

# Meaning Potential

*A publication of the North American Systemic Functional Linguistics Association*



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## Welcome!

Dear NASFLA members,

Welcome to the Spring 2024 issue of *Meaning Potential*! This year, we continue to embrace 'connection' and 'continuity' as guiding principles for our endeavors as an organization.

Connection lies at the heart of what we do, as we strive to foster and sustain a sense of community among North American SFL scholars, facilitating ongoing dialogue and collaboration. In this issue, you'll find various avenues to deepen your connections within our scholarly family. From insightful features and member profiles to upcoming events like AAAL and other conferences, there are ample chances to connect. We especially draw your attention to two feature pieces, where you can connect with Dr. Karen Terrell's work in mathematics education, or be inspired to foster connection through learning collaboratives as described by Dr. Loretta Fernandez.

Continuity is equally vital and NASFLA leadership continues to lay the groundwork necessary for our organization to flourish in the years ahead. This involves not only nurturing our current initiatives but also envisioning new pathways for growth and development. As well, it involves recognizing those who have come before us. In this vein, we are happy to celebrate the life and contributions of Peter Fries, a founding member of NASFLA, in this issue. We also invite you to consider how you might contribute to the continuity of our organization. Whether through sharing your expertise, volunteering your time, or simply spreading the word about our mission, your support is invaluable.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Accurso & Sheila Ameri, *Meaning Potential* editors



# Message from the President

Dr. Jason D. Mizell, *University of Miami*

[jdm135@miami.edu](mailto:jdm135@miami.edu)

I can't believe that many of us will be together again in less than a month. As we prepare to come together at what will be a celebratory time for many, I also ask that we hold in our thoughts, prayers, and actions those who continue to suffer around the world due to political violence, genocide, war, and other atrocities. Halliday (2015) stated,

I have always thought of linguistic theory as something to be applied, to real problems either in research or in some domain of practice; eventually I came up with the term 'applied' linguistics to encapsulate this preoccupation with a theory as a mode of action that is based on understanding. (p. 97, emphasis added)

Taking Halliday's words to heart, I urge each of us to use our knowledge of SFL to advocate for justice for all those who are suffering. Over the course of the last year, many of our members have conducted research, and published articles and blogs that have pushed for equity and humanizing treatment for those who have suffered and others who continue to be oppressed. For example, as shared by our Communications Coordinator Dr. Sabrina

Sembiante, our last NASFLA Conversations webinar featured talks by Drs. Andres Ramirez and Yaegan Doran on "Modeling Monolingual and Multilingual Interaction in SFL: Beyond Grammar and Genre." Dr. Ramirez grounded his discussion in Halliday's model of context and Martin's stratified model of context and language, using examples of his work with Spanish-speaking immigrant mothers to showcase how multilingual teaching-learning exchanges are purposeful and systematic. Dr. Doran shared his research regarding how a monolingual mother and child negotiate their social relations in conversation. He drew upon his new work that focuses on tenor as a resource and how the interactants put forward their positions and accommodate each other's positions. Together, Drs. Ramirez and Doran illustrate how interaction through the lens of SFL can reveal rich resources for shared understanding, teaching, learning, and positioning.

As we jointly continue to strive to answer Halliday's call to practice an 'applied' linguistics, I want to personally thank not only the NASFLA leadership team for

*Continued on next page -->*

## Message from the President (cont'd)

their dedication this year but also to our members who have been given their time to lead and attend different virtual discussions. As we prepare for AAAL 2024, I want to invite you to attend various sessions that will feature different aspects of SFL. Please take a look at some of the presentations on pages 20-23. I also want to personally invite you to attend the NASFLA business meeting that will be held on Saturday, March 16th from 12:30pm – 1:40pm in the Arboretum 1 room.

The entire NASFLA leadership team, whose pictures can be found below, welcomes you to AAAL in Houston (or another NASFLA event soon), and send out a heartfelt thanks to all of our members for all their efforts to advance linguistic, cultural, and social equity in North America and beyond.

Sincerely,  
Jason D. Mizell, Assistant Professor  
Department of Teaching and Learning  
University of Miami

## NASFLA Leaders



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*University of Miami*



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*Western Washington University*



Dr. Kathryn Accurso  
NEWSLETTER  
*University of British Columbia*



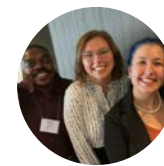
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Dr. Laura Schall-Leckrone  
MEMBER AT LARGE  
*Lesley University*



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Danny Ferguson, Anna Zaitseva, & Sheila Ameri  
GRADNASFLA REPS  
*The Ohio State University*



Dr. Nihal Khote  
WEBSITE  
*Western Washington University*



# NASFLA Open Business Meeting at AAAL

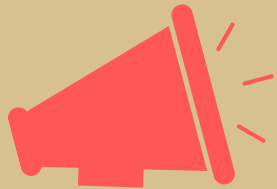
Saturday, March 16 12:30 PM – 1:40 PM  
Hyatt Regency Hotel Houston  
Room: Arboretum 1



\*Note: Minutes will be available to all members afterward on the NASFLA website

## March 16 Agenda

1. Welcome and land acknowledgement
  - a. The Houston area is ancestral land of the Karankawa, the Atakapa and the Akokisas
2. Approval of minutes from previous business meeting
3. Reports (including Promising Scholar)
4. New business
  - a. Non-profit organization status
  - b. Discussion and adoption of updated by-laws (postponed from 2023; click [here](#) for a draft)
    - i. Please review by-laws draft in advance of the business meeting; send any comments to President Jason D. Mizell at [jml135@miami.edu](mailto:jml135@miami.edu)
  - c. ISFC 2026 preparations (North America's next turn to host the international SFL congress)
5. Adjournment



## Up Next in NASFLA Conversations Our SFL webinar series

In 2022, the NASFLA Leadership launched a webinar series called *NASFLA Conversations*. The next talk in this series will be on Friday, April 5, 2024 featuring Drs. Luciana de Oliveira and Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso. Register [here](#) to receive a Zoom link.

