1. Introduction

Ferry Adenan

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Ferry Adenan, Professor M.A.K Halliday, founding Professor of Linguistics at the University of Sydney, Australia, is often regarded as the linguist responsible for the development of systemic functional linguistics. Systemic functional linguistics is a comprehensive descriptive model of language and language use which has been evolving for many years. It is still evolving, as applied linguists continue to research and reflect on the way human beings use language to make meaning in social contexts. Educators and linguists are both concerned with SFL. Educators would like to know how people learning the language can follow native speakers of the language to use the language. Therefore, SFL is to build a discipline of educational linguistics. In practice educational linguistics may mean, "learning language, learning through language, learning about language" (Cope, B. et. Al. 1993). Educational linguistics brings linguists and educators together to deepen their insight about language and language use and to easeen their professio nal duties.

SFL is ‘systemic’ because whenever a feature of language is described it is described as one choice from a set of possible choices within a particular language system which itself is part of a network of systems that make up the language. The systems are related in a kind of hierarchy making it possible to describe an aspect of language at whatever level of detail is the most useful. Language users are constantly making choices from the set of systems which make up the complete resource of language and then putting these choices into effect through the structure of the language they use. Understanding this process can provide very useful insight for language teachers and users.

Systemic functional linguists use system diagrams to map the way language users make choices as they move through the hierarchy of language systems, and finally make their choices real or ‘realize’ them in language structures. This technique is used here to discuss about clauses in the English language as meaning units and carriers according to functional grammar.

2. Constituency in Functional Grammar

Understanding the notion of constituency in functional grammar is very important. For example, if we have two words, brotherhood and monsters, we can use the notion of constituency and represent these words morphologically thus:

Brotherhood

Brotherhood

monsters

monsters

If we were interested in pronunciation, we would represent the constituents as brotherhood and monsters, that is break them up into syllables. But if we were
interested in meanings, we would break them into morphemes, because morphemes lead to words which in turn lead to phrases, clauses and sentences. Thus at the level of morpheme we have, monster and g, at the level of word we have monsters, at the level of phrase (or group, as Halliday calls it) we have, for example, the fierce monsters, and at clause level, we have the men shot the fierce monsters.

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{The men shot the fierce monsters} \\
\text{The men shot the fierce monsters} \\
\end{array}
\]

I could have put in another level: the lower level of morpheme, but most of our discussion will be at the level of clause, because Halliday’s orientation is functional and he says: “there is a general principle in language whereby it is the larger units that function more directly in the realization of higher-level patterns... (1) if we want to explore how semantic features are represented, that grammar we look primarily at the structure of the clause... (Halliday, 1965:21).” What we use therefore is a ranking of the constituents which go from morpheme, word, group, clause, sentence, paragraph etc. Or we could look at it from the point of view that a sentence consists of groups, which consist of words which consist of morphemes. This defines scale of rank for grammar. ‘But in syntax’ we also look at constituents according to immediate constituents (IC) analysis. Let us take this simple example: dogs chase cats. In the immediate constituent analysis the tree diagram would look like this:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{dogs} \\
\text{chase} \\
\text{cats} \\
\end{array}
\]

In ranked constituents analysis it would look like this:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{clause} \\
\text{word} \\
\end{array}
\]

In IC analysis, we get the overt of the constituent parts. The analysis expresses the idea that some constructions are more closely related than others. In any grammatical structure we should be able to specify the order in which the pieces can be put together. The analysis, however, does not say anything about the function that any of the pieces have.

In ranked constituents analysis, each mode corresponds to a unit on the rank scale (i.e. word, group, clause, etc.) as is shown in the example we discussed above. With ranked constituents we are simply combining words that go together to form a group, say. ‘We have to bring in other concepts to explain the grammatical structure’, these are functional in orientation.

Look at the following example: tall buildings. We can label this group by assigning a class label or functional label, as in (a) or (b) below:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{a) } \\
\text{b) } \\
\end{array}
\]

adjunct noun modifier head group

tall building tall buildings

Class labels do not tell us what the functions of words are. They merely refer to form analysis. The labelling employs terms like noun, verb, adjective, adverb and other words. It does not tell what part the item is playing in the structure. For example, in
fig. 2.1-1. Same item functioning as psychological, grammatical and logical subject.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some money</th>
<th>the poor</th>
<th>we given</th>
<th>the ich</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Subject</td>
<td>Grammatical Subject</td>
<td>Logical Subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theme</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2.1-2. Psychological, grammatical, logical subject realised by different terms.

