Up, up and away! Taking off with SFG:

An investigation into the impact of selected Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) concepts on students’ writing of a film review

Author’s Name: Elisabeth Campbell
Aston University

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Abstract

Many of the ELT textbooks tend to remain with a traditional approach to the teaching and learning of grammar. This action research investigates how a Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) approach, based on Halliday’s functional theory of language, could present a different dimension to how language works. A short 10-hour course was designed to measure the impact of selected SFG concepts on the students’ rewrites of a film review. The findings show an overall improvement in the rewrites’ quality, especially in terms of their structure and use of nominal groups. The findings also reveal how this meaning-orientated approach to grammar in texts enables students to reflect on language and how it supports interaction about language choices and meanings. Implications for ESOL practitioners and curriculum designers are that they should consider this approach as another way to explore grammar, one with potential to help students understand how texts make meanings.
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1. Introduction

At a time when the Department for Education “has placed greater emphasis on the correct use of grammar in exams” (The Times, Nov 25th 2014) and knowledge of a wide range of grammatical structures is being tested in many of the newly designed ESOL assessments, it seems grammar instruction is critical for academic success. Although I consider myself a reflective practitioner interested in new practices, it is true that my approach to grammar teaching favours a more traditional approach. This is supported by Borg (2006), who documented that teachers’ conceptions of approaches to teaching grammar are shaped by their language-learning biographies and the contexts in which they teach. This can affect the utilisation of new approaches in the classroom.

There are two key factors that influenced me in the utilisation of SFG as a new approach. One was the realisation that many students in my group continued to make the same grammatical errors, despite feedback on grammatical rules, and a different approach seemed necessary. The other was interest in the linguistic theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that I was introduced to in my Masters course.

Much of the literature shows that SFL proves to be a complex and widely embracing academic linguistic theory. Much of its development has been “one of continuous expansion of its ‘territory’ in terms of theory, description and application” (Matthiessen, 2010). Clinical contexts have been frequent sites for SFL discourse analysis. For example, Bartlett et al. (2005) describe SFL studies to understand autism and Painter (1999) has applied it to child development. It has been a popular
tool for critical analysis in media texts (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2004) and Forensic Linguistics has drawn on its tools for authorship attribution (Nini and Grant, 2013). Education has been an especially fruitful area. Studies show SFL analyses to have been successfully applied to Science (Halliday and Martin, 1993), Mathematics (O’Hallaron, 2005), History (Coffin, 2006) and English (Christie, 1999).

SFL is the linguistic theory underpinning Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth SFG), and as a “relative newcomer” (Derewianka and Jones, 2010:10) in the ELT world, I was curious how this complex theory of language could be made more palatable for the ESOL classroom. As I started to explore teaching materials, my curiosity was compounded when I realised that it is an approach best known in Australia, and accessing relevant materials seemed difficult. Indeed, in an email exchange with Mary Schleppegrell, a prominent exponent of this approach, she recommended some resources, but added that they are “not easy to find” (email exchange, 6.6.2014). I found this to be the case.

For this reason, I decided to design a short course of 10 hours using selected SFG concepts that I felt could promote the writing of a film review. Through conducting this small-scale action research, I aim to investigate the impact of these SFG concepts on a small group of ESOL students’ writing, with a particular focus on how plausible it is to contribute to improvements made between the pre- and post-test writings. Student perceptions of this approach will also play an important part in the investigation.

Appendix 1 gives details of the course content, which the reader might wish to refer to before reading on. The selected concepts are:
• Genre;
• Register – field, tenor, mode;
• Transitivity – participants, processes, circumstances;
• Multimodality;
• Evaluation;
• The use of Metalanguage, and
• The Teaching and Learning Cycle.

The literature review will therefore only focus on these concepts, as space considerations preclude discussions of any of the other aspects of this broad linguistic theory. The aim in the literature review is to establish the arguments for and against their implementation in the ESOL classroom amongst the ever-changing theories in ELT.
2. Review of literature

Firstly I will provide an overview of some of the approaches to grammar that have been given prominence in much of the ELT literature and explain my rationale for an SFG approach. Next, I will explore the theoretical framework of SFG as a linguistic theory and will then explain the reason behind the selection of the chosen SFG concepts for this investigation. The final section will present some of the challenges raised in the literature in applying this approach and will position my investigation as an attempt to overcome these challenges.

2.1. The rationale for an SFG approach

There is considerable debate and scholarly research on how best students learn grammar. The traditional grammar approach, still evident in many course books, of labelling words by their class – subject, verb, object (SVO), and focusing on the sentence as the basic unit of analysis, has been heavily criticised by researchers (Coffin et al., 2009; Derewianka and Jones, 2010; Bourke, 2005). The grammar syllabus was and in many cases still is “almost mathematical in its structural progressions” (Woods, 1995:37) in which language is made up of a limited set of structural patterns. The researchers claim that this syntagmatic perspective of analysing clause types in terms of the sequential ordering of the elements (SVO) leads to a set of sentence level decontextualized rules that, according to Gebhard et al., “have given grammar a bad name” (2013:108) or have had “a harmful effect on teaching English” (Bourke, 2005:87). The theorists continue that these prescriptive rules for correct usage shift attention away from meaning to focusing on sentence
level grammatical structures and forms that can be assessed as correct or incorrect. This focus on forms and sentence level structures can lead to a course based around a grammatical syllabus that Thornbury criticises as “transmitting little McNuggets of grammar” (Thornbury, 2010).

The prevailing disillusionment by the theorists, that a focus on forms “is often inaccurate and subjective and tends to ignore actual usage” (Bourke 2005:86), has resulted in an emergence of different responses and approaches in ELT over the years. This favouring of one approach and disfavouring of others is posited by Swan (2006): “Language teaching fashions oscillate from one extreme, where grammar is given star billing, to the other, where it is back-grounded or completely ignored”. This is reflected in much of the literature. For example, Krashen’s (1982) view was that grammar is of no value, and grammar instruction is not necessary for language acquisition. Similarly, Prabhu (1987) claims that we should lose formal grammar teaching altogether, advocating that learners will acquire it naturally in their own way. Some approaches that go beyond the more syntactic orientation of traditional grammar include an emphasis on a communicative approach, a language awareness approach (Thornbury, 2001) a task-based learning approach (Willis and Willis, 2001), Meddings and Thornbury’s Dogme approach (2009), a lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) and a Systemic Functional Grammar approach (Halliday, 1978). These opposing theories with their “catchy dichotomies” (Pinker 2014:192) assume a “language war” exists within the various theoretical camps in which “at each turn, learners are exposed to new practices that are at huge odds with what went before” (Hunter, 2013:476). However, as Pinker observes, “it’s not true that if one kind of
grammarians is right then the other one is wrong” (2014:192). His argument is that they are just engaged in different kinds of activities.

On closer consideration of the different kinds of activities with which SFG engages, it seems an illuminating approach to favour. The main characteristic of this particular functional theory of language is its shift away from a focus on forms to a focus on text analysis. According to Coffin et al (2009), SFG makes explicit to students how texts, both the texts they need to read and the texts they need to write, make meaning. This has direct relevance to this investigation, where the aim is to analyse film review texts to aid the written production of this text type. It is also an approach that argues for a broader view of language learning and supports experimenting with new ways of using language, regardless of the errors that inevitably result. This appears to be a very different approach from the ones my students have been previously exposed to, and in this way holds appeal. In order to explore SFG further and to establish what role it can play in teaching and learning, I will now examine its theoretical framework and underlying principles.

2.2. The theoretical framework of SFG

M.A.K. Halliday, the “architect” of functional grammar, initially developed this functional theory of language during the 1960s (Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) and later his followers Butt et al. (2000) Eggins (2005) and Thompson (2014). Halliday’s systemic functional approach distinguishes itself by its attention to systems of language, form and function, emphasising paradigmatic relations in language, thereby “raising system above structure” (Fawcett, 2014). As a result, traditional grammar rules of subject, verb and object have no place in SFG.
This is supported by Schleppegrell, who claims “Language is a complex, dynamic, adaptive system of patterns and not a set of rules” (2014:11). There is the idea that speakers or writers choose grammatical forms from this system of patterns according to the context and the functional purpose. When making this choice, they also choose not to use a number of wordings (Halliday, 1994). To this end, the theory has an orientation towards both function and choice, and the successful use of language is viewed as learning how to make choices from varying language forms appropriate to various contextual situations and genres. It does not restrict itself to the role of individual words or to the level of the sentence, as in traditional grammar, but as Coffin et al (2009) state, it “places great importance on how grammar varies in relation to context and it views grammar as a meaning-making tool” (Coffin et al 2009: 191).

Building on the idea of language use as functional and that its function is to make meaning, Halliday’s SFG model includes three functional components, or metafunctions, that explain the main purposes underlying all language use. These are:

1. The Ideational metafunction, which enables us to represent our experience of the world;
2. the Interpersonal metafunction, which enables us to interact with others, and
3. the Textual metafunction, which enables us to create coherent and cohesive texts.

Halliday posits that these metafunctions occur simultaneously in every sentence and provide different layers of meaning. They are linked to the social context through the
notion of register. Martin (1984) another influential “architect” of SFG, added to this model genre, the social purpose, and describes how a text unravels in stages depending on what the interactants want to achieve. The diagram in figure 1 summarises this relationship between genre, register and metafunction; these concepts will be examined in more detail in section 3.

![Diagram of genre, register, and metafunction relationships](image)

**Figure 1: Metafunction in relation to language, register and genre. Taken from Martin, 2009:12.**

Much of the literature shows that this functional theory has attracted at times an almost evangelistic account of its importance. For example, Eggins claims, “SFL will forever inform me how I think about language and life” (Eggins 2004: xv). Christie (1999 :761) writes SF theory is “a social theory about social life”. Coffin summarises its significance with the claim that “using the theoretical lens of SFG helps us to see and in some cases resee language as fundamentally a tool for thinking with a meaning-making resource as opposed to, for example, a set of rules” (2010:2).

However, the SFG model presented is undoubtedly broad and complex for its application in the ESOL classroom. Research shows that attempting to understand its complexities has led to much uncertainty and contention surrounding its theory. One theorist is Bourke (2005), who raises objections that SFL is a “veritable maze which
lacks a key ingredient of good pedagogical grammar, viz. simplicity”. (2005:93). He is critical of its theoretical framework, saying “one enters into ever more delicate system networks until eventually the original metafunction meaning is transmitted into wording.” Indeed, Bourke affirms that one could “come away from SF grammar with a sense of bewilderment, hardly an appropriate attribute for pedagogical grammar” (2005:94).

The challenge, then, is to explore ways in which SFG can be given practical appeal for the ESOL classroom. The following section outlines how SFG concepts attempt to achieve this when applied to texts, and in particular, to a film review.

### 2.3. The significance of SFG concepts for understanding and producing texts

#### 2.3.1. Genre

Derewianka and Jones (2010) discuss the SFG model in figure 1, and claim that as it is multidimensional, there are several ‘entry points’ for the teacher to negotiate when considering its implementation. They suggest that entering into this model through genre is a more applicable aspect of the SFG model and one that teachers could find easier to implement in the classroom. Genre is defined by Martin as “a staged, goal-oriented social process” (Martin 1984:25) that highlights the schematic structure of a text, i.e. the staged step-by-step organisation of a text. SFG proponents consider that an awareness of genre can help learners understand how texts are organised according to the social purposes they are trying to achieve. According to Butt et al. (2000), “when texts share the same general purpose in the culture, they will often
share the same obligatory and schematic structures and so they belong to the same genre types” (2000:9).

The fact that a genre-based approach was initiated in the 1980s in the Sydney School, Australia and that it continues to be used as a popular framework in both primary and secondary schools in the UK, is evidence that it can have a powerful impact on learners’ writing. Indeed, Lee Donaghy, an assistant principal of Park View School in Birmingham is an example of a current educator promoting genre pedagogy to inform a school’s curriculum (speaker at Aston University Conference, 17.5.2014).

Examples of studies that have highlighted its use to raise students’ awareness of the processes of making meanings include Schleppegrell 2014 (a recount), Ho 2009 (a book review) and Chen 2008 (summary writing). It would seem that the Hallidayan concept underpinning SFG comes into play in these studies. Traditional grammatical rules and single word meanings alone would appear to offer little help in mastering the different text types learners need to read and write. Knowledge of genre can provide a schematic structure in which to learn features of lexico-grammar, where the focus is on the meaning of the text as a whole in context.

Despite its popularity, a genre-based approach has attracted much debate over the years from the theorists. Painter expresses the concern that the explicit teaching of genres can “force the potentially creative individual to conform to a restricting, constraining recipe” (2001:170). Rosen (2013) puts forward a radical criticism of its schematic approach, stating “it involves lack of choice and keeps absolute power locked up in the pages of worksheets and prescriptions of what to write and how” (2013:9). Bhatia (2001) offers a more middle-ground stance. Bhatia views genre
knowledge “as a resource to exploit generic conventions… rather than a blueprint for replication” (2001:76).

2.3.2 Register

In order to provide learners with a closer consideration of language choices in this text-based theory of language, it is important to move beyond an understanding of the framework of different genres to the SFG concept of register. Register is defined by Halliday as “variation according to use” (cited in Thompson, 2014:40). Halliday posits that there are three register variables: field, tenor and mode realised through their different metafunctions (see figure 1). If the goal of analysis with functional grammar is to recognise how a text means what it does, then it is believed that an exploration of these three variables can guide learners to identify patterns and to make effective language choices in their writing.