**NASFLA**  
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

**NASFLA Conversations**  
Friday, April 5 at 4:00pm eastern  
Register to receive a Zoom link at [nasfla.org](http://nasfla.org)  
**Luciana de Oliveira in conversation with 2023 Promising Scholar Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso**  
about challenges faced by minoritized scholars on their academic journeys, strategies for navigating systemic barriers, fostering inclusivity, and opening spaces for more diverse voices within the SFL community

**VCU**

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY**

# 2024 Promising Scholar

Dr. Nicole Siffrinn, *Penn State Harrisburg*  
[nzs5803@psu.edu](mailto:nzs5803@psu.edu)



The 2024 NASFLA Promising Scholar selection committee, comprised of Drs. Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso (chairperson), Luciana C. de Oliveira, Meg Gebhard, Pía Gómez-Laich, and Josh Iddings, would like to thank each of this year's nominees and those who wrote letters of support for them. After careful deliberation, the committee selected Dr. Nicole Siffrinn as the 2024 recipient of NASFLA's Promising Scholar Award.

Dr. Siffrinn is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Education at the School of Behavioral Sciences and Education at Penn State Harrisburg. Her work in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) focuses on teacher education and theoretical innovation to

critically examine and reimagine more equitable futures with and for educators and youth. As a critically oriented and socially responsive linguist, Siffrinn has found SFL to provide her with a highly adaptable set of theoretical constructs and practical tools to expand what counts as language and literacy in schools. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Siffrinn!

The awardee receives:

- Public recognition through NASFLA channels
- \$200 in Routledge books of their choosing
- An opportunity to give an invited talk in the *NASFLA Conversations* webinar series and contribute a feature to *Meaning Potential*



## M.A.K. HALLIDAY BOOK PRIZE

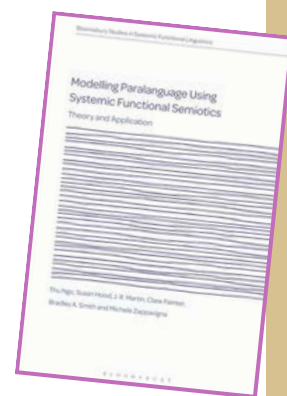
### And the winner is...

The inaugural winners of the M.A.K. Halliday Prize are Thu Ngo, Sue Hood, Jim Martin, Claire Painter, Brad Smith, & Michele Zappavigna for their book *Modelling paralinguage from the perspective of Systemic Functional Semiotics: Theory and application* (Bllomsbury, 2023). Congratulations to the authors and thank you to Dr. Meg Gebhard (University of Massachusetts Amherst) for serving as the NASFLA representative on the selection committee!

Other short-listed titles to check out include:

- *Women in Social Semiotics and SFL – making a difference* (Maagerø, Mulvad, & Tønnesen, 2022)
- *Systemic functional insights on language and linguistics* (Matthiessen, Wang, Ma & Mwinlaaru, 2022)
- *A functional linguistic perspective on developing language* (McCabe, 2021)

The M.A.K. Halliday Prize is an international book prize awarded biennially by ASFLA, our Australian counterpart organization, for the most significant scholarly monograph recently published in Systemic Functional Linguistics. The principal criterion is evidence of excellence and significance in furthering and developing the work of SFL. Stay tuned for the next award cycle, which will take place in 2025.



# In Memorium

## PROFESSOR PETER H. FRIES

1937–2023

By Cecilia Colombi and Mary Schleppegrell



Peter Fries was the driving force behind the development of the North American Systemic Functional Linguistics Association (<https://www.nasfla.org/>), and we are grateful to him and his wife Nan for the work they did to establish the Association that is now thriving under a new generation of leadership.

With Bernie Mohan and other founders, Peter and Nan wrote Bylaws and organized meetings of NASFLA at conferences in the U.S. and Canada to reach out to scholars interested in the theory. They nurtured everyone who came to the meetings, encouraging new members and fostering interaction by helping make connections.

We recall a meeting they organized in Lansing, Michigan in the early 2000's, where a substantial contingent from California was welcomed by scholars from Canada and from other U.S. institutions and where our students made their first presentations of SFL-inspired research. Peter and Nan always arranged for a NASFLA meeting at the annual American Association for Applied Linguistics conferences and for SFL-oriented events at the National Council of Teachers of English;

these traditions continue to attract new people to our community. Peter and Nan attended many meetings all over the world, contributing their experience and knowledge in the building and running of the organizations. For example, they were there in Mendoza in 2004 when NASFLA's Latin American counterpart, ALSFAL (*Asociación de Lingüística Sistémico-Funcional de América Latina*) was created. And in Peter's words, Cecilia remembers his advice, saying that only the local members should be present when they were considering forming a new association in Latin America.

Work in SFL is now thriving in North America, with scholarly journals consistently publishing work based in the theory and with university departments (especially of Education) across the country hiring and supporting SFL scholars. We're glad that Peter was able to see these outcomes of the work he and Nan did over many years. Along with his important scholarship, his legacy also includes the large community of SFL scholars now working across the Americas.

—Cecilia & Mary

# Collaboration Feature

## COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY IN DISCIPLINARY READING GROUPS: BRIDGING ACADEMIA AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Loretta Fernández, *University of Pittsburgh*

[lof7@pitt.edu](mailto:lof7@pitt.edu)



### Introduction

Reading groups and book clubs are a long-standing tradition of social interpretive activity that give an important contribution to contemporary understandings of texts, though usually literary (Peplow, Swan, Trimarco, & Whiteley, 2016). The same kind of social interpretive activity can happen with disciplinary reading groups within universities. They serve as invaluable tools for the development of learning and the advancement of knowledge, especially in fostering productive interactions between professors and graduate students and generating civic engagement. By collectively engaging with seminal texts such as *Making Sense: Reference, Agency, and Structure in a Grammar of Multimodal Meaning* (Cope & Kalantzis, 2020), which we are reading here at the University of Pittsburgh, we contribute to collective understandings and applications of theories such as multimodality, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Cognitive Linguistics (CL), and sociocultural theory (SCT). Furthermore, our discussions about such theoretical issues challenge, integrate, and expand our understanding of those theories informing our work and advocacy. Exploring these theories through a reading group and not simply individually elucidates how a collaborative environment can facilitate deeper comprehension, critical analysis, and the synthesis of new ideas. It constitutes what the New London Group (1996) named “situated practices.”

