Jonathan J. Webster (ed.). (2015) *The Bloomsbury Companion to M.A.K. Halliday*. London: Bloomsbury. ISBN 978 1 4411 7275 4 978 1 4411 9758 0 978 1 4411 0254 6, xiv + 512 pp. (hb)(epdf)(epub)

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The Bloomsbury Companion to M.A.K. Halliday, edited by Jonathan J. Webster, is one volume in a series entitled *Bloomsbury Companions*, and covers a wide range of topics, such as cognitive linguistics, lexicography, and syntax and discourse analysis. It focuses on Halliday as the originator of Systemic Functional Linguistics, and his powerful theory of language, which adds to our understanding of how language works (vii).

Structurally, the volume is composed of four parts with a total of 19 chapters. The first is an introductory chapter presenting a brief biography of Halliday; the second part (Chapters 2 through 6) focuses on various factors that have influenced Halliday's thinking about language; the third (Chapters 7 through 14) sets up the essential framework of Halliday's theory; the fourth (Chapters 15 through 19) concerns the various ways in which Halliday's idea of language has been developed.

The first chapter offers a brief biography of Halliday, from which we gain a better understanding of Halliday's life – his fascination with China and Chinese, his dedication to learning and teaching, his preoccupation with language and linguistics, and his contributions to linguistics and human sciences.

The second chapter is entitled *The 'history of ideas' and Halliday's natural science of meaning*, and primarily sets out how Halliday's theoretical work constitutes the natural science of meaning for investigating the processes of meaning (p. 18). The author David G. Butt splits the chapter into 10 sections. While expounding the milieu of Halliday's enquiry in section one, he gives an account of Halliday's family background, social environment, his teacher J.R. Firth, his study of child language, and his recognition of empirical investigations. In the sections that follow (2–7), he displays evidence of the scientific value of Halliday's studies of language by examining his approaches to language. In order to manage the complexity of languages, Halliday has proposed a system of dimensions, co-ordinates for scientific enquiries into texts and their contexts. Halliday makes his view about 'science' in linguistics very explicit by stating that complementarities are characteristic of the grammars of natural languages. In Section 8, the author makes it

clear that Halliday combines linguistics with social and natural sciences through system networks, and uses networks of choices as a test case for a science of meaning. Section 9 is concerned with Halliday's critical consciousness in his studies of language. In this section the author makes a comparison between Saussure's synchronic linguistics and Halliday's diachronic linguistics. Finally, he returns to a discussion of the natural science of meaning, situated in a cultural context.

Chapter 3, entitled *Halliday in China: Legacies and advances from Luo, Wang and beyond*, is authored by Peng Xuanwei. It concerns Halliday's two Chinese teachers, Luo Changpei and Wang Li, and their influence on Halliday's thinking about language and linguistics. The author quotes Halliday (2003b: 188) as saying "Luo Changpei gave me a diachronic perspective and an insight into a language family other than Indo-European; and Wang Li taught me many things, including research methods in dialectology, the semantic basis of grammar and the history of linguistics in China". According to Peng, holisticality is most apparent in the panchronic dialectic and interactional nature of SFL (p. 63). He engages in a discussion regarding the key concepts in Systemic Functional Grammar: rank, process, clause complex, and mood and modality. In summary, he emphasizes that Halliday started his linguistic career in China, and argues that this has led to his outstanding achievements both in general linguistics and in specific descriptions and other applications (p. 71).

Braj B. Kachru is the author of Chapter 4, entitled *'Socially realistic linguistics': The Firthian tradition*. This is primarily a postscript to the study of language in social context, and focuses on Firth's views on this aspect of language study and research (p. 74). From the perspective of Firth, the focus of the study of language should be its function in the context of given situations, which are mainly characterized by the following parameters: (a) the relevant features of the participants; (b) the relevance of objects; (c) the effect of the verbal action. What is Firth's influence on Halliday? Such categories as context of situation, system and collocation are vital for Halliday's description of language. Important as it is, the Firthian approach to language is subject to misunderstanding or even criticism. Such misunderstandings were less likely to arise from his lectures or personal interaction with him. As Halliday (1971) comments, it is as a student of Firth's that one sees the 'whole man' which is missing from his writings and without which it is difficult to relate the man to his writings.

