



FACOLTÀ DI STUDI UMANISTICI  
CdL Lingue e Comunicazione

# Lingua Inglese 2

## LESSON 1

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# Outline

- From structural to functional linguistics
- An introduction to Discourse Analysis
- Microfunctions: Austin & Searle
- Macrofunctions: Jakobson

What is the difference between  
structural linguistics and  
functional linguistics?

# Structural Linguistics or Structuralism

Language is conceived as a self-contained, self-regulating system, whose elements are defined by their relationship to other elements within the system. It is derived from the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and is part of the overall approach of structuralism. Saussure examined language as a dynamic system of interconnected units.

The French term *langue* (an individual language) encompasses the abstract, systematic rules and conventions of a signifying system; it is independent of, and pre-exists, the individual user. It involves the principles of language, without which no meaningful utterance, or *parole*, would be possible.

In contrast, *parole* ('speech') refers to the concrete instances of the use of *langue*.

**Saussure** is also known for introducing several basic dimensions of semiotic analysis that are still important today.

Two of these are his key methods of **syntagmatic** and **paradigmatic** analysis.

The former defines units syntactically (the surface structure of language). Studies the relation of words that co-occur in the same sentence

**Syntagmatic** means that one element selects the other element either to precede it or to follow it. For example, the definite article "the" selects a noun and not a verb.

**Paradigmatic** analysis defines its units lexically, according to their contrast with the other units in the system. It refers to the semantic relation between words that can be substituted with other words in the same category.

- ✓ **Functional theories** of language propose that since language is fundamentally a tool, it is reasonable to assume that its structures are best analyzed and understood with reference to the functions they carry out. These include the tasks of conveying meaning and contextual information.
- ✓ **Functional theories** take into account the context where linguistic elements are used and study the way they are instrumentally useful or functional in the given environment. This means that functional theories of grammar tend to pay attention to the way language is actually used in communicative context. The formal relations between linguistic elements are assumed to be functionally-motivated.

DISCOURSE LEVEL

Sentence Connectivity

*Larger than the sentence text*

We arrived at the shop just as the butcher was clearing away. As a result the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones, and the little puppies liked the scraps.

SENTENCE LEVEL

Sentence

the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones, and the little puppies liked the scraps.

CLAUSE LEVEL

Clause

the big dogs enjoyed their unexpected bones

PHRASE LEVEL

Phrase

their unexpected bones

WORD LEVEL

Word

un- expect -ed

# From structural to functional

- Structural approach: how things are composed (their internal structure)
- Functional approach: what the unit does
- ✓ Function of syntactic units:

Mary	liked	The gift
Subject	Verb	Object/Complement
Senser	Process	Phenomenon
Theme	Rheme	



# From structural to functional

- Mental clauses are concerned with our experience of the world of our own consciousness. Mental clauses consist of a **Senser**, which is a human participant, and a **Phenomenon**, that which is felt, thought about, perceived . **The Process** is represented by the predicate itself.

Mary	liked	The gift
Subject	Verb	Object/Complement
Senser	Process	Phenomenon

# From structural to functional

- The **Theme** is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message, it is that with which the clause is concerned. The rest of the message, the part in which the **Theme** is developed, is called the **Rheme** (Halliday 1995: 37)

Mary	liked	The gift
Subject	Verb	Object/Complement
Senser	Process	Phenomenon
Theme	Rheme	

Julia	likes	dancing	
Subject	Fin./Verb	Complement	Interpersonal f.
Senser	Process	Phenomenon	Experiential f.
Theme	Rheme		Textual f.

1. What the addressor wants from the addressee (question or statement), how certain s(he) is (modality, etc.). The interpersonal function refers to the grammatical choices that enable speakers to enact their complex and diverse interpersonal relations. A speaker not only talks about something, but is always talking to and with others.
2. To express information. The experiential function refers to the grammatical choices that enable speakers to make meanings about the world around us and inside us.
3. The first constituent in the clause plays a relevant function in the connectivity of the text: what is this text about?

