

Meaning Potential

A publication of the North American Systemic Functional Linguistics Association



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Welcome!

Dear NASFLA members,

Welcome to the spring 2023 issue of *Meaning Potential*! This year, 'connection' and 'continuity' have been key themes in our pursuits as an organization. Connection in terms of fostering and sustaining a sense of community among North American SFL scholars to support ongoing dialogue and collaboration. And continuity in terms of laying important groundwork for the organization to grow and thrive into the future.

Therefore, this issue highlights various kinds of work you might connect to within our community of scholars, interviews and profiles that might help you feel more connected to fellow members, and upcoming opportunities to connect in real-time at AAAL. In addition, it invites you to consider how you might contribute to the continuity of the organization. Thank you all for being part of this vibrant community already as members, readers, and contributors. We look forward to seeing you one way or another soon!

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathryn Accurso, *Meaning Potential* editor

Do you have a *Meaning Potential* contribution?

Want to be a reviewer?

Email nasflanewsletter@gmail.com



Message from the President

Dr. Andrés Ramirez, *Florida Atlantic University*

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It is with great pleasure, and also some sadness, that I write to you as outgoing NASFLA President. Looking back on my service in this role, I am honored to say that our organization is stronger than ever. We are a vibrant and very talented community of scholars deeply committed to enduring social change, educational access, and justice.

As our membership has grown, so has the participation and outreach of the NASFLA community. This is evident if you simply look at the remarkable scholarship referenced in this newsletter in the form of books, talks, events, and of course SFL-related presentations at AAAL this year.

For example, our newly launched webinar series NASFLA Conversations is now a regular event with exciting content and insights (see p. 4). As well, the GRADNASFLA Symposium continues to enjoy success in building community and providing scholarly and leadership opportunities to graduate students in NASFLA. We remember with great pleasure the success of the symposium held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst last year, and we look forward to the next meeting to be held in 2024 (see p. 16).

In addition, I reflect on the quality, reach and expanded nature of this very channel, the

NASFLA newsletter. Meaning Potential is no longer just a document that highlights presentations at AAAL. I am very proud to have initiated the change in distribution format and content back in March of 2018 when I was newsletter editor with Marianna Ryshina-Pankova and Tairan Qiu. As you can see, Kathryn Accurso, our current editor has taken it to a wonderful new level!

I am also very happy to report some sustaining collaborations with other SFL organizations around the world, such as ASFLA and ISFLA, the Australian and International Systemic Functional Linguistics Associations, respectively. For example, our organization now has standing representation on the selection committee for ASFLA's M.A.K. Halliday Prize international book prize (see p. 5). And regarding ISFLA, myself and Sabrina Sembiante from Florida Atlantic University and Jason D. Mizell from the University of Miami have begun discussions about hosting ISFC51 in South Florida in 2026, the year that the international organization's next SFL conference is scheduled to be held in North America.

In preparation to host an international conference, as President, I have overseen

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Message from the President (cont'd)

NASFLA's application for non-profit status, which is now well under way. As outlined in the annual business meeting agenda, this process required drafting formal organization by-laws (see p. 4). I encourage all members to review the draft by-laws, email me with comments, and/or attend the business meeting on March 19 to discuss and vote on them. Achieving non-profit status will help take our organization to a new level as we will be eligible for important tax exemptions, be able to receive tax-deductible donations, and collect future membership dues (should we decide to do that as an organization).

Please know that as I move into a Past President role, my commitment to and work for and with the organization will continue. And I invite you to join me! **Please consider serving as a member of the NASFLA leadership or finding other ways to get actively involved with the organization.** Your service not only makes us better, but it gives you the opportunity to grow as a leader and scholar in a nurturing environment in the company of wonderful scholars.

Last but not least, I close with a tribute. Of course, I am proud to have served all of you, but in this letter I must especially acknowledge Dr. María Brisk and Dr. Mary Schleppegrell. Serving as the president of an organization you belong to is a great honor. Congratulations on your respective retirements and thank you for all you have done for us. Members, please take time to read the reflective interviews with these special scholars and leaders on pages 7–14 and plan to attend their NASFLA Conversation in May.

In the spirit of many of those who have inspired NASFLA's work, I welcome you to AAAL in Portland, and praise our members for all their efforts to advance linguistic, cultural, and social equity in North America and beyond.

Dr. Andrés Ramírez
Associate Professor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Florida Atlantic University

NASFLA Officers (outgoing 2023)



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Dr. Beth Dillard
WEB MANAGER

NASFLA Open Business Meeting at AAAL

Sunday, March 19 1:50 PM - 2:55 PM
Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront
Mt. Hood room



*Note: Minutes will be circulated to all members afterward by email.

March 19 Agenda

1. Welcome and land acknowledgement
2. Approval of minutes from previous business meeting
3. Promising Scholar Award 2023
4. Reports
5. New business
 - a. Discussion and adoption of by-laws (click [here](#) for a draft)
 - i. Please review the draft in advance of the business meeting; send any comments to President Andrés Ramirez at ramirezj@fau.edu
 - b. Nomination and election of new leadership



Up Next in NASFLA Conversations An SFL webinar series

Last year, the NASFLA Leadership launched an online talk series called *NASFLA Conversations*. The next talk in this series is a reflective and forward-looking conversation between Drs. María Brisk and Mary Schleppegrell (approx May 2023). Stay tuned to www.nasfla.org for further date/time details.



