YOUNG WRITERS 'LEARNING TO MEAN': FROM CLASS-ROOM DISCOURSE TO PERSONAL INTENTIONS

SUSAN JONES

University of Exeter

Abstract

Drawing on writing conversations with L1 writers, writing in UK primary and secondary English language classrooms, this paper considers evidence for how 'learning to mean' develops: a term coined by Halliday emphasising language awareness as a semiotic resource. The research was undertaken in classrooms adopting a pedagogy previously shown to be effective (Myhill et al 2012) that explicitly highlights the effect of linguistic choices, thus is faithful to the Hallidayan intention to foreground meaning. The examples of young writers 'learning to mean' reported here are often unconscious, fleeting and partial: indicating the complexity for young writers in articulating this understanding and for teachers in supporting it. Nevertheless there is evidence that young writers are using language choices purposefully to create meaning. The study was longitudinal with data collected over a three year period, enabling the exploration of changing patterns of student talk about their own writing. Key themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis are that 1) rhetorical choices are being articulated; often in relation to word choice, 2) there was a growing awareness of the reader, 3) there is an emerging consciousness that their own choices as a writer can create a literary 'effect' and 4) an increasingly visible ability to articulate this effect. The paper will argue that the discourses of the classroom can shape, limit and enable the move from dependence to independence, as young writers learn how to use linguistic resources to express personal writing intentions. The article aims to contribute to a theoretical understanding of how an awareness of how language shapes meaning develops and a pedagogic understanding of how best to support this development.

Keywords: metalinguistic understanding, writing choices**,** grammar, reader awareness, classroom talk

1. INTRODUCTOIN: THE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

Metalinguistic ability allows us to make language itself the object of attention. As an adjective, metalinguistic is variously attached to concepts such as awareness, knowledge, development, learning and understanding, often reflecting the academic discipline from which research comes. In reporting literature from a variety of academic disciplines I have tried to be faithful to how the original authors used this term, but the focus here is on metalinguistic understanding. While this understanding can be broad, including for example how language is interpreted or how it varies in different contexts, the emphasis in this paper will be on how knowledge about language impacts writing choices. Halliday (1975) coined the term 'learning how to mean' to express a possible potential for metalinguistic development. It represents a particular view about language, about language learning and how we simultaneously learn about language and use language. In the particular case of writing it is also aspirational and captures what it is to be a writer; to control written language in such a way as to express personal meaning. Meta-linguistic knowledge is defined by Gombert as: '*the control consciously chosen, decided on and applied by the individual*' (2003:3), thus signalling conscious awareness of language as a necessary developmental step. Myhill and Jones point out *that 'there is very limited understanding of how older writers in the secondary or high-school phase of schooling develop metalinguistic understanding about writing'* (2015:840). This paper seeks to address this gap and will consider both the primary and the secondary phases of the UK school curriculum. The aim is to explore how 'learning to mean' develops in a pedagogical context that is explicit about how language choices impact on writing intentions.

For teachers of writing, any insights from educational research are realised in professional contexts and the question of how to harness the potential of knowledge about language in a meaningful way remains a salient issue, an issue made visible in the ongoing debate about the value of explicit grammar teaching. The explicit teaching of grammar has fallen in and out of fashion in Anglophone countries over recent decades. With little evidence to support the transfer of explicit grammar knowledge into writing performance, grammar teaching was abandoned in the later part of the twentieth century accompanied by a view that the teaching of grammar was the antithesis of creativity. Recent years have seen a return to a focus on knowledge about language as a necessary component of mother tongue education. In England, grammar was first reintroduced along with the new National Curriculum in1988. Subsequent revisions of the literacy curriculum (DfE, 1995, 1999) have all included some reference to grammar, but the most recent version (DfE, 2014) is the most explicit, specifying what grammatical knowledge must be mastered in each year of the primary curriculum. This is accompanied by a national test in spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG). The Australian (ACARA, 2009) and US (CCSSI-ELA, 2012) curricula have also seen a renewed focus on explicit teaching of knowledge about language. In the UK this trend has received considerable criticism in the liberal press and amongst the educational establishment. The popular children's author, Michael

Rosen, regularly writes about the dangers of grammar teaching and the shortcomings of the SPaG test; for example, asking *'are the people who devised this test really interested in writing? I doubt it'* (Rosen, 2015). Wyse and Torgerson (2017), critical of evidence from randomised control trials that signal effective grammar pedagogy, argue that the inclusion of grammar in the curriculum is ideologically driven. What is revealed in these debates, , is that what is being critiqued, is not so much grammar, as a particular view of grammar; a traditional view that is concerned with error, standards, correct forms and the defining of terms. The context in which this study takes place therefore is a contested professional arena, where the value of grammar for writing is debated in the media, in staffrooms and amongst the research community.

The grammar debate reveals that both professional and academic positions can become fossilised around existing pro or anti grammar debates and so can be somewhat tin-eared in response to a more nuanced debate about how to harness grammar to support choice and create effect exemplified in the approach to grammar teaching that is at the heart of this paper. This contextual approach links grammatical knowledge to the meaning it creates; is taught alongside writing and not separated from it; and adopts a descriptive approach, noticing grammar in use, rather than a prescriptive approach that dictates rules about right and wrong. It is, in short, concerned with how young writers 'learn how to mean'. This approach has previously been reported as effective (Myhill et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013). The aim of this paper however, is not to revisit the effectiveness of the pedagogy, but to explore how 'learning to mean', develops within such a pedagogic context, one likely to facilitate this development; so as to better support teachers in creating classrooms that enable young writers to make links between their semantic intentions and linguistic choices. It does so by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach drawing on insights from psychology, linguistics and sociocultural traditions.

1.1 Conceptual framework

Halliday proposes that while language can be a domain of knowledge (for example in the field of linguistics) it should also be viewed as '*the condition of knowing'* (Halliday, 1993) Thus presenting language as both the object of learning and the medium of learning. Halliday viewed learning language as the process of integrating linguistic structure with existing linguistic functionality, arguing that it is in this integration that the potential for meaning develops and becomes increasingly sophisticated, as does the original functionality. From this perspective both learning and language learning are semiotic processes '*When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning, a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language'* (Halliday 1993: 93). The implicit or unconscious nature of linguistic function means that meta-functional facility; recognising what you are doing and how

you are doing it, is key to learning because '*meaning is at once both doing and understanding………… All meaning, and hence all learning, is at once both action and reflection' (*1993: 100*)*. Halliday describes this meta-functional principle as a dialectic relationship between engaging in a language act and understanding a language act; thus a child can construe the language system from an act of meaning while at the same time create meaning from their use of the language system: '*when children learn language, they are simultaneously processing text into language and activating language into text' (1993:105)*.

