Unit 1

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Theoretical Introduction and Overview of English grammar

within the SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL model of language

Print version of the
Exploring English Grammar — the world of groups and phrases
presentation given on
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<div align="right">1.1</div>

Goals

The learning goals for today's session are:

1. To understand four choices we'll make about how to 'do' grammar:
   (a) Descriptive vs prescriptive grammar
   (b) Lexis + Grammar = Lexicogrammar
   (c) Functional vs formal grammar
   (d) Systemic vs structural grammar
2. To introduce some concepts useful in studying grammar

<div align="right">1.2</div>

1 About grammar

1.1 Prescriptive vs descriptive grammar

Descriptive vs prescriptive (and/or proscriptive) grammar

1. Lay people often say grammar is about prescribing what is good, or proscribing what is bad.
2. A modern grammarian just describes how people actually use language (rather than how they think they do, or claim to do)
3. Grammatical "rules" therefore need to be reinterpreted as something like "laws of nature" (like gravity, or conservation of energy, or evolution by means of natural selection): generalized statements of observed fact.
4. We'll try to work with real examples taken from linguistic corpora; but sometimes, when trying to illustrate a particular grammatical point, it can be convenient to use (carefully) constructed examples.

<div align="right">1.3</div>

1.2 Lexicogrammar

1. Some approaches treat lexis (vocabulary) separately from grammar
2. We will treat both together, as "lexicogrammar"
3. Lexicogrammar covers all the knowledge in the dictionary plus all the knowledge in the grammar book
4. With this knowledge, you can produce and understand very many sentences
5. But you still need to know about the context before you can really use or understand lexis and grammar appropriately.

1.3 Functional vs formal grammar
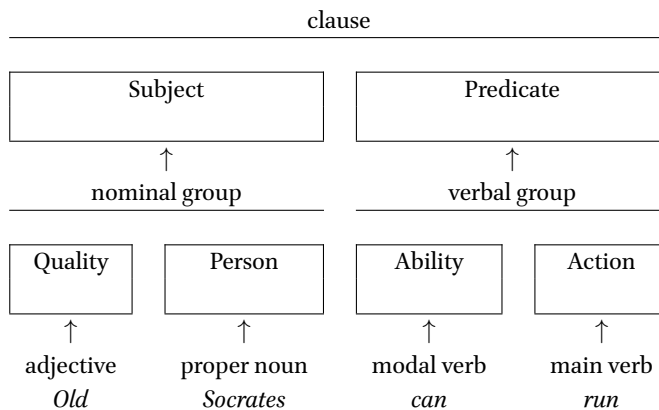
Functional vs formal grammar

1. Consider the simple sentence: "Socrates runs".
2. A formal grammar might analyze this by saying that it consists of a noun followed by a verb.
3. A functional grammar might analyze it by saying that it consists of:

   (a) a subject, of which something is predicated

   (b) an actor, who is involved in a process of doing something

   (c) a theme (specifying the topic), followed by a rheme (conveying a message about the topic)

4.

Socrates	runs
S	P
Actor	Process
Theme	Rheme

5. From now on, we'll use initial capitals for function labels.
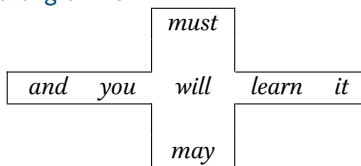6. We'll also include information from formal grammar as well:

Functional and formal grammar combined

clause

Subject	Predicate
↑	↑
nominal group	verbal group

Quality	Person	Ability	Action
↑	↑	↑	↑
adjective	proper noun	modal verb	main verb
Old	*Socrates*	*can*	*run*

1.4 Systemic vs structural grammar

Systemic vs structural grammar

must

*and   you   will   learn   it*

may

1. A structural approach is interested in the horizontal (syntagmatic) relations: what is connected to what, and how?

2. A systemic approach gives priority to the vertical (paradigmatic) dimension: what choices are available, and how do they differ from each other?
3. Once the focus has been shifted from structure to system, the choices available can be stated in a more abstract way:
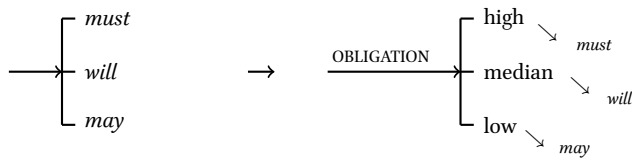
4.

