AAAL 2018, Chicago, IL, March 24ᵗʰ-27ᵗʰ

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SFL-RELATED COLLOQUIA

1. Recontextualizing SFL theory & praxis in multilingual classrooms in the US: A critical reflection

Type of Presentation	Title	Summary, Abstracts	Presenters
Mon, March 26, 8:00 to 11:15am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Chicago 8 & 9			
Invited Colloquium		**Summary** This colloquium explores Halliday's theory of SFL in the context of social, economic, and political changes shaping K-12 public schooling in the United States. The panelists will present and comment on research conducted in elementary, secondary, and teacher education programs and invite a critical discussion of SFL-informed research and practice. **Abstract** This colloquium explores instantiations of Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in the teaching, learning, and researching of disciplinary literacy practices in multilingual classrooms in the United States. While SFL praxis has a longer history in other parts of the world (e.g., de Silva Joyce & Feez, 2016), scholars have only recently begun to recontextualize Halliday's work as a way of responding to the changing nature of public education in the United States (e.g., Achugar, 2009; Brisk, 2015; de Oliveira & Iddings, 2014; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Harman, 2018; Gebhard & Harman, 2011). These changes include the decline of manufacturing jobs; demographic shifts in rural, suburban, and urban communities; the standardization and accountability movement; privatization and the outsourcing of aspects of curriculum, design, instruction, and assessment; and the rise of nationalism (e.g., English-only mandates and declarations of anti-immigrant executive orders; Gebhard, forthcoming). To respond to these challenges, SFL praxis has gained increasing traction in K-12 and higher education contexts. However, critiques of the current recontextualization of	**Organizer** Meg Gebhard, University of Massachusetts-Amherst **Discussant** Jonathan Daniel Rosa, Standford University

		Halliday's work in the United States, similar to critiques of SFL in other contexts, have raised important concerns about SFL—that its metalanguage is too technical for students and teachers; that its approach is at odds with dialogic approaches to educating multilinguals; and that it has the potential to reproduce raciolinguistic ideologies (e.g., Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Brisk & Zhang-Wu, 2017; Bourke, 2005; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Luke, 1996). The panelists will engage with these critiques while discussing their research practices in elementary, secondary, and tertiary contexts. The panel concludes with the remarks of a scholar who works in the transdisciplinary fields of multilingualism, teacher education, school reform, and linguistic anthropology. These remarks will stimulate a dialogue among panelists and audience members regarding conceptions of disciplinary literacies, literacy development, teacher education, and social change in applied linguistics.	
Paper 1	**Critically responding to the changing nature of public education: A Hallidayan conceptual framework in action**	**Summary** This paper draws on Halliday's theories of language, learning, and social change to present a conceptual framework for responding to social, economic, and political changes that shape the nature of public education in the United States. **Abstract** This paper draws on Halliday's theories of language, learning, and social change to present a conceptual framework for responding to social, economic, and political changes shaping the nature of public education in the United States. In making a case for a Hallidayan perspective of literacy, literacy development, and school reform, this paper has three parts. First, it outlines how a Hallidayan perspective of teaching and learning provides a comprehensive conceptual and analytic framework and aligned methodology for critically exploring how educational reforms of the past and present shape the nature of current institutional practices in schools, especially in the context of the current standardization and accountability movement (e.g., Gebhard, forthcoming). In turn, these institutional practices shape teachers' pedagogical practices in local classrooms and ultimately influence students' abilities to draw on multiple ways of making meaning as they learn to read, write, and critique increasingly dense disciplinary texts across grade levels and content areas. Second, this paper provides an illustration of this reconceptualization of teachers' work and student learning in action by sharing data from an ethnographic study of changes in multilingual students' disciplinary literacy practice in an urban high school. These students, most of whom were undocumented students from Guatemala and refugees from Syria, used their expanding multilingual repertoires to gain a purchase on disciplinary literacy	**Presenter Meg Gebhard,** University of Massachusetts-Amherst

| Paper 2 | Developing instructional theory through design-based research on SFL approaches | practices through their participation in a series of SFL-based curricular units focusing on English language arts, science, math, and history. Last, this paper explores the implications of a Hallidayan perspective of teachers' work for researchers and practitioners in the transdisciplinary fields of critical applied linguistics, literacy studies, teacher education, and school reform policy.

Summary
SFL is a high-level theory of language that has to be made relevant to achieving disciplinary goals in order to fulfill its promise as a resource for meaning-making in classrooms. This presentation describes features of a design-based research process that support the development of instructional theory using SFL.

Abstract
This paper shows how a design-based research process yielded research findings, materials, and instructional theory over a three-year project to develop SFL-based approaches to engaging English Learners (ELs) in talk about language and meaning. We worked collaboratively with teachers and literacy coaches at six elementary schools with high proportions of ELs, supporting them in using SFL metalanguage to engage in grade-appropriate literacy activities in reading texts and responding with subject-specific arguments in English language arts and science. We began with a theory of change and design principles that drew on previous research, and applied these principles in designing activities and evaluating them as we observed teachers' enactment. This enabled us to recognize shortcomings and return to our principles to re-evaluate and develop them further. Through this process we developed new instructional theory about productive ways SFL can be used to support students' engagement in subject-specific literacy practices.

Taking a design-based research approach offers several affordances for the use of SFL to support students in literacy development. While prior research using SFL offers valuable insights for thinking about how this linguistic theory can contribute to instructional practice, each new context of application requires that the SFL metalanguage be situated in ways that enable it to support students in focusing on meanings that connect with teachers' goals and disciplinary expectations. The presentation will report on the ways we investigated and iteratively built on curricular approaches that emerged out of collaboration between teachers and researchers. It will also demonstrate how the work benefitted from the varied perspectives offered by linguists, literacy experts, and experienced teachers on the research team. Curricular approaches based in SFL that show | **Presenter**
Mary J. Schleppegrell, University of Michigan |

