North American Systemic Functional Linguistics Association

NA-SFLA Newsletter #6
May 17, 2003
Editors: [Gulbahar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulbahar) Beckett and Nan Fries

NA-SFLA WEB SITE <<http://www.yorku.ca/cummings/nasfla>>

1. NA-SFLA at AAAL Review [Report by [Gulbahar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulbahar) Beckett and Nan Fries]
North American Systemic [Functional Linguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Functional_theories_of_grammar) Association Cracker Barrel,
dinner & panel

On Monday March 24, Bernard Mohan, NA-SFLA Chair, organized a Cracker Barrel for NA-SFLA members and friends who attended the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) annual meeting held on March 22-25 in Arlington, Virginia. Between 5:15-7:15 p.m, the Cracker Barrel attracted about 60 people. It was a pleasure to see our regular members and friends. Attendees had lovely chats and discussions on topics of their interest such as Genre, language and education, and ape language. About 30 participants stayed for dinner — the tenth annual SFLA/AAAL dinner. Our guest of honour was Wilga Rivers, Professor Emerita of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University.

Professor Rivers is internationally recognized for her work on the psychological and linguistic aspects of language teaching. She is the author or co-author of 13 books and about 80 articles on various aspects of language
teaching. She is the recipient of numerous foreign language awards and the most distinguished leadership award of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. We were honoured to have Professor Rivers join us for dinner.

The NA-SFLA panel (Scollon, Mohan and Royce) was very well attended including
in the audience [Deborah Tannen](http://www.nndb.com/people/231/000087967/), and Chuck and Marjorie Goodwin.

2. LSA/NA-SFLA update [July 25-27] SEE NA-SFLA WEB SITE FOR INFORMATION.
The LSA/North American Systemic [Functional Linguistics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Functional_theories_of_grammar) Association
Mini-conference will be hosted at LSA Summer Institute at Michigan State
University in East Lansing, Michigan.

The May 1 deadline for abstracts has been extended to June 1.

LSA Summer Institute web site <lsa2003.lin.msu.edu/index.html>

Two additional notes: [1] for those attending the Pragmatics conference in
Toronto, our Mini-Conference will be convenient by train from Toronto. [2]
THE LSA/NA-SFLA MINI-CONFERENCE IS FREE AND THERE IS NO NEED TO REGISTER. HOWEVER, IF YOU LET US KNOW THAT YOU ARE COMING IT IS EASIER TO PREPARE THE RIGHT NUMBER OF HANDOUTS. Since we have no fee, you will have to get your own coffee.

Unofficial headquarters: [Super 8](http://api.getsmartlinks.com/goto?app_id=opencandy&guid=C58C87CC-3BEB-A276-3579-F433EC170376&time=133376612&term=Super%208&url=http:%2F%2Fwww.yorku.ca%2Fcummings%2Fnasfla%2Fnewsletters%2Fnewsl6.html&v_xpi=35&tp=inuvo&link_id=-10386809&cid=892&pid=1) Hotel.
We will be posting abstracts and a tentative schedule on the NA-SFLA web site
soon.

Tentative list of titles:
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Free,
No Registration necessary,
Open to the Public
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FRIDAY, JULY 25 [EDUCATION DAY]
Morning: Opening welcome/organizing remarks: Nan Fries, VP, NA-SFLA
CHAIR: Peter Fries, Conference Convenor

9am
1. Peter Fries [Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics]
[Fries1ph@cmich.edu] [one hour]

10am
2. Robyn Woodward-Kron [Disciplinary learning through writing: An
investigation into the writing of undergraduate Education students]
[robynwk@hotmail.com] [one hour]

11am
3. Carolyn Hartnett [Meaning First: A Functional Approach to Written
Composition] [HARTNETT@compuserve.com] [one hour]

2 hour lunch break [noon-2]
NA-SFLA executive committee meeting

Afternoon: [2-5]
COLLOQUIUM ON EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS OF SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS
[from [University of California](http://api.getsmartlinks.com/goto?app_id=opencandy&guid=C58C87CC-3BEB-A276-3579-F433EC170376&time=133376612&term=University%20of%20California&url=http:%2F%2Fwww.yorku.ca%2Fcummings%2Fnasfla%2Fnewsletters%2Fnewsl6.html&v_xpi=35&tp=inuvo&link_id=-10320859&cid=921&pid=1), Davis]
CHAIR, [Jay Lemke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Lemke) [jaylemke@umich.edu]
(3 hours)
1. SFL as a resource for advanced literacy development (Introduction to
session)
Cecilia Colombi and Mary Schleppegrell