Some notational conventions
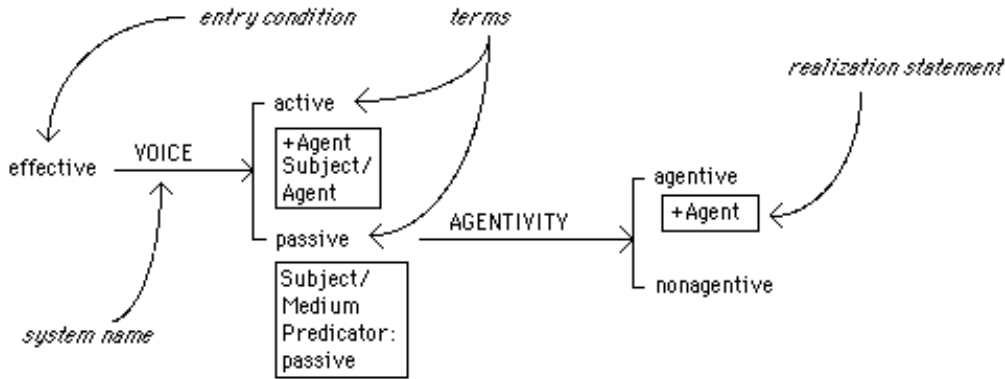
Oswald	shot	Kennedy
Subject/ Agent	Predicator	Medium

Kennedy	was shot	by Oswald
Subject/ Medium	Predicator: passive	Agent

Kennedy	was shot
Subject/ Medium	Predicator: passive

2 Some choices involved in producing a clause

## Some choices involved in producing a clause

1. In winter semester you tried to guess a clause that I was thinking of; you asked 'closed' questions (e.g. 'yes/no' for binary choices, or 'wh-' questions for sets of choices with three or more terms).
2. Some of the results from that experiment can be generalized.

2.1   Strata: semantics vs grammar vs phonology/orthography

- "Is it a question?"
- $\longrightarrow$
- "Does it function as a question?"
- OR:
- "Does it have the grammatical structure of a question?"
- OR:
- "Does it sound like (/ Is it written like) a question?"
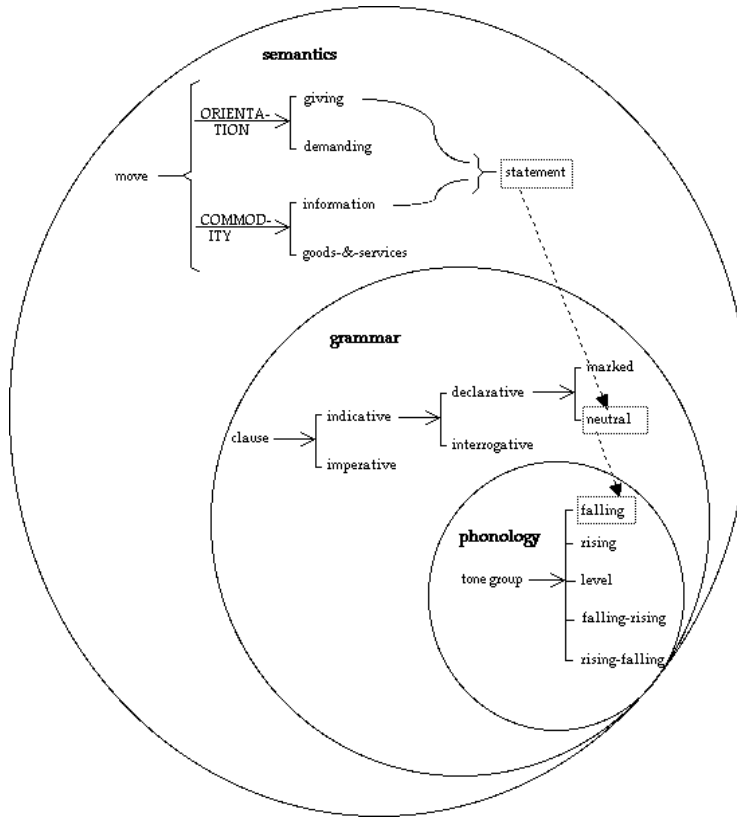
2.2   'Functional components' a.k.a. 'metafunctions'

