A Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach to the Analysis of CFL Textbooks

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Abstract

In the view of much functionally oriented language education research, the goal of teaching and learning is for learners to become competent in using the appropriate forms of language for making meaning in particular contexts. Due to its systematic focus on the meaning-making mechanisms of language, systemic functional linguistics (SFL) has been recognized as having useful applications in educational settings. However, SFL-trained teachers need to be able to access teaching materials appropriate for the application of a functional approach in their teaching contexts. This study examines these issues in the context of the teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL). It analyzes four CFL textbooks for beginners to explore the extent to which the presentation of grammatical knowledge and the types of activities used in the textbooks can raise learners' awareness of the meaning-making function of language. For this purpose, the linguistic framework of SFL is used to analyze how grammatical instruction and apparatus are presented in these textbooks. The findings from this analysis show that the types of activities in the four textbooks examined are not always sufficiently contextualized to enable students to understand the key relationship between forms and meanings in each case: three out of the four textbooks do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to become aware of the systemic nature of the language and to discover how language users make systematic choices in specific contexts. This study shows the efficacy of the SFL model in textbook analysis: an SFL-based framework can be helpful for teachers in selecting textbooks as well as in providing suggestions for authors to redesign textbooks, by encouraging textbook writers to present language as a meaning-making resource.

1. Introduction

The purpose of teaching a foreign language (FL) is to enable students to use the language appropriately in real life contexts and for specific purposes. In the FL learning process, students should be guided to

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learn "how to mean in a new language" (Matthiessen, 2015), and recognize the linguistic mechanisms used by the target language to create meanings. To this purpose it is fundamental to explore how such mechanisms are introduced to learners, and show them how different features of language, including grammar, can be communicate meaning.

Researchers in second language acquisition have extensively investigated the ways in which students' acquisition of linguistic features can be enhanced. For some time, explicit knowledge of grammar was excluded from teaching as irrelevant to learning; now however, while not being considered as the ultimate goal of teaching, most current approaches to second language teaching would see grammar as a relevant part of language learning. Therefore, the question widely debated by researchers is not *whether* or not to teach grammar but *how* to teach it. The teaching of grammar has been recently supported through form-focus instruction: empirical studies have found that both focus-on-forms and focus-on-form instruction may result in effective learning, in particular when applied in communicative teaching contexts (Ellis, 2006, 2009; Newby, 2014). Although how to teach grammar is still under debate, researchers in language education settings agree that language is a system linked to and developed for real life communication, and that a language can only be understood within the context in which it is used, and so the process of learning a language needs to be introduced in a contextualized way (Larsen-Freeman, 2003, 2011; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004). Language acquisition research suggests that a contextual and meaning-focused approach is also suitable for grammar instruction (Leaver, 2005; Ellis, 2006). The traditional PPP (presentation-production-practice) teaching method (Larsen-Freeman, 2003) does not reflect the acquisitional process for learning grammar: the research emphasizes the importance of the recognizing the different stages of noticing, input processing and form-meaning linking, in order to help learners become full competent in the use of grammatical structures (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004).

The theory of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) puts forward a process for analyzing grammar and provides a model of how language constructs meanings (Halliday, 2006, 2014), one which underlines the key role of context by emphasizing that language develops within human social and cultural contexts (Hasan & Perrett, 1994). For functional theories of linguistics more broadly, "the goal of language learning in not to achieve competence only in the narrow sense of well-formed syntactic structures and propositional meanings but to achieve the facility to employ grammatical knowledge in pragmatically and socially successful ways." (Tomlin, 1994, p. 146).

Besides these fresh approaches to the teaching of grammar, the transition from a traditional to a functional teaching perspective also has implications for the description of grammar. Pedagogical grammars, which are traditionally opposed to functional grammars (Tomlin, 1994), present the description of language forms *per se,* without considering the contextual situations of their use. Structure-oriented descriptions introduce grammatical categories (number, tense and aspect, gender and mood, etc.), word classes (adjective, preposition, noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, etc.) and syntactic functions (subject, verb, complement, etc.) mainly focusing on explanations of rules. At the other end of the spectrum, functionally-oriented grammars introduce language features with descriptions in terms of meanings not simply confined to traditional notions of meaning as reference, but including such perspectives as the speaker or hearer's focus of attention (Tomlin, 1994; Derewianka, 2001; Derewianka & Jones, 2010). Between these two extremes, some reference grammars are based on Halliday's systemic functional model. According to some scholars, such theory is in the middle between traditional and functional approach, providing "a bridge between forms and meaning" (Tomlin, 1994; Derewianka & Jones, 2010), and supporting the development of L2 grammar which "arises from successful discourse use of the new language, that a pedagogical grammar must address how grammatical constructions are deployed in discourse, which is precisely what functional grammars do." (Tomlin, 1994, p. 141).

The SFL model has also been used for describing Chinese grammar. Halliday's conceptualization of systemic functional theory has inspired the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language (Halliday, 2006). The application of the SFL model has been connected to language pedagogy from its origins, and the descriptions of Chinese grammar based on systemic functional model have provided valuable support

for researchers and teachers in the area of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (McDonald, 1992; Halliday & McDonald, 2004; Li, 2007; Peng, 2015). While SFL-based resources available for language pedagogy offer a theoretical framework by which instructors can help students understand the way language is connected to social context and how language functions in creating meanings, we still need to explore the extent to which these perspectives are traceable in FL textbooks. Textbooks are recognized as crucial resources in the educational process in their impact on what and how instructors teach, and since teachers and students rely heavily on them in the FL classroom (Brown, 2014), the language of textbooks is a highly relevant resource for students' learning. It is thus essential to explore the extent to which the grammatical apparatus included in FL textbooks links the use of grammar to socio-cultural contexts and identifies the relevant linguistic features teachers can use to show the way "grammatical constructions are deployed in discourse". Previous studies on different FL textbooks across a range of languages have shown that textbooks tend only partially or not at all to incorporate findings from research on grammar acquisition (Aski, 2003; Ellis, 2002; Fernández, 2011; Tammenga-Helmantel & Maijala, 2018). In recent years, in response to the increasing demand for CFL learning, the publishing industry, teachers and researchers have launched the publication of new teaching materials, taking into consideration issues of applied linguistic research in order to facilitate the acquisition of Chinese, and such issues are equally relevant as applied to CFL textbooks.

