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Using systemic functional linguistics as method in identifying semogenic strategies in intercultural communication: A study of the collocation of “time” and “different” by Swedish managers with international management experiences

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical foundations to intercultural communication (ICC) are integrative and interdisciplinary but few have studied ICC from a systemic linguistics perspective. Viewing communication as a dialogic process, this study takes a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) view of language as a social semiotic where semogenesis (meaning making) is both construed and construes by context of situation which in turn is construed by culture. Using interview data collected from Swedish managers who have extensive international management experiences, this study aims to illustrate how SFL can be used as an adaptive theory and framework of discourse analysis in uncovering semogenic strategies in ICC processes.

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1. Introduction

Intercultural communication (ICC) inquiry began in the 1950s and 1960s with the early observable waves of globalization, the practical interest of which was to better understand how individuals from different cultures could communicate more effectively (McLuhan, 1962). ICC is commonly defined as the study of the two central concepts of (anthropological) culture and communication, where individuals from two distinct cultural heritage come together in transaction exchange and interlocution. In that sense, the conceptualization of ICC is fairly broad, since most individuals even if from the same culture might belong to different sub-cultures, in which there will then exist a continuum (matter of degree) of differences of culture (Ellingsworth, 1977; Gudykunst & Kim, 2003; Sarbaugh, 1988). The past thirty years have seen ICC as a field develop in theory and inquiry, with scholars presenting state-of-art overview of research in the field (Asante & Gudykunst, 1989; Asante, Newmark, & Blake, 1979; Gudykunst & Mody, 2004), some of whom have included ICC studies as contributing to building the foundations of newer fields of research

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such as global leadership studies (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016) and current theories (Haase, 2016; Kim, 2005; Gudykunst, 2005, 1998, 1983). As a subject of study, ICC is essentially a dialogic process. Theoretical contributions to ICC studies are characteristically integrative and interdisciplinary. Scholars have drawn from the fields of interpersonal communication (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), cultural anthropology (Hall, 1976), social psychology (Tajfel, 1981; Triandis, 1988), communicative accommodation theory (Gallois, O'gay & Giles, 2005) and integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2005).

The fact that ICC is inherently a process rather than product, could be said to be the main challenge in its theoretical framing and analysis, because how does one apply a consistent theory and framework of analysis to a subject of study that becomes and develops in its various contexts, as it is being observed? The conceptualisation of ICC and its research framing have been approached via elements related to ICC competence, which is a subject materialised (i.e. made product) of the ICC process. The study of ICC competence within the field of international business studies has been approached in two strands. The first is as human skillset such as emotional and mental adroitness (empathy and mindfulness), adaptive abilities in cognition, behaviour and the capacity to contemplate multiple perspectives and tolerate ambiguity applied in an array of functional registers, objectifies and makes measurable the effectuating of the processes of ICC. The second is where ICC competence has also been studied as a process, although still in a manner that is agent materialised and thus becomes an entity that can be possessed / owned (i.e. made product) such as communication styles (Chad, Hays, Core, & Auerbach, 2013; Pekerti & Thomas, 2003), conflict resolution styles (Hammer, 2005; Mao & Hale, 2015; Miyahara, Kim, Shin & Yoon, 1998), communication rituals (O'Hallaron, Palincsar, & Schleppegrell, 2015; Roth & Tobin, 2010) and value orientation (Jameson, 1994; Pavitt, Braddock & Mann, 2009).

This purpose of this study is to complement the current field of ICC research in theory and framework of analysis from the perspective of applied linguistics, in particular through the lens of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and language as a social semiotic. Language and society have reciprocal relations, as a sign system “[it] enables meaning exchange in performance of social practices” (Hasan, 2015:274). Language is both product (text) and process (semogenesis or meaning-making), the word that comes out in exchange from a speaker can be seen as belonging to part of a neurocognitive network that gets activated and thus expressed (Lamb, 1999). Behind any text lies a complex selection of semantic options that materialises in the form of text or speech, in themselves representations of processes at a particular state (Fontaine, 2015; Lamb, 1999). Language is also a central human resource for construing experience. Communication is the process of meaning exchange, of which communication makes part of how experiences are construed (Hestbaek Andersen, Boeriis, Maagerø & Tønnessen, 2015). In this study, ICC processes are studied as a system of meaning making that construes semogenesis, a process that is alive, moulded by its users, context of use and constantly developing. From a social semiotic approach, communicating across cultures and ICC processes form part of social practice,

it is the systemic aspects of culture that legitimise the choice of meanings that can be meant appropriately in the context of that social practice. The interplay of the social and the semiotic systems is equally important to the shaping of culture and to the meaning potential of language. (Hasan, 2015, p. 274)

This inter-exchange of the sights and sounds of the surrounding context, together with the interlocutors' cultural filters that determine what is significant in the course of exchange

make for the network potential of meanings. As such, meaning from context of situation is culturally oriented (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Within a firm, meanings are socially mediated and construed through language in use. ICC exchanges and meaning exchanges do not occur at singular (individual) subjective levels but rather is always plural (collective) intersubjective activity that is culturally grounded.

Postulating that what is needed is a theoretical framework that is structured yet systemically dynamic towards various contexts of application, this study takes an SFL approach to language and communication processes. SFL views language as a social semiotic system through which meanings are created between interlocutors as choice towards a practical end. A language is, semiotically, its own meta-system. Using language as its own meta-language, the aim of this study is to (i) illustrate how SFL can be used as theory and framework of discourse analysis in (ii) identifying the semogenic (meaning-making) strategies employed by individuals working in a cross-cultural working context. The aim of this study can be phrased in the following research questions:

- (i) What theoretical and practical contributions can systemic functional linguistics make to the field of intercultural communication studies?
- (ii) What semogenic strategies which with application of SFL as framework of analysis, can be described / identified in a cross-cultural communication working context?

