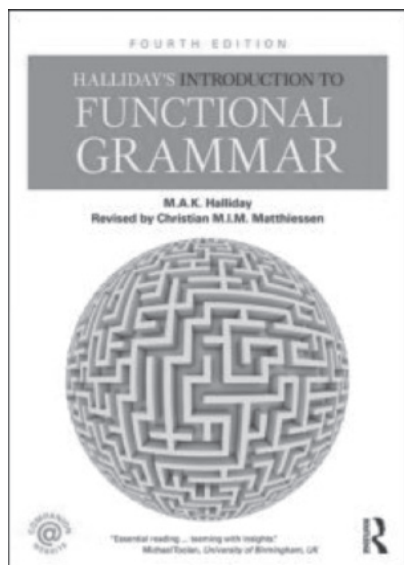


## Book Review



<b>Title</b>	Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar (4th Edition)
<b>Author</b>	Halliday, M.A.K.
<b>Publisher</b>	Routledge
<b>No. of pages</b>	790 pages
<b>ISBN</b>	9781444146608(pbk)
<b>Reviewer</b>	Marilyn Lewis, The University of Auckland

One might think that a volume of this size and stature could not sell in large numbers and yet this fourth edition in just under thirty years speaks for its popularity. The original author's name remains part of the title, although the updating has been done by Matthiessen. The links between Halliday (who started an introduction to the grammar of English in the early 1960s) and this latest author/editor go back a long way. Matthiessen describes Halliday as "the first linguist to teach me about language" (p. xvii) as opposed to teaching about linguistics. Of the twenty pages of references, Halliday's own work fills four and a half and Matthiessen's nearly three.

The book is a link between practical and theoretical grammar or, as described in its publicity, it makes connections between grammar, meaning and discourse. One question in the mind of potential buyers could be how far it differs from the third edition which, like this one, was written more as a reference book than as the text book offered in the first two editions. The answer is that there are considerable changes and additions, starting in the first chapter, *The architecture of language*, which introduces a feature using the variables of the context as a basis for classifying texts. Rather than attempting a chapter by chapter description, this review will mention a few of the book's features, illustrating each from a range of chapters.

A first impression is the logical and clearly explained organisation as signalled in the Contents pages which show each of the ten topics/chapters having up to nine sub-topics. The five chapters which make up Part 1 deal with the clause, and the five of Part 2 with "Above, below and beyond the clause". The final chapter, *Beyond the clause: metaphorical*

*modes of expression*, moves from lexicogrammar and semantics to ideational metaphors.

A second feature is the language of explanation, which is unashamedly dense and packed with the technical terms which are the tools of our trade. Yet one can almost hear the voice of the teachers/authors, as they use accessible examples to illustrate their points. Early in Chapter 1 the organisation of the English language is illustrated by two tables breaking this down via an analysis of *Little Miss Muffit*. One table illustrates the sound breakdown and the other the spelling of this nursery rhyme.

Then there is the signposting. Navigating the content is helped in various ways, starting with pages ix to xi where the printing conventions are explained: graphics, font types and so on. The index is extensive, although now and then perhaps makes assumptions about the reader's knowledge. A student wanting to read more about 'context' would find the word missing, which is perhaps understandable since the idea of context is present throughout the book.

The signposting is important because of the amount of detail which is another of the book's features. Chapter 3, *Clause as message* is one example. The term 'theme' used first in the sixties by the Prague school of linguists, is defined, illustrated, and shown in all its variations. Here's one example which illustrates the link between theme and rheme.

*As for the other players, I've got no apprehensions.*

The availability of increasingly varied corpora enlivens the examples throughout, but the author reports that he has deliberately not gone through earlier editions replacing examples from past decades. In case readers are as fascinated by the examples as by the points they illustrate, there is a system for tracking down the source of each, including the book's own database which can be found on a website.

The book's questions are as interesting as its answers. In fact it's easy to imagine that they have been used as rhetorical questions during university lectures. In Chapter 1 we have "What are the basic functions of language? (p. 30) At the risk of oversimplifying, the answer to the first question is just two: "making sense of our experience, and acting out our social relationships" (p. 30). The answer to a question in the last chapter, "What is the underlying significance of... 're-mapping' between the semantics and the grammar?" (p. 713) is more complex.

Matthiesson refers to the dominance of Continental Europeans in reference grammars of the first part of the twentieth century, followed by English speaking linguists. His own origins in Sweden, although he doesn't mention this, seem to be a fortuitous rebalancing of the source of ideas. What he does mention is that his own PhD students have written "comprehensive descriptions of the clause grammars of a rich range of languages" (p. xviii) including Thai.



The book is described by its author as a “medium-sized volume” (p. 4) which may be a little modest. Its announced readership of “students and scholars” will appreciate its 786 pages, whether they are the former, led through is systematically as a text book, or the latter using it as an ongoing reference.

**Reviewer:**

**Marilyn Lewis** was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland. Her interest in TESL continues through her writing and through running teacher workshops in various Asian countries. In New Zealand she supports English Language Partners, an organization that provides English language support for refugees and other immigrants.