

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING GENRE-BASED PEDAGOGY: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Frances CHRISTIE

University of Sydney and University of Melbourne

Abstract: At least three traditions of genre studies have emerged in English-speaking cultures in recent years: one based on systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory; another based on the study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP); and a third referred to as New Rhetoric Studies. All have offered important observations about genre, though this paper argues the particular value of SFL theory and more specifically, genre-based pedagogy developed in its name by Martin and his colleagues (e.g. Martin and Rose 2008). Genre based theory uses Halliday's SF grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), with its commitment to the presence of three major metafunctions in language (ideational, interpersonal and textual). These, it is argued, are all involved in the construction of meaning in different text types, their character expressed in terms of three register variables (field, tenor and mode). Having briefly outlined the theory and aspects of the functional grammar, this paper goes on to describe several different genres, all of them relevant for educational purposes.

Keywords: genre-based pedagogy; genre; Systemic Functional Linguistics.

DESENVOLVENDO E IMPLEMENTANDO UMA PEDAGOGIA BASEADA EM GÊNEROS: UMA PERSPECTIVA DA LINGUÍSTICA SISTÊMICO-FUNCIONAL

Resumo: Pelo menos três tradições de estudos sobre gêneros emergiram nas culturas de língua inglesa em anos recentes: uma baseada na teoria linguística sistêmico funcional (LSF); outra baseada no estudo de Inglês para Fins Específicos; e uma terceira referida como Estudos da Nova Retórica. Todas elas ofereceram observações importantes sobre gêneros, embora este trabalho argumente em favor da particular importância da teoria da LSF e mais especificamente, da pedagogia de gêneros desenvolvida nessa perspectiva, por Martin e seus colegas (por exemplo, Martin e Rose 2008). A teoria de gêneros usa a gramática Sistêmico Funcional de Halliday (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), com o seu comprometimento com a presença de três metafunções na linguagem (ideacional, interpessoal e textual). Argumenta-se que essas três metafunções estão envolvidas na construção do significado em diferentes tipos de texto, sendo suas características expressas em termos de três variáveis de registro (campo, tenor e modo). Após brevemente delinear a teoria e aspectos da gramática funcional, este trabalho descreve diferentes gêneros, todos relevantes a propósitos educacionais.

Palavras-chave: pedagogia de gêneros; gêneros; Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional.

DESARROLLANDO E IMPLEMENTANDO UNA PEDAGOGÍA BASADA EN GÉNEROS: UNA PERSPECTIVA DE LA LINGUÍSTICA SISTÉMICO-FUNCIONAL

Resumen: Por lo menos tres tradiciones de estudios sobre géneros emergieron en las culturas de lengua inglesa en años recientes: una basada en la teoría lingüística sistémico-funcional (LSF); otra basada en el estudio de Inglés para Fines Específicos; y una tercera referida como Estudios de la Nueva Retórica. Todas ellas ofrecieron importantes observaciones sobre géneros, aun que este trabajo argumente en favor de la particular importancia de la teoría de la LSF y más específicamente, de la pedagogía de géneros desarrollada en esa perspectiva, por Martin y sus colegas (por ejemplo, Martin y Rose 2008). La teoría de géneros usa la gramática Sistémico-Funcional de Halliday (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004), con su comprometimiento con la presencia de tres meta funciones en el lenguaje (ideacional, interpersonal y textual). Se argumenta que esas tres meta funciones estén envueltas en la construcción del significado en diferentes tipos de texto, siendo sus características expresadas en términos de tres variables de registro (campo, tenor y modo). Después de brevemente delinear la teoría y los aspectos de la gramática funcional, este trabajo describe diferentes géneros, todos relevantes a los propósitos educacionales.

Palabras-clave: pedagogía de géneros; géneros; Linguística Sistémico-Funcional.

INTRODUCTION

At least three broad traditions of genre theory emerged in English-speaking cultures over the last 25-30 years: the first drew on systemic functional linguistics (SFL), following Halliday (e.g. Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) and later Martin (e.g. Martin and Rose 2003?); a second emerged as an aspect of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g. Swales 1990); and a third was referred to as the New Rhetoric Studies (e.g. Miller 1984/1994). All three traditions have held some matters in common, while also disagreeing in many other ways. For example, all would agree that a genre is a social institution, for it is used by people in a multitude of social activities in order to achieve important social goals. All would agree that genres are equally significant in speech and writing, though in practice for pedagogical purposes, it has tended to be the written genres that have received more attention. Theorists tend to differ over at least two issues. The first involves the methodology for analysis of genres, while the second concerns the degree of descriptive detail that is considered desirable in identifying and teaching genres. SFL theorists use the SF grammar, arguing that it allows a very fine analysis of genres, and that it also provides a basis for a genre-based pedagogy. Theorists in the ESP tradition are much more eclectic in their methodologies, using applied linguistics where they consider this useful, while also drawing on psychology, ethnography and any other areas of scholarship they find helpful; their pedagogy is thus also quite eclectic in character. As for the New Rhetoricians, they generally avoid exhaustive grammatical

