

## Message from the President

By Helen Caple

Welcome to our Spring newsletter! We have so much to report and equally as much to announce, so this is going to be a bumper edition. Many of our members have spent the winter conference season travelling far and wide to participate in the discussion and dissemination of their research at AMODE, ESFLC, and ISFC. You can read their reports in the newsletter.

But first, I'd like to reflect on the loss of another giant of the SFL community – Gunther Kress. Many of our ASFLA members have a long and rich history with Gunther Kress, through his years at UTS, the afternoons in the inner west spent discussing semiotics, his early editing of Halliday's papers into the book *Halliday: System and Function in Language*, each of which contributed to the work that he and Theo van Leeuwen eventually published as *Reading Images*. Throughout his career he has played a foundational role in education, CDS, and social semiotics. Mary Macken-Horarik (in her remembering of him at ESFLC) described him as a disruptor, a pike in a carp pond, who saw the need to upset the cosmology – the centrality of language in the universe of analysis. And that is exactly what he did, a point also echoed by Joe Breen in



his lovely piece for the Irish Times, in saying that he shone a light in dark places. Gunther's work with Theo van Leeuwen has been hugely influential in my own research career, so for all of this I am immensely grateful. ASFLA will be hosting a symposium to honour and remember Gunther Kress on Saturday October 5, immediately after the ASFLA conference.

Speaking of the ASFLA conference, Convenors Yaegan Doran, Alex Garcia and Dorothy Economou are putting the final touches to the program (a draft of the program is already available at the conference website) and we are all looking forward to welcoming you to the University of Sydney for the conference in October. There will be a lot happening on the side-lines at the conference and we would like to encourage members to get involved. In particular, ASFLA Treasurer Trish Weekes will be chairing a discussion about the role of SFL in education and the

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*Please let us know if you have any news that should appear on these pages or if you have any ideas about what you'd like to see:  
l.logi@unsw.edu.au*

Lorenzo Logi, Editor

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ways in which we can better support English teachers who are facing renewed resistance to SFL in the curriculum. This session will be held at the end of the first day of the conference, and I encourage all to attend.

We will also be presenting the second Hasan Prize at the ASFLA Conference. The award recognizes emerging scholars whose recent work engages deeply with Professor Hasan's topical and methodological concerns. Nominations are open until 26 September. Details are posted on the ASFLA website, <http://asfla.net/hasan-prize/> and in the newsletter.

We will also be launching the first phase of our ASFLA History Project at the conference. Thanks to the efforts of Fran Christie and Maree Stenglin in collecting facts and figures about ASFLA's history, we have now collated their work into a dynamic historical timeline, which can be viewed at the ASFLA website (<https://asfla.net/asfla-history-project/>). You will find a wealth of information (on past conferences, symposia, workshops that ASFLA has organised/sponsored), heart-warming memories of past ASFLA presidents, and a year-by-year list of major publications by members of the SFL community in Australia. Being a history, it is only as complete as the questions we have asked of ourselves, and we welcome additions and/or corrections where we have made mistakes in our rememberings. We would also love to have more photographs (e.g. from conferences) in the timeline, so if you have anything you would like to add or correct, please get in touch ([asflaweb@gmail.com](mailto:asflaweb@gmail.com)).

Finally, I would like to say a hearty congratulations to Dr Lindsay Williams, who has been awarded his PhD from the University of New England. Well done, Lindsay (and congratulations also to his supervisor Eveline Chan).

To all in the SFL community, I wish you all the best for the spring and summer months. Safe travels if you are heading to Sydney for the ASFLA conference, and I look forward to welcoming you all to the conference in October.

## Vale Gunther Kress



**Gunther Rolf Kress (26.11.1940 - 20.06.2019)**

*By Theo van Leeuwen*

I first met Gunther in 1987, one summer evening in Armidale, where we had been to a small conference on language and education. One of the conference organizers had invited us to his house, and we were sitting in his garden, discussing the critical analysis of media speech and writing. After a while he suggested we do some work together. Two weeks later I sat in the courtyard of his small terrace house in Newtown, a few streets away from where I then lived. 'What shall we do?', he asked. I said I had always wanted to study the 'language of the image'. I had read Barthes, Metz, Peter Wollen, but thought more could be done. Gunther said he had long realized it was no longer viable to analyse media texts without paying attention to the visual. So the visual it was to be. Then he stood up, went inside and a moment later returned with two little books from the bedroom of his young son Michael - Ladybird's *Baby's First Book* and Dick Bruna's *On My Walk*, the one explaining images with words, the other entirely visual. For almost two hours we talked about these two books, which

eventually would become key examples in our book *Reading Images*.