This study aims to investigate how current teaching perspectives are reflected in CFL textbooks. It assumes that a contextualized presentation of grammar instruction can enhance learners' awareness of the link between forms and meanings and support the language learning process, and uses the linguistic framework of SFL to analyze how grammar instruction and types of activities are presented in four CFL textbooks for beginners. It is hoped that the results of the study will support teachers' pedagogical choices by providing criteria for textbook selection, and thus contribute to CFL teaching in general.

2. A Systemic Functional Approach to Language Education

The theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics conceptualizes language in terms of interconnected networks of meaning-making systems (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The theory models the relationship between linguistic forms and meanings in reference to how speakers or writers use the language by making systematic linguistic choices in specific contexts. With the aim of explaining how language and context are interrelated, SFL provides a metalinguistic framework aimed at capturing how texts are constructed and how language communicates meanings. SFL focuses on the complementarity between language and social context, the latter being divided in the two types of cultural context and situational context. At the level of cultural context, the linking between linguistic choices and context is conceptualized in terms of *genre*, understood not just as "text type" but as "how to get things done in a culture using language". The level of situational context is conceptualized as *register,* which has the three variables of *field*, what the text is about, its subject matter or relevant social activity; *tenor*, who is involved in the production and reception of the text, the relationship between the interactants; and *mode*, how the text is transmitted, including the channel of communication and related issues (Halliday, 1994). Corresponding to the three register variables, three generalized abstract functions or *metafunctions* are posited which link the internal meaning-making processes of language to its different external contexts: the ideational metafunction, representing experiences of our material and social worlds; the interpersonal metafunction, enacting relationships between users of the language; and the textual metafunction, organizing the texts which are the instantiations of language and how information is presented therein.

Due to the effectiveness of the SFL framework for text analysis with the aim of understanding how language makes meaning in context, this approach has been applied in various educational settings (e.g., Moncada Linares & Xin, 2020). The SFL approach has been used to inform teachers in teaching academic literacy (Schleppegrell, 2012, 2013), deconstructing or constructing texts to facilitate students

in recognizing how language structures create meanings and helping them to identify the particular language patterns used for specific functions. As used in teacher education programs, SFL-based pedagogy aims to develop teachers' functional metalanguage (Gebhard, 2010; Gebhard et al. 2014), providing them with a knowledge of language features that make texts more transparent (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Martin & Rose, 2005), and enabling them to scaffold disciplinary knowledge when teaching reading in the classroom. Providing an explicit metalanguage to deconstruct the disciplinary language of textbooks, in areas such as history (Achugar et al., 2007) or science (Schleppgrell, 2003), provides teachers with the effective tools to enable their students to analyze texts, making them aware of the link between forms and meanings. Brisk and Zisselsbeger (2010) revealed that teachers exposed to SFL-based programs show greater confidence in teaching the genre and organization of specific texts. Zhang (2018) proposes an SFL-based model of teacher education to enable teachers to deconstruct the content of textbooks and to change their beliefs about textbook use.

SFL has also been applied in FL classroom settings. Some studies have demonstrated the success of SFL-based pedagogy in foreign language teaching programs, such as Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language at the primary level in North America (Mohan & Huang, 2002; Huang & Mohan, 2009), Spanish as a heritage language (Colombi, 2009), Japanese grammar for advanced learners (Teruya, 2009), and teaching English grammar in the Australian context (Derewianka & Jones, 2010). A specific area of SFL-based research focused on writing instruction (Byrnes, 2009), with a number of studies using the genre-based approach showing successful results in applying the SFL framework to second language writing instruction and enhancing the textual quality of narrative of written texts in different L2s, such as English (Cheng, 2008; Yasuda, 2015; Rose & Martin, 2012), German (Ryshina-Pankova, 2006), and Chinese (Cheng, 2017).

These research projects have shown that applying SFL in training teachers and working with learners fosters awareness of how language works and increases their confidence in interpreting different texts. However, in the teaching and learning process the role of textbooks is also crucial: the language used in textbooks can pose linguistic challenges for students and have an impact on learners' literacy. SFL-based frameworks have also been used by a number of scholars to examine the language of textbooks. Romána and Busch (2015) analyzed the interpersonal and textual meaning of science textbooks to observe how the language frames the topic of climate change, with their results showing that the textbooks represented climate change as uncertain with reference both to climate phenomenon and to human causation. Presnyakova (2011) investigated the complexity of language instruction across grade level in four elementary school Language Arts textbooks and concluded that lexicogrammatical complexity increases across grade level while lexical variation and lexical density show no significant changes. Other studies have examined the complexity of language and text structure in English school textbooks. Putra and Lukmana (2017) analyzed the lexical density, lexical variation, and grammatical intricacy of EFL textbooks used in Indonesian high schools, observing a progressive increase in text complexity at lexical level from the lower to the higher grades. To (2018) observed language complexity in English textbooks in a Vietnamese context, concluding that while complexity does increase according to the level of the textbooks, there was no direct correspondence between complexity and textbook level. With a similar aim, O'Keeffe and O'Donoghue (2015) used an SFL-based framework to analyze the language of mathematics textbooks used in the Irish secondary school context. Finally, Zhang (2017) has proposed an SFL-based framework for the evaluation of English language textbooks, suggesting that systemic functional descriptive categories can be used as criteria "to look at the dynamic value of the textbook in relation to the teacher's role" (p. 98), and that evaluation based on SFL concepts can inform textbook (re)design.

These studies confirm that the SFL framework is well-suited for exploring the internal organization of language in text, and that explicit metalinguistic knowledge supports both teaching and learning. However, in order to allow teachers to explicitly teach such knowledge and learners to recognize the systematic relationships between meanings and forms, the types of texts and activities used in FL textbooks need to be presented from a meaning-making and contextualized perspective.

3. The Present Study

This research aims to examine the extent to which FL Chinese textbooks provide contextualized samples of language and grammar instruction in their approach to grammar instruction: basically whether they introduce language as a decontextualized system of rules, as in many traditional approaches, or as a resource to create meaning, as in the SFL approach.

As already explained above, an SFL approach understands the purpose of grammatical description as making explicit the relationship between form and meaning, not applying rules to produce structurally correct output. It regards a text not as a set of forms but rather as an interplay of meanings, with language structures understood in terms of their contextualized use of language (Derewianka, 2001; Mohan et al., 2010). Applying an SFL framework enables us to observe the extent to which information about grammar and grammar-based activities allow learners, with the teacher's help, to explore the appropriate use of language in context.

