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Abstract

The main purpose of the research was to investigate the effectiveness of genre-based approaches in teaching academic writing. The study was motivated by the researcher's perceptions about university students' difficulty in acquiring the essayist literacy of the academy, and the fact that very little empirical research had been conducted on the effect of genre-based writing interventions. The following questions guided the research: (1) Can genre-based approaches be justified theoretically? (2) How effective are genre-based academic writing interventions? (3) Which is more effective: a narrow-angled or a wide-angled approach?

The theoretical framework combines foundational principles of Systemic Functional Grammar, Constructivism and Critical Literacies. A mixed methods design was used, including a survey of writing tasks, genre analysis, discourse analysis, and a quasi-experimental comparison of pre- and posttest essay ratings.

The survey of writing tasks indicated that the academic essay was the written genre most frequently required by humanities departments, and that argumentation, discussion, explanation, description and analysis were the text types featuring most prominently in writing prompts. Since the materials of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies contained the largest number of essay-length tasks, the subject-specific intervention was focused on students of history. The cross-disciplinary group included students with Economics, English, History, Philosophy, Political Sciences, Psychology and Sociology as majors.

A genre-based presyllabus, comprising exploration, explicit instruction, joint construction, independent construction and critical reflection, was customized for the subject-specific and cross-disciplinary groups. The syllabus gave prominence to the use of rhetorical modes, logical development of an argument, and engagement with other authors.

The statistical analyses of the essay scores show that the narrow-angled and the wide-angled genre-based interventions were effective. Although the size of the improvement

on the four dimensions of the scoring instrument was not equal, the overall improvement of the students in each of the groups is statistically significant. Despite the more modest overall improvement of the students in the cross-disciplinary group, their mastery of stance and engagement exceeded that of their subject-specific counterparts.

Even though both interventions were effective the subject-specific group performed significantly better than the cross-disciplinary group overall ($p = 0.043$). Their performance was also more consistent across the four dimensions of the scoring instrument.

The results of the opinion survey indicate that students from both groups were generally positive about the effect of the respective interventions on their academic writing abilities. The only significant difference is the subject-specific group's more positive evaluation of the transferability of the skills they acquired. The more pronounced skills transfer was probably facilitated by the subject-specific group's deeper level of engagement with source materials and more opportunities for practising content-based writing.

Main limitations of the study include the small sample size and non-parallel presentation of the two interventions.

Key terms: ACADEMIC ESSAY, ACADEMIC LITERACY, ACADEMIC WRITING, COMMON CORE, CROSS-DISCIPLINARY, GENRE-BASED, HISTORICAL WRITING, LANGUAGE TEACHING, SUBJECT-SPECIFIC, HUMANITIES.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose

As in many other disciplines, linguistic distinctions start off with theoretical acts of distinction-making that consist of comparing, classifying and categorizing phenomena. In the present case the notion of genre can be traced back to the work of Aristotle, whose *Poetics* presents the basis for the classification of literary texts into categories, such as kinds of poetry, the novel and drama (Swales 1990:1). Since the early 1980s increased attention has been paid to the notion of genre in non-literary discourse, particularly in language teaching and learning (Paltridge 2001:2), mainly through the work of John Swales (1981; 1990).

In the domain of writing development, in particular, genre-based approaches arose from research initiatives by educational linguists who attempted to translate the Systemic Functional theory of Michael Halliday into teaching practice (Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987:58). As a later development, genre studies facilitated the development of educational practices in fields such as rhetoric, composition studies, professional writing, English for Specific Purposes (henceforth ESP), and particularly for classroom teaching (Martin *et al.* 1987:59).

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the effectiveness of genre-based approaches in teaching academic writing to undergraduate students of the humanities in both subject-specific and generic contexts.

1.2 The concept of genre – a preliminary definition

The concept of genre is primarily based on the idea that members of professional and academic communities usually have little difficulty in recognizing similarities in the texts they frequently use for specific purposes, and are able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to read, understand and write them relatively easily. This emphasis on purposefulness, conventionality and ownership of genres is demonstrated by John Swales's (1990:58) widely quoted definition:

> [a] genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

More recently, ideological and socio-cognitive dimensions as well as the tendency of genres to cluster together in "families" have also been highlighted (compare Johns 2008; Bhatia 2004; Hyland 2004). Chapter 2 gives a comprehensive account of different perspectives to genre in linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching, and writing pedagogy.