Language from a functional perspective is a complex yet dynamic semiotic system that is organized in four interrelated strata: semantics, lexicogrammar, phonology and phonetics. The first two relate to the content strata and express content meaning. The latter two relate to the expression strata, organizing resources for expressing meaning. Language influences and is influenced by social context dynamics. These strata are also understood to be intersecting continua rather than distinct levels. Vocabulary (words/lexis) and grammar for example, are not two distinct poles of the language system but they are part of a single continuum called lexicogrammar (Halliday & Hasan, 2000; Hasan, 1985, 1987). In terms of the content plane, it is lexicogrammar and semantics that allows for an almost indefinite cognitive expansion and construing of reality (Halliday, 1984a; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). Humans use language towards practical purposes such as in the construing of experiences and enacting of reality in dialogue/written exchange with others. This is done in a two-step dialogic and iterative process. The first is by way of interfacing with each other and with the surrounding context so that experiences and interpersonal relationships can be transformed into meaning, reflected in the stratum of semantics. Meaning, in a second step, is further transformed into wording, reflected in the stratum of lexicogrammar. Different perspectives of meaning making or semiosis is expressed through speaker, writer, listener or reader (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). From this perspective, semogenic processes are processes of meaning making in a context of use. The arena of ICC in that sense provides an interesting linguascape of constant mediation and negotiation pegged at multiple levels towards different purposes, from personal identity to transactional goals to which language is used. This is due to that individuals who communicate across cultures cannot help but launch their perspective shaped and informed from childhood by their mother tongue and cultural heritage, traditions and beliefs.

2. Systemic functional linguistics: Characterisation synopsis and literature review

Conceived during the 1960s by M.A.K Halliday, SFL developed rapidly during the 1990s and early 2000s as grammar for the purposes of text analysis, “one that would make it possible to say sensible and useful things about any text, spoken or written, in modern English.” (Halliday, 1994: :xv). In Halliday’s view, “A discourse analysis that is not based on grammar is not an analysis at all, but simply a running commentary on a text.” (Halliday, 1994, pp. xvi-xvii). SFL proved a particularly rigorous framework of text linguistics analysis for scholars in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA) studies who were particularly interested in “analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 1996, p. 204). Examples from CDA with SFL as framework of analysis research can be found across disciplines (van Dijk, 2001), where SFL is applied in a variety of contexts of study including media articles (Machin & Mayr, 2013), political discourse in multimodality (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2016), physician patient communication (Studer, Danuser & Gomez, 2017), political discourse (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000), pedagogy, creative writing and gender studies (Poulsen, 2015) and as methodology in organizational discourse studies (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough, 2003).

Broadly, SFL is defined as a meta-linguistic theory and framework for describing and analysing language/s. The notion of “function” in the context of SFL refers to both, (i) the notion of purposed use in the sense of achieving practical materialised goals, and in reference to (ii) the meta-system of meaning potential and its instantiation/realization in language. The influencing scholars to SFL is described by Halliday (1984b, p. 311):

For Malinowski, language was a means of action; and since symbols cannot act on things, this meant as means of interaction—acting on other people. Language need not (and often did not) match the reality; but since it derived its meaning potential from use, it typically worked. For Whorf, on the other hand, language was a means of thought. It provided a model of reality; but when the two did not match, since experience was interpreted within the limitations of this model, it could be disastrous in action (...) Mathesius showed how language varied to suit the context. Each sentence of the text was organized by the speaker so as to convey the message he wanted at that juncture, and the total effect was what we recognize as discourse. Their work provides the foundation for a systemic functional semantics.

Language is thus always in *context*, and context is always *in language* (Eggins, 1994). In SFL, the functional use of language refers to the manner in which people use their language/s as social semiotic resource (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). A metalanguage is the language that is used to describe and analyse language/s, and applied to various fields of study (Bache, 2002). It can serve as common resource to provide scholars with a consistent, unambiguous way of continuously refining linguistic theory and providing tools for myriad features description and analysis of human language/s and communication practices. Although linguistics scholars of influence such as Ferdinand de Saussure have acknowledged that syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations in language are equally important, much of twentieth century linguistic scene in typological linguistics and cognitive linguistics (including Chomsky’s generative tradition), tended towards the foregrounding of syntactic (syntagmatic or linear, horizontal) dimension of language description and analysis. SFL differs from this tendency in that it gives priority to describing the paradigmatic dimension in language, focusing on the “vertical” choice relations (Bache, 2010, 2002). Halliday’s SFL (Halliday, 1985) can be

found in context with similar schools of thought that emphasise the paradigmatic dimension of language study including glossematics (Hjelmslev, 1961), tagmemics (Pike, 1982), the Prague School of linguistics (Corder, 1974), stratificational grammar (Lamb, 1966) and functional semantics (Harder, 1996). SFL makes poignant the importance of paradigmatic foregrounding because such features of aspect of Tense, *past*, *present*, *future* or definite/indefiniteness articles, *a/the*, and the continua of modalities, *should*, *could*, *would*, are now viewed as user choice in meaning making. With a paradigmatic dimension foregrounding, SFL provides a metalanguage that views the system of language (grammatical systems in relation to functional aspects in context of use) as a complex network of systems that are open, with the creation of meaning possibilities limited only by its users and context of use. This metalanguage feature in itself is not confined to choice relationships between individual grammatical categories such as tense or definiteness, but at higher levels that include entire clauses that make a macro-system. SFL as metalanguage enables the study of language as a system of systems (Halliday, 1981).

By focusing on meaning making, SFL as theory and framework of analysis remains autonomous of constraints of the structure of any single language (Matthiessen, 2014). As a metalanguage SFL is intimately involved in negotiation, construction, organization and construal of human experiences. As a semiotic tool, SFL has been applied to various fields of study that include the study of scientific language, the challenges of composing and comprehending science texts in school (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Schleppegrell, 2004), multimodality in language and computer science (Hunston, 2013; Lemke, 1998; Unsworth, 2001), multimodality in film analysis (Bateman, 2013), visual grammar design and framework of analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996/2006), discourse analysis (Young & Harrison, 2004), critical language awareness (O'Hallaron, Palincsar & Schleppegrell, 2015) and leadership and organizational discourse (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002; Harrison & Young, 2005).

