

Systemic Grammar and Syllabus Design

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ABSTRACT

SYSTEMIC LINGUISTICS AND SYLLABUS DESIGN

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The major focus of this thesis is to illustrate that D. A. Wilkins' proposals for Syllabus design outlined in his book Notional syllabuses do not reflect the theoretical categories of the systemic model for language description as represented by the work of M. A. K. Halliday. Although D. A. Wilkins uses much of Halliday's terminology in his proposals, writers in the field of syllabus design and language teaching are mistaken in assuming that these two authors share a common set of theoretical categories. D. A. Wilkins' work is not based on M.A.K. Halliday's functional model for language description.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A language teaching syllabus:

A language teaching syllabus contains the objectives or aims for a specific course to be taught. These objectives may be drawn from a variety of areas or disciplines depending upon the context within which the course is being offered. Some of them will certainly pertain to specific skills such as understanding, speaking, reading and writing but others may make reference to the history and civilization of a people, to their literature or even to the mental discipline to be derived from studying a language (Mackey, 1965, p. 323).

The objectives that are purely linguistic in nature will necessarily reflect some sort of language analysis because the very fact of setting out to teach a foreign language to students involves the breaking down and identification of the elements to be taught. Some description of language is always the basis for the analysis of language teaching (Mackey, 1965, p. 36).

In formulating a syllabus, the course designer takes his list of items and terminology from the linguist, for it is the linguist who provides the inventory in the form of a description of the language (Johnson, 1982, p. 33). The course designer organizes and selects the items he wishes to use. What is taught in the classroom will be directly

affected by the language description on which the syllabus is based.

The language description may vary in many ways.

Since language is a human activity, different ideas about what human activity involves produce different notions of what language is (Mackey, 1965, p. 5). Most linguists are interested in how language works and any one theory will depend on what is observed and how it is observed. Most descriptions of language will differ in the linguistic levels described, in the units used to describe them, in the direction or order in which the units and levels are treated and in the material on which the description is based (Mackey, 1965, p. 36).

Syllabus design in 1982

Keith Johnson of the University of Reading describes recent tendencies in syllabus design in a 1979 article.

It is now over two years since Wilkins' original proposals for functional syllabus design were made available in accessible form. Since that time the ideas have received widespread attention, to the extent that today course designers, examining boards and others whose decisions are likely to affect language teaching programs in crucial ways are already considering adoption of such syllabus designs... The idea has in short "caught on". (Johnson, 1977, p. 668)

Johnson is referring to his colleague D. A. Wilkins of the

University of Reading whose book Notional syllabuses appeared in 1976.

Wilkins gathered together all his ideas on syllabus design, many of which had first appeared in 1973 under the title The linguistic and situational content of the common core in a unit/credit system, published by the Council of Europe. These ideas were Wilkins' response to a particular problem on which the Council of Europe had been working. The Council had wanted to develop a suitable system for teaching all the languages used by the member countries. They had wanted a flexible framework within which it would be possible to cater to the average adult European wishing to learn any of a number of languages for any of a number of reasons (Johnson, 1982, p. 42). They brought together a team of experts for the purpose of designing and implementing this project. D. A. Wilkins was part of this team and his particular task was "to develop a system of categories by which it would be possible to specify the communicative needs" of any one of these learners (Johnson, 1982, p. 34). Wilkins first determines what kinds of meaning are necessary to meet the communicative needs of a learner, and in the first part of his book Notional syllabuses he distinguishes three types of meaning that can be conveyed in the uttering of a sentence (Wilkins, 1976, p. 21). Each of these three types of meaning constitutes a category by which one can specify the communicative needs of a learner. The first kind of meaning is called the ideational meaning of a sentence and is the type of meaning that is expressed through grammatical systems in different languages (Wilkins, p. 21). It is through this kind of meaning that we express our

"perceptions of events, processes, states and abstractions". In order to incorporate this kind of meaning in a syllabus, Wilkins suggests that it be dealt with under the heading semantico-grammatical categories. The second kind of meaning that can be conveyed by an utterance is the speaker's attitude to what he is saying. The speaker may be sure of what he is saying, he may be stating an objective truth or he may indicate that what he is saying is subject to some contingency. This kind of meaning is called the modal meaning and is incorporated in a syllabus under the heading modality.

The third kind of meaning conveyed by an utterance is a matter of the function of the utterance as a whole in the larger context in which it occurs. The speaker is putting the utterance to a specific purpose or use. This kind of meaning is called the communicative meaning and is incorporated in a syllabus under the heading categories of communicative function.

The initial impetus for this effort to reorganize a language teaching syllabus came from Wilkin's firm conviction that foreign language courses were not teaching students how to do anything through language. As an example of what he means by doing something, Wilkins says that most courses will teach the student how to report and describe as in the sentence "The manager ordered the drunk out of the restaurant" but that they don't teach the student how to do it, in this case, "Get out of here" (Wilkins, 1976, p. 41). Communicative function is the term he uses to designate what we do through language and he feels that these communicative functions should be taught to the

students. A communicative meaning is the type of meaning conveyed by the utterance as a whole. An example of a category of communicative function and its exponents would be the category of Suasion which includes utterances designed to influence others. The category includes such verbs as persuade, suggest, advise, recommend, advocate, exhort, beg, urge, propose. Examples of the way this particular function is expressed would be:

- a) Let's go to the zoo
- b) We could go to the zoo
- c) Shall we go to the zoo
- d) I suggest a visit to the zoo
- e) I suggest that we go to the zoo (Johnson, p. 36, 1982).

According to Johnson (1982, p. 50) it has become quite "standard practice to refer to a way in which a function is expressed as that function's exponent and to say that such and such a structure is being used to expound such and such a function".

The ideational meaning of an utterance, incorporated in the syllabus under the heading semantico-grammatical categories, deals with concepts such as duration, frequency, quantity, dimension and location (Johnson, 1982, p. 35). These concepts are divided into five main areas of semantico-grammatical categories. These categories have the following headings: Time, Quantity, Space, Relational meaning and Deixis (Wilkins, 1976).

Each of these concepts has a variety of grammatical features associated with it. The concept of duration for example is associated

grammatically with prepositions such as for, since, and from.

The word notional used in the title of the book is "borrowed from linguistics where grammars based on semantic criteria are commonly called notional grammars" (Wilkins, 1976, p. 18). For Wilkins, a notional syllabus will contain both the semantico-grammatical and communicative function categories. However, there has been some confusion about the name to be given to this type of syllabus. The confusion stems from the fact that many people refer to the semantico-grammatical categories as notions and to the categories of communicative functions as functions. In order to avoid this confusion many authors refer to the type of syllabus that uses notions and functions as its starting point as notional-functional, semantic or communicative.

Wilkins organizes the linguistic system into these two major categories of notions (semantico-grammatical categories) and functions (categories of communicative functions). The book, while not exhaustive according to Wilkins, provides an inventory of categories that would constitute a tool in the construction of a syllabus for language teaching. It is not in itself a syllabus. Any one syllabus would involve a process of selection and ordering from this larger inventory (Wilkins, 1976, p. 24). One of the first applications of Wilkins categories was made by Van Ek in the The threshold level published by the Council of Europe in 1975.

On what description of language are Wilkins' proposals for syllabus design based

We mentioned above that the course designer normally gets his linguistic categories from the linguist. Wilkins is proposing categories of language that will be drawn upon for syllabus design. They constitute a sort of pre-syllabus from which one would draw to compile a syllabus for a particular type of learner (Lee, 1977, p. 269). On what theory or description of language are the categories contained in the book Notional syllabuses based? According to Wilkins, they are not based on any description of language.

When it comes to attempting to produce a notional syllabus, there is no available semantic (notional) framework in terms of which it can be produced. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 20)

Wilkins' proposals for syllabus design and his categories cannot be traced to any particular theory about language or any particular description of language.

Nevertheless, the fact that syllabus makers usually get their linguistic categories from the linguist and that the terminology used by D. A. Wilkins for his proposals has much in common with the terminology used by M. A. K. Halliday, the leading theoretician of the functional or systemic school of linguistics, has led many writers in the field to assume that Wilkins' proposals for syllabus design reflect

and respect this particular linguistic model.

Many authors concerned with the notional-functional approach to syllabus design assume that there is a general consistency or harmony of viewpoint between a functional approach to language description as represented by the Halliday model and the type of notional-functional syllabus design proposed by D.A. Wilkins in his book Notional syllabuses. One finds many references to Halliday in the literature.

In his new book Communicative syllabus design and methodology (1982) Keith Johnson cites Halliday as the seminal thinker in the communicative approach to language teaching. In the short annotated bibliography, Johnson refers readers who would like more background information to the work of M. A. K. Halliday.

The work of Halliday has been referred to several times in the present collection, and his view of language has certainly influenced recent approaches to language teaching. (Johnson, 1982, p. 216)

Henri Besse in his article Enseigner la compétence de communication (1980) says that the concept of function as used in communicative function and the communicative approach to language teaching owes much to M. A. K. Halliday, who was the first theoretician to approach the description of language from the outside according to how it is used in social intercourse rather than from the inside as other linguists have done, who base their description on

morphological and syntactic regularities (1980, p. 42). Besse also assumes that Halliday's work is the theoretical source from which Wilkins derived his categories for syllabus design. ... le notional syllabus, assez directement inspiré des hypothèses fonctionnelles de M. A. K. Halliday..." (1980, p. 153).

In the introduction to their book A Communicative grammar of English Leech and Svartvik explain how their approach to the teaching of grammar links up with other work in the field.

Mention must be made of ... the 'functional' approach to language as exemplified in M. A. K. Halliday's Explorations in the Functions of Language. A parallel development in language teaching method has been the orientation towards communicative teaching in the work of D. A. Wilkins and others. (1975, p. 14)

In her article The Functional approach to curriculum design, Yalden discusses the foundations for this type of approach as found in the work of D. A. Wilkins. In the same article, she quotes M. A. K. Halliday in order to "sum up current thinking" in the field (1979, p. 21).

