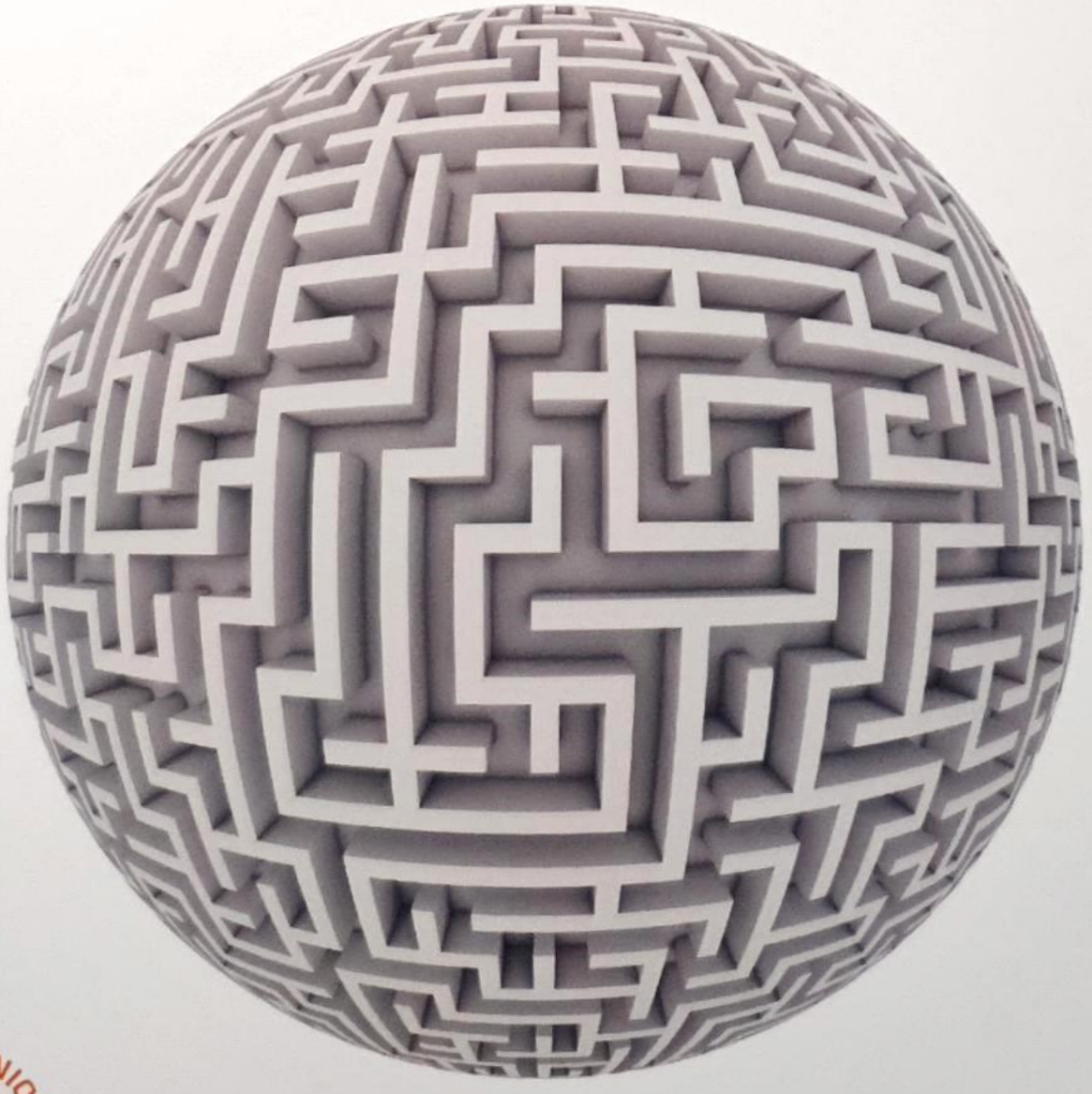
FOURTH EDITION

HALLIDAY'S INTRODUCTION TO FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

M.A.K. Halliday
Revised by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen



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ROUTLEDGE

Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar

Fully updated and revised, this fourth edition of *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* explains the principles of systemic functional grammar, enabling the reader to understand and apply them in any context. Halliday's innovative approach of engaging with grammar through discourse has become a worldwide phenomenon in linguistics.