(Halliday M.A.K, 1994-2003)

# Discourse Analysis



## 1- Language in Use

**Discourse** is one of the most significant concepts of modern thinking in a range of disciplines across of humanities and social sciences.

### Why?

Because it concerns **the ways language** works in our engagements with the world and our interactions with each other, so creating and shaping the social, political and cultural formations of society.

TO STUDY **DISCOURSE** IS THEN TO STUDY **LANGUAGE IN ACTION**, LOOKING AT TEXTS IN RELATION TO THE **SOCIAL CONTEXTS** IN WHICH THEY ARE USED.

**DISCOURSE**: an overloaded term, because it is connected with almost everything that goes on in the world, and thus **covers a RANGE OF MEANINGS**:

- ✓ Speech and writing to consider conventions and social situations;
- ✓ But also institutionalized ways of thinking that define our social lives.

(Hyland K. & Paltridge B. 2011)

# Discourse Analysis

## Language in Use



D.A. deals with language in context, linking the text/utterance with its social situation.

Born in the 1960s and 1970s out of work in different disciplines: linguistics, psychology, anthropology, sociology.

(Cfr. *The Bloomsbury Companion to Discourse Analysis*, 2011)

- ✓ Contribution of semiotics and the French structuralists' approach to the study of narrative.
- ✓ Dell Hymes's communicative competence: speech in social settings (1964);
- ✓ Language as social action: **speech-act theory, conversational maxims** (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, Grice, 1975), **pragmatics**, i.e. the study of meaning in context (Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983).

# Discourse Analysis

## Language in Use



Every day we encounter or take part in a wide range of different types of spoken interactions....

Each situation has its own conventions and formulae, different role relationships, different purposes and different settings.

Discourse analysis is interested in all the above creating a fundamental distinction between:

**LANGUAGE FORMS** (grammatical, lexical, phonological) and

**DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS** (what we do with the language)

# Discourse Analysis

## 2- Communication



**Proposition** (we talk about something)

**Reference** (we make a connection with context)

*Examples: His flight should be here any minute.*

*I'm on my way*

**Speech Act Theory** (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

Locutionary Act

Illocutionary Force

Perlocutionary Effect

# Discourse Analysis

## 2- Communication



**Speech Act Theory** (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

Locutionary Act

Illocutionary Force

Perlocutionary Effect

“Is there any salt?”

In uttering the locution "Is there any salt?" at the dinner table, one may thereby perform the distinct **locutionary act** of uttering the interrogatory sentence about the presence of salt, as well as the **illocutionary act** of requesting salt (**illocutionary force of request**), and the further **perlocutionary effect** of causing somebody to hand one the salt.



# Discourse Analysis

## 2- Communication



**Speech Act Theory** (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

*Example (after a dinner with friends):*

Man: Let's have coffee at our place

Wife: You're working tomorrow.....

This is an *indirect speech act*. The wife could have expressed the same message with a *direct speech act*:

*Man*: Let's have coffee at our place

*Wife*: I am tired, I want to go to sleep

# Discourse Analysis



## 2- Communication

**Speech Act Theory** (John Austin 1962, John Searle 1969)

### Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Direct Speech Act: grammatical form and communicative function (i.e. illocutionary force) correspond.

Indirect Speech Act: grammatical form and communicative function do not correspond.

**Is there any salt??**

Other examples (requests and proposals):

- Would you like to meet for a coffee? - I have class....
- Can you call Samantha?
- **It's cold outside...**
- The tea is really cold!