New approaches to language teaching are allegedly not unusual in the profession. Banners and bandwagons come and go. In the present work it is not our intention to evaluate the contribution of Notional syllabuses to language teaching methodology or to establish the merits or problems engendered by this approach to syllabus design.

The major focus of this work is to illustrate that D. A. Wilkins and M. A. K. Halliday do not share a common set of categories. The proposals contained in Notional syllabuses do not reflect the theoretical categories of the systemic model for language description as represented by the work of M. A. K. Halliday. As Wilkins himself states, they are not based on any framework for language description.

Although D. A. Wilkins uses much of Halliday's terminology in his proposals, writers in the field of functional syllabus design are incorrect in assuming that there is a consistency or harmony of viewpoint between a functional approach to the description of language as represented by the Halliday model and the type of syllabus design proposed by D.A. Wilkins in his book Notional syllabuses.

Descriptions of language

A description of language may focus on one particular area or seek relationships among several areas. The focus chosen for study and elucidation will depend on how the linguist perceives the nature of language and what he perceives to be the part of language that lends itself to linguistic description. Such a description may focus on anything from a single sequence of sounds to everything that can be talked about (Mackey, 1965, p. 8).

For systemicists language is an essentially human activity and must not exclude the mind, thoughts and ideas of those who use it, nor the situations in which language is used (Mackey, 1965, p. 17).

Language is a form of human semiotic and is related to the culture in which it operates. Because culture is too large an area to be directly related to language, the conceptual category that represents the culture is the situation. The situation in which language occurs is seen as one instance of a generalized social context or situation type (Gregory, 1980). The situation which is extra-linguistic is related to the form language takes through what systemicists call the functional components of the semantics.

For systemicists, a language groups and abstracts elements of situation which have a constant relationship with its vocabulary and grammar. It is the conceptual categories proposed in the semantic stratum of the systemic model that allow the particular elements of situation to be accounted for or coded in language. The importance that the systemic model attaches to the semantic stratum is, according to Berry, the most noteworthy difference between the systemic model and other models of language description (1975, p. 50). Systemicists are concerned with relationships: the relationship between the situation and the semantics and the relationship between the semantics and the form language takes. Let us first focus on the relationship between the extra-linguistic situation and the semantics. A particular situation-type can be regarded as a semiotic structure represented as a complex of three extra-linguistic dimensions: the on-going social activity, the status and role relationships involved, and the rhetorical channel used in the communication (Gregory, 1980, p. 76). These three dimensions are called respectively, the field, the tenor and the mode of the situation. They

are a conceptual framework for representing the social meanings. These three dimensions of situation can be systematically related to the functional components of the semantics. The functional components of the semantics are the categories of the model that allow language to encode the elements of field, tenor and mode. Three metafunctions make up the semantic stratum of the model. These are the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction and the textual metafunction. These three metafunctions, although not isomorphic with the semiotic components of situation, realize in language the field, tenor and mode of the situation.

The metafunctions are the area of the semantics that interface with situation and realize linguistically the extra-linguistic components of situation. Each of the metafunctions is made up of networks of systems that are organized to account for all options within each particular area of meaning. A system is paradigmatic. It is a set of options with conditions of entry.

There is also a very complex relationship between the metafunctions of the semantics and the form language takes. The metafunctions interface with form through the lexicogrammar. This is a "linguistic device for hooking up choices from semantic systems and realizing them in a unified structural form" (Halliday, 1973, p. 42).

Systemic grammar recognizes that meaning is of prime importance to the way language is structured.... It deals with system networks describing the way different features interact and depend on each other. The primary emphasis is on analyzing the limited and highly structured sets of choices which are made in producing a sentence or constituent. (Winograd, 1976, p. 16)

According to Winograd, the essential question that systemicists address is "How is language organized to convey meaning?" and not "How are syntactic structures organized when viewed in isolation".

Systemic grammar pays more attention to the way language is organized into units, each of which has a special role in conveying meaning. In English, we can distinguish three basic ranks of units, the clause, the group and the word.

The top rank is the clause. It can express relationships and events involving time, place and manner. Its structure indicates what parts of the sentence the speaker wants to emphasize and can express various kinds of focus of attention and emotion. It determines the purpose of an utterance - whether it is a question, command, or statement - and is the basic unit which can stand alone. (Winograd, 1976, p. 18)

Halliday's developing theory is one in which social and linguistic, external and internal aspects of language behaviour are intimately and mutually related and descriptively tied together through the concept of networks of choice: semantic networks, lexico-grammatical networks and phonological networks. (Gregory, 1980, p. 77)

Summary of Chapter I

Language teaching syllabuses are usually based on or reflect a particular description of language and this description is provided by the linguist. These descriptions will vary depending on the linguists' view of the nature of language.

A new approach to syllabus design has become widely accepted and this approach produces a syllabus that can be called notional, semantic, notional-functional, or communicative in its design. D.A. Wilkins of the University of Reading is the acknowledged source for this type of approach to syllabus design. Many writers in the field of applied linguistics assume that this approach to syllabus design reflects the theoretical categories of M. A. K. Halliday's model for language description.

The school of systemic linguistics takes system as its main conceptual descriptive category and hence the label systemic. However, the systemic school is often referred to as the functional school of linguistics and the theory is called functional because of its

philosophical view of the origins and nature of human language. This particular view will be examined more closely in chapter II.

Both authors use many of the same terms as part of their descriptive process and this may have led many authors to assume that D. A. Wilkins' categories for syllabus design reflect the functional model for language description proposed by M. A. K. Halliday .

Although it is not unusual for linguists to give personal meanings to words in common use, it can cause great confusion because these terms often conceal significant differences in what is being said about language (Mackey, 1965, p. 31-32).

CHAPTER II

SYSTEMIC LINGUISTICS

In chapter II, we look at the theory of functional grammar as a whole. We try to explain what a functional perspective on language entails and how the framework for language description as elaborated by M. A. K. Halliday reflects this particular approach.

Halliday is interested in how language is organized to convey meaning (Winograd, 1972, p. 16) and he assumes a functional perspective on language in his approach to this problem.

It is difficult to grasp the exact meaning Halliday attributes to the term functional given the numerous synonyms the word suggests. When we refer to something as functional, we usually mean it is practical, useful or operational and when we inquire about the function of an object, for example, we usually want to know what the object does or what it can be used for.

Functional theories of language originally came from outside linguistics (Halliday, 1981, p. 33). They came from anthropologists and ethnologists for whom research into the function of language was but one aspect of a wider study of remote societies. For these researchers the term functional referred to the role of a particular utterance in a particular situation. They were inquiring into the communicative purpose of a given utterance within a particular society. This interest in the function or functions of language was part of an overall theoretical

position that analysed the interdependence of patterns and institutions within a particular social system in order to determine how they interacted in sustaining the system (Webster's, 1971, p. 921). These anthropologists were interested in the role of language in society. They were not interested in, nor did they have much to say about, the linguistic system itself (Halliday, 1981, p. 33).

Whatever the divergence of opinions was amongst these early researchers, one area of consensus does emerge regarding language. They all discerned the essential difference that exists between language as a means of doing and language as a means of thinking. They established these two categories as the fundamental opposition in their classificatory division of the functions of language in society (Halliday, 1981, p. 34).

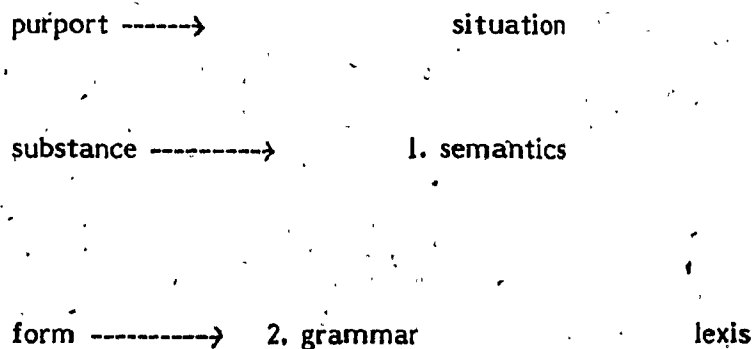
As a linguist, Halliday adopted the functional approach to language because he felt that not only were these two basic functions of language the general categories of what human beings do with language, but that these functions are built into language as the fundamental organizing principle of the linguistic system itself (Halliday, 1981, p. 33). According to Halliday, the social functioning of language is reflected in the internal organization of language. This conviction is the mainstay of his theory and the principal difference between the anthropological and the linguistic interpretation of the functions of language. For Halliday as a linguist, the two main functions of language, i.e., language as a means of doing and language as a means of thinking, are also ascribed to the language itself and not, as for

these early anthropologists, ascribed only to the role of utterances in different situations (Halliday, 1976, p.27). These early anthropologists were not focusing on the linguistic system per se.

For M. A. K. Halliday then, a functional approach to language means establishing the functions of language in society and then describing how the linguistic system itself reflects these functions. If human beings act and reflect on their environment through language, the linguistic system itself must be organized in such a manner as to permit them to take on some role in interpersonal situations as well as to allow them to make reference to the categories of their experience. "Functionalism is seen as a perspective for describing language both externally as a social and cultural phenomenon and internally as a formal system" (Gregory, 1980, p. 74).

Levels of language

Halliday postulates a linguistic system comprised of three levels or strata (Halliday, 1977, p. 176), the semantic level, the lexicogrammatical level and the phonological level.



substance -----> 3. phonology

purport -----> sound

(Hudson, 1971, p. 12)

In this chapter we discuss the relations between the extra-linguistic element of situation and the linguistic level of semantics and, to a lesser extent, the relations between the semantic and the lexicogrammatical levels of language. We first briefly describe how the various levels fit together.

The extra-linguistic elements of situation generate the interpersonal and ideational metafunctions of language. In any speech situation one must be able to take on some interpersonal role in order to negotiate intersubjective reality. One must be able to make reference to the categories of one's experience. Halliday calls these particular aspects of the situation a behavioural potential that exists outside language and constitutes a higher level semiotic (Halliday, 1974, p. 96). Language is one kind of social behaviour and a form of human semiotic (Halliday, 1974, p. 98).