3. Data collection and respondents

Empirical data to this study consists of 33 long with top managers in Swedish owned / managed enterprises with headquarters in Singapore. Of the 33 respondents, 23 were Scandinavian and 10 were Singapore Chinese. The targeted group of respondents for the interviews were individuals in leading or managerial positions, having responsibilities as Managing Director, Chief Executive Officer and Regional Director. This study prioritized the selection of individuals based on the common denominator that these individuals were in leadership position in the organization, and that they were in a position of effecting change and taking decisions that could have cascading effects through the organization. What they thought and expressed in corporate communication mattered. The respondents worked in a variety of industrial backgrounds including shipping, finance, food and beverage, and information technology.

The interviews were semi-structured, beginning with questions that pertained to the respondents themselves and what they did for work. From questions pertaining to the Individual, the questions then broadened in scope to encompass the respondents' ideas of working with colleagues who come from a different cultural and language heritage. The broadest topic of the interview question set focused on what the respondents thought about the environmental context in which they worked, which is Singapore as compared to their home country (a Scandinavian country). The average time of interview is 1 h 39 min. All

interviews were transcribed according to the Gothenburg Transcription Standard (GTS) (Nivre et al., 2004) using Modified Standard Orthography (MSO), which is a set of guidelines and specifics on how to modify transcriptions in order to show various prosodic features for text analysis. The transcription of 33 files rendered a total of 540 A4 pages of transcribed data, 242 951 tokens, 7473 types. The transcriptions comprise the study's corpus data. Each respondent is given a file (transcript) number, ranging File #1 to File #33.

3.1. Data management and coding

A concordance software, CasualConc (Imao, 2008), that runs natively on Mac OS X 10.9 or later is used as corpus data management in order to generate kwic (keyword in context) concordance lines, word frequencies, collocations, semantic clusters, and concordance plots for word use distribution through the corpus. Word concordances reveal context of use for selected words of query in the study's corpus data. The use of a concordance software makes more accurate thematic coding of data, where the most salient topics of interest from respondents will be indicated under word count frequency of use. The concordance word count shows that for this corpus data, there are 78 (out of 242 951) word tokens that occur in 100% of the 33 files. These 78 word tokens make up a semantic cluster of words that help uncover the most salient topics raised by the respondents during the interview processes when looking for word classes apart from determiners (e.g. *the/a*), prepositions and adverbials that aid in text cohesion and are therefore can occur with high frequency in any text.

3.2. Systemic functional linguistics: Framework of analysis

Functionality is intrinsically built into the architecture of language, so that language has evolved along those functional lines that hold capacity for semogenesis, as such, the term “metafunction” was used in SFL, to suggest that function was an integral component within the overall theory (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2014). Within the framework of SFL, the unit of analysis is a clause rather than the sentence, the latter referring to written text. Clauses are grammatical structures that contain a Finite verb (verbs that carry tense such as *has gone, is going, will go*) in contrast to grammatical structures that contain non-finite verbs that occur in infinitive such as *to go* or *going* (a gerund). Language is structured into metafunctions that construe three types of meanings simultaneously (Halliday, 1994, 1985). These include:

- (i) The *ideational* metafunction in language construes experience/s comprising of two components, the experiential and the logical. This is “language about life” and a user's experience of their internal and external worlds constituted as a flow of events or happenings. The system of expression for ideational meanings is through Transitivity or process types. Processes comprise three interacting components, (a) the process itself, (b) the participants in that process and (c) any related circumstantial factors (time, manner or cause). The participants and processes as components are sorted out in the grammar of the clause. Thus apart from the interaction of participants and processes, there is also the mode of reflection, of imposing linguistic order in our flow of events that can be construed by Transitivity. There are six basic types of Transitivity processes—material (doing, happening), mental (sensing, thinking), behavioural (biological), verbal (saying), relational and existential. These processes

have actors, beneficiaries, circumstance and attributes. The system of Transitivity is inherently realized simultaneously with interpersonal meanings that are realized by the Mood, comprised of the Subject and Finite elements.

- (ii) The *interpersonal* metafunction of language encodes interaction between speakers. The clause construes exchange between users. The system of expression for interpersonal meanings is Mood, containing a nominal type element that is the Subject, and a verbal type element that is the Finite. These Mood adjuncts and comment adjuncts validate propositions, obligation (*must, need, have to*) and inclination (*possibly, maybe, certainly*) in expression of attitudes and opinions (*to be honest, understandably, honestly*). Mood of clause comprise two types (a) *indicative* that includes declaratives (*statements*) and interrogatives (*yes/no and wh- questions*) and (b) imperatives (*commands and exclamations*).
- (iii) The *textual* metafunction uses language to organise the ideational and interpersonal meanings into a coherent text. Three textual metafunction elements include (a) continuatives, that signal a response in dialogue or a move to the next point reference, (b) conjunctions that link paratactically (expansion such as *and, or, not, but, so*) or binds hypotactically (projection such as *when, while, before, after, because, since, that*) and (c) conjunctive adjuncts. The last element shares the same semiotic space as conjunctions, referring to adverbial groups or prepositional phrases that link the clause to the preceding text.

The study and analysis of the metafunctions in the corpus data will help uncover semogenic strategies, how meanings are negotiated, created and shared.

4. Findings and discussion

This section discusses the empirical data findings in relation to answering the research questions:

- (i) What theoretical and practical contributions can systemic functional linguistics make to the field of intercultural communication studies?
- (ii) What semogenic strategies which with application of SFL as framework of analysis, can be described / identified in a cross-cultural communication working context?

