

2. Media Genres- Linguistic/Semiotic Textures

Media and education: a functional view on simplification criteria of news articles in the second language classroom

This paper presents the results of a study conducted within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics analyzing the lexico-grammatical criteria used for simplifying news articles to adapt them to levels of linguistic proficiency found in second language classrooms. The analysis focuses on different versions of news articles corresponding to Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced levels. The original versions come from The Guardian, with simplified versions made by a major publisher for an English as a Second Language website (<http://www.onestopenglish.com>). The results of our analyses show that the changes focus mainly on the ideational metafunction with a decrease in the logical complexity of subordination in the simplified texts for the ESL classroom. They also involve a decrease in experiential grammatical metaphors. In this latter case abstract nominal post-modification structures, including present and past participle as well as prepositional phrases, are expressed as finite clauses in the simplified ESL texts (Martin 1989, Christie & Derewianka 2008, Rose & Martin 2012). Changes in the textual metafunction involve going from more “contentful” to “more contentlight” Themes (Berry 2013), and changes in the interpersonal metafunction involve going from more abstract to more concrete grammatical subjects.

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