



Consortium on Reaching Excellence
in Education, Inc.

*Your Implementation Partner
for Literacy and Math Achievement*

NABE 2018

Functional
Grammar:
Implication
for Academic
Literacy and
Text Study

Functional Grammar: Implication for Academic Literacy and Text Study

Presented by Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education, Inc.

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Handout

Credit to Cheryl Carter, Workforce Education, Texas

STORY IN FORMAL REGISTER

Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived with her grandmother. Her grandmother made her a beautiful red velvet cloak with a hood. The little girl wore it everywhere, so she was called Little Red Riding Hood. One morning Little Red Riding Hood's mother told her to take a basket of food to her grandmother who was not feeling well...Off she skipped to grandmother's house. She had not gone far when she met a wolf.

"Good morning, Little Red Riding Hood," said the wolf.

"Good morning, wolf," said Little Red Riding Hood.

"Where are you going?" asked the wolf.

"To see my grandmother," said Little Red Riding Hood.

"And what do you have in the basket?" asked the wolf.

"Good things to eat," said Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf thought to himself, "The grandmother would be good to eat, and this little girl would be even better. I must think of a way to gobble them up."

The wolf asked Little Red Riding Hood, "Where does your grandmother live?"

"Down at the end of this path," said Little Red Riding Hood.

"I will walk with you for a little while," said the wolf. "Wouldn't you like to stop and pick some flowers to take to your grandmother?"

"That is a good idea," said Little Red Riding Hood. She stopped to pick some flowers, and as soon as she stooped down to pick a flower, the wolf went running off to grandmother's house. When the wolf got to grandmother's house, he knocked on the door. Tap Tap.

"Who's there?" called out grandmother.

"It's Little Red Riding Hood," called out the wolf. "Open the door."

"I am in bed," said the grandmother. "Come in."

The wolf ran into the house and started chasing the grandmother so he could catch her and eat her up, but the grandmother ran out the back door and into the woods before the wolf could catch her. After the grandmother ran away, the wolf found one of her nightcaps and one of her nightgowns and he put them on and jumped into her bed. Soon Little Red Riding Hood came to the house. The door to the house was open. She went in and walked up to her grandmother's bed.

"But grandmother," she said, "What big ears you have!"

"All the better to hear you with, my dear," said the wolf.

"And, grandmother, what big eyes you have!" said Little Red Riding Hood.

"All the better to see you with, my dear," said the wolf.

"Grandmother, what big teeth you have!" gasped Little Red Riding Hood.

"All the better to eat you with, my dear," said the wolf. And he jumped out of bed and began chasing Little Red Riding Hood around the room so that he could catch her and eat her up. But just then the grandmother returned to the house with a hunter she had found in the woods. The hunter ran in and chased the wolf away with his big gun. Then the grandmother, the hunter, and Little Red Riding Hood all sat down and ate all the goodies in the basket, and lived happily ever after.

STORY IN CASUAL REGISTER

Well, you know, everything turned out okay for that Little Red Riding Hood. And her granny, too. But for a little while there I was just sure that nasty old wolf was gonna have them both for his dinner. That wicked old wolf with his big old sharp teeth and sneaky ways!! Ooh! I sure would hate to have him chasin' me. When Red was walking through those woods and that old wolf came along and started talking to her, why I was just wondering why her mother let her go out in those woods by herself in the first place. And didn't anybody ever tell Red not to talk to strangers! A cute little thing like her and all dressed up in that bright red cloak and hood and all, looking sharp and just sticking out like a sore thumb, just bound to attract attention from some nasty old wolf prowling around the woods just looking for some trouble to get into. And then he gets to granma's house and just prances right in there. What was granny thinking not having her doors locked up tight. Why, it's just like what happened to old Miz Johnson down the street last month. A woman just can't be too careful these days. You know what I mean, girl. But anyway, you know that granny must've been in pretty good shape for an old lady 'cause she got

away from that old wolf and went right out and found that guy in the woods. Imagine just running right out and finding him and him with a gun and all to scare away that wolf. And at least Red and granny got to eat all those goodies in the basket Red was carrying from her momma. Oh, and that hunter got to eat with them, and I guess they had a pretty good time after all. And that old wolf didn't get a bit of anything -- or anybody! Ha Ha. I guess he must still be out there prowling around just looking for somebody else to gobble up. So you be careful out there, you hear girl?

