

Mr Collins,

Thank you for sending me Dr Ferguson's draft paper.

My response to your email of 22.12.09 is in two parts: the first deals with Dr Ferguson's draft paper, the second with the editorial statement.

Dr Ferguson's draft paper.

I note that while you imposed a condition on me that I should deal with matters of grammar, not persons, you clearly did not impose the same condition on Dr Ferguson. Her paper says very little about grammar and a good deal about persons, including critical assertions about me, which I shall not be allowed to respond to in your journal or on your website, just as I was not allowed to respond to the Management Committee's and the Author's Statements in the September 2008 *Words'Worth*.

There are many things in the draft that are objectionable. As with my 'Errors' paper, I quote from the text and then add my comment.

- [1] 'I sent Professor Huddleston a substantial written response (Nov-Dec 2007) to his initial critique of 23 pages. ... It seems that my formal response to his first critical review was ignored or not taken seriously. Its existence is denied in his current critique'. (p. 2, para 3)

I begin with this point because it relates directly to what I have said above about the different conditions applying to my paper and Dr Ferguson's. For the earlier version of my paper (entitled 'Defects in the "Coalface Grammar"') did include some discussion of Dr Ferguson's document 'Specific response to Rodney Huddlestorne's [sic] *Remarks*'. She challenged three specific points in my draft: one related to an example which I dropped from the published version rather than argue about, while the other two related to criticisms I had made concerning her account of verbal group structure and imperative clauses. These two (which we also discussed at the time) I dealt with in items [12] and [51] of the 'Defects' paper: relevant excerpts are reproduced in the Appendix below. I also referred to her 'Specific response' paper in the Conclusion, noting that her final comment, 'I have much to read, study, reflect upon, and talk about. Thank you.' gave no indication that she thought the great majority of my criticisms were invalid, and that she did there acknowledge inconsistency in relation to the distinction between groups and phrases and an error in the treatment of idioms, although these do not figure in her subsequent 'Errata' list. I attach a copy of her 'Specific response' document.

In revising my 'Defects' paper in order to comply with your condition that it deal with grammar not persons, I had no option but to remove these references to her 'Specific response' document: they were not essential and it would have been impossible to retain them without referring to Dr Ferguson. It is thus not true that I ignored her 'formal response' or didn't take it seriously: the fact that there is no mention of that document in my 'Errors' paper is a consequence of my complying with the condition that you imposed. Nor does my 'Errors' paper deny the existence of that document: it simply doesn't mention it, for the reason just given. Note, in particular, that its existence is not denied by the statement on p. 3 of 'Errors' that 'it is now over eighteen months since I submitted the earlier "Problems" paper, but in this time not one of the errors I discussed has been argued to be not a genuine error'. We had discussed my criticisms of her account of verbal group structure and imperatives before I submitted 'Problems', with Dr Ferguson concluding the discussion (email of 09.12.07) as follows:

'The emails from you that I have just read dispel some of the confusion I was experiencing. I thank you for the attachment on imperatives, and look forward to reading it closely. Your points 1 and 3 I will "worry" when I get home until I see

your point or until I challenge you, or I will ask for further explanation, if I may.' She never referred to these matters again.

- [2] 'It is disappointing that Professor Huddleston withdrew his initial agreement to work collaboratively to support literacy teaching through selective and strategic use of grammar' (p. 2, penultimate para).

It is not true to say that I withdrew my initial agreement to work collaboratively. In a document entitled 'Response to your remarks on *Grammar at the Coalface*' attached to an email of 30.11.07, Dr Ferguson made a 'Proposal for a way forward' in two parts; one concerned my paper for *Words'Worth*, the other collaborative work to be published on the ETAQ website, namely:

- a brief overview of Standard English Grammar [Dr Ferguson's puzzling name for the approach followed in *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*] (mainly your [=RH's] responsibility)
- a brief overview of Systemic Functional Grammar (mainly my [=LF's] responsibility)
- notes on aligning both grammar (joint responsibility – many of your comments in *Remarks* will contribute to the planning of this component)
- examples of student activities where the grammars are taught and used (joint responsibility between us and teachers). Such a practical component would likely make the difference between teachers taking up the grammars or not.'

As for the first of these, I said I would prefer to write such an overview singly rather than jointly: this I did, and the resulting paper 'A Short Overview of English Syntax: Based on *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*' was posted on the ETAQ website in April 2008. I did agree to collaborate on the second item, but Dr Ferguson herself put a stop to that: in an email dated 25.01.08 she wrote: 'I ... regrettably withdraw my invitation for you to work with Ray [McGuire] and myself in 2008'. In my reply of the next day I wrote: 'I hope you will reconsider that decision ... If you do I shall be ready to comment on draft material'. She did not change her mind on this issue, and the work described in the last three bullet points above was never done. It is thus quite wrong to say that I withdrew my agreement to work collaboratively: it was Dr Ferguson herself who terminated the agreement.

There are two points I would add here. In the first place the above proposal that she put forward at the end of November 2007 implies that she accepted that there was a good deal more wrong with the Coalface Grammar than '[a] small handful of proofing errors ... and a couple of editorial oversights' (p. 2, last para but two of her current draft): the brief overview of Systemic Functional Grammar was needed because the Coalface Grammar failed to give a sound account of it.

Secondly, I should perhaps explain, for the record, that the reason why Dr Ferguson withdrew her invitation was that she was angered by my saying in a draft of my *Words'Worth* article that, as editor, she took the view that all specific criticism of the Coalface papers should be confined to my website article. That statement was of course true; in my view the exclusion of specific criticisms from my *Words'Worth* paper was a mistake, and I wanted to make clear that it was not my decision. In the light of her response I removed the offending sentence from my draft. Still for the record, I attach a copy of the second draft of my journal article (which makes general points and then shows how relevant errors in the Coalface Grammar could have been avoided if these points had been noted) and of Dr Ferguson's proposed editorial revision of it).

- [3] 'It is unnecessary to post a detailed reply to Professor Huddleston's 'Errors in the Coalface Grammar'. Essentially, he presents, as errors, statements that do not exist in my articles, and he demands a great deal of additional material ...' (p. 1, para 2)

The claim in the second sentence that I treat as errors things that are not actually in her articles is false. Most of the errors catalogued had already been identified in my earlier 'Problems' paper, and there was no similar claim made about that paper. The falsity of the claim is particularly obvious in the case of my 'Errors' paper because each numbered item in §II, Schedule of errors, which constitutes the bulk of the paper, begins with a citation from the Coalface Grammar. For example, in item [23] I cite the sentence 'Pronouns do not inflect' and show that it is an error. How could I be talking about a statement that does not 'exist' in her articles, when those words actually occur on p. 38 of the first article? Or take item [46], where I quote as follows from p. 50 of the second article:

'A noun group has up to three major sections:

1. pre-modifying structures ...

(b) ADJECTIVES

a. numeratives or quantity adjectives (*two, several, many, SET OF* as in *many mountain peaks*) How many? How much?

Here *set of* is included in a list of adjectives, so the Coalface Grammar is saying that *set of* is an adjective, which is an error. I am identifying an error that clearly appears in the text. Dr Ferguson presents no evidence for her claim, and she gives no example of an item in my catalogue of errors that is invalid by virtue of attributing to the Coalface Grammar a statement or analysis that is not in fact to be found there. The first version of 'Errors' was written in preparation for my defence in the legal defamation proceedings that Dr Ferguson threatened in October 2008, and I wouldn't have been so foolish as to lay myself open to the charge of attributing to Dr Ferguson statements or analyses that were not contained in the Coalface Grammar. It seemed apparent that Dr Ferguson had not properly understood the earlier 'Problems' paper in that she had accepted so few errors: in 'Errors' I therefore spelt things out in painstaking detail and this, together with the extensive citations from the Coalface Grammar, resulted in the paper being a good deal longer than the earlier one. But of course the main reason why it is so long is that there were so many errors to catalogue.

Given that the claim that I attribute to the Coalface Grammar statements (or analyses) that aren't actually in it is false, it certainly is necessary for Dr Ferguson to make a detailed response to my 'Errors' paper. The writer of a teaching resource has a moral obligation to correct significant errors. The 'Errors' paper is appearing on the ETAQ website and although you scrupulously avoid endorsing it the fact that you are publishing it implies that you consider it to be worth the attention of readers interested in the Coalface Grammar. Moreover the earlier 'Problems' paper was endorsed by Professor Randy LaPolla, President of the Australian Linguistics Society. The catalogue of errors contains a great amount of detailed evidence, and there is no justification for Dr Ferguson's unwillingness to take it seriously. Members of the Association are entitled to a detailed response indicating whether she accepts my arguments and if not, why not.

[4] 'The "Grammar at the Coalface" series is now old business from a practitioner point of view.' (p.1, para 1)

'Our ETAQ journal articles become buried as new ones appear and members engage in their demanding work. ... But most of us have moved on (p. 1, para 3)

'It is also disappointing that [Professor Huddleston] has devoted two years to a print and web campaign to widely discredit my articles in professional and public domains' (p.2, penultimate para)

There are two points to make here, the first having to do with the issue of the amount of time

that has elapsed since the publication of the Coalface Grammar.

(a) Dr Ferguson fails to mention the crucial fact that the 'Grammar at the Coalface articles' were presented as a teaching resource written in response to requests from members 'uncertain how to include functional grammar in classrooms'. A teaching resource is something teachers are invited to use in the preparation of their classes. I cannot think it was the intention that teachers should use the Coalface Grammar in preparing their 2008 classes and then move on to something new for the 2009 year (or move back to what they had been doing before). The natural expectation is that they would use the material until it was superseded (as it no doubt would be following the introduction of the forthcoming national curriculum). I did my best to have the material corrected by the March 2008 *Words'Worth* but was frustrated in my efforts by Dr Ferguson's refusal to admit that it needed more than a few corrections. It is this refusal that has led to the long struggle to alert readers to the numerous and serious errors in it.

(b) The second point concerns Dr Ferguson's remark about my 'discrediting her work'. When I first contacted her in July 2007 I was very conscious of the fact that what I had to say had the potential to cause her great embarrassment, and I tried to handle the matter with tact. My first email began:

I recently came across your article 'Grammar at the coal face: the structural basics' in the March issue of *Words'Worth*. It's good to see that you're presenting a teachers' resource with a fair amount of nitty gritty detail in it. But it is a daunting task you have set yourself, and I have to say I think there are a considerable number of places where what you say is open to objection.

