

Anna Kiszczak

Taking a functional language analysis perspective in designing EFL history-based lessons: from theory to practice

1. Introduction

Functional language analysis, an approach to reading which recommends conducting language-based analyses of text, may constitute a solution to the problem of teaching comprehending content area texts. The authors of the concept highlight that in order to read complex and specialized texts, such as history-related reading reference materials, one needs to approach texts in an analytical manner, decode them sentence by sentence with an understanding of the roles and functions of particular words (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008). Hence, recognizing the importance of language structures and functions present in discipline-specific documents, engaging with texts actively and viewing them critically is urgently important for comprehending content-area texts and building disciplinary knowledge.

2. Reading history texts for educational purposes: challenges and barriers

Research studies reveal that teaching history as a school subject is closely connected with using a textbook as the main source of information that students are exposed to (Patrick and Hawke, 1982, quoted by Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish and Bosquet, 1996, Tyson and Woodward, 1989). However, as Vanhulle (2009) points out, it is not only broadening history knowledge that can be the goal of reading content area texts, but also helping students develop a critical perspective to the past and the present times, improving logical thinking, or enhancing their literacy skills.

There is no denying that students, many of them novice readers in a particular area, do not process discipline-specific texts in the same way as professional readers, e.g. academics do. It is diverse purposes for reading history texts that constitute one of the most fundamental differences between these two groups of readers (VanSledright and Kelly, 1996; Foster, 2011). It has been argued that novice readers predominantly focus on understanding the described events, their chronology, the actions of agents, and on finding

relationships between events and their participants (Schleppegrell, Greer and Taylor, 2008). This kind of purpose for reading is called 'knowledge-getting' (Haas and Flower, 1988, quoted by Foster, 2011: 6). Expert history readers, on the other hand, approach a text in a dynamic way and engage with it actively by investigating writers' perspectives, intentions, word choices and the possible influence of a text on its readers (Neumann, 2010).

Furthermore, professionals employ discipline-specific comprehension strategies and processes adequate to their reading goals. According to Wineburg (1991), skilled history readers draw upon sourcing heuristic which implies confirming or disproving text's credibility through investigating the source of a text before actual reading it (Hynd-Shanahan, Holschuh and Hubbard, 2004). They also get involved in the process of contextualization, that is they localize a historical text in the context, circumstances and time when the document was written to examine whether the factors mentioned could have any relevant impact on the presentation of the content (Monte-Sano, 2011; Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish and Bosquet, 1996). Corroboration, that is confronting multiple sources and texts on the same topic with a view to validate history information, is another characteristic feature that differentiates expert readers from novice ones (Wineburg, 1991).

L2 students reading history texts in different phases of their school or academic attainment can face numerous barriers (Foster, 2011; Pace, 2004; VanSledright and Kelly, 1996). They can be perceived as separate problems in reading history or as closely linked to each other. For instance, the roots of reading comprehension problems may lie in L1 reading comprehension ability or text difficulty that is connected with specialized syntax and morphology (Nokes, 2011). L2 readers might also lack adequate skills and strategies to deal with challenging texts or the capability of synthesising information acquired from multiple history sources (Nokes, 2011). Last but not least, learners may not be good enough at selecting the most relevant portions of the written material (Pace, 2004).

Another barrier to reading history might be related to the lack of prior knowledge or readers' misapplication and inappropriate use of their background knowledge (Nokes, 2011). In other words, poor readers look at history through the perspective of contemporary reality and tend to follow a reductionist way of thinking about the world, and consequently, they simplify historical interpretations (Nokes, 2011). This is also connected with the fact that some learners do not notice any difference between historic events and the sheer interpretations of them presented in most of content textbooks (Nokes, 2011). In other words, students tend to believe that writers are archivists, and not constructors of perspectivised texts.

3. Characteristics of history discourse

The unquestionable intricacy of discipline-specific texts is connected with the fact that each discipline has its own characteristic features (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2010). History texts also exhibit certain attributes connected with specialized lexico-grammatical and discourse structure that are typical of this field.

History discourse involves a frequent use of nouns, noun phrases, and nominalizations (de Oliveira, 2010; Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza, 2007). They are employed in order to gather and convey information, expand the data, organize various possible ways of analyzing the material, and to “structure reasoning” (de Oliveira, 2010: 195). History texts get more impenetrable and detailed as a result of the presence of complex and versatile nominalised entities. All of the discussed procedures make it easier for a writer to compress history content, however, at the same time more abstract and difficult for recipients to process.

As shown by researchers also verb types used in clauses in history texts are of great significance. Basic sub-categories of verbs present in history writings comprise: (1) action verbs which are related to events (e.g. *fight, collect, control*); (2) saying and thinking-feeling verbs which are used to write about opinions, views, beliefs and quotations (e.g. *hate, speak, suppose, suggest*); and (3) relating verbs which are employed in order to convey basic pieces of information (e. g. *are, had, was*) (Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza, 2007; Schleppegrell and de Oliveira, 2006). Analyzing the verb choice in clauses of a history text may ensure not only better understanding of the text content, but also greater awareness of the perspective of the author.

Another typical attribute of history discourse is an extensive use of conjunctions and time references. Although their role is associated with the organization of content and they should help readers reason the structure of texts, they may also hamper readers’ understanding of a text due to their confusing or unclear meanings connected with a variety of functions they play in written documents (Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza, 2007).

4. Functional language analysis in approaching content area texts

Functional language analysis, as claimed by Fang and Schleppegrell (2008, 2010), is an approach which can help improve students’ ability to read content area texts in a second language. The origins of this approach can be found in systemic functional linguistics which maintains that language makes it possible

to express various meanings of messages. The role of language is to structure and deliver knowledge through words (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2010).

The objective of conducting functional language analysis of discipline-specific texts is thoroughly related to exploring the three types of meanings embedded in clauses, namely, the experiential meaning (referred to actions described in clauses), the interpersonal meaning (connected with the functions of event participants) and the textual one (associated with the structure and organization of pieces of information) (Halliday 1994, quoted by Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza, 2007). Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) describe a range of language analysis strategies that help readers discover the three meanings of any clause. Firstly, in order to uncover the first type of meaning – experiential – students should pay attention to processes, participants, circumstances, attributes that are present in a clause. From the lexical point of view, readers should investigate conjunctions and reference devices. Interpersonal meaning can be figured out mainly by the analysis of mood, modality, the author's perspectives, attitudes, judgments and the author-reader relation. This can be done by studying the usage of grammatical word classes. Last but not least, for the purpose of discovering textual meaning, which is helpful for students to understand the organization of text and its points, readers should identify theme structuring, the application of cohesive devices and the presence of noun groups and nominalizations (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008).