(i) An exploration of field

The field refers to the cultural activity or subject matter, which in a film review would include the actor, director, scene, etc. This is expressed through the experiential grammar, the means by which we tell “what happens to whom under what circumstances” (Burns and Knox, 2005:238). The “what happens” is construed by verbal groups, or processes; the “who or whom” includes nominal groups or participants, and the selection of circumstance are expressed through the adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. This concept of deconstructing a sentence for processes, participants and circumstances is also termed a transitivity analysis, and there are two key contributions to language learning that can be explored by applying such an analysis to texts. For example, in a film review, it can reveal how grammar is
used to show the readers the world that the film reviewer wants them to see and how the reviewer wants to represent it. It can also engage students to think about language differently, moving them away from a focus on forms and prescriptive rules, and helping them to see grammar as a “meaning-making resource” in the texts they read and write.

The teacher’s task is to conceptualise this in a way that is engaging and meaningful to the second language learner. Schleppegrell explores this in her study with young learners in school contexts. She uses a transitivity analysis to stimulate noticing patterns and to support writing development (Aston University conference, 5.3.2014). In this and other studies, she uses Martin and Rose’s (2007) definitions of processes as “doing, feeling, saying, being” rather than Halliday’s original terms of “material, mental, verbal, relational”, and shows how an explicit transitivity analysis can guide learners in making effective choices in their writing. A further example of simplifying this transitivity concept for the classroom is illustrated by Stories for Learning, a free SFG-based interactive teaching and authoring software programme. It shows how experiential grammar can be simplified for language teaching by using colour codes. Learners begin to see language in terms of these meaningful chunks of language rather than the more abstract traditional concepts of verb, noun and adjective. The “blocks of meaning” feature is particularly effective for identifying these parts of a transitivity analysis, enabling learners to reflect on language patterns and choices. Interestingly, this method appears similar to the “chunking” of the lexical approach or the “phraseology argument” put forward by Thornbury (2010), in which the focus is on phrases that are strung together rather than on individual words. It is worth noting that some aspects of SFG may not be so radically different
from other approaches that have appeared before and after it. This is implied by Swan, who appears to be critical of the claims that Halliday’s linguistic theory is in any way ground-breaking, when he says “the discovery that grammatical structures have meaning predates SFG by several thousand years as does the idea of grammar as choice” (Swan 2011:492).

(ii) An exploration of tenor

The tenor in texts refers to the relationship between writer and reader, and, in the case of the film review, the reviewer and reader. This variable of the situational context is expressed through the interpersonal grammar, “the means by which we position ourselves in relation to others through the texts we create” (Burns and Knox, 2005:238.) For example, the film reviewer has knowledge, so the status between writer and reader is unequal, resulting in a large social distance. Painter claims that “tenor is a dimension of the context that second language learners find notoriously difficult to navigate” (2001:174). This is because students can often strike the wrong note of being either too formal and bureaucratic or too familiar. An exploration of tenor, therefore, appears a significant contribution to learners’ understanding of language choices and the effect they can have on their audiences. It would seem, however, that it is not always a concept that teachers embrace. According to the research by Aguirre-Munoz et al. (2009) on developing teacher capacity for the use of SFL and academic language, it was found that very few teachers instructed students in the grammatical features related to the tenor of academic texts. “If teachers were not comfortable in their understanding of tenor it is not surprising that their instruction was not focused in this area” (Aguirre-Munoz et al., 2009:315). Another aspect of interpersonal grammar that could be challenging for the teacher is
appraisal (or evaluation). As Thompson says, it must be considered in any analysis of the interpersonal meanings of a text, because “it is the central part of the meaning of any text” (Thompson, 2014:80). In terms of a film review, it has particular significance, as the role of the reviewer is to give a synopsis of the main events to the reader along with some advice and an evaluation. There is a theme running through the text that expresses the writer’s relationship with the reader and the writer’s attitude towards the subject matter. Thompson refers to this attitude as inscribed or invoked. It is something that is not directly evaluative but invokes an attitude. He continues that this is “a slippery concept” (2014:83) and one that could undoubtedly be problematic for the ESOL student.

(iii) An exploration of mode

The mode refers to the medium of communication, whether it is written or spoken. This variable of the situational context is expressed through the textual grammar, i.e. “the means by which we construct coherent, cohesive and meaningful texts in context” (Burns and Knox 2005:239). There is currently considerable interest in the literature in multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) that is inspired by the work of Van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress and Van Leeuman (2006). They call for a need to expand the conception of mode to embrace MDA, which entails moving beyond linguistics into social semiotics, taking into account the many modalities of communication working together within a text, such as language, music and images. In this way, there are “various modalities co-articulating what is going on in the text” (Martin and Rose, 2007:321). This can be applied to a film review. Its text is often accompanied with pictures, clips of trailers, music, etc., and by transforming participant, processes and circumstantial meanings into visual images, learners’
understandings of these intended meanings can be developed. This co-existence can be used to support and enhance experiential meaning in the text that makes for an important consideration in exploring SFG concepts. The emergence of MDA, therefore, appears a valuable part of functional linguistics, and as Kress says, “the more tools students have for understanding the information in the written text and in the visual images, the better equipped they will be to identify the function of the text and its meaning-making resources” (2006:207).

The concepts of genre and register therefore have pivotal roles to play in the consciousness-raising of how a text means what it does. Many of the problems experienced by learners often stem from failure to recognise how a text is organised, failure to grasp aspects of tenor or a lack of knowledge of the field in question. It is believed that if these concepts of genre and register are made explicit, then learners can be better equipped to understand the features of a particular text type and its linguistic choices and produce these in their writing. However, the literature reveals that these concepts are not without their critics. It is the additional challenges that they present that will be examined next.

2.4 The challenges of implementing an SFG approach

One of the fundamental goals of SFG is to encourage students to critique and engage with texts. Macken-Horarik argues that SFG metalanguage “provides a powerful navigational toolkit for teachers” (2008:46) to move them towards critical literacy, interaction and exploration. A contrasting perspective, however, is that it is “too technical to be of a viable framework for teacher education” (Bourke 2005:93). Rosen takes up this criticism of its excessive metalanguage when he says of
Halliday, “he produces new terms and classifications like rabbits out of a hat” (2013:7). Even Coffin, an advocate for SFG, has concerns: “the problem is the time needed to learn the metalanguage and the issue of how much of it is useful and helpful to share with students” (Coffin, 2003:17). ESOL students who are illiterate in their own language may have their own struggles with the traditional metalinguistic terminology, and the introduction of targeted SFL metalanguage, such as processes, participants, circumstances and nominal groups, would seem beyond their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the distance between what a learner can demonstrate without assistance and what the learner can do with assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). It is questionable, therefore, how valuable SFG’S metalanguage can be for ESOL students working at lower levels and with limited mastery of the language to communicate ideas. This would appear to challenge the application and appropriateness of SFG concepts.

The issue of the student’s ZPD can result in further difficulties in implementing this linguistic theory. Research shows that it adopts the Teaching and Learning cycle (TLC), which draws on Vygotsky’s (1978) notions of mediation, scaffolding and ZPD. The teacher presents a model text and deconstructs it; the students then work with the teacher to compose the same text type and are given the same opportunity to compose the same text on their own (Rothery, 1994). The problem with this approach is that it discounts the reality of many ESOL community classes that are working with mixed abilities. Many of these classroom environments have differentiation as their focus, which often lends itself to targeted workshop-centred classes in which the teacher needs to respond to different learning styles and to teach to the student’s ZPD. Focusing on the homogenous instruction of a teacher-fronted
TLC approach rather than on differentiated instruction would therefore appear to be misguided and counterproductive for learning.

There is an abundance of literature regarding the role of corrective feedback in relation to second language development, and despite the wealth of research, there is little agreement on what type of feedback is most effective. The focus on feedback at the clause level and grammatical corrections of traditional grammar approaches conflicts with the principles underpinning SFG, in which language development needs to be conceived of as “expanding linguistic repertoires… not just as developing accuracy” (Schleppegrell, 2014:3). In his paper, Devrim (2014) calls for a supportive dialogic process between the teacher and learner in which corrective feedback needs to be above grammar and morphology, covering areas such as genre, organisation, word choices, registerial effectiveness and discourse semantics. This mediation tool would appear to focus on potential rather than on problems and is more conducive to an SFG approach and its principles. However, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) argue that “empirical evidence strongly suggests that error feedback can help students both in the short and long term” (2005:264). This is supported by Fathman’s and Whalley’ study (1990), which showed that grammar feedback by the teacher had more effect on the correction of grammatical errors than content feedback did on the improvement of the content of the student rewrites. The debate continues. However, it appears that teachers using the apparatus of SFG are encouraged to look beyond the traditional focus on single word and clause level grammatical errors.

The call for a willingness to rethink language and grammar on the part of the teacher is put forward by Gebhard et al. (2013), who suggest a need for a
“reconceptualization” of grammar and an investment in this linguistic theory (2013:108). The idea that every clause expresses the three metafunctions simultaneously and that there is a need to see language as a “meaning-making machine” can lead to a belief that it is too demanding to take up. Indeed, Ur (2013) acknowledges that teachers’ beliefs are a major factor influencing the choices in teachers’ actions. This is supported in Gebhard et al’s study which highlights the reservations of teacher training participants for implementing an SFL-based approach. Factors affecting its implementation included teachers’ inability to effect change, time limitations, the nature of institutional forces, where traditional conceptions of grammar are rewarded, and the teachers’ own language learning histories. Even teachers who have been exposed to the theory in Masters courses appear reluctant to use it in their classroom teaching. This is indicated in Burns’ and Knox’s (2005) study. They found that although SFL is taught as a major linguistic theory in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the Knowledge about Learning (KAL) the students had acquired on their MA course had little impact in their teaching practice. This is a concern, and it underpins the aim of this investigation: there is a need to make this complex theory translate into classroom practice in which activities have practical appeal for teaching and learning. Currently there appear to be few examples of this in the literature and this could go some way towards explaining why teachers, textbooks and policy makers tend to remain with traditional grammar. If this linguistic theory stays in the hands of the theorists and linguists, then there is the danger of it having little practical relevance to the ESOL classroom. Swan’s point that “it does not seem to me that SFG has a great deal to
contribute to language teaching – after all we would all be using it” is particularly salient here (Swan, 2011:493).

Another important consideration in implementing an SFG approach is that it raises questions in the “post-methods” era, which Kumaravadivelu (2006) claims is the current movement in ELT professional thinking. He suggests that one problem is that methods are top-down prescriptions by theorists, and it should be the teachers driving how to teach. Ur (2013) supports this, arguing that the superiority of a particular method is debateable and that teachers should be encouraged to design their own “situated methodologies” that are based on not only language pedagogy but should also include topics like motivation and interest, the nature of teacher mediation, classroom dynamics, etc. As a result, although many of the theorists hold high regard for SFG as an effective language tool, there needs to be a variety of principles and practices operating in the classroom that are likely to be conducive to good language learning. These need to be determined by the teacher and the learning environment, not the theorists.

From this overview of the literature, it can be seen that SFG is a powerful linguistic theory that has significance for the language learner. However, the literature raises a range of challenges faced by teachers in its implementation. Research has also identified some limitations in the ELT textbooks and literature regarding practical guidance for SFG in ESOL settings. To achieve the broadness of perspective that this theory demands, teachers need to have access to a range of resources and activities that promote and explore its concepts. It is for this reason that the focus of this study will be on investigating a practical way of applying SFG concepts to the reading and
writing of a film review whilst addressing some of the challenges that have been raised.

Previous studies show that the film review has been an effective genre to analyse SFG concepts. Er’s study (2001) shows how Systemic Textual Analysis can serve as an effective diagnostic assessment by teachers in the second language classroom. Donohue’s study (2012) examines Higher Education students’ writing on a film studies course and illustrates how SFL tools can be used for English for Academic Purposes provision. Pang (2002) uses the film review as a pedagogical genre to support the writing process. Ho (2009) takes the film review genre to focus on its schematic structure and its thematic progression. However, as Ho states, “research on the potential of STA as an interactive teacher-learner learning experience has not been well explored” (2009:334), and a film review does not appear to have been used explicitly to explore the SFG concepts selected for this investigation. Additionally, Derewianka and Jones state, “there is an urgent need for more materials for use in a range of settings” (2010:13). For these reasons, the findings from this investigation could have a potential contribution to the knowledge base of how this linguistic framework could be applied to the ESOL classroom.
3. Methodology

This action research was guided by the following questions:

1) What impact can an approach based on selected SFG concepts have on my students’ writing of a film review?

2) To what extent can this approach support interaction about language and enable students to reflect on meaning, language choices and patterns?

3) Does a Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) work in an ESOL context?

3.1. Course design

In order to explore and investigate these questions, I designed a short, intensive course of 10 hours over a period of five weeks. Pre-course reviews were collected beforehand in a timed one-hour slot during which the students were asked to review a film or book of their choice for a broadsheet newspaper. This is a writing assessment learners are required to produce for their ESOL City and Guilds Level 2 Writing. The overall quality of these pre-tests did not meet the required standards, and consequently changes in quality could be attributed to the course content. The course consisted of activities that introduced SFG concepts over a series of sequenced tasks, with a new SFG concept being added and reviewed each week. A Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) was adopted to enable the deconstruction, joint construction and independent construction stages of the review writing.
3.2. Rationale for methods used

The motivation for implementing this short course is to explore and reflect on a meaning-oriented approach to grammar in texts and to consider the impact of this for my future practice. As a programme manager, I would also consider the merits of sharing this approach with my teaching team. This underpins action research, as Wallace points out that “the main function of action research is to facilitate the ‘reflective cycle’ and in this way to provide an effective method for improving professional action” (Wallace 1998:18).

3.3. The students

The students consisted of four females enrolled on the ESOL Level 1/Level 2 course at Adult Education, Coventry Council, where I currently teach. Each student has her own areas for improvement. For example, Ellie expressed in her pre-course questionnaire that range of vocabulary is the most difficult. Kristina is Polish and continues to struggle with the use of articles. Lena is Albanian, and as its spelling is largely phonetic, she finds this area of English extremely problematic. Amy is Nigerian and has the weakest writing skills of the four students. She finds the writing process challenging and is often unable to structure her ideas without considerable guidance.