analysis, on the grounds that genres are so volatile that any detailed descriptions of the kind proposed by grammarians will tend to constrain learners, leading to unacceptable prescription; hence their tendency for pedagogical purposes is to avoid detailed teaching of genres, promoting instead ‘facilitation’ of student learning.

A case can be made for all three broad traditions, and all indeed have often had important and interesting observations to make. However, this paper will consider developments in the SFL tradition, on the grounds that this tradition has by now a well established history of providing detailed descriptions of genres and detailed accounts of appropriate pedagogies for mother tongue speakers of English and second language learners of English. Interested readers wishing to pursue discussions involving the three traditions in greater detail will find it useful to consult, for example, Christie 2006, Paltridge 2007, Johns 2002, Freedman and Medway 1994, Hyon, 1996, and Swales 1990.

In this paper I propose firstly, to outline a little of SFL theory and its claims to make a contribution to pedagogy, and then secondly, I shall review a sample of genres selected to demonstrate how they differ, while also considering aspects of a genre-based pedagogy.

1. SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC THEORY AND ITS CLAIMS FOR PEDAGOGY

SFL theory emerged in the UK in the aftermath of the Second World War, when M.A.K. Halliday and his colleagues were committed to developing a linguistic theory which would contribute to an understanding of social life. In fact, they wanted a theory which would enable them to interpret and explain the nature of social practice, and the manner in which language mediated and built this practice. Halliday has always said that he has little use for traditional distinctions between theoretical and applied linguistics, since the one constantly informs the other. Hence, from the earliest days in the 1960s and 1970s, educational issues have always been important in Halliday’s theory, and in his efforts to explain social experience. (See Christie and Unsworth 2005, Christie 2007 and Halliday 2007 for discussions). Two broad themes in the linguistic theory are worthy of mention here for their relevance to the theory of genre pedagogy that eventually emerged: the first is the notion of the *metafunctions*, and the second is the notion of *register*, which was early developed by Halliday, while later theorists in the tradition of Martin

also developed an associated *theory of genre*. Each of these merits some discussion in order to develop the account, later on, of genre-based pedagogy.

2. THE METAFUNCTIONS

No doubt many other linguistic theories have an interest in language functions. That is because it is hard not to acknowledge that people use language to serve important functions, and it is reasonable to want to explore and understand these. However, SFL theory is functional in quite a profound way, and it is in this sense that it differs from all other linguistic theories. In closely examining the nature of language, Halliday observed that any natural language has three major functions: one to do with the ‘content’ that is expressed, one to do with the nature of the relationship taken up by the speaker/writer towards the listener/reader, and one to do with organizing the passage of language to make it coherent and intelligible. These functions operate in all texts and more specifically, in the clauses within texts, and it was for this reason that Halliday termed them *metafunctions*, meaning they are always ‘with’ or part of the text and its clauses. It should be noted that the SFL theory also states that while the metafunctions are found in all languages, they must be understood in terms of the particular language in review: English is different from Portuguese for example, though since both are European languages, they have more in common than either has with Chinese or Japanese. Each must be parsed and understood in its own terms.

By way of explaining the metafunctions, let us consider the following little text that was written by an Australian child who was just learning to write:

On Saturday we went to visit my grandma

This little clause has a function in providing some information about what the child did or what experience is involved, and this is referred to as the *experiential metafunction*; the clause also has the function of building a relationship of the writer to the readers, and this is termed the *interpersonal metafunction*; finally, the clause also functions to organize a meaningful message, and this is termed the *textual metafunction*. These three metafunctions are the most commonly referred to ones, though there is one other, referred to as the *logical metafunction*, which can be explained by adding here the second clause the child wrote:

*On Saturday we went to visit my grandma
 and she gave me a new dress for my birthday.*

The second clause provides additional experiential and interpersonal information, and it is also overtly linked to the first by the use of the conjunction ‘and’. Where this is the case, we have identified the ‘logical’ metafunction, for conjunctions have a role in creating different logical relations between activities, ideas or events. Consider for example, how different the meaning would have been had the child used the conjunction ‘when’, and we can see why this is said to realize or express the logical metafunction:

*On Saturday we went to visit my grandma
 when she gave me a new dress for my birthday.*

The experiential and logical metafunction are said to be both parts of the *ideational metafunction*, since they are both to do with the nature of the knowledge, ideas, content or activity that is constructed. Thus, there are three broad metafunctions, one of which embraces two metafunctions, both to do with the ‘content’ being constructed.