It is at the semantic level of the linguistic system that this behavioural potential is realized. Realization is the name of a relation between categories of different kinds, where one category is a condition

for the presence of the other (Hudson, 1971, p. 79). In this instance, the semantic systems of language are derived from the behavioural functions of language. This semantic level is made up of three components or metafunctions. The first two come from outside language, from the behavioural potential of the situation. They are the ideational component, which is language as a means of thinking, and the interpersonal component, which is language as a means of doing or acting through a listener.

In order, however, to fulfill these roles language has to have a third metafunction which enables it to link up with the situation in a meaningful way. There must be a relevance function, a system which allows a text or an utterance to cohere with its environment, both the non-linguistic environment and that part of the environment which consists of what has been said before (Halliday, 1981, p. 34).

This third component is the contextualizing function, called the textual function. This component is purely linguistic. It makes language operational "but has no transcendent function outside language" (Halliday, 1981, p. 35).

The textual function

This third component of the semantics is the contextualizing function (the textual function). This function allows the speaker to organize his discourse most appropriately for the situation in which it will figure. The textual function is an enabling function vis-à-vis the other two: it is only through the encoding of the two other components

as text that they become operational (Halliday, 1977, p. 202). It is through the semantic options of the textual component that language comes to be relevant to its environment. The textual component is made up of thematic systems, information distribution systems, and focus systems.

For example, if in the sentence

No one had known where the entrance to the cave was situated.

The one who discovered the cave was John.

we replace the underlined clause by the sentence "What John discovered was the 'cave'", it doesn't make sense in the context of the first sentence. It has the same transitivity choices from the ideational function - John - discovers - cave but as information, in the context of what comes before, it is nonsensical (Halliday, 1968, p. 210).

The following is an example of a passage in which only the thematic structure has been scrambled. Everything else is well formed.

Now comes the President here. It's the window he's stepping through to wave to the crowd. On his victory his opponent congratulates him. What they are shaking now is hands. A speech is going to be made by him. 'Gentlemen and Ladies. That you are confident in me honours me. I shall, hereby pledge I, turn this country into a place, in which what

people do safely will be live, and the ones who grow up happily will be able to be their children. (Halliday, 1977, p. 193)

According to Halliday, the patterns used to distort this passage thematically are not optional stylistic variants; they are an integral part of the meaning of language. In this particular passage they are simply unmotivated choices that don't make sense in the environment.

Texture is not something that is achieved by superimposing an appropriate text form on a pre-existing ideational content. The textual component is a component of meaning on the same level as the ideational and interpersonal components of the semantics (Halliday, 1977, p. 193).

The theme systems, for example, are based on the unmarked/ marked distinction. The terms of the theme systems are choices between different ways of arranging the basic ingredients of a message in order of prominence. The meeting takes place on Tuesday has chosen unmarked or usual distribution. It's on Tuesday that the meeting takes place has chosen predicated or marked theme that gives greater prominence to Tuesday (Berry, 1975, p. 163).

The speaker has many options open to him in his organization of the message. His choice of options will also depend on the form of the interaction between himself and the listener/reader. Certain rhetorical modes such as the expository, didactic, persuasive or descriptive may influence his choices. In addition, the medium chosen for the interaction

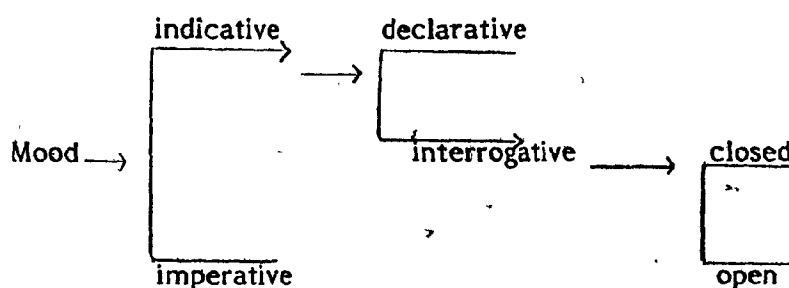
will influence his decisions.

For Halliday, the key concept is the one of realization. The behavioural potential of language is realized linguistically by the semantic level, or as Halliday refers to it, the meaning potential of language. This meaning potential embodied in the various semantic components is organized into systems and system networks (Halliday, 1974, p. 86). In order to understand how system networks constitute the meaning potential of language it is necessary to grasp the fact that (for Halliday), in order to make sense of what the speaker actually says, we must be able to interpret it against the background of what he can say. What the speaker can say could be defined as what is available for him to say within any given language. The background to what the speaker does is what he could do. It is a potential which is objective, not a competence, which is subjective (Gregory, 1980, p. 79). This meaning potential, or what the speaker can say, is represented in system networks and the entire meaning potential of language is contained within the totality of systems.

Each component of the semantic level, the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual, is comprised of a finite number of systems and system networks. The underlying organization of a system is paradigmatic: a range of alternatives one of which must be chosen at each point in the system until all options are exhausted.

For example, the interpersonal component has a Mood system. The entry condition for choice within the mood system is the level of clause because Mood is not available except at the level of main

clause. Part of the Mood system looks like this:



Each system in this network is finite, and a choice must be made at each point in the network until there are no more options available. Two options are available in the first system. If indicative is chosen then one must go on to choose between declarative and interrogative; if interrogative is chosen then one must go on to choose between closed interrogative, i.e., (Do you like coffee?) and open interrogative, i.e., (What is your favourite drink?) There is a logical dependence between systems based on the choices made in the preceding system.

These systems provide the terms for language description. A path through the system provides the features selected from the terms available in the system. For example, a path through the Mood systems could provide the following features: indicative, interrogative, open interrogative. Once all the features have been selected from all the relevant systems the meaning potential for the clause is realized. All possible meaning is accounted for in terms of features. These features

are themselves realized by the lexico-grammatical level of language. Just as the meaning potential or semantic level realizes the extra-linguistic behavioural level of language, so it is on the lexicogrammatical level that one realizes the choices made in the meaning potential or the semantic level of language. A path through the system produces a series of features that are the speaker's actualized potential. He has made his choice from the options available to him. This actualized potential is codified at the lexicogrammatical level through the realization rules. These rules translate the features selected into structures. It is only at this level that we derive the structures that exist in an ordered sequential manner.

The behavioural potential of language contained in the situation

Language as a means of thinking and language as a means of doing constitute the behavioural potential of language present in any situation. These two aspects of the situation rule or activate the components that comprise the semantic level of language. For each component of the semantic level of language Halliday determines the situational factors by which it is activated (Halliday, 1977, p. 200):

The first aspect of any situation is the social action that is occurring or the subject matter that is under discussion. This element of situation activates the ideational function of language because it is necessary to make reference to the categories of one's experience and identify the process and participant roles associated with the process. These choices are determined by the nature of the activity. The

ideational function of language is comprised of systems that permit the speaker to identify what is going on and how it is going on. The meaning potential of the ideational component is manifested through a set of options available in the systems that make up the transitivity network. Terms such as agent, process and goal are present in the transitivity network because they are categories of our experience and reflect our understanding of the external world. They are motivated terms because if we find that the grammar of English embodies a structural element expressing the external causer of a process, it is reasonable to label it agent. This derives from the social function that language serves in expressing our experiences of processes and the participants in them (Halliday, 1976, p. 21).

The second aspect of situation that activates a component of the semantic level is the role structure. This is the cluster of socially meaningful relationships in the verbal exchange. They include both permanent attributes of the speakers and hearer (or readers) as well as the role relationships that are specific to the situation itself. These latter come into being as a result of or through the verbal exchange. The role structure, or tenor, activates the meaning potential inherent in the interpersonal function of language. This is the function in the linguistic system that allows the speaker to take on some role in the interpersonal situation. This interpersonal function allows roles to come into being only in and through language. Such discourse roles as questioner, informer, responder, doubter, and contradictor are available through the networks of the interpersonal function. They are comprised

of systems that permit the speaker to intrude as a personality into the situation. The speaker's selection of discourse role determines his selection of options in the mood system. The speaker selects a particular role in the speech situation for himself and for the hearer. He judges, he assesses the probability of something, he approves or he disapproves. The speaker expresses beliefs, opinions, doubts and personal feeling. He greets someone or takes leave of someone. All these uses of language form an interrelated set of options in a definable area of meaning potential; the interpersonal function of language (Halliday, 1977, p. 203).

Although the textual function of language is a purely linguistic function and depends for its existence on the prior phenomenon of text created by the other two functions, it is activated by the symbolic organization of the situation or the mode. The systems that comprise the textual function permit the speaker to organize his text to suit the situation so that he makes sense in the context. These systems represent the choices available for the structuring of information in the clause. All the systems available within this function are concerned with the internal organization of the discourse or text as an act of communication so that such factors as channel or medium and rhetorical mode influence the choice of options from the terms present in the various systems.

It is crucial to point out that this framework for language description is not a performance model. A linguistic description is not a progressive specification of a set of structures one after the other,

ideational, interpersonal then textual. The system does not first generate a representation of reality, then encode it as a speech act and finally recode it as text. Rather, it embodies all these three types of meaning in simultaneous networks of options, from each of which derive structures that are mapped onto one another in the course of their lexicogrammatical realization (Halliday, 1977, p. 193). Meanings in all functions are generated simultaneously and mapped on to one another. We do not, as Halliday specifies, first decide on a content and then run it through a machine to decide whether to make it a statement or not (Halliday, 1974, p. 97).

There is absolutely no chronological implication in the choices made from terms in systems. These are theoretical stages designed to account for the relationships between different aspects of language (Berry, 1977, p. 47). Each of the three semantic components generates a structure and these structures are mapped on to each other to produce the second level of realization in the lexico-grammar.

According to Halliday (1979) not only does each of the semantic components or metafunctions generate a structure but each one generates a different kind of structural mechanism, each one of which is non-arbitrarily related to the kind of meaning it expresses. The experiential component of the ideational metafunction will tend to generate a structure that has the form of a configuration or constellation of discrete elements each of which makes its own distinctive contribution to the whole.

