

Enhancing Pre-Service Teachers' Knowledge of Language through Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract

Students in US schools are required to make meaning from linguistically complex texts. Teachers are often inadequately prepared to create language-focused instruction because they lack a deep knowledge of language (KOL) themselves. Therefore, teacher educators must apprentice pre-service teachers in developing their KOL and demonstrate how to use that linguistic knowledge to inform their pedagogy. The theory of Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) has been introduced into some teacher preparation programs across the English-speaking world to enhance new teachers' KOL. This study examines the pedagogy used to introduce SFL theory to future teachers and highlights some of the challenges pre-service teachers experience as they explore SFL theory. Findings suggest that the incorporation of SFL theory within the course deepened pre-service teachers' KOL and confidence in using that knowledge to design effective instruction for linguistically diverse students, but that difficulties remained in transferring that linguistic knowledge to robust language focused instructional practice. Implications for teacher education and suggestions for successfully introducing the theory are discussed.

Key Words: Teacher Preparation, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Academic language.

Teacher education program standards such as the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) require new teachers to develop content knowledge of their subject matter which includes understanding how academic language works in the disciplines they teach. In spite of this demand for teachers to have a deep knowledge of academic language, teacher preparation programs in the US have not typically integrated linguistic theory within their courses in ways that adequately support the new teachers' KOL (Brisk, Homza & Smith, 2014; Gebhard, Chen, Graham, & Gunawan, 2013). To address the gap in pre-service teachers' (KOL), some teacher educators have begun to integrate SFL into their teacher preparation course sequences for pre-service teachers (Gebhard & Willett, 2015; Schulze, 2015). How to integrate SFL theory effectively into teacher preparation programs so that new educators develop a linguistic awareness and use that KOL to develop robust language-focused pedagogy is an area that needs further exploration. The purpose of this article is to illuminate the effective pedagogical practices used to increase pre-service teachers KOL and shed light on the challenges and benefits of integrating SFL into teacher education programs. Namely, it addresses the following question:

How does integrating SFL into a literacy methods class for pre-service teachers enhance their knowledge of language?

1. Systemic Functional Linguistics

The functional perspective of language introduced during the course was derived from Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL is a sociocultural-based view of language that contends that language users construct meaning by making linguistic choices and employ language to accomplish tasks in particular contexts (Halliday & Hasan, 1989).

In contrast to traditional views of language and grammar that view language as a decontextualized set of rules to be followed absolutely, SFL proposes that grammar is a semiotic resource that helps language users construct meaning by making linguistic choices that “operate simultaneously at the phonological, lexical, and discourse levels depending on the cultural context in which meaning is negotiated” (Gebhard, Chen & Gunawan, 2014, p. 3). These aspects of language can be analyzed to make visible the ways that language functions to shape and respond to context by articulating experience, negotiating relationships, and establishing the information flow (Gebhard & Willett, 2015).

1.1. Context

Context plays an integral part in SFL theory because SFL purport that without context language is considered devoid of meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Context operates on two corresponding semiotic planes: the context of culture and the context of situation. Context of culture embodies the potential pathways for socially-recognizable meaning exchange. It serves as a virtual “catalog of genres that we can choose from to accomplish tasks in a particular culture” (Schulze, 2015, p. 4). Alternatively, context of situation represents the more immediate atmosphere in which a text is instantiated. These two concepts of culture are not dichotomous viewpoints but instead form complementary and corresponding semiotic resources that ultimately influence the construction of meaning.

1.2 Register

To analyze the linguistic components of the context of situation, Halliday and other systemic functional linguists re-conceptualized and expanded upon Reid’s existing theory of *register* (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Lukin, Moore, Herke, Wegener, & Wu, 2011; Reid, 1956). Three linguistic elements compose register: field, tenor and mode. *Field* concerns the content of the text and how social realities are constructed through language. Linguists look to three primary elements of the clause when denoting the field: *processes*, *participants*, and *circumstances*. These components correspond broadly to the traditional grammatical terms of verbs, nouns, and adverbs. Serving as the central component of a clause, processes denote external, observable, actions which may be categorized as material, behavioral or verbal or internal less observable actions represented by mental processes. These processes may indicate tense (past, present, continuous, etc.) or may occur in the “timeless present” tense such as the base form of a verb (Run/Play) or to indicate something that happens with regularity, such as “It snows a lot in winter in Boston.” *Participants* may be defined as who or what takes part in the action or process within the clause. *Circumstances* describe the process by adding information related to such factors as time, manner, or location. Table 1 below illustrates the components of field and their corresponding functions as realized in the following clause: *Preservice teachers learned to use SFL during the semester.*

Table 1: Elements of Field Represented in the Clause

Clause	Pre-service teachers	learned to use SFL	during the semester
Elements of field in the clause	Participants	Process	Circumstance
Element’s function within the clause	Defines who or what is involved in the action.	Denotes an internal action using a mental process.	Describes the process, in this case duration of the process.