# Language microfunctions (1)

- Language is used to reach diverse purposes
- J. Austin (1962) speech acts:
  - Locutionary – literal meaning
  - Illocutionary – communicative force
  - Perlocutionary – effect/reaction in the addressee/recipient

LOOK AT THE ABILITY OF A SENTENCE TO PERFORM  
ACTIONS

# Language functions (2)

- Searle's (1969, 1976) taxonomy of speech acts (microfunctions):

Speech Acts	Purpose	Types
Representatives (Assertives)	Representation LOCUTIONARY SA	Stating, telling, insisting
Expressives	Stance ILLOCUTIONARY	Deploring, admiring
Verdictives	Assessment ILLOCUTIONARY	Assessing, estimating
Directives	ask for action on the receiver's part PERLOCUTIONARY	Ordering, requesting, warning, prohibiting, daring
Commissives	Commitment ILLOCUTIONARY	Promising, vowing, pledging
Declarations	Declaration - ILLOCUTIONARY	Blessing, baptizing, dismissing

- Searle's (1969, 1976) taxonomy of speech acts (microfunctions):

Speech Acts	Purpose	Types
Representatives (also Assertives)	Representation, tell how things are- LOCUTIONARY	Stating, telling, insisting <i>«No one makes a better cake than me».</i>
Expressives	Stance, how the speaker feels about something ILLOCUTIONARY	Deploring, admiring <i>«I am sorry that I lied to you».</i>
Verdictives	Assessments about the addressee - ILLOCUTIONARY	Assessing, judging, estimating <i>“I congratulate you for performing so well”</i>
Directives	ask for action on the receiver's part PERLOCUTIONARY	Ordering, requesting, warning, prohibiting, daring <i>“Could you close the window, please?”</i>
Commissives	Committing the speaker to do something about the future ILLOCUTIONARY	Promising, vowing, pledging <i>«I'm going to Paris tomorrow”</i>
Declarations	Declaration They change the state of the world in an immediate way ILLOCUTIONARY	Blessing, baptizing, dismissing <i>Ex: “You are fired, I swear, I beg you”.</i>

## Representatives

Speech acts that commit the speakers/writers to the truth of their expressed statements:

«The Nuragic civilization, also known as the Nuragic culture, lasted from the 18th century BCE (Bronze Age) up to the Roman colonization in 238 BCE».

## Expressives

Speech acts that state how the speaker/writer/addresser feels about. His attitudes and emotions about what is being said.

«I'm so sorry!»

In writing, these occur through the use of verbs, adjectives and adverbs that can take a particular communicative force.

## Verdictives

Speech acts that give assessments or judgements about the hearer :

«Congratulations for your performance»



## Directives (Perlocutionary force)

Speech acts that cause the hearer or reader to take a particular action, to force the reader/hearer to do something:

May I have some soda?

Do your homework!

Fly Emirates

# Commissives

Speech acts that the speakers use to commit themselves to future actions.

Promises, pledges, refusals, threats that the speaker takes to make the **WORLD FIT THE WORDS** (via the speaker)

«I'll be back soon»

«We will not do that»

# Declaratives

Speech acts that change the world around via their utterance/words:

«I now pronounce you man and wife»

«I sentence you to 6 years of prison»

«The ball was out!»

London, the capital of England and the United Kingdom, is a 21st-century city with history stretching back to Roman times. At its centre stand the imposing Houses of Parliament, the iconic 'Big Ben' clock tower and Westminster Abbey, site of British monarch coronations. Across the Thames River, the London Eye observation wheel provides panoramic views of the South Bank cultural complex, and the entire city.

It's little wonder London, England is one of the world's top tourist destinations, attracting upward of 20 million visitors each year from around the world. Britain's capital city is a vibrant arts and entertainment center (its theaters are always busy), and 50 years after The Beatles, the country's music scene still rocks.

London also offers one of the planet's greatest concentrations of cultural attractions. From royal palaces to the people's parliament, from museums and cathedrals to riding a giant Ferris wheel for breathtaking views over the River Thames, you could spend endless days exploring London's best sightseeing locations without ever running out of unique things to see and do. And, as an added bonus, many of the best places to visit are free.

To help you make the most of your London travel itinerary, be sure to refer often to our list of the top tourist attractions in London.

The French government says older people with pre-existing conditions can now get AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine, revising its stance on the issue.

"People affected by co-morbidities can be vaccinated with AstraZeneca, including those aged between 65 and 74," the health minister said.