This form of critical reading, as emphasized by scholars such as Richard Gale (2008), is paramount for advancing academic success and cultivating a deep engagement within the social context. Our group engages in a systematic and collaborative approach to comprehending, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating disciplinary perspectives, thereby fostering effective reading practices and reflective engagement with literature. This collaborative inquiry enables an in-depth exploration of disciplinary issues as well as facilitates a journey through the literature, allowing us to delve into questions we are passionate about. Most of the readings are established at the beginning of the semester, but if there is a special topic that is emerging in the field (e.g., translanguaging or the polemics around SFL and academic language) we can propose variations or add readings. In this regard, this form of collaborative reading serves as a cornerstone for higher education because it offers a model for undertaking the scholarship emerging in the disciplinary field and applying it to our teaching, learning, and leading. Thus, through these informal reading practices and engagement with various texts, we gain insights into what is happening in the field of applied linguistics. Enacting such interpretive activities prepares us and our students for academic pursuits and could lead to civic engagement.



## Collaboration Feature (cont'd)

### Disciplinary Reading Group Engagement

Our reading group offers a conducive environment for collaborative learning, allowing participants to engage in meaningful discussions, share diverse perspectives, and collectively interpret complex texts which can inform our work as academics. For example, in the context of "Making Sense," our group made up of PhD students and professors collectively dissects intricate concepts proposed by Cope and Kalantzis, like multimodal meaning, reference, agency, and structure. Through our discussions, we not only deepen our understanding of the text but also cultivate critical thinking skills to inform our scholarly inquiry. Thus the group serves as a platform for knowledge exchange and fostering mentorship relationships that are conducive to intellectual growth for all, not only for the students!

We all draw from our expertise, personal, and professional experiences to provide insights, contextualization, and theoretical frameworks that facilitate the comprehension of the text. Each member brings different perspectives, innovative interpretations, and contemporary research trends to the discussion, challenging concepts and contributing to the advancement of knowledge and of the field. For example, for the past few years, Myriam Abdel-Malek (University of Pittsburgh), Ida Chavoshan (New York University), and I have been using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) work around reading images to analyze and compare infographics across three different languages and cultures: Arabic from Jordan, Italian from Italy, and English from the United States. Our joint analysis sheds light on cultural meanings

specific to languages and nations in a global phenomenon, such as the pandemic (Fernández et al., in press). Our analysis suggested that each infographic differently construed COVID-19 information and preventive measures, making use of different combinations of semiotic resources. Because we are applied linguists, we are in the process of expanding this work to identify pedagogies that could be applied to teaching multimodal analysis in foreign language classrooms (Chavoshan et al., in press).

However, inspired by this semester's reading group, our work is evolving. For example, we are thinking of revisiting our data with Cope & Kalantzis' concept of transposition, a complex concept that combines philosophical, linguistic, and psychological assumptions. Transposition involves reframing meanings into different meaning forms (modes) and examining how they combine to create meaning possibilities that move according to the shared end of the users in a multimodal experience. For example, a picture of a person does not capture the same meanings as if we describe the person with words, or using a picture and words in a funeral in which nobody knew the person. Those meanings change if we perform the same action in a classroom.

As well, advancing multimodal theory through our group reading of "Making Sense" means considering a nuanced exploration of its classroom applications. Cope and Kalantzis' work emphasizes the interconnectedness of different modes of communication and meaning-making processes, offering a holistic



## Collaboration Feature (cont'd)

framework for analyzing diverse forms of representation, including language, images, sound, and gesture. Through our collaborative readings and discussions, we try to reframe the theoretical implications of their application of multimodality with other authors that work in the same framework (e.g., Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; O'Halloran, 2011; Painter et al., 2013) trying to identify pros and cons of different frameworks, their applicability and limitations, and proposing innovative extensions or refinements. This interdisciplinary approach has enabled a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and communication modalities, enriching both our knowledge of SFL theory and of multimodal scholarship.

### **The Power of a Reading Group**

Our reading group has played a pivotal role in my professional career by fostering an intellectual community, one that promotes diversity and inclusion by bringing together different scholars and students from diverse ethnicities, races, gender orientations, and academic interests. Our group has been a catalyst for the formation of intellectual communities within our academic institution encompassing people from different departments and schools across the University. We have also invited scholars from other universities such as Francis Troyan or María Brisk to participate in some of our reading discussions, or to read some of their work with us. By facilitating shared inquiry and dialogue we have created a space where we feel a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Over time, I can

say that this has enhanced the overall academic experience. Additionally, our reading group has actively promoted diversity and inclusion by valuing and respecting individuals from various backgrounds. By incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences, our group contributes to enacting an equitable and inclusive academic environment. Our reading group is a good example of praxis in the Vygotskian sense of a dialectic relationship between theory and practice that offers collaborative learning opportunities, encouraging participants to engage in knowledge-sharing, and collective intellectual inquiry that leads to practice (see Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). Through this collaboration, we not only contribute to each other's learning but collectively deepen our understanding of complex subjects, fostering a culture of shared learning and growth within the academic community.

The power of collaborative inquiry showcased within our reading groups extends far beyond academic pursuits to encompass civic engagement. We collectively leverage disciplinary knowledge to address pressing societal challenges, employing evidence-based analysis and advocacy to create meaningful social change in our schools and classrooms. Our group has served as a platform for informed civic discourse, fostering an environment where we can contribute to societal improvement through rigorous intellectual engagement. Moreover, the inclusion of various materials, such as academic journal articles, book chapters, and non-academic sources such as TED talks or videos

has enriched our interpretative activities because we engage in the complexity of disciplinary inquiry and the necessity of considering diverse perspectives. Exploring texts that represent a range of perspectives, including those marginalized or underrepresented in traditional curricula, allows us to foster intellectual humility and a more nuanced understanding of societal issues.

Participating in our reading group over time has offered me multifaceted benefits that extend beyond academic realms and have an impact at a personal level, as well. It has enhanced my communication skills, emphasized active listening, and provided models for the coherent articulation of ideas. Moreover, it has offered me the possibility of respectful engagement with diverse viewpoints, a proficiency crucial in academic, professional, and social settings. Engaging with a spectrum of perspectives can cultivate empathy and develop a deeper understanding of others' experiences, fostering a sense of social responsibility and a commitment to equity and inclusivity. Finally, our reading group has nurtured in me a lifelong love of learning by stimulating my curiosity and encouraging intellectual exploration beyond formal education. I have been participating in our reading group for about 10 years thanks to the encouragement of my dissertation director and now colleague and friend Dr. Richard Donato, and I cannot think of a better way of continuing the work that started with my Ph.D. than continuing to engage in our critical readings. Through self-directed inquiry, we continue to seek opportunities for intellectual growth,

transcending the structured confines of academia to embrace a continuous journey of discovery and enrichment.