For example, when the Carpenter says to the Walrus Cut us another slice: the ideational meaning is the representation of a material process, cutting, in which three entities participate, the one who cuts, the thing that is cut, and the one that the thing is cut for; (Halliday, 1979, p.60)

These discrete elements form constituent-like structures which allow one to isolate them and continue to refer to them as discrete entities. However, there is no reason to believe that each particular process will always be encoded as just one particular configuration of elements. At this particular stage of realization there is no reason to represent the experiential component in a linear fashion (1979, p. 64).

The interpersonal metafunction, on the other hand, generates prosodic structures which are not discrete but cumulative and extend over long stretches of discourse (p.79). For example, in Cut us another slice (p.60) the interpersonal meaning is a demand for goods-and-services, "I want you to do something for me," embodied in the selection of the imperative mood, direct, explicit and without any special modulation" (p. 60). In the sentence "I wonder if perhaps it might be measles, might it, do you think?" (p. 66) the speaker has combined an interpersonal meaning of, I consider it possible, together with an invitation to the hearer to confirm the assessment. The modality is strung throughout the clause as a continuous motif. Each one of these aspects of modality could occur by itself but the effect of putting them all together is cumulative. They are not segmental as

in the structure generated by the experiential component. The meaning is distributed like a prosody throughout a continuous stretch of discourse (Halliday, 1979, p. 67).

The interpersonal component contains the systems of features that permit an ongoing intrusion of the speaker into the speech situation. The intonation contour expresses the key, the particular tone of assertion, query, hesitation, doubt, reservation, forcefulness or wonderment that the speaker gives to the proposition or clause. It cannot be associated with a segment (Halliday, 1979, p. 66). It is a melodic line mapped onto the clause, running through from beginning to end. Mood and modality, tone and key, intensity and other attitudinal meanings are typically realized through this kind of prosodic structural pattern.

The textual metafunction generates still another kind of structure from its systems. Choice from these systems organizes discourse into a succession of message units such that each has its own internal texture provided by the two systems of prominence. In the example, Cut us another slice. "the textual meaning is the internal organization of this as a message with the focus on what is demanded (thematic prominence) together with its relation to the preceding text through presuppositions - a slice of something, of which I have already had at least one" (p.60.). Cut has thematic prominence because it is in first position. The emphasis is on the demand for a service. Tonic prominence is the focus of information, it signals the climax of what is new in the message. In this case slice.

In the example, Why did you let the big one get away? (Halliday, 1979, p. 67) why has thematic prominence because it is in first position. The emphasis is on the demand for information. Get away has tonic prominence because it signals what is new in the message. Tonic prominence is not necessarily realized by final position but the speaker often puts what is new at the end of the message. These two systems of prominence are different but both contribute to the texture of the clause. They are what Halliday calls culminative structures because they express the status of elements by assigning them to the boundaries of the clause. The textual component generates structures that are wave-like.

"It is important to stress that when we associate each of these structural types with one of the functional semantic components, we are talking of a tendency not a rule" (1979, p.70). It is also important to point out that, although the functional categories themselves are universals, the structural tendencies described here are for English. They may differ considerably from one language to another.

To summarize then, we have the behavioural potential of language which is realized by the systems present in the meaning potential of language constituted by the semantic metafunctions that are both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated. The ideational metafunction is activated by the field of social process outside language, by what is going on in the situation. Choice from the systems within the experiential component generates a particular type of non-linear, discrete type structure. The interpersonal metafunction is activated by

the tenor of the social relationship of those involved in the exchange. Choice from the systems available within the interpersonal metafunction generates a melodic or prosodic type structure.

The textual metafunction, which is a purely linguistic component of the meaning potential of language, is activated by the mode of discourse and what part the text is playing in the exchange.

Because systemic theory takes the systems and not the structure as the basis of the description of a language, it is able to show how these types of structure function as alternative modes of the realization of systemic options. They are mapped on to each other to form the syntagm which is the output of the lexico-grammatical system.
(Halliday, 1979, p.79)

CHAPTER III

THE IDEATIONAL FUNCTION

Language is organized to convey meaning. One of the areas of meaning potential in language, the ideational, allows us to make reference to our experience of the world so that information about this world can be transmitted between members of a society. The term ideational is used by both D. A. Wilkins and M. A. K. Halliday and is a good example of a technical term crucial to both their theories. In addition, their definitions of this particular area of meaning in language appear to be very similar. This explains, in part, why many writers on syllabus planning have assumed that these two authors share a common set of theoretical categories.

For all human beings, the environment is something to be thought about, researched and understood. According to Halliday, the results of this reflection on the environment are coded directly as the ideational component or function of language/(Halliday, 1981, p. 35). This particular metafunction of language represents the linguistic expression of the speaker's experience of the external world including the inner world of his own consciousness as well as the expression of his emotions and perceptions. The ideational function in Halliday's theory of language provides a conceptual framework for the encoding of experience as it is shared by those participating in any speech situation (Halliday, 1968, p. 209). As was illustrated in chapters I and II of this

work, it is one part of the semantic stratum of the model that mediates between certain non-linguistic elements of situation and the linguistic system. It is part of the first cycle of realization in the encoding of language.

Halliday provides a conceptual framework for the encoding of experience through the categories of the transitivity network. The transitivity network comprises all the systems for classifying experience and it is this network that provides the conceptual categories of the experiential part of the ideational function of language.

In this chapter we try to pinpoint exactly how information is encoded in the transitivity network, why Halliday calls these options transitivity options and at what level of realization this encoding takes place.

Transitivity is the representation in the semantic stratum of language of the processes and participants, both animate and inanimate, as well as the circumstantial elements associated with them that make up the semantics of the real world. The transitivity network reflects the discreteness or the distinctness of the phenomena of our actual experience (Halliday, 1981, p. 35). Consider COW EAT GRASS where cow and grass are the participants and eat is the process. "We know where cow begins and ends, what eating is and is not, which part of reality consists of grass and which part consists of other things" (Halliday, 1981, p. 36). If there were not a basic fit between the discreteness of words and things we should not be able to talk about anything at all.

For Halliday, process is to be understood in a very broad sense: actions, events, physical and mental perceptions and states can be transmitted through verbs. There are different types of processes that involve different types of participants and the transitivity network is set up to account for all the ways that the participants can relate to the processes (Halliday, 1976, p. 159).

This view of transitivity is an extension of a narrower use of the term "transitivity" whereby the word refers simply to the type of relation holding between verbs and objects as in transitive and intransitive verbs. Halliday uses it in a wider sense, so that transitivity refers to the content or factual-notional elements of the English clause in its entirety at an, as yet, abstract semantic level.

Most educated speakers of English will have heard the words transitive and intransitive at some point during their education. Dictionaries use the following criteria to define transitive.

- (a) that there is a 'passing over' of the action from the subject of the sentence to the object of the sentence and that this object is affected by this action.
- (b) that the verb must represent action in some sense.
- (c) that the verb must be followed by a direct object that is expressed.

We could probably assume that most people would recognize some or all of these criteria as pertaining to the word transitive. It is

important to note that dictionary definitions use criteria that differ in nature. The first two criteria mentioned above require a knowledge of real world relationships and the meaning of the words involved whereas the third condition is more closely connected with grammar per se in that it does not necessarily require understanding of the meaning involved.

Dictionary definitions are a reflection of the knowledge contained in traditional grammar. One of the fundamental characteristics of traditional grammar, according to Parisi and Antinucci (1976) is the elaboration of two groups of concepts: grammatical concepts or categories known as the parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc., and logical or relational concepts such as subject, predicate, complement and attribute. These relational concepts derive their meaning from the functional roles played by the various parts of speech (1976, p. 166).

Both these groups of concepts find their origin in the philosophical system of Aristotle (Lyons, 1968, p. 271). Western grammatical theory was developed on the basis of that particular philosophical system. Dictionary definitions underline the fact that there may be a direct object expressed after the verb. This requirement refers to a type of predication in traditional grammar. The term predication derives from a Greek word and means "attributing properties to things" (Lyons, 1968, p. 271). It was assumed that the different modes of predication represented differences in the objective world, the different modes of being. It was assumed in the Aristotelian doctrine that the world was

populated with individual persons, animals and things which were substances and that these substances were either the initiators or the victims (agents or patients) of activities and processes, or were endowed with certain qualities or were situated in particular places at a particular time (Lyons, 1968, p. 339).

Let us examine how a modern English grammar treats the concept of transitivity. According to Quirk and Greenbaum in A University Grammar of English, a sentence may alternatively be seen as being comprised of five units called elements of sentence or clause structure. These elements are Subject (S), Verb (V), Complement (C), Object (O) and Adverbial (A) (1973, p. 12).

There are different types of verbs corresponding to different types of object and complement. The following seven clause types are distinguished in this grammar. (1973, p. 167).

1. S V A

Mary is in the house.

subject	verb: intensive	adverbial
	(copula)	

2. S V C

Mary is kind

subject	verb: intensive	complement
	(copula)	

3. S V O

Somebody caught the ball.

subject	verb: extensive	direct object
	transitive	

4. S V O A

I put the plate on the table.

Subject	verb: extensive	direct object	adverbial
	transitive		

5. S V O C

We have proved him wrong.

subject	verb: extensive	direct object	complement
	transitive		

6. S V O O

She gives me expensive presents.

subject	verb: extensive	indirect	direct object
	transitive	object	
		recipient	

7. S V

The child laughed.

subject verb: extensive:

intransitive

Upon examination we can see that the classification of clause types, according to what Quirk and Greenbaum call the different types of object and complement which follow the verb, resembles the traditional classification of predicates into three types.

One could say that the traditional scholarly grammar of modern English predication reflects the Aristotelian view that substances are either the initiators or victims of activities or are endowed with certain qualities or are situated in particular places at a particular time. The clause types in Quirk & Greenbaum are basically distinguished on the original principles of predication. Intransitive verbs are complete on their own. Transitive verbs are followed by direct objects and intensive or copula verbs are followed by complements or attributes.