While researchers have produced explicit descriptions of Chinese grammar within an SFL framework (McDonald 1992; Li 2007; Tam, 2004), a comprehensive SF-based analysis of CFL textbooks has yet to be developed (McDonald (1999) represents a preliminary exploration of some of the relevant issues). Teachers of Chinese as a foreign language who aim to guide their students in understanding how language features express meanings in context require access to teaching materials with language resources that allow for such analysis. An SFL-based analysis could clearly reveal what kind of language features are used in textbooks.

Ultimately, the contribution of this study is the implementation of SFL approach in the analysis of grammar instruction and grammar activities in CFL textbooks. It examines four CFL textbooks for beginners, and addresses the following research questions:

RQ (1) What kinds of approaches are adopted in CFL textbooks for teaching grammar, on a continuum between structure-oriented (focusing on accuracy) and function-oriented (focusing on appropriacy)?

RQ (2) To what extent do the types of activities included in the CFL textbooks analyzed allow analysis of wording choices and raise learners' awareness of features of language as meaning-making resources?

RQ (3) What are the differences and similarities among the textbooks analyzed?

4. Method

In order to explore the extent to which CFL textbooks introduce language as a resource for making meanings and allow learners to deepen their understanding of the relationship between language choices and their contexts of use, four widely used textbooks for teaching Chinese were analyzed. The textbooks analyzed here are the first volumes of multi-volume series of CFL textbooks published in four different countries, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Italy: *Discover China*, hereinafter DC (Ding et al., 2010); *Ni shuo ya*, hereinafter NSY (Arslangul et al., 2016); *New Practical Chinese Reader*, hereinafter NPCR (Liu, 2003); and *Parliamo Cinese*, hereinafter PC (Masini et al., 2018). I selected one lesson from each textbook where the grammatical item 多少 *duoshao* 'how many' was introduced. The reason for selecting the lessons introducing *duoshao* was due to the fact that while in the four textbooks the progression of grammatical items is not homogeneous, *duoshao* is introduced at a similar point in the grammatical sequence.

Since the purpose of the analysis is to observe the extent to which grammar instructions are presented in text-based and contextualized ways and offer teachers and students opportunities to focus on the lexicogrammatical aspects of language in context, I decided to examine how the same grammar structure was introduced in order to obtain reliable and clear results, avoiding different interpretations due to the different grammatical item to be taught or differing proficiency level (Appendix A). The analysis

included three phases: the first phase identified the grammatical instructions for the activities introducing the form *duoshao*, according to the grammatical information, the terminology used for metalinguistic description, the types of target language samples, and the types of activities. Only those features of the instructions that involved lexicogrammatical choices and wording analysis at lexicogrammatical or discourse level were analyzed, while activities that had no grammatical relevance but aimed to develop competence in pronunciation and vocabulary were excluded from examination. This phase of the analysis generated the data for understanding the approach to grammar pedagogy adopted by the textbooks.

Phase two of the analysis adopted a quantitative approach to capture the types of activities that are used more frequently in each textbook and to reveal what linguistic features are introduced through the activities. This analysis could provide information to evaluate the extent to which the language of the textbooks is contextualized, and "treat[s] the social aspect as integral to language" (Hasan & Perrett, 1994, p.181). In the third phase a comparative analysis of the results from all four textbooks was carried out.

The procedure used a framework based on Ellis's (2002) classification for FL textbooks, supplemented by the SFL concepts introduced above. Ellis's classification provides a three-variable system: *explicit information*, involving explanations of the grammar item or structure and how it is used in the target language which could be either supplied/deductive or discovered/inductive; *data*, exemplars of the target language not supported by activities; and *operations*, tasks that students have to carry out involving the target language. These operations are subdivided into *production-based operations*, when learners have to perform by saying or writing something in the FL; *input-based operations*, also called *reception operations*, when students have to perform a task to demonstrate that they comprehend the target structure without producing any output in the FL; and so-called *judgment operations*, when students have to identify whether a sentence including the target item is grammatically correct.

In order to answer RQ1, Ellis's first two categories of grammar instruction – explicit information, and data – were analyzed on the basis of the characteristics of the different models of grammar utilized, as placed on the continuum from traditional grammar to functional grammar proposed in Derewianka & Jones (2010): see Figure 1 below. While structure-oriented grammar instruction focuses more on accuracy and the presentation of structure rules, function-oriented grammar instruction focuses on the meanings users aim to communicate in using the language. Incorporating aspects of both these approaches, SFL – referred to in Figure 1 as "systemic functional grammar" or SFG – focuses on the relationship between text and context, paying attention to both grammatical forms and the meanings they construe in context (Tomlin, 1994; Derewianka & Jones, 2010).

Figure 1

Continuum of Models of Grammar: Traditional to Functional (Based on Derewianka & Jones, 2010)

Form	*Relating form and function*	*Function*
Structure-oriented grammar	SFG	Function-oriented grammar
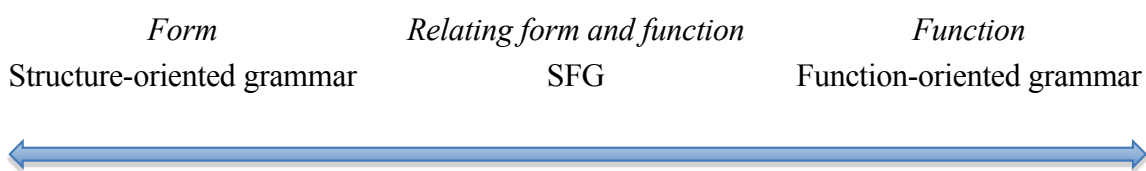
In classifying the approach adopted in grammar instruction, using Ellis' categories, *operations* activities were first identified as production-based or input-based. In order to see whether these types of activities and their texts raise students' awareness of language structures as meaning-making resources and help teachers find suitable texts they can use for presenting grammar or just require a rigid application of rules (RQ2), the types of activities and texts provided in the exercises were examined on the basis of SFL framework at the level of situational context. The present analysis focuses on the stratum of semantics using the three metafunctions that in the SF model define different systems of meaning. (Hasan & Perrett, 1994).