Thus, (1) theme is that which is the concern of the message.
(2) subject is that of which something is being predicated or which rests the truth of the argument.
(3) actor is the doer of the action.

Here are some examples parts of a narrative taken from Halliday (1985: 36).
Assign the three functions to each example:
(1) I caught the first ball.
(2) I was beaten by the second.
(3) The third I stopped.
(4) By the fourth I was knocked out.

The three functions have been defined as:
1. The theme is a function in the clause as a message. It is what the message is concerned with: the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say.
2. The subject is a function in the clause as an exchange. It is the element that is held responsible: in which is vested the success of the clause in whatever is its particular speech-function.
3. The actor is a function in the clause as a representation (of a process). It is the active participant in the process: the one that does the deed.

These three headings: clause as message, clause as exchange, clause as re-

| The rich gave the poor some money. |
| Psychological subject = theme. |
| Grammatical subject = subject. |
| Logical subject = actor. |
As a generated rve, the theme is the element that comes in a first position in a clause. It is not described the way, however. The definition is functions. The theme is one element in a particular structural configuration which taken as a whole, organizes the clause as a message, the configuration being theme–rheme.

From fig. 2-2-1 it is clear that the theme is not always a nominal group (that is, a group with a noun). It may also be an adverbial group or prepositional phrase. It can be a single word or a clause.

In English, sometimes the theme is very explicitly marked as in

As for that birthday present, Amat gave it to Wieda.

About next Saturday, I am sorry I can't come for dinner.

There is a special thematic structure which is called thematic equative, which is a form of identifying clause (like an equation), as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Amat gave to Wieda</th>
<th>was a birthday present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The one who gave Wieda</td>
<td>was Amat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wieda's birthday present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A form such as What Amat gave to Wieda is a type of structural feature known as nominalization. In a thematic equative we have two semantic features, one which identifies the theme and one that identifies it with the theme, such nominalization as identifying above has a semantic component of exclusiveness, suggesting this and this only. In the unmarked form the one who gave Wieda this birthday present, there is no suggestion of exclusiveness. Amat may have given Wieda other things also. The following is a complete list of marked and unmarked theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amat</th>
<th>gave Wieda a birthday present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wieda</td>
<td>was given by Amat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very carefully</td>
<td>who poured the coffee into the glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Friday night</td>
<td>who usually goes shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamed</td>
<td>always borrows my books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What she gave to me</td>
<td>must study hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>surprised me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you</td>
<td>killed the monsters?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>who gave me a hand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2-2-1 Theme - rhyme configuration
### 2.2.1 Theme and Mood

The element that is typically chosen as the theme in an English clause depends on the choice of mood. An independent clause is either indicative or imperative. If it is indicative, it is either declarative or interrogative. If it is interrogative, it is either polar interrogative (i.e. yes/no type) or content interrogative (i.e. wh-type). Observe the following figure:

![Mood Diagram](image)

Fig. 2-3 Mood in English Clauses

In YesNo type of interrogative, the element that functions as the theme is the element that embodies the expression of polarity, namely, the finite verb, such as is, isn't, do, don't, can, can't. So, in a yes/no interrogative it is the finite form that is placed, before the subject, and that word becomes the theme. In the wh-type of interrogative, the theme is constituted by the wh-element itself. The examples below show the two types of interrogatives,

| Can | you tell me what the time is? |
| Is | it far to Candi Sukit? |
| Who | killed Udin? |
| With what | did you kill the snake? |

| Theme | 
|---|---|
| we | 

**2.2.2 Other Characteristic Themes**

Besides the types of themes we have considered so far there are other elements that have a special position in the thematic structure:

a. Conjunction and modal adjunct

i. Conjunctive adjuncts relate the clause to preceding test and are therefore also known as 'discourse adjuncts'. Examples of these are: rather, in any case, actually and, instead likewise so, etc.

ii. Modal adjuncts are those which express the speaker's judgement regarding the relevance of the message, examples of these are:

---

Humanlike Volume XIII, No. 3/2001 225
How likely ?, I think, I assure you, how constant ?, etc.
Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Function as Subject, Adjunct or Complement either alone, or in the structure of a group, nominative or adverbial, e.g., whose horse, in which, with whom. A relative group function is the Theme of the clause in which it occurs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| they answer to their names. | 2-2-3. Multiple Themes. The clause in the English language is the product of three simultaneous semantic processes. "It is at one and the same time a representation of experience, an intensive exchange, and a message" (Halliday, 1985:53). These three functional concepts can be related to the three types of meaning that are embedded in human language, forming the semantic organization of languages, that is they are metatfunctions, and the terms for them are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Ideational meaning is the representation of experience of the world and of the inner world of imagination. The ideational function of the clause is that of representing what is in the broadest sense we can call "processes": actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations. In this case the clause is considered as the most significant grammatical unit because it functions as the representation of processes. The interpersonal meaning is a form of action: the speaker or writer doing something to the listener or reader by means of language. The interpersonal function of the clause is that of exchanging roles in rhetorical interaction, statements, questions, offers and comands, together with accompanying modalities (Halliday, 1965:53). Textual meaning is relevance, the context: both the preceding (and following) text, and the context of situation. The textual function of the clause is that of constructing a message (Halliday, 1965:53). The theme-theme is the basic way of organizing the clause as message. But in the total make-up of the Theme, components from all three functions may contribute. There is always an ideational element in the Theme. It is generally known as the top Theme. The textual element within the Theme may have any combination of (i) contri.
nuitive, (b) structural and (iii) conjunctive themes. Continuatives are a small set of items such as yes, no, well, now, marking a response or a move to a new point it continues. A structural theme is one of the thematic elements designated conjunctions and relatives. A conjunctive theme is one of the conjunctive adjuncts, such as that, is, in any case, and but, etc.

Within the interpersonal element we can have a (i) modal theme (that is, one of the modal adjuncts), (ii) topic verb (in a yes/no interrogative clause), (iii) vocative element.

So far we have followed at Theme-Rheme as a structure within a clause. But we can find thematic organisation at other levels of organisation also, both above and below the rank of clause. For example, above the rank of clause, we find the same principle lies behind the organisation of paragraph, where a topic sentence is no more than its Theme.

In a complex clause, which is one step above the clause, we can distinguish between the Head (dominant) clause plus Modifying (dependent) clause, e.g.

Give that book away if you don't like it

This is a typical sequence the Head followed by the Modifier. If the order is reversed, the reason is to make the Modifier the Theme.

If you don't like it, give that book away.

Note that there will be thematic structure in each of the clauses as shown by this example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Given</th>
<th>can</th>
<th>Swing</th>
<th>for</th>
<th>behind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1</td>
<td>Theme 2</td>
<td>Theme 3</td>
<td>Theme 4</td>
<td>Theme 5</td>
<td>Theme 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gave</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gave</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gave</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>don't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gave</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>away</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>don't</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 The clause as Exchange

At the same time that the clause is organized as a 'message', it is also organized as an interactive event, which involves a speaker, or writer, and audience. In oral interaction, the speaker and listener each adopts a role, which may change as the interaction develops. When a speaker asks a question, the listener is assigned the role of supplier of information.

There are two types of speech roles, which can be regarded as fundamental:

(i) giving (defined as 'inviting to receive')

(ii) demanding (defined as 'inviting to give')

Related to this basic distinction is another distinction, which is also fundamental. It relates to the nature of the commodity being exchanged: goods-and-services and information. Give me a pencil is an example of goods, some object being exchanged while give me my book is an example of a demand for services. In either case the exchange commodity is strictly non-verbal.

On the other hand when is your mother coming back requires information to be supplied and it is strictly verbal. Language is both the end and the means for such an interaction. When these two variables are taken together they define the four primary speech functions, offer, command, statement, and question, as exemplified in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Goods and Services</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>offer</td>
<td>statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would you like a drink?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>command</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give me a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is he giving her?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Speech Functions

The four speech functions are matched by these desired responses: accepting an offer, carrying out a command, acknowledging a statement, responding to a question. Only the last one strictly speaking requires a verbal response but it is normal to make some sort of verbal response in each case.

