



The 2025 ASFLA Conference – SFL in Dialogue for a Dynamic Future

December 3, 4 and 5, 2025
University of South Australia
City West Campus

The 2025 ASFLA conference – *SFL in Dialogue for a Dynamic Future* – invites scholars, educators, and practitioners to explore the evolving role of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in addressing the complex challenges of our rapidly changing world. At the heart of this conference theme is dialogue: dialogue across disciplines, cultures, modalities, and communities. Indeed, dialogue embodies the dynamic, negotiated nature of meaning-making and reflects SFL's commitment to understanding language as a social semiotic system shaped by context.

This conference provides a platform to reflect on SFL's rich theoretical foundations while envisioning new possibilities for SFL. In particular, the conference aims to:

- Foster cross-generational and cross-disciplinary conversations within the SFL community
- Showcase innovative research and applications of SFL in diverse settings
- Strengthen SFL's impact on social, educational, and technological landscapes
- Explore how SFL can remain responsive and relevant in a dynamic future

Ultimately, we welcome contributions that spark dialogue, challenge assumptions, and inspire new directions for systemic functional research and practice. Of course, in the tradition of ASFLA conferences (and especially ASFLA conferences in Adelaide!), the conference theme of dialogue will extend beyond conference presentations. We also see this conference as an opportunity for productive dialogue in less formal, more 'social' settings, growing and nourishing the SFL community.

Please join us from 3-5 December 2025 at the City West campus of the University of South Australia.

Program

Keynote Abstracts:



Influences of Systemic Functional Theory on Multimodal Literacy and Embodied Teaching **Presented by Associate Professor Victor Lim Fei, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.**

Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) has had a foundational influence on the development of educational approaches to multimodal literacy, embodied teaching and digital play. Halliday (1978) viewed language as a social semiotic, positioning it as one of many interrelated systems for meaning making. Halliday & Hasan (1985) conceived culture as a web of interrelated semiotic systems with other scholars furthering this perspective to embrace other meaning-making resources—such as still and moving images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021; Bateman, 2013), gesture (Ngo et al., 2022), film (O'Halloran, 2004) sound (van Leeuwen, 1999), and space. (Ravelli & McMurtrie, 2015) in what is now known as multimodality studies. SFT has profoundly shaped multimodality studies, especially through the metafunctional principle, which posits that all semiotic systems realise ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings.

In this talk, I highlight three areas of my work demonstrating how SFT has offered theoretical insight and informed practical approaches for reimagining literacy pedagogy through the lens of educational semiotics, that is

multimodality in educational contexts (Lim & Unsworth, forthcoming). In the English curriculum, where attention to multimodal literacy is becoming increasingly important, SFT-informed multimodal frameworks have underpinned the development of pedagogic metalanguages for classroom use. In Australia, Unsworth and colleagues (Mills, Stone, Unsworth, & Friend, 2020; Unsworth & Mills, 2020) apply appraisal theory to examine how multimodal texts construct attitudes and emotions, offering a principled account of evaluative meaning in digital composition. In Singapore, I have extended this work to the domains of viewing and representing, developing curriculum-embedded frameworks that support learners in engaging critically and creatively with both digital and print multimodal texts (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023).

SFT has also informed embodied teaching by demonstrating how meaning is made not only through language but also through multimodal resources such as gesture, gaze, movement, and spatial arrangement (Lim, 2021). By modelling classroom discourse as multimodal semiosis, SFT has informed a framework for analysing and designing the teacher's embodied pedagogic practices that orchestrate multiple semiotic modes in teaching and learning. On digital play, SFT has informed the development of a pedagogic metalanguage to analyse the multimodal design of educational apps and video games. Using multimodal analysis, I have examined children's digital composing and parent-child co-play on platforms like Roblox, revealing the literacies and learning involved (Lim & Toh, in press). I conclude the talk by discussing the future research directions to advance educational semiotics.