I gave some examples, and suggested writing a reply, ending my email as follows:

I would emphasise that my focus would be on presenting a sounder and clearer account of the material, not on criticising your paper: I am now retired and am enjoying a peaceful, stress-free life, and have no wish to get involved in any unpleasantness. I have, however, devoted much of my academic career to working on English grammar, and feel I could make some useful contribution to helping teachers get an outline understanding of the structure of English.

My concern throughout has been to do what I can to avoid a situation where teachers take erroneous material from the Coalface Grammar and present it in their classes. Note that when I had occasion to write to you on 10.04.08 about my concerns over the timing of the posting of my 'Problems' paper on the ETAQ website, I wrote:

[I] feel it would be best if I said quite unequivocally at the outset that in my judgement these two articles are shockingly bad

I gave examples and elaborated on this assessment, but then added:

That work of this quality should have been published in such circumstances is of course very distressing, and I have been conscious from the start that it has the potential to be a cause of deep embarrassment for Lenore. (In correspondence with her I accordingly did not express myself as forcefully as I have done above, and I would ask you not to copy this email to her.)

The goal of avoiding the use of erroneous Coalface material in the preparation of classes while minimising embarrassment to Dr Ferguson could have been achieved if she had

withdrawn the original versions and provided corrected revised versions. Inevitably, this would have been embarrassing, but no one need have known what a large number of errors there had been, and she would have gained respect for her courage.

Unfortunately, she was not willing to do this, and decided on a policy of large-scale denial. Her commentary in the March 2008 *Words'Worth* acknowledged just four errors, a very small fraction of the number I had identified, and my 'Problems' paper was presented not as an account of the shortcomings of the Coalface Grammar relevant to all members considering using it as a teaching resource but as a paper 'requiring readers to have extensive knowledge of traditional, structural and functional grammars' and of potential interest to a highly restricted audience. In these circumstances I felt I had no alternative but to change course and to discredit the Coalface Grammar with the aim of alerting your members to the danger of using it in the preparation of classroom material.

[5] 'In his current paper, [Professor Huddleston] replaces my practical framing with a theoretical one and critiques my articles from this superimposed perspective. He demands an extensive, pure grammar rather than my hybrid selection and combination of material and practices that are effective in developing literacy skills.

... By renaming "Grammar at the coalface" as "The Coalface Grammar", he signals a repositioning from the practical to the theoretical. He confirms this change when he explains that he excluded from his considerations my framing introduction in the first article and the illustrative learning episodes and activities' (p. 1, last two paras)

In the September 2008 *Words'Worth* Dr Ferguson had said that some of the errors I alleged were not errors but simply differences resulting from my not taking a functional perspective like that which is predominant in her articles. I refuted this claim in §1b of 'Errors', and I am glad to see that Dr Ferguson is no longer taking this line: instead she complains about my taking a 'theoretical perspective'.

I do not RENAME 'Grammar at the Coalface' as 'The Coalface Grammar'. The former is the name of a series of eight articles, whereas I introduced the latter as a cover term for the two articles I was concerned with – the two articles whose major focus is on the description of aspects of English grammar. With a couple of exceptions, I didn't discuss the illustrative learning episodes and activities because I did not feel qualified to do so as I have had no experience of teaching English in schools. It is uncontested, however, that the two chapters contain a good deal of material that presents a description of major aspects of English grammar, and because this material is so defective it was perfectly proper to devote my critique to it. Notice that, as with the earlier claim about my not taking a functional perspective, Dr Ferguson does not identify anything that I call an error which would not be an error if considered from a practical framing point of view. How does the alleged difference of perspective have a bearing on, for example, the classification of *Sam's* in *Sam's folder* as a possessive pronoun or of *set of* in *a set of bowls* as an adjective? Indeed, one of the most striking things about these errors is that it is pedagogically unsound to include *Sam's* in a column headed 'possessive pronoun' and *set of* in one headed 'numerative or quantity adjective' without drawing the reader's attention to the highly unorthodox nature of these analyses, let alone giving evidence in support of them.

It is not true that I demand 'an extensive, pure grammar rather than [a] hybrid selection'. I will deal with the 'extensive' and 'pure' components of this in turn.

(a) 'Extensive' has to do with how much is covered, and I assume Dr Ferguson is here making the same point as in the September 2008 *Words'Worth*, where she complained about an apparent perception on my part that the brief articles 'should provide exhaustive details'. I dealt with this false claim at relevant parts of 'Errors'. For example, in item [50] I dealt with the error of DEFINING imperative clauses as having no subject, citing examples of commonplace imperatives

that do contain a subject, but I emphasised that I was not saying that it was necessary to exemplify such clauses in a short overview. My point was that they should not be explicitly excluded. There's only a length difference of one word between 'Imperatives can't have a subject' and 'Imperatives usually don't have a subject', but it is sufficient to change a false statement into a true one.

(b) 'Pure' contrasts with 'hybrid', which I take to mean "eclectic". It will be evident from my web paper, 'Problems with the Coalface Grammar', that I do not advocate a pure functional grammar. The paper is divided into three parts – 1: Inconsistency, error and confusion in *CF* itself; 2: Problems with functional grammar; 3: Simplifying functional grammar. Part 2 deals with two topics where I find functional grammar's analysis unsatisfactory: the concept of complement and the treatment of groups headed by adjectives. Part 3 suggests various ways of simplifying functional grammar to make it more appropriate for use in schools. I was thus very much advocating an eclectic approach.

Writing an eclectic grammar, however, is a good deal more difficult than writing a grammar that follows a single approach. You need to have a sound knowledge of all the models you draw on and be aware of the relations between them. My criticism of the Coalface Grammar is not that it is eclectic but that it is inconsistent, selecting mutually incompatible elements from different grammatical models. The traditional concept of complement, for example, is very different from that found in functional grammar, and it therefore won't do for the Coalface Grammar to introduce it first in the traditional sense and then silently switch over to the functional grammar sense (see 'Errors', item [7]).

- [6] 'Any item in a list is, of necessity, out of its context. Thus there is the possibility of misrepresentation. Perhaps this is why about half the items in [Professor Huddleston's] lists state that I "classified" words incorrectly. The word *classify* does not appear in my articles.

Teachers know from experience that classificatory grammar causes confusion for students. By operating with the grammatical function of words, however, students can consider more easily how language structures contribute to meaning. I took the latter approach and clarified it early in my first article ... Specifically, I stated:

Many words can belong to more than one word class. They are assigned a word class according to the grammatical role they play in each instance, e.g. a round of drinks (noun), a round clock (adjective), round the edge (verb), go round (adverb), go round the corner (preposition).

Words were thus considered for their capacity to function grammatically in certain classes. I was explicitly concerned with function and not classification, e.g. 'porcelain' in 'porcelain figurine' functions as an adjective (*What kind?*), and therefore is an adjective in that context.' (p. 2, from l. 2)

There are two points to make here.

- (a) You don't need to use the word 'classify' in order to classify. 'Classify' means "to assign to classes", and Dr Ferguson uses that expression in the italicised quotation from the first Coalface article. When she includes an item in a list or column headed 'Adjective' she is assigning that item to the class adjective, hence classifying it. There is, quite naturally, a great deal of classification in the Coalface Grammar: early in the first article, for example, we find over four pages devoted to word classes – the parts of speech.

Precisely because words can belong to more than one class, there is no implication that when an item is assigned to a given class – adjective, say – it does not also belong to another. On p. 37 of the first article, for example, *square* is included in a list of adjectives, i.e. classified as an adjective, but I naturally didn't call that a classification error on the grounds that it can also

be a noun. I talked of errors only when an item is assigned to a class that it never belongs to. There is no construction in which *a pair* (or *pair of*) or *set of* is an adjective.

(b) The second point is that although Dr Ferguson uses the terms FUNCTION and CLASS, she fails to distinguish correctly between them, just as she did in the Coalface Grammar. To quote from 'Errors', p.5:

A function is a relational concept: when we say that in *The meeting started late*, for example, *the meeting* is Subject, we are describing its relation to the verb; in *They started the meeting late*, by contrast, *the meeting* stands in a different relation to the verb and is functioning as Object. A class, on the other hand, is a set of expressions which are alike in the language system: when we say that *the meeting* is a noun group we are saying that it behaves grammatically in broadly the same way as *a book, that car, my uncle*, and so on.

Similarly, modifier is a function term, while adjective is a class term. In *a round clock*, say, *round* stands in the relation of modifier to the head noun *clock*, and it belongs to the class adjective because it is broadly the same kind of word as *big, strong, beautiful*, etc. Now function (or functional potential) is a major factor determining the class of words, but it is not the only one – as in fact is evident from Dr Ferguson's account of the parts of speech in the first Coalface article, where she gives a number of criterial properties. So when she says in the above passage,

I was explicitly concerned with function and not classification, e.g. 'porcelain' in 'porcelain figurine' functions as an adjective (*What kind?*), and therefore is an adjective in that context.

she is confused and mistaken. It doesn't make sense to say that *porcelain* in her example 'functions as an adjective' because 'adjective' is the name of a class, not a function: she should say that it functions as modifier. And, for the same reason, it is a mistake to say that in calling *porcelain* an adjective she is explicitly concerned with function, not classification, since she is assigning it a class label, not a function label. You can't identify the class adjective with the function modifier. Not all adjectives function as modifiers: *afraid, amiss, asleep, bereft, content, remiss* and the like belong to the adjective class, but they do not function as modifiers – they function as attributes. So you can say *The child was afraid*, but not **the afraid child*, and so on. And, conversely, not all modifiers are adjectives. Common and proper nouns also function as modifiers: *a government inquiry, the Rudd government*, and so on. It is thus an error to classify *porcelain* as an adjective in *a porcelain figurine*: it is a noun functioning as modifier. It has the same function as the adjective *valuable* in *a valuable figurine*, but in the language system it is a different kind of word than *valuable*: it belongs with *government, Rudd*, etc. in the class of nouns. Functional grammar places great emphasis on the distinction between functions and classes, and thus naturally allows that certain kinds of modifier can be realised as nouns, treating examples like *porcelain figurine* in the way just described: see *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, p. 320. Note also that in his letter to Dr Ferguson of 20.07.08 endorsing my critique and recommendation, Professor Randy LaPolla, President of the Australian Linguistic Society, included almost a whole page explaining functional grammar's concepts of function and class, and illustrated with a construction like *porcelain figurine*, namely *school building*, with *school* classified as a noun. It is remarkable, moreover, that while this is the only place in her reply to my 'Errors' article where she actually discusses some specific point of grammar she fails to make any reference to my item [9], where I present the grammatical evidence for treating *porcelain* here as a noun, not an adjective.

