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Layering in functional grammars: Introduction

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This thematic issue focusses on two types of differentiations in linguistic modelling, which play a central role in functional approaches – especially in frameworks that we define as 'structural-functional', following Van Valin (1993) and Butler (2003) – and for which we use the term 'layering'. The first differentiation is that between speaker-related vs. content-related material in language, i.e. the distinction between **interpersonal vs. representational** or ideational aspects of linguistic structuring. In the broadest sense, the representational dimension refers to the representation of 'reality', while the interpersonal dimension pertains to the encoding of the speaker's attitude towards this represented reality, and the functioning of the linguistic expression in the speech interaction (i.e. the speaker's communicative intentions). At the level of the clausal syntagm, the distinction can be seen most clearly in the distinction between the domains of argument structure (representational) vs. modality

and mood/illocutionary force (interpersonal). At the level of the nominal syntagm, the distinction is reflected, for example, in the notions of sense (representational) vs. reference (interpersonal).

The interpersonal/representational distinction plays a most fundamental – and explicit – role in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Functional Grammar (FG), and the most recent version of the latter, Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG). In a third type of structural-functional model, Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), the notions 'interpersonal' and 'representational' are not used, but we can still draw parallels with the organisation of the other two models. In the layered syntactic structure of the clause postulated in RRG, the clause contains a core and a periphery, and the core itself contains a nucleus and the core syntactic arguments. Each unit has a set of operators attached to it, and those operators (e.g. for illocution, epistemic modality, evidentiality) which would be seen as interpersonal in the other two models are among the outermost (clausal) operators, while operators for e.g. aspect, directionality and root modality are attached to either the nucleus or the core.

In relation to these structural-functional theories, the notion of 'layering' thus refers in the first place to a layered organisation of the clausal and nominal syntagms, with (at least) two layers/ levels/ domains/ zones in which interpersonal and representational aspects are encoded, and more fine-grained distinctions within these two layers. The term *layering* was first used in RRG (Foley & Van Valin 1984) and later adopted in FG (Hengeveld 1987). In these two frameworks it refers to a hierarchical type of linguistic structuring, i.e. where a higher layer is seen as being superimposed on other, lower, layers. The distinction between an 'ideational' and an 'interpersonal' component (and a third component called 'textual') in language was first made in work by Halliday (1968) that led to the development of SFG. Systemic-functional

linguists usually prefer to talk about the interpersonal and ideational dimensions as ‘metafunctions’ or ‘components’, which are seen as parallel (‘tiers’), rather than hierarchical.

The second general type of differentiation that is focussed on in this special issue is the distinction between **semantics** and **pragmatics**, which we equally refer to as a type of layering. In one sense, this ‘layering’ is much more general, and the distinction as such is much more widespread across the linguistic discipline (and beyond, e.g. in philosophy), than the distinction between interpersonal and representational. From this perspective, the semantics/pragmatics distinction refers to more or less distinct layers of encoding, or different levels of abstraction, in language. The basic role of this distinction in linguistics in general is reflected in the many and varied ways in which it is approached: the semantics/pragmatic distinction can be seen as being on a par with, *or* parallel with the distinction grammar vs. pragmatics (with ‘semantics’ interpreted as a dimension of grammar, or a dimension of pragmatics),[i] and it is also this distinction which lies at the heart of differentiations such as ‘linguistic meaning’ vs. ‘contextual/situational meaning’; ‘encoded/decoded meaning’ vs. ‘inferred meaning’; ‘what is said’ vs. ‘what is communicated’; ‘locutionary meaning’ vs. ‘illocutionary (and perlocutionary) meaning’; ‘sentence meaning’ vs. ‘utterance meaning’; and so forth.

In another sense, the semantics/pragmatics distinction can be seen as very close to the representational/interpersonal distinction. This is a line of thought which has recently been taken up in FDG, where the representational dimension is equated with ‘semantics’ and, the interpersonal dimension is seen as ‘pragmatics’. Descriptions of the semantics/pragmatics distinction in terms of ‘sentence meaning’ vs. ‘utterance meaning’ or ‘sense’ vs. ‘reference’ intherently point to a distinction which can be

couched in functional terms: ‘representational’ (i.e. the coding of content-related material) vs. ‘interpersonal’ (i.e. the coding of speaker-related meaning).

