Introduction

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I.1 The General Scope of This Volume

The *Cambridge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics* presents a clear and comprehensive overview of one of the most appliable and socially progressive linguistic theories available today. As a social semiotic theory of language, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) prioritizes language from the perspective of systems of meaning – how these systems are shaped, and, at the same time, how they play a role in shaping human social systems and how they relate to other systems of meanings within society. With its origins firmly grounded in a functional approach to language, SFL brings into theoretical rigour the concept of function in relation to language in a unique and robust way. That is, in SFL theory, function is 'meaning in context'. It is not simply equated with 'use', but is considered a property of language at every level of description (cf. Halliday 1985: 17). Moreover, SFL places importance on its 'appliability'. M. A. K. Halliday, the founder of SFL theory, has described a linguistic theory which is appliable as one which

> tackles problems and tries to answer questions – but questions that are asked, and problems that are raised, not by professional linguists so much as by other people who are in some way concerned with language, whether professionally or otherwise. There are large numbers of such people: educators, translators, legal and medical specialists, computer scientists, students of literature and drama, . . .; and it is their 'take' on language that is being addressed, at least to the point of clarifying what sorts of questions can usefully expect to be asked, and whether or not there is any hope of coming up with an answer.
>
> (Halliday 2013:128)

Unlike theories of language that separate 'langue' from 'parole' and which consider parole as a somehow 'flawed' version of language, SFL recognizes the 'symbiotic relation' between langue and parole:

> language as an already produced and an evolving system is predicated on the symbiotic relation between parole and langue – between process and its product – so we may claim that the system enables the efficacy of process while process fashions the very rules by which it attains this efficacy.
>
> (Hasan 2009:310)

This symbiotic relation is also seen in the relation between language and society, and is explained through the social semiotic perspective on language that SFL holds:

> The universal characteristics of parole – its orderly variation, its flexible regularities – are functional (Halliday 1970): they have their origin in the relations of parole to the community's living of life, while at the same time, the various dimensions of a community's social contexts of living depend on parole for their creation, maintenance, and evolution. Language as a social semiotic is predicated on this mutual relation between parole and social contexts.
>
> (Hasan 2009:309–10)

These principle perspectives of SFL theory underpin the contributions in the present volume, with these contributions covering the theory's origins, architecture, key concepts, levels of analysis, and areas of application. Key terms are defined within the chapters, and key concepts are cross-referenced where relevant. Such cross-references to chapters within this handbook are given by reference to the author of the relevant chapter – for example, 'see Butt, this volume' to guide the reader (in this case) to Chapter 1. While the volume could be read from beginning to end, it is not necessary for readers to do so. Rather, readers wishing to understand a specific area of the theory or its application can refer to those chapters most relevant to their area of interest.

I.2   The Structure and Contents of This Volume

The chapters in this volume cover a comprehensive range of theoretical perspectives and applications of Systemic Functional Linguistics written by some of the world's foremost SFL scholars, including M. A. K. Halliday, the founder of SFL theory. As editors, we have endeavoured to compile a volume that can be used primarily as a reference tool with descriptions and explanations of theoretical concepts and discourse analytical tools along with some exemplar analyses. There are also ample citations pointing readers to further literature wherein more detailed information and analyses can be obtained. Many of the chapters include a brief discussion of possible future directions in which research might be conducted or issues be further investigated and resolved. Ultimately, we hope that readers will not only become better informed about the various features of SFL theory and the value it can bring to solving societal problems, questions, and ambiguities in which language features, but that they may be inspired to

pursue some of the challenges and issues raised within the volume – be they theoretical or practical in nature.

The volume is divided into three parts: Part I, 'SFL: The Model'; Part II, 'Discourse Analysis within SFL'; and Part III, 'SFL in Application'. The following paragraphs summarize the contents of the chapters in each of these sections.

I.3   Part I – SFL: The Model

As the introductory part of the volume, Part I, 'SFL: The Model', has been designed in such a way as to cover the core features and terminology of the SFL framework. The organization of this part is designed in part to reflect the key perspectives on the theory. Opening the part, in Chapter 1, David G. Butt lays out in considerable detail the origins and history of how the SFL approach evolved. Halliday's interest in a language-based linguistics is shown to derive directly from J. R. Firth, and, by better understanding Firth's concerns, the reader gains valuable insight into Halliday's development of SFL. A description of key terms in the SFL model is then given in Chapter 2, by Jonathan J. Webster. These two chapters form a necessary background for the more specific chapters that follow.