The framework based on context and metafunction (Halliday, 1977) used for the analysis of production and reception-based operations is described in Table 1. In identify whether texts used in each exercise allow students to recognize how linguistic features realize meanings according to the three metafunctions – ideational, interpersonal, textual – three sets of questions guided the analysis of each grammar activity, with a fourth question identifying those exercises based on a purely structural approach.

Table 1
Analysing Exercises according to Context of Situation and Metafunctions.

	Systemic-functional grammar			Structure-oriented grammar
	Systems of meaning			Accuracy - grammar rules application
	Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual	
	Classifications of phenomena, relations of phenomena.	Social roles, assessment of probability, obligation.	What is new, what is the speaker's point of departure, points of identity.	
Questions guiding the analysis	Does the exercise allow learners to gain awareness of what the text is about, observing participants, processes or circumstances?	Does the exercise allow learners to gain awareness of who the intended audience is or what is the relationship among participants: observing interrogative, declarative, imperative and modality aspects etc. in a contextualized text?	Does the exercise allow learners to gain awareness of how the text is organized, observing text components and *relationship between different parts of the same text* according to the medium of communication?	Does the activity only focus on the application of the rule?
	Activities including descriptions of context:	Activities including descriptions of participants and their role:	Activities including descriptions of the medium of communication:	Activities to check or apply grammar rules:
Examples of activities	Completing the conversation with the provided sentences (with a picture of two people working in an office); etc. Describing your family to the class;	Communication practice A: student asking for information; B officer working in the school office; Fill in the blanks in the dialogue between the students; Read the mobile messages between the two friends and answer the questions; etc.	Read the text message and write a reply (text framed in a mobile picture); Make a dialogue: A is a student asking for information; B is an officer working in the school office; etc.	Change affirmative sentences into interrogative using; Decide whether the statements are grammatically correct; Make sentences with the provided word banks; etc.

In order to analyze whether each exercise can help learners' awareness of the ideational meanings, understanding "what the text is about," grammatical features realizing ideational meanings were noted as to whether and how exercises allow students to recognize the experience being represented in terms of processes, participants, and circumstances as well logical relationships in the text.

In order to observe how operations help to promote students' awareness of the grammatical features realizing interpersonal meanings in relation to "relationships between interactants" the analysis noted the extent to which texts include linguistic features that help express relations and social roles through choices of such features as personal pronouns, e.g. second person informal/ informal 你, 您 , clausal mood, whether declarative, imperative or interrogative, the use of modal verbs such as 可以, 想, 能 , and of final particles 吧, 呢, 吗 ; and to what extent communicative practice activities provide indication about the relationship between speaker/writer and audience.

To examine to what degree each activity enables students to recognize textual meanings, understanding "how the text is organized", we focused on language as a medium of communication in relation to other modalities such as visual images, and the language itself is a resource for creating specific relevance, such as what is new, what is the speaker's point of departure, points of identity, etc. (Hasan & Perrett, 1994, p. 184).

In the beginner-level textbooks analysed, most of the texts are dialogues, written in (imitation of) spoken style, such exchanging personal information, or texts intended for written use, such as mobile messages for exchanging phone numbers or addresses, network chat messages for asking for the cost of a dress. We believe that for pedagogical purposes at beginner level, the analysis of how the text is organized can be more accessible, if we make a clear distinction between texts designed for written or spoken use.

In addition to the language input for each activity, the instructions supplied by the authors to guide students in completing the activities were also considered in the analysis. Exercises such as communicative practice activities do not include any text in the target language, yet they provide detailed descriptions about what meanings students have to make, and students are required to make appropriate linguistic choices based on those descriptions. Because an SFL approach is equally well adapted to analyze the lexicogrammatical systems of Chinese provided in the activity texts on the one hand, as it is to construct the linguistic realization of meanings in Chinese according to the information provided in other languages or mediums.

Since the three metafunctions work simultaneously to make meaning, a full context oriented activity, such as a real-life language input, should allow students to recognize the language resources which realize all three metafunctions. For example, a communicative practice activity might include a description of topic of communication, as well as information about the role relationships of the people involved and the medium of the communication. However, in some cases, exercise texts and / or explanations may present contextual information that allow learners to understand how language structures shape only two kinds of these meanings: for example, matching a written sale announcement to the corresponding image of the product only makes student aware of how language structures encode the text content and the organization of the text's written language but provides minimal instances of language choices which represent the social relationship; or one meaning: for example, filling in gaps in a text using information from a brochure, with no indication about who is the writer, nor what is the purpose of the text, can only raise students' awareness of how such text represents the experience.

When an exercise required learners only to apply the grammar rules, in a decontextualized way, without promoting the understanding of any language metafunction, it was identified under the category of structure-oriented grammar.

5. Results

The analysis of *explicit information* and *data* examined within the continuum of grammar models situated between "form" and "function," is presented in Table 2. Results show that three of the textbooks

present a similar range of choices in the explaining the grammar, while only DC includes aspects that place it close to the function-oriented side of the continuum.

Table 2

Results of Grammar Explanation – Explicit Information and Data

	Form Structure-oriented grammar	*Relating form and function* SFG	*Function* Function-oriented grammar
←			→
Explicit information			
Explanation	*Supplied/deductive*	*Discovered/inductive*	
DC		✔	
PI	✔		
NSY	✔		
NPCR	✔		
Terminology	*Conventional grammar terms*	*Function-related grammar terms*	
DC		*question word*	
PI	*pronome interrogativo*		
NSY	*interrogatif*		
NPCR	*question pronoun*		
Data			
Source	*Contrived*	*Authentic*	
DC	✔		
PI	✔		
NSY	✔		
NPCR	✔		
Text size	*Discrete Sentences*	*Paragraphs Continuous*	
DC	✔	✔	
PI	✔		
NSY	✔		
NPCR	✔		

Three of the textbooks *introduce* grammar explanations by supplying explicit verbal description of grammatical structures, while only DC encourages students to *discover* the categories for themselves. In DC, Grammar rules are presented through inference-based tasks, providing learning techniques to guess general rules from data, such as choosing the correct answer to the questions (Figure 2) or selecting the correct explanation of the grammar item out of a set of options. A grammar reference section is then included in the final part of textbook.