5. A framework for implementing a functional language analysis in working with history-based texts

On account of numerous linguistic analyses of history texts, scrupulously conducted research studies as well as workshops prepared for teachers, Schleppegrell and Fang (2008) have suggested some major aspects of language which might require special treatment while teaching content reading. The authors of the functional analysis approach recommend also measures which can be taken while conducting in-class discussions based on a history-related text.

5.1 Clause theme and events identification

It is assumed that while approaching a history text readers should primarily explore the themes of the clauses. History discourse is characterized by locating grammatical circumstances at the beginning of clauses. The meaning of these circumstances is usually connected with time, place, and manner. Clause themes

can also be expressed by the use of participants of the events or related themes – the repetition of the same participants but under various names referring to the same group of people (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008).

After analyzing clause theme, it is advisable for readers to focus on the issue of the processes that take place in a given clause, paragraph and finally, in the whole text. Fang and Schleppegrell (2008: 47) distinguish four types of processes typical of content-area reading materials, including history-related texts, namely:

- **doing processes** – in other words, actions and events;
- **sensing processes** – referring to the feeling of the actors of particular events;
- **saying processes** – connected with opinions, judgments, utterances and statements of the actors taking part in given actions;
- **being processes** – associated with descriptions of qualities and definitions (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008).

The identification of events requires readers' careful examination of clauses, as well as of the whole text in terms of action events, but also feelings, opinions and states. What is more, students ought to realize that verbs can have literal and metaphorical meanings and therefore, the processes can sometimes be of different types, always depending on the context.

5.2 The analysis of the event actors, their roles and relationships

Research findings have revealed that readers often find it demanding to identify event actors presented in history texts (Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza, 2007; Schleppegrell and de Oliveira, 2006). This may be caused by the fact that history discourse tends to contain different kinds of partakers. In other words, not only are there human actors, but there are also nonhuman participants such as nominalised noun phrases, institutions and organizations, products of human action and behaviour, abstract terms, and finally, embedded clauses. All of these categories can play the role of a participant in a clause (Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza, 2007).

As noticed by Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza (2007), the issue of human participants is a complex one due to a wide range of categories that can function as actors of events. What makes the issue even more complicated is that the roles of these participants are closely connected with the types of processes (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008). By the way of illustration, as far as doing processes are concerned, one can distinguish between an actor who performs an action and a goal which is a human or nonhuman participant the

action is aimed at. The figures of sensing processes are a senser who expresses their feelings and a phenomenon which is expressed by a thought or a feeling. In addition to this, there are a sayer and a message – the roles of saying processes. The four potential roles of being process actors are those of a carrier – the one who is described, an attribute – the quality that is described, a token – the theme of a definition and a value – the participant used to define a token (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008).

While reading history content materials, readers have to exhibit their capability of identifying who or what the agent or a subject of a clause is, and who or what a receiver or an object of the clause is. They should also concentrate their attention on the various types of verbs since, as pointed at by Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza (2007), the analysis of all of the aspects is necessary to explore the power relations between the event actors of a given described situation from the past.

5.3 The perspective of the author

Nowadays, it is becoming more and more common to investigate the way authors tend to depict history content by adding some distorted pieces of information that can be unrealistic, but which carry the perspective and viewpoint of the author (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008). This is done by conducting analyses of the word choice that is influenced by the writer's point of view or while by examining the connection and relationship between participants and events. The advocates of such an approach point out that it is the writer who, by the choice of verbs and processes, gives the power of influencing other participants and events on particular actors. Thus, studying time and cause relationship can help readers develop the awareness of the processes of perspectivisation of history facts and events (Fang and Schleppegrell, 2008).

6. The study

6.1 The purpose of the study

The present action research study focused on the issue of improving EFL literacy skills by working with history-based texts and implementing the basic aspects of the functional language analysis approach proposed by Fang and Schleppegrell (2008, 2010). The goals of the study were to:

1. make the students acquainted with the premises of functional language analysis and its basic terms used in exploring history-related texts;

2. engage and assist the students in the practice of conducting functional language analysis while reading history-related texts;
3. explore the students' attitudes to reading history-related texts and their response to the approach adopted for the purpose of the study;
4. investigate which aspects of functional language analysis would turn out to be most challenging for secondary school readers.

6.2 Participants

The participants of the study were 10 (6 female and 4 male) 17-year-old secondary school students who had completed one-year Pre-IB Programme and were the first form students of The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. The level of the students' general proficiency in English was claimed to be C1+ according to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). All the participants were native speakers of Polish, however, it is noteworthy that one of the participants was raised in an English-speaking community in the Republic of South Africa, which could contribute to her outstanding proficiency in English. All of the students taking part in the study affirmed that they had learnt English for over six years, attended English classes at school three times per week for 90-minute sessions and once a week for a 90-minute speaking class with a native speaker, and studied English at home systematically. While five students participating in the study chose history as a subject of study in the IB Programme, the remaining five students did not learn history in secondary school at all.-

6.3 Materials

The collected data came from the four data sources, that is the pre- and post-study questionnaires, students' homework assignments, and the teacher's observations of the participants' performance in the classroom activities.

The two questionnaires used during the action research study served different purposes. **The pre-study questionnaire** (Appendix 2) was constructed to gain information about the participants' personal views on English history-related texts and their experience in both reading such materials and learning history. The questionnaire was comprised of six close-ended questions concerning the aspects already mentioned. Furthermore, the instrument included also four questions related to basic personal information about the participants. **The post-study questionnaire** (Appendix 2) was carried out after conducting the research and aimed at collecting information about the

subjects' attitudes towards the proposed way of approaching history texts, and their plans for reading history-content texts in the future. Furthermore, some questions addressed the participants' opinions on reading content texts in the EFL context and on the study itself. The questions posed were mainly close-ended ones, such as ticking, matching, ordering, and yes/no questions. Both questionnaires were carried out in Polish the reason being that the researcher wished to avoid any misunderstanding and confusion.