'Functional components' a.k.a. 'metafunctions'

1. Clause as interaction: grammatical systems of MOOD — enacting social relationships
2. Clause as representation: grammatical systems of TRANSITIVITY — construing a model of reality
3. Clause as message: grammatical systems of THEME — creating relevance to context
4. These three sets of choices are simultaneous to and independent of each other (i.e. they are 'in parallel')

## Metafunctions in the grammar of English (1): syntagmatic view

Do	cats	eat	bats?	

Mood		Residue		MOOD
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement D.O.	

Pro-	Actor/ Agent	-cess: material	Goal/ Medium 'affected'	TRANSITIVITY

Theme	Rheme	THEME

Who	shot	the sheriff?
Mood		Residue	
Subject/Wh-	(did) Finite	Predicator (shoot)	Complement D.O.
Actor/ Agent	Process: material		Goal/ Medium
Theme	Rheme		

I	have	a dream.
Mood		Residue	
Subject	(do) Finite	Predicator (have)	Complement D.O.
Carrier/ Medium	Process: relational: ascriptive/possessive		Attribute/ Range
Theme	Rheme		

Metafunctions in the grammar of English (2): paradigmatic view
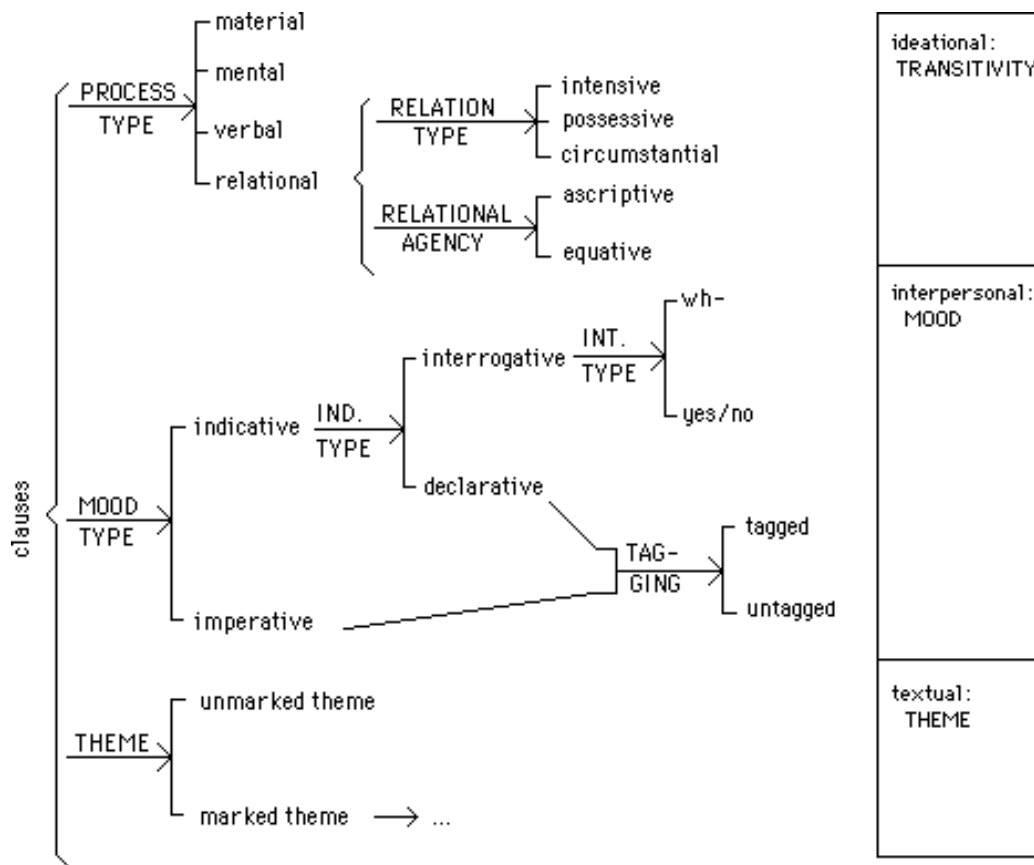
2.3   Clause as interaction: MOOD