From then on, we met every week, starting early in the morning. We would begin with a swim in Nielsen Park, buy fresh croissants on the way back, and then talk over breakfast at Gunther and Jill's place, first in Newtown, then in Petersham, always with examples on the table, and always making the copious notes on which the chapters of *Reading Images* would eventually be based. It is this approach to creating ideas that is, to me, Gunther's greatest legacy - an open-minded dialogue, freely playing with ideas, daring to be intuitive, all this well away from the world of University seminar rooms, formal research proposals and funding applications, and embedded in conviviality and the enjoyment of good food and good company.

Gunther had practiced this form of research for over ten years with Bob Hodge (who is also a master in it) and others in his work on critical

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linguistics at the University of East Anglia which culminated in *Language as Ideology*, an innovative and ground-breaking mixture of Marxist-inspired social theory, Whorfian interpretations of Hallidayan grammar, and a transformation of Chomsky's concept of transformation, not as the transformation of an innate and universal deep grammar, but as the transformation of reality into ideology. In the 1980s, other approaches to critical discourse analysis would emerge, but Hodge and Kress were there first. Today, critical discourse analysis has become a major intellectual movement, with several journals and international conferences.

Also in the 1980s, Gunther and Bob published *Social Semiotics*, which elaborated and deepened the social theoretical basis of social semiotics and extended critical linguistics beyond language into different modes of communication, including news photography, family photos and comic strips. It was a fertile period for social semiotics in Sydney, with regular meetings of the 'Newtown Semiotics Circle', again in people's homes, in the evenings, with food and drink provided. The first version of *Reading Images*, which many have come to see as the launching pad of multimodality studies, emerged in this context, initially published by Deakin University Press as a study guide for a distance course in teacher education.

In the early 1990s Gunther moved to London to take up a chair of Semiotics and Education at the Institute of Education. This led to an increasing focus on multimodal and social semiotic approaches to learning (including early learning) and literacy, to collaborations with Carey Jewitt, Staffan Selander, Jeff Bezemer and others, to publications such as *Before Writing* (1997) and *Literacy in the New Media Age* (2003), and, inspired by all this, to new theoretical formulations, as in *Multimodality – A social-semiotic approach to contemporary communication* (2011),

and, most recently, *Multimodality, Learning and Communication: A social semiotic frame* (2016), with Jeff Bezemer.

In all this, Gunther has played an absolutely foundational role in at least four fields - critical discourse studies, social semiotics, multimodality, and the application of all of these to various aspects of education. His influence will be felt in all these fields for many years. But what also makes him unforgettable is his generosity to colleagues and students and his conviviality, the love of life which from time to time emerges in his work as well, as when he opened a passage on colour by writing: "As I write this, it is a day in mid-August, just before lunchtime – I am sitting looking out through the open French windows, on a tranquil French countryside. I see low hills, trees, forest in the background, some Charolais cattle in the pasture beyond the fence". What also makes him unforgettable is the way he would pause for a moment and look at his audience at the start of his talks, a look at once benign and bewildered, as if to say "But who are you?" and "Do you really want to listen to me?". He was on his way to give such a talk at a conference in Rome when he became unwell on a cobble-stoned street minutes away from the conference venue. He died in hospital later that day. It is hard to realize that he is not with us anymore – but his work is, and will continue to inspire and provoke us for many years to come.



# Vale Gunther Kress

## *From writing to image: how Gunther Kress helped change the way we think*

By Joe Breen (originally printed in Irish Times, 19.8.2019)

### **I like to think Kress would have liked Leiria's story and way in which it was told**

The small Portuguese city of Leiria lies about 137 kilometres north of Lisbon. In summer it is a pretty place, its medieval centre full of narrow, winding streets. It is easy to lose your way, but equally easy to find your bearings again by training your eyes on the spectacular Leiria Castle, which has overlooked the old town since the castle was first built to halt Muslim forces when Islam vied with Roman Catholicism for dominance over the Iberian peninsula.

After the Reconquista was completed in 1492, the Portuguese kingdom turned to those left behind who were outside the Christian family. In 1497, all Jews and Muslims who had not converted were expelled from Portugal.