		promise for further development and dissemination in other contexts will be presented, with critical reflection on the work and directions for future work proposed for discussion.	
Paper 3	**Toward Whole School Change: SFL Theory into Practice**	**Summary** The authors report on a ten-year collaboration between a university and an urban multilingual elementary school. Researchers and teachers explored SFL-informed genre-based approaches to teaching writing to bring about curricular change. A review of data will create a portrait of this collaboration and highlight implications for future research. **Abstract** This paper will report on a nine-year collaboration between a university and an urban multilingual elementary school in the Northeast region of the United States. The purpose of the collaboration was to improve writing instruction. The university researchers worked with teachers exploring SFL-informed genre-based approaches to teaching writing. Through monthly meetings and classroom support, teachers became familiar with the theory and discussed potential practices to implement in their classrooms. The researchers observed classroom practices weekly to support teachers and collect data on instruction and student learning. However, there was no attempt by the researchers to impose a scripted curriculum or check for fidelity so as to give teachers agency over changing their practices. This strong relationship between teachers and researchers allowed for an organic evolution of learning among practitioners as well as researchers. To study the impact of this collaboration, student performance in state-mandated ELA and ACCESS tests for bilingual learners acquiring English were tracked over time. In addition, different aspects of student writing development and teacher practices were studied. The school's general performance improved dramatically over time. Teachers' practices and student learning showed the impact of their appropriating this theory and approach to teaching writing. The introduction of a functional linguistic theory as the basis for changing practices had the unintended consequence of developing language awareness among the teachers, impacting their perception of the value of bilingualism. This in turn resulted in successful practices for addressing the needs of students in the process of learning English. This paper will conclude with some thoughts on directions for future research.	**Presenters** **Maria Brisk,** Boston College **Yaida M. Kaveh,** Boston College

| Paper 4 | Learning to write in science: A genre-based approach | **Summary**

 Writing is central to both the conception of science and the social practices of scientists. This presentation describes how a Sydney School Genre-Based Pedagogy was recontextualized and enacted to support student writing in a middle school science unit aimed at developing students' understanding of the nature of science.

 Abstract

 Writing is not only an indispensable tool for doing science but also a powerful vehicle for learning science (Yore, 2004). It has been shown to enhance content understanding, promote conceptual change and inquiry, improve retention and learning, and cultivate scientific habits of mind. Despite the importance of writing to science learning and inquiry, most science classrooms offer limited opportunities for students to write and little support when students do write (Qi, 2015). As a result, many students face significant challenges in writing science, requiring support in developing language resources for making scientific meaning in genre-specific and register-appropriate ways. One way to provide such support is Sydney School Genre-Based Pedagogy (SGP; Rose & Martin, 2012). SGP offers explicit, systematic explanations of how language choices present information, embed perspective, and structure texts in ways that are specific to particular genres, disciplines, or contexts. It foregrounds the role of teachers as more knowledgeable others in providing support to students in ways that raise their awareness and understanding of how and why a text means what it means and why a text is more or less effective in achieving its purpose. This presentation describes how SGP was implemented in an inquiry-based sixth-grade science classroom, where the teacher engaged her students in learning to write biographies of famous scientists as part of a nine-week unit on scientists and their careers; the curricular module aimed at developing students' understanding of science as a human enterprise interdependent with culture, society, and history. The paper presents detailed information about how the science teacher supported her students through the four phases of SGP (e.g., building knowledge and context, analyzing text, jointly constructing text with teacher, and independently constructing text), and in the process illustrates seven defining features of SGP—explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive, empowering, critical, and consciousness-raising (Hyland, 2007). | **Presenter**

 Zhihui Fang, University of Florida |

Paper 5	**Critical SFL praxis through combined teacher education and after-school program**	**Summary** / **Abstract** content below	**Presenters**

Paper 5 — **Critical SFL praxis through combined teacher education and after-school program**

Summary

This paper illustrates key tenets of Critical SFL Praxis (CSFL), which fosters multi semiotic designing, register switching, and multilingual resourcing among students. After providing an overview of its use in U.S. teacher education, we illustrate our approach through findings from a combined after-school youth and teacher education program.

Abstract

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) has been used as a teaching and analytic tool in supporting advanced proficiency in first and second language literacy over several decades. However, less research has conceptualized how Critical Systemic Functional Linguistics (CSFL) Praxis develops successful scaffolding of students' multiliteracies along with incorporation and validation of their cultural and semiotic repertoires (Harman & Khote, 2017). This paper discusses how SFL researchers have conceptualized CSFL in U.S. teacher education (e.g., Achugar & Carpenter, 2018). It also investigates a combined after-school youth and teacher education program (CASTE) in the southeastern United States that was developed to position bilingual middle school students as civic agents of their learning while simultaneously training pre-service teachers in developing a CSFL praxis.

Minoritized youth often thrive in spaces that privilege the arts and collaborative research related to local civic issues (Paris & Alim, 2014). In addition, pre-service teachers develop a heightened understanding of the social and institutional issues that face their students when they participate in youth participatory programs (Abu El-Haj & Rubin, 2009). Our guiding questions about the CSFL-informed CASTE program are:

How did the range of multi semiotic resources support or not adolescent youth in co-constructing new understandings of community issues?
What types of reflections and interactions did the CSFL praxis generate among pre-service teachers?

For data collection and analysis, we selected multimodal artifacts (mappings, brick buildings, and 3D models), dialogic interactions, legislative theatre performance, and reflective logs where participants co-constructed new knowledge. To explore in depth this meaning-making and the CSFL pedagogical design, we conducted a SFL-multimodal discourse analysis of data (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2010). This integrated analysis illuminated the ways that community members appropriated (and did not) Spanish, English, dialects, and physical and visual resources to make meaning across modes.

Presenters

Ruth Harman, University of Georgia
Khanh, Bui, University of Georgia
Jason Mizell, University of Georgia -LLED
xiaodong zhang, Beijing Studies University, China

SFL-RELATED COLLOQUIA

2. Innovative approaches to scaffolding writing using Systemic Functional Linguistics

Type of Presentation	Title	Summary/Abstracts	Presenters
Mon, March 26, 1:50 to 3:30pm, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Michigan Room A			
Paper 1		**Summary** This colloquium presents research on innovative uses of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis for scaffolding writing development. Each presentation combines SFL-based analysis of student writing with other types of data or complementary analytical perspectives. Presenters will discuss ways that research results can impact classroom instruction of writing. **Abstract** This colloquium presents research on innovative uses of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) tools for scaffolding writing development. SFL approaches see language as a meaning-making resource for achieving goals that are embedded within a cultural or situational context. SFL-based writing pedagogy involves teachers working to raise students' awareness of the purpose, stages, and language features of different genres, and how these elements impact each other (Derewianka, 1990; Humphrey, Droga, & Feez, 2012; Martin & Rose, 2008). Previous research has found that SFL-based pedagogy can be beneficial to students, particularly L2 writers, in their learning of the genres they are expected to write in school (e.g., Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Dreyfus et al., 2015). Recently, SFL has been used in combination with other analytical frameworks such as Rhetorical Genre Studies (Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2016), Critical Discourse Analysis (Achugar, 2008), and Legitimation Code Theory (LCT; Christie, Martin, Maton, & Muller, 2007). However, much still remains to be gained by bridging SFL with other theoretical and analytical perspectives to scaffold student literacy development. In this colloquium, we present research studies that are innovative in how they supplement SFL text analysis with other methods or perspectives to enhance teaching and learning. The four studies in this colloquium are innovative in how they combine SFL-based analysis of student writing with	**Colloquium Organizer** Sylvia Pessoa, Carnegie Mellon University