Part I: SFL in investigations of English

2. Investigating academic English development
Mary Schleppegrell, Linguistics Department, UC Davis
<mjschleppegrell@ucdavis.edu>

3. Nominalization in Generation 1.5 [academic writing](http://FinanceReports.co/)
Jennifer Guzman, Linguistics Department, UC Davis <jrguzman@ucdavis.edu>

4. Teaching ergative verbs to advanced learners of English
Miram Bormann, Linguistics Department, UC Davis <mbormann@ucdavis.edu>

5. The writing development of recent immigrant students
Ann Go, School of Education, UC Davis <algo@ucdavis.edu>

Part 2: SFL in investigations of Spanish

6. Describing academic Spanish with SFL
Cecilia Colombi, Spanish Department, UC Davis

7. How Chilean history textbooks construct causality: ideological implications
Teresa Oteiza-Silva, Spanish Department, UC Davis <tmoteizasilva@ucdavis.edu>

8. Developing oral academic language: The case of Spanish in the US
Mariana Achugar, School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT
<Mariana.Achugar@sit.edu>

9. Cuando: In search of incipient [academic writing](http://FinanceReports.co/) in Spanish bilingual
children
Laura Dubcovsky, Spanish Department, UC Davis <ledubcovsky@ucdavis.edu>

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SATURDAY, JULY 26
A day of papers showing the variety of work done within the Systemic
Functional model.
Lunch will be noon- 2:00 PM
AAAL planning committee meeting

[not in order yet]
CHAIR: Carolyn Hartnett, Secretary, NA-SFLA [morning] and [Michael Cummings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Cummings),
Webmaster, NA-SFLA [afternoon]

1. Asp [What DA can tell us about AD: What a functional [discourse analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discourse_analysis) of
patients with Alzheimer's type dementia can tell us about language and
cognition] [elissa.asp@ns.sympatico.ca] [one hour]

2. Cummings [Detecting stylistic variation from genre analysis]
[mcummings@glendon.yorku.ca] [one hour]

3. Fries [What makes a text coherent?] [fries1ph@cmich.edu] [one hour]

4. Iwamoto [Multi-stratal analysis of paragraphs in a dialogue ] [kazu\_
iwamoto@hotmail.com] [one hour]

5. Lemke [Systems and gradients: describing the language of degree]
[jaylemke@umich.edu] [one hour]

?McCauley [Tattletales] [lennox@yorku.ca]

7. ?Mohan [Developmental grammar of causal explanations in science]
[bernard.mohan@ubc.ca] [one hour]

6. Spruiell [Metafunctional Shift and the Signification of Thou]
[sprui1wc@cmich.edu] [one hour]

?Williamson [Multimodality] [rwilliam@ccs.carleton.ca]

8. Young, R [An invitation to AILA in Madison, 2005] AILA will meet in the US
for the first time. Richard Young, convenor, will discuss his plans for the
conference. [rfyoung@facstaff.wisc.edu] [15 MINUTES]
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SUNDAY [APE DAY], JULY 27

9: 00 AM - noon
Morning: CHAIR: Bernie Mohan, President, NA-SFLA

Benson and Greaves [Multi-Stratal Analysis of Bonobo-Human Discourse]
[Greaves@gl.yorku.ca]

2 hour lunch break [noon-2]

2 PM - 5 PM

Nan Fries [Films of encultured apes: [Kanzi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanzi) [bonobo], Koko [gorilla], Washoe
[chimp] and Chantek [orangutang]]

3. New and improved web site for NA-SFLA
Thanks for bibliographies posted on web site. Please send more on anything
that interests you.

The following bibliographies have been posted:

Benson, James and [William Greaves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Greaves). Ape-human discourse related checklist.
Iwamoto, Kazuyoshi. Bibliography on phonology
Royce, Terry. Resources on MultiModality
Schleppegrell, Mary. Functional grammar in content area teaching
Taboada, Maite. Bibliography on SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) work
[Discourse Analysis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discourse_analysis)
Taboada, Maite. Bibliography on SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) work in
Artificial Intelligence/Computational Linguistics

[Jay Lemke](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jay_Lemke) has an extensive and interesting website, and particularly mentions
the following portions as potentially of interest.
1. Biblio of my own publications,
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jaylemke/bibliogr.htm>
2. Biblio on methods of discourse analysis,
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jaylemke/meth-bib.htm>
3. Biblio on discourse & multimedia analysis,
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jaylemke/courses/DA_MxM/DA_MxM_biblio.htm>