Homework assignments (Appendix 1) constituted a crucial research tool. Not only were they helpful for consolidating each lesson, but they were also a source of knowledge concerning the students' mastery of the material worked upon. Homework tasks were given to the students after three out of the four conducted lessons and were analyzed by the whole group during the following meeting. As each lesson had a complex multilevel design and a variety of tasks and processes were involved in it, the researcher kept **a teaching journal** in order to note down all her observations connected with the students' performance and their spontaneous reactions to the material presented during the lessons. Furthermore, the researcher noted down and described various problems the students encountered while reading and analyzing the target texts.

All the four lessons were investigated with reference to the reading tasks that required analyzing texts as performed by the students, as well as the written materials that constituted the basis for conducting the study. Thus, the texts used in the study were carefully chosen and appropriately adapted in terms of their length and information density. They were authentic reading materials taken from history-related textbooks and books. Owing to the fact that the participants' level of English language proficiency was high, the researcher decided not to alter the lexis of the texts vastly and only some slight changes were introduced. Even though each text referred to history, the issues of the Second World War in particular, the types of the sources were diverse so that the students would have a chance of analyzing various kinds of history-related reading materials.

6.4 Design and procedure

The study comprised four 45-minute classes and its primary concern was to investigate if the techniques incorporating functional language analysis could be supportive in reading English history-related texts by Polish secondary school students. Prior to conducting the first lesson, the researcher carried out a questionnaire in order to gain factual, behavioural and attitudinal information about the participants themselves, their reading habits and problems which they encounter while reading history-based materials.

Subsequently, four English classes were conducted. Each of the lessons aimed at making the students acquainted with a selected aspect of functional language analysis of the target text and assisted them in performing the assigned task. Each lesson started with the pre-reading stage, which focused on some stimulating material, then the students were provided with a given type of a history text and they were asked to perform a set of relatively short reading comprehension activities. After discussing the content of the text, the students were involved in several tasks based on the principles of the functional language analysis approach. After all the lessons had been carried out, the post-study questionnaire was administered with a view to get to know the participants' standpoints and opinions on the suggested way of reading history-related texts.

Table 1 represents a more detailed plan of the study.

Lesson One – a chronicling history text		
PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES	MATERIALS
<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fill a graphic organizer on the basis of their background knowledge; - match topic sentences with appropriate paragraphs; - comment on the characteristic features of a chronicling text; - identify time markers present in the history text; - match time references with their categories and find examples of such time markers in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to know the role of topic sentences and identify such sentences in a history text; - to specify the characteristic features of a chronicling history text; - to recognize the main types of time markers and their roles in a history text; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McDowall, D. (2006) <i>The twentieth century: An Illustrated History of Britain</i>, Edynburg: Pearson Education Limited; - worksheet; - teaching journal; - homework.
<p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prepare a timeline of the major events connected with the Second World War; - match time references with their categories and find examples of such time markers in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to prepare notes in the form of a graphic organizer; - to revise recognizing the main types of time markers and providing examples of them. 	

Lesson Two – a point of view history text		
PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES	MATERIALS
<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify features characteristic of a point of view history text; - match the types of processes with their definitions and the exemplary verbs typical for each of the processes; - justify the importance of recognizing the process types; - search for examples of the processes in the read text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to become familiar with a personal account of a historical event; - to recognize the distinctive features of a point of view history text in the read paragraphs; - to understand the terms related to process types; - to know the basic classification of process types and the types of verbs typical for these processes; - to become aware of the significance of analyzing event processes and the choice of verbs; - to localize examples of the main kinds of processes in the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuttle, W. M. (1993) <i>Pearl Harbor: Fears and Nightmares: "Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children</i>, Oxford University Press; - film: <i>How Pearl Harbor Was Attacked. The True Story</i> (Retrieved on January, 3, 2012: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srTe1r7S6s4); - worksheet; - teaching journal; - homework.
<p>Homework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fill in gaps in a text with the correct forms of the verbs provided for students according to the specifications about what kind of process each clause should include. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to fill in the gaps in the text logically and coherently by choosing appropriate verbs suitable for the given process types. 	
Lesson Three – an explanation history text		
PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES	MATERIALS
<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discuss the specificity of an explanation history text; - identify a sentence which is a summary of the type of the read history text; - match the participant roles with their functions and corresponding process types; - analyze sentences selected from the text and defining the role of each highlighted participant; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to distinguish the facets of an explanation history text; - to substantiate their own choices concerning the tasks answers, the type of the text, and participant roles; - to know the terms connected with the fundamental categorization of participant roles and their functions; - to recognize and provide the roles of given event participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stickels, R. C. (2004). <i>The 1940s</i>. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press - worksheet; - teaching journal; - homework.

Homework: - provide exemplary sentences coming from the text to the descriptions of participants given by the teacher.	- to identify in practice the connections between the roles and the functions of participants, and the types of event processes.	
Lesson Four – an exemplary history text		
PROCEDURES	OBJECTIVES	MATERIALS
Students: - predict the content of each paragraph by analyzing topic sentences; - analyze the selected parts of the text and define the process types and the participant roles in each of the sentence; - answer the questions typical for the functional language analysis.	- to predict the content of the text and the author's perspective on the basis of topic sentences; - to read history text by analyzing fundamental functional linguistic approach assumptions; - to look at a history text in a holistic way.	- The Marshall Plan Retrieved on January 3, 2013, from http://www.gcsehistory.org.uk/modernworld/coldwar/marshallplan.htm ; - worksheet; - teaching journal.
Post-study questionnaire		

Table 1. The design of the study

6.5 Results and discussion

The findings of the present action research study were drawn on the basis of the data acquired from the four sources: the pre- and post-study questionnaires, the students' homework assignments and the present author's post-lesson reflections. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis was carried out by the researcher while investigating the data collected.

6.5.1 The results of the pre-study questionnaire

The findings of the questionnaire (Appendix 2), responses to the first question, revealed that TV programs and films constituted the major source of information about history for the participants. The results presented in Figure 1 demonstrate how extensively the particular history sources are utilized by the participants. As many as 7 students declared that they read textbooks and literature dealing with history and 4 students claimed to have learnt history from popular science articles. These results confirm the unquestionable importance of history-related texts as a source of knowledge.

