GLOSSARY

This glossary deals with terms which are specific to, or particularly important in, Systemic Functional Grammar. If a term in a definition is marked *, it indicates that that term has its own entry in the glossary. Where appropriate, the definition is followed by one or more examples of the term in italics.

Actor: in transitivitiy*, a participant that is the ‘doer’ of a material process*; the Actor may be human or an object, or, in certain cases, an abstract entity. *The lads broke a window.*

Adjunct: a clause element that in principle does not have the potential to become Subject* of the clause (in this it is unlike a Complement*). Adjuncts are typically realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases*. quickly; on Friday; however; unfortunately

Affect: in the Appraisal* model, one of the three major categories of Attitude*; it covers the expression of human emotional reactions to any kind of stimulus. *I adore the night.*

Agent: in ergativity*, an external participant that causes a process to occur in a Medium*. *The lads broke a window.*

Anaphora: in cohesion*, a category of endophora* in which a reference* item such as those points back to an element earlier in the discourse.

Anticipatory it: where an embedded clause* functions as Subject*, it typically appears at the end of the clause of which it is Subject, and in this case an anticipatory it appears in the normal Subject position. The two most frequent structures in which this happens are predicated Theme* and thematized comment*. *It was the North that was changing. It’s odd that she didn’t recognize me.*

Appraisal: a model of linguistic resources for expressing evaluation, comprising three main systems: Attitude*, Engagement* and Graduation*.

Appreciation: in the Appraisal* model, one of the three major categories of Attitude*; it covers the expression of aesthetic evaluations of products and natural phenomena. *This chocolate is delicious.*

Assigner: in transitivity*, a participant that causes a relational: identifying process* to be set up between two other participants. *His adaptability has made him the greatest footballer of all time.*

Attitude: in the Appraisal* model, one of the three major system networks; it deals with the resources that speakers and writers draw on in order to evaluate in positive or negative terms entities, concepts, happenings, states, etc.

Attribute: in transitivity*, a quality (e.g. ‘tall’) or class membership (e.g. ‘an actor’) attributed to an entity represented as Carrier* in a relational: attributive process*. *The customer was very unhappy.*
Attributor: in transitivity*, a participant that causes a relational: attributive process* to be set up between a Carrier* and Attribute*. *The drug also made her extremely agitated.*

B

Behaver: in transitivity*, the participant, typically human, that engages in a behavioural process*. *He watched her closely*

Behaviour: in transitivity*, a pseudo-participant that functions together with the process to realize a behavioural process*. *He gave a sigh of relief*

behavioural process: in transitivity*, a process type which is in many ways intermediate between material* and mental* processes: it comprises typically human physiological and psychological behaviour.

laugh; watch; cough

Beneficiary: in transitivity*, a participant to or for whom a process is represented as taking place. There are three main types of Beneficiary, depending on the role and the type of process: Recipient* and Client* in material processes, and Receiver* in verbal processes. *My friend’s mom gave my brother this shirt; She bought her parents a house; We asked them their names*

C

Carrier: in transitivity*, a participant that has a quality or class membership attributed to it in a relational: attributive process*. *The customer was very unhappy*

cataphora: in cohesion*, a category of endophora* in which a reference* item such as this points forward to an element that appears later in the discourse.

circumstance: in transitivity*, an element which expresses how, where, when, why, etc. the process* takes place. Circumstances generally occur freely with any type of process (although some are more restricted in the processes with which they can appear); and clauses may have one or more circumstances, or none. Circumstances are usually realized by Adjuncts*.

circumstantial Adjunct: a type of Adjunct* which realizes a circumstance in transitivity*.

circumstantial relational process: a sub-type of relational process* which construes the relationship between two participants in terms of place, time, manner, amount, etc. *The kitchen was at the back of the house. The best place for it would be behind the chest of drawers.*

clause: the main lexico-grammatical unit for realizing meaning, centred around a verb (but see minor clause*); clauses may be independent, dependent or embedded*.