Tenor is the second element of register. Tenor concerns the linguistic construction of interpersonal relationships including negotiating power, showing affinity for objects, and connecting with others. To negotiate power within a linguistic exchange, interlocutors make specific linguistic choices. These linguistic choices are often realized by elements of *mood*, the varying clause types such as interrogative, imperative or declarative. For instance, the clause presented in Table 1 exemplifies a declarative mood which alternatively could have been constructed as the interrogative, “Did pre-service teachers learn to use SFL during the semester?” Such a shift in clause type would create an interaction between reader and writer by directly addressing the reader and thus illustrates how a mood shift would alter the tenor of a text. To show affinity, language users make choices related to the appraisal value (Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal value indicates one’s stance or attitude towards the participant or process. If the clause above were restated as, “Students understood the importance of systemic functional linguistics during the semester” it would convey the language user’s positive attitude toward SFL.

Mode comprises the third element of register. Language users achieve discursive cohesion and coherence by employing modal resources depending upon whether the text is realized in writing or face-to-face conversation. For example, a written text often requires cohesive devices such as temporal connectors and conjunctions to manage the cohesive flow of the text (Thompson, 2013). In contrast, interlocutors engaged in a face-to-face conversation may construct meaning without these specific linguistic markers of cohesion because they share a context that does not require explicit reference to shared contextual factors.

1.3 Genre

As the language features and discourse patterns of particular registers are formulated and used with regularity they become recognized as genres (Martin & Rose, 2008). Martin defines genre as a “staged, goal-oriented, social process” (Martin, Christie, & Rothery, 1987, p. 59). Genres are considered staged because they traverse particular steps to accomplish their purpose, goal-oriented because language users will go through each of the steps systematically to its end, and a social process because language users engage with other language users during the interaction.

2. Literature Review: Using SFL to Develop Teachers’ KOL

2.2 SFL and Teacher Education in Australia

A review of recent literature reveals a gap in the literature surrounding effective pedagogical practices to develop pre-service teachers’ knowledge of language. Some notable exceptions exist, particularly in recent studies focusing on teacher preparation in Australia (Fenwick, Endicott, Quinn, & Humphrey, 2014; Fenwick, Humphrey, Quinn, & Endicott, 2014). These studies indicate success in integrating SFL into teacher preparation programs to support pre-service teachers’ linguistic knowledge development. Fenwick, Humphrey, Quinn and Endicott (2014) found that through a 12-week unit on educational linguistics that included tutorials, weekly readings, closed-book text analysis and lectures pre-service teachers were increasingly able to apply a deep linguistic knowledge when analyzing the linguistic features of academic texts. Pre-service teachers participating in the study had increased confidence in identifying the stages and language features of genres found in school but still struggled with applying with making claims regarding how the language of the text helped accomplish the text’s purpose (Fenwick, Humphrey, Quinn & Endicott, 2014).

2.3 SFL and Teacher Education in the United States

In the US, a recent call for increasing the disciplinary linguistic knowledge of new teachers has resulted in several studies examining the use of SFL within teacher education programs. Programs such as ACCELA (Assessing Critical Content for English Language Acquisition) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (Gebhard, Chen, & Britton, 2014; Gebhard, Chen, Graham & Gunawan, 2013) and Teaching Academic Language in the Content Areas (TACLA) (Brisk, 2014; Brisk, Homza & Smith, 2014; Brisk & Ossa-Parra, In press) at Boston College, as have detailed the collaborative research endeavors of educational linguists and teachers of linguistically diverse students in urban schools. These studies have indicated that integration of SFL theory within collaborative professional development opportunities between educational linguists and teachers has resulted in teachers increasing their facility to design more robust language-focused instruction. The studies have also indicated that as a result of the increased metalinguistic awareness of their teachers, linguistically diverse students have learned to engage more critically with language (Gebhard, Harman & Seger, 2007; O’Halloran, Palinscar, & Schleppegrell, 2016; Schulze, 2011). Whereas these studies focus on changes in student texts as a result of SFL-based genre pedagogy, there is a need for greater exploration of the pedagogical practices of the teacher preparation classroom that contribute to pre-service teachers developing an understanding of SFL theory and its application to their future practice. The intention of this article is to explore how SFL was integrated into a pre-service teaching context and discuss some of the most pertinent ways this theory influenced their expanding knowledge of language and ability to create language-focused instruction.