3.4. Recruitment of students and ethical issues

The students were volunteers from my class of 14 students. Information about the study was presented to the group in January 2015 to investigate interest, and the volunteers came forward. In adherence to the university’s research ethics guidelines,
approval to conduct research was applied for and granted prior to collecting the data. The study followed the guidelines set out in the university’s research ethics guidelines. The names of the students are pseudonyms. They were given an information sheet describing the nature, purpose and procedures of the research. They signed a consent form informing them of their rights, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. They were also offered the opportunity to review a transcript of the group interview.

3.5. Data collection

A mixed-methods approach was utilised to investigate the research questions. This included the following techniques:

Observational techniques – lesson notes, students’ reflective diaries, audio recordings, photographs and an observation sheet recording the frequency of use of targeted metalanguage.

Non-observational techniques – a pre-course questionnaire, an end of course group interview, students’ film reviews (pre- and post-test) and taped discussions of issues related to SFG.

The students’ interactions are important to this investigation because, as Vygotsky states, interactions help us “learn new…ways of seeing, doing and being (in Coffin, 2010:3). This is supported by Halliday, who considers dialogue and interaction pivotal for language learning (1978, 2004). In order to gather their perceptions of the approach and to evaluate how it can be used for future instruction, a semi-structured group interview was held at the end of the course.
The methods are mainly qualitative, with some quantitative methods in the form of an analysis of the pre and post-test writings of the same film review. Numerical data regarding comparisons of scores in each aspect of the City and Guilds mark scheme are considered. The rationale for including this is that it can be an effective method to support claims that any improvements have been made due to the investigation. The number of times the targeted metalanguage was used is also considered numerically.

### 3.6. Action research: limitations and strengths

When conducting action research, the question of internal and external validity needs to be addressed. Due to the small-scale nature of this study, the extent to which the findings can be compared and generalised is questionable, which decreases its external validity.

A further limitation is that the educator is both researcher and teacher, and this can lead to researcher’s bias. Barab and Squire’s paper (2004) argues that “if a researcher is intimately involved in the conceptualisation, design, development, implementation and re-searching of a pedagogical approach, then ensuring that researchers can make credible and trustworthy assertions is a challenge” (2004:10). Given my concerns regarding this, I explored the possibility of other research methodologies. I ruled out Linguistic Ethnography, because, in addition to being a participant observer, this short course is dependent on the Teaching and Learning Cycle. This requires Teacher-led input, so the teacher is not a neutral player during this process, and a shift from an authoritative figure to a facilitator is necessary. I investigated Design-Based Research (DBR), wherein the teacher works in collaboration with a researcher.
to measure any impact, but as my colleagues had not come across an SFG approach, I ruled out this option. In order to produce a credible, objective study, I therefore realised the need for the “scepticism, commitment and detachment” that good action research demands (Norris, 1997:173).

Being on familiar terms with the students could compromise my capacity to remain objective, but it could also be an advantageous factor. As the students are recruited from my teaching group, I am aware of their areas for improvements, which have already been highlighted. This knowledge is essential to not only inform the planning of the sessions but also to ensure that their areas for improvement could be considered. The selected resources in the Appendices are also a strength of this study, as they can be adapted for future instruction.
4. Findings and data analysis

This investigation was designed to examine the impact of the selected SFG concepts on the students’ post-tests of a film review, with a view to considering their implications for future language instruction. Data collected will now be presented in four sections under themes that emerged during data analysis.

Central to these themes are the three core questions that underpin this investigation. Section 4.1 considers the impact of the SFG concepts. It will examine the students’ pre- and post-test writings and measure any differences in terms of Range, Grammatical accuracy, Organisation and Activity achievement. Section 4.2. will look at the students’ perceptions of this approach by analysing comments made in their reflective diaries and during an end of course group interview. Section 4.3 analyses the students’ explorations of meaning, language choices and patterns. This data will include audio recordings of discussions and interactions made during the sessions. The final section examines the Teaching and Learning cycle and its associated activities. The data for analysis will include lesson notes and an observation sheet of metalanguage used and taped discussions.

4.1. The impact of the selected SFG concepts on the students’ rewrites

The students’ film reviews for both the pre and post-tests can be found in Appendix 2. I used the rating scales from the Level 2 ESOL City and Guilds marking guidelines for the Assessment of Review (Appendix 3). I selected this from other rating scales to enable the students to become aware of what they need to be working
towards for achievement of this text type. However, I removed the Process Features aspect, i.e. the work plan, revisions etc., as the time constraints of this short course made this too difficult to include. Two marks are awarded for each aspect, with an overall potential total of ten marks. I awarded marks 0-2 for what I consider to be strengths or areas for improvement in each aspect.

The results in Table 1 indicate that the short course was effective in improving the overall mark in the post-tests for each student, with Lena showing the highest gain of 4 marks.

Table 1: Distribution of marks for each aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
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<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ellie</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Katarina</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amy</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lena</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An important consideration for teaching implications is to identify which City and Guilds aspect showed the most improvements. Table 2 shows that this was Range, where I have awarded an overall difference of 5 marks in this aspect. According to the City and Guilds criteria, this encompasses “noun phrase…uses grammatical
features in a way which suits the text type...a rich store of vocabulary suitable for purpose...and to suit [the] intended audience”. This aspect is therefore linked to the experiential and interpersonal grammar focused on during this investigation. The second overall improvement, with a difference of 4 marks, was seen in Activity achievement. This is where “written work produced is succinct and a comprehensive response to the task set, in subject, content and format”. This is linked to the schematic structure of the genre-based approach on this course.

Table 2: Aspect scores for the pre- and post-tests

What will now be analysed is to what extent a focus on experiential and interpersonal grammar and a genre-based approach could have contributed to improvements in both the Range and Activity achievement aspects. Table 3 reveals how the use of SFG concepts, such as participants, material processes in the story orientation, tenor and genre structure have had an overall effectiveness on the quality of the students’ post-tests in Appendix 2.

Table 3. Examples of the students’ use of SFG concepts.
### Review 1. “Sleuth” by Ellie

Pre-test score = 5/10. Post-test score = 8/10 (+3 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
<th>Pre test</th>
<th>Post test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>“a young lover” “disguised detective” “the old crime writer” “an amazing actor”</td>
<td>“the elderly mystery writer” “a cat and mouse game” “the self-confident young rival” “an equally witty partner in the mind game” “a genial counterpart for the revenge-seeking old man” “the always amazing actor genius Lawrence Olivier in the role of the betrayed novelist”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material processes in the story orientation (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>Not present</td>
<td>“is visited”, “to get permission”, “starts”, “happens to be”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>Use of first person singular “I would like to recommend you” Informal phrase “By the way”</td>
<td>No first person singular present “You must go and see” “You have to go and watch” Use of passives “novelists are known” “the screenplay was shot”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre structure (Aspect = Activity Achievement)</td>
<td>Introduction, Analysis</td>
<td>Title, Introduction, Story Orientation, Analysis, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Review 2. “Elemental” by Kristina

Pre-test score = 4/10. Post-test score = 6/10 (+2 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>“first book in new adults paranormal series” “the youngest of Merrick brothers” “great entertainment for the future”</td>
<td>“well-known new adult author (sic) whose books are captivating from the first page” “magic world of literature” “accidental witness of this fight” “brave, optimistic girl who helps her school mate in trouble” “one of four brothers whose parents are dead”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material processes in the story orientation (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>“can control” “takes place” “brings”</td>
<td>“is attacked” “helps” “learn” “encounter” “falls in love”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>Use of first person – “I absolutely love this story” Imperatives – “Give it a try”</td>
<td>No first person singular present. Use of implicit evaluation “Brigid Kemmer show us how small family can support and love each other in the most difficult time” Use of explicit Evaluation “Elemental series is captivating”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Genre structure
(Aspect = Activity Achievement)

| Title, Introduction, Story Orientation, Evaluation | Title, Introduction, Story Orientation, Analysis, Evaluation |

#### Review 3. “Pallati 167” by Lena
Pre-test score = 2/10, Post-test score = 6/10 (+4 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>“this comedy” x 2 “the comedy” x 4 “the most wached(sic) program of all times” “a person who dose(sic) a lot of bad think”</td>
<td>“the intoxicating well-known comedy written from film director Adelina Balashi” “a middle-age family man called Jovan who is employed in the big engineering company” “pretty young Elsa” “the talkative troble(sic) maker Jovan” “the tall curly hair Sandi” “this beautiful, intelligent girl Irena”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material processes in the story orientation (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>“send” “try to get” “try to split up”</td>
<td>“moved” “got to know” “fell in love” “wanted to engage” “works”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>First person singular</td>
<td>No first person singular present Evaluation: “This amazing comedy with lots of humor and skech(sic)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre structure (Aspect = Activity Achievement)</td>
<td>Introduction, Story Orientation, Evaluation</td>
<td>Title, Introduction, Story Orientation, Analysis, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Review 4. “God’s time is the best” by Amy
Pre-test = 3/10, Post-test = 6/10 (+3 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material processes in the story orientation (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>“died” “was… beaten” “woke up” “made a confession” “forgave”</td>
<td>“set” “tells”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of tenor (Aspect = Range)</td>
<td>No evaluative features of the film</td>
<td>Evaluation: “The film is quite stunning” “It’s worth watching”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of genre structure (Aspect = Activity Achievement)</td>
<td>Title, Introduction, Story Orientation</td>
<td>Title, Introduction, Story Orientation, Analysis, Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the main contributions to improvements in Range in all four post-tests is the frequency and lexical density of the participants realised by a nominal group, with examples of both pre-modifications and post-modifications (in Bold) being attempted. Examples in table 3 show that Ellie has greater control of these, enabling her to gain the highest mark overall. This could lend support to the study of Taguchi et al. (2013) that analysed which linguistic features are indicative of higher essay scores. Results showed that noun phrase modification by attributive adjectives and post-noun-modifying prepositional phrases “had a tendency to contribute to essay quality” (2013:421). Biber et al (2011) also suggest that attributive adjectives as noun modifiers are acquired at an earlier stage than features such as post-modifying nouns. This mastery of post modification can therefore be complex and lead to excessive use, as in an example from Amy’s post-test:

‘‘tells the story of a 50 year old polite man with a strong faith whose wife had a child from the power of a herbalist through an impatient friend.’’

This over-use, combined with Amy’s lower lexico-grammatical resources for building field, lead to her lower score of 1 for Range.

Interpersonal grammar is another consideration of Range. In it, lexical choices need to be made to suit the intended audience and a requisite of this City and Guilds Assessment is a more formal register. Table 3 shows that some improvements have been made with a shift in tenor. In their pre-tests, all the students have used the first person singular to present ideas, while their post-tests reveal the more detached position of the review writer. Ellie includes an impersonal voice in an attempt of the registerial requirements of this text type, although she is not consistent, and uses
clauses with a finite expressing modality of obligation (i.e. You must...You have to...). Language that conveys more subtle degrees of commitment would be more appropriate for the intended audience, so there is clearly more scope for remedial and extension work in this area.

Further analysis of the data shows how genre awareness may have contributed to Activity achievement of this text type. Three out of the four students show improvements in their rewrites in structuring their reviews with the addition of Analysis of Film and Evaluation. Amy shows the most improvement; her embracing of the suggested schematic structure (see Appendix 8) and her use of interpersonal grammar for evaluation enables her to move from 0 to 2 in this aspect. However, Lena does not make any improvements in this aspect, remaining with a score of 1. This could be because she has used the past tense in her story orientation, which has the effect of her assignment reading more like a narrative than a film review. I believe she needed to be marked down for this, as this is not a feature of this text type.

The short course was also designed with the students’ areas for improvements in mind (see p.22). The rewrites reveal some progress here. For example, Ellie’s range of the vocabulary used in her participants and her ability to build field through experiential grammar has improved considerably, enabling her to move from 5 to 8 marks. Amy’s structure has improved due to the guidance and input from a genre-based approach. Lena’s spelling errors decreased from 16 in the pre-test to 9 in the post-test, enabling her to gain a mark in the Spelling aspect. These findings illustrate that a move away from the prescriptive rules of traditional grammar towards a genre-based approach, with a focus on experiential and interpersonal grammar, can result in
two key factors. It can help the students improve their performance in this text type and it can also address their areas for improvements.

A disappointing result, however, was that the aspect, Grammatical accuracy, saw no improvements. This was particularly frustrating in terms of Kristina’s post-test. Her use of the scaffolding grid for participant building in her preparation work appeared to show a breakthrough in her addressing the use of the indefinite article as a Pointer.

![Scaffolding grid for work on participants.](image)

Unfortunately, she did not transfer this skill into her post-test, and continued to make further errors with her use of both definite and indefinite articles. This resulted in a zero mark for Grammatical accuracy, because these were not “mostly lapses that are easily corrected”, as indicated on the C and G mark scheme. To gain full marks in this aspect, students are required to have text that is “virtually free of grammatical errors.” All four students have made grammatical errors of varying degrees, but as Ortega (2003) claims, it generally takes up to 12 months of instruction to develop students’ vocabulary complexity and grammatical accuracy. This seems an important factor when considering the results of such a short investigation.
Another aspect with only a slight improvement of 2 marks was Organisation. According to the City and Guild score rating, this encompasses “the expression of complex ideas…. Where appropriate, ideas are linked using formal discourse markers.” In terms of assessment for learning, all four post-tests show considerable work still needs to be done to improve performance in this aspect. One reason for this could be that the students were not given enough time to plan and build in these process features. Another factor could be that, due to time constraints, textual grammar was not considered in any depth on this course.