Sections 4.1 and 4.2 will outline the various facets of how SFL can complement current ICC research methods through structuring and quantifying the results of unstructured raw data collected in the form of interviews. Section 4.3 in particular, addresses the semogenic strategies identified as used by respondents when communicating across cultures.

4.1. Concordance analysis

Words of high frequency occurrence with instances in all 33 files reflect metafunction type, processes, relational attributes and circumstance. Results in Table 1 show that Ideational and Interpersonal metafunctions make for dominant semogenic processes.

The word count on high frequency occurring words reflected in Table 1 at the same time seem to highlight topics of concern for the participants that can be grouped by different metafunctional processes and circumstance / attributes. Table 1 reflects that the

Table 1. Words occurring in high frequency in the corpus data reflecting metafunction and type in 33 files with a total of 7473 word types and 242 951 word tokens.

Frequency Rank # (1–4619)	Words	Metafunction, type	Proportion		File	
			Frequency	%	In File	Proportion %
14	have	Ideational, relational	3297	1.32	33	100
19	do	Ideational, material	2209	.91	33	100
27	think	Ideational, mental	1394	.57	33	100
35	like	Interpersonal, modal adjunct	1168	.48	33	100
39	more	Interpersonal, modal adjunct	1045	.43	33	100
41	what	Interpersonal, wh-interrogative	1004	.41	33	100
42	when	Interpersonal, wh-interrogative	984	.40	33	100
58	time	Ideational, relational	699	.29	33	100
60	singapore	Ideational, circumstance	676	.28	33	100
64	how	Interpersonal, interrogative	648	.27	33	100
87	different	Ideational, relational	468	.19	33	100
119	working	Ideational, material	306	.13	33	100
120	where	Interpersonal, wh-interrogative	305	.13	33	100
226	system	Ideational, circumstance	145	.06	33	100

dominant metafunction is *Ideational* with a total of 8 instances compared with 6 instances of *Interpersonal* metafunction. In terms of metafunctional processes and type attributes, material actions such as *do* and *working* occur together with mental process, *think*, which could be said to make up the dominant activities of the respondents. There are 4 instances of *Interpersonal interrogatives* thus indicating that the respondents might be asking questions a lot of the times in context, and 3 instances of *Ideational* metafunction with *relational attributes* such as *have*, *time* and *different*. The relational attributes also indicate topics of interest for the participants, showing awareness of “time” and “differences”. *Interpersonal modal adjuncts* that indicate inclinations and attitudes of the respondents appear in the word *like* and *more*.

Semogenesis and meaning making materialises through constant interaction between mind (internal mental processes), and the external environment. One type of semogenic strategy is that of *projection* in the form of quotations, reporting and free indirect speech. Table 2 are results of an n-gram (a multi-word unit or MWU) word frequency analysis of a 2-gram (two word unit) sequence. The 2-gram sequence allows for a sharper delineation of metafunction processes as words occur in contextual sequence. The results indicate that it is mostly *Ideational* metafunctions that dominate in 2-gram sequences in the corpus data, where the *Ideational* metafunction *mental* process, “*i think*” ranks high in frequency

Table 2. 2-grams occurring in high frequency in the corpus data reflecting metafunction and type in 33 files with a total of 7473 word types and 242 951 word tokens.

Frequency Rank # (1–4619)	2-grams	Metafunction, type	Proportion		File	
			Frequency	%	In File	proportion %
2	<i>i think</i>	Ideational, mental	985	.41	33	100
8	<i>do you</i>	Interpersonal, interrogative	639	.26	33	100
11	<i>have to</i>	Interpersonal, high modality	575	.24	33	100
15	<i>a lot</i>	Interpersonal, value modality	515	.21	33	100
21	<i>i have</i>	Ideational, relational	439	.18	33	100
30	<i>but i</i>	Interpersonal, conjunctive adjunct	376	.15	33	100
33	<i>is a</i>	Ideational, relational	372	.15	33	100
32	<i>to be</i>	Ideational, existential	371	.15	33	100
34	<i>to do</i>	Ideational, material	370	.15	33	100

at #2. Results from Table 2 show that the respondents need not necessarily be observed or recorded in ICC conversation in order for ICC semogenic strategies to be uncovered. The *Interpersonal* metafunction *conjunctive adjunct*, “*but i*” that ranks #30 in frequency occurrence indicates continuation of speech, but in contradiction. This “contradiction” or contrary continuation shows a mediation of meaning making, in which the contrast is made to something said in context, in relation to Self. The processes reflected in Table 2 can in an SFL framework, be analysed further using Transitivity analysis (illustrated in Section 4.2).

In order to select texts in illustration of an SFL semogenic strategy analysis, a concordance analysis for the words “time” and “different” was run due to that the words ranked in frequency close to each other at 58 and 87, and that they were both *Ideational* with *relational attributes* indicating that they were words that could be used with great nuances in accordance to the user of the language when used in context. Table 3 shows the retrieved data for the concordance analysis of “time” and “different”. The kwic results indicate that there are 9 instances of word collocations in context occurring in 7 files.

4.2. Systemic functional linguistics analysis

From the 7 files in which the collocates of “time” and “different” occur, text examples 1 and 2 from Files #2 and #4 show how two Swedish top level managers use the words in context. The text examples are used to illustrate a broader collocative context of the kwic results for the words “time” and “different”, uncovering more specific semogenic strategies via a tri-functional analysis of the texts. The respondents have had more than ten years experience of working and negotiating across cultures. Both respondents at the time of the interview were based in Swedish headquarter offices located in Singapore, where they have Asia and Asia-Pacific responsibilities. Swedish manager in File #2 is named respondent \$R. Swedish manager in File #4 is named respondent \$C. Following the GTS MSO transcription guidelines, all words are transcribed in non-capitals as a means concordance sorting. Speech pauses marked by “/”. Longer speech pauses are marked by “//”. The text examples are immediately followed by the tri-functional analysis in Table 4 (for Text Example 1. File #2) and Table 5 (for Text Example 2. File #4). Table 6 and Table 7 give the summary of the

Table 3. CasualConc concordance retrieved data for searched words “time” and “different”. Total of 9 instances occurring in 7 files.