3. Methods: Context, Data Collection, Data Analysis

3.1 Research Context

The course in which this study took place was an introductory course in literacy methods in a teacher preparation program at a four-year college in the western United States. Two sections of the course were offered, one in the day and one in the evening. The course was open to pre-service teachers and future speech pathologists. Although the course was an upper-level division course, it served as an introduction to the theories and instructional practices related to early literacy learning in K-3 contexts.

The course was a three-credit, four hundred level course that fulfilled a literacy education requirement of the teacher preparation program and an elective for speech pathology majors. The class met in person once a week for approximately three hours for the duration of a 16-week semester. The study was six weeks in duration beginning at the fourth week of the term.

3.2 Participants

The two sections of the course had a total of 46 students enrolled. The majority of the course participants were third and fourth year undergraduates or post baccalaureate students pursuing elementary teacher certification (N=29) or licensure in speech pathology (N=17). A number of the participants had some experience substitute teaching (N=21). A number of participants also cited Spanish as their first language (N=11). Participants' ages ranged from 19-54 years old.

3.3 Research Approach, Data Collection and Data Analysis

The study employed an action research approach in which the problem of developing knowledge of language among pre-service teachers in teacher preparation programs was identified and instructional practices using SFL to support teachers' linguistic knowledge in a teacher preparation context was explored (Burns, 2009). To inform the guiding research question of this study, qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed. Data collection methods included a survey, a genre analysis assignment, and instructor observations. The survey was a self-assessment in which each of the 46 participants responded anonymously to closed statements on a four-point Likert-type interval scale (*Strongly agree to strongly disagree*) designed to measure confidence in their ability to employ linguistic knowledge to design language-focused instruction.

The second data collection instrument was a genre analysis assignment completed by course participants. This assignment called for students to choose a text that was appropriate for the grade level and content area they would mostly likely teach. Participants were asked to identify particular linguistic features, the discourse structure, and language patterns within a short portion of the chosen text. Based on the findings of this genre analysis, they were to make instructional recommendations to support their future students in negotiating meaning from these language patterns. At the conclusion of the study, participants were asked to retake the survey and to analyze the text again using what they had learned about SFL to identify linguistic features, discourse structure and language patterns and again make instructional recommendations to support their students. To analyze changes in the participants' capacity to analyze texts, I created a rubric for the assignment and employed open coding to identify the changes in their analysis, particularly how they used SFL metalanguage to identify language demands and how they used what they learned from their analysis to inform their instructional design.

4. Applying SFL Theory in Teacher Education

SFL theory was introduced in a systematic way within the course over the period of approximately six weeks. I began by introducing the theme that would serve as the thread of the course and the touchstone for all of class discussions and assignments: language's role in making meaning. As each of the pedagogical activities used to teach SFL theory were introduced, participants were reminded that the purpose of exploring SFL theory was to deepen their understanding of language's role in meaning making and that each of the theoretical aspects that were being introduced were designed with that goal in mind. Making this theme visible proved valuable, as many course participants had never conducted any form of textual analysis or had any background in linguistics or grammar studies. Emphasizing this thread also reminded that our ultimate goal was not to be linguists per se, but to be language-focused educators who could pinpoint potential linguistic struggles for struggling students.

4.1 Language Buddy Activity

The first instructional activity in the class was called "Find your language buddy." Each participant was provided a short written text, typically no more than five sentences in length, printed on an index card. The texts were constructed to address nearly identical fields of discourse but differed in the linguistic choices that constructed their tenor and mode.

Table II. Language Buddy Example

Academic	An estimated 70% of the Earth's surface is covered with water. This surface water is found in oceans, lakes, rivers, streams, marshes, even in puddles and morning dew.
Conversational	You know, the earth is mostly covered in water. The water I can see is in the ocean and other bodies of water, even the morning dew.