clause complex: two or more ranking clauses* combined by lexico-grammatical means into a larger unit. In traditional descriptions, this is equivalent to a ‘sentence’ (at least in written text).
Client: in transitivity*, one type of Beneficiary* that appears in material process* clauses: it is a participant for whom a process is represented as taking place. *She bought her parents a house; She bought a house for her parents.*

cognition mental process: in transitivity*, one of the subcategories of mental processes*; it covers processes which in traditional terms would be describing as ‘thinking’ (rather than perceiving, feeling or wanting). *Have you decided on the carpet for the bedroom?*

coherence: the quality in connected discourse of ‘hanging together’, of making sense, as perceived by readers and hearers.

cohesion: a set of textual resources by means of which connections between different clause complexes* in discourse may be signalled.

command: in speech role*, a stretch of language which has the function of influencing the addressee’s behaviour by demanding goods-and-services*. *Sit down! I wonder if you could move that suitcase.*

comment Adjunct: one of the two types of modal Adjuncts*; comment Adjuncts express the speaker/writer’s attitude towards the content or speech function of a proposition. *Sadly, the new version is unusable. Broadly speaking, the short words are the best.*

comparative reference: in cohesion*, one of the ways in which cohesive reference to an entity mentioned elsewhere (usually earlier) in the text can be made, by comparing another entity to that preceding entity. *The same is true of the southern hemisphere.*

Complement: a clause element that is not Subject* of the clause but in principle has the potential to become Subject. Complements include not only what are traditionally called Complements (following verbs such as *be*) but also Objects; they are most often realized by nominal groups. *He’s a fool. The lads broke a window.*

congruence: this refers to the relation between meaning and wording: a congruent wording is one which is intuitively ‘closer’ to the unmarked (and generally most frequent) way of expressing a meaning – for example, a process expressed by a verb, or the speaker’s assessment of probability by a modal verb. See also grammatical metaphor*.

conjunctive Adjunct: in cohesion*, an Adjunct* which has the textual function of signalling the conjunctive relation between two clause complexes*. *Therefore; In contrast*

D declarative: in the mood* system, a choice realized by the ordering of Subject* followed by Finite*; congruently used to realize statements*.

desideration mental process: in transitivity*, one of the subcategories of mental processes*; it covers processes which in traditional terms would be describing as ‘wanting’ (rather than perceiving, feeling or thinking). *He longed for a new start to his life.*
elaboration: in clause complexing*, one of the three categories of expansion*, in which one clause elaborates on the meaning of another by adding details, restating or clarifying it in some way. *It’s okay to make mistakes, in fact, it may help you in an interview.*

ellipsis: in cohesion*, the set of resources by which full repetition of a clause or clause element can be avoided, and by which it can be signalled to hearers that they should carry over the wording from a previous clause; see also substitution*. *Has Mike put the dustbins out? Yes, he has [put the dustbins out].*

embedded clause: a clause which forms part, or the whole, of a constituent in another clause at a higher level. This happens especially when an embedded clause functions as Postmodifier* in a nominal group or when an embedded clause functions as Subject* or Complement* of another clause. Compare ranking clause*. *The man I saw on the beach is Sam. To know him is to love him.*

definition: in cohesion*, a kind of reference in which the referent is mentioned earlier or later in the text rather than outside in the physical context.

Engagement: in the Appraisal* model, one of the three major system networks; it deals with the resources which speakers and writers draw on to position themselves in relation to other voices and positions that are brought into the text in some way. These resources include modalisation*, negation* and projection*.

enhancement: in clause complexing*, one of the three categories of expansion*, in which one clause enhances the meaning of another by adding information about when, where, why, how, under what condition, etc. the other clause takes place. *Nice guys often finish last because they’re too nice.*

ergativity: an alternative perspective to transitivity* on how the world is represented in clauses; ergativity views the clause in terms of whether the process happens in the Medium* by itself or whether it is caused by an external Agent*.

esphora: a special kind of non-cohesive endophora* which functions within the nominal group: the determiner points forward to the Post-modifier* which specifies the referent.

exclamative: in the mood* system, a comparatively infrequent sub-category of declarative* realized by a WH-element combined with Subject*Finite ordering. *What a fantastic job she has!*

Existential: in transitivity*, the only participant in an existential process*. *There are 193 members of the United Nations.*
existential process: in transitivity*, a comparatively restricted type of process which is used to express the mere existence of an entity without predicating anything else of it. There are 193 members of the United Nations.