		other types of data (e.g., interviews, think-alouds, classroom discourse, and analyses of assignment descriptions), and other complementary analytical perspectives (e.g., a disciplinary perspective on reasoning; LCT). Conducted in diverse learning contexts, the four studies work to develop instructional methods that scaffold student writers' explicit knowledge of genre expectations and their ability to meet these expectations with attention to contextual and disciplinary demands. After the presentations, we will have 20 minutes for audience participation and discussion of theoretical and pedagogical implications.	
Paper 2	**Uncovering "The Story" Behind Meaningful Texts: Understanding Bilingual Students' Intentions and Linguistic Choices for Their Final Pieces**	**Summary** This presentation examines how bilingual students developed multiple texts under a genre-based approach to writing instruction informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Interpretations of their final products for a genre were enhanced by understanding their explicit reasoning of language choices and their perceptions of their abilities and interpretations of contexts. **Abstract** This presentation highlights how bilinguals developed their final products guided by a genre-based approach to writing instruction informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL emphasizes that language users make choices given the contexts of culture and situation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Genre-based pedagogy guides teachers to familiarize students with the purpose, stages, and language features of different genres (Derewianka, 1990; Humphrey, Droga, & Feez, 2012; Martin & Rose, 2008). This study focuses on the last year of a 10-year qualitative research study of a university-school partnership. Data sources included students' writing portfolios (initial cold prompt, graphic organizers, drafts, and final piece), and students' and teachers' interviews. In addition to analyzing the purpose, stages or text structure, and language features of students' products, analysis of students' reasoning of their language choices enhanced interpretations of how students made decisions for their writing based on their interpretations of their abilities and instructional context.	**Presenters** Jasmine Alvarado, Boston College Maria Brisk, Boston College

		Student writing was analyzed using SFL informed rubrics for individual genres (Author, 2015). Interview data were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006).	
		Findings demonstrate that students' drafts reflect their concerted efforts to incorporate multiple aspects of language despite their final products containing less of these features. Appropriation of language features occurred when teachers jointly constructed paragraphs and to a lesser degree in their individual drafts. Students' decisions for their writing were also guided by their knowledge of purpose and their consciousness about their audience.	
		The evaluation of students' writing is usually based on final products using a rubric. However, understanding bilinguals' linguistic choices through review of drafts and the voices of the students enhances educational stakeholders' interpretations of students' rationale behind their development of particular pieces of writing. Their articulated choices demonstrate how they position themselves as active participants in their writing and defy being viewed as merely receivers of knowledge.	
Paper 3	**Knowledge-building in middle school ELA classrooms: SFL and LCT perspectives on classroom discourse**	**Summary** This paper explores disciplinary knowledge-building co-constructed in classroom interactions and written texts in 8th grade language arts classrooms. Teachers and students participated in structured small group conversations, joint analysis and co-construction of texts, and independent writing. Complementary sociological and functional linguistic analyses of the discourse are discussed. **Abstract** This presentation discusses the conceptual framework and preliminary findings from a qualitative case study informed by SFL (Martin & Rose, 2007), Legitimation Code Theory (Maton, 2014), and their pedagogical intersections (Christie, Martin, Maton, & Muller, 2007). We explore and illustrate how the two perspectives functioned as complementary theoretical and methodological frameworks to teach and analyze disciplinary classroom discourse and student writing in a group of 8th grade English language arts classes in the southeastern United States. Guided by the lead author of this paper, who worked as the middle school's instructional coach, teachers learned to use SFL and LCT to develop scaffolded approaches to teaching reading, speaking, and writing. Teachers then guided students through detailed reading and writing of multimodal	**Presenters** Glenn Jackson, University of Georgia Ruth Harman, University of Georgia

		texts, using methods based on the Reading to Learn model (Rose & Martin, 2012) while also maintaining an explicit focus on building academic language through structured peer-to-peer conversations (Mellom, Weber, Gokee, 2017). This pedagogical approach resulted in a data set inclusive of several small groups of students discussing similar content in similar pedagogical settings. In the data analysis stage of the study, transcripts of the classroom talk, co-constructed writing, and independent products were analyzed to investigate the patterns underlying the individual, small group, and whole class discourse. The LCT concepts of semantic gravity (context-dependency of meaning), semantic density (condensation of meaning), and autonomy (strength of boundaries between fields of knowledge) were used in conjunction with SFL-based textual, interpersonal, and ideational analyses to determine the ways that students and teachers co-constructed disciplinary knowledge, including knowledge about the curricular texts, over the course of the curricular project. We believe that the preliminary research findings illuminate patterns in classroom discourse that may inform professional development workshops for educators in the areas of curriculum development, instruction, and assessment.	
Paper 4	**Disciplinary and Linguistic Approaches to Analysis of Middle School Students' Writing in History**	**Summary** We present an analysis of the writing of 32 students from a diverse middle school as they wrote four arguments each year over two years. We show how their historical reasoning and language resources evolved together as they moved toward authoritative disciplinary presentation of claims, evidence, and reasoning. **Abstract** Our study took place in a diverse middle school as 32 students (including 18 bilinguals) were supported by an inquiry-based curriculum that enabled them to reason with complex sources and respond to questions with evidence-based arguments. We report on the ways the historical reasoning and language resources of these writers evolved over two years as they learned to weigh evidence from sources to take a position on an issue and write arguments that presented claims, evidence, and reasoning about the issue. Our analysis of their 256 arguments took two perspectives on the writing: a disciplinary perspective, using a four-level rubric to assess complexity of claims, sourcing and corroboration of evidence, and reasoning about significance and reliability; and a linguistic perspective	**Presenters** Chauncey Monte-Santo, University of Michigan Mary J. Schleppegrell, University of Michigan Ryan Hughes, University of Michigan Sarah Thomson, University of Michigan