Clause as interaction: MOOD (1)

MOOD TYPE:

- either 'imperative' or 'indicative',
  - if 'indicative', then either 'declarative' or 'interrogative',
    - ∗ if 'interrogative', then 'yes/no' or 'WH-',
      - if 'WH-', then 'WH-subject' or 'WH-other'.

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- non-finite or finite
- bound (e.g. reported speech)
- major
- clause
-

[free]	([free])	[bound]	
Close the window!	(She told me)	to close the window.	[non-finite]
He is closing the window	(She told me)	he was closing the window.	[finite]
Is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	whether he was closing the window.	[finite]
Who is closing the window?	(She asked me)	who was closing the window.	[finite]
What is he closing?	(She asked) me	what he was closing.	[finite]
Why is he closing the window?	(She asked me)	why he was closing the window.	[finite]

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Clause as interaction: MOOD (2)

SUBJECT PERSON:

- either 'non-interactant' or 'interactant',
  - if 'interactant', then 'speaker' ("I") or 'speaker-plus' ("we") or 'addressee' ("you");
    - ∗ if 'addressee', then: no further differentiation (unlike German)
    - ∗ *You kenn say You to me.* :-D

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Clause as interaction: MOOD (3)

FINITE TYPE:

- either 'temporal' (primary tense) or 'modal';
  - if 'temporal', then PRIMARY TENSE: 'past' or 'present' or 'future';
  - if 'modal', then MODALITY: 'high' or 'median' or 'low'.

	[past]	*she knew* ('yesterday')
PRIMARY TENSE	[present]	*she knows* ('now')
	[future]	*she will know* ('tomorrow')

1.18

	[high]	*she must know* ('surely')
MODALITY	[median]	*she will know* ('probably')
	[low]	*she may know* ('perhaps')

Clause as interaction: MOOD (4)

POLARITY:

- either 'positive' or 'negative';

POLARITY MARKING:

- if 'positive' or if 'negative', then either 'marked' (emphatic) or 'unmarked'.

	[unmarked]	[marked]
[positive]	*he closed it*	*he did close it*
[negative]	*he didn't close it*	*he did not close it*

1.19

2.4   Clause as representation: TRANSITIVITY

1. A "GOING ON" consists of
   - PROCESS +
   - PARTICIPANTS +
   - CIRCUMSTANCES
2. PROCESS TYPE:
   - material ('doing')
     – *Lola runs.* [intransitive]
     – *Tom films Lola.* [transitive]
   - mental ('sensing')
     – *Mary liked the gift.* ['like' type]
     – *The gift pleased Mary.* ['please' type]
   - relational ('being')
     – *Mary is a teacher.* [ascriptive]
     – *Mary is the teacher.* [equative]
   - (plus other minor types)
3. TWO WAYS OF MODELLING REALITY:
   - *Pat cooked.* [intransitive]   MODEL 1 IS THE
   - *Pat cooked the rice.* [transitive]   'TRANSITIVE' MODEL
   - *The rice cooked.* [middle]   MODEL 2 IS THE
   - *Pat cooked the rice.* [effective]   'ERGATIVE' MODEL