2023 Promising Scholar

Dr. Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso, *Mississippi State University*
lc1811@msstate.edu



The 2023 NASFLA Promising Scholar selection committee, comprised of Drs. Jason D. Mizell (chair), Sally Humphrey, Michael Maune, Silvia Pessoa, and PhD candidate Darrell Allen, would like to thank each of this year's nominees and those who wrote letters of support for them. This year's nominees represented a creative and innovative group of scholars whose work spanned from examining how textbooks position historically minoritized groups, to the use of translanguaging, to how embodiment can be understood, to how to center student's funds of knowledge and cultures in understanding science. After careful deliberation, the committee selected Dr. Lourdes Cardozo-Gaibisso as the 2023 recipient of NASFLA's Promising Scholar Award.

Dr. Cardozo-Gaibisso is an Assistant Professor of TESOL and Linguistics at Mississippi State University. She is also the founding director of the Science Literacy for Equity Research Collaboratory (SL4E) at the university's Social Science Research

Center where she is also a Research Fellow. She draws on SFL in her justice-oriented work around multilingual science literacies, which has been published in journals such as *Language and Education*, *Cuaderno de Pedagogía Universitaria*, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *Journal of Latinos and Education*, and *Journal of Writing Analytics*, in addition to many book chapters. She will be presenting on this topic at AAAL on Tuesday, March 21 (see p. 20 of this newsletter).

Dr. Cardozo-Gaibisso completed her PhD at the University of Georgia under the direction of Ruth Harman. In recognition of this award, Dr. Cardozo-Gaibisso will receive \$200 in Routledge books, as well as an opportunity to share her work through the NASFLA Conversations webinar series and future issues of *Meaning Potential*. Thank you to Routledge for their support of SFL scholarship, and congratulations, Dr. Cardozo-Gaibisso!



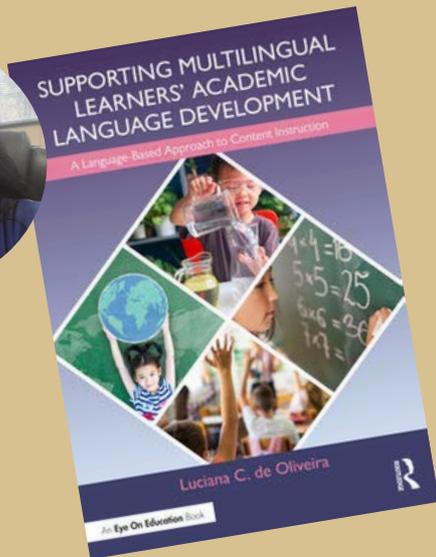
M.A.K. HALLIDAY BOOK PRIZE

New Award Announcement!

The M.A.K. Halliday Prize is an international book prize awarded biennially for the most significant scholarly monograph recently published in Systemic Functional Linguistics. It is named in memory of M.A.K. Halliday, who was the leading figure in the development of SFL theory. The principal criterion for success will be evidence of excellence and significance in furthering and developing the work of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Click [here](#) for more information on eligibility and nomination procedures.

Nominations are due **March 31, 2023** and should be sent to Dr. Meg Gebhard, the NASFLA representative on the selection committee [gebhard@educ.umass.edu], with CC to committee chair Dr. Rosemary Huisman [rosemary.huisman@sydney.edu.au].

NEW SFL BOOKS HIGHLIGHT



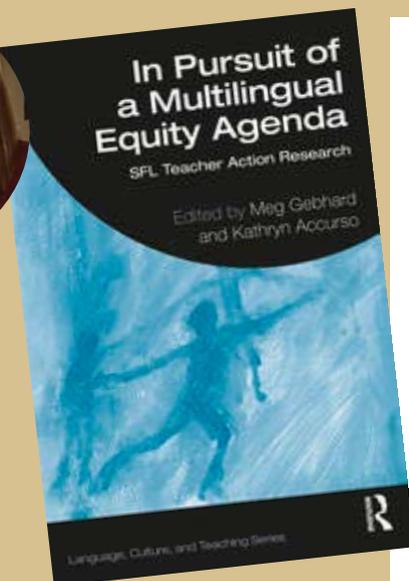
[de Oliveira, L. C. \(2023\)](#). *Supporting multilingual learners' academic language development: A language-based approach to content instruction*. Routledge.

- Provides elementary school teachers with everything they need to know to successfully teach grade-level content to multilingual learners
- Chapters are organized by subject, addressing the specific language demands of teaching English language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science. Each chapter features examples of implementation in grades K-5, practical strategies, and a wealth of tables, figures, and other resources.



[de Oliveira, L. C., & Jones, L. \(2023\)](#). *Teaching young multilingual learners: Key issues and new insights* [Elements in Language Teaching series]. Cambridge University Press.

- Provides an overview of research focusing on language teaching practices for young multilingual learners in primary classrooms in English-speaking contexts.
- Pedagogy-informed research studies informed by culturally sustaining practices conducted in K-5 classrooms are used to develop research-informed pedagogies for young multilingual learners. Grade K-3 and 4-5 illustrations of such practices are provided.
- Concludes with implications for teacher education and the preparation of teachers of young multilingual learners.



[Gebhard, M. & Accurso, K. \(Eds.\) \(2023\)](#) *In pursuit of a multilingual equity agenda: SFL teacher action research*.

Routledge.

- Part of the Routledge Language, Culture, and Teaching series
- Provides accessible examples of how K-12 teachers used SFL and action research to support the disciplinary literacy development of diverse learners in the context of high-stakes school reform
- Intended for pre- and in-service teachers and teacher educators to improve professional practice through critical SFL pedagogy, and help teachers combat racism and anti-immigrant rhetoric by contributing to an equity agenda in their schools
- NOTE: **20% off with code FLE22 through March 31**

A Reflective Interview with Dr. María Estela Brisk

by Laura Schall-Leckrone (BC '13)
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Although María Estela Brisk may have recently retired from her position as Professor of Language and Literacy at Boston College (BC), she has not slowed down. In the past year, she taught an online graduate course for female Afghani refugees in Bangladesh on Teaching Genres of Writing and plans to teach them a second course this upcoming fall. Dr. Brisk also published a thoroughly revised second edition of her book on *SFL Genre Pedagogy for K-8 Classrooms* based on over seventeen years of collaborative research in the Boston Public Schools (BPS). She continues to teach and revise online courses for BC and work closely with schools, teachers, and multilingual and minoritized school children in the greater Boston area, not to mention travel the world. Just back from a trip to Antarctica with her granddaughter (see picture below) and planning to attend the international Systemic Functional Congress in Tunisia in March, she recently made time for a conversation about the role of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in her work since the early part of the 21st Century.