In Chapter 3, Miriam Taverniers takes up the central concept of semantics and explores how it is conceptualized and modelled in SFL theory. In particular, she teases out the different conceptions of semantics within SFL. Importantly, she relates the key concepts of abstraction, patterning, and actualization to stratification and metaredundancy. Chapters 4 through 7, then, combine to provide a detailed discussion of four key approaches or perspectives on language in the SFL framework: the clause, units of the clause, context, and sound patterns. The multifunctional view of the clause is detailed by Margaret Berry in Chapter 4 on the lexicogrammar. Berry presents a concise analytical overview of the clause from the experiential, interpersonal, and textual metafunction. In Chapter 5, Lise Fontaine and David Schönthal present a critically engaged description of the units of 'group' and 'phrase'. After reviewing the different units below the clause, they go on to challenge the distinction between the units of 'group' and 'clause'. Context and its relation to text type is examined by Wendy L. Bowcher in Chapter 6, as she details the concepts of context and register within the model. Specifically, Bowcher discusses the history of these two concepts and their relation between one another, and reviews seminal SFL research on context and register. Chapter 7, by Wendy L. Bowcher and Meena Debashish, details how intonation and English tone groups are situated within the SFL framework. Not only do the authors offer a usable description of English intonation, they also raise important issues related to topics currently under debate and possible areas of future research.

The final three chapters of Part I each step outside the standard SFL model in different ways. In Chapter 8, Mick O'Donnell explores aspects of the model which are under debate within the field. He outlines the main points of interest, showing where there is scope for significant contributions from researchers. Chapter 9, written by Anke Schulz and Lise Fontaine, presents the model of functional syntax as developed within the Cardiff Grammar. As a model with its roots in SFL theory, the Cardiff Grammar shares many of the same principles as outlined in the other chapters in this part. However, there are some important differences illustrated in this chapter. In the final chapter of Part I, Chapter 10, Christopher S. Butler situates SFL in its theoretical context in relation to other functional approaches, or what he refers to as 'functional-cognitive space'. This chapter, based on a detailed comparison of sixteen different models, shows that while some differences are highlighted, there are also some interesting points of shared concerns.

I.4   Part II – Discourse Analysis within SFL

The second part of the volume contains eight chapters which present various discourse analytical tools developed within the framework of SFL theory. This part begins with Chapter 11, by Tom Bartlett, who first describes SFL from a discourse analytical perspective and then discusses some of the main approaches to discourse analysis within SFL. This chapter includes critical comments on some of the analytical approaches and effectively sets the background for the chapters which follow.

Chapter 12, by Maite Taboada, focuses on cohesion and conjunction. This chapter describes Halliday and Hasan's (1976) early work on cohesion, and includes a brief description of cohesive harmony (Hasan 1985; Khoo 2016), as well as work on rhetorical structure theory (RST) (Mann et al. 1992). In her discussion of conjunction, Taboada briefly points out some of the differences between Martin's (1992) and Hasan's (1985) descriptions. The chapter also includes a brief description of some areas in which Halliday and Hasan's model of cohesion and coherence has been applied, such as in computational studies and foreign language teaching and learning.

Chapter 13, by Andy Fung and Francis Robert Low, focuses on semantic networks as developed by Hasan (1996), but the chapter first situates this discourse analytic framework in relation to other semantic-level approaches within SFL. The chapter describes the basic unit of analysis, the 'message', and demonstrates the utility of this framework through an analysis of a mother–child interaction. The latter part of the chapter illustrates how semantic networks have been applied, with a focus on pedagogic and journalistic discourse.

Chapters 14 (J. R. Martin) and 15 (Susan Hood) describe two related analytical frameworks: discourse semantics and the system of APPRAISAL. Martin

briefly explains how his 'discourse semantics' differs from Halliday and Hasan's (1976) concept of coherence and cohesion before elaborating on various systems within his framework. The second part of the chapter presents a text analysis demonstrating the application of the different discourse semantic systems and the value of this analytical approach in highlighting threads of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings throughout a text, and how these threads relate to each other. Towards the end of the chapter, Martin discusses the interpersonal system of APPRAISAL, which provides a natural segue to Hood's chapter on Appraisal. Hood first situates the APPRAISAL system within SFL theory and then introduces the three main APPRAISAL sub-systems: ATTITUDE, GRADUATION, and ENGAGEMENT. The latter part of her chapter discusses some of the ways that the system of APPRAISAL has been applied, ending with a discussion of the current trends in Appraisal research, including multimodal studies, research into legal language, and studies of identity and affiliation.