Metafunction	What is realized or expressed
Ideational <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 20px;"> ↗ Experiential ↘ Logical </div>	The knowledge, content or activity
Interpersonal	The relationship of speaker/writer to listener/reader
Textual	The organization of the message

Figure 1 The metafunctions found in all natural languages.

Looking more closely to the grammar of the clause, we can see that the experiential metafunction is expressed mostly in the verbal group, its subject and associated prepositional phrases (and any adverbs, when present). The SF grammar adopts some functional labels to identify those language items that realize the *experiential component* of the clause, creating the following functional categories:

	<i>On Saturday</i>		<i>we</i>	<i>went to visit</i>	<i>my grandma</i>
	Prepositional phrase		Noun group	Verbal group	Noun group.
	Circumstance		Participant	Process	Participant.
<i>and</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>new dress</i>	<i>for my birthday.</i>
conjunction	Noun group	Verbal group	noun group	noun group	prepositional phrase
	Participant	Process	Participant	Participant	Circumstance

Verbs realize or express processes, while noun groups or their equivalent realize the participants involved in those processes, while prepositional phrases and sometimes adverbs ('slowly', 'gradually') build circumstances that accompany the processes. These elements- participants, process and circumstances- are all said to constitute the *transitivity* expressed in a clause.

The interpersonal metafunction is expressed mainly in the *mood system*, and in written language the choice for mood is normally declarative, as it is in the text here, for the writer adopts the role of giving information, while the choices of the first person pronoun ('we', 'me' 'my grandmother') build a relationship of some intimacy.

As for the textual metafunction, this is best understood in terms of what is made *thematic* in the clause, though the resources of cohesion are important too. The notion of *theme* in the SF grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004) refers to what is made the 'point of departure for the message' of the clause; in English, but not in all languages, this is placed first. In a typical or unmarked situation in English, theme is what is expressed as Subject of the clause. Suppose the child had written

We went to visit my grandma on Saturday.

This is a perfectly usual way to create a clause in English, and English speakers use such expressions all the time. Here the Subject 'we' is Theme of the clause. But note that the young child actually wrote:

On Saturday *we went to visit my grandma.*

Placing the circumstance first like this creates what is called a *marked theme*, for it is the circumstance that is made significant for the point of departure of the message. Theme patterns become very important to English speakers, and as they learn to write they develop some proficiency with playing with those elements they make thematic. Note also in the two clauses we have been looking at that there is a connection made between the two clauses using a pronoun to build what is technically termed *reference*:

On Saturday we went to visit my grandma
↙
And she gave me a new dress for my birthday

Referential items of this kind play an important role in building the overall texture that gives clauses their overall cohesion. We shall return to these matters in greater detail below.

3. REGISTER

While Halliday and his colleagues were doing their pioneering work on developing the functional grammar in the 1960s and 1970s they were also exploring another related phenomenon they had observed in language: namely, its tendency to vary depending on the contexts in which people find themselves. Thus, if you record or keep notes on the typical day of individuals, it becomes clear that they change the ways they use language many times, depending on the relationships and the activities involved. This led to adoption of the notion of *register*- a term taken from music theory - to explain how the same person switches from one language pattern to another. As the theory emerged (e.g. Halliday McIntosh and Strevens, 1967, Halliday and Hasan 1985) it was recognized that the language uses vary depending upon the *context of situation*, a term taken from Malinowski (1923). Language was said to vary depending on the *field of activity* (in writing this refers to the topic for writing), the *tenor* (or relationship of participants using language) and the *mode* (or the channel of communication).

The remarkable achievement of Halliday and his colleagues was that they were able to go on to argue that there is a clear relationship of the these variables in any context of situation and the grammatical choices that realize or express them. Figure 1 sets out the relationship of text and context of situation.

Context of situation	Realized by	Text
Field of discourse (what is going on)	—————→	Experiential meanings (transitivity, lexis)
Tenor of discourse (who are taking part)	—————→	Interpersonal meanings (mood, modality, person)
Mode of discourse Role given to language	—————→	Textual meanings (theme, cohesive relations)

Figure 1 The relationship of text and context of situation (adapted from Halliday and Hasan 1985, p. 26)

The field of activity- or the topic for writing- is expressed or realized primarily in the transitivity choices and the lexis. The tenor of discourse is expressed or realized primarily in the mood choice, though modality and person are also important. The mode of discourse is realized primarily in such resources as theme and cohesion.