One of the leading families living in the town's small Jewish Quarter was the de Ortas. Their house is now a fascinating museum. Samuel de Orta was at the cutting edge of communications technology – he was a printer; Johannes Gutenberg had printed his first Bible in 1452. Samuel and his three sons produced renowned volumes including, in 1496, the *Almanach Perpetuum* by Abraão Zacuto. This contained the tables of “solar declination which proved to be of great use for navigation”, as one of exhibit caption stated. This is something of an understatement. The era of Portuguese exploration and colonisation in the Age of Discovery had begun and such a tome would have been invaluable.

If that history has more than its share of light and shade, then Leiria's more recent boast of being a key site for the growth of the plastics industry is no less so.

In the city's main museum, an exhibition from the plastics age concludes with the unhappy fact that plastics the solution has now become plastics the problem as the mounting cost of its pollution continues to affect the world.

I like to think Gunther Kress would have been impressed with Leiria's colourful story and the imaginative ways in which it was told. You could say he was also in the communications business in that as professor of semiotics and education at the Institute for Education at the University of London he was hugely influential in academia and beyond with his work on social semiotics, multimodality and education generally.

### **Thinker**

He was also the reason I was in Leiria. However, sadly he had died suddenly in Rome two weeks before he was due to address the annual conference of the European Systemic Functional Linguistics Association in the Portuguese city.

Prof Kress was a remarkable thinker.

Although his reputation as a leading theorist was built on an impressive body of work that was as wide-ranging as it was deep, he was arguably best known for the 1996 book, *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design*, which he co-authored with Professor Theo van Leeuwen.

While studying in Sydney, Kress came into contact with Michael Halliday, a British-born academic and his new theory of systemic functional linguistics. Halliday's influence was to prove inspirational. In *Reading Images* they explain what Halliday brought to the party. Linguistics had “generally been studied in isolation from meaning”, but those following

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Halliday's work saw "grammatical forms as resources for encoding interpretations of experience and forms of social (inter)action".

### Visual

Kress and van Leeuwen then explained what they were doing. "Just as grammars of language describe how words combine in clauses, sentences and texts, so our visual 'grammar' will describe the way in which depicted elements – people, places and things – combine in visual 'statements' of greater or lesser complexity and extension." As such they were building on one of the great changes in contemporary meaning-making, the shift, as Kress declared in his 2009 book, *Multimodality*, "from the dominance of the mode of writing to the mode of image".

I came across Kress and van Leeuwen and the concept of multimodality after a career in production journalism.

They helped me understand more deeply what happens, both at the levels of production and reader/reception, when, for instance, the modes of type, image and layout are combined to communicate.

Take the newspaper or webpage you are reading. This is a multimodal document with each mode employed to convey meaning. But

is that meaning stable?

There is no guarantee that you the reader will draw the same meaning as was intended. It is tricky stuff, but wonderfully illuminating of the myriad ways discourse works in the service of power.

Sadly, Gunther Kress will no longer shine a light in dark places. A leading scholar in the field of critical discourse studies, Jan Blommaert, spoke for many when he said "a really great one" had passed away. "Gunther was not just a scholar who defined the direction of thought of at least two generations of scholars in semiotics, multimodality, pedagogy and social thought. He was also a genuinely kind man, a wonderful friend and such fun to be around with."

Theo van Leeuwen stated Kress had "played an absolutely foundational role in at least four fields – critical discourse studies, social semiotics, multimodality, and the application of all these to various aspects of education." His influence, he said, would be felt in these fields for many years.

And so in the warmth of a Portuguese summer's night, we raised a glass to his life and his work, remembering the simple truth of what he termed as his slogan: "There is no meaning without framing."

### *Tributes for Gunther Kress:*

*By Helen Caple, 22.6.2019, via sys-func*

On behalf of the ASFLA community in Australia, I would like to extend my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the family of Gunther Kress, who died suddenly in Rome, Italy, on 20 June 2019. To his many many friends and colleagues, you have lost one of the founding fathers of multimodality, an original thinker, a humble and modest man who will be sorely missed.

Gunther was attending the AMODE conference in Rome and was due to give the opening plenary at the conference. Today, Friday, we had the opportunity to remember him in the only way fitting, by putting his theories to work in our own research presentations. We also had the opportunity to open the day with colleagues sharing their stories on the Gunther they knew. He was described variously as a teddybear, a man with an appreciation of the efficiency of little

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Italian cars, a humble man, and a man of generous spirit. For others, their interactions with Gunther reminded them of the importance of talk, no matter where it takes place, in taking pleasure in the not knowing, and in learning to be comfortable with chaos.

Rome may have crumbled a little more yesterday on witnessing the loss of such a great scholar, but he has left behind an incredible legacy and a wonderful community of multimodality scholars who will continue the work that he and his peers began.