Chapter 16, Diachronic Studies by David Banks, while not technically about a discourse analytic approach, is about a discourse analytic perspective – diachrony – and Banks illustrates some of the discoursal features that are focused on by SFL researchers whose data and analytical perspectives would fall within the domain of diachronic research.

Chapter 17, by Kay L. O'Halloran, Sabine Tan, and Peter Wignell, covers multimodal discourse analysis, a particularly fruitful and growing area within the SFL theoretical framework, abbreviated as SF-MDA (Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis). The chapter highlights the features of SFL theory which inform SF-MDA before presenting an exemplar analysis of a multimodal text, an internet webpage, using the analytical tools of SF-MDA.

The last chapter in this part, Chapter 18, by Gerard O'Grady, outlines the relationship between SFL theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly that developed by Norman Fairclough (1989, 2015). After tracing the development of CDA, O'Grady describes Fairclough's methodology, pointing out its compatibility with SFL theoretical perspectives and analytical concepts. Towards the end of the chapter, O'Grady presents a critique of the criticisms of SFL-inspired CDA, and in the last part of the chapter he outlines some of the particularly productive areas of CDA research which make use of SFL theoretical tools.

I.5   Part III – SFL in Application

This third part of the volume presents several fields of research in which the theory of SFL has been applied, with the first three chapters (Chapters 19, 20, and 21) on different areas related to language development and learning. Geoff Williams' chapter describes Halliday's groundbreaking work on child language development (Chapter 19), and is

organized around two main thrusts of the SFL approach: how research into language development informs the SFL theory of language, and how learning language goes hand in hand with learning culture and in developing one's position and identity within society. Williams relates how this latter perspective, in particular, is demonstrated through research into mother–child interaction conducted by Ruqaiya Hasan and analyzed using her semantic networks (e.g. Hasan 1996).

Chapter 20, by Heidi Byrnes, moves on to the application of SFL in the field of second language development. She first locates SFL within the general domain of second language acquisition research, and then discusses the application of several key features of SFL theory and L2 teaching and learning, noting, in particular, the value brought to the L2 teaching/learning environment of the SFL approach to the description of language and language in use, as well as its description of a lexicogrammar rather than the typical and 'unsustainable' separation of lexicon and grammar. She also raises the significance of SFL research into and description of grammatical metaphor in second language learning and teaching.

In Chapter 21, Peter Mickan outlines how SFL theory has been applied within the field of general education. Mickan's chapter covers work focusing on early childhood and primary school education, secondary school, tertiary education, and finally teacher-training and educational research. Underlying all these chapters is the principle that learning language and learning through language is a process of 'learning how to mean'.

In Chapter 22, John Bateman, Daniel McDonald, Tuomo Hiippala, Daniel Couto-Vale, and Eugeniu Costetchi note the long history of connection between SFL and computational linguistics, mentioning Halliday's involvement in 'some of the earliest attempts to achieve automatic translation systems in the 1950s' and his key role in some of the 'most well-known language-oriented systems to emerge in computational linguistics and Artificial Intelligence in the 1970s and 1980s'. The chapter discusses recent SFL-related research, noting some of the challenges that a meaning-based theory of language poses for computational models, but also the distinct and far-reaching possibilities that SFL can offer the field.

The next three chapters (Chapters 23, 24, and 25) are connected in terms of their focus on SFL in relation to science and medical research. Chapter 23, by Elissa Asp and Jessica de Villiers, concerns clinical linguistics. After briefly describing the field of clinical linguistics, Asp and de Villiers present an overview of research that falls within the SFL theoretical approach, including work on schizophrenia, neurodevelopmental and neurocognitive disorders, Alzheimer's disease, and aphasia. They also discuss the significance of SFL-informed research and some future directions.