Our reading group has played a pivotal role in advancing my personal learning and has modelled to me how academic knowledge exchange should happen, particularly in the realm of theoretical exploration and interdisciplinary inquiry. By engaging with seminal texts and groundbreaking articles, our reading group has facilitated collaborative learning, knowledge exchange, and the exploration of the advancement of theories such as multimodal theory, SFL, CL, and SCT. Through collective exploration, critical analysis, and synthesis of ideas, we ourselves contribute to the evolution of scholarly discourse, propelling the boundaries of knowledge in our respective fields.

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# Research Report

## LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS: TOWARDS A DEEPER PEDAGOGY

Dr. Karen Terrell, *Loyola University Maryland*

[klterrell@loyola.edu](mailto:klterrell@loyola.edu)



As a mathematics teacher, I have always believed in promoting literacy in mathematics. Even in my early years of teaching, I would have my students keep word banks and write about various experiences or concepts in the class. When a state law passed that severely altered bilingual education in Massachusetts and, consequently, the schools in which I taught mathematics (Nieto, 2009), I had no idea how it would impact my practice and the trajectory of my research.

That fall term I was greeted by a completely different population of students – more than half the class was Cape Verdean and had only been in the US for no more than years. My school district had embraced the “literacy across the curriculum” stance (as had I), and thus, I had adjusted the mathematics courses that I taught accordingly. However, the word banks, writing exercises, and other class routines that had proven effective for my native-English speaking students prior to the arrival of my Cape Verdean students were no longer adequate. I knew then that I needed help meeting the linguistic needs of all my students. Unfortunately, this aid did not arrive until years later when I took a graduate course regarding second-language acquisition.

Since my time as a classroom teacher, the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics

(CCSSO, 2010) have been incorporated or adopted as many states’ guiding standards. One of the most prominent shifts in these newer principles offer is the promotion of the instruction of academic language in mathematics classrooms and deliberate attention to mathematical discourse for all students. Even states who have revised their frameworks since the introduction of Common Core (e.g., Georgia) maintain the Standards for Mathematical Practice, which focus on students’ abilities to communicate and were founded upon the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ (NCTM) process standards such as Communication (NCTM, 2000).

Through workshops, professional development, and literacy and sheltered English instruction courses, many teacher preparation programs have taught numerous language-based strategies to content area pre-service and in-service teachers. However, it can be arguable as to the level of impact these trainings and curricular shifts have been able to achieve, particularly in the subject area of mathematics. For instance, according to long-term National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP) trends, “Compared to 2012, the 2020 mathematics scores for White, Black, and Hispanic 9-year-old students and for White 13-year-old students were not significantly different while the mathematics scores for

# Research Report (cont'd)

Black and Hispanic 13-year-old students were lower” (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Over time, I have wondered if this could be due to a struggle between conceptual and procedural knowledge of language-acquisition concepts, mimicking an ongoing discussion within mathematics – breadth vs. depth. For instance, teachers may create word walls for their classrooms because they have been instructed to do so (procedural); however, the decision of which words to promote and then how to use the walls in daily classroom activities requires a “deeper dive” into the realm of content-area language.

With this in mind, I believe incorporating SFL in mathematics methods courses may be a first step in deepening pre-service and in-service teachers’ conceptual knowledge of content-and-language integration in mathematics. This kind of course revision, in turn, may alter their content-language instruction in ways that may be more substantial and produce greater outcomes for their future multilingual learners (MLs). This article will discuss the two semesters of a secondary mathematics course

wherein I incorporated a more functional, genre-based pedagogy to begin shifting away from random-strategy approaches and explored the effectiveness of this practice.

## Action Research Study

As various pieces of data were analyzed to explore course shifts, a qualitative methodology was selected for this study. More specifically, the action research approach was applied in that I was seeking to “improve practice and study the effects of the action that was taken” (Nieswiadomy, 2012, p.179). Winter (2005) continues that action research should be considered an extension of the professional work of educators and that the process should involve both reflection and change in one’s practice – my ultimate goal.

This investigation asked: How does the incorporation of genre instruction in mathematics methods courses impact the beliefs, planning, and practices of new and prospective teachers? The goal of the research’s intervention was to ground mathematics methods students in the genre-related aspects

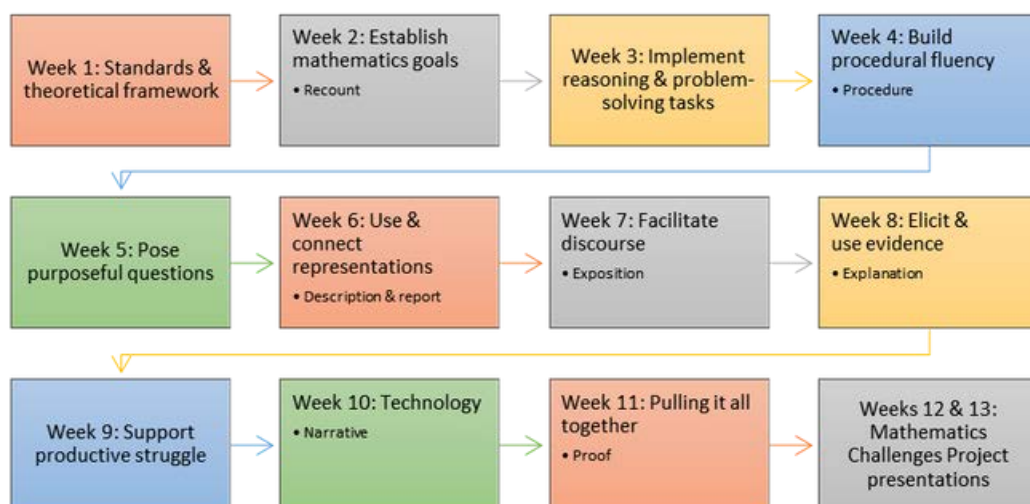


Figure 1: *Genre Mapping within Mathematics Methods Course Design*



## Research Report (cont'd)

of SFL theory (Halliday, 1985). We know that SFL suggests that language is chosen according to function, as a resource for making meaning and sense of the world. As such, instruction of macrogenres was infused in the mathematics methods course designed for middle and high school in-service and pre-service teachers and implemented in the Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 semesters. Figure 1 on the previous page provides a map of where the genres were taught within the classes.