“Juicy” Language Teaching

Making Academic Language Meaningful for ELLs

Credit to Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore and Aaron Grossman, Washoe County Schools

So what makes a sentence juicy?

Historically, approaches to ESL instruction relied on watering down complex texts into shorter, simplified sentences that students could comprehend more easily. While it may have helped get the content across, it was not teaching the students the kind of sentence structure they’d see in grade-level texts and tests. So, kids would come across sentences like, “The thicker the glacier the faster it moves,” and think it was about “the thicker” (that’s an actual sentence example taken from studies done with kids), since they were so used to reading sentences that were like, “The thick glacier moves fastest.”

So, how do you teach kids sentences like that, or that start off with words like, “Although”, “However”, or have structure like, “If it were....then it would be....” and such? Well, you do it using actual text, in context, and you make it meaningful. To choose the sentence, find one that has complex structure but also that holds the essence of the text, or some really pivotal information.

The approach: It relies heavily on instructional conversations and student interaction. Basically, we start by reading a short, on-grade-level non-fiction text during shared reading (Although you can also do it during a read aloud or small group work). There are 3-4 days of different activities to dig into the article (you only do this twice a week, so the article gets spread out over 2 weeks — I recommend this over trying to do more per lesson, or trying to do all 4 lessons in one week). Beforehand, you choose a juicy sentence that you won’t use as part of a think aloud or turn-and-talk; you leave it alone because you want to leave that for Day 2.

Day 1: Word Play. Here, you introduce the article and vocabulary (about 6 terms depending on the article and kids). You do some word play, such as choosing a Tier 2 word and having kids act out the differences between it and a BICS counterpart (like, “It says the frog leapt up to catch the fly — what do you think it looks like to leap instead of just jump?”). Or, you might have a sentence like, “Sometimes it hails” and ask kids how the sentence changes when you take out the word *sometimes*.

Day 2: Juicy Day. You write the sentence or sentences you have chosen for students on chart paper. You should have only one language goal. Then you ask kids to write, “I think this sentence means...” You read some examples, and ask kids to explain their thinking by pointing back to language in the sentence. Sometimes kids will write about other information from the article, so, you will have to model more than once how to focus in on the language in the sentence alone to make sense of it, or “unpack” its meaning, helping them to clue in on terms that change the meaning of the sentence if misunderstood or removed. As you discuss it, you

can write BICS words as explanations *above* the academic language you have on your chart.

Then, you can use the structure of that sentence to create a sentence frame for students to use in their writing. This way they can see how it can be used in other contexts, and get practice writing more complex sentences.

Day 3: Accountable Talk. You re-read the whole text and they discuss it and jot down their now-deeper understandings.

Here's an example of a juicy sentence. I read a text to my class about dinosaur poop. The sentence from the text was something like:

"Previously, scientists believed dinosaurs swallowed the bones whole without chewing, but after examining the coprolite, they realized they crushed mouthfuls of flesh and bones."

As part of our discussion, after they wrote down their ideas of what it means, I focused in on the word realized, a word many of them would have known and used it to discuss how it's different from the word "know" because it tells me there's new information. So, we had to figure out what the new information was, and one student noticed "after examining the coprolite", which they said that meant they were looking at it closely. So, I got them to look and see what happened "before" and what happened "after". I wrote the word "before" above "previously", and the kids' language of "look closely at" above "examining". Once I felt they understood the sentence, I asked them to write in their books, next to where they had written, "I think this sentence means..." to write, "Now I know it means..."

Then, I had them write their own sentences using, "Previously.... but after I/they/we realized...." Some kids wrote things like, "Previously, I thought NYC was small, but after I came here, I realized it's huge." and "Previously, I thought Ms. Flecha was mean, but after coming to class the first day, I realize she's nice." (haha, had to share that one!)