The conversation began with her introduction to SFL. As Dr. Brisk explained, “Mary (Schleppegrell) was my muse,” and it started with a focus on writing.

Q1. How did you find your way to SFL?

“Well, I was always curious about the teaching of writing, especially in a second language, because I never felt that as a second language learner, I was ever taught how to write, and that was the biggest source of difficulty. When I came to graduate school, my English was very good, but when I was asked to write papers, I almost turned around and...went back home because nobody had taught me how to write a graduate paper. So, I was always looking for something.

In the early part of the 21st century, I was working a lot with schools and teachers, and we were all again looking at writing. Ester de Jong said, ‘You should read Mary Schleppegrell’s book, *The Language of Schooling*,’ [which] came out in 2004. And I read it, and I thought, ‘Where were you all my life?’ That’s when I discovered SFL.”

From there, Dr. Brisk also read *Using Functional Grammar* by Butt et al (2000) which she also found very helpful, and Derewianka’s (1999) *Exploring How Texts Work*. But as she emphasized, “Everyone knows it as ‘The Pink Book.’” Around this time, she had a sabbatical and started to work with two Boston schools on

writing, so she decided, “Why not? Let’s try!”

Q2. What has your experience been with teacher uptake of genre-based pedagogy?

“Since I had a sabbatical in 2006, I started working with the Garfield and the Gardener [elementary schools]. I would go every week and meet with the teachers, and we would try it in their classrooms. I would visit the classrooms and observe. Then, we had after-school meetings to discuss what was going on and what to do next.

The following year, I was asked by BC to work with the Russell School. And, so I went to meet with fourth and fifth grade. And they said, ‘Our goal for next year is to improve writing.’ And, so I showed them. ‘I have a way to teach writing that I’ve been experimenting with a couple of schools. Would you like to try it?’ I explained the basis of that to the teachers, and they seemed to be interested. And, the third grade told the principal, ‘If the fourth grade does it, we want to be part of it, too.’ So, that’s when I started working with the Russell. For the first three years, I went twice a month to the school. Then, for the next seven years, I went once a month. I would meet with every grade level during their common planning time. And, we would plan units. I would explain the theory, and we would discuss how they would apply it to the classroom. So, it was very, very collaborative.

And, I’ve always felt like I was a week ahead of the teachers, because I was also learning. We collected student work and analyzed [it]. I had a grant that allowed me to have some graduate

students [help]. We developed analysis forms [like] a rubric, but in which you not only give a value to the work, but also write comments on every aspect based on SFL, and you see what the kids can do.”

Notably, after five years of working with Dr. Brisk, the Russell School, previously one of the worst-performing schools in all of Boston, became number one. However, she says, “I’m not going to take...credit for it.” She added, “The credit goes to the principal. For the 10 years that I was there, she went to every single one of my meetings with the teachers, so she knew what they were supposed to be doing in the classroom and she would follow that up, which was invaluable.” She concludes, “There was no question that it was the SFL...that was responsible for that improvement.”

She also explained how SFL benefitted the large number of emergent bilingual learners in the school, including Newcomers. Their scores on the ACCESS test, an English proficiency measure, would go up one, two, even three levels each year. The principal eliminated sheltered English immersion classes “because teachers knew as much about language as any ESL teacher.” In addition, students engaged with critical thinking from the beginning. “Newcomers would use Spanish if they wanted to discuss, write or read. If they were reading a book in English, the teacher would buy the Spanish version...and [they] had iPads from one of the grants [for translations].” Dr. Brisk recalled how one boy who arrived in 5th grade immediately began working on the Declaration of Human Rights in Spanish, and although he

Brisk interview (cont'd)

wrote in Spanish all year, when he was tested in English, he scored at a Level 2. A hallmark of the SFL approach Dr. Brisk engaged in with the teachers was to offer engaging, relevant and rigorous content and incorporate SFL into the mandated curriculum. Children considered public health issues associated with living in a city, such as the relationship between air quality and asthma. If the teachers were required to use expeditionary learning or, in bilingual classrooms, the American Reading Company (ARC) curriculum, she guided them to incorporate SFL because “whatever writing curriculum they had was always awful.” As Dr. Brisk further explained, ARC does not teach writing; instead, it uses writing to evaluate learning.

Word spread about the dramatic transformation at the Russell. As Dr. Brisk explained, “So, principals started finding out... something good was going on at the Russell, and asking if they could have it [at their] school.” This led to a new program developed by the Superintendent, Excellence for All, with SFL writing instruction offered to 13 schools by coaches who had trained with Dr. Brisk to support these efforts. Teachers throughout Boston can now take three online courses developed by Dr. Brisk on narratives and historical genres; reports and explanations; and procedures and arguments.

Q3. Your 2015 book "Engaging Students in Academic Literacies" has advanced SFL research in the U.S. and beyond. Can you share how this book was conceptualized?

Dr. Brisk explained how the first and then second editions of her book were developed organically from her painstaking work to support students, teachers, and schools.