Chapter 5, *The influence of Marxism*, has a very special place in the volume in that it is written by Halliday himself and gives an account of the influence of Marxism on Halliday's thinking about language. For Halliday, 'Marxist linguistics' is an attempt to examine previous scholarship objectively and thus helps him realize and correct distortions that may derive from 'bourgeois' habits of thought. Owing to Marxist linguistics, Halliday's theories have acquired two pivotal

properties – appliability and functionality. Appliable linguistics is a comprehensive and theoretically powerful model of language which can be applied to the practical and research problems that are faced all the time by the many groups of people in modern society who are engaged with language and meaning (Gibb & Zheng 2006). The notion of functionality has been present in his thinking in three distinct manifestations: functional variation, functional grammar, and metafunction (p. 98). Functional variation is called register, and refers to the way that a language varies, in content and sometimes also in expression, according to the situational context (p. 98). Functional grammar is one in which functional labeling takes precedence over class labeling. The most far-reaching functionality is metafunction, including ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions.

Social semiotics is the topic of Chapter 6, entitled *Systemic functional linguistics: Halliday and the evolution of a social semiotic*. Ruqaiya Hasan here presents her view of 'the evolution of a social semiotic'. She argues that the evolution of a social semiotic proposed by Halliday is a continuity that is formed by five phases: (1) the emergence of ideas of language: learning Chinese; (2) a prelude to linguistics: from language towards linguistics; (3) an apprenticeship in linguistics: Halliday in London/Cambridge; (4) Edinburgh 1958–1963: learning linguistics and teaching linguistics; (5) London 1963–1971: from systems and functions to a social semiotic (p. 101). In terms of the developments giving rise to the integration of the social and the semiotic into a single enterprise that can be termed a 'social semiotic', Hasan offers a brief discussion under three headings: (i) metafunctions and the repositioning of linguistic meaning in SFL; (ii) metafunctionality and the theorization of the process of language; (iii) metafunctionality and the positioning of linguistics as a discipline – reconciling nature and culture (p. 125). She then concludes by relating language to culture, asserting that language is the most frequent, the most pervasive means of 'experiencing' (p. 132).

Chapters 7 and 8 constitute the third part of the volume, covering Halliday's ideas about language. Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen is the author of these two chapters, respectively entitled *Halliday on language* and *Halliday's conception of language as a probabilistic system*. In the introduction to Chapter 7, he emphasizes that Halliday's work not only provides him with a comprehensive map of the lexicogrammatical resources of English in the form of a function-rank matrix, but also provides the key to another huge theoretical issue, Saussure's *langue* and *parole*, by theorizing *langue* and *parole* as the outer poles of a cline – the cline of instantiation (pp. 139–140). This chapter continues with the controversial issue of whether language is a set of rules or a resource, which can be traced back to Aristotle's philosophical-logical view and Plato's descriptive-ethnographic view of language (Halliday 2003a: 99–100). Halliday is supportive of the latter, regarding language as a resource for making meanings. His conception of language as a

resource results in axial rethinking, which in turn engenders the following consequences: systemic clustering, systemic cartography, systemic integration, systemic probability, systemic elaboration, the fractal principle, and semogenesis (pp. 156–180). Additional to the role as a resource, namely as a semiotic system, language can also be expanded to a higher-order semiotic system embodying the potential for the creation of simultaneous strings of meaning (p. 189). Matthiessen identifies the following five features common to Halliday's view of language and his view of linguistics: comprehensiveness, extravagance, indeterminacy, non-autonomy and variability. And Systemic Functional Linguistics can be stratified into four strata: theory, theoretical representation, computational representation and computational implementation.