1.3 Rationale for the study

This study has been motivated by factors at various levels, including changes in higher education, the underpreparedness of students as a result of disadvantaged background, the quality of teaching and learning at secondary school level, changes in higher education, unrealistic expectations by lecturers, and the gap between demands at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

There has been a significant amount of debate on the general underpreparedness of matriculants for tertiary study. At the University of Pretoria lecturers have continuously voiced their disillusionment with students' inability to produce texts that meet the normative requirements and conventions of their academic programmes. In an introductory address at an Education Innovation Forum in May 2006 on the topic of *Stimulating students' discourse abilities*, Deon Rossouw, Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, echoed this conviction, and retorted that students lack both the skills (abilities) and the virtues (disposition) to engage competently in the core academic activities of the university. As a result, intellectual formation, which is the main objective of higher education, suffers. He mentioned a number of possible causes for students' inability to master academic and professional discourse, such as inadequacies of the schooling system, large class sizes and conflicting expectations and conventions between disciplines (Rossouw 2006). To this list one could add the variety of literacy practices and cultural backgrounds that students bring with them when they enter higher education (Hewings 2004:133).

Universities themselves have been affected by rapid external and internal changes, such as the expansion of universities as "knowledge markets", the impact of new technologies, and pressure from industry and government to improve the quality of graduate outcomes despite shrinking government funding and increased accountability to government bodies (compare Jones 2004:254 on the situation in Australia). Internal factors include the tension between the conventional "elitist" literacy practices of the academy (Lillis 2001), the increasing diversity of the student body (including high numbers of first generation university entrants), the push for blended modes of course delivery and an increased demand for quality assurance in teaching and learning.

Although some university lecturers are aware of the complexities associated with acquiring academic discourse abilities, and with teaching them, many still hold unrealistic expectations. Once within the institution students are expected to produce texts which conform to disciplinary and institutional expectations. Lecturers often expect that their students will "absorb" literacy abilities and disciplinary conventions through exposure to academic discourse (lectures, prescribed literature and other academic activities) as they proceed with their studies, as confirmed by Johns (2002b:245):

> One of the most common causes of undergraduate student failure in universities is that most discipline-specific faculty (in biology, history, economics, etc.) have implicit expectations of student work, yet they provide little assistance to students in completing their literacy tasks.

Hyland (2004:141) echoes the view that lecturers tend to see academic discourse conventions as largely self-evident and universal, while complaining that students do not "write in an academic way". Learners are often told that it is their deficit of academic literacy skills that is the problem, and that their grammar needs fixing. However, more and more evidence, especially from cognitive psychology and comprehension research, has been provided to support the view that learning from and using expository genres, in particular, is a complex process that involves knowledge at various levels (compare Grabe 2002:260). This state of affairs has resulted in a shift in recent years towards looking at writing within the context of its disciplinary community (Hewings 2004:132).

Undergraduate students tend to be oblivious of the fact that they lack the abilities to succeed academically, and when they do realize their inability to produce extended and complex pieces of writing, it is almost too late. At an Education Innovation Forum hosted by the Faculty of Humanities in October 2005 on *Developing students' critical thinking skills*, this realization was voiced by postgraduate students. Three students from the Faculty reported on the gap they experienced between their final year of undergraduate study and their honours year. They felt that undergraduate instruction left them ill equipped to cope with the demands of postgraduate writing.

From this outline of the context in which the present research is embedded, questions such as the following have arisen:

1. Whose responsibility is it to teach students to write academically?
2. What teaching approach should be followed?
3. At what level(s) should writing interventions be focused?

The first question concerns institutional issues. The majority of academic departments see it as the mandate and the obligation of writing units to offer a panacea (compare Jones 2004). However, there are also those departments who view the improvement of students' academic discourse abilities as a shared responsibility (Rossouw 2006), calling for an integrated and collaborative approach, which involves subject-field lecturers.

The second question concerns the issue of general versus specific, and the notion of "method". Many writing scholars have argued that narrow-angled interventions are preferable to cross-disciplinary interventions (compare Faigley & Hansen 1985; Tedick 1990; Raimes 1991; Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995; Hewings & Hewings 2001; Biber 1988; 2006; and Hyland 2000; 2003; 2004; 2006). However, courses with narrow foci are not always feasible due to financial and staffing constraints. Furthermore, few empirical studies have been done to compare the effectiveness of subject-specific and generic or semi-generic writing courses. Similar to the general-specific debate, discussions about method have been going on for decades, and still there is no clear answer to which is best. This may be one of the reasons why post-process (postmodern) genre approaches to language teaching have abandoned the idea of a specific method, in favour of a broad sociocultural view that recognizes the importance of focusing on the

requirements of the target situation and the needs of the learners (compare Dunworth 2008).