exophora: in cohesion*, a kind of reference* in which the item points outwards to the physical situation rather than to another item in the discourse. Look at those boys over there.

expansion: one of the two systems of logico-semantic* resources by which one clause can be combined with another in a clause complex – the other is projection*. Expansion has three sub-categories: elaboration*, extension* and enhancement*.

experiential: one of the three major metafunctions*, the experiential metafunction comprises resources to represent the world, to construe our experiences in language.

explicit modality: a form of realizing modality* in a separate clause rather than within the clause which is being modalized (see also implicit modality*). I think it's going to rain today. It's possible they haven't decided yet.

extension: in clause complexing*, one of the three categories of expansion*, in which one clause adds something new to the other, in the form of an addition, a replacement or an alternative. She ran the restaurant, and he did the cooking.

F

fact: a type of embedded projection* where no Sayer or Senser is involved. One context in which facts occur is with anticipatory it*, where it acts as a placeholder in Subject position for the following fact clause. It's odd that she didn't recognize me

field: one of the three dimensions of variation in context which together determine and are construed by the register* of a text. Field relates to what is being talked about and the role of language in the activity that is going on; and it mainly determines, and is construed by, choices in the experiential* metafunction.

Finite: the clause element which realizes tense*, modality* and polarity*. It combines with the Subject* to form the Mood* of the clause, and, if it is present in the clause, the ordering of Finite in relation to Subject indicates whether the clause is declarative* or interrogative*.

G

genre: a type of activity involving language, which is recognized in a culture as a conventionalized way of carrying out that activity, and which deploys the resources of a register* (or more than one register) in particular patterns and stages to achieve certain communicative goals.

Goal: in transitivity*, a participant that is the ‘done-to’ or affected entity in a material process*.

The lads broke a window.
goods-and-services: one of the commodities which can be exchanged using language, in the form of commands* and offers*. See also information*.

Graduation: in the Appraisal* model, one of the three major system networks; it deals with the resources that speakers and writers draw on in order to boost or down-tone evaluations. really good; kind of strange.

grammatical metaphor: the expression of a meaning through a lexico-grammatical form which originally evolved to express a different kind of meaning. The expression of the meaning is metaphorical in relation to a different way of expressing the ‘same’ meaning which would be more congruent. Common types of grammatical metaphor include nominalization* and metaphors of mood*.

group: an element comprising one or more words centred around a Head (which may be a noun, a verb, an adverb or an adjective); groups typically realize constituents at clause level. (See also phrase*.)

H

homophora: a kind of non-cohesive exophora* where the entity referred to is construed as known to the addressee, because there is only one relevant referent in the context. the Prime Minister; shall I put the car away?

hypotaxis: a logical* relation between ranking clauses* (or other elements such as groups*) in which one clause is dependent on another (compare parataxis*). What would happen if the earth stopped?

I

idea: a category of projection* involving a mental* rather than a verbal* process (compare locution*). He wondered whether he should have stayed.

Identified: in transitivity*, the participant in a relational: identifying process* that is already ‘on the table’ in the discourse. To get rid of a cold, the only cure is rest.

Identifier: in transitivity*, the participant in a relational: identifying process* that is introduced into the discourse in order to identify the participant that is already ‘on the table’. In speech, the Identifier typically has the main stress. To get rid of a cold, the only cure is rest.

imperative: in the mood* system, a choice typically realized by the absence of Subject* and Finite*; congruently used to realize commands*.

implicit modality: a form of realizing modality* within the clause which is being modalized, typically by modal verbs or modal Adjuncts (see also explicit modality*). They may like this song. She’s probably used to the noise.
inclination: in modality*, a sub-category of modulation* prototypically relating to the speaker’s willingness to perform an action. *I’ll carry that for you.*

indicative: in the mood* system, a choice which is signalled by the presence of Subject* and Finite* (compare imperative*).

information: one of the commodities which can be exchanged using language, in the form of statements* and questions*. See also goods-and-services*.

