Grammatical metaphor in SFL
A historiography of
the introduction and initial study of the concept

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This paper presents the concept of ‘grammatical metaphor’ as it has been introduced and developed within the theory of SFL. Its purpose is purely historiographic, i.e. it merely presents the emergence of a framework for exploring grammatical metaphor in the 1980s, paying special attention to the theoretical context which formed the background for the introduction of this new concept in SFL.
1. Halliday 1985

The concept of grammatical metaphor was introduced in Halliday’s *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985), in a separate chapter on this subject: “Beyond the clause: Metaphorical modes of expression”. In this chapter, the term ‘grammatical metaphor’ is launched as a type of metaphor complementing the more commonly known lexical metaphor, and two types are distinguished: ideational and interpersonal grammatical metaphors.

1.1. Grammatical metaphor and the lexicogrammar continuum

Halliday places his introduction of the term grammatical metaphor in a more general framework outlining traditionally recognized types of ‘rhetorical transference’ or ‘figures of speech’: metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche. Focussing on metaphor, he expands the traditional definition in a number of steps, thus making room for a newly-identified type, grammatical metaphor.

First, a different type of perspective on metaphor is introduced. Traditionally, metaphor is viewed as variation in the use of words, i.e. variation in meaning: “a word is said to be used with a transferred meaning” (Halliday 1985: 321). In this sense, a lexeme with a certain literal meaning can have metaphorical, transferred uses or meanings. In terms of three general types of perspectives which are distinguished in SFL (cf., e.g. Halliday 1996: 16), this is a view ‘from below’, taking the words as starting point, and then saying something about the meanings these words realize.

This view can be complemented by a perspective ‘from above’, as Halliday shows. Here, the starting point is a particular meaning and the relevant question is: which are the different ways in which this meaning can be expressed or realized? Looked at from this angle, metaphor is defined as “variation in the expression of meanings” (ibid., emphasis MT). The two alternative perspectives are visually represented in Figure 1 (based on Halliday’s figure (1994/1985: 342)).
Taking this view ‘from above’, it is argued, “we recognize that lexical selection is just one aspect of lexicogrammatical selection, or ‘wording’; and that metaphorical variation is lexicogrammatical rather than simply lexical” (1994/1985: 342). In this perspective, different expressions of one meaning are compared. In general, it is hard to find alternative expressions of a given meaning which only differ from each other in one lexeme. Halliday gives the following example: the expression *protests flooded in* can be linked to *protests came in in large quantities, protests were received in large quantities or very many people protested*. In none of these is the variation purely lexical; there is also a difference in the grammatical configuration: in *protests came in in large quantities*, a prepositional phrase is added, in *very many people protested* the noun *protests* is now represented by a verb. This brings Halliday (1985: 320, 1994/1985: 342) to grammatical metaphor:

There is a strong grammatical element in rhetorical transference; and once we have recognized this we find that there is also such a thing as grammatical metaphor, where the variation is essentially in the grammatical forms although often entailing some lexical variation as well.

In the area of grammatical metaphor, Halliday claims, the term ‘literal’ is no longer appropriate. The variation between the different expressions of the same meaning is defined in terms of *markedness*: certain forms can be recognized as unmarked expressions of the given meaning, conforming to the “*typical ways of saying things*”
These forms are the non-metaphorical variants, which are called ‘congruent’ realizations.

Before we turn to the more detailed description of types of grammatical metaphor which Halliday gives further on in this chapter, it is useful to point out some general aspects of the shift in perspective – from a focus on lexical variation to a focus on grammatical variation – which lies at the basis of Halliday’s introduction of the concept ‘grammatical metaphor’.

Crucially, the very recognition of a ‘grammatical’ type of metaphor is a consequence of the ‘view from above’, which is introduced as an alternative to the traditional view on metaphor – and the nature of this perspective determines the major aspects of Halliday’s further characterization of grammatical metaphor in this chapter. Since these aspects also form a central motif through the various explorations of grammatical metaphor in later work, it is important to explicitly explain them against the background of this general ‘perspective from above’.

As Halliday indicates, the main feature of the view ‘from above’ is that it defines metaphor as variation in the expression of a given meaning, rather than variation in the meaning of a given expression. This has important consequences which are not explicitly pointed at by Halliday (see the summary in Table 1):

(i) What comes to be compared are grammatical configurations, whereas in the traditional perspective, the focus is on meanings of a single lexeme. It is exactly this feature which brings in grammatical variation, which can then be interpreted in terms of metaphor.

(ii) Various different types of configurations can be compared as expressions of the same meaning. This means that, whereas in the traditional perspective, there is a simple opposition between literal and metaphorical, there is now a scale of congruency: some expressions are typical realizations of the given meaning, and are defined as congruent; others are more or less incongruent, as compared to the congruent realization(s). This feature will be important in the description of various types of metaphors in later work.
(iii) The concept of realization comes to play an important role: what is compared, in this view, is different realizations of the same meaning. This aspect will be important in the theoretical characterization of grammatical metaphor in later work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional view: ‘from below’</th>
<th>New view: ‘from above’</th>
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<tr>
<td>focus on lexical metaphor</td>
<td>focus on grammatical metaphor</td>
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<td>metaphor as variation in the meaning of a given expression</td>
<td>metaphor as variation in the expression of a given meaning</td>
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<td>comparison of the meanings of one lexeme (in different collocational contexts)</td>
<td>comparison of various grammatical configurations as expressions of the same meaning</td>
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<td>literal versus metaphorical (transferred) meanings of a given lexeme</td>
<td>degrees of (in)congruency: congruent and less congruent expressions of a given meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>(realization inherently plays a role in lexical metaphor, but the concept is not used in the traditional view on metaphor)</td>
<td>the feature of congruency applies to realizations of the same meaning</td>
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Table 1: Two perspectives on metaphorical variation

1.2. Ideational grammatical metaphor

Ideational grammatical metaphors are called metaphors of transitivity. The grammatical variation between congruent and incongruent forms here applies to transitivity configurations, and can be analysed in terms of the functional structure of these configurations. In order to bring out the metaphorical nature of an incongruent expression, it is compared to an equivalent congruent realization. The functional analyses of the two expressions are combined into a single diagram with a congruent and incongruent layer, so that grammatical contrasts between the constituents are shown in the vertical dimension: “(t)he technique here is to match the elements vertically as closely as possible” (Halliday 1985: 325, 1994/1985: 346). In this way also variations pertaining to lexical metaphor become clear, and suggestions can be made as to the reasons (e.g. in terms of Theme-Rheme distribution) why a metaphorical construal was chosen. Examples given by Halliday are “Mary came upon a wonderful sight” and “a wonderful sight met Mary’s eyes” as metaphorical variants of “Mary saw something wonderful.” In Figure 2, these are analysed according to the type of representation which
Halliday proposes. Another of Halliday’s oft-cited examples is “the fifth day saw them at the summit” (congruent: they arrived at the summit on the fifth day).

