Bridging Political and Academic Discourse: A Pedagogical Framework for Teaching Textual Grammatical Metaphors

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Abstract

This study examines textual grammatical metaphors in Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address through Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to develop a pedagogical framework for teaching advanced academic writing. Using qualitative discourse analysis based on Thompson's (2004) framework, we identify and categorise 67 instances of textual grammatical metaphors, revealing how they construct binary worldviews, establish collective identity, and create temporal framing. We then demonstrate how these patterns can be transformed into explicit teaching materials for academic writing instruction. The study presents a four-stage pedagogical approach that uses accessible political texts to scaffold students' understanding of complex textual organisation. Pilot implementation suggestions show how instructors can guide students from recognising these patterns in political discourse to producing appropriate academic texts. The research bridges discourse analysis and writing pedagogy, providing concrete strategies for enhancing students' textual coherence and rhetorical effectiveness.

Keywords: Systemic Functional Linguistics, grammatical metaphors, textual grammatical metaphors, political discourse, inaugural address

Introduction

Political discourse, particularly presidential inaugural addresses, has long attracted linguistic researchers due to its sophisticated language and persuasive rhetorical power (Sowińska, 2013) . Previous research on political discourse has predominantly focused on ideational and interpersonal aspects, as illustrated in studies by Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) and Martin and Maton (2017). However, the textual metafunction – which involves organising information and ensuring coherence – has received comparatively less scholarly attention, despite its crucial role in guiding audience comprehension (Thompson, 2014).

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), as developed by Halliday (1985, 1994) and further expanded by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), textual grammatical metaphors are non- typical grammatical constructions employed strategically to structure discourse, establish connections between ideas, and subtly guide audience interpretation (Martin, 1992; Thompson, 2014). Understanding how textual grammatical metaphors function in political discourse can not only deepen our insights into rhetorical strategies but also provide valuable implications for academic writing

pedagogy – an area frequently lacking explicit guidance regarding textual organisation and coherence strategies (Wingate, 2012).

The intersection of political discourse analysis and academic writing pedagogy offers unique opportunities for teaching complex linguistic concepts. Political speeches, particularly those as widely discussed as Trump's inaugural address, provide accessible entry points for students to understand sophisticated textual organisation before applying these concepts to academic writing. This dual analytical-pedagogical approach addresses a critical gap in writing instruction: while students often struggle with textual coherence, traditional teaching materials rarely demonstrate how expert writers actually construct logical relationships beyond simple conjunctions.

For instance, Trump's statement *"Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength"* uses the verb *lead to* to express a causal relationship that could be more congruently expressed as *"Because we protect ourselves, we will become prosperous and strong*." This transformation from a conjunction (*because*) to a verbal process (*lead to*) exemplifies how textual grammatical metaphors package logical relationships in more rhetorically powerful ways.

Objectives

This study analyses President Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address, as the speech shows a distinctive linguistic style characterised by seemingly simple vocabulary yet sophisticated textual organisation and powerful rhetorical impact (Schoor, 2015). Therefore, this research aims to identify specific rhetorical strategies used to structure information, enhance cohesion, and achieve persuasive effects by delving deeply into how textual grammatical metaphors were exploited. Furthermore, this analysis offers significant pedagogical implications for improving academic writing instruction at the tertiary level.

In order to achieve such aims, this study seeks to answer two main research questions:

1. How are textual grammatical metaphors deployed in Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address, and what rhetorical functions do they serve?

2. What implications do these findings have for teaching academic writing at the tertiary level?

Therefore, this research functions as a practical bridge between theoretical gaps related to textual grammatical metaphor in political discourse analysis and approaches to improve the teaching of academic writing for university students.

Literature Review
Systemic Functional Linguistics and Grammatical Metaphor

SFL conceptualises language as a system of choices for making meaning within specific social contexts. Central to SFL is the understanding that language simultaneously performs three metafunctions: ideational (representing experience), interpersonal (enacting social relationships), and textual (organising discourse into coherent texts). Within this framework, grammatical metaphor emerges as a significant concept that addresses how meanings can be expressed through non-congruent grammatical realisations.

Grammatical metaphor, unlike lexical metaphor which operates at the level of word meaning, functions at the level of grammatical organisation. Halliday (1985, p. 321) defines grammatical metaphor as "a variation in the expression of a given meaning, rather than a variation in the meaning itself". In simpler terms, grammatical metaphor involves expressing one type of meaning through grammar typically used for another type. This differs from familiar lexical metaphors (like "*time is money*") by operating at the grammatical rather than word level. This variation involves expressing meanings through grammatical structures that evolved to express different kinds of meanings. For instance, processes typically realised through verbs (e.g., *they decided*) may be reconstrued as entities through nominalisation (e.g., *their decision*).