Chapter 8 is concerned with Halliday's notion of language as a probabilistic system, which is directly tied to his view of language as a resource (p. 206). In the context of Chomsky's generative linguistics, Matthiessen argues that there are two theoretical obstacles to explorations of language as a probabilistic system. One is the separation between the system and the instance, and the other is the syntagmatic axis to the exclusion of the paradigmatic axis. Halliday overcomes these two obstacles by arguing that language as system and language as instance are not different phenomena but a single phenomenon viewed from different observation points; and that the theory of language is developed on a paradigmatic rather than on a syntagmatic base. As to types of probability, two conditioning effects need to be taken into account: intrastratal and interstratal. Correspondingly, according to the intrastratal conditioning effect, probabilities can be classified as conditional and transitional. Similarly, according to the interstratal conditioning effect, probabilities can be divided into coding orientation and register. Furthermore, the author reminds us of Halliday's bimodal probability profile of equi- vs skew systems, and quantitative and qualitative correlations. He also mentions Halliday's two approaches to corpora: one is to use analytical tools to deal with the corpora in standard orthography; the other is to develop software to analyze the annotated corpora (p. 234). The chapter ends with a point made by Halliday, indicating that the system network makes predications about collective rather than individual behaviour (Halliday 2013).

Chapter 9 is Jane Torr's *Language development in early childhood: Learning how to mean*, which concentrates on the key features of Halliday's research into child language development and its implications for early childhood education and care (pp. 243–244). It begins by introducing Halliday's idea of language evolution in early childhood, which says that children are active participants in their own language learning, and that their developing language also serves as a resource for learning (p. 242). Torr then turns to the transformational grammarians' view of language acquisition as the unfolding of an innate cognitive ability, which

is relatively unaffected by social and environmental processes (p. 244). She shows that a wide range of research proves that the quality and quantity of language spoken to young children exerts enormous influence on their growth, and that early childhood influences are potentially significant for their future achievement. She underlines the necessity for those influencing children in their early years to have a greater understanding of Halliday's model of language development, with its three phases of language evolution. Essentially, phase 1 is associated with the protolanguage, phase 2 with the transition from protolanguage to adult language, and phase 3 with adult language. The three phases witness the successive appearance of three general functions, namely microfunctions, macrofunctions and metafunctions. The social context, one of the most valuable features of Halliday's theory of language development, consists of three elements: field, tenor and mode. The author in her conclusion emphasises the implications of Halliday's research for childhood education and care.

In Chapter 10, entitled *Halliday the grammarian: Axial foundations*, James R. Martin attempts to introduce Halliday's distinctive standpoint on grammar from a pedagogical perspective (p. 257). This chapter unfolds from a syntagmatic perspective to the paradigmatic orientation that is highly valued in Halliday's model of functional grammar. Having reviewed the relation between system and structure, the author presents a short section on traditional parsing-immediate constituent analysis (IC analysis) (Martin 2013). This IC analysis, however, merely demonstrates the compositional structure of the clause, and provides no details on the bits and pieces themselves. When referring to the components of the clause, we need both class labels and functional labels. These have no place in the IC analysis, but are presented in Halliday's model. Once function labeling is deployed, it has to be motivated, but Halliday and his colleagues maintain that motivating systems are more vital than motivating function labels in that system is privileged over structure, and paradigmatic relations are privileged over syntagmatic relations, as exemplified by cases from English and Tagalog. Furthermore, the figures in this chapter show that systems formalizing paradigmatic relations can be associated with one another as networks of systems (p. 278). How can systems rely on each other? Technically speaking, systems are related in delicacy, by cross-classification and system network symbolism that can be used to explore various interdependencies among them. Crucially, the interdependency of systems serves as a driver for Halliday's concept of metafunction, which means that axis is the solid foundation for the critical part of SFL theory – the interpersonal, experiential and textual metafunctions. Two other basic dimensions of SFL theory, rank and strata, are grounded in axial relations. In short, Halliday's formalization of paradigmatic relations in system networks brings about his concepts of metafunction, rank and stratum, which in turn pave the way for innovative work on language typology,

context, multimodality and a wide range of applications in educational, forensic and clinical linguistics (p. 288).

In Chapter 11 on *Intonation*, Bradley A. Smith and William S. Greaves offer a guide to Halliday's study of intonation in English and the unique aspects of his approach. The chapter begins with the argument that intonation is absent in writing, but is obligatory in speech. Then it sheds light on what intonation is and what it does by analyzing the transcription of a play: intonation is the manipulation of pitch, in particular the use of distinctive falling and rising pitch contours and their combinations, to help make distinctions in meaning (p. 295). Halliday's description of intonation is holistic, and can assign to intonational meanings the status of being part of the grammar of English. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Halliday's description of intonation is its application within linguistics (p. 311).