Nilsen (1975, p.90) points out that this kind of classification of clause types is strictly determined by the number and type of complements which follow the verb. ~~the~~ major disadvantage of this type of classification, according to Nilsen, is that there is no separate consideration given to the variety of relationships that exist between subjects and direct objects.

This narrow definition of transitivity relegates the entire notion

to the discussion of predication, and predication begins with the verb. A transitive verb with a direct object is only one type of predication amongst others, and consequently it is not what M. A. K. Halliday means when he writes about the ideational function of language as it is manifested through the transitivity network. The transitivity network accounts for all the participants and circumstances in the process, including the participant in subject position.

The most important difference between the two viewpoints is that Halliday's ideational function of language is not situated at the same level of analysis as is predication. Halliday postulates a semantic level that mediates between the external world and the grammar as exemplified in traditional predication. When he describes the transitivity network as the set of options whereby the speaker expresses the whole range of types of processes and participant roles that are recognized in the semantic system of the language, he is describing an abstract level of choice in the language that is, as yet, non-sequential and unordered in time. At this most abstract semantic level, the participants and the processes are not actualized in real language. They are, rather, the raw material selected by the speaker to conceptualize his thoughts. This is the case because any actual instance of language realization at the lexico-grammatical level must take into account choices made in networks present in the other two main functions in language.

This abstract semantic level is not present in traditional grammar. Traditional grammar, based on the Aristotelian viewpoint of substance

and process, saw real language as directly encoding experience of the external world: the types of predicate embody what can be said about the substance or subject of the sentence.

For Halliday, language does other things besides encoding external reality, and these options must be incorporated into the conceptual framework before language is realized in a spoken or written form.

There is, however, a similarity between the two viewpoints on transitivity. This similarity is very probably the reason that Halliday chose the term transitivity network to describe his semantic categories. The similarity lies in the fact that both traditional grammar and Halliday's are concerned with the independent clause in English. The English clause has one finite verb. However, traditional grammar analyzes the actual clause as it is written or spoken. This is a decoding operation. Halliday, on the other hand, describes one part of the meaning potential of the clause at the abstract level of its conception in the mind of the speaker. This is essentially an encoding operation.

Perhaps the following example will illustrate the fundamental difference. Traditional grammar in its classification of clause types would have to deal with a real piece of discourse such as The cow ate the grass, or A cow is eating the grass or The grass is being eaten by the cow. One might analyze the sentence The cow ate the grass in the following manner.

subject: the cow

predicate: ate the grass

verb: ate: transitive followed by a direct object grass

But if, as Halliday proposes, the transitivity network is the representation in language of the processes participants and circumstantial elements that make up the semantics of the real world, then the categories of the transitivity network must reflect our experience of the real world.

The only terms that are present in this conceptual framework are COW, EAT and GRASS. We know that COW is the animate being that is initiating the action. The process in this case is the action of eating. The participant that is affected by this process is the grass that is being eaten. These categories reflect our perception of reality as shared with other members of our society. The transitivity network provides only for the choice of the participants and the process. We cannot know after choices have been made within this functional area whether they will eventually be realized as The cow was probably the one who ate the grass, or The cow might have eaten the grass or It was the cow that ate the grass or Do cows eat grass? etc,. We require all the information from the other functional networks before we can see the shape the sentence will take.

The actual grammatical structure of a clause may be regarded as the means whereby the various components of meaning deriving from the different metafunctions of language are integrated together (Halliday, 1976, p. 29). As we said in chapter II of this work, structure merely realizes systemic choice.

Thus we see that, the specialized use of a technical terminology depends upon the theoretical framework of description that engenders it. If we examine Wilkins' terminology with reference to Halliday's framework, we see that the terms do not refer to similar or identical views of language.

CHAPTER IV.

SYLLABUS DESIGN

Since most writers in the field of syllabus design assume that there is some uniformity of thought in all that calls itself functional, in this chapter we examine Wilkins' book in the light of Halliday's framework for language description and try to determine in what areas they differ and if there are any areas in which they are similar.

The word notional, as we said in chapter I, is "borrowed from linguistics where grammars based on semantic criteria are commonly called notional grammars" (Wilkins, 1976, p. 18). According to John Lyons, notional grammar starts from the assumption that there exist extralingual categories which are congruent with the forms a language takes. For example, the parts of speech were usually defined in notional terms such as "a noun is the name of a person, place or thing" (1968, p. 135).

This choice of a notional orientation for a syllabus is in opposition to what Wilkins describes as "formal grammars where the criteria used in analysis are formal" (1976, p. 18). Wilkins' intention is to draw up a syllabus in which language teaching is organized in terms of the content rather than the form of the language.

In chapter II of his book, Wilkins distinguishes three separate areas of meaning that are necessary components of a notional syllabus. Each of the three components contains categories on which it would be

necessary to draw in putting a notional syllabus into practice. The three components or areas of meaning are given the following names:

1. The ideational, cognitive or propositional meaning;
2. The modal meaning or modality;
3. The communicative function. This is the functional meaning or the social purpose of the utterance (1976, p. 21-22).

For each of these three components or areas of meaning, Wilkins provides an inventory of categories that would constitute a tool in the construction of a syllabus. Any one syllabus would involve a process of selection and ordering from this larger inventory (Wilkins, 1976, p. 24).

As we outlined in chapter I, the initial impetus for this effort to reorganize language syllabuses came from Wilkins' firm conviction that foreign language courses were not teaching students how to do anything through language.

Communicative function is the term he uses to designate what we do through language and he feels that these communicative functions should be taught to the students. For Wilkins, the communicative function is the type of meaning that is conveyed by the utterance as a whole in the larger context in which it occurs (1976, p. 23). This social purpose of the utterance or its functional meaning is outlined in the section devoted to the third component or area of meaning to be included in syllabus construction.

Let us briefly look at the inventories of items that he includes under the three areas of meaning that would constitute the raw

material from which a syllabus designer would draw to produce a syllabus.

Ideational meaning

The first area of meaning is the ideational or cognitive meaning. This component of the syllabus contains the semantico-grammatical categories from which one would select in any syllabus design (1976, p. 21). It is through this component that we express our perceptions of events, processes, states and abstractions and it is this type of meaning that is expressed through grammatical systems in different languages (1976, p. 21). It is because of the very close relationship between semantics and grammar that Wilkins feels that it is most feasible to select the grammatical forms to be taught using semantic criteria (1976, p. 22). Semantico-grammatical categories of the inventory proposed are individual units of meaning that Wilkins calls concepts or notions (1976, p. 24).

These individual units of meaning or concepts are divided into categories. These categories of concepts and notions deal with elements of time, quantity, space, relational meaning, predication, attribution and deixis.

The semantico-grammatical categories of time would include tense systems, adverbials to mark points in time, prepositions and conjunctions to mark duration in time and structures necessary to indicate frequency or repetition in time.

The semantico-grammatical categories of quantity would include

grammatical number for nouns as they relate to divided and undivided references, pre- and post-determiners and quantifiers such as little and few.

The semantico-grammatical categories of space would include prepositions of location such as from, toward, out of and some verbs that express locational concepts.

The semantico-grammatical categories of relational meaning involve analysing sentences according to the logical relations that exist between entities or reified abstractions (nouns) and the expression of relations between them (verbs). These are the kind of relations that express the types of judgement human beings make about the events that are going on around them - who did something, who it happened to. Wilkins mentions five categories of semantic relation that hold between nouns and verbs and are expressed through syntactic relations. These are the roles of agent, initiator, object, beneficiary and instrument.

Wilkins also deals with predication and attribution within this category of relational meaning. "Our perceptions of the world are ... reflected in our predicating attributes and properties of objects" (1976, p. 36). The following examples are given of "predicative" sentences: John is fat and John is a pilot.

The last semantico-grammatical category presented by Wilkins is that of deixis, devices that allow one to "refer an utterance to the context in which it occurs". (p. 36). Wilkins provides examples of anaphoric reference relating to aspects of time, place and person.

As summarized above, these then are the concepts/notions which make up the semantico-grammatical categories and from which a syllabus maker would choose his items. Concepts or notions, according to Wilkins' proposals, are matters of time, quantity, space, relational meaning, predication and attribution as well as deixis.

Modal meaning

The second component or area of meaning that would be contained in a notional syllabus is the modal meaning. Categories of modality constitute the linguistic devices that allow the speaker to express his own attitude to what he is saying (1976, p. 22). A modal sentence is one in which the truth of the predication is subject to some kind of contingency or modification (1976, p. 38). According to Wilkins, there are two distinct types of modality. One involves a scale of certainty and can express the degree of certitude the speakers feels about what he is saying. The second involves a scale of obligation whereby the speaker expresses the degree to which he is committed to what he is saying. Examples given to illustrate the scale of certainty are: It is likely that I shall be able to play; It may be a good programme; He is certain not to be there; and I am sure they will win (1976, p. 39).

Examples given to illustrate the scale of commitment are: I may drop in for a drink; They must pay up by the end of the week; and I need not resign my job (1976, p. 41).

For Wilkins, the difference between describing a commitment (obligation) and imposing it (command) is frequently just a matter of

changing the subject pronouns. He provides the following example: You must be there by six (obligation) and Be there by six (command) (1976, p. 41).

Functional meaning

The third area of meaning or component that would be included in a notional syllabus and from which a syllabus constructor would select items, is the part comprised of communicative functions. This is an essential component because "an account of the internal grammatical relations and therefore of the ideational meaning does not tell us much about the use to which a sentence is being put" (1976, p. 23). For Wilkins, it is extremely important to prepare the students for the process of communication. They must learn how the acts themselves are performed. These categories of communicative functions are organized under various headings that Wilkins describes as ad hoc. For example, he suggests a communicative function called Permission with a sub-category called to seek permission and suggests several linguistic realizations that perform this particular communicative function. For the above example, the following linguistic realizations are provided.