Metalinguistic understanding, the particular focus of this paper, is therefore likely to involve more than simply a meta-discourse to talk about language, such as grammatical terminology; it also needs to utilise this grammatical system to construct meaning and in the case of writing, evaluate whether rhetorical intentions have been met through any grammatical choices made. Halliday (1978) himself referred to metalinguistic understanding as having three functions: 1) ideational or what a text is about; 2) interpersonal; relating to how the self is expressed and how the reader is understood; and 3) textual, being the structural aspects of text. In coining the term 'learning to mean' to represent the complexity of metalinguistic understanding Halliday created a bridge between theoretical representation and pedagogic possibility. The contextual approach to grammar pedagogy described earlier, is an attempt to realise this possibility by foregrounding the dialectic relationship between grammatical choices and an act of meaning. This is realised through a pedagogic emphasis on talk: about writing purposes; about linguistic choices and about the effect of these choices (Myhill et al., 2016) and is a feature of the pedagogic approach adopted by the teachers in this study.

1.2 Developing metalinguistic understanding: learning to mean

Conceptualising metalinguistic understanding as 'learning to mean' offers a vivid representation of the outcome but not of the process by which it is achieved. In fact we know little about the relationship between knowledge of a language system and the accessing of this knowledge as a resource for meaning making (Myhill, 2005). Much of the research has tended to focus on early years acquisition (Karmiloff Smith et al., 1996; Chen & Jones, 2012) or second language acquisition (Bialystok, 2001; 2007) and so has focused on the beginning of the learning experience and on the apparent absence of metalinguistic understanding, in order to identify its appearance over time. At the same time, metalinguistic understanding has often been viewed as an end point in development; as a higher order thinking skill towards which pedagogy should be aimed. Culioli (1990) talks of different levels of linguistic capacity starting with unconscious activity or epilinguistic activity; moving to conscious control of language articulated in everyday terminology and finally emerging as metalinguistic activity whereby conscious choices are systematically organised and explained using formal linguistic terms. Arguably however, meta-functioning might be said to have

occurred at the point the unconscious becomes conscious rather than with the facility to represent this understanding using a technical language. Fortune and Thorp (2001) point out that learners can possess explicit knowledge but may not be able to verbalize it. Similarly Gutierrez (2008), working with Spanish L2 learners, notes that metalinguistic thinking can occur without recourse to linguistic terminology, drawing a distinction between verbalisation that might occur with or without terminology. He refers to young writers who can make appropriate reformulations and ask pertinent questions of a text in ways that infer metalinguistic understanding but that is not expressed in explicit grammar terminology. These glimpses of young writers trying to express understanding without a language for that understanding, offer tangible moments of metalinguistic understanding in the process of development; and suggest that metalinguistic understanding isn't only visible as an end point in the developmental process; echoing Halliday's claim that all learning is a semiotic process that simultaneously involves language learning.

In his study of oral language Gombert (1992) points to a complex schema of linguistic development, fuelled not only by internal factors but also by social ones, Although making a clear distinction between epilinguistic and metalinguistic levels of knowledge he also shows how they are interdependent. In defining 'epilinguistic', Gombert foregrounds the child's functional understanding of language describing it as '*explicit manifestations of a functional awareness of the rules of the organization or use of language*' (Gombert, 1992:13). The metalinguistic level is described as conscious control, deliberately applied (Gombert, 2003). In this psycholinguistic model there are echoes of the Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) cognitive developmental model, distinguishing 'knowledge tellers' from 'knowledge transformers': the former, chaining ideas as they occur to the writer with one idea triggering the next and contained within familiar linguistic organisation and the latter consciously shaping text for a reader with a rhetorical purpose in mind. While Gombert sees epilinguistic knowledge as preceding metalinguistic knowledge, metalinguistic knowledge itself isn't simply seen as a final phase, rather, development is viewed as being multi-layered. Gombert proposes five layers, suggesting that 'meta' awareness of 1) phonic, 2) lexical and 3) syntactical concepts and processes precedes 'meta' awareness of 4) audience and 5) textual purpose or message; thus making a distinction between 'meta' understanding of language forms and 'meta' understanding of rhetorical purpose or personal meaning. Fontich and Camps (2014) signal the diversity of understanding in relation to the term 'metalinguistic' by naming the range of nouns to which the adjective 'metalinguistic' has been attached: function, faculty, capacity, representation, reflection, activity, analysis, control and knowledge; indicating that every aspect of writing is likely to require a 'meta' component. As indicated in much of the literature reported here, development itself is generally represented as a move towards increased 'meta' functioning, although as is also evident, there is no clear understanding of the point at which it appears and how it then is rehearsed and honed. This paper seeks to present data that might illuminate how this understanding develops and is articulated.

Bialystok's (1987; 1999) early work on metalinguistic development in bilingual children identified two aspects of development: analysis and control. In doing so she points, not so much to a sequencing of skills, as to two complementary skills; the ability to recognise and identify language patterns (analysis) and the ability to manage one's own language use and language choices (control). That the two aspects operate in synergy with each other suggests a symbiotic relationship between language systems and meaning that is in sympathy with Halliday's perspective. The pedagogy at the heart of this study adopts an approach that accords with this view of synchronous development by drawing conscious attention to unconscious writing choices with a view to allowing present analysis to inform future, conscious control. This proposes that mature writing is an act of deliberate choice, even Coleridge, the archetypal romantic poet spoke of writing as the ordeal of deliberate choice.

The emphasis on either early years' language learning or the ultimate outcomes of learning, noted in the literature, reflects the problems of identifying evidence of metalinguistic understanding in the process of development. In order to represent this development, Chen and Myhill (2016) proposed an analytical framework for use with interview data with young writers. Drawing on both Bialystok's concepts of 'analysis' and 'control' and on Halliday's assertion that language learning not only results in more varied language use but also results in the expansion of one's meaning-making potential, they identified four different aspects of metalinguistic understanding. The interviews conducted by Chen and Myhill (2016) were undertaken in both Australian and English secondary classrooms, where students were encouraged to talk about their own language choices and writing intentions. These four aspects are viewed as representing increasing sophistication but not necessarily linear development. They are:

1) Identification: finding and naming a grammatical concept;
2) Elaboration: explaining or exemplifying a grammatical concept;
3) Extension: understanding how a grammar concept is used in writing;
4) Application: articulating how a grammar concept creates meaning within a text.

This trajectory mirrors Gombert's five layers of metalinguistic knowledge which also moves from identifying the presence of textual features to the encoding of rhetorical purpose. The analysis revealed that the most common aspect of metalinguistic understanding was identification; and a tendency to prioritise the presence of a feature over the effect it might have within the text. In accounting for this, the authors note that this pattern of response '*is more aligned to a particular language of description, than Halliday's notion of grammar as social semiotic and a meaning-making resource' (2016:106).* The relative absence of 'extension' and 'application' in this study, demonstrates how fleeting evidence of 'learning to mean' might be. A difference between the Australian and English sample was observed; with Australian writers making greater use of the explicit grammatical terminology, while English learners used more everyday language to explain the grammar. Classroom observations revealed a stronger emphasis on explicit grammar teaching in the Australian context

as compared to an emphasis on conscious design in writing through grammar use in England. The Chen and Myhill (2016) research therefore signals the importance of the classroom and of varying classroom discourses, in creating a context in which 'learning to mean' might be shaped.