4. Pragmatics Conference [systemic and systemic friendly folks speaking
include -- Geluykens, Gruber, Lemke, Macauley, Malcolm, Stainton, Taboada,
Ventola ,Williamson,] Toronto, July 13-18 (Sounds like party time -- a
famous Benson Barbeque)

5. TESOL stories
There was a panel on Functional Linguistics, (including Systemic linguistics) [panel Nunan, Larson-Freeman, Burns and McCarthy--Hammond substituted for McCarthy] in room for under 200. So many people came to
listen that they had to move to a huge auditorium. May have had as many as 1,000 in audience. Mary Schleppegrell reports the same for her paper. Standing room only. Mary's students report that most functional papers filled
rooms. Hummm. Maybe NA-SFLA should submit a panel for TESOL next year?

6. Our condolences to Bernie, NA-SFLA chair, for his loss. Marilyn, his wife, has recently passed away.

7. New URL for the current issue of NETWORK [a systemic newsletter]
<http://www.ling.mq.edu.au/nlp/network/newsletter/newsletter.htm>

8. Member news: Madeline Yeomans got tenure. Amy Cecilia Rigg will start work
at Eastern New Mexico University in the fall. She is finishing her
dissertation.

9. New PhD dissertation: (Congratulations, Robyn)

DISCIPLINARY LEARNING THROUGH WRITING: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE WRITING OF
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION STUDENTS

Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, Australia

Robyn Woodward-Kron: robynwk@hotmail.com

The aim of this study into tertiary students' academic writing was to provide a comprehensive account of the ways in which students learn specialist knowledge through language, particularly the written mode. The study also aimed to describe and map the changes which occur in students' writing as their disciplinary knowledge increases, as well as to provide a better understanding of how students [learn to write](http://FinanceReports.co/) in a disciplinary context.

By investigating the relation between disciplinary writing and the learning of specialist knowledge this thesis has attempted to lay the groundwork for a linguistic theory of learning in disciplinary contexts focussing on the
written mode. As such it should extend systemically oriented understandings of language as a resource for thinking and learning in childhood and adolescence into the adult domain. A more comprehensive description of the study's findings and implications is provided in the dissertation's abstract.

Although the study was undertaken in Australia, Robyn moved to southwestern Ontario during the final phase of her study. She concedes that a long Canadian winter was a significant factor in reducing distractions and helping
to bring her doctoral studies to completion.

ABSTRACT

For many academics and students the role of language, particularly writing, in constructing knowledge and in 'learning to mean' in a disciplinary context remains unexamined. This thesis investigates the ways in which
undergraduate students learn specialist knowledge through writing. The disciplinary context of the study is pre-service primary [teacher education](http://FinanceReports.co/) in a Faculty of Education at one Australian university. Systemic functional
linguistics and [genre theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre_studies) provide the theoretical framework for the study as well as the main analytical tools. The research methodology is an integrated one, drawing on discourse analytical and linguistic approaches as well as a small amount of ethnographic data.

The findings of the research relate to two areas. The first area is the ature of learning to mean in a specialist disciplinary context. In this study, the tutors' written feedback on the students' assignments appeared to play only a minor role in the students' socialisation into the discursive practices of the discipline. On the other hand, the students' introductory textbook was seen to play a major role in shunting the students from commonsense understandings of child development to more uncommonsense disciplinary ones. The second area is the relation between disciplinary learning and writing. At the level of genre through the writing of Expositions, Discussions and Evaluative Accounts, the pre-service education students developed several thinking and learning processes. These included developing a logical argument based on evidence, engaging with recent research and assessing the implications of research and theories for the classroom. The findings also showed that Micro-genres functioned as 'textual learning bridges'. These textual learning bridges allow the student, for example, to review, explain or clarify his or her understanding of a particular concept or phenomenon. The investigation at clause level into the
ideational meanings in the students' texts showed that the processes of naming, defining, taxonomising, reasoning, reporting knowledge claims and engaging with disciplinary knowledge were the main means through which the students built up their own semiotic map of the discipline.

The study's findings have the potential to inform the development of functionally oriented writing pedagogies as well as the thematisation of the role of language for thinking and learning in [pre-service teacher education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Service_Teacher_Education). It is hoped that such a strategy would not only aid the students' writing and learning of specialist knowledge at university but also assist them in their future role as classroom practitioners.