Students were instructed to read the text on the card and find a colleague in the class with a text that corresponded in the field but varied in the linguistic features which constructed the tenor or mode. Once they paired up, they were given approximately five minutes to discuss how each text used language differently and how those linguistic differences contributed to constructing a slightly different meaning and context. At this point of instruction, course participants had not been introduced to the metalanguage of SFL, but, nonetheless, were able to pinpoint a number of linguistic differences among the texts. For instance, the course participants who had the corresponding sentences in Table II noted that the academic version was more “formal” and included statistical language to support its point. They also noted that the academic version used more “advanced vocabulary” such as “estimated.” Students further noted that in the conversational text, the author directly addressed his audience in an informal way by using spoken discourse markers such as “You know” and the first person, “I.”

4.2 Direct Instruction: Interactive Lectures and Discussion

The next part of the course featured a series of interactive lectures and whole-class and small-group discussions related to SFL. Through the lectures, I lead students in a critical examination of context and its role in influencing language choices. To do so, I began by presenting two contrasting clauses on a lecture slide:

*Once upon a time, in a faraway land, there lived a fairy princess who longed for adventure.
The undersigned party agrees to the terms set forth in the enclosed document.*

Although these clauses are presented in a decontextualized manner, students almost immediately identified the most likely context for these clauses, namely a fairy tale and legal document. I chose these clauses because their contexts would most likely be recognizable to all students. I facilitated the discussion of the linguistic view of the context by asking them *probing questions* such as, “What elements of language, in particular what words and phrases, help you know that the text is either a fairy tale or legal document?”

4.3 Group Analysis of a Lesson Plan

Following the lectures and discussion, students worked together in dyads and triads to analyze the language demands of a lesson plan found in an elementary literacy context using the following guiding questions to guide their lesson plan analysis:

1. To what extent are students expected to use academic language to participate in the lesson?
2. What are the specific academic language demands of this lesson? In other words, what do kids have to know about language and do with language to participate effectively?
3. What evidence is there in the lesson of specific instruction related to supporting the students’ use of academic language or meaning making from academic language?
4. What might you change? What instructional support might you offer?

The purpose of this activity was to heighten the language awareness of course participants. When I had taught this course in previous semesters, pre-service teachers had typically focused on instructional activities within lessons rather than linguistic analysis of a lesson to identify language demands and potential linguistic challenges for their students. This activity allowed students to work together to identify, discuss, and collaborate on designing language-based instruction.

4.4 Teachers as Language Detectives Activity

Next, students were given a teacher-constructed model of an exemplary text that demonstrated the typical organizational and linguistic features that help to accomplish the purpose of sharing information about an event or phenomenon. Students worked together in dyads and triads to identify the stages of the text and some of the linguistic features that they noticed. To facilitate their textual analysis, I provided each group member a worksheet containing definitions of SFL terminology with multiple examples of the term’s application.

After the initial analysis, I introduced the concept of register through a face-to-face lecture. I provided concrete examples of field, tenor and mode. We then worked together with an “exemplar” text of a short passage from a history book. We identified the participants, processes and circumstances and discussed how they helped to accomplish the purpose of the passage. The passage detailed a chronological explanation and my students were able to note that the circumstances of time such as references to dates helped to advance the text in time. Students were then tasked with returning to the text to identify recognizable stages of the text and linguistic patterns and features that were prevalent. They used a tool called a “language detectives” sheet developed by Patricia Paugh of the University of Massachusetts Boston that I modified by adding specific questions designed to support participants in using the metalanguage of SFL to analyze texts (See Appendix).

4.5 Independent Genre Analysis Assignment

Students were then asked to work independently on a text analysis assignment outside of class. They were tasked with analyzing a text that they would most likely use in the grade and content area they wanted to teach. They were asked to choose a short passage of fewer than four paragraphs to analyze. They used the “teacher as language detectives” worksheet to facilitate their analysis of the field, tenor and mode using elements of register we identified in class. They were encouraged to use class notes and resources to facilitate their analysis. The assignment required that they summarize and synthesize the language patterns they noted through the SFL analysis make recommendations as to how they would potentially make those language patterns visible to their students.