Jonathan J. Webster is the author of Chapter 12, *Text linguistics*. He introduces the text as the outcome of choices from the total resources available, and states that any text can be accessible to linguistic analysis. He then traces back to the origin of the theory of the text, rightly mentioning scholars such as Firth, Hjelmslev and Jakobson. For it is inadequacies in those previous grammatical descriptions that pushed Halliday to construct a Systemic Functional theory that provides both a theory of grammar and a theory of lexis. Within Halliday's model, system is a core notion. Language is not only a semiotic system, but also a semantic system covering ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. The system is the potential to produce texts, whereas the text is the instantiation of the system (Webster 2015: 8). As the author points out, Halliday makes enormous contributions to text linguistics, as represented in the second volume of his collected works, *Linguistic Studies of Text and Discourse* (Halliday 2002). In particular, Halliday shows that SFL theory and its associated methods can be applied to the analysis of literary as well as everyday texts.

Chapter 13 by Geoff Williams, *Halliday as an international educator*, sets out to explore Halliday's contribution to language education. It centers around a chain of Halliday's key educational concepts and their influence on practice, new research and curriculum development (p. 327). The teacher should begin with the general concept of language as social semiotic, and then turn to the technical concept of language as meaning potential. Language as social semiotic is the orienting idea and language as meaning potential is the further basic principle. All education should develop students' meaning potential (p. 328). Meaning potential can be understood from three perspectives: language as semantic potential; language as dependent on context of situation; and language as about 'what a particular person can mean'. The famous SFL contributions to the development of knowledge about language are genre-based pedagogy and developing knowledge about language in

the British education system. It can be concluded that Halliday's contribution to language education has been both an enduring and an extraordinary one (p. 346).

Chapter 14, *A linguistics of style: Halliday on literature,* is written by Annabelle Lukin, and presents an account of Halliday's approach to language in literature. It starts with Malinowski's and Firth's notions of context of situation and context of culture, which exert a great influence on Halliday's idea about language. Then, it elaborates on the combination of text and system by Hjelmslev, the creation of crypotype by Whorf, the notion of aesthetic deautomatization by Mukařovský and an account of verbal art by Hasan. Speaking of literature and text, Halliday (2002: 60) suggests that in some sense all texts are literature in that different texts involve different cultural values, including value systems and many specific sub-systems that exist as metaphors for them. After expounding the application of situation and culture to the context of a literary work, the author presents lexicogrammar as an aesthetic resource by explicating prominence and foregrounding, and deautomatization.

Chapters 15 and 16 are about multimodal analysis from a Systemic Functional perspective. In Chapter 15, *Halliday's three functions and their interaction in the interpretation of painting and music*, Michael O'Toole compares two concepts of 'function' – the Hallidayan concept of 'semantic metafunction' and the Russian Formalist theorists' concept of function – and concludes that the former is preferable on the grounds that it can be applicable to every verbal genre and extend to multimodal genres. Following Halliday's three metafunctions – textual, interpersonal, and ideational, the author utilizes the corresponding functions – compositional, modal and representational – to analyze a number of works of art.

In Chapter 16, *Multimodal semiosis and semiotics*, Kay L. O'Halloran, Marissa E. Kwan Lin and Sabine Tan aim to exhibit analytical techniques and tools that provide empirical data to support claims about the nature of multimodal semiosis (p. 387). Based on multimodal semiotic theory, the authors carry out a multimodal semiotic analysis of two buildings, Loch House and Space Pod. They remind us that the prospects of multimodal semiotics will partly rely on our capability to develop theories based on insights from analyzing multimodal data by using computer-based approaches (p. 409).