2.3.1 Mood in Clauses as Exchange

Consider this piece of information exchange dialogue:

The duke's given away that 'eapot, hasn't he?

- Oh, has he?

Humankra Volume XII, No. 3/2001 227
The function of the finite element is to make the proposition finite. It circumscribes it so that it is something that can be asserted about. It gives the proposition a point of reference in the here and now condition that relates it to its 'context in the speech event'. It does this in two ways:

1. *by reference to the time of speaking (e.g. an old woman was running on the road).*

2. *by reference to the judgement of the speaker (e.g. he can't do it).*

Finiteness is thus expressed by means of either a temporal or a modal-verb operator. The temporal operators are: does, is, and has. The modal operators are can, may, could, might, will, would, should, is to, was to, must, ought to, need, has to, has is. An essential feature of finiteness is polarity, that it can be either positive or negative. Either something is X or it is not X.

The Subject, the Nominal component of the Mood supplies the rest of what it takes to form a proposition. It supplies the something by "reference to which the proposition can be affirmed or denied". In the following example:

The duke has given away that teapot, hasn't he?

The finite has specified reference to polarity and tense, while the subject, the duke, gives us the entity in respect of which the "assertion is claimed to have validity."

Dependent upon the choices made by the speaker, it is usual to have the same form perform the function of subject of a proposition and the theme of a message. Here is an example:

that teapot was given by the duke to my aunt.

In the following example we get a marked Theme, that is, a Theme which is not also a Subject.

that teapot the duke gave to my aunt.

One way to determine what might be the Subject is to use a question tag. In the duke has given that teapot away, we would have to use didn't he?
If the validity of the proposition is questioned, then the response to, say, was the leapord given away? might be No, it wasn't. It was the tea cosy.

2.3.2 Structure of the Residue in Clause of Exchange

The residue is made up of functional elements of three kinds:
- A Predicate (can be one only)
- Complement (can be one or two)
- Adjunct (can be quite a number)

The Predicate is realised by a verbal group minus the Finite. The underlined portions in these verbal groups form the Predicate; has been running, may be going to sleep.

The Complement is an 'element within the Residue that has the potential of being Subject but is not'. Using this definition, we have two complements in the duke gave my aunt that teapot, my aunt and that teapot; either could function as subject in a clause related to this one.

An Adjunct is an element that does not have the potential of being Subject. It is normally realised by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase. In my brother was given a calculator yesterday by the salesman there are two adjuncts: the adverbial group yesterday and the prepositional phrase by the salesman. Note, however, that the prepositional phrase has its own internal structure, which contains a complement, in this case, the salesman, and hence the salesman can become Subject.

The normal order of elements in the Residue is Predator > Complement(s) > Adjunct(s). In wh- interrogative exclaimative and imperative clauses the residue can precede the Mood.

Impressive clauses have a Mood element that consists of Finite plus Subject or one consisting of Finite only, or of Subject only, or it may have no Mood element at all.

2.4 The Clause as Representation

The clause has an ideational function and is a means of representing "patterns of experience". Language enables us to build a picture of reality, to make sense of our external as well as internal experiences. The clause is the grammatical unit that functions as a representation of processes. By processes is meant those things that go on in life: doings, happenings, feelings, being something.

A process can consist of three components and they provide a way of interpreting our experience of what goes on,
1. the process itself;
2. participants in process;
3. circumstances associated with the process.

Humaniora Volume XII, No. 32001
For example, if we are outside and a flock of birds fly past, we could say ‘birds are flying in the sky’. This is not the only way of organizing the experience. We could have said ‘it’s raining’ (just the process) just as we say ‘it’s raining’ (just the process), rather than water is falling out of the sky. In English there are few clauses that are tightly processes. Generally, we tend to have participants also and there is some circumstantial element. So, in the clause ‘birds are flying in the sky’, we have a process (flying), a participant (bird) and a circumstantial element (in the sky). Another way of looking at it would be that there is a ‘doing’, a ‘doer’, and a ‘location’ in which the doing takes place. The three elements are typically realised by word classes that we call ‘verb’, ‘noun’, and group or prepositional phrase. Observe this example:

The boy Jumped the hurdle. Process Actor Process Goal

In the first case the boy did something.
In the second case the process (jumped) was extended to someone/something also.
So, one can think of transitivity as either ‘going through to another’ or ‘not going through to another’.
A whole class of clauses can be interpreted in this manner, where there is an Actor, a Process and there may or may not be a goal. This class is referred to as Material Process.