Concordance Output. Search Word: time. Context Word: different		
KWIC (keyword in context)		
		File #
1	“it is difficult to say average <i>time</i> because it is <i>different</i> every <i>time</i> / because it varies quit”	2
2	“because it is <i>different</i> every <i>time</i> / because it varies quite a lot but if they have encountered”	2
3	“that’s a little bit <i>different</i> / i remember first <i>time</i> i went to a staff dinner some <i>time</i> ago and the girls were i”	32
4	“when i was here nineteen seventy six first <i>time</i> / singapore was totally <i>different</i> / so it’s er / and one”	29
5	“people stay with the companies for a longer <i>time</i> / very <i>different</i> environment / that’s what i find”	18
6	“i like to go to <i>different</i> places / maybe next <i>time</i> go to latin america / maybe back to denmark”	1
7	“just reincarnate / so they have a <i>different</i> philosophy of <i>time</i> / so i’m also impressed by this / so i took my”	4
8	“so presentation habits are <i>different</i> so it takes <i>time</i> to get adjusted / but my wife now / she also starts to”	24
9	“ideas / and the project moves up in the organization / the <i>time</i> schedule could be completely <i>different</i> ”	2

Table 4. Meaning making at the *Ideational, Interpersonal* and *Textual* strata in Text Example 1 for File #2.

Process	Interpersonal		Textual		Instance
	Mood	Modality	Textual	Clause #	
Relational	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	i	in sweden it <u>is</u> more common
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	ii	to get <u>paid</u> on time
Material	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	iii	without <u>having</u> to <u>send</u> out reminders
Relational	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	iv	in asia you <u>have</u> to <u>[be]</u> more expediting on payments
Material	Imperative	Obligation	Continuative	v	<u>make</u> sure you <u>get</u> paid
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	vi	it usually <u>takes</u> a longer time
Relational	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	vii	it <u>is</u> difficult
Verbal	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	viii	to <u>say</u> <u>average</u> time
Relational	Declarative	Usuality	Conjunctive	ix	because it <u>is</u> different <u>every</u> time
Relational	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	x	because it <u>varies</u> quite a lot
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Conjunctive	xi	but if they <u>have</u> <u>encountered</u> quite a <u>few</u> times
Material	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xii	that you <u>will</u> <u>send</u> an invoice
Existential	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	xiii	then it <u>is</u> complete silence
Material	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xiv	then you [will \emptyset] <u>send</u> a reminder
Existential	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	xv	it <u>is</u> complete silence
Material	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xvi	then you [will \emptyset] <u>call</u> them up
Verbal	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xvii	then they [will \emptyset] <u>say</u>
Mental	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xviii	well we <u>have</u> <u>found</u> a mistake in the invoice
Verbal	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Conjunctive	xix	but why did <u>not</u> you <u>tell</u> us
Relational	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xx	so it <u>is</u> just
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xxi	<u>sometimes</u> a way to <u>drag</u> out the payments
Relational	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xxii	<u>average</u> time <u>is</u> difficult to say
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Conjunctive	xxiii	and <u>usually</u> if we <u>do</u> a large project
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xxiv	it <u>is</u> always
Relational	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xxv	we <u>have</u> payment securities
Relational	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Conjunctive	xxvi	and then it <u>is</u> <u>no</u> problems
Material	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xxvii	because <u>as</u> <u>soon</u> <u>as</u> you <u>fulfil</u> your part
Material	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xxviii	you <u>will</u> <u>get</u> your money from the bank by letter of credit or advance payment
Material	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Continuative	xxix	so it <u>is</u> <u>not</u> so complicated
Relational	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xxx	but when we <u>settle</u> small things like spare parts and services
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xxxi	it <u>sometimes</u> can <u>be</u> quite complicated
Relational	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xxxii	to <u>give</u> them information they want
Material	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xxxiii	so they <u>can</u> <u>release</u> papers

number of instances of metafunctional types, processes and attributes for the clauses in Text Example 1, File #2 (total of 33 clauses) and in Text Example 2, File #4 (total of 53 clauses). Text Example 1 has a total of 227 words, Text Example 2 has a total of 324 words, with 100 words difference. This renders the clause units to a total of 33 in Text Example 1 and a total of 53 in Text Example 2. The clauses are example units of text analysis.

Text Example 1. File #2. (227 words)

\$R: in sweden it is more common to get paid on time without having to send out reminders / in asia you have to [be \emptyset] more expediting on payments / make sure you get paid / it usually takes a longer time ... it is difficult to say average time because it is different every time / because it varies quite a lot but if they have encountered quite a few times that you will send an invoice / then it is complete silence / then you send a reminder / it is complete silence / then you call them up / then they say / well we have found a mistake in the invoice but why did not you tell us / so it is just / sometimes a way to drag out the payments / average time is

Table 5. Meaning making at the *Ideational, Interpersonal* and *Textual* strata in Text Example 2 for File #4.

Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual		Clause	
Process	Mood	Modality	Textual	#	Instance
Relational	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	i	yah time is important
Relational	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	ii	[we are \emptyset] very punctual
Relational	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	iii	we are extreme
Mental	Declarative	Inclination	Continuative	iv	i <u>mean</u>
Mental	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	v	i'm <u>used to it</u> from south america
Relational	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	vi	they <u>were</u> extremely relaxed about time
Verbal	Declarative	Inclination	Continuative	vii	i <u>would say</u>
Relational	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	viii	that this to me it's the <u>most</u> typical thing of a culture
Mental	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	ix	how they relate to time
Relational	Declarative	Temporality	Conjunctive	x	but <u>first</u> experience <u>was</u> in iran
Mental	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Conjunctive	xi	and er and time <u>didn't</u> matter <u>at all</u>
Verbal	Declarative	Inclination	Continuative	xii	i <u>would say</u>
Mental	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xiii	that we <u>describe</u> time as a line
Material	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xiv	you are <u>born</u>
Material	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xv	and then you <u>die</u> here
Material	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xvi	and things <u>happen</u>
Relational	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Conjunctive	xvii	but for them it <u>wasn't</u> like that
Relational	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xviii	it <u>was</u> like a circle
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xix	[it \emptyset] <u>never start</u>
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xx	[it \emptyset] <u>never end</u>
Existential	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xxi	time <u>is</u> <u>just</u> there
Material	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Conjunctive	xxii	and they <u>don't die</u> either
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xxiii	they <u>just</u> <u>reincarnate</u>
Relational	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xxiv	so they <u>have</u> a different philosophy of time
Mental	Declarative	Inclination	Continuative	xxv	so i'm also <u>impressed</u> by this
Material	Declarative	Probability	Continuative	xxvi	so i <u>took</u> my watch
Material	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xxvii	and <u>threw</u> it away
Relational	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xxviii	when i <u>was</u> about <u>thirty years</u>
Material	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xxix	i <u>arranged</u> meetings with guys down there
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Conjunctive	xxx	and they <u>turned up</u> <u>three days later</u>
Relational	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	xxxi	it <u>was</u> extreme <u>totally</u> extreme
Mental	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xxxii	and i <u>remember</u>
Mental	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Continuative	xxxiii	one guy <u>made</u> a <u>fantastic</u> impression on me
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xxxiv	he <u>came</u> <u>two days later</u>
Verbal	Declarative	Usuality, Intensity	Conjunctive	xxxv	and he <u>said</u> oh
Relational	Declarative	Temporality	Conjunctive	xxxvi	and that <u>was</u> <u>in the beginning</u>
Mental	Declarative	Inclination	Continuative	xxxvii	so i <u>mean</u>
Verbal	Declarative	Usuality	Continuative	xxxviii	i <u>asked</u> him
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xxxix	he <u>was</u> <u>coming</u> looking for a job
Mental	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xl	so i <u>mean</u>
Mental	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xli	he <u>must</u> <u>be interested</u>
Verbal	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xlii	so i <u>said</u>
-	Exclamation	Usuality, Intensity	Vocative	xliiii	what <u>jesus</u> christ
Material	Interrogative	Neg. Polarity	Continuative	xliv	<u>why</u> <u>didn't</u> you <u>show up</u>
Material	Declarative	Obligation	Continuative	xlv	we <u>had</u> <u>made</u> an appointment
Verbal	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	xlvi	then he <u>said</u>
Material	Declarative	Temporality	Vocative	xlvii	ah i <u>was</u> <u>on my way</u> to your office
Material	Declarative	Probability	Conjunctive	xlviii	but then i <u>met</u> a friend on the street
Mental	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Continuative	xliv	i <u>haven't</u> <u>seen</u> him for <u>such</u> a long time
Mental	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	l	so i <u>started</u> to <u>realise</u> what matters in life huh
Relational	Declarative	Inclination	Continuative	li	so this guy to him this friend <u>was</u> <u>more</u> important
Relational	Declarative	Temporality	Continuative	lii	so <u>finally</u> i <u>was</u>
Relational	Declarative	Neg. Polarity	Continuative	liii	so i <u>haven't</u> <u>had</u> <u>any</u> watch <u>since</u> then

Key: ellipsis [\emptyset]

Table 6. Summary of instances of metafunctional types for 33 clauses in Text Example 1. File #2.

Ideational		Interpersonal		Textual			
Process types	#	Mood type	#	Modality type	#	Textual type	#
Material	16	Declarative	32	Usuality	12	Continuative	25
Relational	11	Imperative	1	Obligation	12	Conjunctive	8
Verbal	3			Probability	4		
Existential	2			Neg. Polarity	3		
Mental	1			Usuality, Intensity	2		

Table 7. Summary of instances of metafunctional types for 53 clauses in Text Example 2. File #4.

Ideational		Interpersonal		Textual			
Process Types	#	Mood Type	#	Modality Type	#	Textual Type	#
Material	17	Declarative	51	Temporality	17	Continuative	39
Relational	15	Interrogative	1	Usuality, Intensity	8	Conjunctive	12
Mental	13	Exclamation	1	Probability	9	Vocative	2
Verbal	6			Inclination	6		
Mental	1			Neg. Polarity	6		
				Usuality	4		
				Obligation	3		

difficult to say and usually if we do a large project it is always / we have payment securities / and then it is no problems because as soon as you fulfil your part you will get your money from the bank by letter of credit / or advance payment / so it is not so complicated / but when we settle small things like spare parts and services / it sometimes can be quite complicated to give them information they want so they can release papers

Text Example 2. File #4. (324 words)

\$C: yah / time is important / very punctual / we are extreme / i mean i'm used to it / from south america / they were extremely relaxed about time / i would say that this / to me it's the most typical thing of a culture / how they relate to time / but first experience was in iran / and er / and time didn't matter at all / i would say that we describe time as a line / you are born and then you die here / and things happen / but for them / it wasn't like that / it was like a circle / never start never end / time is just there / and they don't die either / they just reincarnate / so they have a different philosophy of time / so i'm also impressed by this / so i took my watch and threw it away when i was about thirty years // i arranged meetings with guys down there and they turned up three days later / it was extreme / totally extreme / and i remember one guy made a fantastic impression on me / he came two days later and he said oh / and that was in the beginning / so i mean / i asked him / he was coming looking for a job / so i mean he must be interested / so i said what jesus christ why didn't you show up / we had made an appointment / then he said ah i was on my way to your office but then i met a friend on the street / i haven't seen him for such a long time / so i started to realise what matters in life huh / so this guy / to him this friend was more important / so finally i was / so i haven't had any watch since then