Initiator: in transitivity*, a participant that causes another participant to engage in a material process*. *He made her work too hard.*

inscribed Attitude: in the Appraisal* model, an explicit expression of the speaker’s evaluation. See also invoked Attitude*. *He was a cruel child.*

intensive relational process: a sub-type of relational process* which construes the relation between two participants in terms of assigning a quality, or of establishing identity between the two. *He’s a cruel child. Her address is 34 Peel Road.*

interpersonal: one of the three major metafunctions*, the interpersonal metafunction comprises resources for establishing, negotiating and maintaining relations with the other interactant(s) in a communicative situation.

interrogative: in the mood* system, a choice realized by the ordering of Finite* followed by Subject*; congruently used to realize questions*.

invoked Attitude: in the Appraisal* model, an implicit expression of the speaker’s evaluation: the speaker tells the addressee something which is intended to invoke an evaluation without making the evaluation explicit. See also inscribed Attitude*. *As a small child, he tore the wings off flies.*

J

Judgement: in the Appraisal* model, one of the three major categories of Attitude*; it covers the expression of moral and ethical evaluations of people and their behaviour. *an honest man*

L

locution: a category of projection* involving a verbal* rather than a mental* process (compare idea*). *She said he was wrong.*

logical: a metafunction which covers resources for combining language elements into larger units. It is most salient in conjunctive relations between clauses, but it also operates at other levels, for example between groups.

logico-semantic relation: one dimension of the conjunctive relations that can be set up between clauses, relating to the kind of meaning realized by the relation. The most basic division within logico-semantic relations is between expansion* and projection*. See also taxis*. 
material process: in transitivity*, a process type which represents physical actions and events. All material processes involve an Actor*; some also involve a Goal* or Scope*.

Medium: in ergativity*, the entity which ‘hosts’ a process, or medium through which the process is actualized. The process may be self-engendered in the Medium, or caused by an Agent*. 

mental process: in transitivity*, a process type which represents activity in the mind. All mental processes involve a Senser* and some may also involve a Phenomenon*. Many mental processes can function in projection*.

metafunction: the over-arching groupings of meanings that language realizes. The major metafunctions are experiential*, interpersonal* and textual*, with the logical* as a fourth metafunction with a more restricted domain of operation.

modal Adjunct: a group of Adjuncts which realize interpersonal meanings (compare conjunctive Adjuncts* and circumstantial Adjuncts*). The two types of modal Adjunct are mood Adjuncts* and comment Adjuncts*.

modality: the set of interpersonal* resources which allow speakers to negotiate degrees of certainty and obligation with respect to their propositions* and proposals*. The main categories of modality are modalization* and modulation*.

modalization: one of the two major systems of modality*, relating to probability and usuality. See also modulation*. I'll probably have a beer to celebrate. He usually tends to keep his emotions to himself.

mode: one of the three dimensions of variation in context which together determine and are construed by the register* of a text. Mode relates to how language is functioning in the communication, for example whether it is spoken or written; and it mainly determines, and is construed by, choices in the textual* metafunction.

modulation: one of the two major systems of modality*, relating to obligation and inclination. See also modalization*. I,000 movies you must see. I'm willing to help if needed.

mood: the interpersonal* system which realizes choices in speech role*. The major categories in the mood system are imperative* and indicative*, and within the latter category, declarative* and interrogative*.

Mood: the functional clause element consisting of Subject* plus Finite*; other elements such as mood Adjuncts may also form part of the Mood. They will probably have got home by now.

mood Adjunct: one of the two types of modal Adjuncts*; mood Adjuncts realize meanings which are associated with the mood* system: tense, polarity and modality*. already; never; probably
nominalization: a key form of grammatical metaphor* in which the meaning of a process, which would most congruently be realized by a verbal group, is instead realized by a nominal group. The prompt administration of the appropriate antibiotics may occasionally lead to resolution.

objective modality: resources for realizing modality* in a way which to a greater or lesser extent masks the fact that the speaker is the source of the modality (see also subjective modality*). It’s likely that malware is active on your pc.

offer: in speech role*, a stretch of language which has the function of indicating the speaker’s willingness to provide goods-and-services*. I’ll give you a hand with that bag.

parataxis: a logical* relation between ranking clauses* (or other elements such as groups*) in which both clauses are of equal status (compare hypotaxis*). He may be old, but he’s got young ideas.

participant: in transitivity, an entity or concept that is represented as directly involved in the process of the clause. There may be up to three participants in a clause. Participants are typically realized by nominal groups.

perception mental process: in transitivity*, one of the subcategories of mental processes*; it covers processes which in traditional terms would be describing as ‘perceiving’, such as seeing or hearing (rather than feeling, thinking or wanting). She heard his footsteps outside the door.