One further variable need to be build into the account of register as Halliday, Hasan and others offered it: it was the notion of *context of culture*, a term also taken from Malinowski (1935). Here the notion is that we use language partly as a condition of the context of situation which gives rise to it, but also partly as a condition of the wider context of culture that shapes so much social practice. A simple example serves to illustrate the point: almost all cultures in the world have trading encounters, involving similar fields of activity, as well as similar tenor relations while the modes- normally in face to face dialogue- are also similar. But the particular cultural context also shapes a great deal of what happens. In my own culture of Australia, for example, bargaining is not common and in many cases highly inappropriate, though in many of Australia's neighbouring countries it is commonplace, and even regarded as the norm. The result is that trading encounters differ considerably, depending on the culture in which one is operating, and in order to be successful, one really needs to understand the local values and practices that apply.

From the earliest days in the 1960s and 1970s Halliday and his colleagues (see discussions in Hasan and Martin 1989) argued that the SF grammar and the associated theory of register could be used to shape and inform teaching practice. Learning to use language Halliday (1975) had suggested is a matter of 'learning how to mean'- how to shape and organize meanings, build relationships and enter with confidence into daily life. Equally, for the purposes of school learning,

children are always learning ‘how to mean’, whether that be in the mother tongue, or in a second language.

4. THE THEORY OF GENRE

In the SFL theory as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (e.g.1985) the terms ‘register’ and ‘genre’ are interchangeable. It was Martin and his colleagues who proposed that genre functions differently from register. In working with educational linguists he noticed that young children might take the same field of activity (perhaps a school excursion), assume the same tenor towards the reader, and also use the same mode (written). but nonetheless they could produce different types of texts, sometimes a narrative and sometimes a recount. (See Christie and Unsworth 2005 and Christie 2006 for detailed discussion). While the theoretical differences have never been fully resolved, the fact is that it is the model of register and genre proposed by Martin and his colleagues (e.g. Martin and Rose, 2003) that has been most influential for educational purposes. Hence it is this model which is used in the following discussion. Figure 3 sets out a simplified account of the theory.

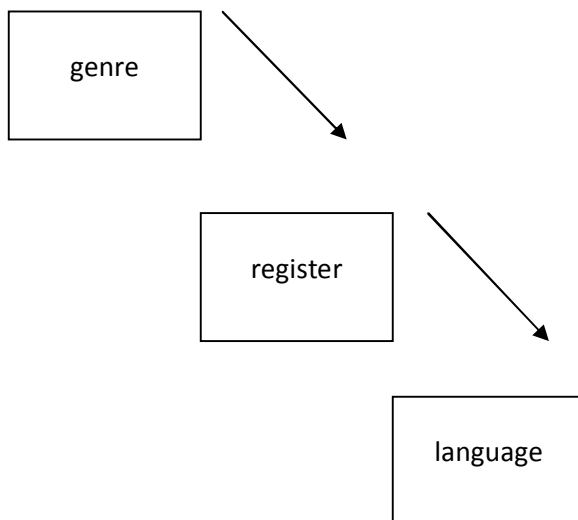


Figure 3: Genre, register and language (Martin, 1985, 250)

Choices are made in language which express aspects of the three variables of field, tenor and mode, and these in turn are realized in the particular text type or genre selected.

5. A SAMPLE OF GENRES

The notion of genre just briefly explained above is perhaps best exemplified by reference to actual texts produced by young learners. The following example is drawn from an Australian classroom involving young learners (Christie 2003). In common with many other early childhood teachers, the teacher had involved the children in making what are called 'hairy monster'. This is a simple science experiment: she provided an old sock, filled it with some soil (or 'dirt') and some wheat seeds, and placed this in a shallow dish with some water in a warm place in the classroom. After a few days of warm sunlight, the seeds produced sprouts which emerged through the old sock, creating what is termed a 'hairy monster' (this was made more realistic by the fact that they stitched a face on the sock). The children were invited by their teacher to write about what they had done and observed. Two different children produced Text 1, a recount and Text 2, a procedure.

Text 1 A recount

- 1 *We got a sock.*
- 2 *We put on the eyes.*
- 3 *We put on the mouth.*
- 4 *We put the seeds in the hairy monster.*
- 5 *We put the dirt in.*
- 6 *We watered it.*
- 7 *We put the hairy monster down the back.*
- 8 *We watered the next day.*

Text 2 A procedure

- 1 *Get an old sock.*
- 2 *Stitch on the eyes.*
- 3 *Stitch on a mouth.*
- 4 *Put some wheat seeds in the sock.*
- 5 *Put some dirt in the sock.*
- 6 *Water the dirt in the sock.*
- 7 *Place the sock in a tray in the sunlight at the back of the room.*
- 8 *Water the sock each day.*

Hence, in register terms the field, tenor and mode values are very similar, though the tenor values differ: the field is 'making hairy monsters'; the tenor is that of one informing the reader of what was done, or of what could be done; and the mode is written. The genres are nonetheless different. A recount recreates a sequence of steps, while a procedure tells how to follow these steps. Thus, the one tells *what was done*, while the other tells *how to do it*.