You can use this to teach any grammar form you feel students need. All you need is a text that contains it, which makes it meaningful.

I Have a Dream Speech – Washington, DC 1963

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

FUNCTIONALGRAMMAR

IMPLICATION FOR ACADEMIC LITERACY AND TEXT STUDY

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR

- It emphasizes the way spoken and written language operate in different situations.
- It is useful in showing how texts work beyond the level of the sentence, how different texts are structured, and how language changes to match the purpose of the users.
- In short, it takes a descriptive approach that focuses on how groups of words function to make meaning.

FG IS A FUNCTIONAL NOT FORMAL FRAMEWORK IN 3 WAYS

- **In interpretation of texts**—it accounts for **HOW** the language is used and is shaped into a system that can satisfy human needs
- **As a system**—the fundamental components of meaning are functional components and there are two kinds of meanings—**ideational** and **interpersonal**—and then **textual** which brings the other two meanings together
- **The elements of linguistic structures**—each element in a language is **based on its function** and all the units of language (clauses, phrases, etc.) are interpreted in relation to the whole

THE 3 METAFUNCTIONS

- **Ideational** – use language to talk about experiences, to describe events
- **Interpersonal** – use language to interact with others, to create and keep relationships, to influence others, to express our own views and change the views of others
- **Textual** – use language and organize our messages in ways that interconnect to other messages and the wider context of what is said or written

TRADITIONAL VS. SFL/FG

Example 1.

Traditional grammar

His	good	friend	wrote	this	book	in	America.
Pron.	Adj.	N.	V.	Pron.	N.	Prep.	N.

Functional grammar

His good friend	wrote this book	in America.
Nominal group	Verbal group	Prepositional group

EXAMPLE 2

Traditional grammar

This bridge	was built	before the 19 th century.
Subject	Predicator	Adverbial

Functional grammar

This bridge	was built	before the 19 th century.
Theme	Rheme	

Functional grammar

This bridge	was built	before the 19 th century.
Goal	Process	Circumstance

KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FG AND TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR

- Functional grammar focuses on **the way language is put together** so that meaning is communicated for a specific purpose.
- Traditional grammar looks at language as a **set of rules for correctness**.
- Functional grammar provides **tools for describing how language is used** in varying real-life contexts. It respects speakers' rights to make up their own minds about how they choose to talk.
- Functional grammar focuses on **how language in a text works together** to construct meaning.
- Traditional grammar focuses on **the sentence** and the role-based parts of speech within it.
- Functional grammar treats **the clause** as the basic unit.
- **IN SHORT IT BRINGS HOME A FOCUS ON SYNTAX!!!!**

FG GIVES US TOOLS TO ANALYZE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

- Science texts, for example, are complex because of nominalization, passive-voice structure, technical language.
- Math contains dense noun phrases with lengthy modifiers.
- History texts contain many examples of nominalization to connect ideas throughout a text.

SO LET'S TALK ABOUT REGISTER IN FG

- **Field** – processes, participants, and circumstances
- **Tenor** – appraisal value, modality, mood
- **Mode** – theme and rheme, repetition, conjunctions, pronouns

Elements of Field			
Clause	Students	are expected to complete homework	on a daily basis.
Field elements	Participants	Processes	Circumstances
Function	Who is involved?	What is the central action?	What words or phrases describe the central action?
Modality			
High modality	All students <i>must</i> complete their homework daily.		
Medium modality	Students <i>ought</i> to complete their homework daily.		
Low degree of modality	Students <i>could</i> complete their homework.		

THEORY TO PRACTICE –TEACH ABOUT REGISTERS

1. Frozen-- Language that does not change
Examples: Lord's Prayer; Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
2. Formal--Complete sentences and specific word usage. This is the standard for work, school, and business.
3. Consultative--Formal register used in conversation
4. Casual--Language used in conversation with friends. Word choice is general, and conversation is dependent upon non-verbal assists.
5. Intimate--Language between lovers (and twins). This is also the language of sexual harassment.