		focused on growth in sentence variety, use of logical connections, projection of one's own and others' perspectives, and lexical sophistication. We used the tools of systemic functional linguistics, taking a meaning-based perspective related to the writing goals. All samples were coded independently by two raters and inter-rater reliabilities were calculated. We describe learning pathways into writing that emerged in this corpus as students moved toward authoritative disciplinary presentation of claims, evidence, and reasoning. We differentiate these pathways to show variation in the ways learners with different starting-points moved forward both in their historical thinking and their language use, and we identify issues and challenges that emerge in both disciplinary thinking and linguistic control over the language resources needed to present historical thinking. We also suggest classroom supports and teaching strategies that can enable students to meet these challenges.	
Paper 5	**Understanding and scaffolding writing expectations in information systems through interdisciplinary collaboration**	**Summary** This presentation describes an SFL design-based research study focusing on writing in the discipline of Information Systems (IS) at the university level. SFL analysis of student writing is combined with corpus analysis and interviews with IS instructors to identify features of key IS genres, forming the basis of subsequent instruction. **Abstract** This presentation describes an SFL design-based research study focusing on writing in the discipline of Information Systems (IS) at the university level. Recent IS curriculum guidelines emphasize the importance of writing skill development (Topi et al., 2010), and although IS faculty are expected to take an active role in development of students' writing (Pomykalski, 2006), this is difficult without explicit knowledge of features of IS genres. In this study, we present a collaboration between applied linguistics and IS faculty in developing writing workshops implementing an SFL-based approach to genre instruction (Dreyfus et al., 2015; Rose & Martin, 2012). Data sources for the study include assignment descriptions, sample texts, rubrics, student writing, interviews with faculty and students, and classroom observations. Valued features of the target genres (e.g., case analyses, project reports, and analysis of designed objects and experiences) were identified through think-alouds with faculty reading student writing from previous semesters and through corpus analysis using	**Presenters** Silvia Pessoa, Carnegie Mellon University Thomas D. Mitchell, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar Ryan T. Miller, Kent State University Maria Pia Gomez Laich, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar

| | | the software tool DocuScope (Ishizaki & Kaufer, 2012) combined with detailed SFL-based analysis of the linguistic resources in higher- and lower-graded student writing. This data informed the design of writing workshops using the Teaching and Learning Cycle (see Dreyfus & Macnaught, 2013; Humphrey & Hao, 2013).

Our preliminary analysis reveals improvement in student writing compared to a previous semester. For example, our corpus analysis shows that student writing after the workshops is more analytical and more grounded on the theoretical and analytical frameworks from the courses. Complementary, SLF-based Appraisal analysis (Martin & White, 2005) shows increasing use of more analytical language embodied in the use of a balanced use of positive and negative appreciation (evaluation of things) with appropriate use of graduation resources. Interviews with faculty reveal higher expectations for student writing. This study provides a model for interdisciplinary collaboration to scaffold disciplinary student writing development. | |

SFL-RELATED INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

1. "What's meaning got to do with it?": Elementary Pre-service Teachers' Engagement with SFL Genre Pedagogy

Presenter
Nicole Siffrinn, University of Georgia

Sat, March 24, 8:00 to 8:30am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Superior Room B

Summary

This paper discusses elementary pre-service teachers' engagement with SFL genre pedagogy in their lesson, task, and rubric designs for a writing unit. Findings show that despite immersion in SFL genre pedagogy, the pre-service teachers were reluctant to draw on language-based literacy instruction, favoring expressivist and prescriptivist approaches.

Abstract

Calls to foster pre-service teachers' linguistic knowledge have resurfaced as rapid demographic shifts and new policy initiatives (e.g., Common Core) place new demands on educators and students. While the Hallidayan perspective of language and its associated pedagogical practices are seen as a response to this call (Accurso, Gebhard, Purington, 2017; Schulze, 2015), the use of systemic functional linguistics genre pedagogy in teacher preparation programs outside of a TESOL context remains sparse. As such, more research is needed on how to prepare mainstream classroom teachers to support the academic language development of linguistically diverse students (de Oliveira, 2008). The aim of this paper is to explore how elementary pre-service teachers engaged with SFL genre pedagogy in their lesson, task, and rubric designs for a writing unit.
Data comes from an ongoing project where elementary pre-service teachers are introduced to functional language resources to support them in engaging students in genre-specific literacy activities. Informed by Halliday's (1978) social semiotics and Martin's (1999) teaching-learning cycle, this qualitative case study draws from pre-service teachers' written and visual artifacts and the instructor's field notes and teaching materials. Using thematic and discourse analysis, preliminary findings show the pre-service teachers were reticent to use language-based literacy instruction in their lesson designs and, as a result, their writing tasks favored an expressivist approach while their rubrics favored a prescriptivist approach. Indeed, despite intense training on how SFL supports variation in meaning-making systems depending on context, the pre-service teachers had difficulty understanding how grammar construes meaning; accordingly, they often dismissed the pedagogy as too structured, relying on their intuition about what constitutes good writing instead. Implications include the need for more contextualized SFL-informed praxis across courses in elementary teacher certification programs as well as more exposure to instructional methods and materials that illustrate how language and content co-construct meaning.

2. Translanguaging in Culturally Sustaining Systemic Functional Linguistics: Developing a Heteroglossic Space for Multilingual Learners

Part of the Colloquium Positive Synergies: Translanguaging in Conversation with Critical Theories in Education. Discussant Ofelia García. Organizer Zhongfeng Tian, Boston College

Presenters

Zhongfeng Tian, Boston College
Nihal Khote, Kennesaw State University

Sat, March 24, 10:10 to 11:50am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Erie Room

Summary

This paper explores the positive synergies of pedagogies – culturally sustaining systemic functional linguistics and translanguaging, both conceptually and empirically, in multilingual classrooms. This new approach holds the promise of developing meaningful, heteroglossic contexts of learning that support multilingual learners in meeting academic challenges.

Abstract

While U.S. public schools are increasingly becoming diverse, policies like high-stakes testing and English-only mandates promote reductive literary practices that effectively erase the cultural and linguistic repertoires of multilingual students (Molle, Sato, Boals, & Hedgspeth, 2015; Paris, 2012). Therefore, to counteract monoglossic American classroom spaces, it is imperative to develop meaningful, heteroglossic contexts of learning that support multilingual learners to meet the academic challenges (Flores & Schissel, 2014; Palmer, 2011).