Figure 2

Grammar Section in DC Textbook (p. 66)

With reference to the category of *data*, only contrived sources of the target language were found in the four textbooks: some textbooks use samples derived from the lesson text; others create new samples to illustrate the grammar item. However, differences were found in the amount of text presented for this purpose. All four textbooks introduce samples of the target language in the form concise, decontextualized sentences including the grammar item. Of the four books, in addition to such short sentences, DC also introduces grammatical items through samples of language in the form of paragraphs and dialogues, enabling students, with teachers' help, to raise their awareness of the interrelation between linguistic forms, meanings and their use in context.

The different textbooks also differ in their metalanguage used for the description of grammatical features. While more structure-oriented grammars use conventional grammatical terms for describing items, and arrange the descriptions of grammar according to grammatical classes, and functional-oriented models focus on the description of the item based on the communicative intentions of language users in context, systemic functional grammar in the middle between traditional and functional approach, uses standard terminology for the description of grammatical classes, however "unlike traditional grammar, it (….) is constantly shunting between form and function, between grammar and semantics" (Derewianka & Jones, 2010, p. 7).

The British textbook is close to functional description model on this aspect too: it describes *duoshao* as a "question word," while the three other textbooks still adopt conventional terms more related to the formal description than to the use, employing terms of the grammatical class "pronoun, interrogative". Results show that only DC turns out to be the more function-oriented while the three other textbooks are still highly oriented to a more traditional grammar description. However, DC still retains traditional aspects such as the use of contrived and inauthentic language.

A qualitative analysis of *operations* based on Ellis's classification was then undertaken through the framework of the SFL context of situation. Results in Table 3 below show that all textbooks include both production-based and input-based activities, and that the four textbooks present instructional features

which focus on meaning and form relationships, featuring different percentages for each category of the situational context. Table 3 also indicates that one textbook, namely NPCR, includes decontextualized activities, which only focus on accuracy. These activities which can be carried out without any understanding of the context, take the form of drills, e.g., whereby students must repeat the sentence substituting the underlined word with those provided, or of exercises in application of a rule, e.g., turning sentences into questions.

This qualitative analysis is supplemented with a quantitative analysis showing the number of each type of activities, both production-based and input-based, and the number of those including language features that allow students to examine meaning-making processes through the analysis of situational context categories. This offers a clearer picture of the extent to which texts in the four textbooks are contextualized, and how much the textbooks foster awareness of the relationship among forms, meaning and context.

Table 3

Types of Activity and Language Resources Classified by Metafunction

Operations		Total	Metafunction (Ideational)	(Interpersonal)	(Textual)	Accuracy - Application of the rules
DC	Production-based	21	21	13	15	-
	Input-based	2	2	1	2	-
			100%	*61%*	*74%*	
PC	Production-based	8	8	3	5	-
	Input-based	6	6	1	1	-
			100%	*29%*	*43%*	
NPCR	Production-based	12	7	3	5	4
	Input-based	3	2	-	-	1
			60%	*20%*	*33%*	*33%*
NSY	Production-based	10	10	3	6	
	Input-based	4	4	2	4	
			100%	*36%*	*71%*	

The overall results show that all the analysed textbooks include a predominant tendency towards *production-based* activities, while *input-based* activities, with the exception of PC, represent a very small portion. It needs to be pointed out that numerous production-based activities found in DC also include reception parts that don't appear in the count. For example: "Read the text message and write a reply" was identified as a production-based activity; however, in order to reply to the message, students need to

recognize some aspects such as the content of the request (ideational meanings), the sender to reply to (interpersonal meanings), and the linguistic characteristics appropriate for a mobile text message (textual meanings). *Reception* activities guide learners to discover the input and require them to detect what linguistic forms are used to make certain meanings. Among input-based activities, those matching text or dialogue with the correct image are quite common; in order to complete this type of activity, students need to identify the situation and the relationship between the participants described by the text in order to select the correct image: a text matching an image representing a conversation between two students can't be associated with an image including a student and a professor. Input-based activities of *judgment,* such as asking learners to select the grammatically correct sentences among a set or finding errors, only focus on accuracy and do not support the recognition of links between meaning and form. These input-based activities included in the category of structure-oriented grammar were only found in NPCR.

As regards the percentage of types of activities that support learners in exploring linguistic resources, the quantitative analysis shows that the textbooks examined here include a larger amount of activities related to the ideational metafunction. In three of the textbooks, with the exception of NPCR (60%), all of the activity texts include information on processes, participants or circumstances (DC, PC, NSY 100%), and in order to complete the exercise, students need to understand what the text is about and recognize which linguistic features encode those meanings. In the textbooks many production exercises were found that explore the linguistic resources for expressing ideational meanings, such as comprehension questions, completing text activities using the information provided in a brochure, a business card, or a written text. For example, the input-based activity (Figure 3), asks learners to select true or false based on matching pictures to linguistic text, requiring them to recognise participants and types of process.

Figure 3

Grammar Activity in PC Textbook (p. 232)

Percentages show that NSY and DC provide texts and activities that include language resources (74% and 71%) realising textual meanings. Numerous exercises support learners' knowledge of how to construct a text on the basis of the medium of communication: for example, reading mobile phone messages or a dialogue between two friends in specific contexts and answering related questions. Such texts provide language features that students, with the teacher's help, can use to examine how the different parts of a written or spoken text are organized (Figure 4). Teachers could promote the recognition of how texts construct meanings, such as speakers' point of departure, or how one part of the text relates to another, focusing on the distinction between spoken and written text.

Figure 4

Grammar Activity in DC Textbook (p. 65)

Attention to these aspects is also required in the case of exercise instructions. In order to perform communicative or writing activities that ask students to produce output for specific purposes, such as writing an announcement for the web including information about a clothing item you intend to sell or make a speech to present your family to the class, students have to construct texts paying attention to how to select the points of departure and the focuses, according to the medium they are using.

