

word corpus of early Australian English (1788-1900). The article shows that each colonial parliament followed its own spelling policies; as a result, regional standards were established, some examples of which are still traceable in present-day usage. T. Breban ('The Grammaticalization of the English Adjectives of Comparison: A Diachronic Case Study') explores the current polysemy of such adjectives as *other*, *different*, *same*, *identical*, *similar*, and *comparable* and attributes it to a process of grammaticalization. The study, based on the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (750-1710), and the COBUILD Corpus (*Bank of English*), provides both a quantitative and qualitative analysis, bringing to light the development of new meanings and their varying distribution. The final paper of the volume, by G. Kjellmer ('Panchrony in Linguistic Change: The Case of *Courtesy*'), deals with the development of the word *courtesy*, relying both on the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *CobuildDirect* corpus. The word is seen to embrace simultaneously all the stages related to the development of its meanings – an instance of panchrony in linguistic change.

This volume testifies to the fact that past and present are so strongly interrelated that it is difficult to fully understand Present-day English structures and features without turning back to previous centuries. The increasing strength of corpus-based research thus allows for the development of further lines of investigation also in historical linguistics, often with results that may challenge well-established theoretical assumptions.

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HALLIDAY, Michael A. K. / MATTHIESSEN, Christian M.I.M., *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Arnold Publishers, London 2004, pp. 689, ISBN 0340761679, \$ 37.50.

This extremely accessible and well-written textbook is an essential title for anyone with an interest in functional grammar and its general framework. Not only is the theory explained very clearly, but it is also illustrated by numerous examples drawn from an extensive corpus of written and spoken English.

The volume is divided into two parts, each containing five chapters. The chapters in Part 1 (1. The architecture of language; 2. Towards a functional grammar; 3. Clause as message; 4. Clause as exchange; 5. Clause as representation) deal with clause-level grammar. Those in Part 2 (6. Below the clause: groups and phrases; 7. Above the clause: the clause complex; 8. Groups and Phrases Complex; 9. Around the clause: cohesion and discourse; 10. Beyond the clause: metaphorical modes of expressions) describe how lexicogrammar resources are deployed in the process of creating and interpreting texts.

In the first chapter, the authors cover the basics of functional grammar, i.e. the architecture of language, whose minimal units and constituents are defined in terms of phonology, graphology, and lexicogrammar. These in turn reveal how language is organized in its structure, system, stratification, instantiation and metafunction.

The second chapter continues the introduction to functional grammar, illustrating the concepts of grammaticalization, of classes and functions, and of subject, actor, and theme. Language is described here as a system pivoting around the clause which carries a message in a particular context and is realized in an exchange between speaker and listener.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the notion of theme and its relation to mood, to the rheme's representation and to their use in connection/contrast with New and Given items of information.

The fourth chapter explores the meaning potential of the clause as message. Here the concepts of Mood and Residue are clearly explained with particular regard to modality – both in declarative, interrogative, wh-questions – and in its fourfold aspect of value, polarity, orientation and type. A thorough explanation is included of the concepts of polarity, of the role of intonation in the building of the message, and of the relationship between Mood, Theme, Residue, and Rheme.

Chapter 5 deals with the complex aspects of transitivity, which are made very accessible to the layman, and can therefore be of great interest also for students.

In Chapter 6, the analysis focuses on the three main classes of groups: nominal, verbal and adverbial, along with a brief but exhaustive overview of prepositional and conjunctive groups. The discussion concentrates on the make-up of these units, which function as elements in the internal organization of a clause.

The seventh chapter is an extended analysis of the relationship between the clause-complex and the rhetorical-relation organization of the texts. It investigates the links between clauses according to their logico-semantic relations.

Chapter 8 highlights the complex structures involving groups and phrases: after a short discussion of paratactic nexus-types (namely, apposition and coordination), it turns specifically to hypotactic textual links.

While the ninth chapter is concerned with cohesion, the tenth and last chapter discusses the phenomenon of grammatical metaphor, describing how English metaphorical realization creates a complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar.

The approach taken in this book overcomes the distinction between theoretical and applied linguistics. The theoretical framework in which the description of grammar is placed, proves comprehensive enough to equip the reader with basic principles of functional analysis applicable to any context of language use.

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