This list is adapted from a list in the book *A Framework for Understanding and Working with Students and Adults from Poverty* (Copyright, 1995, Ruby K. Payne, RFT Publishing)

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS: SENTENCE ACROBATICS WITH JUICY SENTENCES

- Juicy sentences, developed by Lily Wong Fillmore, enable us to attend to three core actions:
 - Focusing on academic language and **syntax**
 - Identifying craft and thought in a text
 - And where appropriate enabling the teacher to focus on foundational skills

"**Syntax** is a word which comes from the Greek. It means, in that language, *the joining of several things together*; and, as used by grammarians, it means those principles and rules which teach us how to put words together so as to form sentences. It means, in short, *sentence-making*. Having been taught by the rules of etymology what are the relationships of words, how words grow out of each other, how they are varied in their letters in order to correspond with the variation in the circumstances to which they apply, *Syntax* will teach you how to give all your words their proper situations or places, when you come to put them together into sentences."

SYNTAX SIMPLIFIED

Noun: the rules about how words are arranged and connected to make phrases and sentences.

So now let's focus on juicy sentences. Read the article provided and do the following:

1. Read and annotate the article with a focus on the questions below.
 - What makes a sentence juicy?
 - What instructional opportunities does the juicy sentence provide?

ADD 5TH GRADE VIDEO—JUICY SENTENCES IN ACTION

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGBunYg5Iuc>

Let's Practice....

If the bison disappear, so will the Lakota people.

1. Copy the sentence.
2. Write, "I think this sentence means _____."
3. Write other things that you notice.
4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author's structure.

Let's Practice....

There are walls that hold up the roof of your home, walls that form the exterior of your school, and walls that make up the many buildings you see throughout the day. Early Asian Civilizations, Domain 2, Lesson 12

1. Copy the sentence.
2. Write, "I think this sentence means _____."
3. Write other things that you notice.
4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author's structure.

ONE MORE...

They were penned into a "Chinese quarter" – a thing they do not particularly object to, as they are fond of herding together.

1. Copy the sentence.
2. Write "I think this sentence means _____"
3. Write other things that you notice.
4. Write a new sentence mimicking the author's structure.

USING JUICY SENTENCES TO DECONSTRUCT/RECONSTRUCT

Levees, or raised areas, separating New Orleans from **Lake Pontchartrain** were **broken down** by the **pounding waters** stirred up by the hurricane, finally **flooding** about 80% of the city and **destroying** more than 100,000 homes.

This sentence is about waters.

1. **Levees** are raised areas.
2. **Levees** separated **New Orleans** from Lake Pontchartrain .
3. **Levees** were broken down by the **waters**.
4. **Waters** **flooded** 80% of the city.
5. **Waters** destroyed more than 100,000 homes.

Main Idea

The hurricane stirred up waters that broke levees, flooded the city, and destroyed.

SO INSTRUCTION CAN FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING:

- Every day find a sentence or two from the texts students are reading to use in an instructional conversation. The sentences selected should be important and complex enough to warrant attention and discussion.
- Select a sentence from the Read Aloud.
- The sentence should be “juicy” and have an important idea in the content.

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DECONSTRUCT

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state **sweltering** with the heat of injustice, **sweltering** with the heat of **oppression**, **will be transformed** into an **oasis** of freedom and justice.

This sentence is about a dream.

1. **I have a dream** about the state of Mississippi.
2. **The state of Mississippi** is a state burning (filled) with injustice (unfairness).
3. **The state of Mississippi** is a state burning (filled) with oppression (control).
4. **The state of Mississippi** will be transformed (changed).
5. **The state of Mississippi** will be transformed to a state with freedom.
6. **The state of Mississippi** will be transformed to a state with justice.

RECONSTRUCT

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state **sweltering** with the heat of injustice, **sweltering** with the heat of **oppression**, will be **transformed** into an **oasis** of freedom and justice.

This sentence is about a dream.

1. I have a dream about the state of Mississippi.
2. The state of Mississippi **will be changed** into a state with freedom and justice.
3. The state of Mississippi **is** a state filled with **unfairness** and control.

MAIN IDEA

I have a dream that Mississippi will change into a state with freedom and justice from a state of unfairness and control.

Thank you. For more information contact
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