- a) Can I use your telephone?
- b) Could I possibly use your telephone?
- c) If it's all right with you, I'll use your telephone.
- d) You don't mind if I use your your telephone?
- e) Do you object to me using your telephone?

f) Would you permit me to use your telephone?

g) I wonder if I could use your telephone?

(Wilkins, 1976, p. 60).

All these suggestions for the linguistic realization of the sub-category to seek permission are based on introspection because there is no single unambiguous grammatical structure by which a function is realized (1976, p. 42).

Communicative functions are divided into six major categories. They constitute the six kinds of things that one does with language (1976, p. 44).

One judges and evaluates. This first category deals with the expression of assessments and would include sentences with verbs such as: estimate, value, assess, appreciate, judge, pronounce, rule, sentence, award, blame, reprimand, etc.

One attempts to affect the behaviour of others. This second category is called suasion and would include sentences with verbs such as: suggest, advise, recommend, order, warn, caution, etc.

One exchanges information and viewpoints. This third category is called argument and would include sentences in which information is passed on with such verbs as: tell, inform, report, publish, assert, argue and affirm. It would also include sentences in which one agreed or disagreed using verbs such as: confirm, corroborate, endorse, support, etc. It would also include sentences in which a concession is made through verbs such as: concede, grant, admit, yield, etc.

One draws conclusions, makes conditions, compares and contrasts

and explains reasons and purposes. This fourth category is called rational enquiry and exposition and relates to the rational organization of thought and speech. Functions to be included in this category are those of implication, deduction, hypothesis, conclusion, demonstration, consequence, comparison, etc.

One reacts or expresses emotional reactions to events and people. This fifth category called personal emotions involves lexical items that express positive emotions such as: pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction, delight or contentment, etc., as well as negative emotions such as: shock, displeasure, discontent, anger, and indignation, for example.

One expresses certain relationships with persons addressed. This sixth category is called emotional relations and includes largely phatic utterances such as greetings, expressions of sympathy and gratitude or hostility.

These then are the six categories of communicative functions.

All three series of inventories i.e., the semantico-grammatical categories, the categories of modality and the categories of communicative functions are available to the syllabus designer for selection purposes. In chapter II of his book, "Applications of a notional syllabus", Wilkins outlines a possible approach to defining learning units and selecting items from the three inventories provided.

Syllabus design

The first step for the syllabus designer is to define his objectives. These, according to Wilkins, will be derived from an analysis of the

needs of the learner and these needs will be expressed in terms of the types of communication in which the learner will need to engage. Therefore, in a notional syllabus, the underlying principle of ordering is the network of meanings that the learner needs to be able to understand and convey. Since these networks of meanings come from the two major components of a notional syllabus i.e., the semantico-grammatical categories (concepts) and the categories of communicative functions, a syllabus would have to be ordered either according to conceptually defined learning units or according to functionally defined learning units (1976, p. 66).

Functionally defined learning units

The syllabus designer would have to decide which of the various linguistic realizations or grammatical structures for a particular function was appropriate for his course and his learners' needs and proficiency level as well as the exact sociolinguistic or stylistic conditions under which communication takes place. The principle behind using functionally defined learning units in syllabus design is that "the learner is recycled through units with similar denomination", e.g., to seek permission, "but with greater and greater rhetorical range" (1976, p. 59).

Conceptually defined learning units

The second, and according to Wilkins more difficult, approach to ordering learning units in a syllabus would be to use conceptually

defined learning units. These would be units defined using the conceptual content from the semantico-grammatical categories as a base (1976, p. 67). One would have to isolate particular categories of meaning, determine the different forms through which these could be realized and then order these in a syllabus. In this kind of learning unit, one would place more weight on semantic criteria in the selecting and ordering of grammatical forms to be presented to the learner. For example, in an initial language course, there could be a unit devoted to a grammatical category such as transitive sentences "but we would use our semantic insight to ensure that in the first instance at least the grammatical subjects were all agents and not instruments" (Wilkins, 1976, p. 68).

Although in chapter I of his book Wilkins singles out three essential areas of meaning to be drawn upon in syllabus design, in chapter II where he deals with setting up learning units, he does not set up a learning unit based on modality. He says that this is an impossible task because parts of it resemble the functional and parts of it resemble the notional (conceptual) content (1976, p. 66).

The lexical content

The lexical content for a syllabus can be largely derived from an analysis of the topics likely to occur in the language use of a given group. Wilkins suggests themes around which semantically related items can be grouped and from which, in constructing a notional syllabus, an appropriate selection can be made. Topics such as the following are

suggested.

- a) Personal identification
- b) House and Home
- c) Trade, profession, occupation
- d) Free time, entertainment, etc. (1976, p. 77)

Halliday's terminology

The reader will agree that many of the terms used in the Halliday model for language description occur in Wilkins' proposals. There is much that is familiar here. Ideational component, language functions, transitive sentences, agent, instrument, beneficiary, modality are but a few of the technical terms common to the two models. This commonality is most probably the reason that many writers assume a continuity and coherence between systemic linguistics and what Wilkins assembles under the label of a functional approach to language. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

It is my contention that Wilkins' proposals for syllabus design do not in any manner coincide with Halliday's framework for language description and that in all cases they contravene the basic tenets of functional or systemic linguistics as practiced by its leading theoretician M. A. K. Halliday.

The following basic principles of systemic linguistics find no reflection in Wilkins' work.

1. Systemic or functional linguistics is an approach to language description;

2. The proposed framework has a tristratal organization;
3. Actual text or language is perceived as multiple coding;
4. Structure is non-arbitrary and generated by the semantic component of the descriptive framework;
5. The functional view of language is extrinsically and intrinsically motivated and the three metafunctions of the semantic stratum have equal weight and status in the model.

Let us examine Wilkins' proposals in the light of each of the above principles of systemic linguistics.

Systemic linguistics is an approach to language description

Wilkins states that the categories of his notional syllabus are not based on any approach to language.

Whereas in the case of the grammatical syllabus a framework is readily available in the form of one of the many descriptions of the language ... when it comes to attempting to produce a notional syllabus, there is no available semantic (notional) framework in terms of which it can be prepared. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 20)

An approach to language would constitute a "set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language ... it describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view or

a philosophy" (Anthony, 1963, p. 63).

There is no theoretical justification for the categories Wilkins is proposing as essential in syllabus design. His categories do not reflect any coherent, comprehensive view of language.

Anthony defines method, as distinct from approach, as "an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected approach" (1963, p. 65). The problem with Wilkins' book Notional syllabuses is that it does suggest in a large way an overall plan for the presentation of language material but, unfortunately, since this plan is not based on any approach it has no theoretical basis in linguistic description with which it can be cross-checked or correlated.

Functional or systemic linguistics proposes a tristratal framework for the organization of language description.

No mention is made of the metafunctions in Wilkins' work, except in a footnote on page 21 in which he states that "Halliday's three-fold division of 'functions' does not parallel the division into three types of meaning that is proposed here". In functional linguistics, all the meaning potential of language is contained in the semantic stratum of the model. This semantic stratum is composed of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. This abstract semantic level interfaces with the situation and the choices made here are realized at the morphosyntactic level.

For Wilkins, there is no semantic stratum mediating between the

external world and its expression in the grammar or syntax of language. Wilkins uses Halliday's definition of the ideational component with which we "express our perceptions of events, processes, states and abstractions" (1976, p. 21). However, for Wilkins, the ideational meaning is an account of the internal grammatical relations of a sentence as they occur in a real chain of discourse. For Halliday, the systems of the transitivity network make up the ideational component. A path through the system provides us with the thesis of the clause at this abstract semantic level. It is an unactualized area of meaning potential. This non-sequential systemic choice of features is then accounted for in the sentence structure by application of the realization rules. There is no semantic stratum in Wilkins' proposals. He applies notional criteria directly to the lexico-grammar. This is evident when we examine his proposed semantico-grammatical categories that are the content of his ideational component.

Wilkins suggests a conceptually defined learning unit devoted to the category of transitive sentences (1976, p. 68). He suggests that we use our semantic insight to ensure that in an introductory course the grammatical subjects all be agents and not, say, instruments or benefactives. An agent, according to Wilkins' definition is "the usually animate entity carrying out the action represented by the verb" (1976, p. 35). The following example is given to illustrate his point.

John drank the wine.

If we examine the following examples which also have an agent, according to Wilkins' definition, in subject position, it is impossible to

determine in what manner making all the grammatical subjects agents has simplified the task for the learner.

John considered the matter.

John kicked the ball.

John saw Mary.

What in effect is one to tell the student about transitive sentences? That the results of the action pass over from the agent to the goal or from the subject to the object. It is quite obvious that Mary is not affected by John seeing her in the same way that the ball is affected by being kicked, the matter affected by John considering it or the wine affected by being drunk. In fact, this conceptually defined learning unit is based on the purely formal criteria for transitive sentences. The relationship between the participants is different for each of the four above examples and this fact reflects the old problem of applying notional (semantic) criteria to structures.

Wilkins' semantico-grammatical categories are prestructuralist notional-grammatical categories (Martinet, 1979).

As John Lyons so aptly put it:

There is no need to emphasize the inappropriateness of the notional definition of transitivity in respect of many English sentences ... hit, in I hit you is syntactically a transitive verb, and is often chosen as an example because the action referred to may plausibly be said to 'pass across' via my fist to you, but hear in I hear you is involved in exactly the

same syntactic relations with the two pronouns, and is regarded as a transitive verb though ... the action ... is the other way round. (Lyons, 1968, p. 350)

Wilkins is proposing conceptually defined units of meaning that were rejected by Jespersen because of the obvious problems of applying notional definitions to syntactic structures.

The many notional or logical relations between verbs and their objects are simply so numerous that they defy any attempt at analysis or classification. (1969, p. 229)

Linguists had already concluded a long time ago that in dealing with semantics, nothing but advantage could be derived from the methodological separation of semantics and grammar (Lyons, 1968, p. 135).