The two types of ‘layering’ referred to above play a central role in the three structural-functional theories mentioned. Indeed, in these theories, the design of the model is based on the conception of linguistic structure as multi-layered in terms of a distinction between higher (/interpersonal) and lower (/representational) domains of structuring (which are in a hierarchical or scopal relation, as in F(D)G and RRG, or, which are seen more generally as parallel tiers of ‘multi-functional’ structure, as in SFG) and/or in terms of different levels of encoding. One of the central concerns in the development of these theories is then the refinement of the layered models, which can be characterized in relation to the two differentiations focussed on here: advances in those models are based on explorations of more fine-grained distinctions within each of the domains/layers, and also on theorising about the distinction between semantics and pragmatics, which sometimes centres around the question of the place and role of a pragmatic component (or a discourse component / contextual component) or a semantic component in a structural model of grammar (/syntax).

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The papers in this special issue are written within the frameworks of the three structural-functional models mentioned above, and their offshoots, or they are placed more generally in traditions that are based on insights about layering proposed in these models. They explore the interpersonal/representational and semantic/pragmatic distinctions from various perspectives, focussing on different areas of descriptive grammar.

In "**Layering in functional grammars: A survey**", Christopher S. Butler and Miriam Taverniers give an overview of the notion of layering in SFG, F(D)G and RRG. Each model is looked at in some detail, and attention is paid to recent developments that are relevant for the understanding of layering. The discussion is organised in terms of five issues: (1) What layers are distinguished (how many?) in the 'standard' version of the theory, and how is the relationship between the layers conceived of? (2) What is the motivation and descriptive evidence for the layered model? (3) What is the relationship between the view of a layered linguistic structure and the way in which different levels of encoding are conceived (syntax/semantics/pragmatics)? (4) In what way is the conception of layering related to the way in which the linguistic model views language typology? That is, in a typological perspective, what aspects of layering are regarded as universal, and what aspects differ between languages or typological groups of languages? (5) What alternative layered models have been proposed, if any?

In "**The status of purpose, reason and intended endpoint in the typology of complex sentences, and its implications for layered models of clause structure**", Jean-Christophe Verstraete approaches the domain of clause combining from the perspective of a layered conception of linguistic structure. The area of clause combining has played an important role (either as such, or as a heuristic in relation to other descriptive areas) in the study of the relationship between layers of higher organisation in the clause, and those of lower organisation, either in general (RRG) or, in terms of a distinction between interpersonal and representational layers of structuring (in SFG and F(D)G). For example, for one type of semantics looked at in Verstraete's paper, viz. that of the expression of reason, a distinction has been made, e.g. in SFG (Halliday & Hasan 1976), between internal conjunction (illustrated in (1)

below), which, for instance, focusses on reasons for the speaker's judgement that something is the case, and external conjunction (illustrated in (2) below), which focusses on the causative relationship between two represented events:

(1) The linesman said it must have been accidental, because Linighan looked so 'surprised'. (BNC J1G 2051)

(2) 'I can't sleep at night because I'm worried: both about getting behind with my work, and about bouncing cheques,' he said. (BNC A8K 499)

Expanding earlier layered models of clause combining (e.g. Davies 1979, Verstraete 1998) which deal with further subtypes within the domain of internal conjunction, Verstraete here zooms in on the area of external conjunction, and focusses on three types of semantic relations, viz. those of purpose, reason, and temporal endpoint (instantiated, in English, by *so that*, *because* and *until*, respectively). Verstraete claims that, for each of these meanings, a systematic distinction can be made between pure adverbial relations, shown in the (a) examples in (3)-(5), and relations that lie in between adverbials and complements, shown in the the (b) examples in (3)-(5):

(3) a. Alfonso, on the other hand, though go-ahead and energetic, was of a docile nature and readily deferred to his parents and his eldest sister Urraca, so that he became the favourite son and developed all the traits of a spoilt child. (BNC ASW 166)

b. As I screwed up my eyes against the dazzle, trying to see the creature so that I might describe it to Crispin, it vanished. (BNC CKF 566)