Recounts and procedures are two of the most commonplace genres found in English though they are no doubt found in other languages. They are found from early childhood to adult life. Procedures for example are found in sets of directions, science experiments, recipes and manuals. Recounts are found in history books, in personal diaries and in journals and magazines of

many kinds. They endure and are valuable because they serve important social purposes. While they are sometimes learned almost unconsciously as a part of engaging in various tasks, they are always worth teaching both to mother tongue and second language learners of English.

How does a genre-based pedagogy proceed? The first step is to identify the genre one wants to teach, and that depends on the subject being taught. Then the genre needs to be analysed in terms of its overall schematic structure; both teacher and students must develop an awareness of the overall set of stages in the structure, and their purpose.

A great deal of work has been done on researching the genres found especially for school learning, and some of this work will be drawn on here to develop this discussion.

Since recounts have been already introduced, we can now consider an example written by a much older student than Text 1. The first matter to notice is the *schematic structure* typically found in a recount of personal experience. The one we looked at above was a very simple example of such a genre and it did not have more than one element or stage. A more complete expression will be found in Text 3, written by a boy aged 11 years, who was writing about a family holiday he had had at a small town called 'South West Rocks'. According to Rothery (see Martin and Rose 2008) a recount has these stages, where the symbol ^ reveals sequence:

Orientation ^ Record of Events ^ Reorientation

An *Orientation* has the function of introducing persons in a setting and often in a period of time: this is so the reader has some understanding of the context for the recount as well as its main people.

The *Record of Events* then introduces a sequence of events or activities and these are linked temporally.

The *Reorientation* closes the text by rounding it off.

Text 3 is set out to display the first two elements or stages, though strictly speaking, this text has no complete Reorientation

Text 3 The Day I nearly got smashed on the rocks

Orientation

*Last summer holidays my family and I went on our yearly holidays to South West Rocks. I was really excited because we always have so much fun there. **In South West Rocks** the surf isn't too rough but the beaches have lots of rocky outcrops so everybody is always very careful to swim away from them.*

Record of Events

***One day** we were having lunch on some rocks. My Mum, Dad and sister, Nic were there. Nic was two years older than me but we still both swimming and we always had a great time together at the beach. It was really hot on the rocks so when we finished lunch, Nic turned to Mum and said, 'Can we have another swim? It's too hot here.'*

'Oh, I don't know. You know how dangerous those rocks are', Mum replied.

'Oh come on, the water is really flat and we're good swimmers. We'll be careful to swim away from the rocks so we don't get dumped,' I said.

***Once we had finished**, my sister and I jumped into the water thinking that we could swim away from the rocks quickly because the water was flat and we were good swimmers. But little did we know that the reason the water seemed calm was because it was actually pulling more water back from under the surface to make a bigger wave. **When we noticed that a big wave was coming**, we tried desperately to swim away from the rocks so we wouldn't be crushed.*

*My sister succeeded to do this but I was stuck stranded, trying to swim to shore. After a while I noticed that the only way I could survive was to dive under the water. So I took a deep breath, dove under the water. **When I noticed the wave had passed** I sprung back up and noticed I was still alive.*

The field here is 'family holidays', while the tenor is that of young writer to reader, where some knowledge of the participants is assumed; the mode is written to constitute the whole activity (unlike for example, a text that has an accompanying image of some kind).

Looking to the genre, probably the first and most distinctive point we can notice about Text 3 is that it depends for its unfolding on the sequence of events in time, and this is very characteristic of recounts. Hence there is a large number of circumstances of time (and one of place), in marked theme (shown in bold), expressed either in circumstances of time or in dependent clauses of time: *Last summer holidays; in South West Rocks; one day; once we had finished; when we noticed that a big way was coming; after a while*. They all serve both to unfold the texts and to mark commencement of new developments in the text.