Thank you, and rest in peace, dear Gunther.

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*By John Knox, 8.7.2019, via sys-func*

I realise it has been a few weeks since he suddenly passed away, but I still feel compelled to write about Gunther Kress. His scholarship has had a profound impact on the way I have understood the world - from his early work on critical linguistics to his work on multimodality and literacy. I was privileged to meet him once and he was extremely generous and warm. Despite hardly knowing him, I was shocked and upset to hear he passed away. My sincere condolences to his family and loved ones - we have lost a great scholar and person.

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*By Mary Macken-Horarik, 8.7.2019, via sys-func*

Hi John,

Thanks for sharing your sense of loss with us. I too have continued to feel sad at Gunther's passing over a fortnight ago. It is an incalculable loss and yet we need to find words for it, aware of how inadequate they are. News of Gunther's death reached me in the drought-stricken paddocks of a Yass farm and

I wandered around for hours, thinking of him. It was hard to bear in private. Coming to the ESFLA conference in Leiria Portugal has given me a chance to grieve Gunther's passing in the company of others who knew and cherished him. It is always the person we miss first and perhaps most. I remember Gunther's warmth, his infectious laughter as I shared earnestly about 'important' matters in narrative or genre in the early days of the genre-based literacy project in Sydney. I was never quite sure whether he was laughing with me or just near me. I remember his respect for the intelligent question, whether this came from a novice like me or from an established colleague; he valued with a kind of lightness of being the 'weight' of a sudden insight and he offered many teachers a shared sense of the importance of a social semiotic perspective on education for unstable futures.

The work he started will go on of course. Scholars like Bob Hodge, Theo van Leeuwen, Jon Ogborn, Carey Jewitt and Jeff Bezemer will continue to build on and perhaps surpass understandings that began in conversations, gallery visits and coffee meetings with Gunther Kress. Many of us within systemic functional semiotics will continue to learn from his writings and to find riches in his work on multimodality and concepts like the motivated sign, semiotic affordances, reading as the making of a new sign, the multimodal ensemble or his perspective on learning as a process of making new meanings. But the loss of Gunther as a person is something many will continue to grieve even if our contact with him was a singular occurrence or an encounter in a time many years ago. I want to thank him for the friendship, conversation, stunning (and confronting) insights and for the creation of a social semiotic enterprise worthy of serious (and playful) investment.

## Community News

### *From Queensland, Lindsay Williams reports:*

In August, the English Teachers Association of Queensland (ETAQ) held its annual conference and it was attended by nearly 400 teachers from throughout the state. Among the array of workshops on offer, there were a number of SFL-based sessions covering topics such as teaching grammar knowledge through poetry, sentence making, using the Appraisal system in English, and the potential of SFL approaches to paralinguistics for teaching spoken texts. In November, ETAQ is also conducting a Grammar Day aimed at developing English teachers' foundational knowledge of the language-in-use model and related grammatical concepts.

In book news, Oxford University Press is about to publish the second of two textbooks designed to support the new General English syllabus for senior students. *English for Queensland Units 3 & 4* foregrounds the language-in-use model, applying this to analysing assessment tasks. In addition, relevant features of language, paralinguistics and image are introduced to support students' reading and writing at key moments.

It is great to report that SFL, and in particular genre pedagogy, is used as the basis for a core subject (compulsory foundation) in the Master of Business program at the Business School, University of Queensland – and has been since 2016. Kate Power and Ken Tann are running the large course with about 500 students every semester. They are also teaching business communication based on SFL to students in the flagship Master of Data Science capstone program. In addition, a program to embed English language tutorials in postgraduate studies is being piloted at the Business School.

Currently, Ken Tann has three Ph.D. supervisions using SFL analysis: one each in marketing, finance, the Faculty of Medicine

working on Aged Care. Ken and his doctoral student in marketing are working with an agricultural company to improve their product packaging, based on SFL.

And, of course, Ken Tann, Kate Power and their team are convening the 2020 ASFLA conference to be held in Brisbane. We look forward to that.

Finally, the only Ph.D. completion to report is really a New South Wales achievement, but the student was a Queensland, so I include this one here: Lindsay Williams has been conferred with a doctorate from the University of New England. Supervised by Eveline Chan (and Devo Devrim), his thesis was entitled 'Nurturing affiliation: The interpersonal, multimodal work of stand-up comedians'.

### *From Western Australia, Anne Thwaite reports:*

Our main news is regarding publications and movements of members.