The same confusion between the class term adjective and the function term modifier is seen on p. 39 of the first Coalface article, where Dr Ferguson writes: 'Determiners appear as determining adjectives in noun groups, e.g. an exciting book, the new book, those useful books'. This is incoherent, for the underlined words can't belong simultaneously to two distinct parts of speech. They belong to the class determiner, and function as modifier (or, on a different

dimension of noun group structure, what functional grammar calls 'deictic'): see 'Errors', pp. 18–19.

The distinction between function and class occupied a significant place in the discussions Dr Ferguson and I had in January 2008, by email and in a face-to-face meeting. The first version of the critique of the Coalface Grammar that I wrote had been too long for publication in *Words'Worth*, and it had been agreed that I should write a relatively short article for the journal and a longer one for publication on the ETAQ website. Early in January 2008 I submitted the first draft of the journal article, in which I discussed just a sample of the errors, and the next day I sent in a few pages of the website article, which I conceived of as a supplement to the one in the journal. These pages dealt with the concepts of function and class. Dr Ferguson's reaction was to say that this expository material on function and class would be more appropriate for the journal article than the discussion of a sample of errors. It was agreed, then, that the journal article should deal with the function/class distinction and a couple of other topics. Significantly, Dr Ferguson saw this as providing 'information about key grammatical concepts not dealt with in coalface'. She was thus admitting that the Coalface Grammar failed to explain what is probably the most basic and important conceptual distinction in functional grammar. But there is no mention of this fundamental defect in the response she made to my 'Problems' paper in the March 2008 *Words'Worth* or in later statements. The present document admits only 'a small handful of proofing errors ... and a couple of editorial oversights', and the quotation in [6] above betrays confusion and error concerning the function/class distinction in general and the analysis of noun groups like *porcelain figurine* in particular, suggesting a lack of awareness and understanding of functional grammar's treatment of these matters. It is deeply depressing to find this appearing in what is scheduled as the last ETAQ publication on the Coalface Grammar.

- [7] '[I acknowledged] several proofing errors in lists of examples that were erroneously described as "classification" errors. These subsequently appeared in our journal as "errata".' (p. 2, para 3)

I don't know what Dr Ferguson means by a 'proofing error': in particular, I don't know how one could verify whether or not a certain error was a proofing error or not. The use of the term seems designed to diminish the seriousness of the error, for its most obvious application is to typos. She says in the March 2008 *Words'Worth* that the inclusion of *won't* and *capable of* in a list of modal adverbs ('Errors', item [14]) arose because '[o]riginally the list illustrated modality, generally'. Leaving aside the question of how the original version of a chapter on the 'structural basics' came to contain a list of modal words, the move from this version to the one where we are presented with a list of modal adverbs is not a matter of proof-reading, but of revising, re-writing, the text. In any case, from the reader's perspective the seriousness of an error depends on how what appears in the text differs from the truth. The inclusion of *won't* and *capable of* as examples of adverbs is certainly a very serious error because the expressions are so utterly different from adverbs in their grammatical behaviour. And it is certainly not erroneous to call this a classification error: the text classifies these items as adverbs but they don't in fact belong to that class, and hence are wrongly classified. Proofing error and classification error are not mutually exclusive: the former apparently has to do with how the error was made while the latter has to do with the nature of the error independently of how it was made.

- [8] 'A small handful of proofing errors in over 1200 examples in the series, and a couple of editorial oversights, reportedly did not cause confusion.' (p. 2, para 4)

Dr Ferguson has so far corrected only five errors, but the implication of exhaustiveness in her

list of 'Errata' lacks credibility for the following reasons:

- (a) The erroneous classification of *a pair* as an adjective was not acknowledged in the March 2008 *Words'Worth* 'Errata', but it was acknowledged in the September issue, after attention had been drawn to it in *The Australian* of 13.06.08. This raises the question of why it was not acknowledged in the March issue. I had drawn her attention to this error in no less than five documents before that issue: the first draft of my web article, 'Remarks on the Coalface Grammar' (22.10.07), an email expressing concern as to whether Dr Ferguson was taking the matter seriously enough (03.01.08), the first draft of my journal paper, 'Problems with the Coalface Grammar' (07.01.08), the second draft of it (14.01.08), and the second draft of my website article, with the title 'Problems with the Coalface Grammar' now applying to this, not the journal article (10.02.08). How was it possible for her to miss this error if she read these documents carefully and drew up her 'Errata' list conscientiously?
- (b) The 'Errata' list acknowledges that *who* in *The explorer who saw the carnage ahead ran in fear* is a pronoun, not a conjunction, but fails to note that the same applies to *what* in the preceding example *They saw what lay before them* ('Errors', item 29): there are two instances here of effectively the same error. What reason could there be for omitting *what* from the 'Errata' list?
- (c) Dr Ferguson's 'Specific Response' document (07.12.07) acknowledges a number of errors not mentioned in the 'Errata'. Under the heading 'Groups and Phrases' she writes: '“Group” causes confusion. Inconsistency acknowledged' (cf. 'Errors', item [30]). Under the heading 'Group classes – Idioms do not form grammatical units', she writes 'Anomalies are noted. This is an important distinction' (cf. 'Errors', item [15]).
- (d) We have seen in the discussion of quotation [6] above that in January 2008 Dr Ferguson admitted that the distinction between function and class was not dealt with in the Coalface Grammar; the failure to deal with this is the source of a good few errors, e.g. items [30], [45], [62] in 'Errors', but these are not covered in the 'Errata' list.
- (e) A large number of errors involve inconsistencies. How, for example, could it not be an error to say on one page that prepositions appear as head word in preposition phrases and then on the next that preposition phrases have no head ('Errors', item [28])? Yet this and similar inconsistencies do not appear in the 'Errata' list.
- (f) There are other errors which are so obvious that I'm at a loss to understand why they were not acknowledged. Particularly striking here is the classification of *Sam's* as a possessive pronoun ('Errors', item [60]).
- (g) I have given evidence and argument in support of each claim I make that such and such a passage in the Coalface Grammar is in error. If Dr Ferguson wishes to deny that they are errors she needs to provide counter-evidence and argument. But she systematically refuses to engage in academic debate of this kind. Note, for example, the case of her classification of *set of* as an adjective ('Errors', item [46]). Much of the evidence against this analysis had been given in my 'Problems' paper, yet in the September 2008 *Words'Worth* she amended the list of numerative or quantity adjectives by replacing *a pair* by *pair of* (i.e. another expression like *set of*) without any explanation or justification.

Conclusion

It is incontestable that the Coalface Grammar contains a great many errors. This has been denied

several times, but the denials have no credibility. There are two reasons why this is so. In the first place, they are not supported by evidence or argument challenging the reasons I had given for regarding particular claims or analyses in the Coalface Grammar as errors: they are simply assertions. Secondly, the denials are vague and inexplicit: they acknowledge a small number of errors in the 'Errata' notices, but do not mention the large number of other errors I have catalogued. Thus Dr Ferguson does not say, for example, 'It is not an error to say that *Sam's* is a possessive pronoun', but nor does she say that the Coalface Grammar doesn't classify *Sam's* as a possessive pronoun. She doesn't say that it is not an error to call *set of* an adjective, but nor does she say that the Coalface Grammar doesn't classify *set of* as an adjective. And similarly for sixty-odd other errors.

Dr Ferguson has effectively ignored most of my 'Problems' and 'Errors' papers. And she likewise ignored the letter from Professor LaPolla endorsing the former, replying that she had 'no academic dispute or disagreement with Professor Huddleston'. This was obviously false, given that I argued that the Coalface Grammar was riddled with errors, while her position at the time was that the only errors were those noted and corrected in the March 2008 *Words' Worth*. The falsity of the statement is also evident from the fact that a few weeks later she took the initial steps in legal proceedings based on the claim that I had defamed her by saying that the Coalface Grammar was riddled with errors, whereas in fact all errors had been corrected before the allegedly defamatory article had appeared in *The Australian*.

Members of ETAQ were done a considerable disservice by the distribution to them of so defective a teaching resource. Dr Ferguson has a moral obligation to deal seriously with the criticisms that have been levelled against it, and given that she cannot show them to be invalid she should acknowledge the errors. It is incontestable that it would be educationally unacceptable for teachers to base their classroom material systematically and comprehensively on the Coalface Grammar. This being so, the teaching resource should be corrected, or at the very least withdrawn. For them to be told that save for a small handful of proofing errors and a couple of editorial oversights the material is sound would be to greatly compound the disservice that was done to them by the original publication of the material. It would be quite indefensible. I appeal to you to insist that Dr Ferguson radically rethink her response to my 'Errors' paper.

The Management Committee's statement

The editorial paragraph quoted in your email of 22.12.09 is quite unsatisfactory. As I said in 'Errors', 'It is not enough to say that the views expressed in *Words' Worth* articles are not necessarily those of ETAQ: members need clear guidance from the Committee to the effect that the numerous errors in the Coalface Grammar make it unsuitable for use as a teaching resource.' Let me make a final eleventh-hour attempt to persuade you to change your mind.

The crucial first step in the argument is, again, the fact that it is incontestable that the Coalface Grammar contains a great many errors. I explained above why Dr Ferguson's denials of this lack credibility, and the same applies to the denials that you yourself have made. In *The Australian* of 13.06.08 you are reported as saying:

`the mistakes were "relatively minor" ... If coming upon these couple of minor inaccuracies caused teachers to be having conversations about grammar in classrooms then I would see that as not a bad thing'

and in your email to David Vaux of 20.06.08 you wrote:

`The few real errors that appeared in the ETAQ journal **last year** were ones of proofreading in moving through several versions of a document. They were acknowledged and corrected in the next issue.'

It is not true that the mistakes are relatively minor, that there are just a couple of minor inaccuracies and that all the real errors were acknowledged in the next issue (or, rather, the March 2008 issue): this is demonstrated with masses of evidence in 'Errors'. I have to say that I do not understand how you felt able to make those statements. In the first place, I had drawn

your attention in my email of 10.04.08 to serious errors beyond those acknowledged. Secondly, you had, presumably, read my 'Problems' paper, which you had posted on the ETAQ website. Thirdly, according to the AATE website, you are 'an enthusiast for functional grammar ... and currently [tutor] at QUT on the subject'. Is it possible for you to tutor in functional grammar and not to have noticed for yourself that the Coalface Grammar gives a massively defective account of functional grammar, with numerous misrepresentations and confusions? If you are an enthusiast for functional grammar, how can you defend a teaching resource that gives such a defective account of it? I cannot believe that you currently believe these statements to be true, given the very large amount of evidence to the contrary that I have presented in 'Errors'. If you don't, then surely it is incumbent upon you to correct what you have said.