Phenomenon: in transitivity* the entity which is sensed or which provokes a mental response in the Senser* of a mental process*. She heard his footsteps outside the door. Spiders terrify me.

phrase: a structure consisting of a preposition and its complement (the complement is typically a nominal group). Phrases may function as Adjuncts* in a clause or as Postmodifiers* in a group. (See also group*.) I’ll see you in the pub; the house on the left

polarity: a system which is relevant to all clauses with the two major options of positive and negative. Polarity is typically realized in the Mood*. Negative polarity is often realized as part of the Finite* (e.g. by -n’t attached to the operator), but may also be realized by mood Adjuncts* such as never or determiners and pronouns such as no and none.
possessive relational process: a sub-type of relational process* which construes the relationship between two participants in terms of one possessing the other. He has a beard now. They own the restaurant.
predicated Theme: a thematizing structure using anticipatory it* which allows the speaker to pick out a single element of the clause and give it emphatic thematic status (traditionally called a ‘cleft sentence’). Compare thematic equative*. It was the North that was changing.
Predicator: in a Mood*-Residue* analysis of the clause, the Predicator is realized by a verbal group excluding the Finite*. The kittens will have been handled from a very early age.
process: in transitivity*, the process is the core of the clause, and construes the action, event or state that is being represented in the clause. The process is normally realized by the verb functioning as Head of the verbal group.
projection: one of the two systems of logico-semantic* resources by which one clause can be combined with another in a clause complex – the other is expansion*. Projection may involve locutions*, ideas* or facts*.
proposal: in interpersonal* terms, a clause which functions to exchange goods-and-services*, in commands* or offers* (compare proposition*).
proposition: in interpersonal* terms, a clause which functions to exchange information*, in statements* or questions* (compare proposal*).

Q
question: in speech role*, a stretch of language which has the function of demanding information* from the addressee. Congruently realized by an interrogative*. What time does the train get to Portsmouth?
quote: a type of projection* in which the two clauses are equal in status (see parataxis*). Compare report*. ‘How should I write dialogue?’ she asked. He thought, ‘Maybe I’d better leave her alone.’

R
rank scale: the scale of constituency in the lexicogrammar from clause to morpheme. The principle of the rank scale is that we can normally split any meaningful unit at one rank, or level, into smaller units of a different kind at the rank below (e.g. a clause can be split into the groups of which it is made up).
ranking clause: a clause which is not embedded* in, or functioning as, a constituent of another clause.
Receiver: in transitivity*, a participant to whom the saying realized in a verbal process is
directed. We asked them their names. He frequently repeated the story to the heads of
various agencies.

Recipient: in transitivity* the participant to whom goods are given in a material process* clause.

My friend’s mom gave my brother this shirt; My friend’s mom gave this shirt to my
brother.

reference: in cohesion* a set of textual resources which allow the speaker to represent a given
element as recoverable or identifiable at that point in the discourse. See also ellipsis*.

Has Mike put the dustbins out? Yes, he has.

register: variation in the patterns of language choices according to the context of use. There are
three dimensions of context which determine, and are construed by, the different
configurations of language choices: field*, tenor* and mode*.

relational process: in transitivity*, a process type which construes a relation between two
entities or concepts, either of attribution or of identity.

relational: attributive process: in transitivity* a type of relational process* in which a quality or
class membership is ascribed to an entity or concept. Relational: attributive processes
involve a Carrier* and Attribute*. The customer was very unhappy.

relational: identifying process: in transitivity* a type of relational process* in which one entity
or concept is construed as the unique representative of a more general category.
Relational: identifying processes involve a Token* and Value*. The old jokes are the
best ones.

report: a type of projection* in which the projected clause is dependent on the projecting clause
(see hypotaxis*). Compare quote*. He said he is too busy with work. She decided that
he was too young for her.