We began with recount in Week 2 as it is a typical practice in mathematics to recall sequences of events (Marks & Mousley, 1990). Procedure was also discussed earlier in the term due to the prevalence of step-by-step directions in the subject. Description and report were presented mid-semester; description being to list attributes or features of a phenomenon and report focusing on examination and classification (Derewianka, 1991). Exposition (i.e., argument) was introduced taking a position on an issue and justifying it, and in conjunction with the third Standard for Mathematical Practice, “Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others” (NGACBP/CCSSO, 2010, p.6). Explanation dealt with giving an account of how or why something works, and narrative – the heart of mathematics – was featured as storytelling. Finally, proof was presented as a genre, according to Selden and Selden (2013), but taught as an extension of exposition. Marks and Mousley (1990) state, “Mathematicians use language to make meanings and to share understandings” (p.118). As such, students need

to develop control of genres that are present and valued in mathematics. Therefore, we (the teachers) must embrace the range of genres in mathematics in order to expand students’ communication skills that are also present in mathematics-related jobs.

### Data

This research examined several of the students’ course assignments: their Academic Language Journal (ALJ), Mathematics Challenges Project, and Instructional Unit. The ALJ required students to conduct four classroom observations and to reflect upon the academic language that was present in the sessions. The fifth journal entry had students create digital stories for their classrooms and discuss how they might utilize the stories in their future classrooms. The Mathematics Challenges Project was a two-part project, comprised of a research paper in the first half of the semester and an instruction demonstration at the end of the term. Students determined a mathematics topic to research and then presented four activities that incorporated best practices to address the topic according to the research. The Instructional Unit was a compilation of eight lessons around the same topic.

The requirements for each assignment basically remained the same from 2017 to 2018, with only a few changes. For the ALJ, amended directions encouraged students to cite text from Derewianka (1991) for the genre prompts in order to explicitly guide students’ thoughts back to the readings used for the genre discussion in our class, something that had been

lacking in the 2017 journal entries. The Mathematics Challenges Project was updated to include a discussion of a genre most relevant to the instruction in the presentation. The Instructional Unit was altered so that one of the lessons in the eight-day unit had to involve genre instruction. It was also strongly encouraged that students include genre in their description of the overall language instruction in the unit, which was located on the unit plan's cover sheet (see Figure 2 on p. 17).

## Findings & Discussion

Document analysis of students' assignments yielded evidence of how they understood genre instruction during the courses and how they chose to embrace (or not) this deeper approach to language in mathematics. This study was exploratory in nature, and thus, course artifacts were examined to understand how course participants made sense of the notion of genre based on the course curriculum.

### Academic Language Journal (ALJ)

There were several examples of how students discussed the concept of genre in their journal entries from both years. From 2017, Student A's entry provided two examples:

*If students had not learned about simplifying square roots, talking about solving a quadratic equation by using square roots may have been confusing language. The fact that the term "solution" can be used interchangeably with "roots, x-intercepts, and zeros" could have been confusing for the ELLs. However, it seems that the teacher has been using these terms in class as the ELL students gave the alternative words before the non-ELL students.*

*The genre of language that I felt was most prevalent in this class was procedure. Students were asked to follow procedures that were previously taught to complete the warm-up. Then students were given a procedure and gave the teacher the procedure to solving a quadratic using square roots.*

In the first excerpt, Student A noticed the multi-semiotic nature of very common terms in mathematics. In the second excerpt, she highlighted the presence of the procedure genre in several instances within the class. The identification of genre and these explicit discussions of language use had not been present in previous iterations of the course, even though the assignment requirements were almost the same. As these kinds of discussions are those that indicate a deeper consideration of language in the subject and assignments, it seems that the revisions made to the methods courses were effective and need to continue in the future.

### Mathematics Challenges Project

In the Fall of 2017, Student E incorporated a R.A.F.T. activity into her Mathematics Challenges Project:

Role: Quadratic Formula

Audience: Quadratic Equation

Format: Poem

Topic: I can solve all your problems

While this class was not required to discuss genre in their presentations, narrative was the overarching genre for this activity, as Student E's class would be asked to basically write a story in poem form.

# Research Report (cont'd)

In 2018, Student F offered an example of an information report in her project (see Figure 3 on pg. 17). According to Derewianka (1991), the report genre's purpose is to "document, organise and store factual information on a topic" (p.51). For middle schoolers to solve this problem Student F posed, they would need to test various combinations of two dice. Pupils would need to record and report the combinations in an organized process to compare the answer choices presented to the information that they generated.

## Instructional Unit

Overall, the Fall 2017 students did not mention macrogenres in their unit plans, but it also was not a requirement for their submissions. Rather, they discussed strategies they incorporated in the unit in the "Language Instruction Description" portion of the unit plan cover sheet. For example, Student G wrote:

*Students are presented with previously introduced and new vocabulary that is incorporated in this unit. Vocabulary will be discussed and displayed on the Word Wall along with accompanying graphic representations. These visuals provide an entry point for English Language Learners, and students that struggle with language. Students will have the opportunity to reinforce using this vocabulary daily, either through writing, or through discussion during small group work, or whole group report-outs. Students will also read a story based around a lesson, and create their own stories as part of the end of unit portfolio presentations.*

This was the first instance that I had witnessed of language instruction incorporated beyond vocabulary instruction alone.

In 2018, the discussion of language activities in this section of the cover sheet continued, with the exception of Student D who explicitly discussed genre:

*Language instruction has been incorporated into this unit to enhance student learning. Use of genre provides students opportunities to engage with content. For example, students use the genre of explanation to present their investigation into an analysis of distance, rate and time to determine if a driver was speeding on I90. Students prepare posters which use the genre of explanation to provide supporting evidence and defend their position as to whether a driver was speeding.*

Other students in this course did incorporate genres such as exposition, procedure, and narrative in their lessons, however, as required.

For example, Student B:

*The students will be work in groups of 3, to read over the digital story. The digital story discusses their schools problem with muddy athletic fields, and put them in a position to renovate them. Their task is to research how athletic fields use a parabolic curve to increase drainage, and to create a presentation displaying their research. The presentations should also include approximate time and cost to complete the renovation.*

Throughout the analysis of 2018 course documents, it seemed that when explicitly asked to discuss genres, students did so. However, beyond these kinds of directions,

students relegated to descriptions of strategies, rather than the genres at play. Thus, it became apparent that genre must be a normalized component of instruction and explicit in all directions in future iterations of this methods course.