"In order to help the teachers, I would type up notes that were translations of [what] I was learning from reading Mary, from reading (other sources). I made these binders that were genre-based, because I soon noticed the way to have a buy-in with teachers is to present, first the genre and the purpose and the stages. Then, I was introducing language slowly, because it tended to scare the teachers more. By the third year, we were more intensely working with language.

I started trying to determine what aspects of language were most essential for which genres. I couldn't introduce all aspects of language for all genres. It was just too much. Pretty soon, I realized, for instance, verb groups are essential to narratives to develop character. Certain types of adverbials are important for narratives too. But in reports and explanations, noun groups are essential, because all the information is [located] in noun groups, so they are cumulative. When we got to writing arguments, the interpersonal function kicked in. And, we looked at mode, evaluative language, and graduation."

Around this time, Boston College sought someone to teach undergraduate and graduate courses on Teaching Language Arts. Dr. Brisk took all that she was learning about SFL working with BPS teachers and developed an SFL course. As she explains, “I was...using what I

was learning in the school to apply it to the courses, and vice versa. So, they were ... feeding each other.” Then, she received a grant to pay teachers to assist in the graduate course every semester. She added, “That was...great professional development, because teachers who helped me in the course, got really good at it.” She also “started ... writing articles with teachers based on [classroom] data,” which enabled them to “focus and look at student work in a different way.” As she explains, “[When] you’re writing an article, you do a lot of analysis.” The five years Dr. Brisk spent creating and revising the genre-based binders, working with BPS teachers, and teaching the Language Arts course at BC led to the first edition of her 2015 book, *Engaging Students in Academic Literacies: Genre Pedagogy for K-5 Classrooms*.

Q4. What can we expect from the second edition?

In the 8 years since the first book came out, Dr. Brisk reported learning a lot from working with closely and collaboratively with teachers and students in Boston, as well as developing and revising on-campus and online courses. Based on these experiences, she created a thoroughly revised 2nd edition. Specifically, she extended her work to middle school contexts, added a new chapter on “Enhancing Writing instruction for Bilingual Learners,” and revised all the teaching materials to integrate language features more into each genre-based chapter.

One has to wonder if María Estela Brisk ever sleeps. In between writing the first and second editions of her book on genre pedagogy

(among other commitments), she wrote another book just on language. As Dr. Brisk explains, after analyzing “thousands of pieces of student work” she wrote, *Language in Writing Instruction: Enhancing Literacy Instruction in Grades 3-8*, which came out in 2021. In it, she focuses on linguistic challenges in writing, because “the more advanced aspects of written language are hard,” and “because kids (and teachers) have so much to learn about the basics.”

Q5. What challenges and opportunities do SFL researchers currently face? What next steps would you like to see in the field?

Dr. Brisk described two main challenges to doing this work, with which many of us can identify: (1) “to get teachers to lose the fear of teaching language and [teach] it for its function;” and (2) “[getting] content area teachers to be able to integrate the teaching of writing and the teaching of language [into] the teaching of their content.” She provides poignant examples from recent interactions with teachers.

“In last week's meeting, I showed [a teacher] a piece of writing from a kid who wrote in Spanish, but it's the same issue in English. The kid was writing a very angry argument about when Breonna Taylor was murdered because she was Black. I pointed out to the teachers in such an angry essay, 'Why did he use the passive voice?' The passive voice in history is to hide the doer. So, instead of saying, 'The police killed Breonna Taylor for being Black' and blaming the police, [ie] who he was angry at, he hid the police by using the passive voice. So,

Brisk interview (cont'd)

I said, 'Of course, what he did was not intentional, because he didn't know better. But, you have to teach the kids about choices.' I mean about being intentional in the choices and understanding the functions of the grammar, and what they can do for what you want to mean. That was such a good example, especially because it wasn't an example pulled out of the air. It was an example from one of the kids in one of those schools. So, it was very real for the teachers."

In terms of working with content teachers, Dr. Brisk mentioned her work with science and math teachers. One very strong bilingual teacher had superb science units, but couldn't figure out the type of explanation she was requiring from her students. Dr. Brisk added, "If you don't understand the purpose of the explanation, how are the students going to understand?" Because attention to language is not typically part of educator preparation for science or math teachers, Dr. Brisk "spent a lot of time with her." She added that it took "one math teacher two courses to figure out what I was trying to tell her, and now, she thinks I walk on water, because once she discovered, she said, 'Oh, my God! Yes, SFL makes such a difference!' SFL made the difference in the kids' understanding of math, not just the writing; it had a tremendous impact on the learning. Overall, and especially in the current context of teacher shortages, pandemic-related illnesses, and associated challenges, Dr. Brisk counsels patience and support to all engaged in this work.

As a "Brisk baby" fortunate enough to have studied with Dr. Brisk at BC between 2008–13, I

am once again struck by all the ways in which she leads by example. Her generosity is legendary. While at BC, she organized reading groups (and provided the books) for colleagues, doctoral students, and teachers to together, read new books by Martin (2008) and Rose and Martin (2012) and discuss applications and implications. I recall one session at her house near the BC campus being held while María was out of town, so she left the key. When Bill Brisk, her husband, came home, he just smiled not at all surprised to see a group of educators in their living room deep in conversation, and said warmly, "Oh, Hello!"

Dr. Brisk's contributions are not limited to the superhuman amount of work she continues to do, but also extend out through the networks she has created and the countless students, teachers, teacher educators, and researchers she has influenced. Her collaborative way of engaging in this work: always a learner, creating collectives to share learning from Boston to Bangladesh, writing and revising books and co-authoring research articles elevate the language-based learning of all involved, and most importantly, have dramatically improved teaching and learning opportunities for multilingual and minoritized children.

As soon as the interview ended, Dr. Brisk asked about my current projects and immediately following our conversation, she introduced me to another "Brisk baby" doing similar work, so we can connect at the AAAL conference in Portland this March, because that's what María Estela Brisk does.

