1. General Course Information

Plan, Assessment, web

- Three weeks of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)
  1. General Intro to SFL
  2. SFL and its use in Critical Discourse Analysis
  3. SFL and its use in Language Teaching

- **Assessment:** (50% of the LFC course)
  - 1 final assignment (analysis of a text) 35%
  - 3 small assignments online 5% each

- **Course Web Page:** a link from the course page on the dept. website
  http://web.uam.es/departamentos/filoyletras/filoinglesa/Courses/LFC-SFL/
1. General Course Information

**Background Readings**

Not compulsory, just if you are interested:


2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics

2.1 What is SFL?

- Systemic Functional Linguistics is an approach to language developed mainly by Michael Halliday in the UK and later in Australia.
- While American-style linguistics evolved in the modelling of the world’s languages, SFL was developed to address the needs of language teaching/learning.
- Central: language use must be seen as taking place in social contexts. Language is not good or bad, it is appropriate or inappropriate to the context of use.
- Language function (what it is used for) is often more important than language structure (how it is composed).
2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics

2.2 ‘Systemic’: separating choices and structure

- Chomskian grammars provide sets of rules, where choices and structural configurations are mixed together:
  
  \[
  S \rightarrow NP \ VP \\
  S \rightarrow v NP \ VP \\
  NP \rightarrow NP1 \\
  NP \rightarrow det NP1 \\
  NP1 \rightarrow noun \\
  NP1 \rightarrow NP1 PP \\
  VP \rightarrow v NP \\
  VP \rightarrow v VP \\
  PP \rightarrow prep NP
  \]

- To generate a sentence, one starts with a symbol, (e.g., ‘S’), and choose one of the rules to expand it. E.g.,

  \[
  S
  \]

  \[
  S \rightarrow NP \ VP \\
  NP \rightarrow det NP1 \\
  NP1 \rightarrow noun \\
  VP \rightarrow v
  \]

  The cat sat

- Systemic Grammar separate choices from their structural consequences:
2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics

2.2 ‘Systemic’: separating choices and structure

- To use the network, one takes a ‘path’ through the network, and combines all the structural rules, e.g.,
- clause: finite-clause: declarative

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subj</th>
<th>Fin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nom.group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

2.2 ‘Systemic’: separating choices and structure

- A “systemic” approach allows you to focus on meaningful choices in language (e.g., active vs. passive) without needing to think of the particular structure that realises it.
- Basic tenet: “meaning implies choice”: if there is no alternative but to do something, then it is not meaningful.
- A grammar consists of a set of choices, or “systems”, organised as a tree (some choices depend on others):
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2.3 ‘Functional’: focus on what things do

- A “structural” approach is concerned with how things are composed (their internal structure)
- A “functional” approach is more concerned with what the unit does.
  - Function of syntactic units:
    - Subject
    - Senser
    - Theme
  - Functions of speech acts as a whole: (speech function):
    - give/demand, action/information
  - Functions of texts as a whole (Genre):
    - description, recount, narrative, explanation, exposition, etc.

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2.3 ‘Functional’: focus on what things do

- Multi-functionality: in organic systems such as language, things generally serve more than one function at the same time:
  - Function of syntactic units:
    - Subject
    - Senser
    - Theme
  - Interpersonal functions: Interpersonal functions
  - Experiential functions: Experiential functions
  - Textual functions: Textual functions
  - Subject/Finite: carry interpersonal information such as what the speaker wants from the reader (question or statement), how sure the speaker is (modality), etc.
  - The same units also serve to express information (experiential)
  - The first constituent in a clause (Theme) plays a significant function in the connectivity of the text: what is this text about?
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2.3 ‘Functional’: focus on what things do

- The “functional” approach affects modelling decisions all the way throughout the grammar, for example:

  - **Function-informed Analysis**
    - Quantifiers
    - The thing we are talking about
    - a handful of rice
  
  - **Structure-informed Analysis**
    - The head of the NP
    - a handful of rice

2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics

2.4 Language and its Context

- Systemic Linguistics grew out of the work of J.R. Firth in London (first chair of general linguistics in the UK), who in turn took ideas from Malinowski (the famous anthropologist).
- Both Firth and Malinowski believed one could only look at language in relation to the context it occurred in.
- In SFL, context is one of the central concerns.
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2.4 Language and its Context

- In SFL, the appropriateness of linguistic options is conditioned by the current “context of situation”.