4.2. The students’ perceptions

The impact of the selected SFG concepts on the students themselves was unexpected. In answer to the question, “How do you like to learn grammar?” in the pre-course questionnaire, all four responded that they either agreed or strongly agreed that “I like to know the parts of speech [that] are used e.g. subject, verb, object etc.” Also all four replied “Yes” to the question, “Do you think exercises designed specifically to test your grammar are helpful?” I was therefore prepared for some resistance to an approach that did neither of these. However, comments made in their reflective diaries and in a group interview (Appendix 4) at the end of the course suggest the contrary. The comments from both data sources are divided into three headings:

(i) Student self-assessment;

(ii) Opinions of the new approach, and

(iii) Enjoyment of the experience.
(i). **Student self-assessment**

The following examples of self-monitoring, self-assessment and self-evaluation indicate the impact of this approach on the students’ learning.

**Comments in reflective diaries:**

- **Amy**
  
  Now I know differences between participant, process, register and evaluation.

- **Kristina**
  
  We wrote review. We use correct structure, participants, processes, register and evaluation. We used all information we learn previously. I think we did well.

- **Ellie**
  
  Compared with former review about the same film the difference is BIG!

**Comments in the group interview:**

- **Ellie**
  
  "We must decide for who we write and decide which language we should use."

- **Kristina**
  
  "We learn about structure, participants and processes. I didn’t know about this when we started and now I think I have a good idea how this is."

- **Amy**
  
  "Before I didn’t know the difference between the sensing and being so now when I’m writing I know when to use being, doing, saying and sensing."

- **Lena**
  
  "From now on we are going to recognise what are the participants’"

- **Ellie**
  
  "Yes and how to describe them [...] and what should be in front of the thing, what should be after that, the qualifier". 
(ii) Opinions about the new approach

The strongest argument for exploring this new approach for future language instruction came from Kristina in the group interview:

```
"...Learning English before I think this is all the same. Every year, every year the same way and here now, something new and with different way and I think this is much better, to change this way, how we learn, how we look for this, like for example being, doing, seeing, sensing. This is absolutely new for me."
```

Also Ellie’s comment confirms Coffin’s claim (2010:2) that this approach helps students “resee language as fundamentally a tool for thinking” when she says,

```
"Absolutely sure it improved our language in many ways. Not only our language but our thinking about language..."
```

Further Comments reveal that the students found it both challenging and stimulating.

Lena It’s always good to learn new things and stretch ourselves more into different words!

Ellie I realised today for the first time what “new approach to grammar” means. I find it challenging. It forces us to think.

Kristina All this new material is very interesting, is difficult but we can learn how writing review. It focuses us to think.

Ellie “This approach is very, very different [...] I think it is very very complex for children.”
(iii) Enjoyment of the experience

The following examples taken from each of the students’ reflective diaries are evidence of the positive learning experience this approach fostered. This is supported by attendance figures for the short course, which were 80% for the five sessions.

Ellie  It was a great time together to write a real review of our own. I can see improvements a lot and I wouldn’t want to stop.

Lena   I enjoyed every session and I’m glad I came to this course.

Amy    I love it and I would like to no (sic) more.

Kristina I like it very much, can’t wait for the next occasion.

This data has significance for professional practice. It would seem that whatever particular pedagogy is used to improve students’ writing, there needs to be an understanding of how students perceive it to fully measure its impact. Although both Ellie and Kristina identify that this approach can be challenging, none of the students said that they did not enjoy it or that they did not find it useful. This feedback therefore has significant implications for future instruction.

4.3. Explorations of meaning, language choices and patterns

The improvements in the post-tests and the students’ positive responses are also likely to be attributed to the additional focus during this investigation. A large portion of class time was spent exploring meaning, evaluating language choices and identifying patterns. Samples of this data from the recorded discussions and interactions will now be analysed.
(i) Meaning

The use of film trailers, music, pictures and focus questions were used to introduce the film reviews. Examples of questions to elaborate on interpretations and stimulate discussion included:

- What is the relationship in this picture?
- How is the music and setting helping to provide meanings?
- What does his expression suggest about him?

This combination of multimodality gave rise to some interesting considerations. One was how different modes can evoke different feelings, as is shown in Lena’s comment:

“'The music and sound makes me, like you know, watch the movie...you feel that emotions. In the review, in the reading review you can’t feel that kind of moving.’”

The second point was that the visual images and film clips seemed to help co-articulate meanings in the film reviews. For example, after Amy had discussed the pictures, watched the trailer and then read the film review on St. Vincent, (Appendix 5), she wanted to discuss the clause “drinking away his last days”. She said,

“'He’s a drunk, spent all his money. What lead him to become a drunkard? He has some kind of illness?’”

Additionally, Lena wanted to explore the meaning of the clause “who sets out to seek revenge on all those who have wronged him” in another review. After seeing the trailer and discussing the visual material, she suggested that the accident described in the review could have been set up by the main character as a way to get revenge on his victim.
These examples confirm the claim in the literature review (p. 10) that multimodality helps students to become better equipped to identify the function of the text and its meaning-making resources. This area therefore has important teaching and learning implications.

Further examples of explorations of meaning are presented in extracts 1-5, taken from a recorded discussion that explored a process analysis of the film review “St. Vincent”. The students’ interactions recorded during the sessions will show continuous line numbering from this point.

**Extract 1.**

1 Amy: His comedic ways haven’t deserted him’’.
2 “Haven’t deserted’’ means abandoned so it’s a
3 ‘doing’ action.
4 Ellie: I think is a ‘being’[...]’’haven’t deserted him’’
5 means they’re still with him, it’s a state, his
6 state, so it’s a being, still with him.

**Extract 2.**

7 Lena: “‘who have wronged him’’.Is it ‘sensing’ or is
8 it action?
9 Kristina: “‘have’’...’have’ would be...
10 Lena: “‘have’ is ‘being’
11 Kristina: “‘have wronged’’...oh I don’t know...
12 Lena: “‘have wronged’ belongs together...’sensing’? 
13 Kristina: No because “‘wronged’’ is ‘doing’ something
14 bad, ‘doing’
something not ‘sensing’. ‘Sensing’ is like feelings, ‘wronged’ is action, making something bad.

**Extract 3.**

18 Kristina: ‘‘Charge him’’. This is action, take money

19 Ellie: ‘‘Charge him’’. I think it’s a ‘saying’, they

20 ask him for money.

**Extract 4.**

21 Kristina: What do you think about ‘‘suffer’’ when she

22 is in pain? She has Alzheimer’s, she

23 suffered [...]’sensing’ like feeling, feel pain.

**Extract 5.**

24 Teacher: ‘‘Looks up to’’. What process is that?

25 Amy: Isn’t it ‘sensing’?

26 Teacher: Can you explain why you think ‘sensing’?

27 Amy: Because he feel about him, the father

28 Ellie: Yes, he admires, it’s not a ‘doing’, it’s

29 a ‘sensing’.

This data illustrates how the students are exploring text meaning through the use of processes metalanguage. By looking at how the processes work in texts, thoughts about language and its meanings are stimulated, and students are encouraged to discuss their choices. For example, Ellie is familiar with Bill Murray as a comedy actor in the role of St Vincent and uses her cultural knowledge of him to explain her choice of a relational process (lines 4-6). The different interpretations for the
processes ‘have wronged’ (lines 11-17), ‘charge’ (lines 18-20) and ‘looks up to’ (lines 24-29) follow much of the literature promoting this approach as a way to move students towards critical literacy, interactions and exploration of grammar based on meaning. Schleppegrell believes that being explicit about how language means what it does “enables the kind of consciousness-raising that stimulates meaningful interaction in the classroom” (2014:11). The students also value these meaningful interactions, as revealed in the following comments from the group interview:

Lena: It helps me a lot because we can hear different opinions.

Kristina: And learn words from each other.

Ellie: Yes, we learnt much from each other, we discuss and argue a lot!

The use of the interactive software Stories4learning was also a useful supplementary teaching tool to present the meaningful blocks of language during the transitivity analysis (see Appendix 6 for photographs). This helped the students focus on grammar as a meaning-making resource in the texts rather than on the labelling of individual words associated with traditional grammar. Ellie’s following comment supports the idea that she is beginning to see language in this way.

30 Ellie: ‘‘Comes’’ is ‘doing’ but it can be also ‘when it comes to his evil ways’’ it can be also ‘being’.

31 If you take only one word ‘‘comes’’ it is action it is ‘doing’, but in connection with all the others ‘‘to come to his evil ways’’ it is ‘being’.
(ii) Language choices

The following reflections were recorded in Session 2, where the aim was to examine two different writers’ reviews for the film “No Good Deed” (Appendix 7).

35 Teacher: Do you think the writer has to know who
they’re writing for?

36 Ellie: That is what the main thing is. He has to use
different language with children, with higher
class people.

37 Teacher: By having the two texts is it helping you?

38 Kristina: Yes

39 Teacher: In what way is it helping you?

40 Kristina: Because I see what I can use instead, like
“it’s about’’ and “it focuses’’. It’s very
interesting. It’s the same text but we see
it’s more formal. It’s a very nice exercise.

41 Ellie: I think the words are more simple, simpler
in the first version and in the second
version, formal one, the words are more
sophisticated.

42 Teacher: Does it affect the meaning of the text?

43 Ellie: It shouldn’t. It must mean the same
These two texts are about exactly the same,
only different words. For me number 2 is
easier to understand.

44 Teacher: How can being aware of register, of these
different choices from the writers,

help you in your writing?

Amy: The two of them can help me. But just some American slang I don’t like it so I won’t use it.

Kristina: We can compare these two and now I have an idea when I write formal text, how this should like, which words I use...

Ellie: Which words I use and which words I er... should avoid!

This data shows the students’ understanding of the nature of the choice system and how language equivalents (line 44), different styles (lines 47-50) and the selection of words (lines 64-66) are considered by writers in order to appeal to their different audiences. This awareness could have helped them address aspects of tenor in their rewrites.

The following extract taken from the recording of the joint construction in Appendix 10 is a further example of the students exploring process choices.

Lena: What is the evaluation?

Ellie: ‘‘I would suggest to watch this film for both adults and children’’. I use formal language for this thought.

Kristina: But we want... we have to... we can show or tell people.

Lena: We can use both.

Ellie: So telling ‘‘It’s well worth seeing’’ and
showing “it delivers the message”. We can say

“Pete Docter one more time delivers a

...masterpiece.”

This supports the findings in Schleppegrell’s study (2014). By examining how writers tell the readers about characters’ attitudes through ‘being’ or ‘sensing’ processes, or show them through ‘doing’ or ‘saying’ processes, Schleppegrell reveals how students can convey implicit and explicit attitudes in their writing. The students are applying their awareness of this through their different process choices. This could have contributed to Kristina’s attempt of both implicit and explicit evaluation in her post-test (see table 3).

(iii) Language patterns

The following data refers to the noticing of patterns.

78 Teacher: The processes we looked at last week can
79 you remember what they are and why writers
80 choose different processes[...]? 
82 Ellie: It was more about ‘doings’ in our films
83 because a critic, how do you call it?
84 Teacher: Yes, the writer.
85 Ellie: The writer[...]describes, in most cases the
86 content of what the film is about.
87 Teacher: That’s right.
88 Ellie: And that is the action...and that is why ...
89 is more about ‘doings’ and not much about
‘beings’ or ‘saying’.

Teacher: Exactly that. If we look at the evaluation what’s the main process in the evaluation generally, is it ‘doing’?

Kristina: Evaluation was more ‘saying’ because it is about opinion.

Teacher: Absolutely, different processes for different parts. We talked about a letter of complaint. What processes are the writers going to use generally?

Lena: ‘Sensing’…yeah.

Teacher: Why do you say ‘sensing’?

Lena: Because when we complain about something we are not happy and… how we feel about this… yeah

Teacher: Absolutely, any others?

Kristina: And ‘saying’.

Ellie: And ‘saying’.

Teacher: And ‘saying’ exactly because you’re reporting what people say.

This shows that the students are beginning to explore the different process patterns in parts of texts (lines 82-95) and in different text types (lines 100-109) and how these processes function. This awareness could have helped them in their choices for their story orientations and in their evaluations in their post-tests.
4.4. The role of the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC)

It is important to understand the effect of the TLC on this investigation. Four assertions on the nature of the TLC are now presented in order to consider its utilisation as an instructional tool for future practice in the ESOL classroom.

Assertion 1: A crucial part of developing students’ awareness of text types is that the teacher is an authoritative figure, employing an explicit instruction approach.

Teacher-fronted delivery with explicit instruction was the approach taken in the deconstruction of the film reviews. The genre template in Appendix 8 was discussed, followed by a transitivity analysis, to examine the participants, processes and circumstances used in the different reviews. This explicit transitivity analysis had the intention of not only focusing the students on the salient language features of this text type but also helping them make effective choices in their writing. The following extract shows examples of the teacher’s strategic guidance to raise the students’ awareness of the functional components of the nominal group.

104 Kristina: “a single nurse”
105 Teacher: Yes absolutely, now I think there’s more
106 Kristina: “recovering from a divorce”
107 Teacher: Yes this is all the participant
108 Kristina: “A pregnant prostitute”
109 Teacher: Yes, carry on
110 Kristina: “named Daka”
111 Teacher: and more
112 Kristina: “Naomi Watts’’

113 Teacher: and more again

114 Kristina: “with a heavy Russian accent’’

115 Teacher: Can you see, you have your noun, or

116 thing, you have your short adjective and

117 also more detail here? The aim is

118 to look at this and to try to use it

119 in your writing.

120 Teacher: […]This is a long participant. So where

121 is the thing?

122 Lena: “Atmosphere’’

123 Teacher: “Atmosphere’’ that’s right and “of

124 bleakness and fear is a…?’’

125 Lena: Qualifier

The scaffolding grid for participants (p.33) was also an important supplementary resource to focus attention on the structure in the nominal group and a handout exploring transitivity in clauses was discussed. The implications drawn from this deconstruction stage are that that the teacher’s authoritative role of presenting, explaining and guiding is integral to raising awareness of these particular functional features in texts.