In the analysis of more complex types of transitivity metaphors, it is possible to indicate a “chain of metaphorical interpretations” (Halliday 1985: 328, 1994/1985: 349) as steps in between the metaphorical form under analysis and a (completely) congruent expression. An illustration of such a chain given by Halliday is included below as example (1) (with (e) representing the most congruent form).

(1) a. Advances in technology are speeding up the writing of business programs.
   b. Advances in technology are making the writing of business programs faster.
   c. Advances in technology are enabling people to write business programs faster.
   d. Because technology is advancing, people are (becoming) able to write business programs faster.
   e. Because technology is getting better, people are able to write business programs faster.  
      (Halliday 1994/1985)

A number of aspects are mentioned about the distribution of transitivity metaphors. Ideational metaphors are found in all types of adult discourse. Complete congruency and complete incongruency are rare (Halliday 1985: 328, 1994/1985: 349):

It seems that, in most types of discourse, both spoken and written, we tend to operate somewhere in between these two extremes. Something which is totally congruent is likely to sound a bit flat; whereas the totally incongruent often seems artificial and contrived.
In general, Halliday argues, written language has more ideational metaphors than spoken discourse. This is attributed to a more general difference in types of complexity: written language is said to be “lexically dense”, whereas spoken language is “grammatically intricate”. In written language, various lexical meanings are often ‘packed’ into one single nominal group. This is the context in which ideational metaphor occurs. (Halliday does not further explain this aspect of the distribution of metaphor.)

Throughout the history of language, demetaphorization occurs: grammatical metaphors gradually lose their metaphorical nature, and in this way become “domesticated” (ibid.). Halliday gives three types of what he regards as ‘domesticated’ transitivitiy metaphors in English:

(i) expressions of the type •have a bath•, •do a dance•, •make a mistake• in these forms, the meaning of the process is expressed in the Range rather than the verb;

(ii) examples such as •she has brown eyes• (congruent: her eyes are brown) or •he has a broken wrist• (congruent: his wrist is broken);

(iii) expressions such as •he writes good books• (congruent: he writes books, which are good) or •we sell bargains• (congruent: the things we sell are cheap).

1.3. Interpersonal grammatical metaphor

Since interpersonal grammar in general is organized in two systems, viz. of MOOD and MODALITY, two types of interpersonal grammatical metaphor can be distinguished.

In **metaphors of modality**, the grammatical variation which occurs is based on the logico-semantic relationship of projection. Whereas modal meanings are congruently realized in modal elements in the clause (i.e. modal operators, modal adjuncts or mood adjuncts), interpersonal metaphors are defined by Halliday as expressing modal meanings outside the clause, for instance by means of an additional projecting clause, as is illustrated in example (2). In this way, metaphors of modality are explicit realizations of modal meanings. Speakers can express their opinions in separate
clauses in various ways. Some further possibilities given by Halliday are illustrated in (3).

(2)  a. *I think it’s going to rain.*
    b. Congruent: *It is probably going to rain.* (Halliday 1985)

(3)  *it is obvious that* ...
    everyone admits that ...
    the conclusion can hardly be avoided that ...
    no sane person would pretend that not ...
    commonsense determines that ...
    you can’t seriously doubt that ...

Because of the great diversity in explicit expressions of modal meanings, Halliday states, “(i)t is not always possible to say exactly what is and what is not a metaphorical representation of modality” (1985: 334; 1994/1985: 355). Typical examples of interpersonal metaphor (involving projection) are characterized by two features (it is these features which suggest that these expressions are metaphorical):

(i)  The proposition is expressed in the projected clause, rather than the projecting one. This is shown by the fact that the tag represents the projected clause, as in *I think it’s going to rain, isn’t it?* (not: *don’t I?*).

(ii) When the proposition is negative, the negation can either be expressed in the proposition itself, or in the projecting clause. This is illustrated in (4), where (a) and (b) (with transferred polarity feature) are said to have the same ‘meaning’.

(4)  a. *I think Jane doesn’t know.*
    b. *I don’t think Jane knows.*

Halliday describes *metaphors of mood* in a similar way as metaphors of modality: in this type of interpersonal metaphor, a mood meaning is not expressed in the clause, but rather as an explicit element outside the clause. Typical examples of mood metaphors are “speech-functional formulae” (1994/1985: 365), of which Halliday gives the following examples:
‘Command’ functioning as a ‘warning’:
   a. I wouldn’t … if I were you.
   b. Congruent: don’t …!

Modalized ‘offer’, typically functioning as ‘threat’:
   a. I’ve a good mind to …
   b. Congruent: Maybe I’ll …

Modulated ‘command’, typically functioning as ‘advice’:
   a. She’d better …
   b. Congruent: She should …

The possible explicit expressions of mood meanings are very diverse, and it is not easy to decide whether a given expression should be interpreted as a mood metaphor.

1.4. Ideational and interpersonal metaphors: General aspects

In the final paragraphs of his chapter, Halliday points to the interaction between ideational and interpersonal metaphors, and mentions some general aspects which characterize both types.

Some expressions contain both interpersonal and ideational metaphors. Halliday illustrates this with the example look at the way they cheated before. As an expression of a ‘request’ with the meaning ‘consider the fact that they cheated before’, this form is metaphorical in the ideational sense only. However, when taken as an incongruent realization of the meaning ‘the evidence is (the fact) that they cheated before’, both interpersonal and ideational metaphors are involved (look at the way they cheated before).³

Halliday finally suggests that the concept of grammatical metaphor “enables us to bring together a number of features of discourse which at first sight look rather different from each other” (1985: 343, 1994/1985: 366). In this sense, interpersonal and ideational metaphors are “really instances of the same phenomenon arising in these two different contexts (ideational and interpersonal, MT)”. All the instances of grammatical metaphor which are analysed can be linked to the same general features:
In all the instances that we are treating as grammatical metaphor, some aspect of the structural configuration of the clause, whether in its ideational or in its interpersonal function or in both, is in some way different from that which would be arrived at by the shortest route – it is not, or was not originally, the most straightforward coding of the meanings selected. (Halliday 1985: 343, 1994/1985: 366)

1.5. Conclusion

In this section, we have looked at the first presentation of grammatical metaphor as offered by Halliday in his *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985). Halliday introduces the concept as an equivalent of lexical metaphor on the opposite end of the lexicogrammatical continuum. We have seen that the recognition of this type of metaphor depends on a shift in perspective – starting from the semantics rather than the lexicogrammar, which redefines metaphor as variation in the expression of a given meaning. I have argued that the nature of this new perspective determines the main features of the framework in which grammatical metaphor is understood: various configurations are compared as alternative realizations of the same meaning; their variation is analysed in terms of their functional structures; and they can be placed on a scale of congruency, the metaphorical variants being termed ‘incongruent’.