Apart from this, we can note the large number of processes of action, some of which are: *my family went on our yearly holidays; we were having lunch; we were still both swimming; my sister and I jumped into the water.* Other processes- termed 'relational' - tend to build descriptions or states of being: *I was really excited; the surf isn't too rough; everyone is very careful.* The processes of action create the events while the relational or 'being' processes, and some mental processes (*I noticed*) build description and/or reaction to event. The text has no true Reorientation, though probably the young writer intended his last sentence to suggest a closure. A conventional closure, creating what would be a Reorientation would read something like this:

After a few weeks we packed up and went home and got ready to return to school.

Now we shall turn to another type of genre- an *explanation*. More than one kind of explanation genre might be identified. The instance we shall look at explains how a process of the natural world – namely, how a plant is fertilized - takes place. The basis schematic structure for such a genre has two elements:

Phenomenon Identification ^ Explanation Sequence.

The *Phenomenon Identification* states the phenomenon that is to be explained.

The *Explanation Sequence* gives an account of the explanation of that phenomenon.

Text 4 How do plants fertilize?

Phenomenon Identification

The reproductive female part of a flower consists of a stigma. The male parts are the stamens and the anthers. These are the parts that make fertilization possible.

Explanation Sequence

*The first step in fertilization is pollination. **When the pollen sacs that are contained in the anthers are ripe**, the anther breaks open and sets the pollen free. Then birds, insects or wind carry the pollen to another flower of the same species. This is called *cross pollination*. **When the pollen is carried to the stigma of the same flower**, it is called *self-pollination*. Cross pollinated plants are usually healthier than self pollinated ones. Many plants do not self pollinate because of this.*

***Once the pollen grain reaches the stigma of the same species of flower**, it begins to grow. It does not stop growing until it reaches the ovary. **When it arrives**, it pierces the ovary wall and*

*then it goes through the ovule. This is how plants fertilize. **When plant fertilization is finished, nearly all the flower parts die and fall off because their work is done.***

The field here is 'plant fertilization'; the tenor is that of expert to reader, in that the identity of the writer is not revealed and it is written throughout in the third person; the mode is again written to be constitutive of the text, though such a text could also have an accompanying illustration.

Turning to the genre itself, it is clear that even a casual glance reveals how different this text is from Text 3. The field of knowledge being constructed is of course very different while the genre and its purpose are very different. One immediate difference lies in the fact that Text 4 is written in the present tense, since the information it deals with is held to be always true. This makes it markedly different from Text 3, which seeks to recreate past experience. But there are other differences. Notice how the opening element- the *Phenomenon Identification*- asserts the phenomenon to be explained: there are no marked theme choices in this element or stage. Furthermore, the processes are all relational because they build description, and sometimes a definition, of matters to be explained more fully below: *the reproductive female part of a flower consists of a stigma; the male parts are the stamens and the anthers; these are the parts that make fertilization possible.* Finally note that this element has no conjunctions of any kinds for logical relationships between clause are not required for the meaning making here.

We can observe how different is the next stage or element, in which the phenomenon is explained: there are five marked themes, all expressed in dependent clauses of time: *when the pollen sacs that are contained in the anthers are ripe, the anther breaks open and sets the pollen free; when the pollen is carried to the stigma of the same flower, it is called self-pollination; once the pollen grain reaches the stigma of the same species of flower, it begins to grow; when it arrives, it pierces the ovary wall ; when plant fertilization is finished, nearly all the flower parts die.*

These marked themes are quite fundamentally important in forwarding the discussion. It is in fact often useful for teaching purposes to try reversing the order of the clauses in the clause complexes involved: one can see how crucial the marked themes are in directing the development of meaning here.

We shall now consider one more genre type- this time an argumentative one, in order to pursue the ways in which different genres function in order to serve different human purposes. Text 5 is an example of an expository genre. In writing such a genre the writer adopts a particular point of view or 'thesis', and then offers arguments in its support. The schematic structure for this genre can be displayed thus:

Thesis ^ Argument(s) ^ Restatement of Thesis.

Thesis- refers to the general point of view or value position that is to be proposed.

Arguments- this refers to the arguments offered in support. Sometimes there is only one argument which is expanded in several ways. More commonly, several arguments are offered.

Restatement of Thesis – this element or stage repeats the opening thesis, thus, bringing the text to a conclusion.

The field or topic in Text 5 has been considerably debated in Australia over the last few years, and this text was written by a senior student who had been engaged in some of the debates. As in the earlier case, the elements of structure are identified, and the marked theme choices are also displayed.

Text 5 Should Australia become a republic?

Thesis

In contemporary Australia there is considerable debate about whether the nation should become a republic. When Australia was settled by the English in the late 18th century, the country was part of the British Empire. Later in history, when Australia became a self-governing country, it remained linked to Great Britain, as a part of the British Commonwealth. Today, the Queen of England is also Queen of Australia and the constitution states that she is the Head of State. Even though Australia remains closely associated with Great Britain because of shared history and values, it will be argued in this essay that it should become a republic, for at least three reasons.