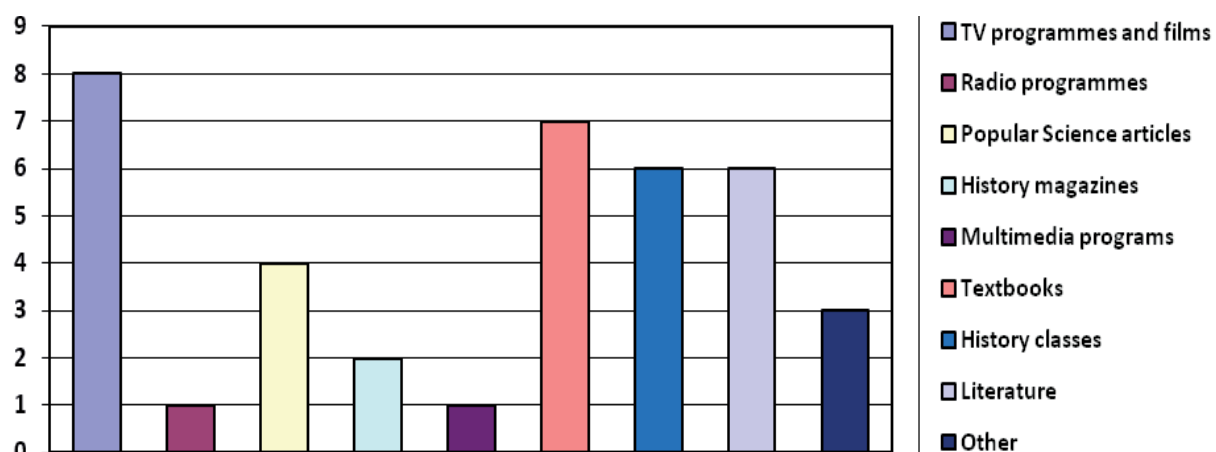


Figure 1. The sources used by the students to acquire historical knowledge

The second question asked the respondents to estimate how frequently they read history-related texts for specific purposes. Half of the students stated that they sometimes read history-content written texts in order to expand their knowledge about important events from the past, and to broaden their interests. Four out of 10 participants sometimes read history documents to understand the influence of history on the present times. However, 4 students admitted not to read history-related texts for this reason at all. The survey revealed that 4 respondents studied history documents to form their own critical standpoint on the events from the past and in order to be capable of justifying their viewpoints. As far as reading history texts for imperative educational reasons is concerned, the participants' responses were divided. Two students admitted that they very often studied history written materials in order to fulfil their educational duties, 2 participants often read history materials for the discussed purpose, 1 person – sometimes, 3 students – rarely and 1 – never. The situation may be due to the educational system incorporated by the school.

The questionnaire explored the actions performed by the participants in the process of studying history discipline-specific texts (Question 3). Responding to this query, most of the students indicated analyzing the connection between described events and people as one of the most frequently employed activities. The survey revealed that as many as 7 students pay attention to the author's personal attitude towards his or her text, and 6 respondents search for other available sources on a given topic presented in the processed text. Half of the participants declared to read a text very carefully and analyze each piece of information, whereas 3 students stated that they pay attention only to the most important pieces of data presented in a text. Two respondents maintained that they focus solely on finding answers to some questions posed by a teacher or a textbook.

The fourth question posed investigated which attributes of history-related texts were perceived by the participants as influential and significant for effective text processing. The respondents were expected to order the suggested factors from 1 to 5, when 1 means that a given aspect hugely affects text understanding, whereas 5 signifies the lack of any influence. This question revealed that for the participants the most important issue was the presence of additional explanations and comments supplied with the main text – the mean score for this answer was 1.9 – whereas the least vital aspect turned out to be the technical language used in history written documents – the mean score for this option was 2.9. As far as the density of information and the biased chronology of the events presented in a text are concerned, the mean score in both cases was 2.4, which indicates that these were not the most problematic and crucial facets of history texts. Similarly, from the responses provided it emerges that the participants believe that neither the subjectivity of the author nor the imprecise descriptions of the event actors truly hamper the understanding of the message of a text. It can be deduced, therefore, that the participants of the present study were fluent readers for whom some text imperfections might not constitute a serious burden to text understanding.

With reference to the question addressing chief general problems potentially encountered while studying history-related texts (Question 5), the vast majority of the surveyed – 7 students – stated that the most perplexing issue was the lack of historical knowledge. Another troublesome aspect of approaching the discussed type of reading materials is the specificity of history as a discipline. The structure of a history-related text and general problems with text comprehension turned out to be slightly less problematic. The language barrier was declared to be the least arduous factor hampering students' text understanding. The situation that all of the participants marked this option as the least problematic one is strongly connected with the fact that the students demonstrate very high level of proficiency in English as a foreign language.

6.5.2 The analysis of the students' performance in the study

As already mentioned, each of the lessons in the present study was devoted to a different facet of reading practice and required analyzing history-related written texts concerning diverse topics connected with the Second World War. Despite the fact that all of the classes followed the same format, a range of activities were incorporated with a view to stimulating the participants' activity and helping them understand the theoretical issues discussed.

The first lesson which centred around a chronicling type of history texts and some general features of history-based written documents, focused on the main events of the Second World War and their chronology. It was observed that the majority of the participants did not demonstrate any problems while performing reading comprehension tasks and commenting on the role of topic sentences in the target text. The key part of the lesson required that the students should discuss one of the three major types of history texts and categorize the time markers. As far as the time references were concerned, a group of 4 students experienced some problems with determining the role of such words as *firstly*, *secondly* which were not used as time markers, but as linking words helpful in organizing an argument. The first homework assignment instructed the participants to analyze the last paragraph of the text read during the lesson and fill in the table by providing the types of Time Circumstantial Meaning together with the examples of the appropriate time markers taken from the text. Most of the answers supplied by the participants concerned 'when time markers'. This situation may be explained by the fact that the students may have been best acquainted with this type of Time Circumstantial Meaning or that the paragraph they analysed contained many examples of this particular type. Six out of 10 students also provided at least one example of 'how long time marker'. What is noteworthy is that all the students supplied the correct answers and categorized the time markers into proper types of Time Circumstantial Meanings. Then the students efficiently constructed a timeline of the events described in the text read. What is more, they demonstrated their procedural knowledge concerning taking concise notes after reading long chronicling texts.