The notion of congruency is characterized in terms of markedness: congruent expressions are the unmarked, typical realizations of the given meaning. In this initial description, the new concepts of grammatical metaphoricity and incongruency are characterized in relation to intuitive notions: what is congruent conforms to ‘the typical ways of saying things’, it is the form of coding ‘arrived at by the shortest route’, ‘the most straightforward coding of the meanings selected’. No explicit definition of grammatical metaphor is given, and while the intuitive explanations seem plausible in the descriptions of ideational and interpersonal metaphors, it is not clear why exactly the analysed expressions are metaphors. More specifically, it is difficult to see why exactly the different types of expressions mentioned (metaphors of transitivity, metaphors of modality and of mood) are all metaphorical, i.e. what is common in their structure.
2. The theme of congruence in earlier work

In his *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985), Halliday introduces grammatical metaphor as a specific phenomenon which has to be accounted for in a grammar, and characterizes it in general in terms of congruence. Although the term ‘grammatical metaphor’ first appears in this context, the concept of incongruence (and even metaphor in a broad sense) turns up at different points in earlier work by Halliday and by Robin Fawcett. This section aims to outline the various meanings of ‘congruence’ in these different contexts. Because of the role of ‘congruence’ in the characterization of grammatical metaphor, these meanings can be seen as the general background against which the concept of grammatical metaphor emerged.

2.1. The concept of congruence in early work by Halliday

2.1.1. Congruence, markedness and probability value

Halliday’s “Grammatical categories in Modern Chinese” (Halliday 1976/1956) is the first publication in which the term ‘congruent’ appears. In this article, Halliday describes different types of grammatical structures in Chinese. In cases where alternative forms exist of a basic structure (differing, for example, in word order), the likelihood of occurrence of each form is expressed as a probability value (such as “’+”, meaning ‘is likely to occur’; “’−”, meaning ‘may occur’). In this context, “a grammatical structure which reflects a contextual structure (by matching it with maximum probability)” (Halliday 1976: 42) is termed ‘congruent’. In language, this is indicated in the unmarked phonological reflection of that form. Halliday gives an example of Given–New structures:

Here the congruent grammatical form is that in which given precedes new; in the congruent form, stress is facultative (that is, there is no stress system at this point), while in the incongruent form the formal mark of incongruence is the phonological reflection of the new by stress. The use of the concept here, and the choice of the phonologically unmarked member as the congruent term, are justified by the probability function taken together with the stress marking of the one form and not the other. (ibid.)
2.1.2. Congruence and social varieties of language

The theme of congruence turns up in two studies of language in social contexts (a major theme in SFL in the 1970s). In the article on “Language in urban society”, Halliday (1978b) deals with the use of different social varieties of language in different contexts. The use of high varieties of language in formal contexts and low varieties in informal contexts is called “the congruent pattern” (Halliday 1978b: 156). It is the pattern in which a language variety is used in that context by which it is defined as the norm. A speaker can also use a language variety incongruently, i.e. in a context where it is not the norm. This incongruent use of language is meaningful, Halliday stresses, because it creates a foregrounding effect.

Congruence is linked to the idea of metaphor in an article devoted to “Anti-languages” (Halliday 1978c). An antilanguage is a type of language created by and maintaining an antisociety, which is set up within an existing society as a form or resistance. As a conscious alternative to standard language, an antilangue has its own types of codings, which are variants of the standard ones. This can be seen at various levels in the antilanguage, especially phonology and morphology, but also lexicogrammar and semantics (Halliday illustrates these variants with expressions from the Calcutta underworld language):

(i) Phonological variants are formed through processes such as metathesis, back formation, consonantal change, syllabic insertion.

(ii) Morphological variants differ from standard language through derivational processes: suffixing, compounding, shift of word class.

(iii) Lexical variants involve lexical borrowing or alternation (i.e. lexical metaphorical transfers).

(iv) Syntactic variants are formed through expansions.

(v) Semantic variants are new forms which have no ‘semantic’ equivalent in the standard language.
The term variants is used here as in Labov’s (1969) variation theory, in the sense of “alternative ways of ‘saying the same thing’” (Labov 1969, quoted by Halliday, quotation marks WL). Halliday points out that each of these (types of) variants can be described in more general terms as “an alternative realization of an element on the next, or on some, higher stratum” (Halliday 1978c: 173, emphasis MT). Morphological, lexical and syntactic variants are alternative lexicogrammatical realizations of the same meaning; phonological variants are alternative realizations of the same word (and hence, also, the same meaning). In general, “(a)ssuming the semantic stratum to be the highest within the linguistic system, all sets of variants have the property of being identical semantically; some have the property of being identical lexicgrammatically as well” (Halliday 1978c: 173, emphasis MAKH). This is a general way in which the variants can be understood. On the other hand, Halliday observes:

Now the significant thing about the items that are phonologically or morphologically distinctive in the underworld language is that many of them are not, in fact, variants at all; they have no semantic equivalent in standard Bengali. This does not mean that they cannot be translated into standard Bengali (or standard English, or standard anything else): they can. But they do not function as coded elements in the semantic system of everyday language. (Halliday 1978c: 173, emphasis MAKH)

Halliday dismisses this issue of whether variants have the same meaning or not by calling them “metaphorical variants”:

There is no way of deciding whether such metaphorical representations ‘have the same meaning’ as everyday forms or not, i.e. whether they are or are not variants in Labov’s definition. […] Nor is there any need to decide. We can call them all ‘metaphorical variants’, since it is helpful to relate them to variation theory; what is most important is the fact that they are metaphorical. (Halliday 1978c: 175)

However, Halliday keeps the general idea that variants are alternative realizations of an element at the next higher stratum – and in this vein, he recognizes a fifth type of variant: semantic variants. Semantic variants realize the same element in the stratum of the cultural context: they “‘come together’ (i.e. are interpretable) at the higher level, that of the culture as an information system” (ibid.: 177).
The variants are referred to as *phonological metaphors*, *grammatical metaphors* (which are morphological, lexical or syntactic) and *semantic metaphors*. As alternative realizations, the variant expressions in an antilanguage can generally be defined as new ways of *coding* which do not occur in the system of everyday language.