**Assertion 2. The co-construction of new knowledge is significant for learning.**

As part of the TLC, the teacher plays varying roles, depending on the context and learning goal. The goal to jointly construct a review of the film “Up” meant moving
to the role of facilitator and scribe. In order to foreground the experiential grammar in the film review, students were encouraged to use the visual images from “Up”, presented in a power point, to help them produce participants, processes and circumstantial meanings in their clauses. My questions were aimed at using the metalanguage to draw out transitivity, e.g.,

- How can we build circumstances into this?
- What are our processes in this slide?
- Can we use a qualifier for this participant?
- How can we add more description to this participant?

Appendix 9 shows the range of the students’ contributions that I compiled during this session. My role gradually diminished as students then used these contributions and their new knowledge of this genre to jointly construct a review of the film “Up”. This co-construction was thought-provoking for future instruction. It lasted sixty-five minutes and had very little teacher intervention, with the students expressing their own ideas and choices and consulting with each other (see Appendix 10 for the tape transcript). It was rewarding to see the extent of learning that had taken place in the previous sessions; the unprompted use of metalanguage to negotiate their meanings is a further example of this. The graph below shows its frequency.
It would seem that the students are taking this metalanguage on board, despite having only just been introduced to it. Indeed, Ellie’s comment in the group interview reflects an interest in this new language:

“‘We have learnt a special language to use for writing a review, new words... We call them describer and qualifier... It makes our speech distinguished and it is fine! I’m very happy about that.’”
Compared to the pre-tests, the joint construction could be viewed as a considerable improvement in linguistic choices and structure.

Figure 4: Joint construction of the film review "Up!"

UP! - flying house, chasing dreams

The leading, well-known film director Pete Docter, whose previous productions include Toy Story and Monsters, released his best-selling computer animation film named UP! in 2010.

A young adventurer Carl Fredricksen falls in love with his childhood sweetheart Ellie. They get married for life and grew old together.

That is how the film begins.

After the death of his deeply beloved wife, Carl becomes a grumpy old man. Remembering his "cross-your-heart" promise to his wife to travel to the wilderness of South America, he makes a desperate decision. He lifts up the crooked house where their love grew and where they enjoyed the time of their life together.

While in air Carl discovers the unexpected company of Russell, the eight year old boy scout, who visited the old man before. They land in the wild bushy, tropical jungle, where they encounter some wonderful and weird creatures.

This spectacular animated 3D movie tells us how to fulfill our promises and to never give up our dreams.

Pete Docter delivers again a masterpiece. It appeals both to adults and children.
There is evidence of a range of material processes in the story orientation (lines 5-20), lexico-grammatical resources for building field, dense nominal groups i.e. “the death of his deeply beloved wife” (9), “the crooked house where their love grew” (14), “the wild, bushy, tropical jungle” (19), implicit evaluation (lines 24-25) and clear structuring. The teacher feedback (lines 26-32) was an attempt to move away from sentence level grammatical errors and the mechanics of traditional grammar towards the utilisation of the newly acquired knowledge and more content feedback, as suggested by Devrim (2014) in the literature (p.17). This feedback was discussed with the aim of the students applying it to their rewrites.

Interestingly, in the review for St. Vincent, there was the following example of how the writer plays with the nominal group, i.e. “her how-far-can-you-push-it Russian accent”. One of the students appears to be experimenting with this when she produces “his cross-your-heart promise to his wife” (line 11).

This data, therefore, reveals that co-construction encourages an exploration of linguistic choices, promotes collaboration and the sharing of ideas in extended discussion and draws on new knowledge of metalanguage, linguistic features and schematic structure. This supports the assertion that this strategy has significance for learning.

**Assertion 3. Providing explicit guidelines about how the structures should be organised can lead to a formulaic type of instruction.**

The following reflections were taken from the joint construction stage:

126 Kristina Why you do so long sentences?...

127 Ellie: We have to do a story orientation
Kristina: Why we write this review?...If they read this review and they like it[...] maybe they will watch the film. If the sentence are too long I think it’s boring[...]

Ellie: It’s an objective...summarising of the film...I don’t influence anybody. The influence comes in the evaluation or the analysis.

Kristina: Why you write all of this?

Ellie: To inform people.

Kristina: Yes to inform... When you put in too long sentence it’s too boring[...]

Teacher: What we’re trying to do is build our sentences.

Kristina: But it’s so long. I think it needs short sentences with simple information [...] not like this.

While Ellie is trying to adhere to the target schematic structure and focusing on packing information into the nominal groups, Kristina is questioning this. It would seem that she would rather use a different style in her review, as this could be something she is more familiar with from her linguistic background.

This raises the concern that providing the students with explicit guidelines about how the structures should be organised can lead to a formulaic type of instruction. There is then the danger of being too prescriptive, restricting students from bringing their
own individual voices to the texts. This assertion supports much of the criticism in the literature regarding a genre-based approach.

**Assertion 4. The TLC does not lend itself to differentiation.**

One of Lena’s areas for improvement is her spelling, and as a result, she can become quite anxious about producing writing that can often be full of mechanical errors. In the group interview, she expressed the following comment:

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"I enjoyed everything apart of today. It’s not really I didn’t enjoy it, was to write the review on our own."
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This suggests that she may not have felt ready for the independent stage, and I realised that this could have been because I had not sufficiently differentiated activities for either her or the other students’ individual needs. The TLC’s reliance on a teacher-fronted approach with whole group activity followed by discussion in groups confirms the issue in the assertion that differentiation for individual learners’ needs is not always an easy strategy to incorporate.

To summarise, this analysis has shown the emergence of the following results: the impact of an SFG approach on the students’ rewrites, positive feedback regarding this approach, the extent to which it explores meaning and language choices and how it utilises the TLC. These will now be considered in more detail in the remaining sections.
5. Discussion

My first research question concerned what impact selected SFG concepts could have on my students’ rewrites of a film review. Findings and data analysis suggest that a focus on how language works at the level of text appears to have resulted in improvements, particularly in the overall schematic structure and in the range of the nominal groups. This reflects the potential of SFG.

My findings also demonstrate that an SFG approach has implications for language teaching that extend beyond improvements in students’ writings. This concerned my second research question. Analysis of interactions and discussions show how it can equip students with new insights into how language works in context. It enables them, through the use of targeted metalanguage, to negotiate meanings, reflect on language choices and expand their “linguistic repertoires” by moving them away from a focus on forms and the prescriptive rules of traditional grammar towards grammatical consciousness-raising.

My third question, “Does the TLC approach work in an ESOL context?” was explored through different assertions. These revealed how explicit instruction of SFG concepts, strategic guidance and co-construction can contribute to high levels of learning. Given an environment with a homogenous group of upper intermediate or advanced students, the TLC could be effectively adopted by a teacher wanting to explore a text-based approach to language teaching.

However, it is well documented that ESOL is a complex learning landscape, and provision exists in many diverse forms. Consequently, this approach will not fit all, as considered in assertion 4. In my own workplace of Adult Education, teachers are
required to work with mixed abilities, often from pre-Entry to Level 1, and the suitability of this approach in these differentiated learning workshops is questionable. Also, both the literature and assertion 3 indicate the caution required in implementing the genre approach using the TLC and call for an awareness of its potential restrictions.

Contrary to the belief in the literature surrounding the difficulty of applying SFG’s metalanguage, I found that key features such as participants, processes, circumstances, register and evaluation could be effectively exploited to bring together those areas of grammar that have particular significance for meaning-making, i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. Selecting the genre of a film review seemed to facilitate this. The capacity to explore multimodality, to foreground the experiential grammar through visual representations, to discuss how writers use evaluation and to investigate the dense nominal groups in authentic texts was a natural focus, whereas in other genres, the saliency of these items may not have been as noticeable. In addition, the choice of the adventure film “Up”, with its colourful animation and sentimental story-line, was successful in capturing the interest of the group. It was also essential not to overload the students, so the selection of simplified metalanguage was an important consideration. These could all have been contributory factors to the positive results.

However, when assessing the merits for future language instruction, some pertinent questions need to be raised. Firstly, although there were improvements in the rewrites, the group had experienced nine hours of explicit instruction (with 1 hour for independent construction) where scaffolding, guided interactions and close teacher-student collaboration took place. In other words, is there any wonder that there were
improvements? Would any explicit instruction under these conditions have yielded improvements? Also, when asked in the questionnaire what they enjoy the most about their ESOL class, Ellie commented, “the way Lis teaches English”. Despite being complementary, this comment needs to be viewed with some degree of scepticism. It raises the question of how much the positive feedback could be attributed to the new approach or simply because of the trust already placed in their teacher.

Another point is that Grammatical accuracy saw disappointing results. It would seem, therefore, that the course failed to address improvements in this aspect. This raises two points for reflection. One is the time needed for instruction results to emerge; it seems unreasonable to expect positive changes over such a short time span. Indeed, research indicates that students need to be exposed to language items in more and more texts over extended periods before the grammar is incorporated into the student’s language. Willis (2003) points out that even then, there can be no guarantee that learners will use correct forms, but “…almost certainly, the exposure, the discussion…will have some effect. They will take learners a little closer to spontaneous use” (Willis, 2003:221). The second point is that like many other methods of instruction, SFG is not infallible. Swan supports this when he says, “the complexities of noun phrase structure, the elaborate constraints on the articles or the niceties of word order do not magically disappear under the functional umbrella” (2011:492). This brings me back to the literature, wherein the learning of grammar is a complex and lengthy process, and no single pedagogical approach can claim superiority. It is more effective for teachers to design their own “situated methodologies” (p.19) using a variety of approaches tailored to meet the students’
individual needs and learning targets. This is echoed in Kristina’s comment in the group interview, when she says,

“‘We can use both knowledge from the past and this new and now our writing will be better.’”

One concern in the feedback is that both Ellie and Kristina noted some challenges with the approach. They were working at Level 1/Level 2 and therefore the idea of implementing these text-based concepts with lower level learners, who are the predominate target group in many community classes and who need survival English to function, may not be feasible. However, with the focus on new digital text formats that can help students understand the structure and function of language, one wonders whether the concepts of functional grammar could be simplified in these computer-mediated texts to help learners of all levels work with SFG. The interactive Stories4Learning website is a start, but this needs to be developed considerably to appeal to students accustomed to a fast-paced digital age.
6. Development of the course

Based on the analysis and assessment for learning, the following are some considerations of how SFG concepts could be developed further in the next course.

6.1. Genre awareness

As the students have explored the schematic structure of a film review, it would seem a natural progression to look at a different genre to help them understand the similarities and differences between different text types. The students are required to produce a formal letter of complaint for their Level 2, so this appears an appropriate genre to explore next. Remaining with a text-based syllabus design, the explicit teaching about the conventionalized structure of such a letter could be a focus. An additional issue that could then be introduced is how these generic patterns can be played upon to create irony or to be provocative. This refers to assertion 3 in the analysis, as it raises students’ awareness that schematic structures are not intended to inhibit self-expression and creativity, but can be customised while still achieving its general purpose.

6.2. Exploring transitivity

Although the visual representations for the participants, processes and circumstances were a useful introduction to transitivity and experiential grammar, they were only briefly investigated. This SFG concept would need to be explored at a deeper level to enable conscious learning to take place. Examining the different participant roles in a letter of complaint could be a starting point wherein actor, goal and carrier in both
concrete and abstract participants could be introduced. In her study, Coffin (2003) assesses a student’s letter of complaint for how well the processes address relating one thing to another, express mental activity and include a variety of material processes. Also, processes such as ‘result in, ‘cause’ and ‘became’ can establish causality and develop the writer’s argument. A focus on this could extend work on the function and choice of processes so far. Similarly focusing on circumstances in terms of specifying time is important to build up a clearer representation of events in their letters. Digital text formats would be a useful tool to facilitate how this experiential grammar is coded, and by analysing them in a range of letters, the students’ knowledge of these linguistic choices to make meaning can be enhanced.

6.3. Development of the nominal group

As has been pointed out in the analysis, post-modifying prepositional phrases in the nominal group can contribute to essay quality. With the aim of improving the students’ writing skills, development of this lexical item could be viewed as a useful target for future instruction. As the students are at a point where they are coming to grips with participants as extended nominal groups, it seems a good progression to examine the use of a clause or prepositional phrase in the qualifier. The following could be an example from a letter of complaint.

The leak that you mended in the roof near the chimney, which is also being renovated.

This contains qualifiers within qualifiers, and as Butts et al. (2000) suggest, this is undoubtedly difficult to master well, as “the qualifier is by far the most intricate part of the nominal group and it can be extremely complex” (2000:68). There is a need
therefore to carefully scaffold and model this compression of meaning in the clause structure in a way that is appropriate and within the students’ ZPD.

6.4. Remedial work on articles

Extension work on the participant could also focus attention on the use of articles, highlighted as a problematic area, particularly for Polish learners like Kristina (p.33). Jones et al. consider the definite article and claim that “once students are aware that ‘the’ identifies a participant, either inside or outside the text, it is a simple matter to make them aware of the kind of relations, especially endophoric ones, that may exist in a text passage” (1989:261). Jones at al believe that the use of demonstrative reference improves if students become accustomed to asking these questions about nominal groups in their rough drafts. More exposure to this type of activity brings this area to the students’ attention, and over time, this repeated focus could be beneficial.

6.5. Exploring tenor

Formal letters are useful text types to investigate aspects of tenor, an area that requires considerable consolidation as indicated in the analysis and literature. Comparing written letters of complaint with spoken exchanges can highlight that social relations and situations lead to very different linguistic choices in which the use of modality, modal adjuncts, imperatives and declaratives are used to achieve different functions. This seems an effective way to extend the students’ knowledge of interpersonal grammar and how various factors in the text impact on the choices writers make.
6.6. Textual grammar

An area identified in the analysis that students need to improve is the Organisation aspect. To be proficient writers, their ideas need to be linked together coherently and succinctly, involving “the logical chaining together of experientially related meanings” (Eggins, 2005:258). In terms of SFG, this refers to the textual meaning. As a result, the next step could involve the explicit instruction of thematic progression in a letter of complaint through Given and New information in a clause. By being exposed to this, the students might then start to improve on texture in their letters and also apply this to other genres.