Updates to the new edition include:

- Recent uses of systemic functional linguistics to provide further guidance for students, scholars and researchers
- More on the ecology of grammar, illustrating how each major system serves to realise a semantic system
- A systematic indexing and classification of examples
- More from corpora, thus allowing for easy access to data
- Extended textual and audio examples and an image bank available online at www.routledge.com/cw/halliday

Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar, fourth edition is the standard reference text for systemic functional linguistics and an ideal introduction for students and scholars interested in the relation between grammar, meaning and discourse.

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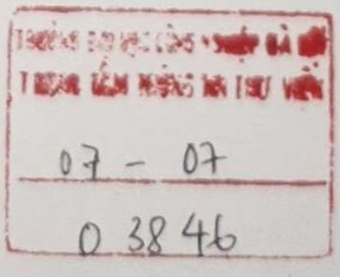

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INTRODUCTION

The first edition of *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (IFG) appeared in 1985. It was, among other things, an introduction to the systemic functional **theory** of grammar that M.A.K. Halliday initiated through the publication of his 1961 article 'Categories of the theory of grammar' (although his publications on the grammar of Chinese go back to 1956). It was at the same time an introduction to the **description** of the grammar of English that he had started in the early 1960s (see e.g. Halliday, 1964). Thus, the first edition of IFG was an introduction both to a functional theory of the grammar of human language in general and to a description of the grammar of a particular language, English, based on this theory. The relationship between theory and description was a dialogic one: the theory was illustrated through the description of English, and the description of English was empowered by the theory. Halliday could have used any other language for this purpose rather than English – for example, Chinese, since he had worked on Chinese since the late 1940s. The theory had been developed as a theory of grammar in general, and by the mid-1980s it had already been deployed and tested in the description of a number of languages.

Around half a century has passed since Halliday's first work on the general theory of grammar and his first work on the description of English, and around a quarter of a century has passed since IFG1 appeared: that edition represents the mid-point between the early work and today's continued theoretical and descriptive research activities, activities that were enabled by IFG1 and are reflected in IFG4. When IFG1 appeared, it was the only introduction of its kind, a summary of the work by Halliday and others undertaken since the early 1960s. It was a 'thumbnail sketch'. He had already published accounts of various areas, accounts that were in many respects more detailed than the sketches in IFG – e.g. his account of transitivity and theme (Halliday, 1967/8), his interpretation of modality (Halliday, 1970) and his description of grammar and intonation (Halliday, 1967a). He had also worked on a manuscript

presenting a comprehensive account of the grammar of English, *The meaning of modern English*; many aspects of this account such as his interpretation of tense in English were only sketched in IFG1. In addition, researchers had contributed significant text-based studies of grammar and of intonation based on his framework. These informed the description of English, but have not been published since text-based accounts were not welcomed by publishers in the period dominated by formal generative linguistics.

Since IFG1 appeared a quarter of a century ago, and IFG2 followed nine years later in 1994, systemic functional linguists have published other complementary volumes drawing on IFG in different ways, designed to serve different communities of users; these include Geoff Thompson's *Introducing functional grammar* (first edition in 1996; second in 2004, with the third about to appear), Meriel and Thomas Bloor's *Functional analysis of English: a Hallidayan approach* (first edition in 1995; second in 2004), my own *Lexicogrammatical cartography: English systems* (1995), Graham Lock's *Functional English grammar: An introduction for second language teachers* (1996), and the IFG workbook by Clare Painter, J.R. Martin and myself (first edition: *Working with functional grammar*, 1998; second edition: *Deploying functional grammar*, 2010). In addition, researchers have contributed many journal articles and book chapters to thematic volumes dealing with particular aspects of IFG or reporting on research based on the IFG framework. For a summary of the rich work in the IFG framework, see Matthiessen (2007b). However, researchers have also complemented IFG stratally, moving from the account of lexicogrammar presented in IFG to the stratum of semantics; book-length accounts include Martin's *English text* (1992) and Halliday's and my *Construing experience* (1999, republished in 2006).