The stratum of the context of culture is important in an understanding of antilanguage in general. Halliday explains this by using Lévi-Strauss’s (1966) interpretation of social systems in terms of metaphor and metonymy: an antisociety is a metonymic extension of (mainstream) society, and its realizations (both in its social structure and in its language: in an antilanguage) can be regarded as metaphorical to the mainstream realization (mainstream society and everyday language). The metaphorical nature of the antilingual variant forms, Halliday argues, is precisely what sets off an antilanguage from the standard language against which it is created as a conscious alternative. Therefore, an antilanguage in general can be seen as “a metaphor for everyday language” (ibid.: 175).

Because an antilanguage as a whole is a metaphor for everyday language, it is only with reference to everyday language that the antilingual variants can be called metaphorical. Within the antilanguage as such, these expressions are the *norm*, they are “the *regular* patterns of realization” (ibid.: 177, emphasis MT).

Whereas antilanguage as a whole is a metaphor of everyday language, metaphorical expressions naturally occur within everyday language as well. Halliday explains the phenomenon of metaphor as a natural feature of language in terms of coding:

Conversation […] depends for its reality-generating power on being casual; that is to say, it typically makes use of *highly coded* areas of the system to produce *text* that is *congruent* – though once coding and congruence have been established as the norm, it can tolerate and indeed thrives on a reasonable quantity of matter that is incongruent or uncoded. ‘Uncoded’ means ‘not (yet) fully incorporated into the system’; ‘incongruent’ means ‘not expressed through the most typical (and highly coded) form of representation’; and both concepts are of a ‘more or less’ kind, not ‘all or nothing’. (Halliday 1978c: 180, emphasis MAKH).
In certain types of social context, the coding process itself is important, and through this the aspect of (in)congruence comes to be foregrounded. This is the case in the language of young children, where a system is still emerging; or in what Halliday calls “verbal contest and display”, where the coding is foregrounded because of a particular function of the system, for example, as a form of resistance. An antilanguage is such a type of ‘verbal contest and display’.

2.2. Congruence in the interpersonal component: Halliday 1984

In the article “Language as code and language as behaviour: A systemic-functional interpretation of the nature and ontogenesis of dialogue”, Halliday (1984) deals with the relationship between system (language as code, as a potential) and process (language as actual behaviour) in the interpersonal component. The general aim of this paper is to show how systems are actualized in dialogue, and how an analysis of dialogue leads to a refinement of the systems. Halliday illustrates this system-process interaction with examples from the ontogenesis of language, setting up interpersonal systems for various stages in the development of one child’s language.

The concept of incongruence plays a role in the relationship between system and process. Halliday first indicates this for the adult interpersonal systems, and then turns to the ontogenetic development of language. In this summary, we will only focus on the first part of the paper.

After a description of basic interpersonal systems at the levels of context (move), semantics (speech function) and lexicogrammar (mood), the question is how these strata are linked to one another through realization, and here the concept of congruence comes in. Options from the system of the move (NEGOTIATION)\(^5\) have congruent realizations in the system of SPEECH FUNCTION; options in the SPEECH FUNCTION network have congruent realizations in the MOOD system. A congruent realization is defined as “that one which can be regarded as typical – which will be selected in the absence of any good reason for selecting another one”, a realization which is “unmarked” (Halliday 1984: 14, emphasis MT).
Focussing on the relations between semantics and lexicogrammar, the relevant system networks are given in Figures 3 and 4. Congruent mappings between selections in the two systems are represented in Table 2 (based on Halliday 1984: 16).

Table 2 only shows the typical, congruent mappings between semantics and lexicogrammar. When turning to language as behaviour, as it actually occurs in dialogue, this basic matrix has to be extended: more delicate options can be indicated, and, more importantly, in this process, incongruent realizations have to be taken into account. As Halliday indicates, there is a link between incongruency and increased delicacy: “many of the more delicate distinctions within any system depend for their expression on what in the first instance appear as non-congruent forms” (Halliday 1984: 14; emphasis MAKH).

Figure 3: SPEECH FUNCTION: primary options

Figure 4: MOOD: primary options
In the realization relationships between SPEECH FUNCTION and MOOD, incongruent types of expressions are especially important in particular areas. In general, Halliday notes, there is a greater tendency to incongruence in the exchange of 'goods-&-services'. According to him, this is "hardly surprising": since information is inherently linguistic, it is only natural that language has clear categories, declarative and interrogative, to express different types of exchange of 'information'. The exchange of 'goods-&-services', by contrast, takes place outside the system of language: as such it is not dependent on an expression in language. As a result, language does not have a clearly defined type of pattern which is specialized for the expression of exchanges of 'goods-&-services'.

This can be seen most clearly in the area of 'offers': there is no single type of expression in English which can be regarded as a congruent realization of an 'offer' – various possible patterns can be used as verbalizations of 'proposals'. Halliday gives the following examples: here you are!, would you like a newspaper?, shall I hold the door open for you?. For 'commands', the imperative can be regarded as the unmarked, congruent realization, but, Halliday argues, non-congruent forms are more often used to express the 'command' function.

In the second part of this paper, Halliday illustrates the emergence of incongruence in the ontogenesis of language. He shows how a child’s language gradually evolves from an initial system in which there is a small number of clear-cut,
congruent options, into a more elaborate adult system, which heavily relies on incongruent realizations as well, and where indeed, in some areas (especially ‘commands’ and ‘offers’), there is no clearly-defined congruent option.

2.3. **Congruence in the ideational component: Fawcett 1980**

Before the term ‘grammatical metaphor’ had been introduced into SFL, Fawcett (1980) proposed a general ‘congruence network’, in which nominalized types of construal (which, as we have seen above, in Halliday’s later account form the principal type of experiential metaphor), are systemically represented, in general, as less typical variants of other, ‘straightforward’ construals.

Fawcett’s “congruence network” is proposed in order to “handle the complex range of possible relationships between the referent as a raw input to the linguistic system and the input to the various system networks” (Fawcett 1980: 91). The congruence network does not belong to any functional component: it is regarded as the “first system network in the semantics”, the network which specifies the possible entry conditions for further systems.