The second lesson was devoted to a point of view history text and the types of processes distinctive for history texts. Whereas the students encountered no major problems with providing examples of *Doing* and *Being Processes*, 4 students found it challenging to discriminate different instances of *Saying* and *Sensing Processes* due to the fact that some of the thinking-feeling verbs could have been misunderstood. The participants confessed that they had never before paid attention to the importance of verb choice and its function. When requested to read a short passage from a history book and fill in the blank spaces with the correct forms of the verbs provided, 8 students accomplished the activity successfully and 2 students made a mistake. The erroneous answers concerned the replacement of the verb *prevent* with the verb *avoid*, which suggests that the students identified the type of the process correctly, even though they failed to understand the meaning of these two vocabulary items.

The third lesson dealt with the explanation history text and the roles and functions of event participants. The students found it very demanding to understand the main ideas of the text and they encountered some problems

in its closer analysis. As far as the issue of human and non-human participants is concerned, the students were firstly surprised by the fact that objects or places are recognized as event partakers. However, at the end of the lesson the students faced no difficulties in providing appropriate examples of these two categories of participants. As far as conducting the analysis of Participant Roles and Functions is concerned, the majority of the students could not identify Participants Roles characteristic of being processes, that is Attributes, Values, Tokens and Phenomena. The homework assignment was based on reading theoretical descriptions of selected sentences and providing suitable examples. It turned out that supplying an example to a sentence in which the participant should be an *Attribute* proved to be difficult for the students (7 wrong answers). Most of the erroneous answers included sentences containing a *Token* instead of an *Attribute*. However, almost all of the students provided the correct answers in the case of the question in which the *event participant* was in turn an *Actor* and a *Carrier*.

The fourth lesson aimed at engaging the participants of the study in performing a basic functional language analysis of a history text. The striking majority of the students (8 out of 10) managed to complete the task of identifying the Process Types and the Participant Roles only with some minor help on the part of the teacher-researcher, whereas 2 students frequently expressed the necessity of the teacher's help. It was observed that the analysis of the text according to the rules suggested by the functional language approach proved to be successful. Yet, the most challenging part of this activity was based on answering the questions related to the perspective of the author.

Having participated in the four lessons, the students admitted that they had noticed the connection between all the presented theoretical pieces of information concerning the functional language analysis approach and active processing of history-related texts. Most of the students seemed to have understood the concept and the premises of the functional language analysis approach and could perform an adequate analysis of history texts with no major obstacles. The participants whose major was history showed more interest in exploring history content-area texts by adopting the discussed approach.

6.5.3 The results of the post-study questionnaire

The first question asked the students to evaluate the four lessons based on the implementation of the functional language analysis approach into reading English history-related texts. The questionnaire (Appendix 2) revealed that the participants' overall response to the presented way of reading and analyzing

content-area texts was positive. Namely, 9 out of 10 students appreciated the innovative manner of approaching history texts and the way of conducting text analyses by the whole class together with the teacher. All of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that the teacher's instructions concerning reading history-related written materials were helpful and constructive. The striking majority of the surveyed – 8 – students expressed their willingness to read content-area texts during English language classes.

While choosing the most useful activities (Question 2) the respondents opted for investigating the connection between the described events and actors, taking into account and analyzing topic sentences, and examining time markers. The participants also appreciated conducting analysis of the types and functions of the event actors, and paying attention to the author's attitudes towards the events described by them. This finding seems to be crucial since in the pre-study questionnaire the students claimed that this activity did not have a significant influence on text comprehension. It might be concluded, then, that after participating in the study, the students reached a different conclusion. The participants declared analyzing the types of processes and verbs used by authors of history texts as the least vital activity. What is noteworthy, the respondents did not mark any activity as totally redundant or useless.

As far as the difficulty of the texts used in the study is concerned, an explanatory text was generally recognized by the participants as the most straightforward and unproblematic (6 students). The results of the questionnaire point to the fact that there was no one type of text which could be unanimously considered as the most complex for all the students taking part in the research study.

Responding to the fourth question, which referred to the participants' plans for implementing the presented reading strategies in the future, as many as 9 students declared that while studying history texts, they were going to search for the connections between the illustrated actions and actors, and pay attention to the author's attitude towards the events described. Furthermore, the majority of the participants – 7 students – intended to take the issue of text type into consideration. This statement confirmed the present author's belief about the importance of broadening readers' awareness of the existence of the different kinds of history texts and their characteristic features. A small number of the participants – 3 students – indicated that they were going to take into account text structure and the types of verbs and processes utilized by the author of a given text. Only 1 person stated that he or she was going to analyze the content and the structure of topic sentences.

The findings of the questionnaire revealed that the majority of the students participating in the lessons appreciated an opportunity to become acquainted

with the new and innovative way of analyzing history texts. Six participants shared the view that the suggested way of reading history helped them notice a different perspective of working with history written materials (Question 5). Three of the surveyed students admitted that taking up this original approach to reading history texts might turn out to be helpful in the course of their further academic education. Only two students expressed the opinion that the presented way of reading history texts was not useful for them because they neither learnt nor enjoyed history. All in all, the students provided fully-developed justifications of their choices and evaluated the lessons they participated in from different angles.

The goals of the study were achieved as it was demonstrated that incorporating some language-focused activities into EFL instruction based on reading history texts can contribute to students' deeper engagement in reading and comprehending content area texts. The participants of the study were acquainted with the basic assumptions of the functional language analysis approach and became involved in the practice of carrying out functional language analysis while reading history, that is discipline-specific texts. Even though the students found some analysis of history texts to be demanding for EFL learners, they generally expressed positive opinions on the adopted procedures.

7. Conclusions

The action research study presented in this chapter has shown that it is reasonable to incorporate teaching discipline-specific reading skills into EFL instruction. Analyzing history content texts in conformity with the premises of a functional language analysis approach has proved useful in drawing the learners' attention to the specificity of the selected content area texts, as well as in designing effective reading comprehension practice.

It was also important to find out that the majority of the participants of the study appreciated the innovative way of analyzing and working with history-based texts and some students expressed interest in being exposed to such an approach in the future. Thus it can be concluded that the participants assessed the adopted procedures favourably and showed positive attitudes towards the study itself. The students appreciated the fact that participating in the lessons provided them with an opportunity to become acquainted with one of the recent trends in teaching disciplinary reading skills in L2 instruction.