The distribution to your members of a teaching resource riddled with errors did them a serious disservice, and this has been greatly compounded by the misinformation that they have been repeatedly given. Dr Ferguson conveyed to them in the March 2008 *Words'Worth* that there were only four errors; your statements endorse this; the Management Committee's statement in the September 2008 *Words'Worth* says that my publicising the matter in *The Australian* was 'quite unnecessary', suggesting that the material, as corrected, was basically sound; Dr Ferguson's statement in the same issue acknowledges just two more errors, but gives readers to understand that the other errors I allege are spurious; and judging by the draft you have sent me her statement in the next issue of *Words'Worth* will repeat this view. In this context, why should your members be motivated to read a very long critique by a person whom they don't know, who is not a member of ETAQ and who has been criticised in the Management Committee's September 2008 statement and denied the right of reply? It is time your members were told the truth. They deserve to have the document properly corrected, or at least withdrawn.

As publisher of the Coalface Grammar, ETAQ has a responsibility to correct significant errors. This is especially so given that it is part of a teaching resource provided by ETAQ in response to inquiries or requests from members. This is quite different from a paper submitted by a rank-and-file member of the Association at their own initiative. Publishing my 'Errors' paper on your website does not absolve you from this responsibility precisely because you present it as my opinion, not as something you endorse. As things stand, we have a teaching resource published by ETAQ which says that *Sam's* is a possessive pronoun, that *set of* is an adjective, that *the books in the books fell from the shelves* is indefinite, that prepositions appear as head in preposition phrases, whereas preposition phrases have no head, and so on. Yet both author and Management Committee refuse to acknowledge that these are errors – or to say explicitly that they are not errors and give grammatical evidence in support of this claim. What possible justification is there for allowing this situation to continue? Surely you can't deny that it would be, to put it mildly, highly undesirable for your members to base their grammar teaching systematically and comprehensively on the Coalface Grammar: in that case there is an obligation on you to warn them against doing so.

Rodney Huddleston

Appendix

Excerpts from the earlier version of 'Errors' (then called 'Defects in the Coalface Grammar') referring to Dr Ferguson's 'Specific response' document.

[12] 1:37L

Verbs ...

1. lexical (semantic) or main verbs appear as HEAD words in verb groups.

This is in conflict with functional grammar: in *has eaten*, for example, the Head is not the lexical verb *eat*, or *eaten*, but the present tense component of *has* (cf. *IFG*:337 – 'The primary

tense is that functioning as Head').

This is one of only three points that Dr Ferguson challenged in her email of 7 December 2007, 'Specific response' to the first version of my website article; she wrote: 'Lexical verb is Head of verb group in a representational analysis (IFG:176)'. The reference here is to the first (1985) edition of *IFG*, but in fact there is no mention of Head on this page, and the sentence I have quoted above ('The primary tense is that functioning as Head') appears on p. 177. I pointed this out to her in my email of 8 December 2007; in her reply of 9 December she wrote, 'Your [point] I will "worry" when I get home until I see your point or until I challenge you, or I will ask for further explanation, if I may' – but she never referred to the matter again.

[51] 2:52L

...

- no Subject + no Finite DEFINES the Imperative Mood that realises a command (*Climb the mountain!*)

There are three points to make here: ...

(b) Similarly, while the simplest type of imperative clause, like *Climb the mountain*, has no Subject and no Finite, this cannot be used to DEFINE imperatives. Subjects in fact are quite common: my website article gives the examples Nobody move, You be quiet, You have a nice day, Don't you speak to me like that. Functional grammar, moreover, analyses *don't* as in *Don't move!* and *do* in *Do be careful* as Finites. Again, I am not saying that it is necessary to mention all these constructions in a short overview, but there is no justification for ruling them out by definition.

In one of only three points in her 'Specific Response' to the first version of my web article where she challenged a particular claim I had made, Dr Ferguson wrote concerning the imperatives with a Subject that I had given:

Are these really imperatives, or are they elided complex sentences, e.g., *I want you to be quiet. I hope that you have a nice day*; or are they vocative + imperative, e.g. *you, be quiet*. [Email of 7 December 2007]

The imperative Subjects are clearly distinguished from vocatives intonationally and by the fact that they can combine with genuine vocatives, as in *Don't you speak to me like that, John*. The proposal to derive the examples concerned by elision from complex sentences is inconsistent with general principles of functional grammar, and is no more motivated for imperatives with Subjects than for those without. As in the case of the challenge discussed in [12], Dr Ferguson did not pursue her challenge after we had discussed it, but she has not acknowledged that it is an error to define imperatives as lacking a Subject and a Finite. Note, further, that *you* in imperatives can be identified as Subject by the Mood tag test: *You be careful, won't you* (see [64] for this test).

[From the Conclusion]

I am at a complete loss to understand why Dr Ferguson maintains that all errors in the work had been acknowledged and corrected by the March 2008 issue of *Words'Worth*. This covers just the first four of the part-of-speech errors listed above and implies that all the other errors catalogued in my website article are not in fact errors at all. At no stage in our long email correspondence or our telephone and face-to-face conversations did she give the faintest hint that she took this view. The main focus of our discussion was on the questions of length and where specific criticisms of the Coalface Grammar should be made – in an article in *Words'Worth* or on the ETAQ website. In particular, there was no indication of such disagreement in her email document of 7 January 2007, 'Specific Response to Rodney Huddlestone's Remarks', i.e. to the first draft of my website article. On the contrary, her final

comment was 'I have much to read, study, reflect upon, and talk about. Thank you.' And she did there acknowledge inconsistency in relation to the distinction between groups and phrases and in the parts of speech classification.

Specific response to Rodney Huddlestone's Remarks

Matters are identified and discussed in their order of appearance in *Remarks*.

Several issues raised are a matter of space: a 15-page overview of structural and functional elements cannot do more than sketch 'default' descriptions. This, in itself, can of course become an issue.

Distinctions between FUNCTION and CLASS, and between the purposes of structural and functional approaches to describing language patterns need further explicit attention in schools.

The syntactic relations of English grammar are crucial, so are the semantic/grammatical patterns of FG. A solution must be found or the water becomes even muddier, leaving students less able to use texts effectively and efficiently.

RH ref	Issue	RH suggestions	LF comments	Possible action
p.1	Framework of SFG used: - minority position - not comprehensive (e.g., no cover of inflectional system of the verb) - semantic rather than grammatical evidence determines analysis	Abandon SFG in schools	SFG has proved to provide insights into ways of constructing and interpreting texts in schools. Acknowledging explicitly its semantic orientation could assist.	Reflect and discuss
p. 2	CF is not a faithful account of a FG description of English		CF was intended to bring together structural and functional descriptions.	Review the wisdom of this decision.
p. 2	Distinction between grammatical FUNCTION and grammatical CLASS not emphasised.	Use FG convention of using upper case for the initial letter of function names and lower case for that of class names, e.g., Subject vs noun group	Distinctions are essential. Consistent use of this convention is desirable.	Include the conventions in further material.
p. 2-3	Definition of 'Subject' is flawed.	Note that Subjects may be nouns or pronouns, clauses, preposition phrases. Subjects may be present in non-finite clauses. Six grammatical properties of Subject need to be identified.	Distinctions between structural and functional use of 'Subject' create some confusions.	Review ways of clarifying distinctions.
p. 3-5	The term Complement is used with different meanings in the two kinds of grammars.	Complements, Attributes, Adjuncts and noun groups need to be defined clearly and the grammatical properties and relationships identified. Complements and Adjuncts can suffice	Concepts of complementation and licensing are interesting.	Review ways of clarifying distinctions.
p. 5-6	Distinction between Participants and noun groups / phrases are not made clear.	Dispense with the terms 'Participant' and 'Circumstance' and use 'Complement' and 'Adjunct'. Some examples are used to illustrate the case.	Concept of licensing of Subjects by verbs is an interesting concept. But the use of Transitivity analyses has proved useful in schools. The suggestion here reduces the grammar to syntax – and only as part of the Interpersonal Metafunction.	Reflect and discuss to find a way forward.

			The example about 'his daughter' and 'charity' puzzles me. Surely 'charity' is a place from which to distribute funds to beneficiaries (hence Circumstance), whereas, 'his daughter' is a direct beneficiary (hence participant: Beneficiary).	
p. 6-7	Rank scale. Rankshifting, backshifting, downranking, embedding	Rank scale is controversial. These concepts are pervasive and should have been introduced clearly at the outset.	Time and space! It is also a case of 'what comes first' in an analogue description; perhaps a digitised description would help. Post-modifiers mentioned on CF 2:50; and groups of one word in CF 1:40.	Reflect and discuss.
p. 8	Complexes	Suggest use of 'sentence' rather than 'clause complex'. Use 'complexes' consistently in all relevant structures.	Time and space!	Reflect and discuss.
p. 8-9	Complementation. Active and passive voice. Cleft constructions	Licensing and functions need to be explicit and consistent.	Interesting concept. This is usually considered with grammatical Theme.	Reflect and discuss.
p. 9	Coordination	Functional links between items from different ranks. Distinction between rankshift and complex may be too subtle for school.	Useful in a longer description This is a key aspect of students' run-on sentences. We must find a way!	Reflect and discuss.
p. 9-11	GROUPS AND PHRASES	Inconsistencies. Drop 'group' and use 'phrase' for all units between clause and word. Adjectival and adverbial phrase be dropped as terms.	'Group' causes confusion. Inconsistency acknowledged.	Reflect and discuss.
p. 11-13	Words and word sequences: FG and CF are inconsistent in identifying and naming structures – in structural terms.	Inconsistencies cause confusions.	I understand the explanations provided.	Serious reflection required regarding the value of SFG concepts for school, given the confusions possible with structural concepts and terms.
p. 13-14	Morphemes, morphology, inflection	No distinction is made between morphology and syntax. Morphemes do not merit inclusion in school programs. Inflections not dealt with adequately.	Syntax not mentioned, but distinction could be made – with a lot of explanation. Morphemes are fundamental to spelling programs. Agreed, but more space is required.	Reflect and discuss.
p. 14-16	Parts of speech	Inconsistencies by definition or absence. Confusing phraseology. Distinction between FUNCTION and CLASS is	Acknowledge inconsistencies or absences. Explanation is helpful.	Noted. Reflection and discussion with a view to a longer description.

		essential here.		
p. 16	Classification errors	Inconsistencies and confusions	Some proofing errors here; also errors as a result of partial rewriting of text; and further errors as a result of differences in FG.	Note to ensure these errors do not reappear.
p. 17-18	Group classes	Idioms do not form grammatical units.	Anomalies are noted. This is an important distinction.	Reflect and discuss.
p. 18-22	Finiteness, tense and Mood	Comparison of concept of 'finite' between traditional and functional grammar. Discussion on Modality raises new issues. CF not faithful to either traditional or functional grammar. Finite verb is Head of verb group in FG. Examples of imperatives with Subjects.	Explanation of difference is most illuminating. More food for thought in footnote 10. Mapping one onto the other is not a solution, I realise now. Lexical verb is Head of verb group in a representational analysis (IFG 1985: 176), but the finite is key to the Logical structure of a verb group (IFG 1985: 177). Are these really imperatives, or are they elided complex sentences, e.g., <i>I want you to be quiet. I hope that you have a nice day</i> ; or are they a vocative + imperative, e.g., <i>You, be quiet</i> .	Reflect and discuss.
p. 22	Conclusion	Grammars other than SFG could serve schools better.	The explanations, discussion, and suggestions have really got me reflecting on alternative ways of dealing with grammar. <i>Remarks</i> has raised issues and questions that need to be explored and addressed. That is not a single-person task.	Reflect, discuss, propose, seek further discussion and feedback, etc. I now believe that syntax, in a somewhat simplified form, is essential for students to understand the grammatical relations between structures in a sentence. But I also believe that they need more than this.