The entry condition of the congruence network, which is represented here as Figure 5, is the input to linguistic processing in general, termed the ‘referent’. The network then indicates the various ways in which this referent may be processed. At the primary level of delicacy, the referent may be processed in three ways: regarded as situation, regarded as thing, and regarded as quality. For each of these general options, more delicate further possibilities are specified. At this point the concept of ‘congruence’ comes in, interpreted in Halliday’s sense:

The term congruence […] provides an apt label for the system network in which we decide whether or not to use the typical set of semantic options – and so the typical syntactic unit – for a referent. (Fawcett 1980: 92)

For example, for the option referent regarded as situation, three further possibilities are available, of which one is congruent (termed ‘straightforward’ and marked with an asterisk), as realized in, for example *Ivy quickly refused his offer*. Other types of construals of this same referent regarded as situation, are (1) a construal as ‘possessed’
situation (‘gerund’), as in *Ivy’s quickly refusing his offer*, and (2) a construal as *quasi-thing* (nominalization or ‘mixed nominal’), as in *Ivy’s quick refusing of his offer*.

Examples of realizations:

- *Ivy quickly refused his offer*
- *Ivy's quickly refusing his offer*
- *Ivy's quick refusing of his offer*
- *Ivy | the girl | Ivy's refusal*
- *what Ivy refused*
- *Ivy*
- *straight to Ivy*
- *very quickly*
- *very quick*

Figure 5: Congruence network proposed by Fawcett (1980: 93)

A selection from the congruence network, rather than a ‘syntactic’ label, such as ‘clause’, then forms the input (the entry condition) for further functionally-specific system networks. For example, the point of origin of the illocutionary force network is the following selection from the congruence network: referent > regarded as situation > straightforward (Fawcett 1980: 201ff.).

3. **An initial framework for ideational grammatical metaphor:**

Ravelli 1985, 1988

In “Grammatical metaphor: An initial analysis”, Louise Ravelli (1988) presents a framework for the study of ideational metaphor. She focusses on three main aspects: general models explaining the phenomenon of grammatical metaphor; different types of ideational grammatical metaphor and how they can be recognized; and ways in which grammatical metaphor influences the complexity of a text.
As we saw in Section 1 above, Halliday compared two different views on the phenomenon of metaphor in general and took a ‘view from above’ in order to introduce ‘grammatical metaphor’. Ravelli takes the same ‘view from above’ as a starting point – defining grammatical metaphor in terms of alternative lexicogrammatical realizations of the same meaning. However, following a suggestion by Halliday, she proposes a refinement of this model which takes into account the fact that metaphor also involves ‘semantic’ variation. It is not completely accurate to say that two alternative lexicogrammatical realizations (a congruent one and a metaphorical one) have ‘the same meaning’. Instead, the incongruent form “has a feedback effect into the semantics” (Ravelli 1988: 137, cp. 1999: 104), and this is especially so because a metaphorical expression may select or omit different aspects of the meaning configuration which is realized by an equivalent congruent expression. In general, Ravelli argues, “(e)ach expression thus shares some semantic content, but differs in detail” (1988: 137). In this view, grammatical metaphor is interpreted as “a combination of semantic features” or a “semantic compound” (Ravelli 1988: 137). This new model, indicating the ‘semantic’ feedback effect of metaphor, is visually presented by Ravelli as in Figure 6.

![Figure 6: Ravelli's alternative model of grammatical metaphor as a 'semantic' compound (from Ravelli 1988: 137, 1999: 104)](image)

What is crucial in this refined model, is that the starting point is no longer one single meaning: it is recognized that metaphor also involves a meaning difference. However, Ravelli indicates, in the present state of systemic theory it is not yet possible
to bring out the exact nature of the ‘semantic’ difference, since in order to achieve this, “it would be necessary to represent the level of semantics with system networks as for the lexicogrammar” (ibid.: 138). Therefore, although this model is theoretically more powerful, it can not yet be used in descriptions of metaphor. For this reason Ravelli takes Halliday’s general view ‘from above’, with ‘one meaning – different realizations’, as the underlying framework in the rest of her paper.

On the basis of an exploration of metaphors in different texts, Ravelli proposes a classification of ideational metaphors into nine general types. These types are summarized in Table 3. With reference to the problem of modelling mentioned above (viz. the absence of system networks for the semantics), she notes that the ‘semantic’ choice which forms the basis of each type of metaphor is here represented in terms of grammatical labels, which are “terms with which we are familiar” (ibid.: 139), such as ‘material process, circumstance, participant’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic choice</th>
<th>Metaphorical realization</th>
<th>Congruent realization</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a material process</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b mental process</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c relational process</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d verbal process</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e behavioural process</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 process</td>
<td>Epithet, Classifier</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a quality of a Thing</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b quality of process</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c quality of a process</td>
<td>Epithet, Classifier</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a modality</td>
<td>Epithet</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>(modal) adverb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b modality, modulation</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>adjective, passive verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a logical connection</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b logical connection</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 circumstance</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>verbal group</td>
<td>prepositional phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a participant</td>
<td>Classifier</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b participant</td>
<td>Thing</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
<td>nominal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a expansion</td>
<td>Relative Act, Clause</td>
<td>embedded clause</td>
<td>ranking clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b projection</td>
<td>Fact</td>
<td>embedded clause</td>
<td>ranking clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 circumstance</td>
<td>Epithet, Classifier</td>
<td>adjective</td>
<td>prepositional clause</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Ideational metaphor types in Ravelli 1988

Specific aspects pertaining to particular types of metaphor are commented on:
(i) **Nominalization** is claimed to be the type of ideational metaphor “of which there is the greatest awareness” (ibid.: 140), and Ravelli links this to the first type in the classification, which is found to account for 35% of all examples of metaphors in the analysed texts.

(ii) There is a relationship of **metaphorical dependence** between categories 1 and 3b: when a process is metaphorically expressed as a Thing, a constituent qualifying the process must be realized as an Epithet modifying the metaphorical Thing.

(iii) Of the fourth type, Ravelli writes that it “takes some account of interpersonal metaphor”, since the congruent realization here is a modal adverb (4a: *it will possibly turn out that*) or “an adjective or a passive verb” (4b: *they are capable of striking first*). The effect of these metaphors is an objectifying and backgrounding of the opinion expressed by the speaker.

(iv) Types 3c, 4b and 7b show a general feature characteristic of ideational metaphor, which Ravelli calls **paradigmatic plurality**, or **paradigmatic recursion**: “a metaphorical realization can pass through the network a second time, again being realized metaphorically” (ibid.: 140). Ravelli shows that two steps of metaphorical realizations are exemplified in these types, for example: *they feel secure* (congruent realization) → *their secure feeling* (1st metaphorical realization) → *their feeling of security* (2nd metaphorical realization). Although this feature of recursion is only illustrated here in types 3c, 4b and 7b, it is argued that “it is possible that recursion is general to all categories of metaphor” (ibid.: 141).