1.3 The classroom as a shaper of meaning

Socio-cultural theories of writing challenge the idea that writing is simply an autonomous or individual act, instead positioning it as an act shaped by both the immediate social context and wider social norms and values. Language itself is viewed as a dynamic construct, evolving over time and endlessly responsive to social and cultural influences. Vygotsky (1978) viewed written language as appropriated, being the product of social and cultural history and not as beginning with the writer. From this Vygotskyan perspective Faigley speaks of a theory of writing that looks '*beyond the expressivist contention that the individual discovers the self through language and beyond the cognitivist position that an individual constructs reality through language. In a social view, any effort to write about the self or reality always comes in relation to previous texts*' (1986: 536). Classrooms are very particular cultural worlds that exist within the culture of the school and local community and that respond to policy formed within a wider political and social context. Lave and Wenger (1991) provided an ethnographic analysis of learning as situated within communities of practice and as the outcome of increased participation in that community, as learners move from peripheral participation to full participation. They describe learning as being constructed between individuals rather than personally acquired in the abstract.

From the socio-linguistic perspective, Bakhtin (1981) concludes that language use is context-bound and that words carry the echoes of past use; such that all utterances are positioned in response to, or in anticipation of, others. The creation of text therefore can't be seen as simply about individual authorship but as a product of both inter-subjectivity and inter-textuality. In light of this, classrooms have been interpreted both as places of limiting and constraining social imposition in which written texts become 'schooled' and formulaic, but also as places of dialogic possibility with an emphasis on reflection and co-creation (Street, 2013; Mercer & Littleton, 2007). The classroom discourses referenced in the title of this paper refer to the way these varied communities are encoded into culture and practice. There is evidence that the current climate in classrooms places an undue emphasis on linguistic form over function. The outcomes of Chen and Myhill's (2016) analysis reported above based on two national jurisdictions being a case in point. Commenting on similar findings in an earlier UK study, Myhill suggests that

> The tendency to see grammatical features rather formulaically as having intrinsic merit, particularly the 'adding more' phenomenon, where writers have 'learned' that writing is improved by adding more adjectives, or short sentences, or connectives, is learning entirely constructed in the classroom. (2011:28)

Bakhtin however, resists the idea that this inter-textuality is inevitably reproductive, by proposing that although writing is concerned with the appropriation of the language and the subjectivities of others; that writers then *'populate it with (their) own intentions'* (1981: 249). In this way writers contribute to culture as well as being shaped by it. Classrooms with an emphasis on the dialogic development of writing, seeking to use classroom talk to bridge understanding of linguistic form and the creation of meaning, might become the context in which young writers learn how to mean. This paper reports on young writers articulating their own writing choices in order to understand how 'learning to mean' takes shape and to understand how classroom discourses are constraining and enabling this process.

2.   METHODOLOGY

This paper represents a focussed strand of a much larger longitudinal study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The broader aims of this parent study were to investigate metalinguistic development in writing, particularly the relationship between developing metalinguistic understanding and developing competence in writing. The particular aim of this paper, however, is to tease out the nuances of what 'learning to mean' looks and sounds like in this cross phase sample. The larger study used a mixed-method longitudinal design to follow four cohorts of students: two primary (years 4-6) and two secondary classes (years 7-9) across a three year period; thus covering an age range of 8-14 years. Thirty-six focus-students (9 from each class) representing a range of abilities and balanced for gender were identified - the original intention had been to ensure a sub-sample of twenty-four students and in anticipation of attrition, the initial group was deliberately larger than was needed. The final number of focus students at the end of the three year data collection period was twenty-nine. For this paper, data from the complete sample have been used, but drawing from a narrow set of relevant codes from the analysis of interviews.

The longitudinal project followed the students and so each year of the project, their teachers changed. However, those teaching the focus children participated in three training-days in each school-year that focused on the pedagogy informed by the contextualised approach (Myhill et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2013). The teachers were supported in planning schemes of work that embedded a chosen grammar focus within a wider learning aim relating to a particular writing skill, for example a focus on verb choice to support 'show not tell' in developing character descriptions. A more extended explanation of this approach can be found in Jones (2020)

The data collection occurred in the Autumn and Spring terms of each year of the project. The data collection for the longitudinal mixed methods study included classroom observation data of complete lessons where writing was the main focus of teaching (3 observations per term), supported by detailed teacher planning notes. The lessons were video recorded and accompanied by researcher field notes. The observation was immediately followed by student interviews (1 interview with each focus student each term of about 15-20 minutes). The interview focussed exclusively

on their writing choices in a piece of their own writing. Finally writing samples were collected (the written output from each term of the project that were discussed in the interviews, plus a repeated task at the beginning of each school year). Thus for each student there were 18 observations, 6 interviews and 9 samples of writing. Each data set was used to shed light on the others and so (for example) statements in the interview were contrasted with classroom discussion that might be exerting an influence. This paper reports on a sub-set of the data, looking at particular codes derived from the analysis of the interviews and supported by the relevant writing sample being discussed, while contextual information and common classroom discourse drawn from the lesson observation data will be used to shed light on what students said.

The interviews were dubbed 'writing conversations' and adopted an approach developed by the wider research team and used in previous research projects to explore student reflections on their own writing choices and process. The interviews used students' own writing as a stimulus for conversation. Using stimulated recall as a means of accessing thought processes during writing has been criticized for being unable to accurately recreate the writers' thoughts and it is argued that such self-reflection is largely a rationalizing and reconstruction of events. Nevertheless, there is a strong tradition of using stimulated recall to access writing decisions (Greene & Higgins 1994) and it is generally seen to be less intrusive than the alternative 'write aloud' protocols (Russo 1989). Table 1 indicates typical questions used in these conversations and shows how the conversations were focussed on their own writing samples, encouraging students to reflect on the choices in the text and their own thinking as they produced the text. Students were encouraged to cite examples from their own writing to illustrate their understanding. The same questions were asked of all students and so although some students offered fuller responses the constructs being addressed were the same.