While ideational grammatical metaphor, particularly nominalisation, has received extensive scholarly attention (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Liardét, 2016; Schleppegrell, 2004) , textual grammatical metaphor has remained relatively underexplored. As Thompson (2004, p. 230) defines it, textual grammatical metaphor involves "the expression of logical relations between elements of discourse in forms which evolved to express other kinds of meaning." In other words, conjunctive relationships typically expressed through conjunctions may be realised through other grammatical resources such as verbs, nouns, or prepositional phrases.

Ravelli (2003) identified several common patterns of textual metaphor, including:

1. The expression of conjunction through verbs (e.g., "*X results in Y*" instead of "*Because X, Y*")

2. The expression of conjunction through nouns (e.g., "*The consequence of X is Y*" instead of "*Because X, Y*")

3. The expression of conjunction through prepositional phrases (e.g., "*As a result of X, Y occurs*" instead of "*Because X, Y*")

These patterns, while identified in academic contexts, appear across various discourse types, suggesting their value as transferable concepts in writing instruction.

Earlier, Martin (1992) developed the concept of textual metaphor through his work on discourse semantics, particularly in his analysis of conjunction and logical relations. He demonstrated how textual metaphors reconfigure the logico-semantic relationships between clauses, often through nominalisation, allowing writers to establish more complex relationships between ideas. Martin and Rose (2003) expanded this framework, examining how textual metaphor contributes to the construction of coherent discourse and manages information flow across extended texts.

Hood (2010) focused specifically on textual metaphor in academic writing, arguing that it enables writers to create more sophisticated logical relationships between concepts than is possible with simple conjunctive relations. Her research revealed how textual metaphors function in academic research articles to establish complex relationships between the writer's research and existing literature while constructing evaluative stance. Recent research has further explored these patterns in second language contexts. Byrnes (2009) traces the longitudinal development of grammatical metaphor in L2 German writing curricula, demonstrating how learners progressively develop control of these features over time. Similarly, research on L2 English writing shows that grammatical metaphor represents a crucial threshold for advanced proficiency (Yasuda, 2019).

From a pedagogical perspective, these patterns present both challenges and opportunities. While students need to master these forms for academic success, the abstract nature of grammatical metaphor makes direct teaching difficult. This suggests the value of using more accessible texts - such as political speeches - as stepping stones to academic discourse.

SFL research establishes grammatical metaphor as crucial for advanced literacy. Yet most studies examine ideational rather than textual grammatical metaphor. This gap is particularly noticeable in political discourse studies, where textual organisation plays a crucial role in rhetorical effectiveness. Despite extensive research on grammatical metaphor in academic contexts, the intersection of political discourse analysis and writing pedagogy remains unexplored. Therefore, Trump's inaugural address presents a unique opportunity: its apparent simplicity masks sophisticated textual organisation that could serve as an accessible entry point for teaching complex academic writing strategies. This pedagogical potential has not been examined in existing literature.

As afore-discussed, the intersection of these two areas - textual grammatical metaphor and political discourse - reveals untapped pedagogical potential. While researchers have examined these domains separately, few have considered how insights from one can inform teaching in the other. Political speeches offer several advantages as teaching materials: they are publicly accessible, culturally relevant, and employ sophisticated textual strategies in relatively short texts. These features make them ideal for introducing complex linguistic concepts before students encounter them in lengthier, more specialised academic texts. The following section examines how textual grammatical metaphors function in political discourse, with particular attention to their pedagogical applications.

Textual Grammatical Metaphor in Political Discourse

Political discourse represents a rich domain for studying textual grammatical metaphors due to its inherently persuasive nature and the significant role logical relations play in constructing political arguments. As Fairclough (2000, 2003) demonstrates, the way political texts organise information and establish connections between ideas often serves ideological purposes, naturalising particular perspectives and framing contested issues in ways that support specific political positions.

The concept of textual grammatical metaphor has been implicitly addressed in political discourse studies through examinations of cohesion, logical relations, and information structure, though rarely using SFL terminology explicitly. Van Dijk's (2006) work on political discourse highlights how the strategic organisation of information contributes to ideological positioning – a critical thinking skill that students can develop through analysing political texts before applying similar analytical frameworks to academic sources. On the other hand, Wodak's (2015) discourse-historical approach examines how temporal and causal relations are constructed in political texts to legitimise policies and actions.