Ravelli explores the possibility of representing grammatical metaphor in a *system network*, which would be especially valuable for two reasons: (1) in general this would explain grammatical metaphor in terms of a *choice* in a system where also other, congruent options are available; (2) more specifically, a system network could account for different types of *recursion* effects found in metaphor.

Paradigmatic plurality, it is argued, is a type of recursion which is not systemic as such, and therefore cannot be represented as an option in a network: it is simply a
“rewiring mechanism” (Ravelli 1988: 141, 1999: 62), an extra possibility for a metaphorical realization, to enter again at a different point in the system.

When “more than one item of a clause may be a metaphorical realization”, this is accounted for in terms of “syntagmatic plurality”: in such cases one occurrence of grammatical metaphor is syntagmatically dependent⁹ on another process of metaphor (Ravelli 1999: 66, 99). In this type of recursion, the recursive option has to be prepresented as a network feature (Ravelli 1988: 141).

The feature of syntagmatic plurality leads Ravelli to make a distinction between two levels at which ideational metaphors can be analysed. Simple metaphors can be distinguished from other types of expressions, in which various instances of metaphorical realizations interact with each other. All the simple types of metaphors outlined in Table 3 are referred to as metaphors which occur at a micro level, whereas metaphors involving syntagmatic plurality are called metaphors at a macro level (Ravelli 1988: 142, 1999: 66–67). In this sense, macro-level metaphors are clusters of micro-level metaphors. Ravelli illustrates this difference with the following example:

(8) ... (it) will have a real impact on political thinking (Ravelli 1988, 1999)

This clause contains four micro-level metaphors: *real*, *impact*, *political*, and *thinking*, which are grouped into two macro-level metaphors: *real impact* and *political thinking*.

Ideally then, both micro- and macro-level metaphors could be represented in a system network allowing recursion – a feature which, Ravelli states, is usually indicated in a network by means of simultaneous systems.¹⁰ Ravelli refers to Fawcett’s (1980, cf. Section 2.3 above) ‘congruence network’ as a possible model. However, she notes, because it is based in Fawcett’s general cognitive-functional theory of language, this network represents “the speaker’s ‘knowledge of the world’” rather than “observable systems of semiotics” which provide the “context for language” in a systemic-functional theory. By ‘observable systems of semiotics’, Ravelli means the strata of semantics and lexicogrammar.
A systemic-functional representation of grammatical metaphor has to take into account a ‘semantic’ and lexicogrammatical level. Ravelli offers an initial schematic representation which is reproduced here as Figure 7.

![Diagram](https://example.com/diagram.png)

Figure 7: Levels in a network representation of grammatical metaphor
(from Ravelli 1988: 137; 1999: 101)

Ravelli (1999: 101) indicates that Fawcett’s network is useful in that it can be modified to serve as a network at the level of the semantics. The ‘semantic’ network would indicate the common meaning realized by different expressions: in this example, this is the initial choice ‘process’, represented as the entry condition for a system. The meaning difference (cf. above) arising from a congruent vs. incongruent realization of this initial choice would be represented as a system, i.e. as a further step in delicacy within the ‘semantic’ network (in this case: the options “process” and “participant”). The realizations of these further choices “would then carry through to the lexicogrammar” (Ravelli 1999: 101). However, the level of lexicogrammar poses many problems. In order to represent grammatical metaphor in the network, and to make recursion possible, there must be a clearly defined entry condition for the systems containing metaphorical options, i.e. “the rank or delicacy at which grammatical metaphor becomes an option must be determined” (ibid.: 99). It is precisely this determination which is problematic:

Grammatical metaphor cannot be a feature at the rank of clause, because although the entire clause may be metaphorical, often only parts of a clause are metaphorical. Thus grammatical metaphor would appear to be a feature at the rank of group/phrase – the constituents of the clause. Yet it is not the case that groups –
such as nominal groups, for example – may be realised metaphorically: the group is the metaphorical realisation of something else. (Ravelli 1999: 99, emphasis LR)

Ravelli concludes: “Thus it is extremely difficult to capture any descriptive generalisations about grammatical metaphor at the level of lexicogrammar” (ibid.).

As to the recognition of grammatical metaphor, Ravelli proposes two devices which can be useful in determining whether a given expression is incongruent or not:

(i) **Derivation.** Many metaphors are formed through derivational processes. However, it is noted that this is not a reliable recognition criterion, since “many metaphorical examples are found without any derivational suffixes, and […] not every suffix indicates a metaphorical form” (Ravelli 1988: 141).

(ii) **Agnation.** Any metaphorical expression has (an) agnate form(s) which show(s) its (more) congruent realization(s). The rewording of a metaphorical expression into a (more) congruent one is referred to as “unpacking” the grammatical metaphor (Ravelli 1999: 77). Although a comparison between different agnates is very useful in recognizing metaphorical realizations, it becomes difficult or impossible in cases where lexical metaphor is also involved. (ibid.).

Ravelli’s study also involves an investigation of the relationship between grammatical metaphor, mode and complexity. The hypothesis formulated by Halliday (1985, cf. Section 1 above) that written versus spoken varieties of language exhibit a different type of complexity, viz. lexical density versus grammatical intricacy, is borne out in Ravelli’s analysis. Moreover, she found that a high frequency of grammatical metaphor corelates with a high level of lexical density and a low level of grammatical intricacy (cf. Ravelli 1988: 144–145, 1999: 73–75). Ravelli offers the following explanation for this correlation: in congruent grammar, process meanings are related to each other through clause complexing (i.e. using the logical resources of taxis and logico-semantic relations), and in this way, a text which is largely congruent is grammatically intricate. Grammatical metaphor, which construes processes as nominal groups, makes it possible for two process meanings to be linked to each other within a
clause; this type of incongruent construal leads to a higher lexical density (more lexical words in the same clause) and a lower grammatical intricacy (the systems of clause complexing are avoided).

Finally, Ravelli also points out another major effect of grammatical metaphor which she found in the analysis of texts. When process meanings are metaphorically construed as Things, this creates new possibilities for the textual organization of a clause: a process meaning can now function as the Theme of the clause (whereas in the congruent pattern, the Theme function is restricted to participants and circumstances (Ravelli 1988: 145)), and it can also become the unmarked focus of information (in the Given/New structure). It is argued that a recognition of such textual effects is essential to an understanding of grammatical metaphor, since it provides a functional explanation of the phenomenon.