The writing conversation data were coded using thematic analysis adopting an inductive approach seeking not simply to describe what students said but to interpret the meanings they represented. As each interview was coded, previous coding was revisited in an iterative procedure comparing new and previous codes. Three coders were involved in this process and as codes were emerging throughout the analysis process, maintaining inter-coder reliability was established through constant checking and cross-checking of each other's coding. Frequent meetings involved discussing the definitions of existing codes and any new codes that were emerging from the analysis, thus ensuring definitions were consistent. The interviews were analysed using NViVO11 that supported both the process of coding and the maintenance of consistency with definitions both during coding and when coding was complete. Table 1 shows the relationship between interview question and the codes and indicates that no one code is especially privileged in terms of the unfolding interview, each being equally likely to be part of any 'writing conversation.' However, responses captured by each of these codes also represent comments drawn from across the interview and not only in relation to particular prompt questions. At the

end of the analysis process, all coding was reviewed and agreed by all three coders. The coding resulted in a set of six thematic clusters: 1. Grammar-Writing Relationship; 2. Grammatical Reasoning; 3. Pedagogical Practices; 4. Metacognition; 5. Using and Understanding the Metalanguage; and 6.Handling the Reader-Writer Relationship. The data reported here come from two of these clusters: Grammar-Writing Relationship and Handling the Reader-Writer Relationship. These are the codes where the dialogic relationship between language form and rhetorical purpose are most visible, other codes capture knowledge about language (grammatical reasoning and using and understanding the metalanguage) and knowledge about writing (metacognition) not directly relevant to the aims of this article.

The two thematic clusters identified as likely to capture examples of 'learning to mean' are themselves constructed from individual codes shown in Table 2, together with their definitions. The representation is based on the total number of interviews: 195, which represents the complete data set including interviews from the wider sample of thirty-six at the start of the project. The fraction indicates how many of these interviews included comments linked to each of these codes. The fact that no code is reflected in all of the interviews indicates that students were not always able to respond to prompt questions in the interview or responded in a way that did not address the prompt question. The numerical data is simply indicating that some codes generated more response than others.

Table 1. Interview questions linked to emergent codes

Theme	Code	Interview question
Grammar-writing relationship	Focusing on word choice	Talking about their own writing: ➔ What have you done well? ➔ What might you change or improve? Students were prompted to consider choices at both word and syntax level
	Making the grammar meaning link	Following a card sort and discussion of grammatical terminology ➔ Invite students to explain how any grammatical features have contributed to the effectiveness of their own writing, dealing first with word class labels, then with syntax.
Handling the reader writer relationship	Awareness of readers' needs	Talking about their own writing: ➔ What did you want to make the reader think or feel or see?
	Explaining the effects of choices	Talking about their own writing ➔ Probe answers for specific explanations of choices and intended effects

Table 2. Summary of codes showing code definition and code representation ordered by frequency

Code	Definition	Representation
Focusing on word choice	Comments related to vocabulary choice which may include examples with or without reasons for the choice **Example:** *It's got better words in it, instead of like short words like 'hello' and 'not' I've got better words like 'held' and 'other' and 'moving through' (Christopher 13-14 years)*	107/195 55%
Awareness of readers' needs	Comments indicating a writing decision made with the reader in mind **Example:** *varied sentences keep it flowing and keep it worth reading because whoever reads it ……I don't want them to be reluctant to be reading it. (Rose 12-13 years)*	84/195 43%
Making the grammar-meaning link	Comments that make a link between the use of a grammatical feature and its effect on meaning **Example**: *I've learned what an adverbial is and what happens when you put it in a sentence……it's like description that when you stick it in a sentence it tells you where, when or how' (Kai 8-9 years)*	68/195 35%
Explaining the effects of choices	Comments that show an awareness of the effectiveness of their own writing choices **Example**: *'you have to put the exclamation mark to let them know that if you mean it, you mean it loudly' (Emma 9-10 years)*	44/195 23%

3. FINDINGS

The four codes outlined in Table 2 are those codes identified as likely to reveal how these young writers 'learn how to mean'; expressing as they do student perspectives on their own writing choices, the impact of these choices on an imagined reader and any examples of them making an explicit link between grammar and the meaning it encodes. They are concerned with what Myhill and Chen (2016) identified as 'extension' and 'application' and less with 'identification' and 'elaboration'. The representation of these codes indicate that for three of them, less than half of the total number of interviews include comments that indicate understanding suggesting, in common with Myhill and Chen's findings, that this is not something that is easy to express. The fact that less than a quarter of the interviews include comments voicing awareness of the effectiveness of their choices suggests that this might be particularly challenging for young writers to articulate. Table 3 indicates that there is also a difference when the codes are compared for representation linked to attainment levels, revealing that the lower attaining students are less represented in these codes generally and particularly in the code relating to talking about effects. The percentage represents how each code was distributed amongst the attainment groups. What it does not show is how many students this percentage implies and so one very

vocal student may be disproportionately represented in the data. The numerical data is simply intended to offer transparency regarding how any code represents the variation within the sample.

Table 3. Code representation by attainment (attainment levels were based on national bench marks for each year group in the sample, with high, average and low indicating, above, at or below this benchmark)

Code	High performing writers	Average performing writers	Low performing writers
Focus on word choice (based on 107 comments)	33%	43%	24%
Awareness of readers' needs (based on 84 comments)	43%	32%	25%
Grammar-meaning link (based on 44 comments)	43%	36%	21%
Effects of choices (based on 68 comments)	40%	42%	18%

Comparing the codes in light of the age of the writers across the six year groups represented in the sample reveals no clear developmental pattern; so while representation is higher in the secondary phase than the primary phase, it is also the case that certain years stand out as having higher representation; year 6 in the primary cohort and year 8 in the secondary cohort. This might indicate that there was an effect linked to the individual schemes of work taught each term, such that some schemes of work were more effective in supporting the ability to talk about choices and effects. The data was collected for the qualitative value of the writing conversations, and this forms the main focus of the reported findings, nevertheless these quantitative comparisons do reveal that this kind of talk is relatively infrequent and that lower attaining writers find it especially difficult to articulate.

3.1 Focus on word choice

Commenting on word choice was, overall, the most common example of how young writers identify aspects of their own writing that they perceive as conveying meaning. Frequently the linguistic metalanguage was used to describe these choices, but in most cases the word that was singled out for comment was the adjective. This reflects classroom practice, which itself tends to make much of the descriptive value of adjectives and adverbs and in our classroom observations there are comparatively few examples of teaching that draws attention to the descriptive value of the noun. So in the following student text: 'The sacred lemur sighed, breathed and swung athletically into the chasm of the canopy with the child listening alertly' Kai (10-11 years) picks out the adverbs 'athletically' and 'alertly' as the well-chosen vocabulary, although the nouns 'chasm' and 'canopy' are perhaps the most evocative in terms of setting the scene as being in the rain forest. So while talk about word choice may

offer an opportunity for demonstrating 'learning how to mean', this opportunity is often restricted to aspects that receive more classroom attention. When explaining their own word choices students are unlikely to refer to their meaning and more likely to echo the classroom discourses identified in the classroom observations, whereby words, commonly adjectives, are identified as being '*strong*', '*good*' or '*powerful*' while some words are seen as intrinsically '*more interesting*'. So while the words they single out are often effective they are not always able to explain why; so in identifying 'the anaconda slithered' as effective Andrew (10-11 years) simply comments that he likes 'slithered' while Ava (13-14 years) says of 'the monster-like shadows'—'*I just like that*'. Other examples of this perception that some words have intrinsic value include:

- Miserable is just better than sad (Eddie 9-10 years)
- 'I'm pleased with 'vast' because I like the word (Ella 9-10 years)
- I like aerodynamic—because it's a long word (Harry 10-11 years)

Sometimes words chosen with novelty in mind miscue young writers as in the following example: 'Briskly, the amount of alcohol intake for underage people is rising': commenting on his choice of the word 'briskly' John (13-14 years) says *'it's just a word you don't hear very often so it might stand out a bit more'*

In the final interview, students were shown an example of their writing from the first year of the project and asked to compare it with a more recent example. It was word choice that featured in this comparison, the words in the later piece being described as *'of '*a higher level*'*, in contrast to the earlier example being '*just basic'*. The reference to words having 'a level' has a very particular meaning in the context of the UK classroom, where work used to be 'levelled' against quite prescriptive criteria. Thus classroom discourses may be signalling that some words simply have more intrinsic value than others and so fail to support young writers in linking particular words to a particular purpose. So while word choice is clearly understood as significant for these young writers, the emphasis might be less on vocabulary as choice and more on vocabulary as performance.

Common parlance in UK primary classrooms includes the notion of 'wow' words; words that have value, in and of themselves, not necessarily linked to meaning and purpose, and the impact of this is seen in the comments above. However the idea that words carry a level of sophistication or relevance, or imply a certain voice or expertise is likely to be significant in 'learning to mean'. The selection of words without an ability to justify, but simply because something 'sounds right' is an aspect of how we all write and this sense of appropriacy is voiced by these young writers; for example pointing out the use of technical terms such as 'aluminium' and 'platinum' or 'black holes' in a piece on space or suggesting that the paring 'slave or citizen' 'sounds better than 'slave or not slave'. Similarly the identifying and naming of adverbials such as 'however' and 'furthermore' as characteristic of an argument text, indicate this sense of appropriateness even though this is often summed up by '*It's just got better words in it'. A tacit c*hoice therefore is evident even when there is no

coherent rational, raising questions about the place of implicit and explicit knowledge as children 'learn to mean'.

The writing conversations created an opportunity to explain word choices and in spite of examples of how this often privileged certain word groups, or novelty over relevance and sometimes indicated a limited ability to put this choice into words, there were examples of young writers beginning to show an awareness of how choices create an effect. Some of this was expressed in a very literal way; such as Adam (8-9 years) explaining that a dragon with razor sharp teeth—'*would be like being touched by a very sharp knife*' or the following year the same boy (9-10 years) pointing out that the presence of thick black smoke '*means you can't see*'. There are those, however, that provide a more extended narrative of the purpose of their own choices and these examples represent a range of ages and attainment levels.

- *I said growling traffic because in London it's really noisy all the time* (William 13-14 years)
- 'Pounced off the bench'. - '*I think it describes how a real person would actually get off a bench if they were shocked in a movement*. (Mark 13-14 years)
- 'I like buzzing and humming ……………....*because you can't hear what everyone was speaking inside a big city or a place, so that's what you hear*.' (Eddie 8-9 years)

Without the use of grammatical language these writers do seem to be demonstrating 'analysis': the singling out of language choices as examples of something in particular and 'control': the conscious decision to use a particular word for a particular purpose (Bialystok's 1987; 1999). The examples below represent greater precision in this respect with several writers able to link word choices with particular named effects and, by and large, these are drawn from the older and higher attaining writers:

- 'Decaying' *suggests dark and unhealthy….. in a gothic novel you are playing on the readers mind* (Ava 12-13 years)
- Hannibal appeared—'*it makes you think Hannibal came out of nowhere*' (Emily 10-11 years)
- 'The cold ocean spray lashed against his legs' *It starts like a punch* (Lucy 13-14 years) identifies 'lashed' as the word that achieves this effect

There are also some quite sophisticated examples of young writers clearly understanding how the word level choices they have made, do shape the meaning and impression of the text. So when Ava (13-14 years) contrasts the words 'unloved' and 'abandoned' with 'malnourished' in describing an abandoned puppy, she is able to single out the first two as creating a different effect and recognises that 'malnourished' is an outcome which is somehow different from the other two, but is not quite able to explain the causal implications that relate the pair of adjectives with the outcome. Similarly commenting on her change of adjective from 'miserable' to the arguably less impressive adjective 'lovely' in the phrase 'Ten year old Kojo and his lovely mother live in Ghana', Fiona (10-11 years) explains that '*I put lovely so that they know that she's really trying hard to look after Kojo*'. So in thinking about her

word choices she is able to express how the change influences the impression of the characters in the text from one of victim to one of agent.

Word choice therefore can be limited by classroom discourse, but can also be the skill that reveals a trajectory of development; from a tacit choice that feels appropriate to an ability to articulate the purpose of a word choice.

3.2 Awareness of reader

Awareness of reader is a key aim in the writing component of the UK National Curriculum which requires that young writers should adapt *'their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences'* (NC: 2014). In our sample, 43% of the interviews included comments that demonstrate an ability to express this. Arguably all the examples discussed above in relation to word choice have a level of reader awareness, even if this includes a need to please the teacher by selecting a word deemed *'higher level'*. The examples cited under this code, however, include those comments whereby young writers actively comment on the reader and their needs. Also, in response to the interview question 'how did you want your reader to think or feel?', we did not code the simple referencing of content; so explaining *'it was a cold dark morning'* as informing your reader that it was the morning, was not coded as reader awareness. However, explaining a choice by recognising the effect of that choice such as *'I wanted them to feel sorry for Noah because he's lost his dad' (Fiona 10-11 years)* was.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in the classroom context, the assumed reader is the teacher and as illustrated in the previous section this has particular consequences in term of the meaning that is being shaped in school texts. So when asked if he had a particular reader in mind, William (11-12 years) suggests *'no not really—well I know someone is going to—Miss L.'* while Rose (11-12 years) says *'I usually picture miss reading it ….. so I usually try and do different vocabulary and different sentences …. I wanted her to know I can use different sentence structures and that my punctuation is fairly standard.'* This clearly indicates reader awareness and suggests that texts are being shaped to meet a perceived intention. One challenge for the teaching of writing is to lift classroom writing beyond this, because, as will be shown, a key aspect of learning to mean is a strong sense of authorial intention; an intention against which to evaluate the effectiveness of choices.

