Beyond the ham sandwich: a textual perspective on referential metonymy
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In the now famous example, *the ham sandwich is waiting for his check* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), it is clear that 'ham sandwich' denotes a class of food but also that 'the ham sandwich' is used to refer to a person and that this expression is co-referential with 'his' later in the clause. This type of metonymy is termed referential metonymy. Metonymy is often characterized in terms of some ad hoc description carrying an associative or relational meaning with respect to the intended discourse referent. While relatively more work has been done on metonymy from a cognitive perspective (e.g. Langacker, 1999; Croft, 2002), very little work has considered its textual role or its place in ongoing discourse (although see Denroche, 2018). Within the field of systemic functional linguistics (SFL), we might consider metonymy as a type of indirect encoding of meaning. If we can agree to think of it this way, we might think of it in terms of incongruency and then ask questions about whether or not referential metonymy can be accounted for in terms that are similar to grammatical metaphor or whether an alternative description would better account for the phenomenon. There are some known differences, however, in contrast to ideational grammatical metaphor, we know that referential metonymy is a relatively early development; children understand and use these metonymies by age 3 (Falkum, Recasens & Clark (2016) whereas nominal grammatical metaphor is generally considered to be associated to a much later stage of development. The first paper of this paper will be concerned with establishing the theoretical place of referential metonymy in the theory of SFL. The referential nature of examples such as 'the ham sandwich' suggest that these expressions do occur in reference chains, and hence have, in principle, the potential to express a textual function. However, the nature of their textual function remains relatively under studied. For example, we might ask to what extent they are cohesive, how they contribute to a text, and whether or not their frequency is affected by different text types, including for example informal vs formal registers. The second part of this paper will attempt to answer these questions by examining instances of referential metonymy in different text types and by considering their use beyond the nominal group or clause in which they occur, i.e. in context. Since, as Dancygier (2009:168) suggests, referential metonymy relies heavily on contextual knowledge, we would expect some trace of this in text. The main aim of this paper is to consider the nature of this trace from an SFL perspective.

References
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