Arguments

The first reason to advance for making Australia a republic is that the Queen, while well liked by many people, is nonetheless very far away and rather remote from the daily lives of Australian. In practice, she is no more than a figurehead, and many Australians attach no significance to her role. For them, Australia is already in many ways independent of Great Britain, so it seems inappropriate to continue the out-dated custom of seeing her as the Head of State.

A second reason for arguing that Australia should be a republic is that many young Australians in particular are descended from parents who came here from many countries apart from Britain, and they feel little loyalty to Britain and its way of life. They have cultural values and lifestyles that are different from the British, and would prefer to see themselves as members of a multicultural nation which is republican in character.

*A third reason very important reason why Australia should become a republic is that the country now enjoys considerable economic independence of Great Britain in its trade and defence arrangements. Australia has important trade relationships with many other countries, including a number from Asia and South East Asia, such as Indonesia, Thailand, India, China and Japan. **In order to build closer ties with all its neighbours**, Australia should be able to speak and act as an independent republic, not owing allegiance to a country in Europe.*

Restatement of Thesis

In conclusion, for all these reasons, partly historical, partly cultural and social, and partly economic, Australia should become a republic, while remaining on friendly terms with Great Britain.

The field here is the issue of whether Australia should become a republic. The tenor is a very formal one, as of an expert writing to persuade the reader. There is no sense of the identity of the student, for the third person is used and the language lacks any sense of intimacy. The writer does make uses of modality at times in order to build the argument and to try to persuade the reader of the case that is made. The mode is written.

The genre has a strong opening sentence, sometimes referred to as a ‘topic sentence’, and the rest of the opening paragraph expands on this opening, elaborating a little of the relevant history of Australia in order to establish the problem or issue of interest. The Thesis is thus elaborated upon, using a series of marked themes which serve to help summarize some history quickly as part of developing what is to be argued: *In contemporary Australia there is considerable debate about whether the nation should become a republic. When Australia was settled by the English in the late 18th century, the country was part of the British Empire. Later in history, when Australia became a self-governing country, it remained linked to Great Britain, as a part of the British Commonwealth. Today, the Queen of England is also Queen of Australia and the constitution states that she is the Head of State.* The last sentence of the Thesis states:

Even though Australia remains closely associated with Great Britain because of shared history and values, it will be argued in this essay that it should become a republic, for at least

three reasons. Coming at the end of the Thesis, this establishes a strong sense of the developing structure of the text. The reader is alerted to look for the three arguments, and references to each of these are then used to introduce the arguments in the next stage of the text.

Thus the three are introduced in these ways:

The first reason to advance for making Australia a republic is that the Queen, while well liked by many people, is nonetheless very far away and rather remote from the daily lives of Australian.

A second reason for arguing that Australia should be a republic is that many young Australians in particular are descended from parents who came here from many countries apart from Britain, and they feel little loyalty to Britain and its way of life.

A third reason very important reason why Australia should become a republic is that the country now enjoys considerable economic independence of Great Britain in its trade and defence arrangements.

Each of these is then elaborated on so that the text is given a strong sense of overall unity and purpose. The text is written partly in the past tense when referring to past events, and partly in the present tense, when referring to what is the case today (e.g. *the Queen is nonetheless very far away*) or what should be the case, when the modality is used: *Australia should become a republic*.

Modality of the latter kind is not found in an explanation genre like Text 4, by the way, and this is one measure of the fact that the two genres serve very different purposes. Text 4 sets out to advise what is scientifically known of the phenomenon, while Text 5 sets out to argue what should be done.

There are of course many other kind of genres found in English, and I have made no attempt to cover all of them in this paper. Rather I have sought to introduce several examples, in order to establish what is generally meant by the notion of a genre in the SFL tradition.

6. DEVELOPING A GENRE-BASED PEDAGOGY USING SFL THEORY

I have already noted above that the first step in developing a pedagogy using SFL genre theory involves identifying the genre to be taught, and that this is of course a condition of the subject being taught. In general recounts, explanations and expository texts are found in many different subjects- history, geography, science, subject English to name a few. However, many of the readers of this paper will be teaching English as a second language, and that will no doubt affect the manner in which they select the genres they teach. Here are some steps to follow:

- ✓ Select the target genre, and this may involve the need to write an instance of the genre for teaching, unless one is available;
- ✓ Also select the relevant field for writing about, where this involves doing some careful research on the major vocabulary items to be taught as well as some relevant grammatical features;
- ✓ Introduce the field and develop some understanding of this by reading relevant texts and discussing these;
- ✓ Introduce the target genre using a model and discussing its meanings;
- ✓ Guide students in a careful reading of the genre, revealing the various stages and promoting discussion of the purposes of each stages;
- ✓ Involve the students in joint writing of an example of the target genre, using a related field of knowledge, so they can use the vocabulary they have learned;
- ✓ Review and discuss the genre produced;
- ✓ Involve the students in independent construction of the genre, using either the same field or at least a related one.