The code also includes examples of an ability to discuss the intended effect from the perspective of the reader. As with the codes for word choice many of these examples echo classroom discourses talking of *'painting a picture in the readers head'* *'wanting them to read on'*, *'wanting them to feel as if they were there'*, using repetition *'so the idea sticks in your readers head'* and writing in order to *'make the reader more interested.'* The classroom observations report these as both common responses and largely as approved and valued responses. The impact of these classroom patterns on how these young writers talk about their choices is encouraging and likely to form part of a growing understanding of the reader/writer relationship;

they are however, also characterised by a lack of precision in terms of both the effect and the available language choices to create this effect. Therefore there are also examples of students who, while able to express quite precisely the effect they want to create; such as Eddie (10-11 years) who explains that the purpose of a particular paragraph was to make his reader '*feel really calm and then suddenly get really tense'*, is nevertheless less able to explain how this effect was realised.

There are also similarities with the comments on their word choices, in that these comments that are tacitly conscious of a reader, also demonstrate explicitness in terms of naming a particular effect; such as wanting your reader to be '*spooked out*' or to ensure that they are '*taking the issue seriously*'', or suggesting that '*an exclamation mark is like shouting at your reader' (Ava 11-12 years)*. In persuasive writing particularly, young writers are aware of their own ability to speak directly to their reader, perhaps to issue a call to arms; so in her environmental piece Fiona (10-11 years) explains her ending '*and we can stop it*'—as wanting them to go and do something, and this example is typical of several others that speak of hoping to evoke a response or create a sense of urgency, urging their reader to do something 'now'. Others draw their reader to mind in their writing of an argument text as in this example where Eddie (10-11 years) speaks of '*wanting them to agree with you….. I want them to say 'yes—good point'*

The possibility of precision in classroom talk patterns, leading to precision in terms of understanding the reader writer relationship and the link to grammatical choices is revealed in a scheme of work for the second year of the project. This was based on World War 1 poetry and the poetry of Wilfred Owen in particular. The teaching drew attention to how the form of the verb; past, present or continuous, changed the sense in which an act was completed or not and commenting on her own verb choices Lucy (12-13 years) comments that '*the' ing' words are continuous ….they make you feel as though you are there seeing what's happening yourself'* and later commenting on her use of the past tense ' *I wanted people to feel sorry for the soldier …. Like it's happened and you can't do anything about it ….. but we don't want it to happen again'* .

Development of reader awareness therefore reveals examples of increasing precision moving from habitual classroom responses to rare, but clear examples of knowing both how a writer wants the reader to respond and how to achieve this linguistically.

3.3 Effect of choices

Outlined above, the code reporting the **focus on word choice** emerged as a key area in which young writers were, with varying degrees of sophistication, able to discuss the choice they had made. In contrast to this, the code, the **effect of choices,** focused on phrasal and syntactical choices and the ability to articulate and explain these choices more broadly. The code emerged from the analysis process and aimed to capture what was becoming clear from the wider analysis; that both teachers and

young writers struggled to articulate their choices, particularly those beyond the level of the word. One explanation for this is that classroom talk may have placed an emphasis on the deploying of grammatical features rather than an understanding of choice with an authorial purpose. This finding from the wider study is pertinent here as a possible explanation for why explaining choices is less visible in the data, being the code with fewest examples. Clearly it is the absence of examples from the lower attaining writers that accounts for this but within this code there is the same range of sophistication as with the others codes, with many of the examples reflecting the rehearsed responses of the classroom such as '*making your reader want to read on*'. One particular example of this is the common explanation that choices are concerned with creating tension or suspense; there are several examples of this justification and this can appear to be an explicit link between choice and effect. This example from Joy (12-13 years), however, illustrates how discourses can be taken up but not always understood. In explaining her choice of 'It is a bitter wet morning and the sun has just risen' she first suggests that '*I done it slowly to build a bit of tension, so you don't know what happened*', but later suggests '*I think I kind of lost the tension because I've done it slowly.*' This suggests an understanding of a desirable feature but no real ownership of what was done and for what purpose. A classroom emphasis on deploying features, combined with a lack of practical examples of how to develop this kind of talk might go some way to explaining the relative absence of precise talk about the effect of choices. As with the other codes there are a range of examples and in contrast to the example above, Fiona (10-11 years) does seem able to be explicit about what an effect is and able to explain how the effect is achieved. Commenting on her own text describing a character who 'barged into the room and pushed the door open' she explains that she is showing the character was in a bad mood, by using the verbs 'barged' and 'pushed' The additional aspect of this explanation is the explicit naming of a grammatical feature as the means by which this effect was achieved. Understanding how any effect is encoded grammatically is the point at which learning to mean becomes a conscious choice, but as with the other codes reported here, it is visible with a range of sophistication and not always supported by classroom practice.

3.4 Grammar/meaning link

The simplest examples coded as demonstrating a grammar meaning link are concerned with matching a grammatical feature with a purpose but not necessarily with a personal choice. This includes statements such as noting that adjectives and relative clauses can add more detail, or that the purpose of an adverb is to indicate how someone is doing something. Many of these simple links reflect classroom truisms such as that a short snappy sentence builds tension, or that a rhetorical question makes you think. These kinds of links can sometimes lead to a misplaced link between grammar and meaning such as Ella (9-10 years) justifying the absence of any short sentences in her writing on the grounds that '*I don't think you should use a*

short sentence because you don't need much suspension when you're explaining a planet'. These rather literal links are sometimes couched using classroom semantic metaphors for grammatical terms such as referring to a relative clause as a 'drop in clause' or an imperative as 'a bossy verb'. At the same time this kind of absolute link between a grammar term and its effect can reveal a level of personal understanding and a developing sense of how grammar shapes meaning; as with this example from Joshua (11-12 years): *You don't know what's going to happen …… when you start with a subordinate clause it doesn't give as much away as it would with a main clause*

As young writers become more explicit about how grammar is shaping meaning they still often draw on rehearsed classroom mantras, suggesting that these repeated responses may act as a spring board for developing a more personal language that establishes an understanding of the grammar meaning link. Examples include:

- explaining that using first person is someone's own perspective so it is more emotional
- showing how strong modal verbs like 'must' can make something more persuasive.
- explaining how character can be expressed through using reporting verbs such as 'he grumbled' rather than 'he said'

The struggle to put this complex thinking into words is illustrated by Mark (13-14 years) a lower attaining writer, commenting on his own writing: 'the mystical, hidden building fell quiet' suggesting that 'i*t's good 'cos it's a building and I'm using a verb on something not actually like human'.* Here the grammar term is used and the effectiveness is appreciated and he half explains that the quality of the text is concerned with the fact that a building can't literally fall silent, being an inanimate object. The problem of articulation here is not limited by his grammar knowledge, nor appreciating the effect, but being able to explain it. The following example from Ava (13-14 years) reveals not only an awareness of reader but also an awareness of authorial voice and how grammatical choices can express the intentions of the writer as well as create an effect on a reader. '*Using a modal verb like 'could' is more subtle than 'should' 'you don't want to be too demanding and you want to be tactful….. not come across too aggressive…. I was trying to make them feel that this was something they had a chance to do'*

Tables 2 and 3 appear to show a progression of sophistication in terms of the four codes outlined here, with word choices and reader awareness being more representative of all children and all attainment levels while explaining the effect of language choices appears to be the least accessible and least representative. At the same time however, all these codes reveal glimpses of metalinguistic understanding and an emerging sense of children learning how to mean.