I have much to read, study, reflect upon, and talk about. Thank you.

The comments above should indicate why I put forward my proposal.

Lenore

PROBLEMS WITH THE COAL-FACE GRAMMAR

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1. Introduction

The first of Lenore Ferguson's 'Grammar at the coal-face' articles, 'The structural basics', came to my attention last July, when a teacher lent me her copy. I regret to say that I found it contained a large amount of inconsistency, error and confusion and I accordingly suggested to Lenore that I should write a reply. By this time, the June issue article 'Functional elements in the clause' had already appeared, so we decided that my reply should cover them both. It does not cover the September and December articles: I was able to send comments and suggestions on a preliminary draft of 'Discourse elements in texts', while few comparable problems arise with 'Aesthetic and artistic elements in texts'.

As a non-member of ETAQ I feel uncomfortable, indeed embarrassed, in criticising what was a major project for the 2007 *Words'Worth*; as a grammarian, however, I feel I must report that the grammatical content of the first two articles fails to provide a reliable teachers' resource on English grammar such as was intended. I hope that readers will not feel inclined to shoot the messenger.¹

A detailed discussion of the shortcomings of what I will refer to as the *Coal-face Grammar* (henceforth *CF*) would require more space than is available in *Words'Worth*. Following discussion with Lenore, therefore, I am splitting it into two parts: the present article, dealing with a fairly small sample of problems, and a longer supplement, to be posted on the ETAQ website (...). References to *CF* are given in the form '1: 36L', '2: 50R', etc.: these refer to the left-hand column on p. 36 of the first article and the right-hand column on p. 50 of the second. I shall also use the abbreviations *FG* for Functional Grammar, and *IFG* for the major primary source for this approach, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*.²

2. The parts of speech

Perhaps the most obvious and serious errors in *CF* involve the assignment of an incorrect part-of-speech label to words or other expressions. Here I'll consider just four examples to illustrate the general point. These are the classification of *won't* and *capable of* as adverbs (1: 37R), and that of *a pair* and *set of* as adjectives (1:37; 2:56, Table 2).

The two so-called adverbs appear in a set of five examples partially reproduced in [1]:

- [1] i *The small boy probably ate his lunch.*
 ii *The small boy won't eat his lunch.*
 iii *The small boy is capable of eating his lunch.*

Probably is of course an adverb, but *won't* is a verb (what many grammars call, more specifically, an auxiliary verb), while *capable of* is not a grammatical unit at all: *capable* is an adjective (with *capably* as the corresponding adverb) and *of* is a preposition (with *of eating his lunch* a preposition phrase functioning as a dependent of *capable*). What makes the errors here so serious is that the adverb analysis is quite unprincipled. When we classify words together into a single part of speech we are saying that they share certain GRAMMATICAL features, but the underlined expressions in [1] are grammatically quite different.

- *Won't*, for example, differs from the others in that it can be inverted with the Subject to form an interrogative: *Won't the small boy eat his lunch?* In [i] *probably* can be moved to the front, but *Probably the small boy ate his lunch* is not an interrogative.
- In [iii] we can replace *is* by another so-called 'linking verb', such as *seems*, and we can coordinate *capable of eating his lunch* with an adjective, i.e. join it by means of a word such as *and*, *or*, *but*: compare *The small boy seems tired but capable of eating his lunch*. You can't make this kind of change to [i].
- Conversely, the adverb *probably* occurs in such clauses as *He had probably eaten his lunch*, but it

¹I shall be happy to enter into email correspondence concerning this paper and the web supplement mentioned below: my address is <rhuddleston@aapt.net.au>. I wish to thank Geoff Pullum and Anne Horan for helpful comments on earlier drafts.

²This has appeared in three editions, published by Edward Arnold: the first two (1985, 1994) were written by M.A.K. Halliday alone, while the last (2004) was a revision by C.M.M. Matthiessen.

can't be replaced by *won't* or *capable* of here.

I can only assume that *won't* and *capable* of were grouped together with *probably* on the basis of MEANING, but this doesn't provide a valid basis for grammatical classification. If you want to know what part of speech a word belongs to you have to examine its grammatical behaviour, and you need to be prepared to look beyond the sentence you're actually analysing in order to find relevant evidence.

The same applies to the so-called adjectives *a pair* and *set of*. *CF* groups these together with *ten* and *second*, but though the meanings may all have to do with quantification, the grammatical properties are very different.

- *A pair* is a noun group in which *a* is a determiner and *pair* the head noun. Evidence for this is provided by the fact that *a* can be replaced by other determiners such as *the* and *this*, while *pair* can be modified by an adjective, as in *a new pair*, and so on.
- *Set of* is again not a grammatical unit. It is cited in the example *a set of bowls*, a noun group with *set* as head and *of bowls* a preposition phrase functioning as a dependent; note that the latter is optional (for we can have *a set* on its own) and that in *a large set of bowls* the adjective *large* modifies *set*, not *bowls*.

The inclusion of examples like these in *CF* means that it cannot be used as a model for the student. You can't do a grammatical analysis of a sentence simply on the basis of intuitions about meaning: anyone trying to go about it this way will be led into countless errors like those illustrated here.

3. Function vs class

3.1 Preliminaries

An important distinction in grammatical analysis is that between FUNCTION and CLASS. Take a simple example like [2]:

[2] *The dog ate my assignment.*

When we say that *the dog* is Subject and *my assignment* Object we are concerned with the function of these expressions IN THIS PARTICULAR SENTENCE. Functions are inherently RELATIONAL concepts. When we say that *the dog* is Subject we are describing its relation to the clause as a whole: it is Subject OF THE CLAUSE; likewise for *my assignment* as Object. *The dog* and *my assignment* are nevertheless items of the same kind IN THE LANGUAGE SYSTEM: they belong to the same class, noun phrase.³ The example shows that items from the same class may be used in different functions, and the converse also holds: the same function can be filled, or 'realised', by items from different classes. Our example illustrates the most common realisation for the Subject, a noun phrase, but in *That he was lying was obvious* the Subject is a clause (a subordinate clause) and in *Under the mat is a silly place to leave the key* it is a preposition phrase.

A grammatical analysis of a clause needs to describe both the functions and the classes of the elements within it. This can be done diagrammatically in displays like the following (slightly simplified) examples, where 'prep' is an abbreviation for 'preposition':

[3]	a.	<i>The dog</i>		<i>bit</i>		<i>my leg.</i>	b.	<i>Some people</i>		<i>left</i>		<i>before lunch.</i>
		Subject		Predicator		Object		Subject		Predicator		Adjunct
		noun phrase		verb		noun phrase		noun phrase		verb		prep phrase

And the same applies to units smaller than the clause, as with the noun phrase in [4a] and the adjective phrase in [4b]

[4]	a.	<i>dark</i>		<i>clouds</i>	b.	<i>very</i>		<i>fond</i>		<i>of cricket</i>
		Modifier		Head		Modifier		Head		Complement
		adjective		noun		adverb		adjective		prep phrase

Representations like those in [3]-[4] figure very prominently in *IFG* but are not used in *CF*; indeed *CF*

³ 'Noun phrase' is equivalent to *CF*'s 'noun group' and *FG*'s 'nominal group', terms I will also use when discussing *CF*'s or *FG*'s analyses (see §4.4 below for discussion of this terminological issue). *IFG* adopts the useful convention of distinguishing function and class terms by writing the initial letter in upper and lower case respectively. I will follow this convention here; *CF* doesn't do so at all in the first article, but does in the second, though not systematically – for example, 'Declarative Mood' (2: 52L) and 'Experiential analysis' (2: 52R) are not function terms.

does not explain the distinction between function and class, and nor does it make the point that a description of clauses, phrases, etc. will involve assigning both functions and classes to the component parts.

CF in fact very rarely uses the noun 'function': functions are more often called 'functional elements' or 'functional components', but the former is also used for the three 'metafunctions', ideational, interpersonal and textual (e.g. 2: 55L). Moreover, the distinction between function and class is obscured by the frequent use of the expression 'function as X', where 'X' is a class term. Consider, for example: 'In *Jamie ate his lunch*, the verb is functioning as a transitive verb' (1: 42L). The function of *ate* here is Predicator; 'transitive verb' is a class term, not a function, and it would therefore be clearer to simply say that *ate* here is a transitive verb. Or take the statement 'When these words [sc. *this, that, these, those*] modify nouns they are functioning as adjectives' (1: 39L): 'modify' is a functional term, adjective a class term, so what was meant was 'When these words are functioning as Modifier they are adjectives'.⁴ Or again:

Words take their word class from the function they serve in a clause. 'Today', for example, functions as a noun in one clause and as an adverb in another' (2: 57, Table 5)

Again, the intended meaning is that when *today* is functioning as Subject or Object (as in *Today is my birthday* or *I'm spending today at home*) it is a noun, and when it is functioning as Adjunct (as in *I haven't eaten today*) it is an adverb. But the statement quoted is in fact misleading because, as we have noted above, there needn't be a one-to-one relation between functions and classes. An expression such as *this morning* can function as Subject (*This morning has been a great success*), Object (*I spent this morning in the library*) or Adjunct (*I haven't eaten this morning*), but it belongs to the same class, noun phrase, in all three cases. And it is simpler and more systematic to treat *today* in the same way, namely as a noun in all three examples..