There have been some changes in WA this year, with Prof. Kay O'Halloran taking up a chair at the University of Liverpool. Before she left Curtin University, Kay and her team produced the following:

- Lotherington, H., Tan, S., O'Halloran, K. L., Wignell, P., & Schmitt, A. (2019). Analyzing the Talking Book "Imagine a world": A Multimodal Approach to English Language Learning in a Multimodal Context. *Text & Talk*. Published Online: 2019-08-30. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2019-0239>
- O'Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., & Wignell, P. (2019). SFL and multimodal discourse analysis. In G. Thompson, W. L. Bowcher, L. Fontaine, Liang, J. Y. & Schinthal, D. (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



# Community News

- O'Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., Wignell, P., Wang, R., Chai, K. & Lange, R. (2019). Multimodality: A New Discipline. In Pflaeging, J., Tseng, C-I., Wildfeuer, J., Bateman, J. and Seizov, O. (eds), *Multimodality: Towards a New Discipline*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- O'Halloran, K. L., Tan, S., Wiebrands, M., Sheffield, R., Wignell, P. & Turner, P. (2019). The Multimodal Classroom in the Digital Age: The Use of 360 Degree Videos for Online Learning. In de Silva Joyce, H. & Feez, S. (eds), *Multimodality Across Classrooms: Learning About and Through Different Modalities*. London/New York: Routledge, 84-102.
- Wignell, P., O'Halloran, K. L., & Tan, S. (2019). Semiotic Space Invasion: The Case of Donald Trump's US Presidential Campaign. *Semiotica*. 2019:226, 185-208.

The team has several more publications which have been accepted and are to appear. Dr Peter Wignell is now working at both Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities. Dr Sabine Tan remains at Curtin.

Prof. Beth Armstrong at Edith Cowan University has published the following:

- Groenewold, R., & Armstrong, E. (2019, online). A multimodal analysis of enactment in everyday interaction in people with aphasia. *Aphasiology*.
- Hersh, D. & Armstrong, E. (2019). The Complaint letter: An analysis of a written exchange at discharge between the spouse of a man with aphasia and the hospital. Poster presented at Communication in Medicine and Ethics (COMET), Adelaide, June.

Dr Anne Thwaite has published the following:

- Thwaite, A. (2019) "Halliday's View of Child Language Learning: Has it been Misinterpreted?". *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 44, no. 5.3. DOI: 10.14221/ajte.2018v44n5.3.

Anne also went to the European SFL Conference in Leiria, Portugal, and gave a paper entitled, "Talk about language in a diverse urban community in Australia".

We are always happy to welcome ASFLA members to WA!

## Visiting scholars:

A warm welcome to Lilian Ariztimuno, who has come to Australia with her family from Argentina on a PhD scholarship with the University of Wollongong, under the supervision of Shooshi Dreyfus and Alison Moore. She's going to be focusing on multimodal expressions of emotion. She will be attending the Friday afternoon master classes at Sydney uni and other events such as ASFLA so please make her feel welcome!

# Conference Reports

## ISFC46 - Santiago, Chile

By Lorenzo Logi

The 46th International Systemic Functional Congress was held at the Pontificia Universidad Católica in Santiago, Chile from July 23-27. Returning to South America as part of ISFLA's five-year global rotation, ISFC46 showcased the work of the continent's scholars alongside that of the global systemicist community. Reflecting the focus of recent work by emerging and established scholars, themes of language typology, multi/inter-modality, paralinguage and corpus assisted approaches resonated across the programme, often interacting with the linguistic, social and political contexts within which local and regional scholars work. The conference was preceded by an institute featuring courses across a variety of avenues, including multimodal discourse analysis, SFG descriptions and paralinguage.

The Australian SFL community was represented by Sue Hood, James Martin, Len Unsworth, Sally Humphrey, Shooshi Dreyfus, Peter White, Alexanne Don, Mira Kim, Long Li, Yaegan Doran and PhD candidates Dongbing Zhang, Yufei He, Yuan Ming, Qingxin Xu, Joshua Han, Georgia Carr and Lorenzo Logi.



Despite pre-emptive disappointment at not being able to see more of the sessions, I was intrigued by a number of the presentations I did attend. Among these, Carmen Luz Maturana's work analysing the role of colour in the staging of Chilean's children books was one of the clearest and most compelling explanations of the metafunctional meaning potential of colour, while Alexandra Garcia's corpus-inspired exploration of how victims' voices are represented in Colombian newspapers provided a sobering but necessary reminder of SFL's potential applications for the advancement of social justice.





