

or figurative language (e.g., *The wind whispered through the night.*) produce shades of meaning and different effects on readers. Students work with peers to arrive at these explanations initially, and then as students gain confidence with this type of analysis, they work more independently.

Teachers use Part II of the CA ELD Standards as a guide for showing ELs how different text types are organized and structured (e.g., how a story is structured or where in an argument evidence is presented) or how language is used purposefully to make meaning (e.g., how sentences are combined to show relationships between ideas). For example, a science teacher identifies a particular sentence in the science textbook that is challenging for students but critical for understanding the topic. The teacher leads a discussion in which the class unpacks the informationally dense sentence for its meaning using more everyday language. Figure 2.20 presents an example. (Note: the main clause is in italics.)

Figure 2.20. Sentence Unpacking

Original sentence:

“Although many countries are addressing pollution, environmental degradation continues to create devastating human health problems each year.”

Meanings:

- Pollution is a big problem around the world.
- People are creating pollution and ruining the environment.
- The ruined environment leads to health problems in people.
- Health problems are still happening every year.
- The health problems are really, really bad.
- A lot of countries are doing something about pollution.
- Even though the countries are doing something about pollution, there are still big problems.

What this sentence is mostly about: Environmental degradation

What it means in our own words: People are creating a lot of pollution and messing up the environment all around the world, and even though a lot of countries are trying to do things about it, a lot of people have big health problems because of it.

This type of analysis demystifies academic language and provides a model students can use to tackle the often challenging language they encounter in their school texts. As students become more comfortable discussing language, teachers guide them to analyze language more deeply based on lesson objectives and students’ age and proficiency levels. For example, teachers discuss with their students the density of information packed into the term *environmental degradation* and examine why the writer used it instead of the word *pollution*. Teachers also discuss how using the subordinate conjunction *although* creates a relationship of concession between the two ideas in the main and subordinate clauses and how connecting ideas in this way is particularly useful—and common—in academic writing.

Using the CA ELD Standards to conduct these types of analyses ensures that all ELs are engaged with intellectually rich content and are able to read texts closely with scaffolding adapted to their particular language learning needs.