### Lessons Learned & Implications

Many of my pre-service teachers felt pushed beyond their beliefs and/or abilities to consider language more explicitly. Initially, they were skeptical, but later appreciated the exercises. Student F mentioned in her Instructional Unit, “Thinking about the different genres from the course while creating this unit helped to organize my lessons. Through creating a goal for each day and deciding how I wanted to implement instruction helped structure my planning.” As presented in the results, students incorporated many language-related strategies into their assignments, as opposed to previous course iterations wherein genre was not discussed at all, and students did not choose to employ language strategies in their unit plans beyond reviewing textbook vocabulary. The Fall 2018 course proved that if students are expected to discuss or incorporate genre, this must be an explicit requirement in all assignments. Otherwise, classes will follow the path of the Fall 2017 class, where genre was only specified or addressed in the Academic Language Journals.

In addition, I was much more comfortable teaching about macrogenres in 2018, which was my second time doing so. It is my intention to continue this incorporation of genre going forward. If one is aware of how language is to

be used in a particular context and the features of that language, the strategy needed to further students’ understanding of the concept becomes clearer. Because “language is dynamic and ever-evolving” (Derewianka, 1991, p. 4), SFL does not offer prescriptions to teach language. Instead, knowledge about language is developed through authentic tasks in different curricular contexts. This is similar to the notion of conceptual knowledge, where if one understands a concept deeply, applying the knowledge of that concept to novel situations is more likely.

Prior research has indicated that students would prefer to have a separate course around language in mathematics rather than literacy and secondary mathematics methods courses infused with language instruction (Terrell, 2012). Methods courses are already trying to cover so much material in one semester that having a separate course would be ideal.

Also, as much as we know about the necessity of language instruction within mathematics, there are still very few institutions worldwide offering a dedicated course on this topic. Perhaps, in time, the development of such a course at my current university will become possible as well. Until this opportunity arises, I will glean from the experiences of institutions that have developed such courses and continue to incorporate genre-based pedagogy into my methods courses.

In addition, perhaps focusing on fewer genres in such a small span of time as a 14-week semester would benefit teacher candidates





# Meet three SFL grad students

Guillermo Jiménez-Sánchez, *National Autonomous University of Mexico*

Rubén Mora, *National Autonomous University of Mexico*

Tatsiana Syman, *National Autonomous University of Mexico*



NASFLA members sometimes wonder why we have not featured more content about SFL scholars and happenings in Mexico, since the NASFLA mission is to connect and support SFL scholars throughout North America. This is a great question! The issue is not one of omission, but rather that many of our SFL colleagues in Mexico participate in the vibrant Latin American SFL organization, the *Asociación de Lingüística Sistemico-Funcional de América Latina* (ALSFAL). In this edition of the newsletter, we were inspired by this question to introduce readers to three grad students working with SFL in their doctoral studies at National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Please don't hesitate to reach out and connect with these accomplished emerging researchers!



Guillermo Jiménez-Sánchez  
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**Guillermo Jiménez-Sánchez** is a doctoral student at the Linguistics Postgraduate Programme of UNAM. His dissertation “Ideational structure and positioning in the discourse of heresy in New Spain” focuses on identifying ideational patterns — both logical and experiential — by means of which authorities, defendants, and witnesses portray practices of religious dissidence in trials and anti-heresy manuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the territory of what later became central Mexico. Furthermore, his research seeks to link lexicogrammatical characteristics of discursive productions with the positioning of participants, heresy itself, and the context of situation and culture. In his work, Guillermo conflates Mexican colonial history with a systemic functional examination of discourse as ground for retrieving the linguistic substratum of a historical discourse that preceded modern Mexican society.



Rubén Mora  
[rubenmora@enallt.unam.mx](mailto:rubenmora@enallt.unam.mx)

**Rubén Mora** has been an EFL teacher at UNAM since 1999 and is currently involved with Advanced Writing Courses at the National School of Languages, Linguistics and Translation (ENALLT). His research and teaching interests include EFL, Systemic Functional Linguistics, academic writing, and genre pedagogy. As part of his master's degree program in Applied Linguistics, he assessed the usefulness of genre pedagogy in the writing of academic essays by undergraduate students at UNAM. His findings confirmed that the pedagogy, proposed by Rose and Martin, helped students learn how to control a genre through its three-stage model, the Teaching/Learning Cycle (TLC).

*Continued on next page -->*

## Meet three SFL grad students (cont'd)

Rubén is a first-year PhD student in the Graduate Program in Linguistics at UNAM in Mexico. The objective of his PhD project is to establish the bases for a pedagogical model for teaching reading and writing at ENALLT focused on the introductions of research articles. The model integrates SFL genre pedagogy, particularly the R2L (Reading to Learn) methodology and the TLC, with analytical models, such as the Create a Research Space (CARS) model and the “3x3” framework developed as part of the Scaffolding Literacy in Academic and Tertiary Environments (SLATE) project.



Tatsiana Syman

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Tatsiana Syman holds a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and is currently pursuing her doctoral studies in Linguistics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Since 2010, she has been working as a translator at the Bank of Mexico, where she is involved in editorial work and translation of institutional documents in the fields of economics and finance. Her research focuses on the metafunctional analysis of specialized economic translation between Spanish and English.

Considering the potential economic ramifications caused by possible lack of equivalence in translations, in her dissertation Tatsiana analyzes a bilingual corpus through the lens of translation techniques and systemic-functional linguistics (SFL). While the identification of translation errors contributes to improving the translated material, metafunctional exploration offers a deeper qualitative analysis of aspects not addressed by techniques. This approach reveals potential causes of translation errors and can serve as a basis in determining equivalence.

Part of this research has culminated in the publication of the article “Un análisis metafuncional de la traducción de textos de economía del español al inglés” in the journal *Lenguaje*. Tatsiana is expected to conclude her research and successfully defend her dissertation in 2024.

## GRADNASFLA UPDATE



### 2024 GRADNASFLA Symposium

This fall graduate student leaders within our organization will be hosting the 5th biennial GRADNASFLA Symposium at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Student organizers include Danny Ferguson, Anna Zaitseva, and Sheila Ameri (pictured left to right). Details will be forthcoming by email through the NASFLA listserv and on the [NASFLA website](#).