Culturally sustaining systemic functional linguistics (CSSFL) is a pedagogical approach that works with multilingual students in actively incorporating the multisemiotic and cultural repertoires of students while co-constructing disciplinary knowledge through explicit and carefully crafted scaffolding (Harman & Khote, 2017; Khote, forthcoming). CSSFL is grounded in Halliday's (1989) SFL view of language as a fluid and dynamic contextualized meaning-making system of choices for accomplishing a wide variety of social, academic, and political goals, and incorporates translanguaging (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2011) as one of its key tenets. Halliday proposes that different varieties of language use are not hierarchically structured; instead, they are equally valid and appropriate in different contexts. Halliday's notion of equity and value of language variation validates all kinds of contextualized language use, situating language learners not as deficient non-natives, but as "resourceful" agents (e.g., Pennycook, 2012, p. 99) with multilingual repertoires and abilities for successful communication in contact zones (Canagarajah, 2014).

Both CSSFL and translanguaging acknowledge and leverage students' full linguistic repertoires, and legitimize multilingual learners' flexible and strategic language use in various learning contexts. This approach fosters a heteroglossic space where voices, languages, and registers of students and teachers interweave to make and challenge disciplinary knowledge domains. Data from a larger ethnographic study (Khote, 2014), illustrates how students switched among registers and languages while appropriating academic discourses and also challenged normative discourses related to social inequity.

3. Persistence and Co-presence: The Challenge of Digital Communication to the Oral/Written Binary

Presenter
Diane Potts, Lancaster University

Sat, March 24, 11:20 to 11:50am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Tennessee

Summary

Drawing on Bregman and Haythornthwaite's (2003) theorization of co-presence, this presentation problematizes analyses of digital texts that employ the historical oral/written binary. Three vignettes illustrate how the binary obscures digitization's impact on the negotiation social relations. Implications for research designs, including data analysis, are discussed.

Abstract

In this presentation, I draw on Bregman and Haythornthwaite's (2003) theorization of persistent conversation and more specifically the radical of co-presence to problematize analyses of digital texts that rely on the historical oral/written binary. The distinction between oral and written language continues to define multiple streams of inquiry within applied linguistics, and is reflected in the specialization of journals, research conferences and special interest groups. But distinctions hide as well as clarify, and the distinction between speaking and writing obscures critical on-going changes that accompany the digitization of texts. I argue research designs that presume either the traditional binary and/or the more nuanced concept of mode continuum (Martin, 1985; Jones 1996) overlook the impact of digitization on three fronts: a) the decoupling of in/formality and mode; b) the reconfiguration of interpersonal relations in new forms of exchange (author, under review); and c) the emergence of unfamiliar social configurations, including digital swarms (Han, 2017). Each links to individuals' changing understandings of 'being there with others' (Bregman & Haythornthwaite, p. 133), which I illustrate using examples from a case study of postgraduate students' perceptions of asynchronous audio feedback, personal communications with distance students, and examples of public social media texts. These examples, which demonstrate individuals' evolving understandings of co-presence, highlight the need to transcend an assumed oral/written binary and instead focus on issues of social relation. This requires rethinking research designs - the data collected, including questions asked in interviews; the data selected for analysis, including prosodic features of language use; and the analytical methods employed, including methods that avoid a 'lingua bias.' It also requires consideration of algorithms that mediate digitized interactions. The presentation closes with a design for an ongoing research project and reflection on its strengths and limitations.

4. Intersemiotic meanings and metafunctions among sign systems in multimodal writing: A case study of a multilingual learner's metalanguage awareness development

Presenter
Dong-shin Shin, University of Cincinati.

Sat, March 24, 1:30 to 2:00pm, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Colorado Room

Summary

This study investigates how a bilingual sixth grader employed particular modes by focusing on intermodal metafunctions of sign systems as he constructed digital compositions in Glogster and PowerPoint. The student's use of semiotic resources was analyzed through an image-language-sound intermodal framework, coupled with discourse analysis of his multimodal composing process.

Abstract

This study critically investigates the relationship between composing with expanded semiotic resources and developing semiotic competence and metalanguage in multimodal writing, through a sixth grade bilingual student's processes of designing multimedia texts. Specifically it examines his use of semiotic modes in composing multimodal texts with digital technologies, representation of meanings, and understanding of intermodal relations and metafunctions of semiotic systems. Drawing on the concepts of design and synesthesia (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Kress, 2003; van Leeuwen, 2015), the study defines multimodal writing as a synesthetic whole among semiotic modes, in a way that is appropriate to the contexts of composition. This study was conducted in the writing center of an inclusive sixth-grade classroom in a US elementary school, during a semester in which students creates multimodal texts using digital technologies (e.g., Glogster, PowerPoint, Edmodo). The collected data include student's papers, digital texts, interview data, and observation notes. Grounded in Unsworth's intermodal framework (2006) and multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & Leeuwen, 1996), the analytical framework draws on codes such as employed modes, constructed meanings (i.e., ideational, interpersonal, textual), and intermodal relations among sign systems. The findings suggest that a) the student employed various semiotic modes (e.g., words, sound, and images) in the mediums, predominantly appropriating linguistic resources; b) the student gradually used non-linguistic modes for ideational meaning beyond interpersonal meaning of texts in concurrence and complementarity relationships among semiotic systems; and c) the student's developing awareness of intersemiotic relations and metafunctions of sign system allowed his semiotic competence with various modes to grow. The presentation concludes with a discussion of metalanguage development in multimodal writing and its potential for contributing to the academic development of multilingual writers.

5. Enacting Pedagogical Language Knowledge in a French Immersion Classroom: A Functional Linguistic Perspective

Presenters

Francis John Trojan, The Ohio State University
Nicole King, The Ohio State University

Sun, March 25, 8:00 to 8:30am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Tennessee

Summary

This study investigates a French immersion teacher's appropriation of his pedagogical language knowledge (PLK) across a set of literacy events. Defined through the lens of systemic functional linguistics, the teacher uses his PLK strategically to teach students to communicate in a variety of social contexts: personal, academic and professional.