# Conference Reports

Facilitating the smooth unfolding of the programme were volunteer students acting as courteous but firm timekeepers for presentations, and the community was zealously kept hydrated, caffeinated and nourished by generous catering options including a variety of dangerously moreish dulce de leche-based sweets. The conference dinner, held at the restaurant 'Las Cavas' directly underground from the rooms that hosted the presentations, was a festive affair accompanied by music and dancing, unsurprisingly initiated by our liquid-hipped Latin American colleagues.



ASFLA's own social media team was very active over the course of the conference, sharing updates and highlights through the association's Facebook page (and reacting quickly to address the comical *contretemps* of choosing a hashtag already claimed by the 2019 International Soft Fruit Convention).

Congratulations and many thanks to the conference convenor Teresa Oteiza and her colleagues for such a varied, stimulating and well-organised conference. We look forward to seeing the community again in Shenzhen for ISFC47!

## Highlights from ASFLA attendees:

"To me the highlight has been the confidence of young scholars to participate with deep respect as knowledge building leaders – across theoretical and applied contexts"  
- Sally Humphrey



"This year's ISFC would be an unforgettable experience for me because of the many firsts in my life: first individual presentation at ISFC, first colloquium with my supervisor, first trip to South America... and of course, most importantly, first free conference dinner! I feel so blessed to be part of the community. Thanks to everyone. XOXO"

- Qingxin Xu





## Conference Reports

"A particular highlight was Andrés Ramirez' plenary on a bilingual adaptation of Reading to Learn. We spend so much time thinking about de-construction, and his plenary was a wonderful example of the importance of the joint construction stage of the teaching and learning cycle, and how it can be both effective and empowering for students (Latino parents, in this case).

I also thoroughly enjoyed Sue Hood's pre-congress institute and plenary on embodied paralinguage - this is such a rich area of research and I can't wait to apply some of what I've learnt to my own work."

- Georgia Carr



I was completely blown away by Miriam Taverniers' complex and dynamic diagrams, and her meticulous theorisation of grammatical metaphor.

- Joshua Han





# Conference Reports

## AMode, 2019 - Rome, Italy



By Louise Ravelli

The hot, hot Roman sun; cool, marble corridors; the madness of mass tourism at the Trevi fountain; sweet Italian pastries for breakfast... there are many memories attached to the AMode conference held in Rome in June 2019, but none more important than the untimely passing of Gunther Kress. Gunther was not only meant to be the opening plenary speaker, but also was one of the main reasons we were all there – using his, van Leeuwen's, and colleagues' work in our own.

It was no easy matter for the conference organisers to deal with this situation, most of whom were close as colleagues and friends to Gunther. But they did so quietly and with aplomb, informing us all simply of the events, making the next morning's session an opportunity for us to share our memories, and dedicating the remainder of the conference to him.

And what a great conference it was. Over three days, AMode (Approaches to Multimodal Digital Environments: from theories to practices) encompassed more than 150 papers, numerous panels, and 4 outstanding plenaries (Marina Bondi, Rodney Jones, David Machin, Theo van Leeuwen), all focusing on the digital in some way.

The conference was a major outcome of the Erasmus-funded project, 'European Multimodal and Digital Education for Language Learning project' ([EU-MADE4LL](#)), which has been developing a trans-national syllabus and common framework of reference around intercultural digital literacy. The [diversity and depth of the papers](#) was extremely impressive, coming from all regions of the world, but with a particularly strong representation from Europe, especially Italy. Australian speakers included Jennifer Blunden; Helen Caple, Emilia Djonov; Annette Turney; Pauline Jones.

As a participant, I of course missed more than I could attend (as with any good conference), but two of my favourite talks were [Gunhild Kvåle](#) (University of Agder) on apps for learning the 'ABC' in Norway, and Addie China (University of Southern Florida) on [Beyoncé as a social semiotic resource](#) in social media.

Fun fact: the conference was hosted by the University of Rome, 'Tor Vergata', which was the first multidisciplinary program of English in Italy, growing from just four students ('a program for the unemployed' said its critics) to being the largest in Italy, with 400 students. Such is the legacy of Gunther Kress, stretching from the future of English language education to the impact of the digital in everyday life, in theory and in practice. Vale.