(4) a. He remembered this because it was the day on which the BBC Home Service had announced the news that Her Majesty the Queen had given birth to what would become known as Prince Edward. (BNC HTG 1324)

b. She kept her eyes lowered when Feargal stood to speak, because if he glanced at her, and she saw contempt in his eyes, she would probably lose her temper, and that wouldn't be fair, not on Terry's day. (BNC HGY 3859)

(5) a. Didn't even know myself until I talked with the PM this afternoon. (BNC ARK 806)

b. She runs through everything she's got in, until she can find something I want. (BNC ADG 873)

While the distinction has not gone unnoticed in the literature, Verstraete here proposes a systematic model for delineating the category illustrated by the (b) examples above. A central feature of these constructions, as described by Verstraete, is that "the secondary clause represents a mental state of a participant in the first clause", and it is in this respect that he sees these types of secondary clauses as similar to complement clauses expressing mental states (e.g. (*She believes) this may be a golden opportunity)*. In modelling this 'intermediate' type of secondary clause Verstraete pays attention to both semantic and formal motivations. He first offers a semantic description of the nature of the mental state relationship between the primary and secondary clause, and further explores this semantic feature in relation to presupposition. He then adduces formal evidence for distinguishing the category, using data from a range of languages that are genetically and structurally different. On the basis of these data, Verstraete identifies the lexicogrammatical "template" underlying these types of constructions. As he points out, the distinction of this type of clause combining has important theoretical consequences for layered models of the clause structure.

With Jan Rijkhoff's paper, "**Layering and iconicity in the noun phrase: Descriptive and interpersonal modifiers**", we leave the area of clausal grammar, and turn to the layered structure of the NP. The hierarchical structure of the NP has become an important theme in grammatical studies at least since the 1980s. The layered organisation of the NP, and possible parallels with the clausal syntagm, have been investigated in various linguistic frameworks (also in generative grammar, and in cognitive grammar), first in relation to nominalisation, and then afterwards also in non-derived nominals. Within FG and its further development into FDG, it has especially been Rijkhoff who has concentrated on the NP. In his model of the underlying structure of the NP (cf. Rijkhoff 1990, 1991, 1992, 2002), which is based on a large sample of typologically diverse languages, grammatical and lexical modifiers (i.e. operators and satellites in the terminology of FG and FDG) in the NP are seen as being organised into a number layers which correspond to semantic domains and are in a scopal relation. The lower (in terms of scope) layers contain descriptive modifiers of three types: qualifying, quantifying and locational. In addition to the descriptive modifiers, Rijkhoff distinguishes a higher layer of interpersonal modifiers or discourse modifiers, which are "concerned with the status of the *referent* of the NP as a discourse entity" (our emphasis).

Rijkhoff's paper in this thematic issue is a further exploration of the distinction between descriptive and interpersonal models in the NP, in a typological framework, in which special attention is paid to the degree to which the model of the underlying structure of the NP is reflected in patterns of word order, and to the close relationship between interpersonal modifiers and the highest layer of descriptive modifiers, viz. that of locational modifiers. Rijkhoff first discusses the relative order of the three descriptive modifiers in the NP in relation to Greenberg's (1963) Universal 20 (on

word order in the NP; and the revised version proposed by Hawkins (1983)), and then turns to the position of interpersonal modifiers in relation to the descriptive complex. He demonstrates that there is a strong preference for word order patterns in the NP to be iconic to the scopal relations proposed in his model of the underlying NP structure, and explains various types of (apparent) counterexamples.

Rijkhoff discusses the relationship between interpersonal and locational descriptive modifiers in terms of the discourse strategy of anchoring the NP referent to the conversational ground, a function which may be encoded in the NP by interpersonal modifiers, but also by locational modifiers. Thus locational modifiers are characterized by Rijkhoff as having a twofold role: on the one hand they have the descriptive property of specifying the location of an entity, on the other hand, they "license or explain the existence of an entity in the shared world of the discourse of the interlocutors", which is a referential, hence interpersonal, property.