Abstract

In this ethnographic case study, we traced the ways in which Brahim, the focal teacher, appropriated the register variables of field, tenor, and mode, as well as features of genre, across representative literacy events in his first year of teaching. As such, we conceptualize his pedagogical language knowledge through the perspective of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and the associated theory of genre (Halliday & Mattheissen, 2014; Martin, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2008). Brahim began to develop his pedagogical language knowledge related to SFL and genre during his teacher preparation program and later leveraged it in his teaching. For this reason, his case is of particular interest because it illuminates the features of the language system he developed and appropriated over time and in interaction with students. Data sources included fieldnotes, video observations, interviews, and artifacts from the various literacy events throughout the study. Our initial phase of data analysis consisted of a review of the field notes and video data. We examined the entire corpus to identify the literacy events in which the instructional focus was genre or the register variables of SFL. Results revealed that, in his learning of the language system, Brahim leveraged his existing linguistic resources across a variety of languages to develop his understanding of SFL. His use of the language system to analyze his personal language use became the means through which he assisted students in understanding how to harness the functions of language in written and spoken contexts to communicate effectively and access power. The findings present a comprehensive portrait of how Brahim came to learn SFL and genre through analysis of his personal language use and later appropriated that understanding to teach students to write and speak in a variety of social contexts: personal, academic and professional.

6. A Multimodal Analysis of the Visual Resources Students Employ in their Social Justice-themed Artwork

Presenter
Cole Kervin, Florida Atlantic University

Sun, March 25, 10:10 to 10:40am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Arkansas Room

Summary

Using Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal framework, authors analyzed the social justice-themed photo montage artwork of six eighth-grade students to identify how students depicted these issues. Students portrayed themes of inequity in nuanced ways, manipulating various visual resources to project their judgment and positionality on these issues.

Abstract

Art enables an individual to interpret and challenge "'normalizing' operations of power" (Leaños & Villareal, 2007) in a space that fosters new forms of knowledge and which has the power to engender personal and social change. The manner of expression available through artwork allows the artist to speak out against injustice in covert or anonymous ways. For students, art presents a safe but powerful medium to negotiate and communicate perspectives that counter hegemonic power structures (Finley, 2011). We ground our study in Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of multimodality with respect to images, recognizing the meaning-making and interactional potential that visual resources as a new literacy affords students. Using Kress & Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal framework, authors analyzed the social justice-themed photo montage artwork of six eighth-grade students. We examine the following research questions:
What themes of social justice are communicated in students' artwork?
How do students portray their views of these issues through the multimodal means of their artwork?
Students were found to use their artwork to portray themes around the inequitable hierarchy of power in society that included representations of oppression, anonymity, paradox, victimization, judgment, and positionality. For example, much of students' artwork portrayed passive or anonymous participants being victimized by the police. Students projected their judgment and positionality on these issues by manipulating the setting and other circumstantial features in the artwork. Students communicated their nuanced interpretations by employing the visual features of brightness, contrast, foregrounding/ backgrounding, and various/multiple participant interactions. Discussion and implications will attend to the importance of art as a democratizing force in the classroom, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse students, and as a means for encouraging students to share and negotiate their complex views of society.

7. A Systemic Functional Approach to the Assessment of Intercultural Communicative Competence in Telecollaborative Discourse

Part of the Colloquium: Looking Back and Looking Forward: The Research of Telecollaboration Two Decades on. Discussant, Nina Vyatkina, University of Kansas. Organized by Marianna Ryshina-Pankova, Georgetown University and D. Joseph Cunningham, Georgetown University

Presenter
Marianna Ryshina-Pankova, Georgetown University

Sun, March 25, 1:50 to 3:30pm, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Mayfair

Summary

This presentation reports on the Systemic Functional approach to the analysis of telecollaborative chats that can be used to describe these exchanges in terms of the discourse semantic moves and their linguistic realizations and ultimately assess these interactions with regard to some aspects of intercultural communicative competence.

Abstract

An important question posed by telecollaboration research has to do with understanding and assessing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) that one aims to develop in a telecollaborative exchange. The assessment challenge has been addressed in mixed-method quantitative and qualitative analyses of student questionnaires and interviews and student online interactive discourse. With regard to the latter, of particular importance to FL educators are the linguistically grounded investigations that focus on the features of dialogic interaction and draw a link between them and the more abstract components of intercultural learning. The findings of these studies help us understand ICC in terms of two aspects of telecollaborative activity: 1) the use of particular linguistic forms by the participants and 2) the overall s**tructuring of their discourse.**
This presentation reports on the study of written synchronous telecollaborative chats held in the context of an advanced FL course that connects these two methodological foci in the analysis of telecollaborative discourse. It does so by proposing the Systemic Functional approach to conversation analysis (Eggins & Slade, 1997) as a framework that systematically links the discourse-semantic structuring of dialogic exchanges with its realization through specific linguistic resources. Thus, the approach is instrumental for combining the focus on the macro features of telecollaborative discourse with the interest in the use of specific language forms that enable particular types of meaning making in these exchanges. The presentation shows how the proposed framework helps describe telecollaborative chats in terms of the discourse semantic moves and their linguistic realizations and relate these to some aspects of ICC, like the skill of discovery and interaction, the attitude of openness and curiosity, and the ability to change perspectives (Byram, 1997).

8. Is This a Speech Which I See Before Me? Transformations in 'Context' in the English Classroom.

Presenter
Erika Matruglio, The University of Wollongong, Australia

Sun, March 25, 4:35 to 5:05pm, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Ohio Room

Summary

This paper investigates slippage between spoken and written modes in tasks requiring transformation of 'context' in subject English. Systemic Functional Linguistic analysis demonstrates that lines between spoken and written language can become blurred. The notion of presence is suggested as useful to make visible the language demands of such tasks.

Abstract

This paper investigates the slippage between spoken and written modes resulting from tasks which require the transformation of 'context' in subject English. The data are drawn from a section of the TRANSLIT project, which is a large study investigating literacy transition points from pre-school to senior secondary school education contexts in New South Wales Schools in Australia. This paper will focus on the delivery of an 'oral task' in the year 9 English subject to problematise what is really required of students when they are asked to deliver a speech based on an interpretation of a literary work as an assessment task, especially when the speech is set in the 'context' of convincing a modern-day jury of Shakespeare's Macbeth's guilt or innocence. Systemic Functional Linguistic analysis of video data showing students performing and written transcriptions of their speeches shows that the lines between spoken and written language can become blurred in such tasks. Students pursued the task using language which varied along a cline from spoken-like to written-like. Importantly, the requirement to demonstrate an insightful analysis of the text and indicate some control of the technicality of the subject appear to be in tension with the mode requirements set by the 'context' of the task. The recent development of the notion of presence (Martin & Matruglio 2013) in SFL is suggested as a useful way to make more visible the language demands of such tasks so that both students and teachers may be made more aware of what such transformations in context mean in the teaching and learning of literacy.