Within the SFL tradition, studies explicitly addressing textual grammatical metaphor in political discourse have remained limited. Young (2011) analyses cohesive devices in political speeches, including metaphorical expressions of logical relations, showing how these contribute to persuasive effect and help naturalise contested political positions. Liu and Gao (2010) examine logical connectives in Chinese EFL

learners' argumentative writing, finding that metaphorical expressions of causality and consequence were particularly common in sections outlining policy agendas.

Regarding inaugural addresses specifically, Sowińska (2013) analyses their genre characteristics, noting that these speeches typically blend ceremonial and deliberative rhetoric while establishing temporal frameworks that connect past, present, and future. Campbell and Jamieson (2008) identify recurring rhetorical patterns in inaugural addresses, including the establishment of collective identity and the articulation of political principles, both of which depend heavily on effective textual organisation.

Trump's rhetoric specifically has attracted substantial scholarly attention for its distinctive stylistic and organisational features. Montgomery (2017) examines Trump's inaugural address from a discourse-analytical perspective, noting its departure from conventional presidential rhetoric in terms of simplicity, directness, and populist framing. Schoor (2015) discusses Trump's populist discourse strategies, observing how his speeches construct binary worldviews and establish collective identity through strategic textual organisation.

However, these studies of Trump's rhetoric have not focused specifically on textual grammatical metaphor as a central analytical concept. The rhetorical strategies employed in political discourse, while serving different purposes than academic writing, utilise similar grammatical resources. This parallel offer pedagogical potential: students can first identify these patterns in engaging political texts before learning to adapt them for academic purposes. This represents a significant gap in the literature, as understanding how Trump's rhetorically effective speech deploys textual grammatical metaphors could provide valuable insights into both political discourse analysis and academic writing instruction.

Academic Writing Pedagogy and Grammatical Metaphor

Academic writing pedagogy at the tertiary level has increasingly recognised the importance of explicitly teaching linguistic resources that contribute to successful academic text production. As Hyland (2007) argues, academic writing involves not just content knowledge but also control of discipline-specific discourse conventions, including the ability to construct coherent arguments through effective textual organisation.

Schleppegrell (2004) demonstrates that academic writing is characterised by high frequencies of grammatical metaphor, which allows for dense information packaging, abstract reasoning, and the construction of technical taxonomies. Christie and Derewianka (2008) trace the development of grammatical metaphor in student writing across grade levels, showing that mastery of grammatical metaphor represents a crucial milestone in advanced literacy development. However, as Liardét (2016) notes, many students, particularly those from non-English speaking backgrounds, struggle to develop control of grammatical metaphor in their academic writing.

Research specifically addressing textual grammatical metaphor in academic writing pedagogy is particularly limited. Ravelli (2003) examines textual metaphor in academic writing, arguing that it enables writers to create more dynamic relationships between concepts than is possible with simple conjunctive relations. Hood (2010) explores how textual metaphor functions in academic research articles, particularly in

introductions, where writers need to establish complex relationships between their research and existing literature.

Several pedagogical approaches have attempted to address grammatical metaphor in academic writing instruction. The Sydney School's genre-based pedagogy, as articulated by Rose and Martin (2012), incorporates attention to grammatical metaphor within a broader focus on genre and register. This approach emphasises explicit teaching of linguistic resources through a teaching-learning cycle that includes deconstruction of model texts, joint construction with teacher guidance, and independent construction by students.

Building on this foundation, recent implementations of SFL-informed pedagogy have demonstrated concrete results in diverse educational contexts. Gebhard and Accurso (2020) examine how SFL principles can be operationalised in educational settings, revealing successful transformations of abstract linguistic concepts into teachable moments through careful scaffolding and contextualisation. More specifically for textual metaphor instruction, Yasuda (2019) demonstrates through a corpus-based study how explicit instruction in grammatical metaphor leads to improvements in EFL students' academic writing quality, particularly in constructing logical arguments and managing information flow. These studies suggest that the theoretical insights of SFL can indeed be operationalised effectively, yet they also point to remaining challenges.

The potential value of using political discourse to teach aspects of academic writing has received limited attention in the literature. Negretti and McGrath (2018) argue for using genre analysis to help students develop rhetorical consciousness, while Miller, Mitchell, and Pessoa (2016) argue how analysis of political texts can develop critical reading skills. However, few studies have specifically leveraged grammatical metaphor analysis of political texts as a pedagogical tool for academic writing instruction.