# SFL at



## Saturday, March 16

- 8:00–10:00am • *Achieving educational equity and literacy development through SFL explicit and context-rich praxis*; organized by Silvia Pessoa (Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar); discussant Andrés Ramirez (Florida Atlantic University) – 2-hour colloquium – Dogwood – 3rd Floor
- **Presentations:**
    - *Languaging in science: Developing a model for teaching language in content areas*; Nihal Khote (Kennesaw State University); Olga Malin (South Columbia Elementary School)
    - *Deconstructing math problems: An SFL approach to making meaning*; Maria Estela Brisk (Boston College); Jennifer Dines (Boston Public Schools)
    - *When “one size fits all” fails: Shared and specific linguistic features of argumentation*; Thomas Mitchell (Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar); Silvia Pessoa (Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar); Maria Pia Gomez Laich (Carnegie Mellon University Qatar)
    - *Deconstructing physics word problems from a linguistic lens: Empowering ELLs*; Fatimah Mahmood (University of British Columbia); Sandra Zappa-Hollman (The University of British Columbia)
  - *Gender differences in meta-discourse: Positioning strategies in asynchronous online discussions*; Madison Dashner & Miriam Moore (University of North Georgia) – Paper #2 in a 2-hour colloquium examining positioning across contexts – Window Box – 2nd Floor
- 9:10–9:40am • *Appraisal analysis of generic moves in literature reviews: Attitude and Graduation*; Jun Zhao (Augusta University) – Individual paper – Arboretum 1 – 2nd Floor
- 9:40–10:40am • *Heritage language speakers figurative language use in Spanish & English genres: A critical metaphor analysis*; Lorraine Ramos (University of California, Merced) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 1
- *Professional identity among Japanese EAP writing teachers*; Mayumi Fujioka (Osaka Metropolitan University) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 28
- 12:30–1:40pm • NASFLA Open Business Meeting – All are welcome – Arboretum 1 – 2nd Floor**
- 3:30–4:30pm • *SFL in mathematics and ELA: Epistemological Commonalities across Content Areas*; Heeok Jeong, (Stephen F. Austin State University) & Karen Terrell, (Loyola University Maryland) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 25
- 8:00–9:00pm • *Early career scholars in AAAL networking event*; hosted by Kathryn Accurso (University of British Columbia) – Regency





## Sunday, March 17

- 8:00–9:05am • *Analysis of appraisal language in Julia Cook's children's picture book*; Xiaomeng Xiong, (University of Florida) & Zhihui Fang (University of Florida) – Roundtable Session 1, Table 6 – Regency – 2nd Floor
- 9:10–10:10am • *Teaching Science through Camera Lens: A Classroom Discourse Analysis of A Visual Literacy Centered Science Class*; Xiaoyun Song (University of Massachusetts - Amherst) – Roundtable Session 2, Table 1 – Regency – 2nd Floor
- 9:40–10:40am • *A computational analysis of micro-disciplinary academic writings: Lexical bundles and their discourse functions across disciplines*; Che-Han Chan & Yiwen Zhang (Georgia State University) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 11
- *The era of digital journalism: Linguistic features and impact of online news as a register*; Difei Zhang (University of Wisconsin-Madison) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 7
- 10:15–11:15am • *Understanding English teachers' leveraging self-directed language learning through digital multimodal composing*; Lianjiang George Jiang (The University of Hong Kong) – Round table session 3: Table 2 – Conference Center: Regency - 2nd Floor
- 1:50–2:20pm • *Stance-taking and assessed writing proficiency in email and argumentative tasks: An automated NLP approach*; Masaki Eguchi (Waseda University) – Individual Paper – Conference Center: Sandalwood B – 4th Floor
- 3:00–4:00pm • *The impact of openness to experience on L2 oral fluency*; Yara Rabea (American University of Sharjah) & Özgür Parlak (American University of Sharjah) – Round Table Session 5: Table 6 – Conference Center: Regency - 2nd Floor
- 3:30–4:30pm • *The use of metadiscourse markers in the conclusion section of research articles across four disciplines*; Yiwen Zheng (Georgia State University) - Poster Presentation - Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 5
- *Indonesian Students' Second Language Writing Development in Taiwan: A Qualitative Investigation of Voice and Positioning*; Shufen Yeh (Cheng Shiu University); Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 15
- *Where disciplines diverge: a cross-disciplinary corpus-based study of shell noun phrases in research articles*; Yunyun Wang (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 26
- *Review on Gender Representation Research in ESL/EFL Textbooks in International Journals (2013-2022)*; Xiaoqin Huang (Chongqing University) & Xiangdong Gu (Chongqing University) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 35

# SFL at



## Sunday, March 17 (cont'd)

- 3:30–4:30pm • *Who's being protected: Examining the restriction of knowledge through the lens of Culturally Sustaining SFL*; Breinde Marcelus, Taryn McMillon, Stephanie Martinez Reyes, Amira Pratt, & Morgan Williams (BreakThroughMiami), Cameron Shaw, Mimi Eckert, & Jason Mizell (University of Miami) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 37
- 4:05–5:05pm • *Identity on the move: An embodied approach towards meaning-making in critical multicultural-lingual teacher education*; Maverick Y. Zhang (Hunter College) – Round Table Session 6: Table 1 – Regency – 2nd Floor
- 4:30–5:05pm • *What's happening during speaking disfluencies? Exploring disfluency features in OPI assessment and unveiling learners' perspectives*; Qiaona (Wake Forest University) & Yu Wu (University of Rhode Island) – Individual Paper – Sandalwood A – 4th Floor

## Monday, March 18

- 9:10–9:40am • *Developing future scientist identity through writing: Genre analysis of a multilingual learner's lab reports*; Hongye Zeng (University of Maryland College Park) – Individual paper – Arboretum 2 – 2nd Floor
- *Assessing participation in participatory research: Using discourse analysis to support equity in collaboration*; Diane Potts, Leon Cruikshank, Lee Brewster, Nik Marsdin, & Violet Owen (Lancaster University) – Cedar – 4th floor
- 9:40–10:40am • *Exploring the Cohesion Patterns and Stance Features of Shell Noun Phrases in Academic Writing: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Dissertation*; Junghun Yang (Iowa State University) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 30
- 10:10–10:40am • *The discourse of necropolitics: A critical multimodal discourse analysis of Vietnam War commemoration*; Minh Nghia Nguyen & Panayota Gounari (University of Massachusetts Boston) – Individual paper – Sandalwood A – 4th Floor
- 1:50–2:20pm • *Genre-related episodes in a French FL class: Exploring students' genre knowledge through collaborative multimodal writing*; Miriam Akoto (Sam Houston State University) – Roundtable session 6: Table 7 – Regency – 2nd floor
- *Developing an Assessment Criteria Framework for Digital Storytelling (DST): A Triangulated Approach*; Chia-Hsin Yin & Stephanie Vigil (The Ohio State University) – Individual Paper – Sandalwood B – 4th Floor