Martin, J.R. & Matruglio, E. (2013) Revisiting mode: Context in/dependency in Ancient History classroom discourse, in Huang Guowen, Zhang Delu & Yang Xinzhang (eds) Studies in Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, Volume 5. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 72–95.

9. Uniformity or diversity: A critical discourse analysis of Chinese public reactions to language policy

Presenters
Fang Liang, University of Cincinati
Dong-shin Shin, University of Cincinati

Mon, March 26, 8:35 to 9:05am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Ohio Room

Summary

This study examines how the Mandarin-Cantonese relationship and public perceptions of Chinese language planning have changed over the years. Drawing on critical discourse analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics, Chinese citizens' comments in the Chinese online forums iTalk and Zhihu on language laws enacted in 2001 and 2011 were analyzed.

Abstract

This study examines how the Mandarin-Cantonese relationship and perceptions of language planning on the part of the Chinese public have changed over the years. Specifically, it investigates what types of language ideologies have been appropriated in China's national language policies and how Chinese react to the ideologies that shape the Mandarin and Cantonese relationships. Drawing on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010; Fair & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) and systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 2004), this study takes the position that "social use of language and language in social contexts" reflect and construct discourses, ideologies, institutions, and identities in the social world. Data collection includes language policies enacted in 2001 and 2011 and Chinese citizens' comments on the policies and the relationships between popularization of Mandarin and preservation of Cantonese in China's major online discussion forums, iTalk and Zhihu. We collected 641 comments in iTalk, and 794 comments in Zhihu. Grounded in critical discourse analysis and appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), the analytical framework draws on codes such as ideologies embedded in language polices, constructed Chinese-Cantonese relationships in language polices, and public reactions to the language polices (i.e., attitudes, engagement, and graduation). The findings suggest that the most prominent reactions were aligned with the authoritarian ideology—the necessity for maintaining the authoritative status of one standard language and accordingly adopting a unitary identity, and sustaining unity of China against a sense of superiority found in Guangdong province. Other reactions opposed aggressive Mandarin popularization for linguistic diversity; the reactions were respectively in favor of individual linguistic identities, unique features of Cantonese, and cultural diversity. The presentation concludes with a discussion of the impact of China's language planning policies on diverse Chinese users and ways to acknowledge and support their linguistic and cultural identities as basic human rights.

10. Constructing "Voice" in Undergraduate Writing in the Disciplines: A Mixed Method Study of Instructor and Student Perspectives

Presenter
Zak Lancaster, Wake Forest University

Tue, March 27, 10:45 to 11:15am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Missouri Room

Summary

This is a qualitative study of undergraduate students' and their instructors' conceptions of voice in academic writing. Using discourse-based interviews and SFL-based Appraisal analysis of interviewees' graded course papers, the study reveals disconnections between instructor and student conceptions—and between reader interpretations and linguistic analyses—of voice in disciplinary writing.

Abstract

"Voice" in academic writing has received much attention in recent years (e.g., Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Hyland & Sancho Guinda, 2012), due in large measure to increased awareness of how interpersonal dimensions of language use influence reader judgments (Soliday, 2011). However, an underdeveloped line of inquiry is how instructor-readers, student-writers, and applied linguists may conceptualize voice similarly and differently in specific student-produced texts, a question with considerable theoretical and pedagogical implications. The study reported in this presentation combined three data sources: (1) discourse-based interviews (DBIs) with three faculty members (in philosophy, music, and psychology) focused on student papers they had graded in advanced undergraduate courses; (2) DBIs with two students from each instructor, one determined by the instructor as a strong writer and the other as weak (six total); and (3) SFL-based text analysis, using Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), of voice in these six students' papers. Preliminary results point to three complications. First, instructors and students characterized voices differently, with instructors referring more to social voices ("philosophical"; "expert," "not engaged"; "unprofessional") and students to individual voices ("this is me"; "my voice"). Second, students and instructors pointed to different textual features as responsible for voice construction, e.g., faculty to source citations and discipline-specific terms and students to first-person pronouns. Third, the participants' commentaries on texts departed significantly from patterns of Appraisal resources revealed through analysis; for example, patterns of 'Engagement' resources (perhaps, according to, might be) were prominent in the psychology research papers but ignored by all three participants. These results point to disconnections between instructors' and students' conceptions of voice and between reader interpretations and linguistic analyses of voice. I conclude with implications for theorizing and discussing voice with students and faculty in the disciplines.

SFL-RELATED POSTERS

Introducing SFL Text-Based Research and Teaching in Japanese EFL Classrooms

Presenter

Akiko Nagao, Ryukoku University

Sat, March 24, 2:40 to 4:10pm, Sheraton Grand Chicago, River Exhibit B

Summary

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, Martin's (2009) genre approach, and Feez's (1998) learning cycle are applied to investigate how 14 EFL learners become experts at genre understanding and meaning-making choices (Mickan, 2013; 2017) when instantiating argumentative genre texts over a semester-long course. Learners' developmental changes and genre awareness were analyzed.

Abstract

This research investigates how 14 novice EFL learners in a community of practice (CoP) became experienced learners by participating in Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) text-based writing lessons for one semester in a Japanese higher education context.
Regarding teaching framework, Halliday's SFL, the pedagogical implications of Martin's (2009) genre approach, and Feez's (1998) learning cycle were applied. Learners' genre understanding and meaning-making choices (Mickan, 2013; 2017) when instantiating written texts in the argumentative genre were studied. SFL-based English writing classes are a top-down system involving lexicogrammar resources according to the "goal" of linguistic activity (Nishijo, 2017) while English education in Japan has been a bottom-up system involving vocabulary and grammar (Nishijo, 2017). First, learners' developmental changes were analyzed using (1) pre- and post-instructional tasks of writing argumentative genre texts and (2) pre and post survey (Deng, Yang & Varaprasad, 2014). Second, learners' genre awareness (understanding of genres texts and their English proficiencies) was analyzed employing in-depth qualitative analysis of their self-reflection on genre analysis (genre structures and language features) on their peers' argumentative essays. Grounded Theory approach and co-occurrence network analysis by KH Coder software were applied regarding frequency counting.
Overall, the learners' incomprehension of the genre's archetypal characters and their negligible conceptualization of an appropriate explanation-genre written text were apparent in their pre-writing task performances. However, peer analysis of learners' post-instructional tasks revealed that most of them began to explore ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings of the argumentative genre texts. These results implied that changes in genre awareness and knowledge affected their lexicogrammatical choices. This particular study's findings provided significant implications for EFL writing pedagogy in a classroom CoP. The process of genre learning with the SFL framework enhanced writers' awareness of textual meanings and refined their knowledge regarding genre functions in these texts.