Experience over time will encourage the students to move with greater confidence into using new genres, while they should also be encouraged to revisit genres learned earlier. The result over months and then years is that students will develop a strong basic knowledge of

genres and of the language necessary for writing them. Teachers too, become more confident in handling the teaching of literacy overall, so that the quality of their own work will improve.

Finally, it is worth noting that more than most other traditions of pedagogy, the SFL based theory seeks to be explicit about both the purposes served in creating particular types of genres and the language choices made in order to create them. Hence, time should be devoted to developing a strong sense of the target genres and the language used, so that students also have a metalanguage with which to review, discuss, debate and think about the texts they write and read, and their role in many areas of social life.

REFERENCES

CHRISTIE, F. Writing the world. In: N. Hall, J. Larson and J. Marsh (eds.) *Handbook of Early Childhood Literacy*. Sage: London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 2003, p. 286-298.

_____. Genres and institutions: functional perspectives on educational discourse. In: *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, Springer, 2006, p. 29-40

_____. Ongoing dialogue: functional linguistic and Bernsteinian sociological perspectives on education. In: F. Christie and J.R. Martin (eds.), *Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy. Functional Linguistic and Sociological Perspectives*. Continuum: London and NY, 2007, p. 3-13.

_____ and UNSWORTH, L Developing dimensions of an educational linguistic'. In: R. Hasan, C. Matthiessen and J.J. Webster (eds.) *Continuing Discourse of Language. A Functional Perspective. Vol. 1*. Equinox: London and Oakville, 2005, p. 217-250.

FREEDMAN, A. and MEDWAY, P. (eds.) *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. Taylor and Francis: London, 1994.

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

_____. *Spoken and Written Language*. Deakin University Press: Geelong, Australia, 1985.

_____. *Language and Education. Collected Works of M.A.K. Halliday, Volume 9* (ed. J. Webster), Continuum: London and NY, 2007.

HALLIDAY, M.A.K. and HASAN, R. *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social Semiotic Perspective*. Geelong Victoria: Deakin University Press, 1985.

_____, MCINTOSH, A. and STREVEN, P. *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. Longmans: London, 1964.

_____ and MATTHIESSEN, C.M.I.M. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 3rd. ed Arnold: London and NY, 2004.

HASAN, R. and MARTIN, J.R. *Language Development: Learning Language, Learning Culture. Meaning and Choice in Language. Studies for Michael Halliday*. Ablex: Norwood NJ, 1989.

HYON, S. Genre in three traditions: implications for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30, 1996, p.693-722.

JOHNS, A.M. *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. Erlbaum: Mahwah, NJ and London, 2002.

MALINOWSKI, B. The problem of meaning in primitive languages. In: C.K. Ogden and I.A, Richards (eds.) *The Meaning of Meaning Supplement 1*. International Library of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method. Kegan Paul: London, 1923.

_____. *Coral Gardens and their Magic, Vol. 2*. Allen and Unwin: London, 1935.

MARTIN, J.R. Process and text: two aspects of human semiosis. In: J.D. Benson and W.S. Greaves (eds.), *Systemic Perspectives on Discourse, Vol.1*. Ablex, Norwood, NJ, 1985, p.248-74.

MARTIN, J.R. and ROSE, D. *Working with Discourse. Meaning beyond the Clause*. Continuum: London and NY, 2003.

_____. *Genre Relations*. Equinox: London and Oakville, 2008.

MILLER, C.R. Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70, 1984, p.151-167. Reprinted in: A. Freedman and P. Medway (eds.), *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, Taylor and Francis, London, 1994.

PALTRIDGE, B. *Genres, Frames and Writing in Research Settings*. Benjamins: Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1996.

_____. Approaches to genre. In: J. Cummins and C. Davison (eds.) *The International Handbook of English Language Teaching. Vol. 2*, Springer Publications: Norwell, Mass, 2006, p. 849-861.

SWALES, J. M. *Genre Analysis. English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, NY and Melbourne, 1990.

Frances CHRISTIE

The author works at the Department of Development and Learning, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. She is an Emeritus Professor of Language and Literacy Education, the University of Melbourne. She was appointed Honorary Professor of Education at this Faculty at the start of 2003.