By the time Halliday generously invited me to take part in the project of producing IFG3, the ecological niche in which IFG operates had thus changed considerably – certainly for the better. It had, in a sense, become more crowded; but this meant that IFG3 could develop in new ways. Thanks to Geoff Thompson's more introductory *Introducing functional grammar* and to other contributions of this kind, we were able to extend IFG in significant ways, perhaps making the third edition more of a reference work and less of a beginner's book than the previous two editions had been. We certainly included features of the grammar of English that had not been covered before, and we provided a more comprehensive sketch of the overall theoretical framework in Chapters 1 and 2. In preparing the third edition, we worked extensively with corpora of different kinds – resources that had become more accessible since IFG1, supported by computational tools that had been developed since that edition; and we included many examples drawn from corpora, and from our own archives of text. In addition, we included system networks for all the major areas of the grammar.

In my own *Lexicogrammatical cartography: English system* (1995), LexCart, I had used system networks as a cartographic tool, organizing the presentation of the description of the grammar in terms of the system networks – ranging across metafunctions and down ranks and taking a number of steps in delicacy. These system networks were derived from a system network of the clause that Halliday had put together for a computational project initiated by Nick Colby at UC Irvine and then taken over as the seed of the Nigel grammar as part of the Penman project directed by Bill Mann at the Information Sciences Institute, USC, in 1980 (this system network has now been published as part of Halliday's collected works). As a research linguist working on Mann's project since the beginning, I expanded this clause network, and added networks for other parts of the grammar – with

the help of Halliday and other systemic functional linguists (see Matthiessen, 1995a, and cf. Matthiessen, 2007b). When we added system networks to IFG3, we did not try to organize the overall presentation in terms of them as I had done in LexCart, since IFG already had its own logic of presentation, which included more reasoning about the development of the account than I had included in LexCart.

In preparing IFG4, I have followed the trajectory from IFG1 to IFG3, while at the same time keeping in mind changes in the environment in which this fourth edition will appear. I have continued working with corpora, benefiting from new resources generously made available to the research community such as COCA (see Chapter 2). A great deal of this work is, quite naturally, 'under the hood': as with IFG3, many fishing expeditions are reflected by only one or two examples, or by just a brief note in passing, and many other expeditions are only reflected indirectly. Along the way, there have been various interesting findings that there is no space to report on in IFG4, like changes in the use of 'gush' as a verb in *Time Magazine* since the 1920s, or more generally in the use of verbs of saying over that period. In working with corpora, I was at various points tempted to replace all examples from older corpora dating back to the 1960s with examples from more recent ones; but I decided against it for various reasons – an important one being that, like any other language, English is an assemblage of varieties of different kinds (cf. Chapter 2, Section 2.4), including temporal dialects: the collective system of a language typically spans a few generations – never in a state of being, always in a process of becoming. And even more than a few generations: while Chaucer is almost out of range, Shakespeare is not.

One new feature in IFG4 is the introduction of a scheme for classifying texts according to contextual variables, presented in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 through to Chapter 10, I have classified all the short texts and text extracts according to this scheme. This is a step in the direction of illuminating the grammar at work in different text types – of supporting the understanding of a language as an assemblage of registers. We hope that the website companion to IFG4 (see below) will make it possible to provide many more text examples.

Another feature of IFG4 is the continued expansion of references to theoretical frameworks and to descriptive work on English in systemic functional linguistics but also in other frameworks. Here it is, of course, impossible to be comprehensive, or even to achieve a balanced representation of references to relevant contributions. In his preface to Volume 1 of his *Basic linguistic theory*, Dixon refers to 'quotationitis', introducing it as 'a fashion in linguistics', and characterizing it as 'attempting to cite every single thing published on or around a topic, irrespective of its quality or direct relevance', and then pointing to problems with this 'fashion'. At the same time, it is very important that readers of IFG should be able to follow up on particular points mentioned in the book and go beyond the material presented here; and these days scholars are increasingly subjected by governments to ill-conceived and destructive frameworks designed to measure their output and impact in terms of publications, so citations make a difference. At one point, I thought that the solution in the area of description might be to cite central passages in the major reference grammars of English. However, on the one hand, this would actually be a significant project in its own right, and on the other hand, these reference grammars are not, on the whole, designed as gateways to the literature. I hope that the website companion to IFG4 will be able to provide more bibliographic information. And various online search facilities are helping students and researchers find relevant references.