Bio: Fei Victor Lim is Associate Professor and Deputy Head (Research), English Language and Literature, at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He researches and teaches on multiliteracies, multimodal discourse analyses, and digital learning. He is one of the editors for *Multimodality and Society* and an associate editor for *Computers and Composition*.



Institute for Communication in Health Care, The Australian National University Presented by Dr Georgia Carr Research Fellow, General Practice Clinical School, The University of Sydney, New South Wales.

Conversations at the end-of-life (EOL), defined as a life expectancy range of six months to two years (Clayton et al. 2007, Hui et al. 2014), are among the most challenging yet critical forms of communication between clinicians, patients and carers. Effective EOL communication is associated with better quality of life and reduced use of non-beneficial clinical treatments, while poor EOL communication can lead to traumatic hospital experiences for patients and carers, negative impacts on clinician wellbeing and increased costs to the healthcare system (Bernacki & Block 2014).

Cardiology represents a particularly complex setting for end-of-life communication. As a speciality, cardiology is characterised by high patient volumes, urgent and emergent situations, and strong adherence with treatment protocols (Fairlamb & Murtagh 2021, Long et al. 2021). Compared to settings such as oncology, cardiology patients are often referred late or not at all to end-of-life care pathways, and more than two-thirds of cardiology patients receive unwarranted clinical interventions in the final 48 hours of life (Fairlamb & Murtagh 2021, Maubach et al. 2019).

To this end, this paper reports on a project on end-of-life communication in a cardiology ward at a metropolitan Australian hospital. The data for the study are authentic healthcare interactions between clinicians, patients and carers, supplemented with clinician interviews and other ethnographic data. These data will be analysed using discourse analysis and genre (Eggs & Slade 2004; Martin & Rose 2007, 2008). I will first describe the patient journey, including the range of different interactions both clinician-patient (e.g. ward rounds, outpatient clinics) and clinician-clinician (e.g. nursing handovers). I will then demonstrate that, despite the complexity of this communicative context, there are opportunities for timely and effective end-of-life communication. In particular, I will highlight instances of best practice, with authentic examples of clinicians communicating in ways which are honest, sensitive and at the patient's own pace. These findings will build on three pilot studies intensive care, geriatrics and respiratory medicine, and will be used to inform an intervention to improve EOL communication.

Bio: Georgia Carr is Research Fellow in the Institute for Communication in Healthcare at the Australian National University and in the General Practice Clinical School at The University of Sydney. Her research is in functional

linguistics, educational linguistics and health communication. In particular, her expertise is in discourse analysis, evaluative language and corpus linguistics, with a focus on sex education, health and media.



Speaking Text in the Mediated Age: Intonation and the Dynamic Co-creation of Dialogic Text
presented by Bradley A. Smith, PhD (Linguistics), BA Hons 1st Class (Linguistics), Macquarie University, New South Wales.

In this talk, the term ‘speaking text’ refers, firstly, to spoken language use, including intonation and other vocal semiotic systems, as forming text. The term ‘text’ is often, perhaps unconsciously taken to refer to the products of written language use with its associations of monologic control, preparedness and structure. However, everyday spoken dialogue, too, produces text, but the nature of such texts and their production is different: crucially, intonational systems are essential in the dynamic co-creation of spoken text, as interactants collaborate on and contest tenor roles, statuses and relations and the co-texturing of coherent discourse that speaks to some relevant context and an end-point, a

telos. Secondly, ‘speaking text’ refers to written text that ‘speaks’: to the ways in which we (usually unconsciously, mentally) interpret writing into speech; and to the ways in which, increasingly, written language is used, as though it is speech, to engage in the sort of dialogic interaction that, traditionally, was conducted through face-to-face spoken language – with all that this implies in terms of the lack of expression plane for intonation in writing, and of the spontaneous nature of written ‘chat’ with often minimal or no editing. Writing is, by nature, mediated and recorded text – a product, in which the process is hidden; but increasingly, spoken discourse too, including dialogue, is mediated and recorded, as text-as-product rather than as unfolding, transient process. I reflect on these contemporary cultural developments – these mode metaphors in this, the mediated age – in terms of our use of interpersonal and textual intonational meanings in dynamic, spoken dialogic discourse to negotiate the direction and stance a text takes; and on the fact that discourse in both modes, though often produced as transient, everyday interactions, is thus increasingly available as text for study, critique and appraisal, and the sociocultural implications of this.