Either one of these areas could be seen as progression to extend and explore functional grammar in the context of a different genre. Above all, the next stage needs to build on the positive learning experience the students have expressed for this approach, and, in the case of Amy, her motivation to learn more, i.e.,

“…I can see improvements a lot and I wouldn’t want to stop it”  (group interview).
7. Conclusion.

This action research has been of considerable interest for both teaching practice and language pedagogy. The challenge in the literature was to investigate ways in which this broad and complex linguistic theory could be given practical appeal for the ESOL classroom. It has been useful to see how activities can be effectively exploited to investigate this meaning-oriented approach to grammar in texts. As someone with reservations about implementing an SFG approach due to my own conceptions of learning grammar, it has also been illuminating to see how Halliday’s theory of language can be simplified for instruction and be seen as a tool with potential to facilitate learning. Despite my initial concerns of some resistance from the students, it has been encouraging to analyse their perceptions of this different approach. A shift away from traditional grammar, with its focus on forms and labelling of individual words, seems to have been a welcome change and one that they are interested in exploring further.

Nevertheless, this research has highlighted that it is an approach not without its shortcomings. The course content was directed at Level 1/Level 2, but the importance of differentiated learning and tailoring instruction to individual needs within mixed ability classes is at the heart of many ESOL learning environments. Finding a way to incorporate SFG concepts to address this mix remains a challenge.

The findings from this small-scale study in one particular context cannot be compared or generalised. However, if this approach were applied to larger groups of students under different conditions, this challenge could be taken up and questions for future research investigated. These include to what extent could a lexico-
grammatical analysis as a resource for understanding and producing texts be simplified for the lower level ESOL learner? How effectively could selected SFG concepts be implemented in a mixed ability class? If this explicit instruction were compared with another method for writing text types, what are some differences in the results in terms of student perceptions and quality of post-test writings? Does content feedback given by the teacher have more effect than the correction of grammatical errors?

Among the aims of undergoing action research was not only to reflect on my own teaching, but as a programme manager, to disseminate the merits of this approach to my teaching team. If I am to get teachers interested in this “reconceptualization of grammar”, then there is still considerable work needed to design activities to be used with different text types, to apply SFG to new digital text formats and to investigate how the TLC can be adapted to meet the demands of mixed ability groups.

Investment is necessary as it has been established in the literature that SFG concepts have not been adequately addressed in the ELT course books or course curriculums. However, at a time when we are all trying to draw on different theories of language teaching to engage our students in motivating learning, this investigation has shown that exploring the different activities that this linguistic theory has to offer is worth the investment.

The ongoing question of which grammar to teach is not a simple answer of the right one or the wrong one. Aspects of traditional grammar have their place, but this investigation has shown how an SFG approach can enrich students’ learning opportunities. Kristina’s words regarding her previous learning of grammar as,

"...all the same. Every year, every year the same way"
seem enough to prompt action for a different approach. They lead me to the following quotation:

“To do the same thing over and over again is not only boredom: it is to be controlled by rather than control what you do” – Heraclitus.

This action research has shown a way to take control of the powerful linguistic theory underpinning SFG in order to steer teaching and learning in new directions and to enable students to think differently about language.

(14,782 words)
8. Appendices

Appendix 1  Teaching and learning activities and course content
Appendix 2  Pre and post-test reviews
Appendix 3  ESOL City and Guilds Assessment criteria
Appendix 4  Tape script of end of course group interview
Appendix 5  “St Vincent” film review
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Appendix 1 – Teaching and learning activities and course content

Session 1 – Introduction to genre through the film review “St Vincent”, Accompanied by trailer and power point of pictures for discussion

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of resource</th>
<th>Teaching focus</th>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout – Schematic structure for a film review</td>
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<td>Flashcards – Being, Doing, Saying, Sensing</td>
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<td>Participants (noun groups) grid for St Vincent</td>
<td>Identify nominal groups – describer, classifier, qualifier etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Session 2 – Register analysis for 2 different film reviews of the film “No Good Deed” adapted from www.jeralanddean.com/film/reviews, Accompanied by trailer and power point of pictures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of resource</th>
<th>Teaching and learning focus</th>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Good Deed (tabloid)</td>
<td>Compare different language choices and their effect on the reader</td>
<td>Register (Tenor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Good Deed (broadsheet)</td>
<td>Identify nominal groups – describer, classifier, qualifier etc.</td>
<td>Participants (Field)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants (noun group grid for No Good Deed)</td>
<td>Identify the different building blocks Red = participants Green = processes Blue = circumstances What patterns and language choices emerge? What are their effects?</td>
<td>Transitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories4Learning – coded texts showing processes, participants, circumstances in the 2 different reviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Session 3 – Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of resource</th>
<th>Teaching and learning focus</th>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review – Road to Perdition</td>
<td>Identify schematic structure, processes, participants Discuss language used for Evaluation</td>
<td>Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation slide - implicit and explicit</td>
<td>What are the effects of showing or telling Evaluation? Why do writers choose these different ways?</td>
<td>Evaluation (Tenor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout – Evaluations from the 3 film reviews</td>
<td>Identify the processes and decide whether the evaluation is implicit or explicit and discuss its effect on the reader.</td>
<td>Evaluation Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Describers” – to turn up the evaluation</td>
<td>How can the writer be more evaluative?</td>
<td>Evaluation Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Thing!” – some examples for a film review</td>
<td>What effect do these language choices have on the reader?</td>
<td>Vocabulary to build the Field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session 4. Building experiential grammar**

**Joint construction of film review “Up”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of resource</th>
<th>Teaching and learning focus</th>
<th>SFG concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jumbled up participants</td>
<td>Match up the 2 halves to give a participant from the film reviews. Identify the film</td>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout – Functional Grammar working in the clause.</td>
<td>Who does what to whom under what circumstances? Identifying participants, processes and circumstances within the clause</td>
<td>Transitivity (Field)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout - Circumstances</td>
<td>Examples of circumstances for extent, location, cause, matter, role</td>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power point for pictures from film “Up”</td>
<td>Joint construction of clauses using participants, processes and circumstances. Use these examples to construct a film review for “Up”.</td>
<td>Transitivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session 5  
Independent constructions of the students’ original review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback slide</th>
<th>Apply knowledge from joint construction regarding structure, register, evaluation, processes, participants, circumstances and rewrite your review for a broadsheet newspaper. Prepare participants using noun grids</th>
<th>Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field – participants, processes, circumstances</td>
<td>Field – evaluation, choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix 2. Pre- and post-test reviews

1. Ellie (pre-test) no title

It might be unusual on this place, but I would like to recommend you two films to watch at the same time – I mean one after the other of course.

It is the “Sleuth” in different features. You will find it very interesting to compare the two versions. The first version dates from 1976. As it is a two actors film, you have to remember the names. Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine are starring in this earlier version and again Michael Caine and Jude Law are starring in the second later version from 2006. The story is naturally the same, but the scenes, the furnitures, the clothes, the way of speaking and using words are very different. The accent lays on M. Caine’s playing the role of a young lover and disguised detective in the old version and the role of the old crime novel writer in the second version. (directed by Branagh by the way).

The best way to judge how taste changes with film, how two phylosophie of film making alters and – how an amazing actor Michael Caine is!

(181 words)

1. Ellie (post-test)

Sleuth – a mystery game through times

With this review you get two in one. In fact it involves two films with the same plot and the same title made with 35 years difference in time.
The story itself is as simple as that: The elderly mystery writer is visited by his wife’s young lover in order to get his permission to divorce. A cat-and-mouse game starts based on witty dialogues. Novelists are known for vivid imagination – not to speak of a mystery writer. The aim of the game is humiliation how disgusting it ever is. The self confident young rival happens to be an equally witty partner in the mind game.

It would not be fair to uncover the ending of this feature. If you would like to know who wins, you must go and see the film. Better to say both of them. The first version-adapted of a screenplay- was shot in 1972 with the always amazing actor genius Laurence Olivier in the role of the betrayed novelist and the young Michael Caine as the young and ambitious lover. The second version was made in 2007 and you will be surprised to encounter the elderly Micheal Caine in the role of the betrayed novelist. Jude Law makes a genial counterpart for the revenge-seeking old man. Director Kenneth Branagh has never seen the first version to avoid any influence.

Which film is better than the other? You have to go and watch then and judge it yourself because there is no ultimate answer. The only definite conclusion is that 35 years make a big difference in film making technics, acting and appearances, but no difference in human behaviour and reactions.

(280 words)
2. Kristina (pre-test)

ELEMENTAL by Brigid Kemmer

EARTH, FIRE, AIR, WATER – more power than you dream

“Storm” by Brigid Kemmer is first book in new adults, paranormal series. This story concerning four brothers, who can control different elements-water, fire, air and earth.

First instalment is Chris story. The youngest of Merrick brothers can control water. He is very powerful and seen as very dangerous.

Action takes place in high school which brings lots of drama, passion and twists.

Moreover this is love story which is my favourite type.

First novel in Elemental series is great entertainment for the future with next instalments.

I absolutely love this story, It has everything that attracts me in book.

Give it a try, you will not regret it

4.5 of 5 xxxx

(125 words)

2. Kristina (post-test)

Elemental – they have more power than you dream

Brigid Kemmer is well-known, new adult author whose books are captivating from the first page. Her new series” Elemental” is next attempt to encourage teenagers to reach for magic world of literature.
First book in Elemental series Storm, begins when nice looking young man is attacked by other teenagers. Accidental witness of this fight is Becca, brave, optimistic girl who helps her schoolmate in trouble.

Chris is one of four brothers whose parents are dead. He is intelligent and responsible student who, what we learn in the later part of the book, is different and very powerfull.

Teenager can control water, just like his brothers can control fire, wind and earth. For Chris and his brothers living in small American town is difficult and sometimes dangerous. During all the adventures, which young men encounter, he falls in love with full of energy Becca.

Elemental series is captivating, strong about love and family. Brigid Kemmer show us how small family can support and love each other in the most difficult time.

(178 words)

3. Lena (pre-test)

Pallati 167 is coming back on the Theater after 30 year when this comedy was invented. This comedy was the most wached program of all times in Albania.

I personally wached the comedy quite a few times and it gives me the same impretion of the first time. The Comedy enclude a Love Story’s and in particular a person who dose a lot of bad think like rumors, send anonymous letters to his Boss to try and get higher in his position or try to split up a couple for the same reason.

The way I discribed above it seems very dramatic, but infact has lots of hommor in it, that’s why I lik watching it all over again. Even the new generation has shown
intrest on this fabulous comedy, that’s why we disided to bring it back for all of “Pallati 167” Lovers.

The Comedy is starting next month from 1st of Mars, and it will be online every Suterday at Pallati Congreve Theater until end of June

Ticket:

Adult £10

Children 5-14 yr £5 Under 5yr free(179 words)

3. Lena (post-test)

Pallat 176

The intoxicating well-known comedy, written from film director Adelina Balashi, was relised in the Theater in 1986 and has been shown in the TV ever since.

A middle age family man called Jovan who is employed in the big engineering company, tries to get his chief attention by doing all sorts of bad thing, just to get higher on the job position.

Jovan moved to his new house with his son and wife who were very decent people, the house was in the same block of flats his chief lived, as a result his son got to know his dad’s chief’s daughter and fell in love. But Jovan was not aware of this, in the same time he wanted to engage his cousin Sandi with pretty young Elsa the daughter of his boss. No one liked the talkative troble maker Jovan, apart of a plumpt over 50 year old single woman, cousin of his and Sandi’s sister who were the sam troble makers. The tall curly hair Sandi, who was going to be set up be his sister and
cousin Jovan, was all ready engage with this beautiful, intelligent girl Irena, who works in the same office.

Jovan also went to Irena’s office to try and split her up from Sandi by saying lots of bad thing about Sandi and the whole family, forgetting that he came from the same family.

This amazing comedy, with lots of humor and skech, is appropriate to watch with all the family and enjoy the best play of all times. And also shows us what the right thing to do and not to make rummers or be a troble maker.

(278 words)

4. Amy (pre-test)

God’s Time is The best.

It is a story of a family who waited for several years before they could have a child.

Unfortunately the girl died at age of seven years. Moreover, the girl’s mother was terribly beaten in her dream at the same night she died. When she woke up she made a confession on how she and her friend went to consult a native doctor for a child after long years of barreness and how she failed to pay back the hug vow she made for the native doctor before the death of her daughter.

Furthermore, her spouse forgave her and told her to always wait for God’s time that human gives something they always want in return. He also said that it would have been better not to have had her then loosen an intelligent and talented daughter like her. In addition, because she had won two best parent of the year awards for them from her school.
4. Amy (post-test)

God’s time is the best

It is an old film by Sola Sobowak, directed of Where’s the Lord, the 50-winning film in Nigeria in 2007. Adapted from an old woman who happen to be her neighbour. God’s time is the best thriller movie.

It’s set in 2009 in Nigeria and tells the story of a 50 year old polite man with a strong faith whose wife had a child from the power of a herbalist through an impatient friend.

The film is quite stunning. It got a lot of effects but what strikes you most is when the child is being taken from school to home severely.