4. Review: Leading motifs in the initial studies of grammatical metaphor

In this paper, we have considered the first studies in which ‘grammatical metaphor’ and ‘incongruence’ appear within SFL. We have focussed on the introduction of the concept grammatical metaphor by Halliday in 1985; the theme of congruence in earlier studies (probability values and social variation in Halliday’s early work, incongruence in the interpersonal component (Halliday) and incongruence in the ideational component (Fawcett)); and the framework of ideational metaphor proposed by Ravelli.

The initial accounts of metaphor and incongruence which we have considered in this paper involve three general types of issues: a theoretical characterization and analysis of the phenomenon ‘grammatical metaphor’ in general, a classification of types of metaphor, and a functional explanation of the effects of metaphor in texts:

(i) The analysis of grammatical metaphor. A metaphorical realization is analyzed by rewording – or unpacking – it into a (more) congruent agnate form, and by comparing its structure to the congruent structure. Halliday presents this analysis in diagrams showing the functional structure of each expression as a separate layer, so that metaphorical shifts become visible in the vertical dimension of the
With complex (especially ideational) metaphors, it is sometimes necessary to unpack them in various steps, so that a ‘chain of metaphorical realizations’ (cf. Halliday) can be set up.

(ii) **Types of metaphor.** In the initial studies of grammatical metaphor, two general types are distinguished pertaining to the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions. Halliday subdivides interpersonal metaphor into two sub-types, according to the primary interpersonal systems at the level of lexicogrammar: mood and modality. Ravelli proposes a classification of ideational metaphors into a larger number of types, distinguished in terms of grammatical class and function.

(iii) **Functions of metaphor.** Ravelli indicates two general effects of ideational metaphor, which, as she states, are important in the functional explanation of the phenomenon. These effects pertain to the textual metafunction: ideational grammatical metaphor can be used to organise a text into a particular thematic or information structure, for example it enables a ‘process’ to function as Theme or to get an unmarked information focus.

The keynote motif in the initial studies of grammatical metaphor is the characterization of metaphor in terms of ‘alternative realizations’. This basic idea is theoretically expanded in two ways: on the one hand, it is linked to the motif of incongruence, which was already used before the concept of grammatical metaphor was introduced; on the other hand, the idea of ‘alternative realizations’ is explored in relation to two important theoretical dimensions in SFL: the notion of stratification (and the semiotic relationship of realization) and the system-structure relation (including the system network as a linguistic tool). In the remainder of this section, these various aspects are looked at in turn.

4.1. **Incongruence**

The general characterization of grammatical metaphor in terms of ‘alternative realizations’ naturally leads to the concept of ‘congruence’: in general, when there is variation among types of expressions, some realizations are congruent, whereas others
are incongruent – as was already recognized in very early work by Halliday (1976/1956). The concept of congruence is described in various ways. It is most often associated with markedness (Halliday 1976/1956, 1984, 1985) or typicality (Halliday 1984, 1985): congruent expressions are typical, unmarked ways of realizing a feature. A number of expressions used to describe the distinction between congruence and incongruence are summarized in Table 4.

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<tr>
<td>• congruent form = “unmarked” form</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “a grammatical structure which reflects a contextual structure (by matching it with maximum probability)”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “the regular patterns of realization”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “he (the speaker) may also use the forms (variants of language) incongruently: that is, outside the contexts which define them as the norm”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• a congruent realization = “that one which can be regarded as typical – which will be selected in absence of any good reason for selecting another one”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• “the typical ways of saying things”</td>
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<td>• “that (structure) which would be arrived at by the shortest route”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “the most straightforward coding of the meanings selected”</td>
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Incongruence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incongruence</th>
<th>Halliday 1978c: 180</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “incongruent’ means ‘not expressed through the most typical (and highly coded) form of representation”</td>
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</table>

Table 4: Expressions used by Halliday to characterize congruence and incongruence

In the context of the systemic representation of variation (i.e. in system networks), the concept of congruence is linked to two fundamental scales in SFL: instantiation and delicacy.

4.2. Metaphor and realization

The general characterization of grammatical metaphor in terms of ‘alternative realizations’ is stated more precisely as ‘alternative lexicogrammatical realizations of a choice in the semantics’ (cf. Ravelli 1988: 135). The concept of realization, and especially the interstratal coding relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar
play an important role in the recognition and understanding of grammatical metaphor as a specific phenomenon of language. The early studies of metaphor show two lines of thinking on this subject. On the one hand, Halliday’s (1985) ‘view from above’, which is proposed as an alternative to the traditional conception of (mostly lexical) metaphor, leads to a recognition of grammatical metaphor in a framework of ‘alternative realizations of the same meaning’ (cf. Section 1.5 above). On the other hand, as Ravelli (1988, 1999) indicates, it is not true that an incongruent expression has ‘the same meaning’ as the congruent realization with which it is compared: instead, the incongruent variant has its own feedback effect into the semantics, leading to ‘semantic variation’. We have seen that the issue of whether or not metaphorical variant expressions have the same meaning as their non-metaphorical counterparts was recognized but dismissed in Halliday’s (1978c) study of antilanguage. The two lines of thinking which characterize the early studies of grammatical metaphor – i.e. ‘same meaning, different forms’ versus ‘semantic variation as well as lexicogrammatical variation’ – will lead to different conceptions about the networking of metaphor, as we will see in the following section.

4.3. Metaphor and system network representations

The idea of ‘alternative realizations’ inherently implies a conception of metaphor in terms of choice, a fundamental concept in SFL which is formalized by means of system networks. The concept of choice is the general motivation behind the exploration of how metaphor can be represented in system networks: to show that a metaphorical expression is a meaningful choice, an option which has been selected in contrast to more congruent realizations. In the ideational component, there are two more specific, structural motivations for exploring how metaphor can be networked: a network representation of metaphor would indicate the systemic relationship between congruent expressions and their incongruent agnates which are used in the analysis to determine their metaphorical structure; and a network could also contain an option of recursion, which is found to be important in the structure of ideational metaphors (Ravelli 1988).
In the studies of metaphor and incongruency which we have considered, the possibility of incorporating grammatical metaphor in system networks has been approached in different ways. In one type of approach, the feature of congruence is directly indicated in the options in a system network. This is exemplified in Fawcett’s (1980) ‘congruence network’, where congruent and incongruent options are represented as systemic features within a system, the congruent ones being indicated by an asterisk. Although in his early description of Chinese, Halliday (1976/1956) did not yet use the system network as a formal representation, whenever different types of expressions are possible for the same basic form, they are assigned a probability value, which indicates whether they are congruent or not within the set of possibilities. In these early proposals, incongruency is built into the description as an aspect of variation at a certain level: in Halliday’s study, this is the level of lexicogrammar, in Fawcett’s it is the level of ‘the speaker’s knowledge of the world’.