1.20

2.5   Clause as message: THEME

1. THEME SELECTION
   - Theme = Predicator (<u>*Close*</u> the **window!**)
   - Theme = Adjunct (<u>*In summer*</u> the students drink lots of **beer**.)
   - Theme = Subject (<u>*Maria*</u> likes **Mozart**.)
   - Theme = ...
2. THEME FOCUSSING
   - THEME PREDICATION
     – *it was <u>**Oswald**</u> who shot Kennedy*
   - THEME IDENTIFICATION
     – <u>*the one who shot Kennedy*</u> *was* **Oswald**
     – <u>*Oswald*</u> *was the one who shot* **Kennedy**
   - ... probably VOICE belongs here, too:
     – <u>*Oswald*</u> *shot* **Kennedy**
     – <u>*Kennedy*</u> *was shot by* **Oswald**
3. INTERPERSONAL THEME
   - *surely Anne*
4. TEXTUAL THEME
   - *oh but in that case*

1.21

1.22

3 Situating grammar

(...)

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

(...)

—George Orwell, 'A Nice Cup of Tea' (1946).

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Unit 3 (winter) — THEME

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

unmarked Theme (Theme = Subject)
marked Theme (Theme ≠ Subject)   1.24

Unit 4 (winter) — MOOD

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

indicative: declarative MOOD
indicative: interrogative MOOD
imperative MOOD   1.25

Unit 4 (winter) — POLARITY

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

positive POLARITY
negative POLARITY   1.26

Unit 4 (winter) — MOOD TAGGING

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*, shóuldn't it? I know very well that I am in a minority here, àrent I. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, àre you, you are merely tasting the sugar, àren't you; you could make a very similar drink by

dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight, will you? , and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again, will you.

<div align="right">1.27</div>

Unit 4 (winter) — MODALITY

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style— should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

<div align="right">1.28</div>

Unit 5 (winter) — PROCESS TYPE

Lastly, tea—unless one IS DRINKING it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I KNOW very well that I AM in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

material PROCESS

mental PROCESS

relational PROCESS

<div align="right">1.29</div>

Unit 6 (summer) — nominal group

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style —should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water .

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

nominal group

<div align="right">1.30</div>

Unit 6 (summer) — TENSE

Lastly, tea—unless one `is drinking` it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I `know` very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you `will` ever `want` to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

`present`

`present-in-present`

`future` (?)

1.31

Unit 7 (winter) — clause complexes

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well `that I am in a minority here`. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. `If you sweeten it`, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: Try drinking tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you will ever want to ruin your tea by sweetening it again.

`expanding clause: condition`

`projected clause: idea`

1.32

Unit 7 (summer) — verbal group complexes

Lastly, tea—unless one is drinking it in the Russian style—should be drunk *without sugar*. I know very well that I am in a minority here. But still, how can you call yourself a true tea-lover if you destroy the flavour of your tea by putting sugar in it? It would be equally reasonable to put in pepper or salt. Tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter. If you sweeten it, you are no longer tasting the tea, you are merely tasting the sugar; you could make a very similar drink by dissolving sugar in plain hot water.

Some people would answer that they don't like tea in itself, that they only drink it in order to be warmed and stimulated, and they need sugar to take the taste away. To those misguided people I would say: `Try | drinking` tea without sugar for, say, a fortnight and it is very unlikely that you `will` ever `want | to ruin` your tea by sweetening it again.

`expansion: means`

`projection: idea`

1.33

4   Resources

Books

There is no required reading for this course, apart from the course notes and the printouts of the slides from the weekly presentations. However, some students may want to look at the following reference work:

1. The Collins COBUILD Grammar of English
   `http://www.amazon.com/Collins-Cobuild-English-Grammar/dp/0007393644`
2. or the older edition:
   `http://www.amazon.com/Collins-COBUILD-English-Grammar/dp/0007183879`
3. The earlier edition appears to be available as a downloadable PDF file on the Internet :-)
   Just google "Collins COBUILD English Grammar PDF" (or similar)

The structure and content of the course are based on:

· M. A. K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold, 1994^2 ["IFG2"]

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Videos available online

Associate Professor Annabelle Lukin of Macquarie University, Sydney, has produced an excellent series of videos that are available online: `https://vimeo.com/album/2028694`

The videos follow essentially the same structure as the present course; they are based on M. A. K. Halliday and Christian Matthiessen, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, London: Edward Arnold, 2004 ["IFG3"]

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