M. A. K. Halliday has proposed a model of language description in which these two areas are separated methodologically yet linked through the interlevels of realization. The great contribution of Halliday's tristratal linguistic framework is that it reflects the insights expressed by traditional grammarians and provides a specific framework for them. In the ideational component of Halliday's model one can identify the different ways in which the participants, animate or inanimate, interact with the process. The descriptive categories of the transitivity network provide the necessary distance from the

grammatical categories of subject and object. Because Wilkins has neglected the semantic component as described by Halliday, he finds himself obliged to make grammatical forms fit notional definitions. In his discussion of transitive sentences, Wilkins goes on to say:

Without further differentiation the notion agent would also have to be taken to include the grammatical subject in the (...) sentence: A tile broke the window. (1976, p. 35)

Wilkins has distorted the notional meaning to fit the structure. This distortion illustrates a problem that all linguists and grammarians have had to face. If every identity or difference of grammatical structure must be matched with some corresponding identity or difference of meaning, either the grammatical description or the notional-semantic description will be distorted (Lyons, 1968, p. 135).

There is no isomorphism between semantics and morpho-syntax. This fact is the reason that Halliday has postulated the different strata of language and the concept of realization. For Wilkins, semantico-grammatical categories express conceptual meaning and conceptual meaning is defined as the meaning relations expressed by the forms within the sentence (1976, p. 24).

It is because of the close relationship between semantics and grammar, that it is feasible to approach decisions about grammatical forms to be taught through semantics. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 22)

This statement is quite irresponsible and naive in the light of the available knowledge on which Wilkins had to draw. According to Chomsky:

Certain assumptions ... are common to all linguistic theory, namely that between verbs and noun phrases there are such relations as agent, instrument and goal ... it is very important to discover how the categories recognized by everyone (under their different names) are to be integrated into a general theory and to refine and elaborate these categories. (1979, pp. 154-155)

Let us examine another example of Wilkins' semantico-grammatical categories. Under Relational meaning there is a category called Predication and attribution which is described in the following manner. "Our perceptions of the world are further reflected in our predicating attributes and properties of objects" (1976, p. 36). The following examples are provided:

- a) John is fat
- b) John is my wife's brother
- c) John is a pilot

As we saw in chapter III of this work, the term predication derives from a Greek word and means attributing properties to things (Lyons, 1968, p. 271). This is the traditional grammarian's point of view based on the Aristotelian thesis of the world as substance and process

encoded directly through language. The above description of predication and attribution is almost identical to John Lyons' explanation of the basis of traditional grammar.

In Aristotelian philosophy the categories were the different ways, or modes, in which predications could be made of things; and it was assumed that the different modes of predication represented differences in the objective world, the different modes of being ... It was assumed by Aristotle ... that the structure of language reflected the structure of the world ... the categories of 'being,' 'signifying' and 'understanding' were congruent with one another; and the congruence of the three sets of categories was held to justify the intimate and indissoluble association of philosophy, grammar and logic. (1968, p. 271)

Wilkins' proposals for the ideational area of meaning and conceptually defined learning units takes us right back to traditional grammar. His categories of attribution are exactly the same as those proposed by Quirk and Greenbaum outlined in chapter III of this work. This, as we said at the time, is a reflection of the original view that there were three basic types of predication that translated into language the three ways substances and processes could interrelate in the external world.

In the above discussion, we have been concerned with showing that

the semantico-grammatical categories of Wilkins' ideational component do not reflect the tristratal division of language proposed in the Halliday model. Since there is no semantic stratum to Wilkins' proposals, they cannot reflect the transitivity options of Halliday's ideational metafunction.

The area of meaning referred to as Communicative function does not reflect this essential tristratal division of language either.

For Wilkins, a communicative function is the meaning of an utterance as a whole in the larger context in which it occurs (1976, p. 22). It is the social purpose of the utterance. This may be one of the meanings attributed to the word function and we agree with Martinet who states that

The polysemy of 'function' is, after all, no worse than that of many terms which have been used without serious drawbacks. Context will as a rule make clear what sort of function we have in mind. (1979, p. 143)

Wilkins is quite clear about the sort of function he has in mind. It is the social purpose of the utterance (1976, p. 23). It is function seen from an extrinsic, ethnographic point of view recognized by Halliday and all functionalists.

Functional theories of language come from outside linguistics. According to such a theory, any piece of text (discourse) could be assigned a particular function, in the sense that it was oriented exclusively or ... predominantly toward some communicative purpose. (Halliday, 1981, p. 33)

However, as Halliday points out, this is not the essential point for linguists or those interested in language per se.

The interest of such functional schemata for the linguist is that the functions arrived at are not in fact simply functions of the text. If they were, they would be of limited concern; but they are more than this ... they are functions that are built into language as the fundamental organizing principle of the linguistic system. (1981, p. 33)

Wilkins' approach is not a linguistic approach to the concept of function. He has simply based his categories of communicative function on the original Malinowski-Bühler insights that utterances perform a communicative purpose in a situation. The great effort of Halliday and other functionalists has been to show that these functions are both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated and justified. Nowhere in Wilkins' proposals do we find mention of how language is organized or what systems are available to perform these functions.

For example, Wilkins proposes the following linguistic realizations for the communicative function To seek permission

- a) O.K.?
- b) alright?
- c) Can I use your telephone?
- d) Do you mind if I use your telephone?

and the following linguistic realizations of the category suasion.

- a) Shall we go to the zoo?
- b) Let's go to the zoo.
- c) Why don't we go to the zoo?
- d) You could go to the zoo.

In the Halliday framework, each of these realizations represents simultaneous systemic choice in the three metafunctions and the realizations are different because the same choices have not been made in each example. Wilkins is interested in the social function of language but not in the reflection of this social function in the study of language as system. The whole aspect of metafunction and systemic choice is missing from Wilkins' work, whether it be the ideational, the interpersonal or the textual. The communicative functions as defined and illustrated by Wilkins are, to some extent, sub-categories of what Halliday calls microfunctions or uses of language in his model.

In his book Learning how to mean Halliday traces the development of child language as the infant learns to control the basic microfunctions of language: the instrumental (I want), the regulatory

(do as I tell you), the interactional (me and you), the personal (here I come), the heuristic (tell me why), the imaginative (let's pretend) and the informative (I've got something to tell you) (Gregory, 1980, p. 74).

There is a tendency for the young child during this process to use language for just one function at a time and have only a few items for each function so there is a reasonably direct semantic function - linguistic item relationship. This contrasts with the multitudinous, potentially infinite uses or macrofunctions of the adult speaker who operates simultaneously within language's metafunctions. (Gregory, 1980, p. 75)

For Halliday, all these various uses of language are fused to form a single generalized interpersonal component at the more abstract metafunction level (1976, p. 21). As we tried to illustrate in chapter II of this work, Halliday does not mean that there is no distinction among such uses of language as to approve or disapprove, to express beliefs, opinions, doubts, to ask and answer questions, to express personal feelings, to greet, take leave of, etc. He is saying that in the adult language there is a generalized and integrated interpersonal function that underlies language use, that forms an interrelated set of mood and modality options allowing us to express what we want. It is one metafunction which embodies all use of language to express social and personal relations - all forms of the speaker's intrusion into the speech

situation and the speech act (1976, pp. 21-22).

Wilkins' original insight that language teaching courses often emphasize certain of the microfunctions such as reporting and describing at the expense of others is probably an apt criticism of what is being taught but certainly not of what is available to be taught. The same linguistic framework that handles reporting and describing also handles all the other communicative functions outlined by Wilkins.

Wilkins' theoretical separation of what we do with language as opposed to what we report or describe through language is a dichotomy that does not coincide with any of the systems in Halliday's interpersonal metafunction. All the systems are available in the interpersonal metafunction of Halliday's model. The systems of meaning potential are there to report, to order, to question, etc.

The confusion stems from the fact that Wilkins' categories are extrinsically motivated and based on non-linguistic criteria. They certainly do not reflect the functionalist's approach to language as specified by Gregory.

Functionalism is seen as a perspective for describing language both externally as a social and cultural phenomenon and internally as a formal system. (1980, p. 74)

For functionalists, real or actual, text or discourse is perceived as multiple coding.

As we illustrated in chapter II, an abstract structure is generated by systemic choice in each of the three metafunctions. These abstract structures are mapped on to each other to form the syntagm which is the output of the lexico-grammatical system. In functional linguistics "a single linguistic item is analyzed, not in successive material segments, but according to its different contributions to the message" (Martinet, 1979, p. 143).

• In the clause, Jack denied the accusation, denied contributes to the experiential (ideational) abstract structure as process, to the interpersonal abstract structure as mood carrier and determinant of the functional tenor, and to the textual structure as rheme and carrier of tonic prominence. Any formal item in the syntagm usually realizes several functions from several systems (Berry, 1977, p. 35).

Wilkins, on the other hand, assigns elements of structure to one or another of two possible categories. An element of structure belongs either to the semantico-grammatical conceptual categories or to the communicative function categories. When we order someone to do something or when we deny something, order, and deny belong to the category of communicative function and something belongs to the semantico-grammatical categories of conceptual ideational meaning. "The something (here the conceptual meaning) is what the grammar of

the language in conjunction with the lexicon expresses" (Wilkins, 1976, p. 67).

Wilkins isolates elements of structure. They belong to either the conceptual area of meaning or the communicative-function area of meaning. This kind of distinction is impossible within the Halliday model.

A clause in English is a realization of meaning potential derived from the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. It embodies all these components at the same time. But this is not done in a discrete, segmental fashion such that we can identify one bit of the clause as expressing one function and another bit as expressing another ... the clause as a whole expresses all functions, through the total set of its structural and lexical resources. (Halliday, 1976, p. 24)

The failure to account for language as multiple coding leads Wilkins to define his learning units either through his semantico-grammatical categories or through his communicative function categories, thereby losing one of the major points of the functional model of linguistics. This is also one of the reasons that in chapter III of his book, "Applications of a notional syllabus," he finds himself unable to create a learning unit based on Modality.

