qualifier

Table 2.6.2

Label	Function	Examples
Deictic	Points to or specifies the Thing	This, his, my, John's, the, some, all, that
Numerative	Gives numerical information about quantity or order	Six, four, first, several, many
Epithet	Describes what the Thing is like; aspects or qualities such as size, colour, shape etc; can be factual or attitudinal	Green, tall, important, dusty, fantastic, sharp, old, smelly
Classifier	Tells what 'kind' or 'type' of Thing; indicates a sub-class	Computer technology, fruit trees, native animals
Qualifier	Further describes or defines with a phrase or clause after the Thing	The trees [in the garden] were old. Water the rose [[that I bought yesterday]] .

NOTE: Single brackets indicate a phrase as Qualifier; double brackets indicate a clause as Qualifier

iv. How and why do these nominal groups differ from those in Text 2.13?

.....
.....
.....

Text 2.15

Balanced muscle groups are **essential for biomechanical stability around your spine**. Swimming is **one of the best known exercises for the spine**. **The buoyancy factor** reduces stress on the spine and **the water resistance** develops **good muscle and cardiovascular training effects**. Keeping your legs straight during swimming removes any **undue pressure from the lower back**.

Adapted from Patterson, Donovan & McNamara (1989: 19)

Balanced muscle groups

essential for biomechanical stability around your spine

one of the best known exercises for the spine

The buoyancy factor

the water resistance

good muscle and cardiovascular training effects

any undue pressure from the lower back

i. How would you describe the field?

.....

ii. What is the purpose of the text?

.....

iii. Do the Things in these nominal groups refer to concrete objects?

.....

.....

.....

iv. How are these Things modified? Why?

.....

.....

.....

Exercise 3.3

Table 3.3 outlines the constituents of the Residue. Here are some more clauses from Texts 3.1 and 3.2. Following the example, identify the Mood Block and the Residue, and analyse the constituents of each. Write the Mood next to the example.

Example: When did you have your last cigarette? **WH-interrogative**

When	did	you	have	your last cigarette?
WH-Adjunct	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Res-	Mood Block		-idue	

The nicotine in cigarettes alters two chemicals in the brain.

Many smokers interpret this rush as one of pleasure.

Could you put up your hand next time?

Mum found some cigarettes in his bag on the weekend.

Does your brother smoke at home?

Appraisal

Analysing Attitude, Graduation and Engagement

Introduction

In this unit we will examine the resources which are used by writers and speakers to evaluate phenomena and acknowledge other positions. In this way they build particular relationships with their readers or listeners. This part of the lexicogrammar is the **Appraisal** system. Here we provide an overview of three sub-systems of Appraisal: **Attitude**, **Graduation** and **Engagement**. However, speakers and writers use resources from each of these sub-systems across a whole text to position the views of listeners or readers.

It is important to remember that research into many areas of Appraisal is comparatively new and that further work is in progress.

☐ Useful references for this topic include:

Martin, J. (1997) Chapter 1

Martin, J. (2000) Chapter 8

Martin, J. and Rose, D. (in press)

White, P. www.grammatics.com/appraisal/

1. Attitude

Attitude refers to the resources used to make either a positive or negative evaluation of phenomena. We can divide Attitude into three categories. These are

- a) **Affect** - expressing a person's feelings
- b) **Judgement** - expressing moral Judgement of people's behaviour
- c) **Appreciation** - expressing aesthetic assessments of objects valued by society such as artworks, states of affairs or people (but not their behaviours).

It is important to remember that all attitudinal meanings are shaped by the particular cultural and ideological context. A more detailed description of the categories and of the lexicogrammatical resources typically used to realise them can be found in the Grammar Summaries (Tables 3.6, 3.7 and 3.8).

The following exercises and grammar summary focus on how Attitude can be expressed **explicitly** through individual lexical items. However, it is important to remember that Attitude can also be expressed **implicitly** with the reader or listener's interpretation playing a very important role. More information about implicit Attitude can be found in the troubleshooting section.

a) Affect

The Affect system is used to express feelings either positive or negative. Feelings can be expressed as emotional states (eg. happy) or physical expressions which indicate an emotional state (eg. laugh).

i. You may have noticed that in both texts the authors use particular types of Judgement for particular individuals, groups or institutions. Why do you think the authors have done this?

.....

c) Appreciation

Appreciation, as we stated earlier, relates to evaluations primarily of objects, processes and states of affairs. People can be the focus of Appreciation but **not** when the assessment relates to their behaviour. Like the other main categories of Attitude, Appreciation can be realised by a range of grammatical resources and can be viewed in both positive and negative terms.

Exercise 3.13

Before examining the resources of Appreciation in more detail, look at Text 3.13 and answer the preliminary questions which follow.

Text 3.13

In his new movie Gosford Park, Altman has taken a traditional comedy/drama and created a scintillating, moving and entertaining piece.

Gosford Park is elaborately orchestrated. Altman has an evenhanded, free-ranging style and the plot, while rich in detail, is nonetheless balanced.

But Gosford Park is not just a shallow murder mystery or a conservative period romance. The themes Altman presents are challenging and profound. The movie exposes the vices and silliness of the British aristocracy and, in doing so, illuminates similar injustices in contemporary society.

i. Text 3.13 is taken from a movie review. What is its overall purpose?
.....
.....

ii. The three paragraphs of the text all make assessments of the movie's value in different ways. Can you identify the different ways?

.....

.....