  **Context of situation**: the situation in which the language event unfolds, at least those parts of the situation which condition that language use.

- E.g.,

  ![Diagram](image)


| 2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics |  
|---------------------------------------------------|---|
| 4.4 Language and its Context | |
| - The following two sentences say the same thing, but say it in ways appropriate to different contexts of situation: | |
|  
  a) *I handed my essay in late because my kids got sick.*  
  b) *The reason for the late submission of my essay was the illness of my children.* | |
| - In what context might you use (a). | |
| - In what contexts would you use (b)? | |
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2.4 Language and its Context

• Halliday models “context of situation”, those aspects of the context relevant to the unfolding language event, in terms of three strands:
  – **Field**: what is being talked about
  – **Tenor**: the people involved in the communication and the relationships between them
  – **Mode**: what part the language is playing in the interaction (is it accompanying action or ALL of the action), what form does it take (spoken or written).

   **Example**: a recipe in a cook book
   *Field*: cooking (ingredients and process of preparing food)
   *Tenor*: expert writer to a learner, learner is beneficiary of the advice
   *Mode*: written, prepared. Text often read as part of process of cooking.

2.4 Language and its Context: FIELD

**Field**: what the text is about:

• Typical fields: science, education, war, medicine, sports.

• Can be more specific:
  – Science: biology: microbiology: virology: plant viruses
  – Education: Language education: English Language education: Secondary level English Education

• Additionally, can be placed on a cline of:
  – **specialised vs. non-specialised**: is the vocabulary specific to the field, or does it use vocabulary common to other fields?
  – Specialised vocabulary may be used in other fields but have different meaning in the current field:
    • “constituent” (politics): member of a political unit
    • “constituent” (linguistics): a syntactic unit
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2.4 Language and its Context: TENOR

Tenor: relationship between participants

- Includes:
  - **Power relations**:
    - *Unequal*: father/daughter, doctor/patient, teacher/student
    - *Equal*: friend/friend, student/student
  - **Formality**: formal/informal
    - *Informal*: I handed my essay in kinda late coz my kids got sick.
    - *Formal*: The reason for the late submission of my essay was the illness of my children.
  - **Closeness**: distant/neutral/close:

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Miss Adorable

Octr. 4th, 1762

By the same Token that the Bearer hereof, sett up with you last night I hereby order you to give him, as many Kisses, and as many Hours of your Company after 9 O’Clock as he shall please to Demand and charge them to my Account: This Order, or Requisition call it which you will is in Consideration of a similar order Upon Aurelia for the like favour, and I presume I have good Right to draw upon you for the Kisses as I have given two or three Millions at least, when one has been reed, and of Consequence the Account between us is immensely in favour of yours.

John Adams
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2.4 Language and its Context: MODE

- **Mode**: what part the language is playing in the interaction:
  - **Role**: Ancillary (language accompanying nonverbal activity, as when we talk as we cook together) or constitutive (the event is defined by the language, as in a speech).
  - **Channel**: written vs. spoken, or some mix.
    - **Projected channel**: where the actual channel is not the intended channel: ‘written to be spoken’ (e.g., a speech), ‘spoken as if written’ (e.g., reciting)
  - **Directionality**: uni-directional channel or bi-directional (uni-directional allows only monologue, while a bi-directional channel allows dialogue)
  - **Media**: +/-visual contact (e.g., -visual for a telephone conversation); use of multimedia (blackboard, powerpoint, etc.)
  - **Preparation**: spontaneous vs. prepared; rushed vs. time for reflection;

2.4 Language and its Context: EXAMPLE

**Yoghurt with walnuts and fresh coriander**

Akhrote ka raita

Another cooling, nourishing dish. It may be eaten by itself or served with Indian meals.