4.2.1. Ideational metafunction semogenic strategies

A striking difference in Text examples 1 and 2 with respondents \$R and \$C respectively, is the context of use of the words “time” and “different”. \$R speaks about the concrete pragmatic activity of invoicing and getting paid on time for work done and that the “average time” for getting paid “is different”. \$C speaks of the philosophy of time as construed from the perspective of a different culture. The difference in registers and context of use between

respondents \$R and \$C is reflected at the *ideational metafunction* strata of realisation with the material processes of doing (*give information, send invoices, do large projects, call them up etc.*) having 48% of all processes occurring in \$R's interview extract, followed by 33% relational processes. For \$R, semogenic processes are reflected in "ways of doing". Clauses # xii to xvi in Text Example 1, is \$R relating a sequence of action that fulfils two functions. The first function is pragmatic narration, \$R's instantiation of these processes adds to \$R's personal understanding of working in the Asia / Asia-Pacific cultural context which is different from the Swedish context. The second function serves towards cognitive recognition and learning of expected behaviour and the catalogue of actions needed in order to manage differences across cultures. In Text Example 2, \$C's interview extract is characterised by a more distributed realisation of transitivity processes. Even if material processes has most instances for \$C's text, it still makes for 32% of all transitivity processes less than the 48% material processes in \$R's text. What follows closely in the *ideational strata* in Text Example 2, is 28% relational processes and 24% mental (thinking) processes, indicating that \$C's use of *ideational* metafunction semogenic strategies reflects an almost equal interplay of various resources of meaning making in context. Mental processes used by \$C shows how \$C as semogenic strategy, rationalises from the Other's perspective, "but *for them* it was not like that" (clause # xvii, Text Example 2) and "how *they relate* to time" (clause # ix, Text Example 2). The mental relational processes also have a behavioural change effect on \$C, "so i *started to realise* what matters in life huh" (clause # l, Text Example 2), "so i *haven't had any watch* since then" (clause # liii, Text Example 2).

4.2.2. *Interpersonal metafunction semogenic strategies*

A common semogenic strategy that both \$R and \$C use can be found in instantiation in the *interpersonal metafunction* strata in the form of the clause Mood type that specifies speech acts, whether the clause is *indicative* (declarative statement and interrogatives) or *imperative* (commands and exclamations). The wh-interrogative found in "but *why* did you not tell us" (clause # xix, Text Example 1) and "*why* didn't you show up" (clause # xlv, Text Example 2). The interrogative clause type indicates recognition/acknowledgement of possible existing cultural differences when working in the same context. The function of the use of the interrogative is to then align these differences or narrow the cognitive gap between the cross-cultural interlocutors in terms of understanding differences in construing reality, so that communication processes can proceed towards the goal, which is to get the invoice paid in Text Example 1, and to understand and conclude the meeting in Text Example 2.

Observable in Text Example 1 is the relatively frequent occurrence of high modal obligation of 12 (approximately 36%) instances of use such as, "in asia you *have to [be]* more expediting on payments / *make sure* you get paid" (clauses # iv and # v, Text Example 1). Clause # v in Text Example 1 is also an imperative (expressing urgency and command) Mood type, that reinforces high obligation in *interpersonal* instantiation. High modal obligation occurs 3 times (approximately 6%) in Text Example 2, although not in the sense used by \$R in Text Example 1 but rather, \$C uses high modal obligations as rationalization strategies. \$C tries to understand why a person did not turn up for an interview at the agreed time, "he *must be* interested" (clause # xli, Text Example 2), "we *had made* an appointment" (clause # xlv, Text Example 2). \$C's exasperation at lack of understanding across cultures and how each interlocutor can construe Time so differently is illustrated in the one *interpersonal* instantiation of an imperative Mood Type in the form of exclamative "*what jesus christ*"

(clause # xliii, Text Example 2). Whether in context of the Middle East (Iran as \$C's first cultural differences in construing Time) or in South America, the use of secular figure *Jesus Christ* in exclamation from a Swede (highly non-secular culture) could be seen as part of an extreme form of semogenesis that places \$C's own cultural heritage and standing against the Other, in this context, clearly illustrating the need for bridging the disjunct of construing Time between \$C and the Other.

Negative polarity is used in semogenesis comparably differently between Text Example 1 and Text Example 2. While negative polarity, indicated by the use of the word *no* or *not*, usually conveys negative inclination, its use in Text Example 1 seems to be employed to convey a positive due to a double negation, “and then it is *no* problem” (clause # xxvi) and “so it is *not* so complicated” (clause # xxix). The words *problem* and *complicated* that co-occur with the negative polarity *no/not* in themselves carry negative connotations, the placing of a negative in front of words that carry negative connotations turns it into a positive. The effect of a double negation is one that reinforces an understanding on the part of \$R of how to narrow the gap of differences in construing reality across cultures. The *interpersonal* metafunction use of negative polarity usually comes too, with instantiations of logical argumentation and rationalization on the part of the user, reflected in the *textual* metafunction strata.

4.2.3. *Textual metafunction semogenic strategies*

Unlike written texts, reported speeches of conversation exchanges, or narratives of incidences of experiences in working in cross-cultural contexts in direct speeches are not overly crafted. In the text examples to this study, *continuatives* and *conjunctions* are used as a means of *textual* metafunction instantiation of cohesion. A continuative is a word or a small set of words that signal/s a move by the speaker to the next point in the communication exchange or dialogue. It could be expressions such as *you know, oh, well, so* etc. A conjunction is a word or group that links clauses by expansion or projection. Continuatives make 75% of *textual* metafunction instantiations in Text Example 1. The sequence of clauses # vii to #x shows \$R use of logico-semantic relations by first contextualizing a problem “difficult to say average time” and then explaining by use of extensions, quantifiers and qualifiers, “*because* it is different *every* time, *because* it *varies quite a lot*”. This semogenic strategy at the *textual* strata allows for \$R to place low expectation barriers, acknowledging that when working in a different cultural context, things may not go as expected. As such, \$R's reiteration of the sequence of actions to be taken for invoices being met with silence from the customer is only a way of narrating familiar happenings at work experienced by \$R, but it is also a means of rationalising past events for \$R, so that it can not only be materially managed but cognitively (mental process) managed, leading \$R to reason that preventive action can be taken, “so it is not so complicated” (clause # xxix, Text Example 1).