It is ironical that although *CF* was planned to present the grammar from a functional perspective it doesn't make sound use of the concept of function. Its failure to apply properly the distinction between functions and classes leads to a number of incorrect analyses, which I will examine in the following subsections.

3.2 Determiners and possessives.

One striking inconsistency in *CF* concerns the membership of the word-class determiner. In Part 1 the class covers articles and demonstratives, as in *the folder*, *those folders*, but in Part 2 it includes possessive pronouns as well, as in *your folder* (2: 56, Table 2). But that is not a permissible analysis, given that determiner and pronoun have been presented as distinct parts of speech. The parts of speech are in contrast, so that no (unambiguous) instance of any one word can belong simultaneously to two different parts of speech.

Certainly there is a similarity between the *your* of *your folder* and the *the* of *the folder* – but it is a likeness of FUNCTION, not CLASS. What we need in order to solve *CF*'s problem here is to make a distinction between what for present purposes I will call the function Determiner and the class determiner.⁵ In our examples, *your* and *the* are both Determiners in function but as far as class is concerned *your* is a possessive pronoun and *the* a determiner. More precisely, *your* is a pronoun functioning as Head of a noun phrase in Determiner function (just as the non-possessive form *you* is Head of a noun phrase in Subject function in *You are very kind*). That the Determiner function is realised here by a noun phrase rather than directly by a word is evident from the fact, overlooked by *CF*, that we can have possessives consisting of a Head noun + Dependents, as in *the new student's folder*. In FG theory this is a case of RANKSHIFT (also called 'downranking' or 'embedding'): in the simplest sentences we have noun phrases functioning in the structure of a clause, the next higher unit on the rankscale, but it is also possible for them to function in the structure of another phrase (see the web supplement to this paper for further discussion of rankshift). Noun phrases in Determiner function are usually possessive, but a narrow range of non-possessives are also possible, as in *What size shoes do you take?* ("shoes of what size"). It's worth noting that this solution could have been found by consulting *IFG*: the account of nominal group structure

⁴There is also an inconsistency here, for later on the same page these words are classified as determiners, and determiner and adjective are distinct parts of speech, or word classes.

⁵Distinct terms have been proposed to differentiate between the function and the class, but here we can make do with the contrast between upper and lower case initial.

includes a table (6(2), p. 314) with rankshifted possessive nominal groups such as *John's* and *my father's* functioning as (what I'm calling) Determiner.⁶

Once one recognises that the Determiner function can be realised by a noun phrase as well as by a member of the determiner word-class, it is easy to see how another error in *CF*'s treatment of possessives can be avoided. Included in the class of possessive pronouns in the Table referred to above (2: 56) is the proper noun *Sam's*, but that can only be regarded as an aberration, resulting from the fact that no way of handling such examples had been found. In *Sam's folder*, we simply have a possessive proper noun functioning as Head of a noun phrase that is Determiner in a larger noun phrase.

3.3 Traditional grammar's 'adjectival phrase' and 'adverbial phrase'

One of the sources of greatest confusion in *CF* is the concept of phrase. For the unit intermediate on the rankscale between clause and word, FG has two terms, phrase and group; there is just one class of phrase, the preposition phrase, while all other classes at this rank are group classes: nominal group, verbal group, adverb group, etc. Towards the end of Part 1, *CF* advocates distinguishing the two terms in this way. In practice, however, *CF* conspicuously fails to do so, often using 'phrase' for FG's 'group', e.g. for *very hungry* (1: 36R), *too quickly* (1: 38L), and so on. I will return to this issue in §4.4: what I want to take up here in the discussion of the contrast between functions and classes is the quite different sense of phrase that *CF* takes over from traditional grammar, and uses in the terms 'adjectival phrase' and 'adverbial phrase'.

Two examples from *CF* (1: 40L) are given in [5]:

- | | | | |
|-----|----|--|-----------------------|
| [5] | i | <i>The small boy under the tree ate his lunch hurriedly.</i> | ['adjectival phrase'] |
| | ii | <i>The small boy ate his lunch hurriedly under the tree.</i> | ['adverbial phrase'] |

As far as its CLASS is concerned, *under the tree* is a preposition phrase in both: it consists of a preposition and a noun group. The labels 'adjectival phrase' and 'adverbial phrase' are thus intended to describe the FUNCTION of *under the tree*. In [i] its function is like that of an adjective (it modifies *boy*, just as the adjective *small* does), while in [ii] its function is like that of an adverb (it's an Adjunct, like the adverb *hurriedly*). This is very confusing, however, for elsewhere adjective, adverb and phrase are used as, or within, class labels. Note, moreover, that *CF* uses 'adverb group' not only in the FG sense of a group with an adverb as Head, but also as a variant of 'adverbial phrase' in the sense we are discussing here.

Not only are the terms confusing, however: they also give insufficient functional information, for adjectives and adverbs do not have just a single function. The labels thus do not distinguish between [5] and [6]:

- | | | | |
|-----|----|---|-----------------------|
| [6] | i | <i>He was in a bad temper.</i> | ['adjectival phrase'] |
| | ii | <i>It was offensive in the extreme.</i> | ['adverbial phrase'] |

In [i] here *in a bad temper* is again functionally like an adjective (cf. *He was cross*), but this time it is not Modifier in the structure of a noun group but attributive Complement in clause structure. And in [ii] *in the extreme* is functionally like an adverb (cf. *It was extremely offensive*), but it is a Modifier of the adjective *offensive*, not an Adjunct in clause structure.

⁶I should add that *IFG* treats *your* differently from *John's* and *my father's*: while the latter are rankshifted nominal groups, *your* (and *my*, *our*, etc.) are taken to be members of the determiner word-class, not the pronoun class. There is a strong argument, however, for taking them to be pronouns, namely that they also function as Subject in a certain type of non-finite clause, as in *She objected to your being given extra privileges*. *IFG* does treat this *your* as a pronoun, but there is no reason to say that this belongs to a different word class than the *your* of *your folder*: the difference is simply one of function.

In summary, there are three reasons why *CF*'s use of the traditional terms 'adjectival phrase' and 'adverbial phrase' is unsatisfactory. First, this use of 'phrase' is inconsistent with its use in 'preposition phrase', applying to a unit with a preposition as its major component. Second, these traditional terms confuse function and class, since they are intended as functional terms even though adjective and adverb are class terms. Third, they don't specify the function precisely enough. They should be abandoned. We can then say, much more transparently, that in [5i] *under the tree* belongs to the class preposition phrase and has the function Modifier in noun group structure, while in [6ii] it belongs to the same class but has the function Adjunct in clause structure.⁷

3.4 Nouns as Modifier

The third case concerns Modifiers like those underlined in *porcelain figurine* and *school yard*. *CF* classifies these as adjectives (1: 37L), but once we distinguish between function and class it is easy to see that the class to which these words belong is that of nouns. We have seen that a single function can often be realised by more than one class, and the pre-head Modifier in the noun group is a function of this kind. In *valuable figurine* and *large yard* the Modifiers are indeed adjectives, but *porcelain* and *school* are different kinds of word from *valuable* and *large*.

There are two reasons why we need to allow for Modifiers that are nouns rather than assume that all Modifiers are adjectives. In the first place, nouns may occur in Modifier function accompanied by their own Modifiers, which are different from the Modifiers of adjectives. Compare, for example, *primary school syllabus* ("syllabus for primary schools"), *Egyptian cotton shirt* ("shirt made of Egyptian cotton"). *Primary* and *Egyptian* are adjectives, which function as Modifiers to nouns, not other adjectives: adjectives are typically modified by adverbs, as in *unusually tall*.

Secondly, just about any common or proper noun can be used as Modifier as well as Head. Compare:

[7]	HEAD	MODIFIER
i a.	<i>A student called.</i>	b. <i>student morale</i>
ii a.	<i>We have reduced unemployment.</i>	b. <i>the unemployment situation</i>
iii a.	<i>Do you believe in God?</i>	b. <i>The God Delusion</i> [a book title]
iv a.	<i>Howard lost his seat.</i>	b. <i>the Howard government</i>

It would, therefore, be quite wrong to make a class distinction between the Head and Modifier uses – just as it would be wrong to make a class distinction between nouns functioning as Head of an Attribute (*They are teachers*) and those functioning as Head of an Object (*We need teachers*). There is certainly some overlap between the noun and adjective classes: *professional*, for example, is a noun in *She's a professional* but an adjective in *She's extremely professional*, but this is different because *professional* has the properties of both classes: note, in particular, that it takes degree adverbs like *extremely* as its own Modifier, whereas such adverbs don't modify nouns. We thus don't need to postulate the massive overlap between the noun and adjective classes that would be needed if items like those underlined in [7] were assigned to both classes.

⁷*CF* does not in fact use FG's term 'Adjunct' for a typically postverbal element in the clause that is not a Complement (though it does use 'Modal adjunct' for a function in the structure of the verb group).

Again, it's worth noting that a quick look at *IFG* could have prevented this error: the display of functions and classes on p. 320 has the Classifier function (roughly, a sub-type of Modifier) realised by nouns or adjectives. Note, moreover, that while dictionaries list *professional* as both adjective and noun, they don't normally do this with *porcelain*, *school*, *student*, *unemployment* and the like.⁸ Many school grammars, of course, make the same error as *CF*, but that is precisely because they are not working with a distinction between function and class.

3.5 Participants and noun groups.

A further case of an error due to the failure to distinguish properly between function and class is the identification of Participant with noun group in *CF*'s titles to Tables 2 and 3 (2: 56). Participant is a function, noun group a class, and again function and class do not stand in a one-to-one relation.

Consider the following examples:

- [8] i a. *He wasted the whole morning.* b. *He watched TV the whole morning.*
- ii *The house opposite the post-office burned down.*
- iii *He gave the parcel to his brother at home..*

In the first place, noun groups do not always function as Participant. In [i] the underlined noun group is functioning in clause structure, but while it is a Participant in [a], it is a Circumstance in [b]. And in [ii] *the post-office* is embedded in a larger noun group and is itself neither Participant nor Circumstance.

Conversely, Participants are not always realised by noun groups, as shown by [iii]. This is one of *CF*'s examples (2: 50L), with *to his brother* labelled Participant, but without acknowledging that this is a preposition phrase, not a noun group. I should add that the fact that Participants can be realised (tacitly in *CF* and explicitly in *IFG*) by preposition phrases poses a major problem when we are trying to distinguish between Participants and Circumstances in textual analysis.