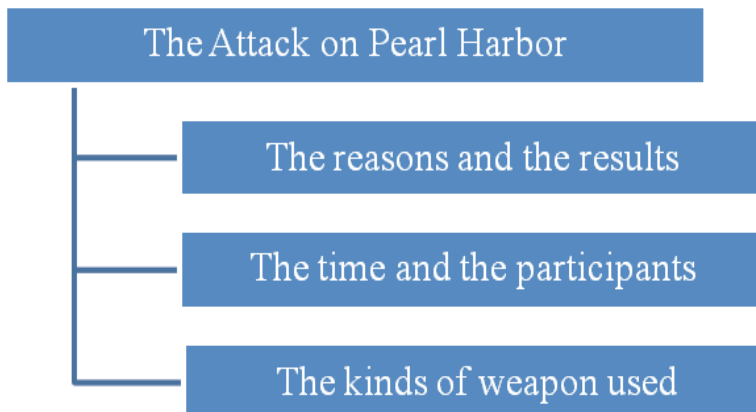
References

- Achugar, M., Schleppegrell, M., and Oteiza, T. (2007). Engaging teachers in language analysis: A functional linguistics approach to reflective literacy. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 6 (2), 8-24.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, U.K: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- De Oliveira, L. C. (2010). Nouns in history: Packaging information, expanding explanations, and structuring reasoning. *The History Teacher* 43 (2), 191-203.
- Fang, Z., and Schleppegrell, M. J. (2008). *Reading in Secondary Content Areas: A Language-Based Pedagogy*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Fang, Z., and Schleppegrell, M. J. (2010). Disciplinary literacies across content areas: Supporting secondary reading through functional language analysis. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 53 (7), 587-597.
- Foster, R. (2011). Passive receivers or constructive readers? Pupils' experiences of an encounter with academic history. *Teaching History* 142, 4-13.
- Haas, C., and Flower, L. (1988). Rhetorical reading strategies and the construction of meaning. *College Composition and Communication* 39 (2), 167-183.
- Halliday, M. (1999). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hynd-Shanahan, C., Holschuh, J. P., and Hubbard, B. P. (2004). Thinking like a historian: College students' reading of multiple historical documents. *Journal of Literacy Research* 36 (2), 141-176.
- How Pearl Harbor was attacked. The true story*. Retrieved on Jan. 01.2013, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srTe1r7S6s4>
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (New Edition) (2003). Harlow: Pearson Education.
- McDowall, D. (2006). *The Twentieth Century: An Illustrated History of Britain*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education.
- Monte-Sano, C. (2011). Beyond reading comprehension and summary: Learning to read and write in history by focusing on evidence, perspective, and interpretation. *Curriculum Inquiry* 41 (2), 212-249.
- Neumann, D. J. (2010). What is the text doing? Preparing pre-service teachers to teach primary sources effectively. *The History Teacher* 43 (4), 489-511.
- Nokes, J. D. (2010). Preparing novice history teachers to meet students' literacy needs. *Reading Psychology* 31 (6), 493-523.

- Nokes, J. D. (2011). Recognizing and addressing the barriers to adolescents' Reading like historians. *The History Teacher* 44 (3), 379-404.
- Pace, D. (2004). Decoding the reading of history: An example of the process. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning* 98, 13-21.
- Patrick, J. J., and Hawke, S. (1982). Social studies curriculum materials. *The Current State of Social Studies: A Report of Project Span*, (pp. 105-185). Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium.
- Rouet, J. F., Favart, M., Britt, M. A., and Perfetti, C. A. (1997). Studying and using multiple documents in history: Effects of discipline expertise. *Cognition and Instruction* 15 (1), 85-106.
- Schleppegrell, M. J., Achugar, M., and Oteiza, T. (2004). The grammar of history: Enhancing content-based instruction through a functional focus on language. *TESOL Quarterly* 38 (1), 67-92.
- Schleppegrell, M. J., and de Oliveira, L. C. (2006). An integrated language and content approach for history teachers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 5 (4), 254-268.
- Schleppegrell, M. J., Greer, S., and Taylor, S. (2008). Literacy in history: Language and meaning. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 31 (2), 174-187.
- Sickels, R. C. (2004), *The 1940s: American Popular Culture through History*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Stahl, S. A., Hynd, C. R., Britton, B. K., McNish, M. M., and Bosquet, D. (1996). What happens when students read multiple source documents in history? *Reading Research Quarterly* 31 (4), 430-456.
- The Marshall plan*. Retrieved on Jan. 03. 2013, from <http://www.gcsehistory.org.uk/modernworld/coldwar/marshallplan.htm>
- Tuttle, W. M. (1993) Pearl Harbor: Fears and nightmares: *Daddy's Gone to War: The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children*, Oxford University Press.
- Tyson H., and Woodward, A. (1989). Why students aren't learning very much from textbooks? *Educational Leadership* 47 (3), 14-17.
- Wineburg, S. S. (1991). On the reading of historical texts: notes on the breach between school and academy. *American Educational Research Journal Fall 1991* 28 (3), 495-519.
- Vanhulle, B. (2009). The path of history: Narrative analysis of history textbooks – a case study of Belgian history textbooks (1945–2004). *History of Education* 38 (2), 263-282
- VanSledright, B. A., and Kelly, C. (1996). Reading American history: How do multiple text sources influence historical learning in fifth grade? *Reading Research Report* 68. National Reading Research Center. 1-32.

Appendix 1. Lesson Two: A point of view history text

1. Watch the film about **the attack on Pearl Harbor**. After watching the video, discuss with your partner the following aspects of the event.



2. Match the following words and phrases given in the table with their explanations. Work in pairs.

[the entries taken from: Longman dictionary of contemporary English]

retain	rain down	air raid	blackout
blast	vivid	home front	outbreak

1. _____ - the activities and living conditions of the people who stay at home during a war
 2. _____ - the sudden start of war, disease, violence
 3. _____ - a sudden short loud sound, especially on a musical instrument or a whistle
 4. _____ - to remember ideas or information
 5. _____ - to fall from the air in large amounts
 6. _____ - having or producing very clear and detailed images in the mind
 7. _____ - a period during a war when lights in streets and buildings are turned off so that an enemy cannot see them at night
 8. _____ - an attack in which one or more planes drop bombs on a place
3. Read the text provided below as quickly as possible and choose an appropriate title for it. Compare your answer with your friends' answers.