# Conference Reports

## ESFLC, 2019 - Leiria, Portugal

By Helen Caple

The European SFL Conference for 2019 was held at the Instituto Politecnico, in Leiria, Portugal, and convened by Marta Filipe Alexandre. The conference theme drew on three key domains that sit at the core of much work in SFL: multiliteracies, professional discourses and education. And these were reflected in the presentations by the three keynote speakers: Mariana Achugar (Universidad de la República, Uruguay) showed us how historical film can be used in language classrooms to create affective engagement with the experiences of others (particularly around traumatic experiences); Srikant Sanrangi (Aalborg University, Denmark) gave a very energized and provocative presentation on the relationship between intuition and expertise; and Jim Martin (University of Sydney, Australia) spoke to the ongoing challenge of modelling ideational semiosis in a stratified model of language and context.



There was meant to have been a fourth keynote – to be delivered by Gunther Kress. But as we all know, Gunther passed away shortly before the conference. To honour the great man and his legacy, the conference organisers used his session to hold a roundtable on multimodality, inviting three scholars to talk to the current state of affairs of multimodality in their fields and how Kress

had influenced their work/field. Mary Macken-Horarik (Australian Catholic University) spoke to Kress's intellectual largesse and the huge impact that Kress's work has had on multiliteracies and school English, but also noted that there is still a long way to go in developing understanding and integration of the tool kits needed to handle the array of multimodal texts now available for study. For Rebekah Wegener (University of Salzburg), Kress (with Hodge) was her pathway into linguistics, and this has taken her to the point where she can now challenge us all to think on the possibility of viewing multimodality as a discipline. Christian Matthiessen (Hong Kong Polytechnic University) thanked Kress for his early editing of Halliday, developing critical linguistics, and expanding social semiotics, but then fired a warning shot across the bows: that we are in danger of missing the multimodal boat. The future, Christian would have us believe, is 'Bateman with velocity'. Inspiring, provocative, and possibly even a tad outrageous: a fascinating session that spoke perfectly to the legacy of Gunther Kress.



Throughout the conference it was heart-warming to see so many of the presenters pay tribute to Gunther Kress through their papers. He was there in the work that so many of us presented. But the highlight of the conference for me was something quite extraordinary that happened during the conference dinner. The usual thanks and gifts were handed out to all who participated



# Conference Reports

## ESFLC, 2019 - Leiria, Portugal

in and organised the conference. But then the microphone was snatched from the hand of the conference convenor, and taken up by one of her colleagues, Inês Santos, who clearly had something she needed to get off her chest. Having not quite finished her PhD yet, Inês had plenty to vent about in relation to SFL and how it has taken over her life. Never have I seen anyone so expertly work SFL theory (in all its glorious complexity) into the very heart of a stand-up comedy routine. But she did, and she performed it with the precision of a seasoned professional. She had everyone rolling around the floor with laughter. It was an absolute treat! To whoever is hosting the next ESFLC – book her now!

Many thanks to the organising committee and all of their wonderfully helpful volunteers for a smooth and successful conference. More pictures from the conference can be viewed here: <https://sites.ipleiria.pt/esflc2019/conference-photos-and-videos/>



Conference attendees with the organising committee, ESFLC 2019, Leiria, Portugal

# Symposium in honour of Gunther Kress

*Theo van Leeuwen and Yaegan Doran*

On Saturday October 5th, ASFLA will host a symposium in honour of the life and work of Gunther Kress. The symposium will be held at Sydney University immediately after this year's ASFLA conference.

Gunther's work has deeply influenced scholars in a wide range of areas, including linguistics, social semiotics, education, media and communication studies and social theory. His innovative, often provocative theoretical ideas and approaches to analysing multimodal texts have been foundational for entire new fields of intellectual endeavour, including critical discourse analysis, multimodal semiotics, and the study of literacy and literacy education. His generous and inspiring engagement with students and colleagues will be unforgettable to all who have worked with him.

The symposium will involve multidisciplinary feature speakers from all these areas, many of whom have worked closely with Gunther. They will discuss his influence on their work, and his legacy for their fields. A full program, with details about time and place of the event, will be published as soon as the program has been finalized.

Admission will be free and include lunch and refreshments, but, for catering purposes, please confirm your attendance at [symposiumforgunther@gmail.com](mailto:symposiumforgunther@gmail.com)

We look forward to seeing you there.

**UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY,  
SOCIAL SCIENCES BUILDING (A01),  
SEMINAR ROOM 6th FLOOR  
SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER 2019**

## **PROGRAM**

9.15 - 9.30	Welcome
9.30 - 10.00	Noel King
10.00 - 10.15	Anne Cranny-Francis (video)
10.15 - 10.45	Louise Ravelli
10.45 - 11.15	Coffee
11.15 - 11.30	Peter Knapp
11.30 - 11.45	Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope (video)
11.45 - 12.15	Theo van Leeuwen
12.15 - 1.15	Lunch
1.15 - 1.45	Jim Martin
1.45 - 2.00	Bob Hodge (video)
2.00 - 2.30	Emilia Djonov
2.30 -	Drinks

# ASFLA 2019 - Registrations closing!

Registrations for the 2019 ASFLA conference are closing soon, so if you haven't already be sure to register at <https://asfla2019.com/registration/>

The conference draft program is also now ready to view. It can be found on our website at: <https://asfla2019.com/program/>

Please note that this is a draft, so is subject to minor changes.

For all other information about the ASFLA conference and pre-conference institutes, please see: <https://asfla2019.com>

We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Yaegan, Alex, Dorothy



# Grants and Prizes

## ASFLA Small Grants

Have you got a great idea but not enough money to make it happen?

Maybe ASFLA can help!

ASFLA offers small grants of \$500 - \$1500 to kick-start research projects in systemic functional linguistics.

We particularly welcome applications from ECRs and SFL-researchers who are in non-permanent positions.

Email our president Helen Caple at [helen.caple@unsw.edu.au](mailto:helen.caple@unsw.edu.au) with a one-page project outline, also indicating how your research will benefit the ASFLA community, and a separate one-page budget plan with costs fully outlined.

There's no deadline for small grants - they are available any time.

## Hasan Prize, 2019 - Call for Applications/Nominations

Closing date: 26th September 2019

The Ruqaiya Hasan Prize is awarded by the Australian Functional Linguistics Association to an emerging scholar whose recent work engages deeply with Professor Hasan's topical and methodological concerns. The prize aims to honour the life and work of Professor Hasan and foster its ongoing legacy, as well as encourage excellence in the research of emerging scholars working with Systemic Functional Linguistics.

The prize will be awarded at the 2019 ASFLA conference to be held at Sydney University. The winner will receive \$500, and an opportunity to give a named presentation at the subsequent ASFLA conference.

Eligibility and selection criteria for the Ruqaiya Hasan Prize are as follows.

The award is available to scholars who:

1. are early in their research career (from senior undergraduate year (honours) to having recently completed a PhD or other doctorate (within 2 years of the closing date for nominations), and

2. are studying or have recently completed their studies at an Australian university.

The award will be made to the applicant who, in the opinion of the selection committee:

1. has most significantly extended the tradition of SFL across the spectrum of themes and approaches that Hasan focused on over her career, and
2. has achieved most relative to opportunity.

To nominate a scholar (self nominations are also welcome) please send an email to Alison Moore at [amoore@uow.edu.au](mailto:amoore@uow.edu.au) with the following information:

- Full name of the nominee;
- Highest educational award the nominee has received and institution awarding it;
- Current degree program in which nominee is enrolled (if any) and institution;
- Names of nominee's supervisors for the current or most recent research award (Hons/Masters/Doctorate);
- A statement of up to 500 words on the significance of the nominee's research and the ways in which it closely and critically engages with Hasan's concerns and her body of work;
- A brief CV for the nominated scholar should be attached.

# ASFLA membership

You may be wondering .... what does ASFLA spend its money on?

Over the past few years, for example, ASFLA membership monies have funded the following:

- Gunther Kress Symposium
- Annual ASFLA conferences
- Annual Hasan Prize
- 2018 Functional description and typology forum
- Appraisal symposia held at U (2013, 2015)
- Halliday Symposium at Sydney University 2015
- Hasan Symposium at Macquarie University 2016
- Register and Context Symposium at Macquarie University
- International Educational Semiotics Website
- Numerous international exchanges of scholars
- Student scholarships to ASFLA Conferences
- Over \$16,000 in small grants awarded over the last four years
- Supporting scholars and educators from Australia to present at the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) in Pakistan over the last twenty years.
- and more... what a bargain!

## Life Membership

Invest in the future of our association and save yourself some hassle!

Life membership is a great idea. It saves you from having to remember to join each year AND it helps our association. Fees from life memberships have been placed in a special high interest savings account, to be used for future large scale projects. Our funds are mounting nicely, as reported by our then Treasurer Yaegan Doran at the 2018 AGM.

## How to pay ASFLA membership

1. Go to the ASFLA website [www.asfla.net](http://www.asfla.net) and click on membership.
2. Fill in your details.

### ASFLA Membership Form

Please fill out your details

3. Follow the instructions about how to pay by EFT.

#### Annual membership:

Full – \$40

Student – \$25

School/institutional – \$50

#### Life membership:

Life – \$250