It’s worth watching because it’s such a thriller story that teaches a barren woman to wait for their time.
## Appendix 3. ESOL City and Guilds Assessment criteria for a Review

**Writing Assessment Record – Level 2: Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Typical performance features</th>
<th>Marks available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process features</td>
<td>A plan is produced which structures relevant information clearly to improve the final result. Work is proof-read and revised as necessary, for accuracy, and is revised for meaning.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work is planned in a way which includes relevant information about the topic. A rough copy of the review is produced. Work is proof-read and revised as necessary, for accuracy and meaning.</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity achievement</td>
<td>Written work produced is a succinct and comprehensive response to the task set, in subject, content and format.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Written work produced matches task set, in subject, content and format.</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content is ordered and structured in a way that is appropriate to the expression of complex ideas. Ideas are sequenced in such a way as to enhance the intended effect of the writing (clarity, persuasion etc.) Where appropriate, ideas are linked using formal discourse markers such as nevertheless, in spite of the fact that subsequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extent and degree of detail are suitable for the purpose of the text. Content is ordered and structured in a way that is appropriate to a review and the message to be conveyed. Organisation is clearly signposted using discourse markers to indicate narrative sequence, structure of argument, logical relations (such as cause consequence) and links between ideas. Content is organised into paragraphs as appropriate and these have coherent internal structure.</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical accuracy</td>
<td>Text is virtually free of grammatical errors. Accuracy is maintained in complex sentences requiring correct sequence of tenses or verb agreement with complex noun phrases. Very few errors in respect of grammatical features expected at this level. Such errors that are present are mostly lapses that are easily corrected.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Uses the full range of embedded and relative clauses, noun phrase and participle constructions, conditional clauses. Uses grammatical features in a way which suits the type of text and intended effect, eg passive voice to shift focus from agent to action, or modal expressions to express degrees of certainty. Uses formulaic language where appropriate. Uses a rich store of vocabulary suitable for purpose, including idioms and technical terms. Makes use of word connotations and associations to achieve effects or to suit intended audience. Uses figurative language, metaphors and idioms in an effective way.</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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75
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks awarded:</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical accuracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout, punctuation and spelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total marks awarded</td>
<td>6/12 required for success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessor's name  
Assessor's signature  
Date  
Candidate's signature  
Date  
Internal Verifier's name  
IV's signature  
Date  

Level 2 Writing: Assessment Pack
Appendix 4. Tape script of end of course group interview (recorded on 26.3.15)

Teacher I’d just like to ask you some questions about what we’ve been doing. So, what do you think you’ve learnt on this short course?

Kristina I think we learn how write a review, how correct write review, how this should look like. We learn about structure, about participants and processes. I didn’t know about this when we started and now I think I have good idea how this is

Ellie And we have learnt a special language, to use for writing a review, new words adjectives a lot, we call them desriber and qualifier

Kristina Now we know we use them as much as possible. I didn’t know that

Ellie Yes and it makes our speech distinguished and it is fine. I’m happy about that

Teacher My next question is are there any activities that you didn’t enjoy, anything that you didn’t really like?

Lena Not really. I enjoyed everything apart of today. It’s not really I didn’t enjoy it was to write the review on our own, but still was ok. Quite alright. We are independent.

Teacher Ok. Do you think this approach has helped you with your writing and your reading skills?

Amy Yes it does help me a lot as a person, like about the processes, being, doing, saying and sensing because before I didn’t know the difference
between the sensing and being so now when I’m writing I know when to use being, doing, saying and sensing

Teacher OK. That’s great. Any other thoughts on that one? OK. How has it helped you think about language and patterns?

Ellie Absolutely sure it improved our language in many ways. Not only our language but our thinking about language and about writing

Lena And another thing from now on when I’m going to watch a movie I’m gonna see in a different aspect so I’m gonna try to put all this, see how the movie’s made, and how they write about movies. That’s good.

Teacher And maybe when you read reviews to think about that? That’s good. What are the main terms you remember, the main names of things.

Ellie Terms like structure of language, looking at language

Teacher What about the particular terms that we’ve talked about?

Ellie We learned a lot like introduction, like story orientation

(Altogether) Orientation

Kristina Analysis

Lena And for sure from now on we are going to recognise what are the participants

Ellie Yes and how you describe them, how you describe them, with what should be in front of the thing, what should be after that, the qualifier, what they are called
Teacher: Ok that’s great. What about register, formal, informal? Has this made you think about choices in your writing?

Ellie: We use mostly formal, I think.

Amy: I would like to use the informal.

Kristina: We must decide for who we write, and decide which language we should use.

Teacher: Yes it depends doesn’t it? How does this approach we’ve done compare with how you’ve learnt grammar before? I think you’ve all had very different experiences of learning grammar.

Ellie: Very different, very big difference.

Teacher: A big difference? Could you give some examples?

Ellie: Yes, Because I am old enough to tell how we have learnt grammar.. 30 years, 40 years ago at school. It was about the structure of sentences. It was built up on the structure, how a sentence is.. what a sentence consists of and we called them subject, object, adjective and I don’t know some other and this approach is very, very different what we learnt here and I think it is very, very much complex and I have the opinion that it should be.. could be difficult for young children to understand or I am too old to judge it. Maybe children today are cleverer!

(all laugh)
Teacher: It’s interesting you say that because they are trying to use it in schools. Any other thoughts on how it compares to how you learnt grammar at school?

Kristina: I learn English a couple of years and I never heard about participants, describers and circumstances and I’m happy to learn about this, like Ellie says, it’s complex and we can use both knowledge from the past and this new and now our writing will be better.

Teacher: That’s good so you’re combining this with what you know before. You’ve had a lot of discussions. How have the discussions helped you understand how language means what it does?

Lena: It helps me a lot because we can hear different opinions.

Kristina: And learn new words from each other.

Ellie: Yes, we learnt much from each other, we discuss and argue a lot!

Teacher: My last question. Would you like to explore any of these activities any further?

Amy: Yes I would.

Lena: If I have time.

Amy: I would like if the class can be shifted to maybe 10 or 11.

Teacher: Ok we can sort the time, but what about what we’re doing? Do you think this is something you’d like to look at more?

Amy: Yeah. I’d like to know more.

Teacher: Can you tell me why?
Amy  Because I can see improvements a lot and I wouldn’t want to stop it..if the
government can help to introduce more of this..like before you know when
I’m talking I don’t know the difference between informal and formal so now I
can say..can you please help me set up the table? But before I say can you
please go ahead and arrange the table? So now I like set up, it’s like nice
English

Teacher  Ok any other thoughts on that?

Kristina  I learn English for two years now. I think this is all the time same. I
mean I still must to learn something new because I’m not perfect but
learning English before I think this is all the same. Every year, every
year the same way and here, now, something new and with different
way and I think this is like much better to change this way, how we
learn, how we look for this, like for example, being, doing, seeing,
sensing. This is absolutely new for me and still not exactly clear. I
know what this mean but if I want to use, if I want to use it I think I
still need…..

Ellie  We could do with some more lessons and times to make it really clear
and really active in ourselves

Kristina  More practice

Ellie  And really know how to use all this

Lena  How to use and how to put things.

Teacher  Anything else you would like to say?.....Ok, thank you very much.

(End of recording)
Appendix 5 – “St Vincent” film review

There’s something wonderfully crumpled about Bill Murray. Even if you took an iron to him, the creases would probably pop back in an instant. And he has this lived-in quality in St Vincent, a comedy from writer/director/producer Theordore Melfi about a Brooklyn grouch with barely a good word for anyone.

Murray’s Vincent, a Vietnam vet who lives alone with his Persian cat, Felix, delights in failure. He drinks. He gambles. He occasionally has sex with a pregnant prostitute named Daka (Naomi Watts, with a heavy Russian accent). The only thing slightly out of character is that he visits an Alzheimer’s sufferer Sandy (Donna Mitchell) at a nearby retirement home. Otherwise he’s a cash-strapped recluse who is happily drinking away his last days. Until, that is, Maggie (Melissa Mc Carthy), a single nurse recovering from a tough divorce and her 12 year old son Oliver (Jaeden Lieberher) move in next door.

She quickly starts imposing on him, asking if he’d watch Oliver after school. Naturally, given his selfish nature, he charges her by the hour and he soon takes
Oliver to a bar and the racetrack. With Oliver in desperate need of a father-figure, Vincent shambles in, even showing him how to fight off bullies with a swift blow to the nose.

Murray’s physical comedic skills clearly haven’t deserted him, as one brilliant early scene, where he endures an accident in his kitchen, demonstrates. His laid-back vibe ensures the action never feels too overcooked. Watts, meanwhile, almost steals his thunder, if only because of her how-far-can-you-push-it accent and outfits.

The ending is drenched in sticky-sweet sentiment but St Vincent is proof that there are few better American comic actors working today.

(adapted from review in “Total Film”, January, 2015:58).
Appendix 6- Photographs showing transitivity in the film reviews

(adapted from Stories4Learning website)

- Participants

- Processes

- Circumstances
Appendix 7—“No Good Deed” reviews to show 2 different writers’ language choices.

No Good Deed – review 1

Sam Miller’s No Good Deed is about an escaped convict who sets out to seek revenge on those who have wronged him.

We see Colin (Idris Elba) kick off the film when he appeals to have his prison sentence cut short as he feels he has served his time. Put away for a bar fight that resulted in the death of a man, this crime is only the beginning when it comes to his evil ways. Luckily for society his appeal is turned down. But uh-oh! On the way back to the slammer Colin manages to escape, not caring that he has even more blood on his hands.

Now he’s “free” Colin sets about finding his ex-girlfriend, who chose not to stick by the thug while he was inside. Big mistake. Especially as after five years in jail Colin’s jealousy returns when he finds out – shock horror- she has a new man. The result is not good and shows us just how violent he is.
After dealing with his ex, Colin turns up on the doorstep of Terry (Taraji P Henson) a mother of two whose husband has been less than romantic recently. Asking to use her phone after a car crash, Colin begins to charm Terry and ends up waiting inside for his “pick-up truck”. Terry’s nature means she is happy to chat away and Colin even meets her young daughter as the family go about their nightly routine. Unfortunately Terry’s husband is away on business which gives way to Colin’s plan.

When Terry’s pal, Meg (Leslie Bibb) arrives for a girly night in the three get on like old friends. But psychos like Colin can’t keep up the act forever and events soon turn for the worse. Cue blood and violence.

There are some scary moments in this average thriller but Terry never seems truly terrified (which in turn means we aren’t overly worried). The twist isn’t too clever either but if you want a movie that doesn’t require much brain power this may be one for you.

(Adapted from www.pearlanddean.com/film/review)
Sam Miller’s No Good Deed focuses on an escaped convict who sets out to seek revenge on those who have wronged him.

Idris Elba’s sinister character Colin begins the film when he appeals to have his prison sentence reduced as he feels he has served his time. Imprisoned for a violent bar fight that resulted in the gruesome death of a man, this crime is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to his menacing ways. The refusal of his appeal is a fortunate one for society. However Colin engineers a skilful escape on his way back to prison, not caring that he has even more blood on his hands.

With his new-found freedom Colin sets about tracing his ex-girlfriend, who abandoned the damaged and dark individual while he was in prison. This proves to be a grave error on her part. The discovery that after five years in prison she has a new man heightens his jealousy. The consequences are tragic and show the audience just how deranged the convicted felon is.

After dealing with his former lady friend Colin arrives on the doorstep of Terry (Taraji P. Henson) a mother of two whose husband has been less than doting recently. Asking to use her phone after a car crash, Colin’s cunning side manifests
itself as he charms Terry into allowing him to wait inside for his rescue vehicle. Terry’s kind-hearted nature means the conversation flows easily and Colin even meets her young daughter as the family attend to their nightly routine. Unfortunately Terry’s husband is away on business which gives way to Colin’s malicious plan.

When Terry’s friend Meg (Leslie Bibb) arrives for a night in the three get on like old friends. However psychotic individuals like Colin are unable to maintain such affable charms forever and events soon turn sinister. Unsettling scenes of blood and violence ensue.

There are some chilling moments in this mediocre thriller but Terry never seems truly terrified which in turn means the audience are not overly worried. The twist is disappointing and overall the story-line does little to stretch and challenge.

(Adapted from www.pearlanddean.com/film/review)
Appendix 8- Genre template

Using a genre approach

The structure of a film review

1. **Title** (to attract the reader’s attention)

2. **Introduction**

   e.g. Director/Actors/ previous work/type of film

3. **Story Orientation** (an incomplete synopsis)

   e.g. circumstances of time/circumstances of place/who/what/when/where/why

   (Material processes mainly)

   (optional)

4. **Analysis of film’s message/ Analysis of film as an Art form**

   e.g. the quality of the film/film production, the features of the film

5. **Evaluation**

   e.g. informing the reader whether it’s worth viewing

   (Being or Sensing processes mainly)
Appendix 9-Joint construction of experiential grammar in the clause

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The leading, well-known film director Pete Doctor, whose previous productions include Toy Story and Monsters, released his best-selling computer animation film named Up in 2010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The nervous, newly-wed, childhood sweetheart, Ellie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An old, married couple, who enjoy the time of their lives together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A grumpy, old Carl Frederickson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A chubby, young, Russell, with a friendly, gorgeous smile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A colourful, big, rare bird named Kevin, who loves chocolate and looks for her young all the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An evil, old discoverer named Muntz, chasing after the rare bird</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The lost and dangerous wilderness of South America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• meet,</td>
<td></td>
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Appendix 10- Taped joint construction stage, with use of metalanguage

-marked-

Group of 3 (Amy absent)

Teacher: Perhaps one person write, all working together

Ellie: Who can write? (laughs) I can write. Let’s begin at the beginning that mean introduction.

Kristina: And we must decide which sentences we can put in

Introduction.

Ellie: Yes we can build into introduction

Kristina: I think this first sentence..”the leading well-known film director”

Ellie: Shall I write the whole sentence?

Lena: Do we add more stuff into this? Do we add more description?

Ellie: If I write you’ll have to do the thinking?

Kristina: All the time I think. So Lis should we write a review now?

Teacher: Yes so now you’re writing your film review about Up. Try to include all of this.