Despite extensive research on grammatical metaphor in academic contexts, the intersection of political discourse analysis and writing pedagogy remains unexplored. Despite these advances in grammatical metaphor pedagogy, significant gaps remain in how we help students bridge different discourse contexts. While students may struggle with dense academic texts, they often demonstrate sophisticated understanding of persuasive strategies in political discourse—a resource that remains largely untapped in writing instruction.

The intersection of political discourse analysis and writing pedagogy thus represents not merely an unexplored area, but a missed opportunity to leverage students' existing analytical skills. Trump's inaugural address presents a unique opportunity: its apparent simplicity masks sophisticated textual organisation that could serve as an accessible entry point for teaching complex academic writing strategies. By analysing familiar political rhetoric, students can develop meta-linguistic awareness that transfers to academic contexts – yet no existing framework systematically exploits this pedagogical potential.

Trump's inaugural address presents a unique opportunity: its apparent simplicity masks sophisticated textual organisation that could serve as an accessible entry point for teaching complex academic writing strategies. This pedagogical potential has not been examined in existing literature. This gap in the literature points to a significant opportunity. Teaching students to recognise and produce textual

grammatical metaphors could enhance their ability to construct coherent, persuasive academic texts. By analysing how these resources function in political discourse, where the objects of study may be more accessible and engaging for students than specialised academic texts, this study aims to develop pedagogical approaches that can bridge the gap between students' existing linguistic resources and the demands of academic writing.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyse textual grammatical metaphors in Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address. The research design combines detailed linguistic analysis with pedagogical application, following Thompson's (2004) framework for identifying textual grammatical metaphor and Martin and Rose's (2003) approach to discourse analysis.

Data Selection and Rationale

To address potential limitations of single-text analysis, this speech was selected as a representative example of contemporary political rhetoric that demonstrates clear textual organisation patterns while remaining accessible to student audiences. The corpus for this study consists of Donald Trump's inaugural address delivered on January 20, 2017. This speech was selected for several reasons:

1. As an inaugural address, it represents a well-defined political genre with established conventions, allowing for systematic analysis of textual features.

2. The speech received significant public and scholarly attention for its distinctive rhetorical style, making it a particularly rich text for linguistic analysis.

3. At approximately 1,450 words, it provides a manageable yet substantive corpus for detailed examination.

4. The speech contains a variety of logical relationships expressed through different grammatical structures, offering ample material for analysing textual grammatical metaphors.

The official transcript of the speech was obtained from the White House archives to ensure textual accuracy. Both the written transcript and video recording were consulted to account for any discrepancies between the prepared text and the delivered speech.

Analytical Framework

The analysis followed a three-stage process designed to systematically identify, categorise, and interpret textual grammatical metaphors in the inaugural address:

Identification of Textual Grammatical Metaphors

Following Thompson's (2004) definition, textual grammatical metaphors were identified as instances where logical relations typically expressed through conjunctions (e.g., *because, but*, *when*) were instead realised through other grammatical structures. For each identified instance, a congruent (non-metaphorical) realisation was constructed to serve as a basis for comparison.

The identification process involved:

1. segmenting the text into clauses and clause complexes;

2. identifying logical relationships between clauses and elements;

3. determining whether these relationships were expressed congruently or metaphorically;

4. constructing congruent alternatives for metaphorical expressions.

For example, the metaphorical expression "*Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength*" was identified as expressing a causal relationship that could congruently be expressed as "*Because we will protect ourselves, we will become prosperous and strong*".

Table 1

Examples of Metaphorical vs Congruent Realisations

Metaphorical Expression	Congruent Alternative	Logical Relation
For too long, a small group has reaped rewards	*Because it has happened for a long time, a small group has reaped rewards*	Temporal-causal
Protection will lead to prosperity	*If we protect ourselves, then we will prosper*	Conditional

These examples illustrate how the agnation test was applied systematically throughout the analysis. The identification process required careful attention to semantic equivalence while recognising the rhetorical differences between metaphorical and congruent forms.

