

**Editorial: Introduction to special issue of IJLS : Systemic functional linguistics and education**

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**Published version**

MOORE, Nick and SALMASO, Grisel (2016). Editorial: Introduction to special issue of IJLS : Systemic functional linguistics and education. *International journal of Language Studies*, 10 (3), 1-4.

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## **Editorial**

Introduction to Special Issue of *IJLS*: Systemic Functional Linguistics and Education

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This special issue of the International Journal of Language Studies comprises a selection of papers presented during the 41<sup>st</sup> International Systemic Functional Congress and X Latin-American Systemic Functional Congress, held in Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina, in April 2014. The theme of the conference was "Systemic Functional Linguistics and Language Education: Novel applications of well-established and evolving lines of enquiry to language education theory and practice." Some of the main fields of the congress were language education and language in education, child language development, language typology, register and genre theory, appraisal theory, discourse analysis, multimodality and multimodal literacy, language and knowledge, and SFL and other language theories.

The papers presented in this special issue reveal some of the many relationships between Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Education. The papers demonstrate both the relevance of SFL to a wide variety of educational contexts and cultures, in primary, secondary and tertiary settings in Australia, China, Argentina, and internationally, and the breadth of SFL models and approaches, encompassing genre theory, discourse analysis, teacher education, multimodal analysis and various forms of pedagogy, that can be applied to education to reveal significant insights. The reader is advised to consult the various retrospective accounts (*e.g.*, Christie & Unsworth, 2005; Halliday & Hasan, 2008) detailing the long and fruitful association between SFL and education, and both Halliday (2007) and McCabe, O'Donnell and Whittaker (2009) provide more examples of applications of SFL to education.

In their paper "The construction of the role of the teachers in academic articles on ICT and education" Lucía Zuppa and Susana Rezzano deploy corpus and discourse analytical tools to expose the lexico-grammatical means used by writers of journal articles on ICT in education to position teachers as somehow inept or 'the problem' when it comes to applying information and

communications technology to education. Simultaneously, the contrast with the construal of ICT in the same journal articles could hardly be starker, with technology often taking the role in a clause of being taken for granted or non-negotiable. Using the SFL tools of transitivity and appraisal analysis, Zuppa and Rezzano are able to bring these contrasts to light.

"Technologies, modes and pedagogic potential in live versus online lectures" by Sue Hood and Jo Lander examines the differences between recorded, online lectures and the same lecture experienced live. While many universities may promote the transfer to online lectures as little more than leveraging new technologies, this paper reveals the significant differences in meaning-making resources across the two modes. The analysis reveals that across the three metafunctions - ideational, interpersonal and textual - clear patterns emerge that place the live lectures in the 'here-and-now' and online recordings as drawing on resources that create their own context. Hood and Lander then examine the pedagogic implications of these differences.

Mark Shiu-kee Shum, Dan Shi and Chung-pui Tai report on an original study that applies Reading-to-Learn pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012) to the teaching of Cantonese Chinese in Hong Kong. Through case studies of three students, the paper reports not only on how all students made clear improvements but also that the attainment gap between the highest and lowest students was narrowed. Interviews with the teachers on the project and close grammatical analysis of student work produce valuable insights into how the pedagogy can be applied to new teaching contexts and other languages.

In "Diagnosing development: A grammatics for tracking student progress in narrative composition," Mary Macken-Horarik and Carmel Sandiford make a strong case for developing a model of grammar that can be used by teachers and students in primary schools to diagnose, assess and develop the wide variety of writing samples that teachers come across. As part of a wider project to translate a functional and metafunctional understanding of language into pedagogic action, the paper demonstrates how multilevel and multidimensional criteria were implemented.

Maria Susana Gonzalez's paper, "Discussion and challenge: Linguistic resources", reveals the different meaning-making resources used in the abstracts and introductions of discussion papers and challenge papers. The aim of the corpus and grammatical analyses in the paper is to provide guidance to students who are required to read such papers in a foreign language in their undergraduate studies and offer them access to meanings by making generic structure and lexical choices explicit.

The editors would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the contributors to

this volume for their commitment to this publication and for their patience and generosity during the editing process. They would also like to thank the editor and board of IJLS for the opportunity to share the work of these authors in these special issues of the journal.

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