2.4.2. Mental Processes: Processes of Sensing

In the sentence John liked the play, it is difficult to see how John can be thought of as the Actor and the play as the Goal. Clauses like this are unlike material process clauses. Instead they can be regarded as a special class of clauses called mental process clauses. Mental process clauses and perceptual clauses are clauses of sensing.

There are five ways to differentiate ‘material process clauses’ from ‘material process clauses’

(1) In a mental process clause, there is always one participant who is human, that is someone who feels, thinks, and sees. The feelings are extended to other human beings and even to plants. This participant can be referred to by one of these pronouns he, she or it.

(2) In a material process clause every participant is a thing. But in mental process it may also be a fact, that is, a thing. John in Chopra’s story that he was wrong. What is perceived is not a thing but fact (but not a fact as in fact and opinion). This is typically realised in English by a ‘that caused’, sometimes specifically signalled by words like the fact that...

(3) The third distinction is that of tense. In a material process clause the unmarked form present tense is the present continuous as in they’re building a garden.
but in mental process clauses the unmarked form of the present tense is the
simple present tense as in, I see the koalas (not I am seeing the koalas). Notice that in both cases we are talking about the unmarked form.

The simple present tense is used with material process when we want to con-
vey the idea of general or habitual occurrence, e.g. they build a gas station in
each of their houses occurs in very specific context as in I feel I’m knowing
the city for the first time.

(4) Mental processes can be represented in
language in many instances as a two
processes. For example, we can say:

- John likes the table or the table pleases
  John
- I believe his story or His story convinces me

(5) Material Processes are ‘doing’ proces-
ses which can be ‘probed’, and substi-
tuted, by the verb do, as in these exam-

dles:

- What did John do? – He ran away. What
  John did was run away.
- What did Mary do win the gift? She sold it.

With mental processes, however, we can not substitute or probe with the word do.
For example, we can not say

*What John did was known the answer

Talking the five points into account, it seems that we can not equate the partici-
pants in a mental process as the Actor and Goal as in a Material process. Halliday in-

troduces the terms sensor and pheno-
menon for the two participants. The sensor
is the conscious being that is feeling, thinking or seeing. The phenomenon is that
which is ‘sensed’, felt, thought or seen’ (Halliday, 1985:111). Halliday further makes distinc-

tions in the mental process in this way: perception is seeing, hearing, etc, affec-
tion is liking, fearing, etc, and cognition is thinking, knowing, understanding, etc. The figure below captures this relationship.
2.4.3. Relational Processes:

if we think of material processes as those of doing and mental processes as those of sensing, then processes of being can be regarded as relational processes. Within relational processes one can identify six types as shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode type</th>
<th>(l) attributive</th>
<th>(l) identifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Inter-</td>
<td>Sue is clever</td>
<td>Tom is the leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectal</td>
<td>The wedding is</td>
<td>The leader is Tom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Person-</td>
<td>Sarah has an</td>
<td>Tomorrow is the 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectal</td>
<td>idea</td>
<td>The first is tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Process-</td>
<td>Sarah is in</td>
<td>The plane in Spain's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectal</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Spain's in the plane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Types of Relational Process

You will note that the ‘identifying’ types are reversible, whereas the ‘attributive’ type are not.

3. Conclusion

Clauses in the English language are the main and most important forms of the meaning carriers. Viewed from the aspect of meaning of the English clause by using the notions of Theme, Subject, and Actor, we can identify (1) the clause as message, (2) the clause as exchange and (3) the clause as representation. In the clause as message, thematic structure is one of the most important message characteristics. In the clause as exchange, two types of speech-roles, namely, giving (‘inviting to receive’) and demanding (‘inviting to give’) are regarded as functional. The clause as representation has an ideational function and is a means of representing ‘patterns of experience’. This type of clause is the grammatical unit in English that functions as representation of process, things that go on in life doings, happenings, feelings, being something.

Each type of clause and its details can enhance good understanding and mastery of English in order for language teachers to be able to use and teach the use of the English language.

REFERENCES