Categorisation of Textual Grammatical Metaphors

Identified textual grammatical metaphors were categorised according to multiple parameters:

1. Grammatical realisation:

- Prepositional phrases (e.g., "*For too long*")

- Verbal processes (e.g., "*lead to*")

- Nominal groups (e.g., "*the consequence*")

- Enhanced by punctuation/layout (e.g., the use of dashes to reinforce adversative relations)

2. Type of logical relation:

- Causal (expressing reason, result, purpose)

- Adversative (expressing contrast, concession)

- Temporal (expressing time relationships)

- Additive (expressing addition, alternative)

- Conditional (expressing conditions, consequences)

3. Position in clause:

- Theme position (at the beginning of the clause)

- Rheme position (later in the clause)

- Embedded (within another element)

Functional Analysis

The functional analysis examined how textual grammatical metaphors contributed to the overall rhetorical effectiveness of the speech, focusing on:

1. how they constructed particular representations of events and relationships;
2. how they managed information flow and thematic development;
3. how they contributed to the persuasive impact of the speech;
4. how they created coherence across the text.

This analysis drew on Martin and Rose's (2003) approach to discourse semantics, examining how textual resources constructed particular meanings in context. Particular attention was paid to how textual grammatical metaphors functioned to naturalise particular perspectives, establish collective identity, and create temporal framing.

Pedagogical Framework Development

Parallel to the linguistic analysis, this study developed a pedagogical framework through the following process:

1. Identifying teachable patterns from the linguistic analysis
2. Developing student-friendly explanations and examples
3. Creating scaffolded activities moving from recognition to production
4. Designing assessment criteria for student mastery

This framework was reviewed by three experienced EAP instructors working in the same tertiary context for clarity and practicality, with revisions made based on their feedback.

Readibility and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of this three-stage analytical process, several measures were implemented. Therefore, 20% of the text was independently coded by a second researcher familiar with SFL so that the analytical consistency can be guaranteed. Inter-rater agreement reached 87% for identification of textual grammatical metaphors and 82% for categorisation of logical relations. Disagreements were resolved through discussion and reference to established SFL literature. The distinction between metaphorical and congruent forms followed Thompson's (2004) agnation test: if a logical relationship could be re-expressed using a simple conjunction while maintaining the same meaning, the original expression was classified as metaphorical.

Results

The analysis of Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural address revealed a substantial presence of textual grammatical metaphors throughout the speech, with 67 instances identified in the approximately 1,450-word text. This represents a density of 4.6 textual grammatical metaphors per 100 words, which is notable for a spoken political text, though lower than the typical density in academic writing (Ravelli, 2003; Hood, 2010).

These textual grammatical metaphors were categorised according to both their grammatical realisation and the type of logical relation they express. Table 1 presents the distribution of textual grammatical metaphors by their grammatical realisation. For example, the prepositional phrase *For too long* establishes temporal context metaphorically, whereas a congruent form might be *Because this has continued for many years*. Such prepositional phrases signal temporal-causal logic while maintaining rhetorical force.

Table 2

Distribution of Textual Grammatical Metaphors by Grammatical Realisation

Grammatical Realisation	Frequency	Percentage
Prepositional phrases	28	41.8%
Verbal processes	19	28.4%
Nominal groups	13	19.4%
Enhanced by punctuation/layout	7	10.4%
Total	67	100%

As shown in Table 2, prepositional phrases represented the most common grammatical realisation of textual grammatical metaphors in the address, accounting for 41.8% of all instances. These typically took forms such as *For too long*, *At the bedrock of our politics*, and *With the understanding that*, functioning to establish temporal, foundational, and conditional relationships respectively.

Table 3 presents the distribution of textual grammatical metaphors according to the type of logical relation they express. Causal relations (e.g., *lead to*, *result in*) predominate, reflecting the speech's emphasis on explaining consequences of political choice.:

Table 3

Distribution of Textual Grammatical Metaphors by Logical Relation

Logical Relation	Frequency	Percentage
Causal	24	35.8%
Adversative	16	23.9%
Temporal	14	20.9%
Additive	8	11.9%
Conditional	5	7.5%
Total	67	100%

Causal relations were most frequently expressed through textual grammatical metaphors (35.8%), reflecting the speech's emphasis on explaining current situations and justifying proposed actions. Adversative relations were the second most common (23.9%), often establishing contrasts between the past and future or between different social groups.

Cross-tabulation revealed significant patterns in how different logical relations were typically realised grammatically. Causal relations were most commonly expressed through verbal processes (e.g., *lead to*, *result in*), while temporal relations

were predominantly realised through prepositional phrases (e.g., *For too long*, *From this day forward*).

The distribution of textual grammatical metaphors throughout the speech also revealed strategic patterns. The density was highest in sections articulating policy positions (6.3 per 100 words) and lowest in ceremonial opening and closing sections (3.1 per 100 words). This pattern suggests a strategic deployment of textual grammatical metaphors to construct logical relationships in portions of the speech focused on argumentation and persuasion.