- A) Pearl Harbor: School-age children fight the war.
 B) Pearl Harbor: Home front Families.
 C) Pearl Harbor: Fears and Nightmares.
 D) Pearl Harbor: Depression Children.

On December 7, boys and girls in the United States witnessed various kinds of adult behavior they had not seen before. Their mothers and fathers shouted and screamed. All day long, they talked about “war” and its ugly and tragic possibilities. One ten-year-old girl could take it no more. “War, war, war! That’s all I hear. I’m tired of hearing about war.” At that moment, her mother slapped her across the mouth. Another girl, nine-year-old Patty Neal, was sitting with her family around the radio and was “chattering away”, her mother asked her to be quiet, but, Patty recalled, “I kept on talking, and my mother, who NEVER hit me, slapped me, and said ‘Patty, you will remember this day.’”

Whatever unusual behavior the children observed that memorable day, the effect was generally the same: it deepened their fears. Throughout the United States following Pearl Harbor, children feared that enemy bombs might rain down on them too. Their anxieties deepened as they participated in air raid drills and blackouts. Some, afraid of bombs, after running home at 3:30 each day, were happy to announce: “We didn’t get bombed today.”

Dr. Joseph C. Solomon, a San Francisco psychiatrist who studied children’s behavior during the blackouts, observed that “the abrupt entry” of America into war “acted as a source of sudden and unexpected danger.” In San Francisco, children’s fears were stimulated by the sirens that blasted on the night of the American war declaration, air raids, blackouts and also by rumors of invading enemy troops.

Some children had nightmares so frightening that they were still vivid years later. The children often dreamed about the enemy. Born in 1933, Barbara Sackman lived in a Polish neighborhood in Toledo, Ohio. Her recurrent dream was of “Nazi tanks coming down our neighborhood main street... shooting and running over my friends.” A large group of children did not know how to share such frightening feelings with their teachers, classmates or even parents. In many of these dreams, the enemy was invading the children’s homes.

Fifty years later, anxieties generated by the war are still with some of the home front children. One is the fear of airplane sounds. Marian Hickman remembered once loving watching airplanes. Within the outbreak of war, however, “airplanes became a great source of anxiety to me as I realized they were a part of the war. Each time I would hear a plane, I’d wonder if something terrible was going to happen”. Marian Hickman, who was six when Pearl Harbor changed her life, has retained vivid memories of the war years. In fact, most of the home front children born in the 1930s have unforgettable memories of December 7, 1941, when they heard the news.

Adapted from Tuttel (1995:87-89)

4. Read the text again. Decide which statements are true (T), false (F) or not mentioned in the text (NM). Compare your answers with your friend’s answers.

1.	American children noticed the change of their parents’ behaviour on 7 th December.	
2.	The children described in the text fully understood their parents’ reaction to the news concerning the attack on Pearl Harbor.	
3.	According to dr. Joseph C. Solomon, American children were prepared for the possibility of the sudden beginning of the war in their country.	
4.	Children had dreams about the war even a long time after the end of the war.	
5.	Barbara Sackman admits that she once had nightmares about Nazi enemies shooting her Polish friends.	
6.	All the American children experiencing the war were unable to talk with anyone about their fears and anxieties.	

7. Many adults who participated in the war, still suffer from wartime anxieties such as the fear of airplane sounds or the fear of lack of light.	
8. Home front children who took part in the war still have not managed to forget about the negative events from their past, even though they tried to do so.	

5. Choose from the statements provided below those which may justify the hypothesis that the text you have just read is a point of view text.

Adapted from: Fang and Schleppegrell (2008:51-58)

The text presents the views of the participants.

There is a number of sensing and saying processes.

The author highlights the importance of the chronology of the events.

It is possible for a careful reader to detect whose views are being presented and highlighted.

The goal of the author is to help the reader understand the ideas and arguments made by the actors.

6. Match the types of the processes (column A) with their short definitions (column B) and with the exemplary verbs (column C). Work in small groups.

Adapted from: Fang and Schleppegrell (2008:47)

A	B	C
Doing processes	Referring to the feelings of the actors of the events.	Relating verbs (be, reflect, include, seem)
Sensing processes	Connected with actions and events.	Action verbs (use, justify, invade, derive)
Saying processes	Associated with descriptions of qualities and definitions.	Thinking-feeling verbs (assume, hold, claim, declare)
Being processes	Linked to opinions, judgments and utterances of the participants of the events.	Thinking-feeling verbs (believe, trust, fear, feel)

7. Work in pairs. Analyze the text that you have read earlier and underline the processes. Fill in the table and provide each type of the process with two instances taken from the text. The first example is given for you.

Doing processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boys and girls in the United States <u>witnessed</u> various kinds of adult behavior ▪ ▪
Sensing processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪
Saying processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪
Being processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪

8. Read the following paragraph and fill in the blank spaces with correct forms of the verbs provided. It is specified in the brackets what kind of process each gap should include. The first example is given for you.

avoid be prevent be explain

Some people (1) had unusual notions (**sensing process**) about how to prevent “fright psychosis” among American children. A week after Pearl Harbor, Eleanor Roosevelt (2)..... that (**saying process**) her son John was teaching his two-year-old son to say “boooooom” every time he hears a loud explosion. Now, she explained, the child thinks he (3) creating (**being process**) the explosion. By this method the child will not be frightened if there (4) (**being process**) a real bombing. The problem was that all Americans had to figure out how to (5) (**doing process**) all children from “fright psychosis”. Invariably, the first warning was to (6) (**doing process**) panic.

Taken from: Tuttle (1995:87-98)

Appendix 2: Questionnaires

Pre-study questionnaire

1. Skąd czerpiesz wiedzę dotyczącą historii? Zaznacz krzyżykiem wybrane przez Ciebie odpowiedzi.

<input type="checkbox"/>	z programów telewizyjnych i filmów
<input type="checkbox"/>	z audycji radiowych
<input type="checkbox"/>	z prasy popularnonaukowej
<input type="checkbox"/>	z programów multimedialnych
<input type="checkbox"/>	z podręczników szkolnych
<input type="checkbox"/>	z lekcji historii
<input type="checkbox"/>	z literatury
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inne:

2. Jak często czytasz teksty historyczne z podanych powodów? Obok każdej opcji zaznacz krzyżykiem wybraną przez Ciebie odpowiedź.