Figure 5

Completion Activity in DC Textbook (p. 44)
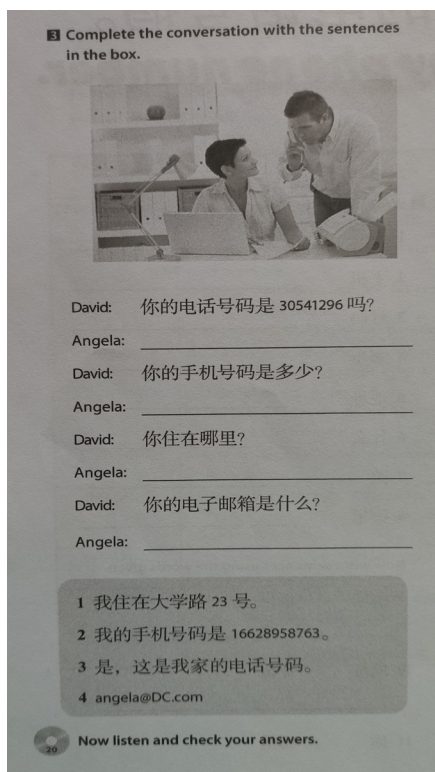
Activities and exercise explanations requiring learners to focus on linguistic choices related to the interpersonal metafunction were found in larger quantity only in one textbook (DC 61%), while these features occur in smaller percentages in the three other textbooks (PC 29%, NPCR 20%, NSY 36%). In DC language information or descriptions of activities that make students aware of who is the intended audience, or what is the relationship between participants, is detectable in texts or explanations that clarify the purpose of the communication and the roles of speakers and audience. Compared to the other

textbooks, DC tends to include these data in a greater number of activities: many writing assignments make these data explicit, such as the intended addressee of the text message, or the relationship between sender and recipient. For example, *in an input based-activity*, in order to complete the conversation using sentences in the block, combined with an image of two colleagues at the office *an office manager standing and an employee seated at the desk* engaged in a conversation (Figure 5), students can note through this input how their relationship is built up through particular forms of language. The other textbooks, in contrast, include less contextualised exercises, the writing production being mainly guided by the content of the text with no reference to the participants involved.

Exercise in Figure 6 is a production-based activity that requires students to act out a conversation by performing a particular social role. While at the semantic level, functions such as asking for information, exchanging information etc., are common across languages, the specific structural and lexical choices are different in each language. In order to realize a specific meaning/function within the social context provided, students have to identify which is the appropriate structure in Chinese, selecting the appropriate pronoun (formal/informal) and the type of interrogative for the question specified.

Figure 6

Communication Activity in DC (p. 68)

Observing the percentages in Table 3, compared to the other two textbooks, DC and NSY are the two textbooks including a higher quantity of contextualized activities, and providing language resources and types of activities that allow students to analyze the wording and raise their awareness of language as a potential meaning-making system.

6. Discussion

With regard to RQ(1), our findings demonstrate that the approach adopted in the four textbooks is still representative of the traditional structure-oriented grammar model focused mainly on the description of grammatical items as "form;" while "in order to be effective, a pedagogical grammar must break the bonds of 'form' to reach out into concerns of meaning and social context on a systemic rather than an ad hoc basis." (Tomlin, 1994, p. 205). Results prove, indeed, that in all textbooks there is a general tendency not to present grammar in contextualized and continuous texts, but instead to use discrete and limited sentences, and provide descriptions of grammatical items oriented to the description of forms as grammatical elements; whereas a pedagogical approach informed by systemic functional grammar

needs to integrate the description of grammatical forms with the meanings they realize, thus integrating grammar and semantics. Not introducing the grammar forms within the context of a whole text also implies not considering the link between grammatical resources and context, and thus not allowing any analysis of language features in terms of understanding how the choice of different language features relates to different contexts. In addition, none of the textbooks use authentic texts, or text extracts, to introduce the target language. This may be explained by the fact that in most cases, Chinese language teaching is organized according to the number and types of characters to be learned: for example, the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK), which defines different levels of competence, is organized according to the number of characters known; for this reason it is probably difficult to find authentic material completely appropriate for beginners' level; authors are thus required to create texts.

Although all of the textbooks present similar traditional features for grammar presentation, this analysis does give us hope that the functional approach could be considered as a valuable one by authors for introducing grammar. One of the four textbooks (DC) presents a more contextualized approach to introducing the grammar than the others, including two aspects that show its tendency towards a function-oriented model. In addition to discrete sentences, this textbook also presents grammar items through dialogues, enabling students to observe a whole text in action and interpret the form-meaning relationship with reference to a possible context. This textbook also explains each grammatical item focusing on the function that it performs – e.g., a "question word" used for asking a question – using a more functional and use-based terminology rather than the traditional one which specifies the relevant word class – e.g., pronoun. Moreover, this textbook has clearly been influenced by current perspectives on methods of teaching grammar which suggest the use of an inductive method in order to offer learners opportunities to infer the relevant grammar rules themselves (Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004).

Due to its potential for revealing the meaning-making mechanisms of language, the SFL framework has long been recognized as beneficial for educational applications. This approach has been adopted for several teaching programs in the USA and UK (Gebhard, 2010), as well as for the National Curriculum in the Australian context (Derewianka & Jones, 2010), and has also proven effective for the improvement of foreign language learning, academic knowledge and literacy (Gebhard, 2010). In order to adopt such an approach, teachers must have a deeper knowledge of grammar than is needed for other approaches. Some studies have indicated that short-term training programs may enable teachers to enhance their awareness of the language system based on systemic functional linguistics (Macken-Horarik et al., 2015; Gebhard et al., 2014), and to achieve "a good enough grammatics" (Macken-Horarik, 2008, p. 43); however, trained teachers should also be able to access teaching materials appropriate for the application of a functional approach to their specific teaching context.

Derewianka & Jones (2010) have highlighted the resistance from the publishing industry and writers of English reference grammars to seeing SFL as a profitable body of knowledge to be included in teaching materials: "Although publishers have gradually taken on genre or text types and aspects of SFG such as cohesion, they have not seen SFG as a profitable commercial enterprise" (p.15). Our findings confirm this condition for Chinese foreign language teaching materials, showing that textbooks' authors and publishers still rely on a more traditional presentation of grammar.

In order to make evident what a functional perspective can offer to Chinese foreign language teaching and learning, it is necessary to increase teachers' knowledge of basic SFL theory on the one hand, and on the other hand to improve research into the effectiveness of SFL-based pedagogy. New explorations confirming the importance of understanding how lexicogrammatical features build language meaning in the foreign language learning process should persuade textbooks writers to rethink their approaches to grammar presentation.

The emphasis on production-based activities found in all textbooks, as shown by quantitative analysis, also confirms their tendency toward a more structure-oriented approach. In order to support learners in going beyond the grammatical structures and the correct application of rules, input-based

activities, which encourage learners to focus on text analysis and uncover the relationship between forms and meanings, such as input-enhancement techniques (Wong, 2005), need to be integrated into FL teaching materials.