A Reflective Interview with Dr. Mary Schleppegrell

by Mina Hernandez Garcia & Sida Sun
minahg@umich.edu; sidasun@umich.edu

During this reflective conversation, Mary shared with us and NASFLA readers how she found her way to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), her plans for the next book, and suggestions she would offer to SFL scholars regarding the challenges and opportunities we face as a field.

Q1. How did you find your way to SFL?

SFL's theory of language answers many questions that emerged for Mary as an elementary school teacher in the U.S. and an EFL teacher of professionals from different fields in Egypt. For her, the relationship between context and language choices was central:

“At that time [with English for Specific Purposes] we were all about function and situation...that the language you use is really related to the context you're in, and what you're doing with it. But out of that I also started thinking about language teaching programs more generally, and how they decide what to teach, when, how they sequence the syllabus. ... first teach the present tense, then teach other tenses, and I started thinking about why... Who thought of this trajectory of what's harder than something else? And what's the whole theory behind this idea of development?”

During Mary's PhD study at Georgetown University, she returned to elementary school classrooms as a researcher to explore how we think about development:



“I was an assistant in a research project ...I'm back in the elementary [school] context ... recording teacher - student interaction and thinking about when students talk in ways their teachers value. We asked students about what they thought made a good response. That was a data set I was working with - the children's talk.”

These questions led her to focus on the 'because' clauses in children's talk and how we define complexity in language development:

“I ended up analyzing all the 'because' clauses in the children's talk. I was looking at all the research around that kind of subordinate clause. The thing about that one is that sometimes it really is about cause and effect. But sometimes it's more about “my reason for thinking this is”... And other uses of 'because' where ... in the interaction with the teacher the 'because' would be used to preface an utterance. And I started thinking about, well, what is complexity, then? What does complexity really mean?”

Schleppegrell interview (cont'd)

Michael Halliday's first edition of *Introduction to Functional Grammar* came out when Mary was writing her dissertation:

"I'm trying to find a way of thinking about these clauses, and why all the grammar books are calling them complex... I was in the library one day looking on the shelves and I came across Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar* first edition, this was 1985, so it was brand new, and from that book I was able to have a framework for thinking about these different kinds of 'because' in terms of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings. That's how I came to SFL."

Q2. How did your book "The Language of Schooling" come about?

Mary's book published in 2004, *The Language of Schooling*, has shaped SFL-based educational research in North America greatly. The questions that led to the conceptualization of this book often overlapped with those that led Mary to SFL. As she moved to an assistant professor position as the director of the ESL writing program at the University of California - Davis, it became increasingly clear to her that something was missing in the general understanding about language that she thought she could contribute through her book on the language of schooling:

"...the students in that program were generation 1.5 graduates of California high schools who had come to the University of California. They were placed in an ESL class...they didn't think of themselves as ESL students. No one had ever pointed out to them that their writing needed

to be improved in some ways. And people weren't clear about in what ways it should be improved, because it wasn't like they were making a lot of grammatical errors. It was more that their writing had an oral spoken flavor to it that wasn't really described very well, and it wasn't in materials teachers were using at that time, and plus, there were international students who had completely different issues around English as a second language... It took me 5 years to write that book... I start out with that whole chapter on what is complexity? What is cognitive demand? What does it mean to say that language is contextualized? Is language ever decontextualized? There's always a context for the person... So that whole argument I make in setting up the book about explicitness, decontextualization, complexity, cognitive demand, was trying to speak back to research I've been reading that talked about language in those terms...Because what I could see for the writers was that teachers would start talking about these students as not very smart. These were obviously talented students who just needed help in thinking about language choices. So, that's where the language of schooling came from."

Q3. Do you have any plans for a next book?

About this, she shared that her next book will draw on the same theory to unpack spoken discourse in classrooms:

"I've decided not to write a second edition [of *The Language of Schooling*]... I feel like it stands on its own, and I wouldn't change anything, but what I would like to do is write a book, maybe discourses of schooling ...

Schleppegrell interview (cont'd)

something that would take the theory again, but now write about it in terms of disciplinary practices and discourses and interaction, because...there's a gap, there's a lot of spoken language in the classroom, and I don't write anything about that, and how that gets shaped by context and- with the work I've done now,... instead of working at the grammatical level around register, to talk more about field, tenor, mode, and contexts, and then situate that in terms of disciplinary development and discussion... that's what I plan to work on.”

Q4. Where do you see challenges and opportunities that SFL researchers currently face?

As one key concept in *The Language of Schooling*, ‘register’ in SFL has a lot to offer:

“I could think about all of these issues that were are out there in terms of [SFL] where register is so important, and understanding the registers that students have access to, have had access to all their lives, or ...aren’t able to learn in school, because teachers without understanding [school registers], also don’t teach it.”

Greater clarity of what register means will be important for making this concept more helpful for researchers and teachers.

“I think it’s still a challenge to help teachers understand the role of register and how it’s different from teaching standard English, and how it’s important for literacy development and supporting discussion in different subject areas. ”

Mary suggests that there is still progress to be made in helping teachers understand the roles of register and mode continuum to support them in making language an explicit focus in disciplinary reading, discussions, and writing.

Note from the authors: We (Mina and Sida) are Mary’s doctoral advisees at the University of Michigan School of Education. We want to express endless thanks to Mary for her wisdom, patience, kindness, and insight that have guided us through the PhD program. We look forward to continuing this SFL journey with Mary in our current and future work.