Continuatives and conjunctions are also used in similar manner found in Text Example 2, where noticeable is the broader nuance of meaning in the use of negative polarity. The *textual* metafunction instantiation for Text Example 2 helps navigate the listener from when \$C had a perspective of Time as linear, to \$C encountering Others who viewed Time as circular, all the way through to why \$C today wears no watch at all. \$C's logico-semantic relations are elucidated by the use of extensions, in addition to the use of modality indicating that \$C was “impressed” by the differences in perspective that in the end, caused a change in \$C's behaviour, “time is *just* there, *and* they don't die *either*, they *just* reincarnate, *so* they

have a different philosophy of time, so i'm also impressed *by this*, so i took my watch, and threw it away" (clauses # xxi to xxvii, Text Example 2).

4.3. Systemic functional linguistics, intercultural communication and semogenic strategies

In this data-set, while the respondents are not recorded speaking with each other in an intercultural communicative exchange, they were still recorded projecting their experiences in the form of quotes, reporting, direct and indirect speech. These forms of speeches are in themselves semogenic strategies, inherently part of construing human experiences and reality. The respondents' projections were analysed using the SFL transitivity analysis by investigating cognitive (thinking) processes and material (doing) processes in context (existential, relational processes) and as such, it is argued here that the interview data remains valuable as being able to give insight into ICC semogenic processes. These interviews, as shown in extracts of two text examples, capture the respondents' personal thoughts and reflections of activities, events and encounters that they have had in a cross-cultural setting.

In answer to the first research question asked in this study, accounting for ICC interaction as inherent parts in a language system is challenging (Fontaine, 2015). It requires a view of language as an adaptive complex system where recursion is necessarily a central notion (Butt, Moore, & Tuckwell, 2015; Lemke, 1998). Therefore, to study and understand ICC processes, in complement to what has already been done in research in the ICC field, where ICC is studied mostly as objectified through the possession of a human skillset (emotional and/or mental adroitness), or as a "communication style", the tri-functional analysis from an SFL perspective illustrates semogenic strategies occurring at a deeper level of internal cognition and external behaviour. Viewing language as a social semiotic also places culture at the centre of semogenesis, that situation of context is derived of the construal of experiences through culture. In the event of two or more individuals meeting in a cross-cultural context, communicating across cultures, cultural reference points for each interlocutor becomes relative, where their own culture is placed in a traversal linguascape in constant mediation with the Other. In terms of answering the second research question, an SFL approach to ICC semogenic strategies can be broadly characterized as instantiations realized across three metafunctional strata, the tripartite interaction of the dialogic processes of (i) cognition (internal thinking, sensing, feeling) and (ii) behaviour (external actions of doing) in relation to (iii) context of situation. In the case of this study and the use of text examples, it is not scalability of results (although this could be done given the use of concordance softwares but more importantly, a greater number of scholars working as SFL analysts analyzing larger compiled data sets) but an illustration of a method of analysis that complements current findings of ICC studies that are not linguistics based.

5. Conclusion and future research

This purpose of this study is to complement the current field of ICC research in theory and framework of analysis from the perspective of applied linguistics, in particular through the lens of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and language as a social semiotic. The findings of this study are complementary to other research findings in the ICC field because human skillset of emotional and mental adroitness from the SFL perspective is reflected

in the mental and material transitivity processes of internal cognition (thinking, sensing, feeling) and external behaviour (doing, talking). Contextual register which refers to the purpose to which the communication exchange takes place, whether in an office for business negotiation for example, or during a coffee break also in an office setting will also influence semogenic strategies. As such, a possible implication from an SFL and language as a social semiotic perspective is that ICC is not seen as the study of the two different concepts of culture and communication, resulting in typological “communication styles” or “conflict resolution styles”, rather ICC instantiation would be a function of the context of situation. As noted by scholars (Bird & Mendenhall, 2016; Kim, 2010), ICC as a field of research in the 1990s began to develop an integrative theoretical foundation grounded in various disciplines from social psychology to communication studies and cross-cultural management studies. In this study, ICC theory and analysis is studied from a language analysis and social semiotic perspective that views language as a complex adaptive system that forms and informs the instantiation of ICC processes in relation to context of use.

The manner in which SFL findings complement current ICC methodologies could prove to also be its limitation. Although spreading as a method of analysis, SFL is a specific school of grammar studies that foregrounds the paradigmatic axis of grammar, and in that sense, remains in the hands of a relatively small group of interested scholars. Both SFL and ICC as fields of research could benefit from theoretical and practical application insights from cross-pollination in future directions of research. In parallel view with Eggins (1994), SFL provides an introduction to the basic principles of the systemic approach, outlining the general approach to discourse and text analysis. The two major benefits that SFL offers in the analysis of a text (written or spoken) are that (i) It offers an integrated, comprehensive and systematic model of language which enables language patterns to be described and quantified at different levels and in different degrees of detail and (ii) it theorises the links between language and social life so that texts can be seen as reflecting of social life, social identity and interpersonal relations. To that extent, it is hoped that this study inspires new directions in future research in the field of cross-cultural communication, and cross-cultural management. In the era of big data analytics and access to text based data on the Internet across different cultural contexts, a particular field of research could be quantitative textual analysis (QTA) applied to the findings of ICC studies to which SFL could provide an outline of data management. The advantage of using QTA methods that SFL could be said to support and can be further researched is that it aligns itself with corpus driven conclusions, with potential to move findings from descriptive (which is what is given here in this study) to predictive.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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