The focus in Chapter 24, by Michael Halliday and David G. Butt, is 'science' and scientific language. They describe the part that language has played in the development of science and how scientific language, as a register, has come to construe knowledge and experience in a specific and

'uncommonsense' way, which they argue is in line with the social purposes of science. Another argument that the authors make is that science language, or 'verbal science', operates in a similar way to verbal art (see Miller, this volume) in that there is a 'symbolic articulation' – that is, conventional language choices realize metaphorical constructions of meanings to create novel understandings.

Alison Rotha Moore, in Chapter 25, comprehensively reviews SFL-informed research into language and medicine. She describes the kind of health problems and medical contexts in which research has been conducted, such as HIV, emergency services, surgery contexts, and health curricula. She discusses the analytical tools used and then outlines the achievements SFL researchers have made in this field. The chapter also suggests some of the directions this kind of research can take and the possible knock-on improvements that could emerge in healthcare and in the healthcare system.

The next chapter (Chapter 26), by Donna R. Miller, entitled Language and Literature, presents some of the most innovative work on the analysis of 'verbal art' available. Miller presents a historical recount of the field of stylistics and the place of Halliday's and Hasan's work in relation to this, noting the possible reasons why Halliday's work has been acknowledged outside the circle of SFL scholars, whereas, surprisingly, Hasan's has received little recognition. Several key influential figures emerge in her chapter, such as Jakobson and Mukařovský. The chapter describes Hasan's systemic socio-semiotic stylistics (SSS) model and its value and insights for understanding the 'art' in verbal art, demonstrating that literature is not like other varieties of language, but is a special variety.

In Chapter 27, Michele Zappavigna describes current work in the application of SFL tools to analyzing social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Weibo, etc. Specifically, she focuses on the way SFL tools can unlock the construction of 'identity' and 'affiliation' in such platforms, pointing out that this kind of investigation derives from Firth's (1950) work on the language of persons and personalities and his concepts of 'communion of feeling' and 'the user in uses' (see also Martin 2009). The chapter also discusses issues involved in collecting social media data.

Chapter 28, by Erich Steiner, focuses on translation studies and the usefulness of SFL ideas and concepts for theorizing and modelling the process of translation. His chapter compares translation with multilingual text production and interpreting, and discusses the relationship between translation, text variation, and paraphrase. It also includes a discussion on the SFL perspectives on equivalence, the translation of registers or text types, and the role of the translator in the process of translation. Steiner describes some of the SFL tools for text analysis that are relevant to translation and possible future directions of SFL-informed translation studies.

The last chapter in the volume is Abhishek Kumar Kashyap's chapter on language typology (Chapter 29). Kashyap briefly traces the development of

the field of language typology, the kinds of questions that typologists ask, and some of the different theoretical approaches taken. The chapter covers the major contributions to language typology from an SFL perspective and applications of language typology to other fields such as translation, intercultural communication, and language teaching and learning.

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Part I

SFL: The Model

1

Firth and the Origins of Systemic Functional Linguistics

Process, Pragma, and Polysystem

David G. Butt

1.1 J. R. Firth (1890–1960): First Impressions and Paradoxes of Plain Statement

> '[M]eaning' is a property of the mutually relevant people, things, events in the situation. Some of the events are the noises made by the speakers. (Firth 1964:111)

The ideas and principles of Professor John Rupert Firth are an essential source of what is important and distinctive about the development, after Firth's death, of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Firth was the first Professor of General Linguistics in England (1944) at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University (SOAS). He also headed the Department of Phonetics in London. Though first trained in history, between the outset of WWI and 1928, Firth had worked as a teacher of English and as a professor in British Imperial India (at Lahore, now Pakistan) as well as in Afghanistan and East Africa. He later returned to these communities to conduct further descriptions of languages. His students and colleagues are notable for the extent and depth to which they developed the study of languages of these regions, as well as languages of East and South East Asia. Firth emphasized the importance of de-Anglicization, and of looking back at one's own language from the perspective of another culture. This is a form of 'de-familiarization' quite remarkable in a person who seemed a conservative Yorkshireman. Yet, as emphasized by Roman Jakobson after their two meetings, Firth shared with the pioneer of British linguistics, Henry Sweet (1845–1912), an 'unusual courage to see the world' with his own eyes 'irrespective of the environmental usage, habit and predilection' of conventional thinking (Jakobson 1966:242). For others, especially to phonemicists and morphologists in America, this 'unusual courage' appeared to be eccentricity, and a lack of