Meet an SFL-inspired grad student

Jennifer Walsh Marr

Doctoral student, *University of Toronto, Ontario*
Lecturer, *Vantage College at University of British Columbia*

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Jennifer Walsh Marr is a long-time English for Academic Purposes instructor in the Vancouver metro area. In her current doctoral work at the University of Toronto, Ontario (supervised by Dr. Enrica Piccardo) and her full-time work as a lecturer at the University of British Columbia's Vantage College, Jennifer has been exploring SFL as a framework for making meaning-making more transparent and accessible to both learners and instructors. Though she has explored and taught language across various disciplinary contexts, Jennifer's current work focuses on university-level engineering instruction in multilingual contexts.

Members of the NASFLA community may already know Jennifer through her recent publications (listed at right) or from encounters at conferences and webinars, where she is often found asking thoughtful questions and making insightful comments. These contributions reflect Jennifer's dedication as a teacher/learner, as well as her commitments to social justice and critical interculturality. These qualities undoubtedly contributed to her recent recognition by British Columbia's Teachers of English as an Additional Language organization (BC TEAL) as one of the [top 50 individuals](#) who has made a significant contribution to the language teaching profession in BC over the past 50 years.

Please check out Jennifer's work, say hi if you see her, and reach out with any questions or ideas for collaboration.

Recent publications (click for linked content)

- Thieme, K., & Walsh Marr, J. (forthcoming March, 2023). First-year international students and the language of Indigenous Studies, *College Composition and Communication*.
- Walsh Marr, J. (forthcoming 2023). Moves away from congruence: interpersonal, logical and grammatical metaphor in EAP. In M. Walková (Ed.), *Linguistic approaches in English for Academic Purposes: Expanding the discourse*. Bloomsbury.
- Accurso, K., & Walsh Marr, J. (forthcoming 2023). Systemic functional linguistics and the teaching and learning cycle. In C. Polio & M. Kessler (Eds.), *Conducting genre-based research in applied linguistics: A methodological guide*. Routledge.
- Walsh Marr, J., Lynch, S., Tervit, T. (2021). Defining with purpose: connecting lexicogrammatical features to textual purpose in authentic undergraduate texts. *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(4), 1092–1101.
- Walsh Marr, J. & Mahmood, F. (2021). Looking past limiting conditions; prioritizing meaning in EAP. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 51, 100979.
- Walsh Marr, J. & Martin, J. L. (2021). Pomp and circumstances: From research, in practice, for students. *Íkala*, 26(1), 227–242.
- Walsh Marr, J. (2019). Making the mechanics of paraphrasing more explicit through grammatical metaphor. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 42, 100783.

Freely available presentations (YouTube)

- First year students waving from away (The LCT Centre, 2021, see 39:11)
- “Reading like writers”: Curricular redevelopment to support first-year lx students’ production of high value texts (Systemic Functional Linguistics Interest Group Conference, 2021)

GRADNASFLA UPDATE

Report on the 2022 GRADNASFLA Symposium "Renewing and Reimagining SFL Practice"

The 2022 GRADNASFLA Symposium was held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (in-person and virtually) from September 30 to October 2. The symposium was sponsored by Dr. Meg Gebhard and held at the University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Education. Conference planning and hosting was a collaborative effort between six grad students from UMass Amherst and Boston College. They were Xiaoyun Song, Ala Alghoraibi, John Levasseur, and Ivory Moulton from UMass Amherst, and Qihan Chen and Drina Yatsu from Boston College (pictured above right).



Five keynote speakers were invited to give presentations at the symposium: Dr. Zhihui Fang (University of Florida), Dr. Len Unsworth (Australian Catholic University), Dr. Ruth Harman (University Georgia), Dr. Holly Graham (Mount Holyoke College), and Dr. Kathryn Accurso (University of British Columbia). There were three paper sessions and two roundtable sessions, with 20 presenters from 8 countries including the United States, Argentina, Chile, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Presentations covered a wide range of topics, including world language teaching and learning, disciplinary literacy development in K-12 schools, critical literacy in schools, teacher professional development, and multimodal and media discourse. Further details regarding the program can be found [here](#).

Previous GRADNASFLA conferences were held in 2017 (University of Georgia), 2019 (Georgetown University), and 2020 (University of Michigan). Folks interested in being part of the 2024 GRADNASFLA Symposia can contact Qihan Chen at chenao@bc.edu.



SFL at



Saturday, March 18

- 8:00–8:30am • *The contributions of Critical Race Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics to educational policy analysis*; Darrell Allen & Mary Schleppegrell (University of Michigan) – Individual paper – Belmont
- 9:10–9:40am • *(Un)voicing a field's expertise: A citation and transitivity analysis of a developmental education Power-language event*; Emily Suh (Texas State University) – Individual paper – Laurelhurst
- 10:10–10:40am • *Understanding linguistic profiles of research article discussions in four disciplines: A cluster analysis*; Weiyu Zhang & Yin Ling Cheung (Nanyang Technological University) – Individual paper – Eugene
- 1:50–3:50pm • *Bilingual creativity, meaning potential, and codeswitching*; Rakesh Bhatt (University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign) – Invited paper in the Wilga Rivers language pedagogy colloquium – Oregon Ballroom EF
- 2:25–2:55pm • *Uncle Sam needs you to take Russian: An appraisal analysis of world language recruitment materials*; Sheila Ameri, Anna Zaitseva, & Francis John Troyan (The Ohio State University) – Individual paper – Laurelhurst
- 3:00–3:30pm • *Translanguaging during sixth-grade social studies inquiry*; Mina Hernandez Garcia (University of Michigan) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom H
- *Teacher candidates: Navigating immigration discourses in a post-Trump era*; Ruth Harman (University of Georgia), Nihal Khote (Kennesaw State University), Trena Paulus (East Tennessee State University), Ajay Sharma, Shuang Fu, & Michael Todd (University of Georgia) – Individual paper – Portland
- 4:00–4:30pm • *Exploring the relationship between metacognitive awareness of metadiscourse strategies and EFL argumentative writing performance*; Chenghui Chen & Laurence Jun Zhang (University of Auckland - Faculty of Education and Social Work) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom G
- 4:35–5:05pm • *Metadiscourse beliefs and practices among upper-level undergraduate writers*; Zak Lancaster (Wake Forest University) – Individual paper – Laurelhurst
- 7:30–8:30pm • *Early career scholars in AAAL networking event*; hosted by Kathryn Accurso (University of British Columbia), Jason Mizell (University of Miami), Crissa Stephens (Georgetown), & Jongbong Lee (Cyber Hankuk University of Foreign Studies) – Columbia