As with Affect and Judgement we can identify different categories within Appreciation. These are:

- **Reaction** - assessing the emotional impact of the phenomenon (eg Para 1)
- **Composition** - assessing the form or composition of the phenomenon (eg Para 2)
- **Valuation** - assessing the worth or significance of the phenomenon (eg Para 3)

More information on the categories of Appreciation can be found in the Grammar Summary (Table 3.8).

Text 4.6

Surprisingly, Brown's new stage production has opened to full houses. However in my opinion, this long awaited musical comedy is gutless. I much preferred the film version. Obviously the naked painted bodies of the dancers appeal to theatre-goers and the popular press. Unfortunately, the dancers can't act.

textual	interpersonal	topical	Rheme

- i. How would you describe the purpose of this text?
- ii. What do the topical Themes relate to?
- iii. What other meanings are given prominence by placing them in Theme position? Why?

Troubleshooting: Thematic structure

Introduction

The Thematic structure of a clause is not always easy to analyse. The boundary between Theme and Rheme is often difficult to identify and there are a number of grammatical structures which complicate analysis. In this unit, we try to address some of the problems you may encounter with your analysis of Thematic structure.

Thematic progression

Analysing patterns of Thematic progression

Introduction

In this section, we look at **Thematic progression**. This term refers to sequences or patterns of unmarked topical Themes which are sometimes found in texts. These patterns relate to the function of particular 'chunks' of text (for example, a sequence of clauses describing or explaining) and play an important role in the development of paragraphs and the overall method of development of texts. In the following exercises, you will further explore the implications of Theme choice by analysing some typical patterns of Thematic progression. These are illustrated in Table 4.3.

☐ Useful references for this topic include:

Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. (1995) Chapter 5

Butt, D. et al. (2000) pages 142 - 144

Eggins, S. (1994) pages 302 - 305

Exercise 4.7

Divide the clauses in paragraphs 1-3 into Theme and Rheme using the table provided. After the first clause in each paragraph, draw arrows to show how each new Theme connects with ideas met in either a previous Theme or Rheme. The Grammar Summary (Table 4.3) shows you how to do this.

Text 4.14

(Paragraph 1)

Body modification and ornamentation play an important role in many cultures. The adornment of the body may take many forms. It includes body painting, hair styling, tattooing, scarification and piercing, and can even extend to amputation and mutilation.

Theme	Rheme

(Paragraph 2)

One form of body art becoming increasingly popular in the west is the application of henna designs. However, henna has been used to decorate the body for important occasions and celebrations for over five thousand years. Its use and designs vary from region to region. For example, Indian brides decorate their hands and feet with fine floral and paisley designs. Morrocans use henna patterns to protect the wearer from evil and to promote luck and fertility, and Sudanese women wear henna to express love for their husband.

Grammar Summary - Nominalisation

Nominalisation works by turning words that are not normally nouns (verbs, conjunctions, adjectives, and adverbs) into nouns. Table 4.5.1 shows a number of ways that nominalisation can be formed. Table 4.5.2 describes strategies for building complex nominal groups around these nominalisations.

Table 4.5.1

<p>From verb to noun Many verbs are commonly changed into nouns</p> <p>a) by adding suffixes to the verb form: verify → verification; identify → identity; arrange → arrangement</p> <p>b) by using the gerund form -ing: her acting, an old saying Some verbs are used as nouns without any change eg. cause, visit, struggle.</p>
<p>From conjunction to noun Nouns can also be used to express relationships typically realised by conjunctions, eg:</p> <p>a) The customer left <i>because</i> the food was cold. The customer's <i>reason</i> for leaving was the cold soup.</p> <p>b) He began painting portraits <i>and then</i> moved on to landscapes. The latter <i>part</i> of his career focussed on landscapes.</p>
<p>From adjective to noun Adjectives can also be nominalised and turned into a noun form. For example: expensive → expense; unstable → instability; tense → tension</p>
<p>From clause to nominal group Nominal groups containing nominalisations are often used to condense meanings that would otherwise be spread across a number of clauses. For example:</p> <p>a) I am going to develop my ideas in a logical way because that helps me structure my essay. The logical <i>development of ideas</i> contributes to the <i>structure of an essay</i>.</p>

Table 4.5.2

<p>Modifying an abstract Thing Once something has been turned into a noun or nominalised, it can then be measured, described, evaluated and classified. Here are some of the ways in which nominalisations in abstract written language are pre and postmodified to form more complex nominal groups.</p> <p>a) Classifiers help define the Thing by specifying type or subject area: eg. <i>medical</i> facilities; <i>physical</i> isolation; <i>political</i> unrest; <i>economic</i> rationalism Many of these are also abstractions.</p> <p>b) Epithets often indicate importance or significance: eg. <i>complex</i> internal relationships; <i>widespread</i> political unrest; These can also be intensified ie. <i>extremely</i> complex internal relationships.</p> <p>c) Inexact numeratives help generalise about quantity/extent: eg. <i>additional</i> medical facilities; <i>several</i> contributing factors; <i>many</i> important reasons</p> <p>d) Qualifiers help with the meaning of the abstract term and are often a vital part of these nominal groups: eg. A rapid increase [in the rate [of population growth]] . . . The inconvenience and expense [of participation [in programs [such as this]]] . . .</p> <p>Notice how this 'drift towards the noun' occurs in many parts of the nominal group ie. with Orientation (the <i>rate</i> of), abstract Classifiers (economic) and within nominal groups embedded within the Qualifier.</p>