4.   DISCUSSION

The paper aimed to explore how 'learning to mean' is visible in how students discuss their writing choices, because evidence for what development of this capacity might

look like is currently scarce. One way to represent this is through linear models of development, suggesting that some skills can only be mastered when other skills are already in place. The picture that emerges in this data however is difficult to present as linear because the examples of understanding are episodic and dependent on enabling environmental conditions. Examples of this ordering of learning: include Culioli (1990) and Gombert (1992) who both consider epilinguistic or unconscious language use to precede metalinguistic understanding, which itself confers the ability to consciously control language use for a particular purpose. Gombert further argues that 'meta' understanding of language forms precedes the 'meta' understanding of rhetorical purpose or personal meaning. The data reported here, however, is perhaps better explained by a view of language learning as more integrated, such as that proposed by Halliday; who describes a dialectic relationship between using language and understanding language such that each develops in relation to the other and as they develop, so too does the meaning that is being expressed. Bialystok's (1987; 1999) view of 'analysis' and 'control' working and developing together presents a similar non-linear but co-dependent understanding of development and the possibility that analysis of current, unconscious choices might inform future, conscious control in a repeated cycle of development. The image evoked here is not so much linear as that of ripples in a pond, widening and expanding but not necessarily in perfectly concentric circles. The data capture development as it unfolds, not so much over time, but 'in the moment', which might illuminate the conditions that enable this development.

Adopting a model of inter-dependence; where language experience in one aspect touches and develops another and language use and language knowledge develop side by side, might offer a lens to explore the data reported here. The code capturing comments about word choice represents a range of sophistication in line with attainment as discussed above, suggesting that the simple choosing of one word rather than another, might well be where 'learning to mean' can develop. The sophisticated understanding that facilitates the abstract link between choice and meaning can be made explicit and concrete through word choice, which itself constitutes more accessible grammatical knowledge. Thus the code that captures some of the simplest examples of choice also captures moments of metalinguistic awareness. There is evidence of 'analysis' and 'control', and of 'meta' knowledge at the form level '*you have to use proper words—instead of 'kids' you have to say 'children' (*Fiona 8-9 years) *commenting on a formal report*) and at the rhetorical level '*choking' is quite good and 'seeking' and 'searching' they are like dark words, a tension kind of thing'* (Ava 12-13 years). While these examples reflect attainment levels, it is in this code that more children have more to say, in more sophisticated ways. Meta-facility, often represented as an advanced stage in development (Gombert 1992) is visible here in the making and explaining of simple choices.

A limiting factor for all children, however, is finding the right words to express their choices. The language by which all these choices; word level and syntactic level,

are explained is often dependent on the language of classroom discourse. This 'borrowing' of a language to explain choices, is perhaps a necessary pre-requisite of independence. Gombert's claim that 'meta' understanding of linguistic form precedes 'meta' understanding of rhetorical purpose also resonates here, as these children are certainly better able to comment on the existence of a feature than its purpose. This apparent dependence on classroom discourse might well be viewed to be understanding that is appropriated and carrying the echoes of past use as Bakhtin suggests.

One echo or message that is being heard in relation to word choice is that some words have more value than others. What is less well understood by these students, is what confers this value; with young writers appearing to have more to say about its value in terms of a performance (look what I can do) than its value in terms of how it is shaping meaning (listen to what I am saying). One conclusion that has been drawn in relation to this is that this reflects the impact of classroom culture (Myhill, 2011; Chen & Myhill, 2016). Even though the teachers in this study were involved in professional development that highlighted a contextual approach, these teachers also occupy a professional context that includes the SPaG test in primary schools and an emphasis on standardised tests with an increased grammatical component in both primary and secondary schools. One consequence of this is a decreasing emphasis on what a writer wants to say and an increased emphasis on how it is communicated. Thus a language of personal authorial intention is increasingly a missing component. This is evidenced in the observation data for this study reported elsewhere (Myhill et al 2016, Myhill and Newman 2016) which includes many examples of explaining grammar terms and encouraging the inclusion of these terms but far less talk about their own writing intentions and aims. This kind of talk was much more evident in the interviews than in the classroom, because they were designed to evoke such reflections, suggesting there are ways to enable this talk, approaches currently under-utilised in the classroom.

If children are going to learn how to mean—they first need to know what they want to say. If children are going to explain how their language choices create an effect, they first need to know what effect they wish to create. One notable finding from this study is that in spite of a relative absence of examples of young writers able to justify or verbalise their own linguistic choices, there are still examples of the struggle to do just this as indicated above (For example: Mark's comments on the mystical building, Ava's comment on the description of the abandoned puppy and Fiona's description of Kojo's mother). If one assumes a linear view of metalinguistic development then this absence might be explained by the fact that many young writers are not yet able to do so. The evidence here from explanations of word choices, however, suggests that in certain contexts they can and that they develop a repertoire to articulate this. Similarly the evidence in relation to classroom discourses suggests that young writers, effectively or otherwise, use the discourses available to them in order to do this. Bakhtin offers an additional possibility; that writers can contribute to culture as well as being shaped by it. This possibility may in part be

realised if the classroom discourses being articulated by these young writers do not remain the outcome of learning but become the springboard for ownership of this learning; the words to explain intentions rather than the words that constrain or mask intentions.

In each of the codes outlined above there are examples of dependence on well-rehearsed classroom discourses but also moments of awareness of how the language choices they are making are creating certain effects. The key to this is having a personal writing intention: a writer who has a sense of what they want to say is better able to see how language choices impact on this and better able to evaluate choices in terms of how well a personal intention has been realised in the text. So while classroom discourses might be helpfully modelling this and providing a vocabulary to talk about choices they might also be overly narrow and more focussed on use than on purpose. Indeed an over-emphasis on what a language feature is, and even what it does, might be obscuring what a writer wants to say. In some respects the naïve explanations offered by these young writers, suggesting for example, that some words '*just sound right*' is rather more suggestive of an emphasis on personal meaning and that they are hearing an effect and are aware of the meaning that is evoked, than their recourse to the classroom discourse. What is implied here is that they have a sense of effect but that they don't have the language to explain it; chiming with Fortune and Thorp (2001) and Gutierrez (2008).