Pedagogical Applications of Findings

The linguistic patterns identified in Trump's inaugural address translate directly into teachable concepts for academic writing instruction. While political discourse and academic writing serve different purposes, the underlying grammatical resources remain similar. The following table demonstrates how instructors can transform each linguistic finding into classroom applications, using political texts as accessible entry points before progressing to academic discourse.

Table 4
Transformation of Linguistic Findings into Teaching Applications

Linguistic Finding	Teaching Application	Sample Activity
Prepositional phrases express temporal-causal relations (41.8%)	Teach students to recognise and use phrases like: *In light of*, *Given that*, *In the context of*	Transform explicit conjunctions in sample texts to prepositional phrases
Causal metaphors dominate (35.8%)	Focus instruction on sophisticated cause-effect expressions	Analyse cause-effect chains in accessible texts before academic ones
Verbal processes for logical relations (28.4%)	Introduce verbs like: *stems from*, *gives rise to*, *results in*	Rewrite simple causal sentences using verbal processes
Adversative relations through punctuation (10.4%)	Demonstrate how dashes, semicolons enhance contrast	Compare punctuation effects in political vs. academic texts

These applications follow a scaffolded approach: students first identify patterns in engaging political texts, analyse their rhetorical effects, then adapt these patterns for academic purposes. For instance, students might begin by identifying Trump's use of "*For too long*" as a temporal-causal metaphor, discuss its rhetorical impact, then practice using academic equivalents like "*Historically*" or "*Over the past decade*" in their own writing.

Discussions

Rhetorical Functions of Textual Grammatical Metaphors

The analysis revealed that textual grammatical metaphors in Trump's inaugural address served several key rhetorical functions: constructing binary worldviews, establishing collective identity, creating temporal framing, naturalising political positions, and managing information flow.

Constructing Binary Worldviews

Textual grammatical metaphors frequently functioned to establish oppositional relationships between entities, constructing a binary worldview characteristic of populist discourse (Schoor, 2015). This function was particularly evident in adversative textual metaphors that contrasted the establishment with the people:

"*Washington flourished — but the people did not share in its wealth.*" "*Politicians prospered — but the jobs left, and the factories closed.*"

In these examples, the adversative relationship is expressed not only through the conjunction "*but*" but is enhanced by the use of dashes, creating a stronger sense of opposition. This combination of conjunction and punctuation functions as a textual grammatical metaphor that dramatises the disconnect between elite prosperity and popular struggle.

Similarly, in the parallel structures "*Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs,*" the semicolon functions as a textual grammatical metaphor expressing adversative relation, reinforcing the opposition between "*them*" and "*you*" established lexically.

The binary oppositions created through textual metaphors in Trump's speech offer a clear teaching point. Students can first identify these patterns in political texts, then learn how academic writing transforms simple oppositions into nuanced contrasts. For instance, instead of Trump's stark 'but,' academic writers might use 'while acknowledging X, it is important to note Y' - maintaining contrast while avoiding oversimplification.

Classroom Application: Provide students with political statements using binary metaphors. Have them identify the logical relationship, then rewrite for academic contexts. This progression from recognition in accessible texts to production in academic writing scaffolds the learning process effectively. For example:

- Political: "Washington flourished -- but the people did not share"
- Academic rewrite: "While economic indicators showed growth in the capital region, this prosperity was not equally distributed across all demographic groups"

Establishing Collective Identity

Textual grammatical metaphors also served to construct collective identity, particularly through causal and conditional relationships that linked national allegiance to positive outcomes:

"*At the bedrock of our politics will be a total allegiance to the United States of America, and through our loyalty to our country, we will rediscover our loyalty to each other.*"

Here, the prepositional phrase " *At the bedrock of our politics*" metaphorically expresses a foundational relationship that might congruently be expressed as "*Because it is fundamentally important for our politics*." This is followed by another textual grammatical metaphor, "*through our loyalty*," which expresses an instrumental causal relationship. These textual grammatical metaphors chain together to create a causal sequence that presents national unity as the natural foundation for social cohesion.

This chaining of textual metaphors demonstrates a sophisticated organisational strategy that students need to master for academic writing. However, where Trump uses these chains to build emotional resonance and collective identity, academic writers use similar structures to build logical arguments and establish theoretical frameworks.

