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NINE DECADES OF FUNCTIONALIST THEORIES OF LANGUAGE AND THE PLACE OF SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS (1929-2013)

In 1929, the Linguistic Circle of Prague released a series of Theses about the functions of language. In the same year, the Genevan linguist Henri Frei published *La grammaire des fautes*, a first functional grammar of French. Since that time, different layers of functional grammar or linguistics gave arisen around the world. The aim of the communication is to deliver a general picture of the emergence and development of the different theories along the 20th century including the most recent publications and to locate the Systemic Functional Linguistics in this framework using the successive editions of *Introduction to Functional Grammar* between 1985 and 2014 with Christian Matthiessen gradually replacing M.A.K. Halliday as its main author. Simultaneously, the three “structural-functional” theories of language (Butler 2003), namely SLF, “Functional (Discourse) Grammar” and “Role and Reference Grammar”, are currently challenged by non structural or “external” theories, a trend that J. Bybee and Ch. Butler labelled “West-Coast-Functionalism”. In so far as SFL is not involved in language typology and seldom in diachrony while being crucially concerned with text typology and language teaching, it hardly suffers from that challenge, but FDG and RRG might implode because of the double pressure of formal grammars (Minimalist grammar, LFG, HPSG, etc.) on the one side and “external” functional linguistics on the other side.

BUTLER Christopher (2003) *Structure and Function – A guide to three major structural-functional theories*. Benjamins 2003 (Studies in Language Companion Series 63/64), Part 1 : *Approaches to the simplex clause*, Part 2 : *From clause to discourse and beyond*.

HALLIDAY M.A.K. (& MATTHIESSEN Christian from 2004 on) (¹1985, ²1994, ³2004, ⁴2014), *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (first London : Arnold, then Hodder Education 2004 and Routledge 2014).