	Bardzo często	Często	Czasem	Rzadko	Nigdy
Aby poszerzać swoją wiedzę na temat ważnych wydarzeń z przeszłości.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aby zrozumieć wpływ faktów historycznych na teraźniejszość.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aby zgłębiać swoje zainteresowania.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aby kształtować własne krytyczne zdanie na temat faktów historycznych i umieć je argumentować.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aby wypełnić obowiązek szkolny i wykonać polecenie nauczyciela.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Jakie czynności wykonujesz czytając teksty o tematyce historycznej? Zaznacz krzyżykiem prawdziwe dla Ciebie odpowiedzi.

- Analizuję strukturę tekstu.
- Sprawdzam kto jest autorem i w jakich okolicznościach napisał dany tekst.
- Zwracam uwagę na stosunek autora do opisywanych przez niego wydarzeń.
- Sporządzam chronologiczną listę dat i wydarzeń opisanych w tekście.
- Analizuję związek pomiędzy opisanymi wydarzeniami i osobami.
- Czytam inne materiały poświęcone tematowi opisanemu w danym tekście.
- Podchodzę krytycznie do czytanych przeze mnie informacji.
- Domyślam się znaczeń nieznanymi mi słów.
- Czytam tekst bardzo dokładnie, analizując każdą informację.
- Zwracam uwagę tylko na najważniejsze informacje przekazane w tekście.
- Inne:

4. Jak duży wpływ na rozumienie tekstów historycznych mają podane poniżej ich cechy? Zaznacz krzyżykiem wybraną odpowiedź, stosując skalę od 1 do 5 (1= bardzo duży wpływ, 5= nie ma żadnego wpływu).

Bardzo duża ilość informacji zawarta w tekście.	1	2	3	4	5
Nieprecyzyjne opisy bohaterów wydarzeń.	1	2	3	4	5
Brak dodatkowych wyjaśnień i komentarzy.	1	2	3	4	5
Słownictwo typowe dla tekstów historycznych.	1	2	3	4	5
Fakty opisane przez autora w sposób subiektywny.	1	2	3	4	5
Zachwiana chronologia opisanych wydarzeń.	1	2	3	4	5
Naukowy styl, w którym tekst został napisany.	1	2	3	4	5

5. Co sprawia Ci największą trudność w czytaniu tekstów anglojęzycznych poświęconych historii? Uporządkuj podane odpowiedzi w kolejności od 1 do 5 (1=największa trudność, 5=najmniejsza trudność).

- Brak wystarczającej wiedzy historycznej.
- Bariera językowa.
- Specyfika tekstu historycznego.
- Ogólne problemy z umiejętnością czytania ze zrozumieniem.
- Struktura tekstu.

Informacje o osobie wypełniającej ankietę

Przy każdym pytaniu zaznacz krzyżykiem wybraną odpowiedź.

1. Płeć:

- Kobieta Mężczyzna

2. Jak długo uczysz się języka angielskiego?

- Mniej niż 3 lata
 Więcej niż 3 lata, ale mniej niż 6 lat
 Więcej niż 6 lat.

3. Czy poza szkołą uczysz się dodatkowo języka angielskiego?

- Tak, samodzielnie
 Tak, na prywatnych lekcjach
 Tak, w szkole językowej
 Nie, nie uczę się.

4. Czy w szkole uczęszczasz na lekcje historii?

- Tak.
 Nie.

Post-study questionnaire

1. W jakim stopniu zgadzasz się z poniższymi stwierdzeniami? Zaznacz krzyżykiem wybraną odpowiedź.

	Całkowicie się zgadzam	Zgadzam się	Nie zgadzam się	Całkowicie się nie zgadzam
Podobał mi się nowatorski sposób czytania tekstów historycznych.				
Podobało mi się prowadzenie analiz tekstów wspólnie przez całą klasę.				
Uważam, że instrukcje nauczyciela dotyczące czytania anglojęzycznych tekstów historycznych były pomocne.				
Chciałbym/Chciałabym aby na lekcjach języka angielskiego czytać inne teksty pochodzące z różnych dyscyplin naukowych.				

2. Oceń jak bardzo pomocne okazały się dla Ciebie poniższe czynności w zrozumieniu treści tekstów. Zaznacz krzyżykiem wybraną odpowiedź, stosując skalę od 1 do 5 (1=bardzo pomocne, 5= wcale niepomocne)

	1	2	3	4	5
Ocenianie stosunku autora do opisywanych przez niego wydarzeń.					
Szukanie związku pomiędzy opisanymi wydarzeniami i osobami.					
Omawianie typów procesów i czasowników użytych przez autora.					
Analizowanie typów i funkcji uczestników opisywanych wydarzeń.					
Branie pod uwagę roli zdań wprowadzających do akapitów.					
Badanie określeń czasu w celu chronologizacji wydarzeń.					
Analizowanie typów tekstów historycznych i ich cech.					

3. Który z omawianych typów tekstów historycznych sprawił Ci największą trudność? Uporządkuj je w kolejności od 1 do 3 (1=największa trudność, 3=najmniejsza trudność).

- _____ tekst chronologiczny
- _____ tekst objaśniający
- _____ tekst ukazujący punkt widzenia

4. Które z podanych strategii zastosujesz czytając teksty historyczne w przyszłości? Zaznacz krzyżykiem wybrane odpowiedzi.

Będę brał/a pod uwagę typ tekstu.	
Będę analizował/a typy czasowników i procesów użytych przez autora tekstu.	
Będę przyglądał/a się strukturze tekstu.	
Będę szukał/a związków pomiędzy opisanymi wydarzeniami i osobami.	
Będę analizował/a treść i budowę zdań wprowadzających do akapitów.	
Będę oceniał/a stosunek autora do opisywanych przez niego wydarzeń.	
Inne:	

5. Czy zaprezentowany sposób czytania tekstów anglojęzycznych o tematyce historycznej zachęcił Cię do spojrzenia na teksty historyczne pod kątem analizy językowej? Zakreśl wybraną odpowiedź.

TAK	RACZEJ TAK	RACZEJ NIE	NIE
-----	------------	------------	-----

6. Uzasadnij swoją odpowiedź na pytanie 5.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(liczba znaków ze spacjami: 59 925)