Classroom Application: Present students with examples of metaphorical chains from both political and academic texts. Have them map the logical progression, then practice creating their own chains for different purposes:

- Political purpose: Building group solidarity
- Academic purpose: Establishing theoretical foundations This exercise helps students understand that the same linguistic tools serve different rhetorical purposes across genres.

Creating Temporal Framing

Temporal textual grammatical metaphors played a crucial role in framing the historical significance of the moment and establishing a narrative of national decline and potential renewal:

"*For too long, a small group in our nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost.*" "*That all changes — starting right here, and right now.*"

The prepositional phrase "*For too long*" functions as a textual grammatical metaphor that establishes a temporal frame for the subsequent proposition, positioning it within a historical context of accumulated grievance. This temporal framing creates a sense of urgency and legitimises the call for change that follows.

Temporal framing through textual metaphors is equally important in academic writing, though it serves different purposes. Where political discourse uses temporal frames to create urgency or historical narrative, academic writing uses them to situate research within scholarly conversations and trace theoretical developments.

Classroom Application: Develop exercises where students transform political temporal framing into academic contexts:

- Political: *For too long, a small group has reaped the rewards*
- Academic: Historically, research in this area has focused predominantly on… Students learn to maintain the temporal relationship while shifting from evaluative to analytical language.

Naturalising Political Positions

Causal textual grammatical metaphors frequently served to present contested political positions as natural, inevitable outcomes:

"*Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength.*" "*When America is united, America is totally unstoppable.*"

In the first example, the material process "*lead to*" expresses a causal relationship that might congruently be expressed as "*If we protect ourselves, then we will become greatly prosperous and strong.*" This metaphorical realisation construes causality as a journey or movement, with one entity leading to another, rather than as a conditional relationship between propositions. This presentation of causality as a natural process rather than a contested claim serves to naturalise the protectionist policy position.

The naturalisation of contested positions through causal metaphors presents both a teaching opportunity and a critical thinking exercise. Students must learn to recognise when causal relationships are presented as inevitable versus when they represent one possible interpretation among many.

Classroom Application: Create exercises that move students through three stages:

1. **Recognition:** Identify naturalized causality in political texts
2. **Analysis:** Unpack the assumptions embedded in these causal claims
3. **Academic reconstruction:** Rewrite to acknowledge multiple perspectives Example transformation:

- Political: "Protection will lead to great prosperity"
- Academic: "Some economic theories suggest that protectionist policies may contribute to domestic growth, though this relationship remains contested in the literature"

Limitations and Critical Considerations

While this analysis reveals strategic patterns, we must acknowledge the risk of over-interpreting intentionality. Textual grammatical metaphors may result from speechwriting conventions or rhetorical habits rather than conscious strategic choices. Additionally, the binary worldview constructed through these metaphors, while rhetorically effective, presents a simplified reality that academic writing typically seeks to complicate rather than reduce. These limitations align with broader concerns in critical discourse studies. As Flowerdew and Richardson (2017) note in their handbook, the interpretation of rhetorical strategies must always acknowledge the complex interplay between authorial intention, genre conventions, and audience reception.

Connections to Student Writing Challenges

Students often struggle with similar textual organisation issues, particularly L2 writers who may rely heavily on simple conjunctions. Common errors include:

- Overuse of explicit conjunctions creating choppy prose

- Inability to express complex logical relationships beyond *because* and *but*

- Difficulty managing information flow across extended arguments

Understanding how political discourse employs textual metaphors can help students recognise these resources in academic texts and develop strategies for incorporating them appropriately.

A Four-Stage Pedagogical Framework

The linguistic patterns identified in this study can be systematically taught through a four-stage framework that progresses from recognition to production. This framework addresses the challenge of making abstract grammatical concepts concrete and learnable.

Stage 1: Recognition in Political Texts

In this foundational stage, students develop awareness of textual metaphors through accessible materials:

- Students identify textual metaphors in engaging political speeches using colour-coding systems (blue for causal, red for adversative, green for temporal)
- Compare metaphorical and congruent forms side-by-side using parallel columns
- Complete guided worksheets that highlight specific patterns from Trump's speech

Sample Activity: Present the excerpt "*Washington flourished … but the people did not share in its wealth.*" Students identify the adversative relationship, discuss how the dash intensifies the contrast, then find three similar examples in the text.

Stage 2: Analysis of Functions

Students move beyond identification to understanding rhetorical purposes:

- Examine why speakers choose metaphorical over congruent forms through group discussions
- Analyse rhetorical effects on different audiences using role-play exercises
- Develop critical awareness of how grammatical choices shape meaning

Sample Activity: Students compare "*Protection will lead to prosperity*" with "*If we protect ourselves, we might prosper.*" They discuss certainty levels, persuasive impact, and hidden assumptions in small groups.