SFL at



Sunday, March 19

- 8:00–8:30am • *Situating classroom discourse analysis in curriculum genre to analyze students’ knowledge construction and teachers’ facilitation*; Sida Sun & Mary Schleppegrell (University of Michigan) – Individual paper – Willamette
- 8:35–9:05am • *An online narrative-writing program for elementary ELL students*; Drina Kei Yatsu, Deoksoon Kim, Mary Austin, Sarah Alexander, Elizabeth Mahar (Boston College), & Yoonmi Kang (Harvard University) – Individual paper – Laurelhurst
- *Getting ‘meta’: effective meaning-making choices in school disciplinary writing*; Honglin Chen, Annette Turney, & Erika Matruglio (University of Wollongong) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom H
- 9:10–9:40am • *Corpus analysis of semantic gravity waves in three-minute theses*; Michael Maune (MIT), J. Andrés Ramirez, & Chelsea Zuvieta (Florida Atlantic University) – Individual paper – Portland room
- 10:10–11:10am • *Meta-linguistic moments: Translanguaging and language for talking about language variation in a bilingual kindergarten*; Laura Schall-Leckrone (Lesley University) – Individual paper – Hawthorne
- 10:45–11:15am • *Preservice teachers’ grammatical knowledge and language ideologies in the “grammatical profile project”*; Dorothy Worden-Chambers (University of Alabama), Bedrettin Yazan (University of Texas, San Antonio), & Moon Yang (University of Alabama) – Individual paper – Salmon
- 1:50–2:55pm • NASFLA Open Business Meeting – All are welcome – Mt. St. Helen**
- 1:50–2:20pm • *Trasndisciplinarity in language policy and planning: Multimodality, indexicality, and intertextuality*; David Cassels Johnson (University of Iowa) – Individual paper – Portland room
- 2:25–2:55pm • *Black girls and silence: Learning to value and understand their silences through humanizing research*; N'Dyah McCoy & Jason D. Mizell (University of Miani) – Individual paper – Sunstone
- 4:00–4:30pm • *“I’m just a middleman here”: Emerging engineering scholars’ stance in citations*; Genggeng Zhang (Pennsylvania State University) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom H

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Sunday, March 19 (cont'd)

- 5:10–5:40pm • *Beyond vocabulary: Middle school teachers supporting language development during social studies inquiry*; Mary Schleppegrell, Mina Hernandez Garcia, & Sida Sun (University of Michigan) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom EF
- *An experimental research agenda for Systemic Functional Linguistics*; Ryan Miller (Kent State University), Michael Maune (MIT), & Josh Iddings (Siena College) – Individual paper – Belmont

Monday, March 20

- 8:00–8:30am • *“They searched tirelessly for evidence; it simply wasn’t there”*: Words at work in wrongful convictions; Leanne Victoria Bartley (University of Granada) – Roundtable session 1 – Mt. St. Helen
- 8:35–9:05am • *Drama as translanguaging pedagogy: Implications for second language writing with adult learners*; Kathleen McGovern & Nicole Siffrinn (University of Southern Maine) – Individual Paper – Oregon Ballroom H
- 9:10–9:40am • *“In a word”*: Transition use on L2 English high-stakes essay writing; Sam Davidson & Sophia Minnillo (University of California Davis) – Individual Paper – Meadowlark
- 10:10–10:40am • *An exploratory study of second language students’ “citation” practices in multimodal composition*; Xiao Tan (Arizona State University) – Roundtable session 3 – Mt. St. Helen
- 10:45–11:15am • *Culturally sustaining systemic functional linguistics in ESL classrooms*; Lal Bahadur Rana (University of North Texas) & Ram Bahadur Shahi (Bhairab Higher Secondary School) – Roundtable session 5 – Mt. St. Helen
- 1:50–2:50pm • *“I do not see anything wrong with talking like oneself”*: Voice and stance in university writing; Natalia Avila Reyes (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile) – Paper #2 in a 1-hour colloquium on complementary approaches for eliciting student-writers’ voices – Sunstone
- *Subjectivity and attitudes towards writing: Experiences of prospective teachers in two university writing assignments*; Maria Jesus Espinosa (Universidad Diego Portalesal) & Javiera Figueroa (Universidad Alberto Hurtado) – Paper #3 in a 1-hour colloquium on complementary approaches for eliciting student-writers’ voices – Sunstone

SFL at



Monday, March 20 (cont'd)

- 2:25–2:55pm • *Embodied inquiry in teacher education: The material-discursive and the criticality*; Maverick Yunqiang Zhang (University of Georgia) – Individual Paper – Salmon
- 4:00–4:30pm • *Towards a principled bilingual genre pedagogic practice: A comparative study of two multilingual contexts*; Harni Kartika-Ningsih (Universitas Indonesia) & J. Andrés Ramirez (Florida Atlantic University) – Individual Paper – Pearl