With regard to RQ(2) and RQ(3), the results have demonstrated that only one textbook (DC) presented a majority of contextualized activities. The activity texts include sufficient lexicogrammatical features to enable students to identify the relevant meanings on stratum of semantics, and at the same time, the explanations of spoken or written production practices provide explicit information on the purpose, medium, and addressee of the text that students have to create. These types of activities are appropriate for SF-based pedagogy, enabling teachers to support students in deconstructing and (re) constructing the language, and to bring out the metalinguistic aspects involved in the meaning-making process. Another textbook (NSY) includes activities appropriate only to identify linguistic features that contribute to the creation of the ideational and textual meaning systems, but not contextualized enough to examine language features describing who is involved in the communication, i.e., in terms of the interpersonal metafunction. The language used in this textbook's activities allows students to discover how linguistic forms realize experiential and logical metafunctions (within the broader ideational metafunction), as well as drawing students' attention to the text is organized according to the textual metafunction. However, an indication of who is involved in using the language is not always provided: students are not informed about who their audience is. In case of production activities, such as compositions, students are not always given instructions about who the text is addressed to, and thus what interpersonal language choices are appropriate. In the case of the text activities to be completed, since texts don't provide any information about the relationship between the users involved, students don't have the opportunity to understand how the language functions as a resource to realize meanings.

The most common contextualized activities found in the textbooks analyzed are those based on texts which reveal whether the language is designed for spoken or written use, and the role of language users involved, such as dialogues, emails, mobile texts, web announcements. Such activities allow analysis of wording choices, or require learners to pay attention to the language features suitable for making certain meanings appropriate to the context in which they need to use Chinese: e.g., replying to a mobile text message from a friend. Similarly, the communicative practices presented in the textbooks represent contextualized activities. Completing communicative practice requires learners to reflect on how to formulate the language needed to interact with others, and hence to choose the linguistic forms needed to encode meanings appropriate to a specific social interaction. Communicative practice activities, such as creating a dialogue between a traveller who lost his suitcase and the Lost & Found officer, encourage learners to conceive of language as social interaction, and to raise their awareness of language features as resources for making meaning within particular contexts. As observed by Tomlin (1994):

> "Models of input and interaction argue that SLA is facilitated when L2 input is provided in an environment rich in subject matter information and social interaction. […] Use and interaction thus form a central research core in SLA research, a research core completely aligned with functional approaches to language." (p. 149).

Our findings have shown that the types of activities in the four textbooks examined are not always sufficiently contextualized to enable students to work out the relationships between forms and meanings. In particular, a smaller percentage of language resources were found that allow students to identify what linguistic choices create social interaction (interpersonal). Teaching materials need to include more details about who the users are and what are the status and power relationships between them when constructing activities: for example, in presenting a written text, the explanation of the exercise should also include information about the social position of the writer and the kind of audience the text is designed for. According to SFL theory, the three metafunctions simultaneously cooperate toward the construction of meaning, and hence contextualized teaching activities need to provide language features that allow a metalinguistic analysis of the entire meaning making process; exercise instructions also,

need to provide information about the appropriate meanings to create in order to allow learners to make the relevant linguistic choices. As argued by Hasan & Perrett (1994):

> "learning language is learning how to mean and that *linguistic* meaning is meant by lexicogrammatical patterns. If this is so, then enabling the students to perceive what meanings are typically exchanged in what context would have to be an essential goal of any responsible pedagogy." (p. 217).

FL textbooks focusing on a communicative approach to language teaching, in addition to providing activities to teach students how to use the FL correctly in real life contexts and for specific purposes, should also include contextualized input at the text level, in order to allow the understanding of how language structures realize meanings. As argued by Hasan & Perrett (1994), communicative and task-based teaching "are often only a means of making communicative methodology more goal-centred; they do not intrinsically do anything to link language use systematically to its context" (p. 207).

Among the four textbooks, DC is the most oriented to a functional approach to language: it provides the greatest number of contextualized activities that allow lexicogrammatical analysis. In contrast, NPCR, is the most structure-oriented textbook: it presents a majority of grammar-focused and decontextualized activities that merely focus on rule application and don't allow students to understand how language features encode meanings: e.g., translation of single sentences, cloze tests in single sentences, substitution drills. Based on the assumption that learning language is "learning how to mean" (cf. the title of Halliday, 1975), our analysis has demonstrated that three out of the four textbooks don't provide enough opportunities to allow students to become aware of the systemic nature of language or to discover how language users make systematic choices in specific contexts. The teaching materials for Chinese as a foreign language analyzed here still include partially or wholly decontextualized types of activities, such as individual and limited sentences that don't allow students to go beyond the grammar structure, and types of activities that don't provide data about language users, nor the context in which they are used and for what purpose. Such exercises do not enable learners to deepen their understanding of the systemic nature of language, nor help them realize what makes a text cohesive through the linguistic features of clauses.

7. Conclusion

This study analyzed four Chinese FL textbooks for beginners, with the purpose of examining the extent to which the language and types of activities used in the textbooks, including the presentation of grammatical patterns, can raise learners' awareness of grammar and enable them to recognize the fundamental meaning-making function of language.

It is now widely accepted that the explicit processing of grammar and the development of metalinguistic competence have an impact in language learning, and SFL theory offers a means whereby explicit knowledge of grammar can be applied in language education, as stated by Hasan & Perrett (1994): "Applied linguistics has certainly been concerned with context of situation, with meaning, and with form, but without making explicit the ways in which these three aspects of language description are inherently related and interdependent" (p. 205). The systematic explanation provided by SFL of how language makes meaning in social contexts enhances language teaching and learning. To perform such explicit explanations, teachers not only need to be trained to master SFL constructs and "to be sensitive to linguistic functionality [...]; they need to be able to relate saying to meaning and meaning to the perception and creation of social contexts." (p. 205), they also need to have access to suitable FL teaching resources, in particular through specially devised textbooks, which play a key guiding role in the classroom. In order to identify the appropriate teaching resources to reveal the grammatical system of the language at work, it is useful to observe what kinds of texts and types of activities are included in such teaching materials and whether those texts and exercises can enable teachers and students to carry

out analysis of the wording. It is crucial to investigate the types of activities used in FL textbooks and whether or not such activities show how different linguistic choices are made in relation to the topic of the text, the relationship between users, and the organization of information into text; in short, to what extent they provide a contextualized presentation of texts.

