

## **Logic of Appearance vs Explanatory Logic: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach to the Evolution of Communicative Strategies in the European Union Institutional Discourse**

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**Abstract :** The issue of European cultural identity has become a prominent topic of discussion among political actors in the wake of the unsuccessful referenda held in France and the Netherlands in May and June 2006. The „period of reflection“ announced by the European Council at the conclusion of June 2006 has provided an opportunity for the implementation of several initiatives and programmes designed to „bridge the gap“ between the EU institutions and its citizens. Specific programmes were designed with the objective of enhancing the European Commission’s external communication of its activities. Subsequently, further plans for democracy, debate, and dialogue were devised with the objective of fostering open and extensive discourse between EU institutions and citizens. Further documentation on communication policy emphasised the necessity of developing linguistic techniques to re-engage disenchanted or uninformed citizens with the European project. It was observed that the European Union is perceived as a „faceless“ entity, which is attributed to the absence of a distinct public identity vis-à-vis its institutions. This contribution presents an analysis of a collection of informative publications regarding the European Union, entitled “Europe on the Move”. This collection of booklets provides comprehensive information about the European Union, including its historical origins, core values, and historical development, as well as its achievements, strategic objectives, policies, and operational procedures. The theoretical framework adopted for the longitudinal linguistic analysis of EU discourse is that of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). In more detail, this study considers two basic systems of relations between clauses: firstly, the degree of interdependency (or taxis) and secondly, the logico-semantic relation of expansion. The former refers to the structural markers of grammatical relations between clauses within sentences, namely paratactic, hypotactic and embedded relations. The latter pertains to various logicosemantic relationships existing between the primary and secondary members of the clause nexus. These relationships include how the secondary clause expands the primary clause, which may be achieved by (a) elaborating it, (b) extending it or (c) enhancing it. This study examines the impact of the European Commission’s post-referendum communication methods on the portrayal of Europe, its role in facilitating the EU institutional process, and its articulation of a specific EU identity linked to distinct values. The research reveals that the language employed by the EU is evidently grounded in an explanatory logic, elucidating the rationale behind their institutionalised acts. Nevertheless, the minimal use of hypotaxis in the post-referendum booklets, coupled with the inconsistent yet increasing ratio of parataxis to hypotaxis, may suggest a potential shift towards a logic of appearance, characterised by a predominant reliance on coordination and additive, and elaborative logico-semantic relations.

**Keywords :** systemic functional linguistics, logic of appearance, explanatory logic, interdependency, logico-semantic relation

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