Tuesday, March 21

- 8:00–8:30am • *Place-based education and decolonization: Implementing embodied Teaching and Learning Cycle in a social studies curriculum*; Shuang Fu (University of Georgia) – Roundtable session 12 – Mt. St. Helen
- *Open dialogues and shared struggles: Towards antiracist praxis in science literacies*; Lourdes Cardozo-Ghaibisson (Mississippi State University), Ruth Harman (University of Georgia), Cory Buxton (Oregon State University), & Max Vasquez Dominguez (University of North Georgia) – Roundtable session 12 – Mt. St. Helen
 - *Pre-service EFL teachers' awareness of genre-based writing pedagogy in teaching L2 writing in a non-English dominant context*; Dilara Avci (The University of Arizona) & Şebnem Yalçın (Boğaziçi University) – Roundtable session 12 – Mt. St. Helen
 - *A systematic multimodal model for analyzing ESOL teachers' digital stories*; Stanton Wortham, Deoksoon Kim (Boston College), Leslie Kim (Centreville High School), Grace Zhang (Boston College), & Yoonmi Kang (Harvard University) – Individual paper – Salmon
 - *Towards the automatic analysis of rhetorical strategies: Development and evaluation of a stance-taking analyzer*; Masaki Eguchi (University of Oregon) – Individual paper – Eugene

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SFL at



Tuesday, March 21 (cont'd)

- 8:00–9:00am • *Freedom dreaming: Race-conscious cross-pollinations of SFL for equity and justice*; organized by Jason D. Mizell (University of Miami) & Kathryn Accurso (University of British Columbia); discussant Kisha Bryan (Tennessee State University) – 1-hour colloquium – Oregon Ballroom A
- **Presentations:**
 - *From Halliday’s Marxist social class emancipation to race-conscious cross-pollinations for justice-and-equity*; Jason D. Mizell (University of Miami) & Kathryn Accurso (University of British Columbia)
 - *Critical self-reflections on disrupting racialized perceptions of bilingual student writing through SFL and translanguaging pedagogies*; Mileidis Gort, Molly Hamm-Rodriguez, Mary Beth Snow Balderas, Vanessa Santiago Schwarz, & Devon Hedrick-Shaw (University of Colorado Boulder)
 - *Remixing SFL with critical race theory: Disrupting dominance in elementary language/literacies instruction*; Kathryn Accurso (University of British Columbia) & Jason D. Mizell (University of Miami)
- 8:35–9:05am • *Science literacy for justice: learning about and critiquing socio-scientific issues in high school science classrooms*; Jason Moore (Oakland University) – Roundtable session 13 – Mt. St. Helen
- *#Fedisbest: (de)legitimizing mom shaming and maternal guilt*; Shrouq Almaghlouth (King Faisal University) – Roundtable session 2 – Mt. St. Helen
- 9:10–9:40am • *Teaching cognitive processes of English as a second language revision through Concept-based Language Instruction*; Tianzhi Zhang (University of Pittsburgh) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom G
- *Verbal and embodied socioemotional instruction in preschool: A systemic functional paralinguistic analysis*; Sabrina Sembiente, Catherine Restreppo (Florida Atlantic University), Alain Bengochea (University of Nevada, Las Vegas), & Mileidis Gort (University of Colorado Boulder) – Individual paper – Portland
 - *Student and teacher views of students’ goals and motivation for FL writing*; Marina Tsylyna (University of Wisconsin, Madison), Marianna Ryshina-Pankova (Georgetown), Hadis Ghaedi (University of Wisconsin, Madison), & Anna A. Alsufoeva (Portland State University) – Roundtable session 12 – Mt. St. Helen

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SFL at



Tuesday, March 21 (cont'd)

- 10:10–10:40am • *Genre-based tasks, genre theory, and pedagogical activities in L2 writing instruction: A state-of-the-field study*; Matt Kessler (University of South Florida) & J. Elliott Casal (The University of Memphis) – Individual paper – Portland
- 10:10am–12:10pm • *Acknowledging otherness and becoming mentors through telecollaboration*; Ana Gimeno-Sanz & Sofia Di Sarno-García (Universidad Politecnica de Valencia) – Paper #2 in a 2-hour colloquium on telecollaboration – Oregon Ballroom G
- 11:20–11:50am • *Two pedagogical approaches to writing case analysis recommendations: Comparing student outcomes*; Sylvia Pessoa, Thomas Mitchell, & Maria Pia Gomez Laich (Carnegie Mellon University Qatar) – Individual paper – Portland
- 2:25–2:55pm • *Multimodal metaphors of linguistic diversity: Toward humanizing praxis in language teacher education*; Francis Troyan (The Ohio State University), Loretta Fernandez (University of Pittsburgh), Daniel Scott Ferguson (The Ohio State University), & Yuseva Ariyani Iswandari (The Ohio State University) – Individual paper – Columbia
- 2:25–2:55pm • *Developing literacy skills through language play in a multilingual classroom*; Rachel Floyd (University of Arizona) – Individual paper – Pearl
- *Affective teacher education around immigration issues*; Pamela Kimario, Ruth Harman, Shuang Fu, & Elizabeth Wamboi Mutunga (University of Georgia) – Individual paper – Oregon Ballroom H

OTHER VENUES FOR SFL WORK



The 2nd International Online Systemic Functional Linguistics Interest Group (SFLIG) Conference

- November 13–16, 2023
- Fully virtual
- **Theme:** *Systemic Functional Linguistics research in a changing and challenging world*
- Abstracts due **April 30, 2023**
- Click [here](#) for more information

ISFC49: The International Systemic Functional Congress

- July 2024
- To be held at University of NSW, Sydney, Australia
- Stay tuned to isfla.org for further information

The logo for the International Systemic Functional Linguistics Association (ISFLA), consisting of the letters 'ISFLA' in a large, blue, stylized font.

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