Later studies (Halliday 1984, Ravelli 1988) take into account the stratified model of language, and conceptualize metaphor in terms of the coding relationship of realization between a ‘semantic’ and a ‘lexicogrammatical’ stratum. Here, the question is how the idea of ‘alternative lexicogrammatical realizations of a choice in the semantics’ can be represented in a system network. Halliday (1984) and Ravelli (1988) make different proposals for interpersonal and ideational metaphor.

Halliday (1984) explains interpersonal metaphors of mood in terms of mappings between the ‘semantic’ system of SPEECH FUNCTION and the lexicogrammatical system of MOOD. Congruent coding relationships are indicated between the primary options of both systems, for example the ‘semantic’ choice ‘statement’ (initiating–giving–information) is congruently realized in the lexicogrammatical choice major mood > free > indicative > declarative. When looking at the instantiation of both systems in actual texts, we have to take into account incongruent expressions. An incongruent realization of a ‘semantic’ (speech functional) choice is then indicated as a more delicate option in the MOOD network (i.e. taking into account simultaneous or more delicate systems, such as MOOD PERSON, MODALITY): for example a modulated interrogative with interactant > addressee as
MOOD PERSON (e.g. *Could you ...?*) is an incongruent realization of the ‘semantic’ option ‘command’.11

Ravelli (1988) explores how metaphor can be represented in *ideational* system networks. In keeping with her important observation that an incongruent lexicogrammatical realization does not have exactly the same meaning as its congruent equivalent(s), but rather has a feedback effect into the semantics (cf. above), she makes an initial proposal for a network presentation in which a variation between congruent and incongruent alternatives is also shown at the level of the semantics (cf. Figure 7 above). However, Ravelli does not actually set up a network for ideational metaphor, because of two problems:

(i) There is not yet a system network representation of the stratum of semantics, although, Ravelli notes, Fawcett’s ‘knowledge’ network can be modified for this purpose. (It should be added here that this remark only applies to the ideational component, with which Ravelli is concerned.)

(ii) The level of lexicogrammar is problematic because it is difficult to represent an option for a metaphorical expression in terms of the rank scale, i.e. it cannot be determined which grammatical unit serves as an entry condition for a system in which grammatical metaphor is an option.

As Ravelli presents it (Ravelli 1999: 99; see the quote on p. 24 above), the difficulty lies in determining the rank at which grammatical metaphor is an option (i.e. is a systemic feature). However, the exact way in which ‘grammatical metaphor’ is a feature in a system is not defined, and is stated in contradictory ways: when grammatical metaphor ‘is a feature at a certain rank’, does this mean (1) that units of this rank are metaphorical realizations, or (2) that the meanings of units of this rank are realized metaphorically? This contradiction is revealed when Ravelli argues that, on the one hand, the clause cannot be the rank at which grammatical metaphor appears as a feature, because the clause as such is not a metaphorical realization (i.e. only parts of the clause may be metaphorical), and on the other hand, the group/phrase cannot be an
entry condition for the feature grammatical metaphor, because “it is not the case that groups […] may be realized metaphorically”.

Notes

1. For an elaborate evaluation of the notion of ‘grammatical metaphor’ in SFL and a proposal for an alternative model, see Taverniers (2002).

2. Throughout this paper, the signs “   ” indicates an example of experiential metaphor, while instances of interpersonal metaphor are marked by the sign “  ”.

3. Although the specific contribution of the interpersonal and ideational metaphors is not explicitly described by Halliday, it can be assumed that the imperative mood is an interpersonal metaphor (since the meaning is not ‘request’ but ‘statement’), whereas the realization of the proposition they cheated before as an embedded expansion in the nominal group the way [(they cheated before)] can be interpreted as an ideational metaphor (compared to the ideationally congruent realization as an embedded projection: consider (the fact) [(that they cheated before)]).

4. Although it is clear that ‘expansion’ is not to be read here in its technical sense as a type of logico-semantic relation (expansion as opposed to projection), Halliday does not explain the type of syntactic variety.

5. The ‘move’ is not the name of a system, but rather an entry condition. “NEGOTIATION” is the label which Martin (1992: 50) uses to refer to the system which is referred to by Halliday.

6. In Fawett’s linguistic theory, the stratal relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar is mapped onto the relationship between system and structure: the system networks form the semantics, while the structural realization rules form the lexicogrammar.

7. This article is based on a 1985 BA dissertation (University of Sydney), which is published in the Monographs in Systemic Linguistics series, see Ravelli 1999.
8. By “an option in a network”, Ravelli means an option in a system of recursion (with two features: ‘stop’ and ‘go on’). A system of recursion occurs in the logical system network for complex units (simultaneous with two other systems: Taxis (hypo/para) and type of interdependency (expansion/projection)). Ravelli refers to the logical system network in the full version of her study (1999: 62; 34).

9. From the description and the example which is given (cf. below, example (14)), it is clear that this is the type of dependence which Ravelli referred to earlier with reference to the relationship between types 1 and 3b in the classification of metaphors.

10. That is, a system of recursion is represented as simultaneous with other systems in a network. Ravelli does not explain the systemic nature of paradigmatic and syntagmatic recursion. In describing the two types of recursion, she refers to a difference in terms of their role in a system network representation:

   Note that the recursive option as described here (re. paradigmatic plurality, MT) is not an option in the network, but a rewiring mechanism at a point of realization, to bring a realization of the network back into the system at a less delicate point. Apart from paradigmatic plurality, grammatical metaphor also exhibits the feature of syntagmatic plurality, where the recursive option is the network feature. (Ravelli 1988: 141, emphasis LR; cp. Ravelli 1999: 62)

   On the other hand, when focussing on the possibility of representing grammatical metaphor in the ideational networks, Ravelli writes:

   A recursive option is needed in the network to account for both syntagmatic plurality (where more than one item of a clause may be a metaphorical realisation) and paradigmatic plurality (where one item, itself a metaphorical realisation, may re-enter the network with the potential for a subsequent metaphorical realisation.) (Ravelli 1999: 99)

11. I give this example to make clear the basic distinction between Halliday’s and Ravelli’s proposals for networking incongruence. Halliday (1984) does not give specific examples of incongruent realizations in the adult system, and in his ontogenetic study in the second part of the paper, most examples illustrate the relationship between the levels of context (negotiation) and semantics (speech function).
References