Last month France approved use of the vaccine for under-65s only, citing lack of data for older people.

Your private tourist guide will pick you up at the scheduled time by his comfortable minivan.

During the 45 minutes route to Barumini, it will tell you about the main features of the island and the landscape we will see from the car's windows.

Once arrived, we will visit the imposing nuraghe "Su Nuraxi" and its village: an Archaeological complex whose most ancient traces date back to around the 1500 b.c.

We will begin from the village, where you will see various types of housing structures, the round ones, with a central courtyard, that go back to the nuragic period, and the rectangular ones, that belong to the punic-roman period.

Noteworthy are a central court house with a spa environment, perhaps home to a domestic cult, and the big meeting hut. Then, we will enter the real nuraghe, that can be reached by an iron ladder which leads to a tiny entry, placed at 7 metres of height.

There we will visit the central tower, called "mastio", that originally measured 20 metres in height, and the 4 side towers. The whole of the 5 towers makes a housing complex that, for its grandeur, reminds us of a medieval castle. After the visit to su Nuraxi, you will be taken to the place where your excursion began. The tour can also be enriched by choosing one of the different available options.

# Language macrofunctions

## Jakobson's acts of verbal communication

The well-known model of the **functions of language**, introduced by the Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson (1960: 350-377), distinguishes six elements, or **factors of communication**, that are necessary for communication to occur:

(1) addresser (sender), (2) addressee (receiver), (3) context , (4) message, (5) contact, and (6) common code.



# Jakobson's act of verbal communication

	CONTEXT	
ADDRESSER	MESSAGE	ADDRESSEE
	CONTACT	
	CODE	

Each factor is the focal point of a relation, or function, that operates between the message and the factor.

# Macrofunctions (Jakobson 1960)

	REFERENTIAL	
EMOTIVE	POETIC	CONATIVE
	PHATIC	
	METALINGUAL	

The functions are the following, in order:  
(1) emotive ("Yuck!"), (2) conative ("Come here"),  
(3) referential ("The Earth is round"),  
(4) poetic ("Smurf") (5) phatic ("Hello?"),  
(6) metalingual ("What do you mean by 'krill'?"),

- Emotive f.: internal states and emotions of the addresser (1<sup>st</sup> p. *I*, interjections, personal style)
- Conative f.: aims at influencing the internal states and emotions of the addressee (2<sup>nd</sup> p. *you*, vocative & imperative)
- Referential f.: informative function (3<sup>rd</sup> p., objects, events, facts in the context; nominalisation, premodification, passives, stative verbs; less formal, 1<sup>st</sup> p.p. & dynamic active verbs)

- Poetic f.: aesthetic f., the form of the message (sound-effect, rhythm, figurative language, phonological resemblance) as a crucial part of the message meaning & force
- Examples: political slogans, ads, sayings.
- Phatic f.: sets contact between the addresser and the addressee (opening and checking the channel of communication)
- Examples: Can you hear me?, Well, here we are. I see.
- Metalingual f.: “attention on the code to clarify or re-negotiate it” (Ulrich 29), e.g. *what do you mean?*

# Therefore...

- Close to text types & discourse genres
- Writer's communicative purpose
- Although multifunctional, one predominant function & typology
- ✓ **Emotive (expressive) function** -> author-centred (author's feelings)
  - Characterised by: author's personal style + idiosyncrasies
  - Ex.: literary texts, autobiographies, speeches, author's prefaces, personal correspondence

- ✓ **Referential (informative) function** -> content-centred (information provided)
  - Not the author's feelings but the content
  - Ex.: textbooks, technical reports, scientific articles
- ✓ **Conative (vocative) function** -> reader-centred (affecting the reader's behaviour)
  - Ex.: Advertising, propaganda, official recommendations, polemical & persuasive writing
  - Use of lg geared towards the receiver
  - Use of formality in addressing people: you < tu, Lei, loro

# Read

- Widdowson 2007, pp.12-14
- Ulrich 1992, pp. 32-51