Residue: the part of the clause which is not included in Mood*. The main elements in the
Residue are the Predicator*, Complement and circumstantial Adjunct(s)*. In fact, it may
help you in an interview.

Rheme: the part of the clause which is not included in Theme*. In fact, it may help you in an
interview.

S

Sayer: in transitivity* the participant that produces a message in a verbal process clause. The
Sayer is typically human, but may be non-human. He said he is too busy with work. I
think the poster says Saturday.

Scope: in transitivity*, an element which appears to be a participant in a material process* but
which in fact specifies the scope or range of the process. The boy was singing a wordless
song.
Senser: in transitivity* the human participant that perceives, feels, thinks or wants in a mental process*. She heard his footsteps outside the door. Spiders terrify me.

speech role: from an interpersonal* perspective, the function that an utterance performs in a communicative exchange. At the broadest level, an utterance performs one of four speech roles: statement*, question*, command* and offer*.

statement: in speech role*, a stretch of language which has the function of offering information* to the addressee. Congruently realized by a declarative*.

Subject: the clause element that encodes the entity or concept on which the validity of the clause rests. The Subject functions together with the Finite* to make up the Mood* of the clause. The lads broke a window.

subjective modality: resources for realizing modality* in a way which to a greater or lesser extent make overt the fact that the speaker is the source of the modality (see also objective modality*). I think they left it inside the house. It may already be too late.

substitution: in cohesion*, a form of ellipsis* in which full repetition of a clause or clause element can be avoided by the use of a substitute form which signals to hearers that they should carry over the wording from a previous clause. ‘You’ve got a black eye.’ ‘Yes.’ ‘So [= also got a black eye] have I.’

system network: an analytical tool for showing linguistic choices: when one choice from a set of options (a system) is selected, that opens another set of choices (a more delicate system), and so on, with a realization of those accumulated choices at the most delicate end of the network.

tTarget: in transitivity* the participant at which one sub-type of verbal process* (praising, blaming, accusing, etc.) is directed. He’s always criticizing them for being cautious.

taxis: the logical system of dependency in the relations between clauses in a clause complex*. The clauses may be equal in status (parataxis*) or one may be dependent on the other (hypotaxis*).

tenor: one of the three dimensions of variation in context which together determine and are construed by the register* of a text. Tenor concerns the relationship between the interactants in terms of relative power, familiarity, etc.; and it mainly determines, and is construed by, choices in the interpersonal* metafunction.

textual: one of the three major metafunctions*, the textual metafunction comprises resources which allow the speaker to organize their messages in ways that indicate how they fit coherently into the co-text and the wider context.

thematic equative: a thematizing structure using a WH- clause which allows the speaker to group one or more elements of the clause as a unit and give them emphatic thematic
status (traditionally called a ‘pseudo-cleft sentence’). Compare predicated Theme*.

*What I want to do next is to create a new file.*

thematized comment: a thematizing structure using anticipatory it* which allows the speaker to give thematic prominence to their own viewpoint on the proposition* that follows. *It's odd that she didn't recognize me.*

Theme: in the textual* metafunction, the point of departure for a clause, the ‘hook’ which guides the hearer towards integrating the information in that clause into the ongoing discourse (see also Rheme*). *In fact, it may help you in an interview.*

Token: in transitivity*, the participant in a relational: identifying process* that is a specific representative of the more general category by which it can be identified (see Value*). *The old jokes are the best ones.*

transitivity: the system of linguistic choices which allow the speaker to represent what is going on in the world outside and in their own heads. A transitivity analysis sees the experiential* content of the clause as realized by configurations of process* together with associated participants* and any circumstances*.

V

Value: in transitivity*, the participant in a relational: identifying process* that is the more general category which is represented by a more specific entity (see Token*). *The old jokes are the best ones.*

verbal process: in transitivity*, a process type which represents the exchange of messages and, more broadly, any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning. All verbal processes involve a Sayer*, and usually either Verbiage* or projection*. *He said he is too busy with work*

Verbiage: in transitivity*, the participant which corresponds to what is said in a verbal process* clause when this is realized by a nominal group rather than by a projected clause. *She promised me a treat an hour ago.*