SFL-RELATED ROUNDTABLES

1. Genre Analysis of Rhetorical Analysis Corpus

Presenter
Michael Maune, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana

With
Amanda Ritter-Maggio, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana
Ashli Dykes, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana
Jason Chism, University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana

Mon, March 26, 10:10 to 10:40am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Superior Room A

Summary

While many college students write rhetorical analyses, studies empirically examining rhetorical analysis as a genre are limited and do not focus on the language. In order to understand this genre, this study examines publicly-available texts of the rhetorical analysis genre and analyzes them from a Systemic Functional Linguistic perspective.

Abstract

One of the goals of first-year college composition courses (FYC) is to prepare students for critically analyzing a text and presenting that analysis in a standard, academic genre. Many approaches have been developed to accomplish this goal; one of the most common is assigning a rhetorical analysis paper. In a rhetorical analysis, a writer selects a persuasive text and argues whether the text is rhetorically effective for its audience and explains why. While this is a standard genre taught in FYC, studies empirically examining rhetorical analysis as a genre are limited and do not focus on the language of rhetorical analysis (e.g. Bazerman & Prior, 2004). In order to understand this genre—its context, structure, linguistic features, and purpose—this study examines publicly-available model texts of the rhetorical analysis genre and analyzes them from a Systemic Functional Linguistic perspective, based on Martin & Rose's (2008) framework. This analysis begins with a provisional genre model and aims to refine the genre model, expanding it with an understanding of how linguistic features construe the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings of rhetorical analysis. It examines both professional and educational samples of the genre to develop an understanding of the role social context plays in shaping language choices. The ultimate goal of the study is to inform and improve instruction of the genre so that language, structure, goal, and social context are accurately and appropriately taught to students writing rhetorical analyses.

2. Reconsidering the five-paragraph essay

Presenter

Ernesto Hernandez

Mon, March 26, 10:10 to 10:40am, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Superior Room A

Summary

Far from useless, the five-paragraph essay's fundamental structure of introduction, body, and conclusion provides an excellent framework for developing students' writing skills. Using methods from SFL, in particular Schleppegrell's approaches, the presenter will argue how linking careful discourse analysis of reading material with writing tasks can lead to better writing.

Abstract

The traditional five-paragraph essay has fallen out of favor. Used uncreatively and passively, it can indeed be boring, stilted, and uninspiring. However, the essay's basic framework of introduction, body, and conclusion and its accompanying micro-components (hooks, counterarguments, examples, etc.) have a long rhetorical and literary history, forming the backbone to any good piece of writing in virtually any written genre in English. Lest we forget this, the presenter will show evidence of this in samples of contemporary written material such as school textbooks, advertisements and commercials, online product reviews, and scientific reports. The presenter will argue that teachers can better serve students by linking their writing work in the classroom with careful discourse analysis of good reading material. As students become good decoders of the features of any good piece of writing (whether it be a newspaper article, textbook chapter, or short story), they can replicate and creatively incorporate these real-world techniques in their own essay writing. No conscientious teacher would argue that students should robotically fit their ideas into five uninspiring paragraphs, but by learning to recognize, analyze, and slowly replicate various writing techniques from good reading sources, teachers can guide students into formulating their own creative essays with better and more-compelling introductions, bodies, and conclusions. The presenter will argue and show how pedagogical approaches from Systemic Functional Linguistics, and in particular the works of Schleppegrell (2004, 2008, 2013) can be used to achieve these goals. Long from being useless, the presenter will show how the five-paragraph essay is alive and well and can still provide a constructive and exploitable framework for writing instruction.

3. Race and Equity Issues: Black Youth Express Their Views through Multimodal Semiotics

Presenter
Jason Mizell, The University of Georgia – LLED

Mon, March 26, 3:00 to 3:30pm, Sheraton Grand Chicago, Huron Room

Summary

This discourse analysis study of an Art!YPAR project explored how minoritized youth needed access to Critical SFL praxis (CSFLP), that was not only culturally sustaining but that also promoted a critical examination of hegemonic discourse. Using CSFLP and humanizing pedagogy, minoritized students could effectively name and call out discrimination.

Abstract

This paper investigates an art-inspired Youth Participatory Action Research Project in a high-poverty school in the southeastern US. Specifically, it explores the impact of the project on four young black girls and examines reflexively how a black researcher could/n't connect with them through use of humanizing pedagogy (del Carmen Salazar, 2013). Informed by Critical SFL Praxis (Harman & Khote, 2017), in combination with explicit use of culturally sustaining pedagogy, the action research project aimed to build relationships among adults and youth through multi-semiotic resources (e.g., remixing and drama) and sharing of perspectives on schooling and community. Informed by grounded research and SFL-informed discourse analysis, the study explores how humanizing research (Paris &Winn, 2013) functioned for all participants. How did the approach support them in (a) engaging with their community and school burning issues and (b) supporting them in thinking of ways to address these issues?

Data collected included recordings of individual and group interviews, shared activities, and products of the focal participants during and subsequent to the study. Thematic analysis showed how the girls appropriated the multimodal resources and close relationship with the researcher to recognize and speak out against discriminatory situations in their communities and schools. SFL appraisal and ideational analysis highlighted how the girls and researcher through translanguaging, register switching, and critical language awareness developed a trusting relationship which supported them in developing a meta-discourse to share their experiences at a national literacy conference.

Implications include the importance of why researchers who work in communities of color should be concerned with teaching genre pedagogy and must emphasize how to critically use it to foster a critical culturally sustaining platform for minoritized youth. When genre pedagogy is transformed into Critical SFL Praxis, students learn how to translanguage across registers and languages in effective ways that critically challenge hegemonic discourses.