Stage 3: Transition to Academic Texts

This crucial stage bridges political and academic discourse:

- Compare political and academic uses of similar metaphors using parallel texts
- Identify discipline-specific preferences through corpus examples
- Practice appropriate adaptations through guided rewriting exercises

Sample Activity: Transform political metaphors into academic register:

- Political: "*For too long, researchers have ignored this problem*"
- Academic: "*Historically, scholarly attention to this issue has been limited*"

Stage 4: Production and Peer Review

Students apply their learning in authentic writing tasks:

- Produce 500-word argumentative texts incorporating textual metaphors
- Conduct peer reviews using rubrics focused on logical coherence
- Revise drafts emphasising academic appropriateness

Assessment Rubric includes:

- Appropriate use of causal metaphors (25%)
- Effective adversative relationships (25%)
- Logical coherence and flow (25%)
- Academic register maintenance (25%)

Implementation Challenges and Solutions

Instructors implementing these approaches may face several challenges:

- **Instructor expertise**: Not all writing teachers have SFL training. Solution: Provide simplified frameworks focusing on logical relationships rather than full SFL terminology.

- **Student readiness**: Students with lower proficiency may struggle with metaphorical expressions. Solution: Scaffold instruction through guided practice, moving from identifying simple patterns to producing complex ones.

- **Transfer difficulties**: Students may overuse political rhetorical strategies in academic contexts. Solution: Explicitly contrast appropriate strategies for different genres through comparative analysis.

Implementation Considerations

While the four-stage framework provides structure, successful implementation requires attention to practical constraints and opportunities.

Pilot Implementation Insights

Preliminary discussions with writing instructors at three tertiary institutions suggest several considerations for implementation:

- **Time allocation:** The four-stage framework requires approximately 4-6 class hours, ideally spread across 2-3 weeks to allow for practice between sessions. In our context, this framework can be extended to 9-week courses as our university offers students with this time-framed course for academic writing.

- **Materials development:** Instructors need curated examples from both political and academic texts. A shared repository of analysed speeches and parallel academic texts would reduce preparation time.

- **Assessment integration:** Textual metaphor recognition and production can be incorporated into existing rubrics without creating additional assessment burden

- **Student readiness:** International students may need additional scaffolding in Stage 1, particularly for understanding cultural references in political speeches

Adaptation for Different Contexts

The framework's flexibility allows for various implementations:

- **Intensive format:** Compress into a two-day workshop for advanced students

- **Extended format:** Spread across a full semester, integrating with other writing skills

- **Discipline-specific focus:** Adapt Stage 3 examples to match students' fields of study

This flexibility aligns with current best practices in L2 writing pedagogy. As research on advanced L2 proficiency demonstrates, successful grammatical metaphor instruction must be responsive to students' developmental stages and disciplinary contexts (see Byrnes, 2009; Yasuda, 2019).

Conclusion

This study contributes to both discourse analysis and writing pedagogy by demonstrating how linguistic insights can be transformed into concrete teaching practices. The analysis reveals sophisticated patterns of textual organisation in political discourse, specifically identifying 67 instances of textual grammatical metaphors that serve to construct binary worldviews, establish collective identity, and naturalise political positions.

The pedagogical framework developed from these findings shows how these patterns can enhance academic writing instruction through a systematic four-stage progression. By using engaging political texts as stepping stones to academic discourse, instructors can make abstract linguistic concepts accessible and applicable. This bridging approach addresses the persistent challenge of teaching textual coherence while providing students with transferable skills for constructing logical arguments across genres.

The study's dual contribution lies not only in advancing our understanding of textual metaphor in political discourse but also in providing a replicable model for transforming linguistic analysis into pedagogical practice. Future research should empirically test this framework across different student populations and explore its application to other accessible genres such as TED talks, opinion editorials, and social media discourse.

For the field of ELT, this study demonstrates that the apparent gap between engaging, culturally relevant materials and sophisticated linguistic instruction is bridgeable. As recent scholarship in SFL pedagogy suggests (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020; Yasuda, 2019), the transformation of SFL theory into classroom practice represents a crucial direction for writing pedagogy. In an era where students must navigate multiple discourse communities, the ability to recognise and adapt textual patterns across genres becomes not just an academic skill but a crucial literacy for participation in public and professional life.

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