There is no explicit discussion here of the modal content, parts of which resemble the functional and parts of which resemble the notional content. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 66)

In his original division of the kinds of meaning carried by language, Wilkins distinguishes modal meaning or modality along with ideational meaning and (communicative) functional meaning. He then finds it impossible to set up learning units based on modality. This is a direct consequence of basing his areas of meaning on a vague and general approach to language. Modality as an area of meaning potential is not situated on the same level as the metafunctions in Halliday's model. Modality involves systems of choice that are only open once the speaker has selected indicative in the mood system of the interpersonal metafunction. There are no modality choices open for the imperative mood (Halliday, 1976, p. 193).

It is not surprising that Wilkins finds it impossible to set up learning units based on modality. What is puzzling is why he did not revise his categories of meaning in the light of this fact. Here is just one more example of the consequences of not having a set of correlative assumptions regarding the nature of language on which to base one's proposals. There is no common thread linking Wilkins' three categories of meaning. To Wilkins the ideational component is only syntax to which one applies notional criteria.

Structure is non-arbitrary and generated by the semantic component of of the descriptive framework: the lexico-grammar is the output of systemic choice.

This principle is the third important aspect of Halliday's framework that has not been considered or incorporated by Wilkins in his proposals. In the systemic model, grammatical structure reflects systemic choice in the metafunctions and is non-arbitrary. As we tried to show in chapter II, the relationship is one of realization. Each of the semantic components generates a different kind of structural mechanism as its output. These are mapped on to each other through the realization rules so that the actual linguistic output is a configuration representing choices in all systems available at the clause level (Halliday, 1979). The features selected from the systems determine the form of the clause (Berry, 1977, p. 43).

It follows, however, that since Wilkins has proposed no semantic stratum of language that mediates between the situation and the linguistic output, there can be no systems representing the meaning potential of language and, therefore, no systemic choice. If there is no systemic choice, then structure is purely arbitrary.

This is, in fact, the case with Wilkins' proposals. The fact that any particular linguistic realization or structure may reflect a communicative function is based entirely on the intuition of the native speaker. Wilkins states this himself in his introduction to the sixteen forms he suggests for the communicative function to seek permission.

The list below has been arrived at through introspection and although it cannot possibly be said to be exhaustive .. it presents a wide range of utterances containing linguistic features which are habitually associated with the seeking of permission. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 59)

According to Wilkins, many utterances may perform the function of seeking permission. This of course tells us nothing about their internal organization. In the Halliday model, Do you object to me using your telephone? and Will you let me use your telephone if I pay for the call? are manifestations or realizations of very different choices in all three metafunctions. They are not just intact grammatical entities from which a person chooses when he speaks. They have very different abstract structures generated by the three metafunctions.

The functional perspective on language is both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated and the three metafunctions have equal weight and status in the model.

Functionalism is a perspective for describing language externally as a social and cultural phenomenon that fulfills certain functions in society and internally as a formal system. The extrinsically motivated view of language states that any piece of discourse could be assigned a particular function in that it is oriented toward some communicative purpose. This view of language originally came from outside linguistics. As we said in chapter II, the ethnographer Malinowski and the

psychologist Bühler had both distinguished certain functions of language in society. The functional school of linguistics and Halliday in particular took this perspective as a basis for their theory. This external perspective corresponds to Halliday's can do, or behavioural potential of language. Language allows us to do two things. It allows us to reflect on the world around us and exchange information about this world with other members of society and it allows us to interact as human beings with the other members of our society. These are the externally motivated, extrinsic functions of language in society. The functional perspective is also intrinsically motivated because as a linguist Halliday found and described in language itself the direct expression of these external functions of language. The ideational and the interpersonal metafunctions are the reflection in language of the external functions of language. They are the fundamental organizing principle of the linguistic system.

In addition, Halliday describes the textual function in language. However, this function is only intrinsically motivated in that it finds its raison d'être in language, not outside it. It is the metafunction that enables the other two metafunctions to be actualized. It allows text to be created.

There is a definite harmony and cohesiveness to the Halliday model that has been totally obscured by Wilkins, the more so for his having used so much of the functionalist terminology. In the functional model, the insights brought from outside linguistics find their reflection in the manner in which the various constellations of systems within the

metafunctions allow the speaker to interact with others in his society. Elaborate pains have been taken to illustrate how these various levels and components fit together. The description of any part of the system involves the interpretation of all three sets of relations into which it enters, "upward", "downward" and "across". Whatever is said in interpretation of one level has implications not only for that level but also for what is above and what is below (Halliday, 1979, p. 59). This is so because in the functional model, language is a semiotic or stratified system in which the output of one coding process becomes the input to another.

We find no reflection of this harmony in Wilkins' proposal. He uses the term ideational component to refer to grammatical relations based on notional terminology and thus robs it of its theoretical justification in the semantic stratum of the original model. Some of his communicative functions are simply microfunctions or uses of language in the Halliday model and some actually belong to the logical component of the ideational metafunction. By way of illustration, for the fourth category of communicative function called Rational enquiry and exposition, Wilkins provides the following examples:

- a) Because pensions have been increased, taxes must be raised.
- b) Mary isn't bad looking but Jane is really pretty. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 52)

In the Halliday model questions concerning the linguistic expression of relations such as coordination, negation and implication are handled

within the logical component of the ideational function. The logical component provides the systems of linkage between clauses.

Once again, it is not surprising that Wilkins finds that utterances from the category Rational enquiry and exposition "interact with and possibly overlap those in the categories of argument and suasion" (1976, p. 52). He persists in trying to assign linguistic realizations to one category or another. In the Halliday model the adult speaker operates simultaneously in all three metafunctions. All systems are open at the clause level: systems of transitivity, mood systems, linkage systems and systems for making text cohere with its linguistic and situational environment.

Wilkins makes no reference to a separate textual component at all in his proposals. In Halliday's model the systems from the textual component make language operational and provide the strand of meaning potential that differentiates between a message and a mere entry in the grammar. Wilkins does, however, borrow bits and pieces of terminology from the textual function and includes them in the semantico-grammatical category of Sentential relations. In discussing the choice of one sentence form rather than another Wilkins says:

The choice depends on a combination of factors: the relation between the sentence in question and others that precede it, the emphasis or prominence to be given to the different parts, the distinction between what is already known and

what is new, the type of text in which the sentence occurs.

(1976, p. 36)

The whole textual metafunction has been relegated to one paragraph in the book Notional syllabuses and there is no discussion of what devices or systems are available in language to make these sorts of distinction.

One of the points that Halliday underlines when discussing or explaining his model is the fact that texture is not an optional stylistic variant that is achieved by comparing sentence forms and choosing the most appropriate. He emphasizes that the textual component is an area of meaning potential on the same level with the ideational and the interpersonal functions of the semantic stratum. There is simultaneous systemic choice within all three functions and it is the results of this choice that determine the final structure of the clause.

Conclusion

From a theoretical standpoint, Wilkins' proposals are essentially pre-Halliday in that they are based on a state of the art that existed before Halliday began work on his model. The semantico-grammatical categories proposed by Wilkins are based on the same inconsistent and haphazard assortment of criteria that earlier language scholars were accustomed to using when classifying language. The categories of communicative function as defined by Wilkins are based on the external functions of language in society first brought to light by Malinowski in

1935. What is confusing and perplexing is that Wilkins uses much of the terminology common to functional linguistics but in an extremely simplistic and unrelated manner. An unsuspecting reader might assume that his proposals reflect an adherence to the functional approach to language description.

It is not our intention to describe what a source book for syllabus writers based on the Halliday model should in fact contain. M. A. K. Halliday proposes a framework for the description of language and not categories that should automatically be incorporated in syllabus design.

Nevertheless, an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material should be based upon a selected approach and not, as Anthony said, contradict the principles of that approach. The fact that many writers think that Wilkins' proposals for syllabus design are based on the functional approach to language is certainly not fault of Wilkins. But the fact remains, of which he could not have been entirely unaware, that the similarity in terminology is misleading for many.

Wilkins' book would not be so counterproductive if it had not been perceived as an approach to syllabus design based on the functional perspective on language and if Wilkins' ideas had not been extremely influential in the development of what is called the functional approach to language teaching.

The following principles of syllabus design illustrate the common wisdom as it is shared by those writers who have adopted the notional-functional approach.

1. There is a semantic component which covers basic concepts or notions.
2. There is a functional component which covers the interactional aspect, the use of language to communicate certain purposes or intentions.
3. There is a formal component comprising grammatical knowledge of language forms and structures.

M. A. K. Halliday would not be in agreement with these principles. ¹

However important Wilkins' work may have been, or is, in attracting attention to certain teaching practices and in reorienting some of these to include a larger inventory of the microfunctions of language, it is unfortunate that his theoretical framework for syllabus design did not reflect in a more accurate fashion the categories of Halliday's model for language description because, as Gregory reiterates, the metafunctions are means of tackling the manifold complexity of meaning in both its formal and non-formal aspects and they have already shown themselves to be very useful in both grammatical analysis and the linguistic study of literature (Gregory, 1982, p. 75).

Would it not have been more fruitful and enlightening for language teaching and learning if Wilkins had used the functional model as his basis for a new approach to syllabus design?

The best answer to this question is provided by Halliday in his introduction to Language as Social Semiotic (1978).

If some of the argument seems remote from everyday problems of living and learning, this is because these problems are not simple, and no simple account of what happens at the surface of things is likely to be of much help in solving them. (Halliday in Gregory, 1980, p. 78)

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FOOTNOTES

Halliday, M.A.K. Personal Communication, May, 1982.

¹ ... (function) is of course a difficult term, because the concept is many sided, and in linguistics one has to keep a number of interpretations in attention at the same time. For this reason I have often adopted the term metafunction to refer to the functional components of the semantic system (ideational, interpersonal, textual), using function to refer to the types of context that engender the principal registers (the functional varieties in a language).

It is, I think, misleading to restrict the term to something like the intention of the speaker, or to any other single semantic component of the text. I cannot agree at all with the 'common wisdom' as you summarize it what is lacking, I think, is a genuinely stratified model of language and an adequate concept of register or genre