4 Complements, heads and phrases

4.1 *CF*'s account of the Complement function

In an email message to contributors dated 28.11.07 Lenore wrote: 'The grammar is not "pure" but includes selected aspects of traditional grammar, ... – all within a functional perspective'. It is certainly true that there are a good few things in *CF* that derive from traditional grammar rather than FG. The trouble is that in most cases this creates inconsistency and confusion because the same term is used now in the traditional sense, now in the FG sense even though these two senses are in conflict with each other. *CF*'s treatment of Complement illustrates this problem.

In traditional grammar, Complement contrasts with Object, as in :

- [9] i a. *Sue is a nanny.* b. *Sue had been ill* [traditional Complement]
- ii *Kim hired a nanny.* [traditional Object]

FG's Complement, however, covers both the traditional functions: in this framework all the underlined elements in [9] are Complements. In the text of Part 1 (1: 36L, 38R) *CF* uses 'Complement' in the traditional sense, contrasting it with 'Object', but in the glossary it uses the term in the FG sense.

Not only does *CF*'s glossary definition of the Complement conflict with the way the term is used in the text, it also omits a crucial feature of the FG account. It says that a Complement 'has the potential to be the subject of the verb', which means that it is not Subject in the clause containing it but that there is a related clause in which the noun group concerned is Subject: compare active-passive pairs like *Kim hired a nanny*, [9ii], (Complement) and *A nanny was hired by Kim* (Subject). This matches *IFG*: 122, but *CF* fails to mention that FG recognises a systematic exception to the general rule that a Complement has the potential to be Subject. This is illustrated in [9i], where the underlined items are Complement but do not occur as Subject in any related clause. For these have no passive counterpart, and nor can we say **A nanny is Sue* or **Ill had been Sue* (the asterisk indicates that what follows is ungrammatical). FG calls clauses like *Sue is a nanny* and *Sue had been ill ATTRIBUTIVE*: they attribute some property, quality or characteristic to the Subject; the Attribute expression is a Complement, although there is no corresponding clause in which it is Subject.

⁸There are occasional exceptions. The *Macquarie Dictionary*, for example, lists *school* as an adjective as well as a noun (without giving an example). But this is quite unmotivated and unsystematic: it doesn't do this for *student*, for example, yet there is no grammatical difference between *school* and *student* that could justify giving them different part-of-speech classifications.

The *CF* glossary entry for Complement does contain an example with the verb *be*, but it is one where *be* is used in an identifying rather than attributive sense, as in *Ms Jago is the teacher*, interpreted as identifying who Ms Jago is or who the teacher is.⁹ Here it is possible to switch the functions of the two elements, giving *The teacher is Ms Jago*, with *the teacher* now Subject. *The teacher* in *Ms Jago is the teacher* is presented in *CF*, therefore, as fitting the definition of a Complement as a noun group that isn't Subject but could be. But clearly it won't do to ignore the (much more frequent) attributive use of *be*: the entry is seriously deficient for there is nothing to indicate that the final element in examples like [9i] (*Sue is a nanny, Sue had been ill*) is a Complement.

4.2 A problem for FG's account of Complement

As far as FG is concerned the question arises as to why Attributes are analysed as Complements if they don't satisfy the definition. It covers them by in effect revising the definition: 'A nominal group not functioning as a Subject will be a Complement' (*IFG*: 123).¹⁰ But this won't do either. Complements contrast with Adjuncts, which on the next page are said to be 'typically realised by an adverbial group or a prepositional phrase (rather than by a nominal group)': there is no mention here of the fact that less typical realisations of Adjuncts include nominal groups, as in *She arrived this morning, We met several times, I'll do it my way*. Indeed, on the following page (125) *IFG* itself gives an example of this kind, *The teapot the duke had given to my aunt last year*, with *last year* explicitly labelled as Adjunct, and though it is not given a class label its status as a nominal group is uncontroversial. This is clearly in conflict with the revised definition of Complement. Compare, then:

- [10] (a) *Kim hired a nanny*. [=9ii] (b) *Sue is a nanny*. [=9ia] (c) *They got married last year*.

According to FG PRACTICE the underlined element in (a) and (b) is a Complement, while that in (c) is an Adjunct, but the FIRST DEFINITION of Complement admits only (a), and hence is too restrictive, while the REVISED DEFINITION admits all three, and hence is not restrictive enough.

4.3 An alternative concept of Complement

The anomalies and inconsistencies outlined above can be avoided if we define Complements and Adjuncts in terms of their relation to the verb, as in much non-Hallidayan modern grammar. A Complement has to be LICENSED by the verb: that is, it can only occur if the verb is one that specifically allows (or requires) it. The traditional Object, for example, only occurs with transitive verbs: you can say *He corrected the error*, but not **He disappeared the error*. Similarly Attributes (in the constructions we have been considering) occur only with what are often called 'linking verbs': you can say *He became ill*, but not **He ceased ill*. Adjuncts are not restricted in this way. Take, for example, a Time Adjunct like *last year* or a Reason Adjunct like *because of the weather*. We can't divide verbs into different classes according to whether or not they can combine with elements of these kinds: all verbs can.

The range of Complements, and combinations of Complements, that a verb licenses is called its COMPLEMENTATION. These Complements are not limited to noun and adjective phrases, as can be seen from the following examples, where the verbs (doubly underlined) take Complements of the types shown on the right:

[11]	i	<i>She relied on her memory.</i>	[prep phrase with <i>on</i>]
	ii	<i>We supplied them with arms.</i>	[Object + prep phrase with <i>with</i>]
	iii	<i>I put it in the fridge.</i>	[Object + Locative]
	iv	<i>He said he was sorry.</i>	[finite declarative clause]
	v	<i>They asked me what I wanted.</i>	[Object + interrogative clause]
	vi	<i>We advised them to take a taxi.</i>	[Object + infinitival clause]

Many verbs, like those in [i-ii], take preposition phrases containing a particular preposition – they are often called 'prepositional verbs'.

This concept of complementation applies not just to verbs in clause structure, but also to words of the other major classes in the associated phrases. In the following examples I again use single underlining

⁹The identifying and attributive constructions are distinguished in *CF2*: 51L.

¹⁰ According to FG, both the Complements in [9i], *a nanny* and *ill*, are nominal groups, not just the first: I return to this point in §5.

for the Complements and double underlining for the element that licenses them, the Head of the phrase; the bracketed sequences in [12]-[14] are respectively noun phrases, adjective phrases and adverb phrases:

[12]	i	<i>She told us about [her <u>marriage to John</u>].</i>	[prep phrase with <i>to</i>]
	ii	<i>He helped spread [the <u>rumour that they were married</u>].</i>	[finite declarative clause]
	iii	<i>It was [a good <u>opportunity to get to know each other</u>].</i>	[infinitival clause]
[13]	i	<i>She's [very <u>interested in astronomy</u>].</i>	[prep phrase with <i>in</i>]
	ii	<i>I'm [<u>glad you enjoyed it</u>].</i>	[finite declarative clause]
	iii	<i>This made me [even more <u>determined to win</u>].</i>	[infinitival clause]
[14]	i	<i>[<u>Luckily for us</u>] their train was running late.</i>	[prep phrase with <i>for</i>]
	ii	<i>It was handled [<u>similarly to the last one</u>].</i>	[prep phrase with <i>to</i>]

Complements here contrast with Modifiers, which are not licensed. Note, for example, the contrast between the subordinate clause in [12ii] and a relative clause, like that in *That's [the man who called the police]*. Relative clauses can occur with any noun, and hence are Modifiers, whereas finite declaratives like that in [12ii] are Complements as they occur only with a subclass of nouns containing words such as *rumour, fact, idea, suggestion, belief*, etc.

Good dictionaries include information about complementation in their entries – though not as fully as one could wish. It is a serious weakness of FG, and derivatively of CF, that this concept of complementation is not systematically dealt with.

4.4 Preposition phrases

Following FG, CF says: 'A preposition phrase comprises a preposition and a noun group' (1: 40L). But it is a mistake to think that preposition phrases are invariably of this form. Prepositions, like verbs, nouns and adjectives, function as Heads taking a range of Complements, as illustrated in [15]:

[15]	i	<i>He sat [<u>on the floor</u>].</i>	[noun phrase]
	ii	<i>She emerged [<u>from behind the curtain</u>].</i>	[preposition phrase]
	iii	<i>They took him [<u>for dead</u>].</i>	[adjective phrase]
	iv	<i>I was quite unaware of that [<u>until recently</u>].</i>	[adverb]
	v	<i>I was thinking [<u>about how much I could afford to pay</u>].</i>	[interrogative clause]
	vi	<i>He resigned [<u>shortly after reading the report</u>].</i>	[non-finite clause]

I mentioned in §3.3 that CF advocates following FG in restricting the term 'phrase' to preposition phrases, using 'group' instead for noun groups, verb groups, adverb groups, etc. The distinction between them, however, is not one of rank, for there is only one rank intermediate between clause and word. It would be simpler, therefore, to have a single term for this rank, and CF doesn't tell us why it is nevertheless 'more helpful' to have two (1: 42L). It does say that preposition phrases have no Head word (1: 40L), which implicitly distinguishes them from groups, but this contradicts the earlier statement (1: 39R) that prepositions appear as Head words in preposition phrases.

This contradiction stems from the fact that the term 'Head' is being used in two different senses. Most modern approaches other than FG do take the preposition to be Head of the preposition phrase, and I have been taking this position above. The preposition is Head in that it licenses the Complements. It is also the major factor determining the DISTRIBUTION of the phrase, i.e. whereabouts it can occur in sentence structure. Whereabouts a phrase like *on the floor* can occur in sentences is determined by the fact that it contains the preposition *on*, the Head of the phrase. FG, however, uses 'Head' in a narrower sense, restricting it to so-called 'logical structure'. The effect of this is to overstate the difference between preposition phrases and units headed by nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. I have argued that we need to replace the FG concept of Complement by one based on licensing, and this then means that we need a term for the licenser, and Head is the natural one to use. It then makes sense to abandon the distinction between phrase and group: using phrase for both allows a simpler and more systematic account of structures at this rank.

5. Adjective phrases

It is a serious weakness of CF that it has no description of expressions headed by adjectives. It has no term for what in its framework should be called 'adjective group'.¹¹ There is a section called 'Word groups'

¹¹ It does use 'adjectival phrase', but in traditional grammar's sense of a preposition phrase with a function similar to that of an adjective: see §3.3.