Chapters 17 and 18 complement one another in the realm of multilingual studies. Chapter 17, *Halliday's contributions to a theory of translation*, by Erich Steiner, has four sections. The first provides an overview of how Halliday's views on language in general, and on translation in particular, have exerted substantial influence on translation studies. The second is about formative influences of Halliday's thinking on language and on translation, which owes much to Malinowski's iterative contextualization and Firth's linguistics (p. 415). Then comes a section on evolving functional thinking about translation in Halliday, arguing that Halliday's

linguistics enormously promotes the evolution of translation studies, and taking Catford's (1965) *A linguistic theory of translation* as an example. In the final section, Steiner interprets some key features of Halliday's work on translation, such as register, situation and culture. He also gives due weight to Halliday's standpoint on a good translation in a given context: equivalence should be achieved at different ranks, different strata and different metafunctions.

In Chapter 18, *Halliday in relation to language comparison and typology*, Kazuhiro Teruya and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen provide an overview of work on language comparison and typology that draws on Halliday's development of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Having reviewed descriptions of different languages in SFL, the authors reveal the growth of language comparison from three aspects: comparative linguistics, multilingual system networks and text- and register-based studies. Then they elucidate the contributions that Halliday's systemic functional typology makes to linguistic typology. These contributions can be shown in both description and theory. Descriptively, systemic functional linguists have generated a wealth of text-based and meaning-oriented accounts of lexico-grammatical systems of a wide spectrum of languages, which are all based on the same framework and thus can lay a foundation for typology. Theoretically, metatheoretical insight and the conception of language as a resource for making meaning should be taken into serious consideration. More importantly, typology based on systems opens up three new ways of conceiving of typology generalizations: typology of probabilistic systems, typology in terms of the cline of delicacy, and typology in the light of the community of meaners (speech fellowship) (p. 447).

Chapter 19, *Computational linguistics: The Halliday connection,* is the final chapter of the volume. The authors, John Bateman and Mick O'Donnell, set out the major contributions of Halliday to computational linguistics. The chapter starts by introducing the flexibility and scope of the Systemic Functional mode that is characterized by practicability and inclusiveness. Then, it connects Halliday's theories to computational linguistics, covering machine translation, natural parsing, text generation, linguistic formalisms, and corpus linguistics. Finally, the authors remark that Halliday's view of language as a multidimensional, multifunctional, paradigmatic, socially anchored probabilistic phenomenon undoubtedly provides an impetus for the growth of computational linguistics.

The Bloomsbury Companion to M.A.K. Halliday is of great value for the following four reasons. Firstly, it centers on Halliday as the founder of a powerful theory of language, namely, Systemic Functional Linguistics. As mentioned in the preface, "[t]his book is a celebration of a pioneering scholar who, as Matthiessen points out, has been often ahead of his time and has never been a scholar who adopted (or adapted to) the intellectual fashion of the day" (viii). Secondly, its

authority derives from its distinguished contributors, all of whom are leading scholars in Systemic Functional Linguistics, including Halliday and Hasan, whose chapters offer not only fresh academic insights into the theory, but also very personal perspectives on how the theory has developed out of various encounters and events that have occurred over the course of Halliday's life. Moreover, the volume covers the most central contributions to studies of language by Halliday: language as a probabilistic system, language development in early childhood, Halliday as a grammarian, Halliday as an international educator, intonation, stylistics, text linguistics, multimodality, translation, language comparison and typology, and computational linguistics. Last but not least, the book is well-organized in that it is arranged chronologically in three sections: the influences on Halliday's theories, Halliday's ideas about language, and the developments from Halliday.

However, Halliday's other contributions to language, such as to ecolinguistics, could profitably have been incorporated into the third part of the book. Ever since the 1990 World Congress of Applied Linguistics (AILA) and the publication of Halliday's (1990) *New Ways of Meaning*, there has been a growing interest, within ecolinguistics, in the role played by language in ecological issues and environmental problems (Fill 2001). More importantly, Hallidayian ecolinguistics has developed into one of the main research directions of ecolinguistics (Huang 2016). Despite this potential for improvement, Webster must be congratulated on his impressive editorial work. The book will serve as a truly important guide to Halliday and Halliday's theories in the second decade of the 21st century, a period which Matthiessen rightly predicts will be very open to Halliday's ideas about language.

Acknowledgements

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