Lena: So we have the introduction almost there. I don’t think we can add much

Kristina: I think this is not enough for the introduction, because in introduction must be for example director, actors, previous
work… animated movie..? yeah

Lena: That’s what I was saying, you’ve got the description there

Ellie: That was the introduction. Let’s go over to story orientation

**story orientation** is a short summary of the film, do you agree?

Lena: yeah.. definitely

Kristina: Now we can.. must… describe this movie in short

Ellie: We have to use these **processes** words for meeting… falling in love for instance.

Lena: Did we use a title? **Story orientation**, obviously old man

Ellie: It starts with the childhood

Kristina: And how much… many we want to say about childhood?

Ellie: One sentence…

Kristina: What is the most important? The meeting that girl

Lena: The meeting Ellie

Ellie: “A young adventurer Carl Frederickson meets… Ellie or… falls in love with his childhood sweetheart Ellie and they get married for life and grow old together”

Kristina: Yes because that is not the most important thing in this movie

The most important was this journey..
Ellie: I would think it …still it belongs to the introduction because all the film, the adventures, what the film is about start after that, but that is too much for an introduction we shall take only one sentence

Lena: We’ll get the most important things to put there

Ellie: That is to show the participants…(writes and reads aloud)

Lena: So yeah participants and what..

Ellie (writes) So the participant…”A young adventurer Carl Frederickson meets or falls in love with his childhood sweetheart”. We have to use describers with his childhood sweetheart, Ellie..make another sentence it will be too long otherwise

Kristina: Or maybe something..”the movie begins when… Carl Frederickson meet..met Ellie”, I look for this No Good Deeds review and how this was written here film..This first

Ellie: “It kicks off the film”, It should be formal.

Kristina: This first in story orientation…”begins the film when he appears to have his prison sentence reduced”

Ellie: We can do it the other way round when… story orientation, and we summarise that was how the film begin(reads again)

”they grow old together”. That is how the film begins. Some
Lena: "Describer..."

Kristina: Which tense we use here

Ellie: I use present tense. And now processes?

Lena: "Falls in love".

Elie: It doesn’t matter, it’s just a story I tell

Teacher: You are right – if you notice in your other reviews they use the present tense to show what’s happening.

Ellie: “They get married for life”

Kristina: I don’t exactly understand, “they get married for life”. I think they all get married for life

Ellie: It is always for life? (laughs)

Teacher: We hope!

Kristina: I think when we get married it’s always for life

Ellie: Is it always for life? I think it is an exception if we’re married for life?(laughs)

Kristina: When you get married you don’t think maybe one year, five years I will divorce. When you get married this is for life

Lena: That is a commitment
Ellie: It is a finished story. They got married for life. They did not divorce.

Kristina: Sorry but you know why I’m confused.. this is like the sky is blue and the tree is green for me.

Ellie: Tell it in other words.

Kristina: Don’t worry this is not important.

Ellie: Let’s continue because time is short. When you have other ideas tell me.

Lena: Yes, don’t worry.. processes?

Ellie: Processes...

Kristina: First we decide what we want to say about this movie. What was the most important? We should mention about this promise. What information we want to include? What we can.. don’t use and what we should mention.. This… The big impact for the movie is… like what was this Muntz discoverer..

Ellie: I think it will be too long then when we explain the whole story with Muntz. Muntz was an evil discoverer who appears in the jungle later.

Kristina: But you know there’s connection. They both like him and wanted adventure like this Muntz.

Ellie: It’s part of the story but I think it’s not so important his meeting with Muntz.
Kristina: OK so what’s next?

Ellie: I would say my problem is that for me problem that Ellie’s death belongs maybe to the introduction because it was a very important part of the story that his wife died

Kristina: I think it’s enough for introduction. We have now introduction. Now we have story orientation

Ellie: We have to explain why he got grumpy old man, why he got depressed and dull, why he tried to escape

Kristina: We can say “after Ellie’s death”

Ellie: “After his wife’s death”..ok that is a good sentence..”after the death of his deeply beloved wife”..as a desriber..is it good? “After the death of his deeply beloved wife.. Carl became a grumpy old man”

Teacher: Don’t forget keep it all in the same tense, so present?

Ellie: Ah yes..”Carl becomes a grumpy old man”, maybe more desriber

Lena: “A grumpy old man who”..

Ellie: Yes more desriber..a qualifier or what..

Kristina: Maybe not old because we know that he’s old..

Lena: But when you say grumpy you say grumpy old man..old, even though we know he was old, who wanted to be on his own and achieve what you call this what he wanted to do for this wife

Teacher: Promise?
Lena: The promise, so the grumpy old man who became lonely and wanted to stay alone

Kristina: But you know he decided he wanted to go to this place only after they decided they wanted to move him to this place..

Ellie: Nursing home? Shall we mention the nursery home? Is it important? Or just end the sentence here. “Remembering his promise to his wife to go to Paradise Falls”, make it nicer, make the sentence nicer but it goes something like this. He……

Kristina: He is….. “fulfilling the promise to his wife”

Ellie: Yes, Let’s continue with.. “remembering his promise made to his”. Shall we have a describer for promise? Strong promise. Can you remember “cross-your-heart”, cross- your- heart promise?

Lena: I think that one is more when you see it. To put it down is like one, what you say.. participant

Ellie: We can put it into hyphen?

Teacher: Inverted commas?

Ellie: “Remembering his cross-your- heart- promise made to his wife he”…now we have to describe the house with the balloons somehow..

Kristina: What we want to say first?….he decides to move his house

Lena: Lift his house

Kristina: He decides to move his house

Ellie: He decides…something with desperate..desperate decision
Kristina: “He makes a desperate decision to move” or..

Lena: “To lift up his house and sail…sail it”…

Kristina: “And sail…fly”…

Ellie: “To lift up his house”…We can describe the house a bit..describe it..
“his common home”,””their common home”

Lena: “Welcome home” you’re trying to say?

Kristina: This house was very old and they removed..renovated it together with
Ellie

Ellie: Because the house was a symbol of Ellie,,that is why he wanted to
take the house.. not to travel to Paradise Falls alone

Kristina: “A house where their love grow..happily”

Ellie: Yes something like that to describe the house, why it was important to
lift it..

Kristina: “An old married couple where they enjoyed the time of their lives
together”…

Lena: “Lift up their house where their love grow and they had lots of
memories”

Kristina: “And enjoyed the time of their lives together”

Ellie: “Lift up the house where their love grow” and I would put where
their… here…The house was very shabby. Here we can use a
describer in front of the house. How did the house look like?
Lena: “And enjoyed the times of their lives”, yeah it sound better that sentence

Kristina: Read all to this sentence…

Ellie: “Remembering his cross-your-heart promise to his wife he makes the desperate decision to lift up the house where their love grow and” ..I would put where again…

Kristina: “Where their love grow and where they enjoy the time of their lives”..

Ellie: The house was.. very.. shabby. Here we can use a describer in front of the house. How did the house look like?

Lena: Old, welcoming?

Ellie: Crooked…crooked.. you know…

Lena: Wobbly?

Ellie: Crooked… I like the word..

Kristina: But lift up and what? We concentrate on describe everything and we don’t make sense.

Ellie: OK it comes. The sense comes later (laugh together). “Lift up the house and……reach the Paradise Falls”

Kristina: I think it’s too long. It’s too long. I think this is too long. We should make a next sentence

Ellie: We have to explain first the sense of the lifting up. You’re right

Kristina: Why did he lift up? To move, to sail, to visit?
Ellie: To travel

Kristina: Yeah

Ellie: To travel to the...

Kristina: Remember he bought the ticket

Ellie: You said you didn’t like the film! You know every moment and you slept. You were lying! You remember everything! (joke)”To travel to the wilderness of South America”

Kristina: You know when I fell asleep when they fight with this balloon on the end and this Muntz and wanted to take him

Ellie: “To travel to the wilderness of South America”.

Teacher: Can you read it so far Ellie? Are you going to change the title at all? Later?

(Ellie reads aloud from the beginning)

“The leading well-known film director Pete Docter, whose previous productions include Toy Story and Monsters, released his best-selling computer animation film named Up in 2010. A young adventurer Carl Frederickson falls in love with his childhood sweetheart Ellie. They get married for life and grow old together. That is how the film begins. After the death of his deeply beloved wife, Carl becomes a grumpy old man. Remembering his “cross-your-heart promise” to his wife to travel to the wilderness of South America, Paradise Falls, he makes a desperate decision to lift up the crooked house where their love grew and they enjoyed the time of their life together
Teacher: That’s it so far? Absolutely excellent..fantastic! Just the last sentence I think it’s a bit too long or come back to it.

Ellie: “He makes a desperate decision”. We can put a full stop here. “He lifts up his house”

Teacher: Perhaps that’s a new paragraph?

Ellie: Yes.. “he lifts up”

Teacher: He lifts up how? You need some circumstances?

Ellie: “He lifts up the house with the aid of helium balloons”

Kristina: I think this is not important. If you want to know you need to watch the film

Ellie: We have to come to Russell

Kristina: We not start with Russell yet! We have lots of ideas about Russell but how we put them together?

Lena: How we make Russell appear?

Ellie: Let him appear somehow

Kristina: What’s happening in movie?

Ellie: He discovers a boy hanging on the roof outside

Kristina: But do you remember you came to him he wanted to help him.. for his last badges? Carl sent him to look for something behind the house

Lena: Just to get rid of him

Kristina: And then he came back
Ellie: To find some…

Kristina: Maybe we can mention

Ellie: “An over optimistic scout boy trying to get his badge, accidentally remained hanging”… ( all laugh)

Kristina: But we’ve got something like this…”with the unexpected company of Russell”

Lena: How about you start while he was in the air?

Ellie: “He was enjoying the flight…while he was enjoying…he looked quite enthusiastic”

Lena: “While in the air”

Kristina: “Carl discovers the unexpected company of Russell”

Ellie: “While in the air Carl discovers the unexpected company of Russell”

Kristina: And now we can explain who is Russell

(reads through examples)

Ellie: “An eight year old boy scout”

Lena: Who they met before

Kristina: Why you do so long sentences? Why not full stop? Why we write this review?

Ellie: We have to do a story orientation
Kristina: Why we write this review? Why? If they read this review and they like it then good and maybe they will watch the film. If the sentence are too long I think it’s boring.

Ellie: It’s an objective…summarising of the film, what is happening in the film. I don’t influence anybody. The influence comes in the evaluation or the analysis.

Kristina: Why you write all of this?

Ellie: To inform people

Kristina: Yes to inform. When you put in too long sentence it’s too boring

Teacher: What we’re trying to do is build our sentences

Kristina: But it’s so long. I think it needs short sentences with simple information not too long, not like this

Teacher: Yeah you can overdo you can do too much. I think what you’re trying to do with the describers is great but perhaps sometimes it’s too long

Kristina: While in the air..

Ellie: Because it is a describer

Kristina: I think we should put a full stop after Russell and describe Russell in another sentence

Ellie: OK. He is..

Kristina: But this is good...

Lena: We don’t have to put that much..just to connect something
Ellie: “Who visited Carl..the old man..before..”

Kristina: Maybe earn..he must work

Lena: But first we have to say before the house was lifted..

Ellie: Isn’t it too much about Russell..it’s not important is it?

Kristina: What’s next?

Ellie: New paragraph – we have to use formal words, formal expressions

Kristina: We can mention about the storm..surprised them

Ellie: It is enough..”they landed in the wild bushy jungle?”

Lena: Because of the storm

Ellie: They land

Lena: They didn’t land where they wanted to

Ellie: But in the end..is it important? “They landed in the wild bushy tropical jungle”

Teacher: Can I suggest just another 10 minutes?

Ellie: .. “and the real adventures begins with birds and dogs”…

Kristina: We don’t mention about the bird..

Ellie: I don’t think we have to finish the story because the audience must go there and watch the film. “They land in the tropical jungle where the real adventure begins”.

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Kristina: Look for some different words to describe adventures

Lena: I was just thinking of saying about they met some interesting characters

Ellie: Where the real adventures begin

Teacher: Could you say about their encounters?

Ellie: What is that?

Teacher: Where they meet some characters

Lena: Interesting and weird characters

Teacher: You say interesting, what about wonderful and weird?

Lena: Yeah that will do it makes you think…

(Ellie reads back story so far)

Lena: What we got left now?

Ellie: Let’s make some analysis and evaluation. What is analysis?

Kristina: The quality, features of the film. This movie have some message. We want to mention some message. What is the message?

Ellie: Let’s give analysis first.

Lena: Is this cartoon?

Ellie: 3D

Kristina: This is one thing I like about this, everybody can change

Ellie: Don’t give up on your dreams. That is the message for me
Kristina: I disagree with you

Lena: We can put both of messages

Ellie: It can have more messages

Lena: My message…You always have to make your promise

Ellie: Fulfil your promise…we have two more minutes…”This wonderfully filmed”

Lena: “Wonderful animated movies”

Ellie: …tells us how to fulfil our promises

Kristina: I don’t think he decide to this adventure to fulfil his promise

Lena: What did you say before? People can change

Kristina: After this interaction with Russell he changed

Ellie: Stop discussing!…I would say evaluation can be…

Lena: What is the evaluation?

Ellie: “I would suggest to watch this film for both adults and children”. I use formal language for this thought

Kristina: But we want..we have to..we can show or tell people

Lena: We can use both

Ellie: So telling “It’s well worth seeing” and showing “it delivers the message”. We can say “Pete Docter one more time delivers a …masterpiece”. I would like to end it “which is suitable for adults and
children” but put it **formal**…”It’s really advisable for watch..for children and adults”…

Kristina: Maybe we can say something..

Ellie: It is enough…

Kristina: This film make us think…here is one more sentence..”this film is quite stunning”.

Teacher: Could you read again from the beginning?

(Ellie reads joint construction)

(End of recording)
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