(1: 40L-R) which covers noun group, verb group and adverb group (and two minor classes of group), but makes no mention of adjective group. No less serious than the omission itself is the failure to draw attention to the fact that there is no group class based on adjectives and to explain why.

The reason is that there is likewise no adjective group in FG – because expressions like that underlined in *She was very bright* are analysed as nominal groups. More precisely, *very bright* would here be said to be functioning as Head of a nominal group which in turn is attributive Complement in clause structure.

No justification is given, however, for treating it in this way instead of saying that it is an adjectival group (adjective phrase in the terminology adopted above) functioning as Complement in clause structure, and this is a serious weakness in FG itself.

It means that there is no systematic description of the range of constructions illustrated in [13] above. *IFG* does provide an analysis for examples like *be capable of understanding the text*, *be willing to help* (514, 518), and others of this kind, but it is a highly implausible one. Thus *be capable* is analysed as a verbal group, with the adjective *capable* filling a position in verbal group structure normally realised by a lexical verb and of *understanding* another verbal group dependent on the first. A major problem with this analysis is that it cannot be extended to examples like *Everyone capable of understanding the text was asked to help* or *This rendered him incapable of understanding the text* where there is no *be* present, for surely *capable* and *incapable* on their own cannot be verbal groups. And certainly it is far too opaque to include in a resource for schoolteachers.

A simpler and more obvious analysis is to recognise a class of adjective phrases headed by adjectives on a par with noun, adverb and preposition phrases, and having a range of structures involving various kinds of Complement and Modifier.

6. Conclusion

As mentioned at the outset, there has been space here to discuss only a small proportion of the problems raised by the *Coal-face Grammar*: a fuller account can be found in the Supplement, to be posted on the ETAQ website. The main points I have wanted to make in the present paper may be summarised as follows:

- You can't do a grammatical analysis of a sentence simply by considering its meaning. You need to base it on the formal GRAMMATICAL properties of the components, and to get at these you will typically need to compare the sentence with other related ones.
- It is important to distinguish between grammatical FUNCTIONS, such as Subject, Complement, Head, Modifier, etc., and grammatical CLASSES, such as noun phrase, noun, verb, subordinate clause, etc. Functions are concerned with the relation between an element and the construction containing it, while classes are sets of expressions which are grammatically alike in the language system.
- Neither *CF* nor *IFG* provides a satisfactory account of the Complement function. A better conception of it is as an element that is LICENSED by the Head of the construction: different subtypes of Head require or permit different kinds of Complement.
- Prepositions function as Head of preposition phrases and license various kinds of Complement. There is no sound basis for making a terminological distinction between 'phrase' and 'group' for units headed by prepositions on the one hand, nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. on the other hand.
- Neither *CF* nor *IFG* does justice to constructions headed by adjectives. We need to recognise the adjective phrase as a major phrase class alongside the noun phrase, preposition phrase, etc.

OMISSIONS WITH THE COAL-FACE GRAMMAR

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1. Introduction

I am grateful to Lenore Ferguson for her willingness to allow me to write a reply to two components of *Grammar at the coalface: The structural basics* and *Functional elements in a clause*. The 'coalface' grammar is written predominantly within the framework of Hallidayan Functional Grammar, a theory I have long believed is unsuitable for school-level grammar. In my view, the material contains a large amount of inconsistency, error and confusion and fails to provide a reliable teachers' resource on English grammar such as was intended. A detailed discussion of my concerns would require more space than is available in *Words'Worth*, and ETAQ has agreed to my posting these concerns on the ETAQ website (etaq.edu.au) where I also argue that the functional grammar analysis of some areas of grammar is unsatisfactory.

In the space available below, I address three important aspects of grammar not raised or discussed in the 'coalface grammar' (CF): function vs class, complement, and adjective phrase.

2. Function vs class

An important distinction in grammatical analysis is that between FUNCTION and CLASS. Take a simple example like [1]:

- [1] *The dog ate my assignment.*

When we say that *the dog* is Subject and *my assignment* Object we are concerned with the function of these expressions IN THIS PARTICULAR SENTENCE. Functions are inherently RELATIONAL concepts. When we say that *the dog* is Subject we are describing its relation to the clause as a whole: it is Subject OF THE CLAUSE; likewise for *my assignment* as Object. *The dog* and *my assignment* are nevertheless items of the same kind IN THE LANGUAGE SYSTEM: they belong to the same class, noun phrase. The example shows that items from the same class may be used in different functions, and the converse also holds: the same function can be filled, or 'realised', by items from different classes. Our example illustrates the most common realisation for the Subject, a noun phrase, but in *That he was lying* was obvious the Subject is a clause (a subordinate clause) and in *Under the mat* is a silly place to leave the key it is a preposition phrase.

A grammatical analysis of a clause needs to describe both the functions and the classes of the elements within it. This can be done diagrammatically in displays like the following (slightly simplified) examples, where 'prep' is an abbreviation for 'preposition':

- [2] a. *The dog* | *bit* | *my leg.* b. *Some people* | *left* | *before lunch.*
 Subject | Predictor | Object Subject | Predictor | Adjunct
 noun phrase | verb | noun phrase noun phrase | verb | prep phrase

And the same applies to units smaller than the clause, as with the noun phrase in [3a] and the adjective phrase in [3b]

- [3] a. *dark* | *clouds* b. *very* | *fond* | *of cricket*
 Modifier | Head Modifier | Head | Complement
 adjective | noun adverb | adjective | prep phrase

There needn't be a one-to-one relation between functions and classes. An expression such as *this morning* can function as Subject (*This morning has been a great success*), Object (*I spent this morning in the library*) or Adjunct (*I haven't eaten this morning*), but it belongs to the same class, noun phrase, in all three cases. And it is simpler and more systematic to treat *today* in the same way, namely as a noun in all three examples.

2 Complements, heads and phrases

1 Professor is joint author of _ Publication details of the Cambridge grammar and the student grammar

We define Complements and Adjuncts in terms of their relation to the verb, as in much non-Hallidayan modern grammar. A Complement has to be LICENSED by the verb: that is, it can only occur if the verb is one that specifically allows (or requires) it. The traditional Object, for example, only occurs with transitive verbs: you can say *He corrected the error*, but not **He disappeared the error*. Similarly Attributes (in the constructions we have been considering) occur only with what are often called 'linking verbs': you can say *He became ill*, but not **He ceased ill*. Adjuncts are not restricted in this way. Take, for example, a Time Adjunct like *last year* or a Reason Adjunct like *because of the weather*. We can't divide verbs into different classes according to whether or not they can combine with elements of these kinds: all verbs can.

The range of Complements, and combinations of Complements, that a verb licenses is called its COMPLEMENTATION. These Complements are not limited to noun and adjective phrases, as can be seen from the following examples, where the verbs (doubly underlined) take Complements of the types shown on the right:

[4]	i	<i>She relied on her memory.</i>	[prep phrase with <i>on</i>]
	ii	<i>We supplied them with arms.</i>	[Object + prep phrase with <i>with</i>]
	iii	<i>I put it in the fridge.</i>	[Object + Locative]
	iv	<i>He said he was sorry.</i>	[finite declarative clause]
	v	<i>They asked me what I wanted.</i>	[Object + interrogative clause]
	vi	<i>We advised them to take a taxi.</i>	[Object + infinitival clause]

Many verbs, like those in [i-ii], take preposition phrases containing a particular preposition – they are often called 'prepositional verbs'.

This concept of complementation applies not just to verbs in clause structure, but also to words of the other major classes in the associated phrases. In the following examples I again use single underlining for the Complements and double underlining for the element that licenses them, the Head of the phrase; the bracketed sequences in [5]-[7] are respectively noun phrases, adjective phrases and adverb phrases:

[5]	i	<i>She told us about [her marriage to John].</i>	[prep phrase with <i>to</i>]
	ii	<i>He helped spread [the rumour that they were married].</i>	[finite declarative clause]
	iii	<i>It was [a good opportunity to get to know each other].</i>	[infinitival clause]
[6]	i	<i>She's [very interested in astronomy].</i>	[prep phrase with <i>in</i>]
	ii	<i>I'm [glad you enjoyed it].</i>	[finite declarative clause]
	iii	<i>This made me [even more determined to win].</i>	[infinitival clause]
[7]	i	<i>[Luckily for us] their train was running late.</i>	[prep phrase with <i>for</i>]
	ii	<i>It was handled [similarly to the last one].</i>	[prep phrase with <i>to</i>]

Complements here contrast with Modifiers, which are not licensed. Note, for example, the contrast between the subordinate clause in [12ii] and a relative clause, like that in *That's [the man who called the police]*. Relative clauses can occur with any noun, and hence are Modifiers, whereas finite declaratives like that in [12ii] are Complements as they occur only with a subclass of nouns containing words such as *rumour, fact, idea, suggestion, belief*, etc.

Good dictionaries include information about complementation in their entries – though not as fully as one could wish. It is a serious weakness of FG, and derivatively of CF, that this concept of complementation is not systematically dealt with.

4. Adjective phrases

In *She was very bright*, *very bright* is an adjectival phrase functioning as Complement in clause structure.

A simple analysis is to recognise a class of adjective phrases headed by adjectives on a par with noun, adverb and preposition phrases, and having a range of structures involving various kinds of Complement and Modifier.

5. Conclusion

As mentioned at the outset, there is not sufficient space here to discuss the problems I perceive in the

Coal-face Grammar: A full account can be found on the ETAQ website. The main points I make are summarised as follows:

- You can't do a grammatical analysis of a sentence simply by considering its meaning. You need to base it on the formal GRAMMATICAL properties of the components, and to get at these you will typically need to compare the sentence with other related ones.
- It is important to distinguish between grammatical FUNCTIONS, such as Subject, Complement, Head, Modifier, etc., and grammatical CLASSES, such as noun phrase, noun, verb, subordinate clause, etc. Functions are concerned with the relation between an element and the construction containing it, while classes are sets of expressions which are grammatically alike in the language system.
- Neither *CF* nor *IFG* provides a satisfactory account of the Complement function. A better conception of it is as an element that is LICENSED by the Head of the construction: different subtypes of Head require or permit different kinds of Complement.
- Prepositions function as Head of preposition phrases and license various kinds of Complement. There is no sound basis for making a terminological distinction between 'phrase' and 'group' for units headed by prepositions on the one hand, nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. on the other hand.
- Neither *CF* nor *IFG* does justice to constructions headed by adjectives. We need to recognise the adjective phrase as a major phrase class alongside the noun phrase, preposition phrase, etc.