

# Interpersonal grammatical metaphor: the need for double vision

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The phenomenon of grammatical metaphor (GM) is viewed in Systemic Functional Linguistics as a pervasive feature of language. The identification of GM is based on the modelling of lexicogrammar and semantics as two strata, which opens the possibility of disjunction between the strata: that is, meanings may be realized by forms which congruently realize other meanings, resulting in a new meaning-form combination. This is a familiar idea in traditional views of lexical metaphor: e.g. in the well-known song, 'It's raining men' realizes a meaning something like 'there are lots of men', but combines it with part of the literal meaning of 'raining' to produce a new way of talking about a superabundance of males. Michael Halliday's basic insight was that essentially the same process can be seen as operating in grammatical structures.

Two broad categories of GM are recognized in SFL, based on the two main metafunctions: ideational (language as used for representation, the 'content') and interpersonal (language as used for interaction). The description of ideational GM, particularly nominalization, has been developed extensively in SFL both in terms of the system (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen 1999) and in terms of the deployment of this resource in text (e.g. Simon-Vandenberg et al. 2003). On the other hand, the treatment of interpersonal GM has been given relatively less emphasis. The area most fully explored has been modal assessment (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 689-698); and mood metaphor has more recently been brought into the picture (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 698-707). However, it seems useful to set out a comprehensive picture of metaphor which covers all major areas of interpersonal meaning.

What I aim to do in this presentation is first to offer an overall picture of this resource, highlighting the commonalities and differences across different areas within the domain. I will then go on to explore the ways in which this kind of metaphor impacts on the analysis not only of interpersonal meanings but also of experiential and textual meanings in texts across a range of registers. Clausal realizations of interpersonal meanings open up more or less the full set of experiential, interpersonal and textual choices in the projecting clause; and the analyst is then faced with decisions on how much emphasis to place on the wording and how much on the metaphorical function. My main claim will be that users of the language, however unconsciously, are able to exploit and respond to both the experientialized wording and the interpersonal meaning simultaneously. What is at stake for the analyst – as with ideational grammatical metaphor – is how to incorporate in the analysis the kind of complementarity of vision that is required in order to capture the full meaning-making that is going on. This has implications for the way that texts are described and for the ways in which the resulting descriptions can be applied in different contexts of use.

## References

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- Simon-Vandenberg, Anne-Marie, Taverniers, Miriam & Ravelli, Louise. 2003. *Grammatical metaphor: Views from Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.