5. Discussion

The study uncovered a number of challenges and benefits of integrating SFL into a course within a teacher preparation course sequence. Results of a survey given at the conclusion of the SFL instruction as well as the genre analysis assignment indicated that course participants’ knowledge of language was generally positively influenced. Results of the survey indicated that while all aspects of knowledge of language probed by the survey showed increases, the most significant impact of introducing SFL occurred in course participants’ ability to identify and understand the academic language demands of their content areas. Ninety-six percent (N=44) of participant responded affirmatively to question two on the survey which was designed to gauge their confidence in identifying linguistic features of the texts in their content area. A positive impact was also noted in question 4 which asked participants whether they understood how to analyze the academic language demands of texts. Ninety-one percent of responses indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with that statement (N=42), and increase of approximately 52% from the previous survey.

Examination of the genre analysis assignment supported these responses. For instance, many of the students were able to use SFL metalanguage to pinpoint specific aspects of the register of texts they chose to analyze. For instance, students explicitly identified text participants in greater number and also made use of SFL terminology to identify examples of “timeless present” processes and words and phrases indicating elements of appraisal. In a number of responses to the portion of the assignment in which participants were asked to identify particular language demands of the text that they learned from their analysis, participants identified particular language patterns in the text and discuss how those language patterns contributed to the purpose of the text. For example, one course participant analyzed an informational text designed for young readers about airplanes and noted that the use of relational processes helped the author to define different kinds of airplanes. She concluded that the “relational process helped to convey a comparison and contrast between the airplanes in the text.” Frequently, however, participants were not able to incorporate what they had learned from their linguistic analysis into their proposed instructional activities. In fact, many students concluded that the discipline specific terminology in informational texts or vocabulary in narratives would be the most challenging aspect of the text for students. While lexical aspects of texts often challenge readers, they are not the only challenge students face. Teachers will need to help students identify language patterns and discourse structure and design instruction to help students understand how those aspects of language contribute to meaning within the text and help authors accomplish the purpose of the particular genre.

Open-ended responses included within the post survey also indicated potential challenges in introducing SFL pedagogy in teacher education classes. The significant challenges students indicated included time, terminology and relevance.

5. 2 Time

Many course participants indicated that time was a significant factor that had both negative and positive consequences on their learning. They recognized that there was a significant amount of linguistic theory introduced in a relatively short amount of instructional time. Having a limited time to process, work with examples, and think of questions made the large amount of new SFL grammatical terminology difficulty for participants to appreciate. Conversely, course participants also identified the time used to introduce components of SFL theory, with a week dedicated to examining each of the aspects of register, as being very beneficial. Participants noted that having an entire class and one week to focus on each aspect of register allowed participants time to digest the theory and practice applying the theory to whole texts and clause analysis. Challenges related to terminology and time were related. Students felt that there was a lot of terminology introduced at once.

Participants appreciated that I provided a worksheet during the language detective activity that defined each SFL term and included multiple corresponding examples of the term in context. One student commented, “It was helpful as a guide. I think rote memorization of those terms is not necessary but the template that incorporates those terms was valuable when beginning to analyze texts.” The terminology sheet served as an effective tool to provide course participants the instructional support they needed until the terms could be independently applied.

5.3 Relevance

The final significant prevailing theme evident in student responses to the open-ended survey questions was the “elephant in the room” of all teacher preparation instruction: relevance. As a former classroom teacher, I value the ability to communicate the relevance of subject matter to my students because I know that doing so significantly deepens the impact of learning. In spite of my frequent attempts and recognizable passion for the subject matter noted by several student responses, SFL’s relevance concerned students, although not in a completely detrimental way. One student noted, “The SFL concept was extremely challenging, it made me look at texts in a whole new way. I suppose I am not too sure how it fits with what I’ll be teaching kids, but it did help me understand how to bring a linguistic magnifying lens to texts.” Developing a novel way of examining and understanding texts was the purpose of the project, yet the subsequent application to pedagogical practice needed to be further emphasized throughout the course.