There are several conflicting influences impacting on outcomes here; namely linguistic and metalinguistic understanding and classroom culture. The fact that the latter may be shaping the former is both about limits and possibilities. The classroom observations show that many of the generic explanations such as '*the effect of using personal pronouns is to keep the reader interested'* lack precision in talking about the effect itself, perhaps because teachers may themselves find it hard to articulate effect and thus may not be modelling it effectively. Perhaps this is not so surprising given their support is focussed on the written product which they will access as a reader and not on the writing process in which a writer has to match linguistic resource to purpose. The absence of a language to articulate personal choices, but a clear appropriation of a language of performance serves to illustrate how successful inter-textuality can be. Young writers have quite effectively adopted a discourse of feature naming as evidence of 'better writing.' In the move from a dependence on classroom discourses to an expression of independent personal writing intentions there is a missing discourse pattern; that related to authorial intention. In some ways the writing conversations themselves, undertaken here as a research method, carry the seed of the kind of classroom talk that is missing:

- What did you want to make the reader think or feel or see?
- Probe student answers for specific explanations of choices and intended effects (example interview prompts)

The glimpses of 'learning how to mean', half formed, tentative and momentary, yet visible in this data, require a classroom discourse pattern that models for young

writers how to articulate their own writing intentions, because knowing them provides the reason for the linguistic choices they make, so that rather than school writing being inevitably reproductive it can be '*populate(d) with (their) own intentions*' (Bakhtin 1981: 249) and thus they may, in time, 'learn how to mean'.

REFERENCES

ACARA. (2009). *National English Curriculum: Initial advice*. Melbourne: Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (1982). From Conversation to Composition: The Role of Instruction in a Developmental Process. In R. Glaser (Ed.), *Advances in Instructional Psychology* (pp. 1-64). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bialystok, E. (1987). Influences of bilingualism on metalinguistic development. *Second Language Research, 3*, 154-166.

Bialystok, E. (2001). Metalinguistic aspects of bilingual processing. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 21*, 169-182. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190501000101

Bialystok, E. (2007). Acquisition of literacy in bilingual children: A framework for research. *Language Learning*, 45-77. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2007.00412.x

CCSSI-ELAS. (2012). *Common Core State Standards Initiative: English Language Arts Standards*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/

Chen, H., & Myhill, D. (2016). Children talking about writing: Investigating metalinguistic understanding. *Linguistics and Education, 35*, 100-108.

Culioli, A. (1990). *Pour une linguistique de l'enonciation: Operations et representations* [The case for enunciation linguistics: Operations and representations]. Paris: Ophrys.

DfE. (1995). *English in the national curriculum*. London: HMSO.

DfE. (1999). *The National Curriculum for England, English Key Stages 1-4*. London: DfE.

DfE. (2014). *National curriculum in England: English programmes of study.* Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study

Faigley, L. (1986). Competing theories of process: A critique and a proposal. *College English, 48*(6), 527-542. https://doi.org/10.2307/376707

Fontich, X., & Camps, A. (2014). Towards a rationale for research into grammar teaching in schools. *Research Papers in Education, 29*(5), 598-625. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2013.813579

Fortune, A., & Thorp, D. (2001). Knotted and entangled: New light on the identification, classification and value of language related episodes in collaborative output tasks. *Language Awareness, 10*, 143. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410108667031

Gombert, J. E. (1992). *Metalinguistic development*. University of Chicago Press

Gombert, E. J. (2003). Implicit and Explicit Learning to Read: Implication as for Subtypes of Dyslexia. *Current Psychology Letters: Behaviour, Brain and Cognition, 10* (1), Special Issue on Language Disorders and Reading Acquisition. https://doi.org/10.4000/cpl.202

Greene, S., & Higgins, L. (1994). 'Once upon a time': The use of retrospective accounts in building theory in composition. In P. Smagorinsky (Ed.), *Speaking about Writing.* London: Sage.

Gutiérrez, X. (2008). What Does Metalinguistic Activity in Learners' Interaction during a Collaborative L2 Writing Task Look Like? *The Modern Language Journal, 92*(4), 519-537.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1975). *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). Meaning and the construction of reality in early childhood. In H.L. Pick & E. Saltzman (Eds.), *Modes of perceiving and processing of information* (pp. 67-96). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1993). Towards a language-based theory of learning. *Linguistics and Education, 5*, 93–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/0898-5898(93)90026-7

Jones, S. M., Myhill, D. A., & Bailey, T. (2013). Grammar for Writing? An investigation into the effect of Contextualised Grammar Teaching on Student Writing. *Reading and Writing, 26*(8), 1241-1263. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-012-9416-1

Jones, S. (2020) Developing a Pedagogy of Empowerment: Enabling Primary School Writers to Make Meaningful Linguistic Choices. In H. Chen, D. Myhill, & H. Lewis (Eds.), *Developing Writers Across the Primary and Secondary Years: Growing into Writing*. London: Routledge.

Karmiloff-Smith, A., Grant, J., Sims, K., Jones, M.C., & Cuckle, P. (1996). Rethinking metalinguistic awareness: Representing and accessing knowledge about what counts as a word. *Cognition, 58*(2), 197-219. https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(95)00680-X

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mercer, N., & Littleton, K. (2007) *Dialogue and the Development of Children's Thinking: a sociocultural approach*. London: Routledge.

Myhill, D. (2005). Ways of Knowing: Writing with Grammar in Mind. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, *4*(3), 77-96.

Myhill, D. (2011). 'The ordeal of deliberate choice': Metalinguistic development in secondary writers. In V. Berninger (Ed.), P*ast, present and future contributions of cognitive writing research to cognitive psychology*. Psychology Press

Myhill, D. A., Jones, S. M., Lines, H., & Watson, A. (2012). Re-thinking grammar: the impact of embedded grammar teaching on students' writing and students' metalinguistic understanding. *Research Papers in Education, 27*(2), 139-166. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2011.637640

Myhill, D. A., & Jones, S. M. (2015) Conceptualizing metalinguistic understanding in writing. *Cultura y Educación, 27*(4), 839–867. https://doi.org/10.1080/11356405.2015.1089387

Myhill, D., Jones, S., & Wilson, A. (2016). Writing conversations: fostering metalinguistic discussion about writing. *Research Papers in Education, 31*(1), 23-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2016.1106694

Myhill, D., & Newman, R. (2016). Metatalk: Enabling metalinguistic discussion about writing. *International Journal of Educational Research, 80*, 177-187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.07.007

Rosen, M. (2015, November 3). Dear Ms Morgan: in grammar there isn't always one right answer. *The Guardian*.

Russo, J. E., Johnson, E. J. & Stephens, D. L. (1989) The validity of verbal protocols. *Memory and Cognition,* 17, 759-69. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03202637

Street, B. (2013). Literacy in theory and practice: Challenges and debates over 50 years. *Theory into practice*, *52*(sup1), 52-62. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2013.795442

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wyse, D., & Torgerson, C. (2017). Experimental trials and 'what works?' in education: The case of grammar for writing. *British Education Research Journal 43*(6), 1019-1047. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3315