Serves 6

20 fl oz (570 ml) plain yoghurt
2 tablespoons finely chopped coriander
2 tablespoons chopped walnuts

Put the yoghurt in a bowl. Beat lightly with a fork or whisk until smooth and creamy. Add all the other ingredients. Stir to mix.

- **Field**: Cooking: indian cooking, not highly specialised
- **Tenor**: an expert ‘cook’ to amateur readers, neutral formality, neutral distance
- **Mode**: Written, prepared, intended to be read during cooking
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2.4 Language and its Context: REGISTER

- **Situation type**: a configuration of field, tenor and mode that recurs frequently in our society, e.g.
  - ‘talking among friends’:
    - (field) not limited
    - (tenor) Among friends of generally equal status
    - (mode) spoken spontaneous dialogue with occasional monologue,
  - ‘lecture’
    - (field) generally specialised in a particular field
    - (tenor) generally reasonably formal, power relation of teacher to students
    - (mode) spoken, mostly monologue, may use audio-visuals

- **Register**: the set of linguistic options typically associated with a situation type, e.g.
  - ‘talking among friends’: use of declaratives and interrogatives, hedging (“I think...”), interruptions, low technicality in lexis, low use of nominalisation, etc.

"A register is ... a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration of field, mode, and tenor. But since it is a configuration of meanings, a register must also, of course, include the expressions, the lexico-grammatical and phonological features, that typically accompany or REALISE these meanings."

2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics

2.4 Language and its Context: REGISTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Register</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field</strong>: food, activities in food preparation</td>
<td>Lexis concerning food and actions on food: material processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenor</strong>: Writer as cooking expert. Reader as cooking learner.</td>
<td>Use of imperatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode</strong>: Written to be read while cooking. Monologic, with no feedback from reader. Prepared.</td>
<td>Telegraphic sentences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a more detailed example of register, see Halliday and Hasan’s (1989) analysis of a toddler playing (text 3.1 on p. 30, and figure 3.4 on p 36).

2. Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics

2.4 Language and its Context

**Context-Language: dialogic relation**

- Not only does context condition language,
- The language we use in a situation help to define the context.
  - The Field is not always defined by the situation, but can be chosen by speakers (e.g., in casual conversation).
  - Tenor is often up for negotiation, e.g., a salesman will often try to move from a distant, informal relation with the client, towards a friendlier, closer one (so the client cannot say ‘no’ as easily).
  - As a teacher, we can choose which Modes we work in: spoken, written, multimodal, monologic or dialogic, etc.

![Context-Language Diagram]
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2.5 Language: Stratal Model

Systemic Model of Language Strata

- Context
- Language:
  - Semantics
  - Grammar
  - Phonology/Graphology

- meanings
- wordings
- Soundings/Spellings

2.6 Language: Phonology

- SFL tends to follow a “prosodic phonology” approach to phonology.
- Not a lot of attention paid to this area (SFL focuses on meaning)
- Halliday did work on Intonation:
- Paul Tench is probably the main Systemic Phonologist:
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2.7 Language: Grammar

- Called “Lexico-grammar” to emphasise that it is words and their combination that makes sentences.
- As stated above, SFL takes a 3-layer view on grammar:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Pred</th>
<th>Complement</th>
<th>Adjunct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Recipient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experiential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>textual</td>
<td>Theme</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rheme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Phrases (called groups) have just one layer of analysis:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deictic</th>
<th>Epithet</th>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>Thing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>large</td>
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<td>car</td>
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- More on this in the next class.

2.8 Language: Semantics

- Halliday’s semantic strata is largely is mostly concerned with the semantics of the clause:

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2.8 Language: Semantics

- In Jim Martin’s approach, the “semantics” is about the organisation of the text “above” the clause (discourse-level structures):


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2.8 Language: Discourse Semantics

More next week