6. Implications for Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

New teachers need ways to develop their linguistic knowledge so that they may transfer that knowledge into robust language-focused instruction. Teacher educators must apprentice new teachers into developing linguistic awareness through language-focused teacher education. A number of the activities outlined in this article proved to be fruitful in developing linguistic knowledge in new teachers. The theory of SFL is an important tool in that endeavor. How successfully that theory is taken up by new teachers depends greatly on how teacher educators integrate SFL into their teacher preparation classes. Suggestions for incorporating SFL theory include:

1. Use an “I do, we do, you do” instructional model to introduce the aspects of register. Textual analysis is most likely a new practice for teacher candidates; therefore, the instructor must clearly demonstrate how to use the terms to analyze texts, then work together with the whole class to conduct group textual analysis, before course participants can do so independently. Group analysis also builds students confidence in thinking with a language-focus and allows students to practice a model of textual analysis they will want to incorporate in their own classroom.
2. Provide a “cheat sheet.” Students mentioned that it was a valuable tool in understanding the metalanguage of SFL. Encourage the students to use the terminology sheet frequently and interactively and add their own examples as the “play” with texts so that the sheet includes examples that are relevant to them.
3. Underscore the relevance of textual analysis by emphasizing to future educators that they are not learning to analyze texts for analysis sake; they are conducting textual analysis to develop a deep knowledge of language that will improve their teaching practice. Teachers who know about language are better prepared to pinpoint the potential linguistic challenges their students may face, and to construct language-focused lessons that help students make meaning for the linguistically complex texts students engage with in school. Furthermore, new teachers will be evaluated based on the performance of all their students, including struggling readers and English language learners, so having a knowledge base to construct language-based instruction will benefit them professionally.
4. Last, position yourself as educational linguist rather than a theoretical linguist. Knowing about language does not mean teachers need to know *everything* about language. We can make errors and have different interpretations of our SFL analysis of texts. My only “rule” for our whole-class discussions was that we would use SFL metalanguage to the best of our ability when presenting and discussing results of our analysis. Higher order thinking is enriched by SFL theory and can make teacher preparation classes engaging and language focused.

Appendix: Language Detectives Worksheet

Name:

Date:

TEACHERS AS LANGUAGE DETECTIVES! Analyzing the Language of Informational Texts

Directions: Use this set of questions to guide your analysis of the text. This activity should take you no more than 30 minutes in a group.

Language Features	Examples
<p>Field:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who or what are the participants involved in the text? Are they typically generalized participants (rocks, problems, planets, etc.)? What kind of processes (verbs/ action words) do you notice in the text? For example, are there mostly material (action) verbs or mental (internal) processes? What is the tense of most of the processes (verbs)? Timeless present? Past? Timeless present: Plants <i>need</i> sunlight to grow. Photosynthesis <i>allows</i> plants to convert sunlight to energy. Automobiles and other forms of transportation often <i>rely</i> on fuel for power. Past: George Washington <i>was</i> a fearless first President of the United States. What do you notice about the descriptive phrases and words (circumstances)? Are there words that describe the time, manner and place of certain processes? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Response: Response: Response: Response:
<p>Tenor:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What language resources does the author use to make connections or interact with the reader? Does the text contain discipline specific terminology? Give examples. Appraisal: Does the author use language to convey judgment or evaluate actions? If so how? Are sentences mainly declarative or interrogative? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Response: Response: Response: Response:
<p>Mode:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How is the text mapped? What language features serve as “signposts” for the readers? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Response:

<p>Connectors: because, due to, as a result, therefore, (cause and effect)</p> <p>Temporal connectors: meanwhile, after that, upon learning the news, in the middle of the meeting, after leaving Canada, in 1987. (advance text in time)</p> <p>Cohesive devices for comparison: le: More than, less than, in comparison to, in relation to, corresponding to, compared to, compared with, like, as, unlike</p> <p>2. What graphic features are present, if any? (graphs, charts, keys, maps, illustrations)</p> <p>3. How are connector words or phrases that are used to show a sequence of events, comparison/contrast, cause and effect?</p> <p>4. How are pronouns used? [are they used to help extend and explain?]</p> <p>5. Is there any use of repetition?</p>	<p>2. Response</p> <p>3. Response:</p> <p>4. Response:</p> <p>5. Response:</p>
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The BIG “SO WHAT?”

Write a one paragraph response summarizing your findings. What was the most interesting thing you learned from your analysis? From your analysis, what might be the most challenging aspect of the academic language of this text that you would need to teach explicitly to students? How does this inform how you teach early readers (or not)?

How might you teach this aspect to students? Prepare to share a brief instructional activity that you would use in the classroom to teach students one or more language patterns or informational text.

Adapted from “Teachers as Language Detectives worksheet created by Patricia Paugh of UMass Boston

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