Bio: Bradley Smith (PhD) has researched and taught on the phonology and discourse functions of intonation for twenty years, across various institutions in Australia and around the world, as well as on spoken and written discourse modes and multimodality. He is Honorary Associate (Research) at University of Sydney (Department of Linguistics) and teaches at UNSW (School of Education). He also produces an online YouTube course on intonation, *Listening for Meaning*, as Dr Semiosmith.

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

	Location: University of South Australia, City West Campus			
8:15 am to 8:45 am	Registrations open Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer			
8:45 9:00	Welcome to Country Conference opening and Welcome to the 2025 ASFLA conference – SFL in Dialogue for a Dynamic Future Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
9:00-10:00	Plenary: Victor Lim Presents ‘Influences of Systemic Functional Theory on Multimodal Literacy and Embodied Teaching’ Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
Morning Tea: 10:00-10:30 Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
Room:	H6-03- Sits 43 Attendees (Law Style)	H6-09- Sits 32 Attendees	H6-10- Sits 20 attendees	H6-11- Sits 20 Attendees
10:40-11:20				
11:20-12:00				
12:00-12:30				

Lunch: 12:30-1:30 Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
1:40-2:20				
2:20-3:00				
3:00-3:30				
Afternoon Tea: 3:30-4:00 Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
4:00-5:00	Keynote: Bev Derewianka and Pauline Jones Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
5:00-5:30	MAK Halliday Prize Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
5:45-7:00	Book Launch Location TBC			

Thursday, December 4, 2025

	Location: University of South Australia, City West Campus			
8:30 am to 9:00 am	Registrations open Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer			
9:00-10:00	Plenary: Georgia Carr Presents <i>‘Institute for Communication in Health Care, The Australian National University’</i> - Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
Morning Tea: 10:00-10:30 Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
Room:	H6-03- Sits 43 Attendees (Law Style)	H6-09- Sits 32 Attendees	H6-10- Sits 20 attendees	H6-11- Sits 20 Attendees
10:40-11:20				
11:20-12:00				
12:00-12:30				
Lunch: 12:30-1:30 Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
1:40-2:20				
2:20-3:00				
3:00-3:30				
Afternoon Tea: 3:30-4:00 Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
4:00-5:00	Keynote: PhD 3-minute Thesis Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
6:30-late	Conference dinner: Roma, 11 Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000			

Friday, December 5, 2025

	Location: University of South Australia, City West Campus
8:30-9:00	Registrations open Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer
9:00-10:00	Plenary: Brad Smith Presents ' <i>Speaking Text in the Mediated Age: Intonation and the Dynamic Co-creation of Dialogic Text</i> -'Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum
Morning Tea Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer	

Room:	H6-03- Sits 43 Attendees (Law Style)	H6-09- Sits 32 Attendees	H6-10- Sits 20 attendees	H6-11- Sits 20 Attendees
10:40- 11:20				
11:20- 12:00				
12:00- 12:30				
Lunch Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
1:40-2:20				
2:20-3:00				
3:00-3:30				
Afternoon tea (might remove, TBC) Hawke Building, Level 5 Foyer				
4:00-5:00	Keynote: A Conversation: SFL in SA (led by Peter White) Hawke Building, H5-02 Bradley Forum			
5:00-5:30	Conference close			
6:30-late	Closing party: TBC			

Organising committee:

- David Caldwell
- Nayia Cominos
- Bron Custance
- Bev White
- Hiromi Teramoto
- Brian Dare
- Lisl Fenwick
- Bron Parkin
- Claire Simpson-Smith
- Jean Mendrin

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