A final part of Rijkhoff's paper focusses on the parallelism between the layered structure of the NP and that of the clause. He first illustrates the clause-NP symmetry, which applies to lexical as well as grammatical modifiers in the two types of syntagm, in the three descriptive domains of quality, quantity, and location, and then turns to the nature of interpersonal modification at clause level. In the clausal syntagm, the descriptive/interpersonal contrast applies to the distinction between the clause as description of an event, and the clause as a specific event that is referred to in the world of discourse, and interpersonal modifiers are seen as specifying whether the event is actual (realis) or non-actual (irrealis). Rijkhoff shows that the distinction between interpersonal and descriptive modifiers at the level of the clause is especially useful with regard to explaining anaphora.

In the final paper in this thematic issue on layering, "**Functional Discourse Grammar – Multifunctional problems and constructional solutions**", Matthew Anstey offers a detailed analysis of FDG, and proposes a re-interpretation, viz. a 'constructional' version of FDG (along the lines of Construction Grammar), which addresses some theoretical and descriptive problems in the model of FDG.

Anstey argues that, although it has advantages over the older Functional Grammar model, the new model of FDG has its own problems, which he divides into four areas. The first two problems Anstey discusses have to do with the design of the FDG model as such: (1) the place of operators and satellites in the model; (2) the type of predicate-logic notation that is used in FDG. In relation to (1), Anstey proposes to regard operators and satellites as types of specifiers (hence to recognize the conceptual unity underlying both), which are defined as providing specific information relevant for the type of ontological entity they modify. In relation to (2), Anstey recommends the removal of the predicate-logic notation used in FDG, and puts forward a simplified, non-formal notation.

The third problem, viz. (3) the insertion of lexemes as parts-of-speech at the representational level, is also an aspect of the architecture of FDG as such, more specifically in terms of the number of levels that are distinguished. However, Anstey argues that this problem and the solution he proposes can only be understood within an analysis of how exactly the relationships between these levels are conceived of in FDG. Hence, it is related to a more fundamental issue which Anstey regards as problematic, viz. (4) the tight bond, interpreted in FDG as a one-to-one relation, between the interpersonal and representational levels on the one hand, and the syntactic level.

Anstey discusses this problem in the broader framework of the distinction between a semantic and a syntactic level, and the nature of the interface between semantics and syntax. The crucial question, in this discussion, is: how can 'semantics' be defined? Anstey considers two possibilities: semantics can be seen in a narrow sense as syntactically-relevant meaning; or semantics can be more broadly interpreted as comprising also conceptual meaning and speaker's intentions. Anstey argues for the more broadly defined type of (conceptual-intentional) semantics and thus the more autonomous semantics, and motivates this choice in relation to the phenomenon of many-to-many function-to-form relations in language (Haspelmath's (2003) notion of *multifunctionality*). In order to accommodate this type of conceptual-intentional semantics in FDG, Anstey proposes a re-interpretation of the FDG model which incorporates insights from Construction Grammar, and calls this 'constructive reappraisal' of FDG "Constructional Functional Discourse Grammar".

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The papers in this special issue approach the phenomenon of layering in linguistic structure from a multitude of perspectives. They focus on a functional type of layering, distinguishing higher and lower levels (in terms of a distinction between interpersonal, speaker-related dimensions vs. representational, content-related dimensions), and more fine-grained distinctions within each of these two, or they explore the distinction between different layers of encoding in language, e.g. the distinction between grammar and pragmatics, or syntax and semantics. The papers show how these distinctions are at work in explaining the organisation of both clausal and nominal syntagms; and how they can be approached from a descriptive or theoretical level. As indicated above, the various papers in this issue are either set within the framework of a type of structural-functional grammatical theory, or are

based on insights from these models. However, the notion of 'layering', especially in the two senses focussed on in this thematic issue, is pervasive in linguistics in general (e.g. also in cognitive linguistics and generative linguistics, to name just two approaches). We hope that the various structural-functional views on layering offered in this compilation of papers will open up further possibilities for approaching the phenomenon of 'layering' from perspectives in which insights from different types of linguistic theories can be combined in an interesting way.

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[i] Other types of differentiations along the dimension of levels of encoding in language may focus on other points: e.g. early SFG has a distinction between syntactic structure (syntagmatic structure as such) and grammatical structure (semantically motivated structure).