The current study applied an SFL-based framework to reveal the extent to which textbooks facilitate this kind of lexicogrammatical analysis. It demonstrated that in all of the textbooks examined, grammar explanations still follow the traditional model: the textbooks describe grammatical items according to their grammatical classes, and do not provide authentic instances of language in use. Moreover, only one out of the four textbooks presents samples of the target language in a continuous form, while in the other textbooks, samples of the target language are introduced through limited and decontextualized sentences. The application of an SFL-based-framework also revealed that the types of activities and the texts utilized in them are not sufficiently contextualized: while they provide information for recognizing the systemic lexicogrammatical choices encoding ideational and textual meanings, they still lack essential information for explaining interpersonal meaning. In three of the analyzed textbooks, texts and activities are not sufficiently contextualized and provide only limited opportunities to uncover the correlations between form, meaning and context.

Although there still is much work to be done by researchers, authors of foreign language textbooks, and publishers in the industry, this study has shown that the functional perspective has been partially adopted in one of the analyzed textbooks. Hopefully, the present study can be helpful for teachers in textbook selection, providing a useful framework to examine specific activities in the books they are expected to choose. Furthermore, these results can offer suggestions for authors in redesigning textbooks, encouraging them to present the language as a meaning-making resource and favoring the creation of teaching materials that enable students to recognize how form and meaning are interrelated.

In addition, this study has shown the efficacy of an SFL model for textbook analysis: investigating language through the lens of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, has made possible the evaluation of the extent to which the language and instructional features used in the textbooks are associated with the relevant social contexts. This model of textbook analysis allows analysts to evaluate the language activities employed by authors for didactic purposes. Adopting a functional perspective enables teachers and researchers to judge the extent to which textbooks' language is contextualized in specific contexts and for specific purposes, similarly to the authentic forms used in real-life.

Ultimately, this study proves that besides its application to discourse analysis and teaching and learning processes, SFL theory, which has been developed to a significant degree in response to the applied needs of language education (Christie, 2004), is also appropriate for the selection of teaching materials: it provides data about the functional components of the language included in texts and the types of activities used in textbooks. The application of a systemic functional theoretical framework to textbook analysis put forward in this paper highlights the great contribution such a theory can make in educational settings. In addition to its contribution to the theoretical investigation of language, systemic functional theory applied to the analysis of textbooks can "bring innovation, clarity and new directions to educational activities" (Christie, 2018, p. 1), in line with the purpose that can be said to have initially inspired its genesis: the enhancing of the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

Appendix A

Textbooks Analyzed

Arslangul, A., Jin, Y., Lamouroux C., & Pillet, I. (2016). *Ni shuo ya! A1/A2*. Editions Didier.

Ding, A., Chen, X., Jin. L. (2010). *Discover China. Student's book one*. Macmillan Education /FLTRP.

Liu, X., (2003). *New practical Chinese reader Vol. 1*. Beijing Language Culture University Press.

Masini, F., Zhang, T., Gabbianelli, G., Wang, R. (2018). *Parliamo cinese. Corso di lingua e cultura cinese Vol. 1*. Hoepli.

Appendix B

Description of Analysed Textbooks and Units

Textbook	*Ni shuo ya!* 你说呀!	*Parliamo Cinese* 我们说汉语 *Women shuo hanyu*	*Discover China*	*New Practical Chinese Reader*
Country and date of publication	France, 2016	Italy, 2018	UK, 2010	China, 2003
Acronym used in the paper	(NSY)	(PC)	(DC)	(NPCR)
Unit	Unit 7 Lesson 1	Unit 3 Lesson 3c	Unit 5	Lesson 8
Contents	*Listening:* comprendre des échanges de jeunes Chinois sur les gouts vestimentaires, l'uniforme à l'école et l'argent de poche; *Speaking:* énoncer et justifier des achats de vetements, donner son avis sur l'uniforme scolaire; résumer une discussion sur l'argent de poche; *Speaking interaction:* échanger sur les habitude d'achat, jouer une scène d'achat vestimentaire et discuter del l'argent de poche. *Reading:* comprendre un questionnaire sur la mode et une enquete sur l'uniforme scolaire; comprendre des témoignages de jeunes sur leur achats. *Writing:* rédiger une petite annonce pour vendre de vetements.	*Funzione comunicativa:* Chiedere e dire il numero di telefono; fare una richiesta; Chiedere e motivare una scelta.	Listening and reading: -Identifying contact numbers; -Identifying postal email address; -Text messages; *Speaking Writing:* -Asking for and giving information about contact numbers and addresses; -Writing addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses; -Responding to text message.	*Drills and practice:* Talking about one's family Asking about someone's occupation Talking about someone's university
Unit title	买什么穿什么	Parlare di se stessi	这是我的电话号码	你家有几口人？
Lesson title	买哪一件？	你的电话号码是多少？	-	-

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汉语作为外语教材的系统功能语言学分析

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摘要
功能导向的语言教育研究认为，语言教学与学习的目标应是使语言学习者在一定情境中能够使用恰当的语言形式。系统功能语言学重视研究语言的表意机制，在语言教育中广为应用。然而系统功能语言学背景的教师也需要为其教学目的择用适当的教材。本研究以系统功能语言学为理论框架，考察四部汉语作为外语的入门教材，分析教材中语法知识的呈现和教学活动的设计是否有助于学习者表达意义。研究结果表明，四部教材的教学活动设计并不总能帮助学生理解一定情境下语言形式与意义的关系。其中三部教材未能充分展示语言的系统特征，未能揭示语言使用者如何做出符合语境的语言系统选择。本研究同时展现系统功能语言学模式在教材分析领域的效用，系统功能语言学有助于语言教师选择教材，也有助于教学编写者设计教材，将语言有效呈现为表意资源。

关键词
汉语作为外语；汉语语法教学；外语教材；系统功能语言学；教材分析

Gloria Gabbianelli（高莉雅），意大利乌尔比诺大学交际科学、人文与国际研究系长聘教轨助理教授。讲授硕士及本科汉语课程。研究兴趣包括汉语作为第二语言、汉语作为外语，汉语习得与教育、教学技术和教学材料研究。成果主要涉及汉语作为外语的习得与教育。作为意大利教育部下属中学汉语课程委员会委员（2015-2016）参与编写意大利高中汉语教材。