# SFL at



## Monday, March 18 (cont'd)

- 1:50–2:55pm • *Culturally sustaining systemic functional linguistics in ESL classrooms*; Tomoko Oyama (University of Electro-Communications, Kokushikan University) & Hyun-Sook Kang (University of Illinois Urbana Champaign) – Roundtable Session 6: Table 7 – Regency – 2nd Floor
- *Genre-related episodes in a French FL class: Exploring students' genre knowledge through collaborative multimodal writing*; Miriam Akoto (Sam Houston State University) – Roundtable session 6: Table 7 – Regency – 2nd floor
- 1:50–3:50pm • *Reflecting on opportunities and challenges presented by technology in scenario-based second and foreign language assessments*; Payman Vafae, James Enos Purpura, & Erik Voss (Teachers College, Columbia University) – Paper #1 in a 2-hour colloquium on language assessment for the 21st century – Imperial Ballroom West – 3rd Floor
- 3:30–4:30pm • *Sociolinguistic Variation in the "Territories of Knowledge" and Modality Marking in Graduate-Students' Case-Studies and Presentations*; Beata M. Latawiec (Wichita State University) – Poster Presentation – Exhibit Hall/Marketplace: Spot 6
- 4:00–4:30pm • *Peace is a verb: An SFL-informed discourse analysis of peace representation in children's books*; Luzkarime Calle Díaz (Universidad del Norte), Rebecca Rogers (University of Missouri - St. Louis), Erica Ferrer Ariza (West Virginia University), Doris Villarreal (University of Missouri - St. Louis) – Individual Paper – Sandalwood A - 4th Floor
- 5:10–5:40pm • *Enacting Culturally Sustaining Functional Linguistics (CS SFL) in ESL Classrooms*; Lal Bahadur Rana, Ram Bahadur Shahi (Bhairab Higher Secondary School) & Jagadish Paudel (The University of Texas at El Paso) – Individual Paper – Pecan – 4th Floor

## Tuesday, March 19

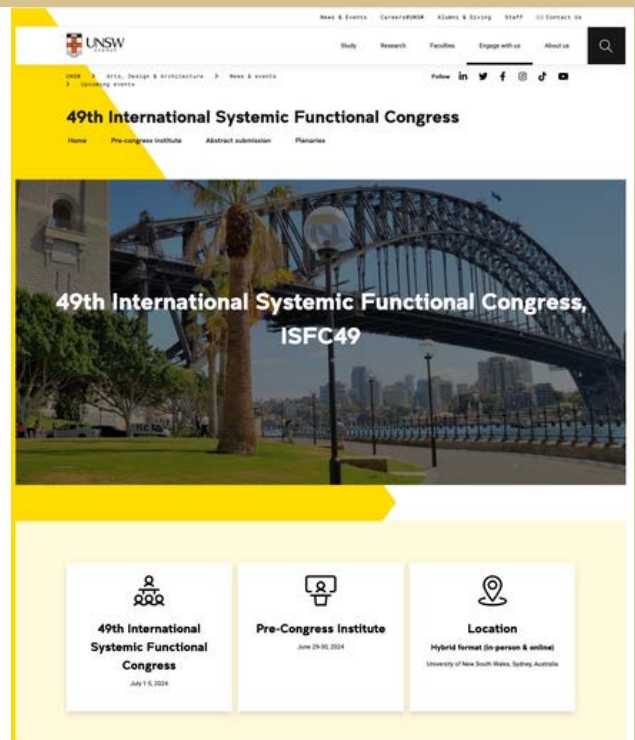
- 8:35–9:05am • *Parsing, snipping PARSNIPs for Ali and Ahmed: A comparative analysis of global and regionalized coursebooks*; Sheila Ameri (The Ohio State University) – Individual Paper – Ponderosa – 4th Floor
- 10:10–10:40am • *Task Complexity Effects on Functional Adequacy and Creativity in EFL Writing: Performance and Measurements*; Gavin Bui (The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong) – Individual Paper – Mesquite – 3rd Floor
- *Automated disfluency annotation in second language learners' spoken data using a large language model*; Minjin Kim (Pennsylvania State University) – Individual Paper – Sandalwood A– 4th Floor
- 1:50–2:20pm • *Multilingual undergraduate students' perceptions of genre-based learning: Acting for identifying and meeting genre learners' needs*; Naoko Mochizuki (Kanda University of International Studies) – Individual Paper – Arboretum 4 – 2nd floor

# OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS & VENUES FOR SFL WORK

## ISFC49:

### The International Systemic Functional Congress

- July 1–5, 2024
- Hybrid format (simultaneously online and in-person at University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia)
- Theme: Harmony, Compassion and Empowerment
- Check out the [ISFC49 conference website](#) for info about registration, plenaries, etc



### ALSFAL Conference & Colloquium of SFL in Mexico

- July 29–Aug 2, 2024
- See flyer on next page or [conference website](#) for details



## NEW SERIES

### Bloomsbury Studies in Systemic Functional Linguistics

Edited by  
David Caldwell, John S. Knox  
and J.R. Martin

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# XIX

## CONGRESO

Asociación  
de Lingüística  
Sistémico  
Funcional de  
América Latina

IV Coloquio  
de Lingüística  
Sistémico-Funcional  
en México

29/07/2024 - 02/08/2024

The National School of Languages, Linguistics, and Translation of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Faculty of Languages of the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla have the honour to host the 19th Congress of the Systemic Functional Linguistics Latin American Association (ALSFAL) and the 4th Colloquium of Systemic Functional Linguistics in Mexico, which will take place from July 29th to August 2nd.

### Presentation formats

- Colloquium
- Paper
- Workshop

### Official Languages

- Spanish
- Portuguese
- English

### Number of participants

- Colloquium - 3 to 4 participants
- Paper - 1 to 2 participants
- Workshop - 1 to 2 participants
- Maximum of 2 presentations per person

### Information on abstracts:

The information regarding the format and submission of abstracts will be detailed in the second call for papers and in the corresponding website, currently under construction.

<https://eventos.enallt.unam.mx/alsfal>

Please send your questions to: [alsfal2024@enallt.unam.mx](mailto:alsfal2024@enallt.unam.mx)

### Location:

Escuela Nacional de Lenguas, Lingüística y Traducción,  
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

Ciudad Universitaria, Ciudad de México, México.