Regarding the third question Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998:310) argue that a genre approach is especially suitable for beginner and intermediate students. According to them the main advantage at this level is that the scaffolding built into genre-based teaching programmes, and the model texts used, give the learners confidence. This links up with earlier observations by Johns (1995), *viz.* that university writing demands are very different from the approaches and assignments given in secondary schools, that undergraduates have "little experience with the demands, topics, knowledge claims, and values of the discipline they have chosen", and that they possess "little knowledge of the intellectual and linguistic requirements of academic discourses" (Johns 1995:280). In her opinion the undergraduate lecturer can provide students with access to socially powerful forms of language that are important for academic and career success by making genre knowledge explicit, yet stressing that this knowledge is not value-free and that genres evolve and change in response to changes in the context.

This thesis departs from the premise that genre-based teaching of academic literacy is most appropriate at second-year level, because at this level students have already acquired a measure of metacognitive awareness about their own academic success (or lack thereof), although this awareness may be based solely on their first year grades. Secondly, it is believed that an intervention in the second year is still early enough to decrease a student's risk of extending his/her undergraduate study as a result of inadequate academic literacy. A third argument is that a number of departments in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria offer undergraduate courses in both languages of instruction (Afrikaans and English) up to second year level, while English is the only medium of instruction as from third year level. At least some of the Afrikaans mother tongue students are completely underprepared to write academically in English when they enter their third year of study.

At this point it might seem as if a choice has been made in favour of a genre-based approach, while only superficial evidence has been provided to justify this choice. The next section aims at juxtaposing the criticisms that have been leveled at (early versions

of) genre approaches, while also highlighting the benefits that have been mentioned in the scholarly literature.

1.4 Criticisms and benefits of genre approaches

1.4.1 Criticisms

Genre approaches instantiate a revival of the "scientific" approach to language learning

Certain critics of the original Swalesean genre analysis raised concerns about an "overprescriptive" approach, making use of "moves" that typically occur in a more or less fixed order (Prior 1995). Others regard it to be an essentially textually grounded (product) model of teaching and learning that reverts back to teaching the traditional rhetorical modes according to a rigid structural template. Such approaches are criticized for fostering passive learners, instead of cultivating active participants. The so-called "liberal progressivists" have claimed that genre literacy entails a revival of transmission pedagogy, which implies "learning formal language facts again" (Cope and Kalantzis 1993:2), while the New Rhetoric genre school has questioned whether genres can be taught and acquired in the classroom. Proponents of this school have argued that genres are so slippery and evolving that building a curriculum around them is virtually impossible (Johns 2002a:4).

Gee (1997:24) defends genre approaches by reminding his readers that they are based on sound educational principles and a solid body of linguistic theory, and that explicitness is actually one of their strengths. Cope and Kalantzis (1993:6) contest the criticism that genre pedagogy is merely transmission pedagogy. They argue that genre scholars object equally strongly to both traditional and progressivist pedagogies. Grabe (2002:266) contends that genre approaches are more than "prescriptive how-to-do procedure[s]" and emphasizes the genre movement's overt focus on the relation of the social purpose of text to language structure, which, in his opinion, should be seen as a patterning and signaling that assist writers in structuring according to the demands of the context.

Genre approaches result in isolation from content disciplines

Badger and White (2000:156) point to Kamler (1995:9), who criticizes genre approaches for their lack of attention to the instructional and disciplinary contexts in which texts are constructed; in other words for their purported focus on the general instead of the specific. Dias and Paré (2000), proponents of the New Rhetoric Movement, argue that learning is an integral aspect of activity in the world, and that we learn to read and write those genres we need in the contexts that we need them. They further argue that writing in real-world settings is a means to accomplish larger goals and often involves non-linguistic actions. For these scholars the disjunction between situations of use and situations of learning is unbridgeable. In other words, for them the classroom can never simulate real-world experience, and therefore writing teachers should teach only classroom genres (Hyland 2004:17), such as essays, reports, synopses, etc.

Dudley-Evans (2002:235), however, retorts that genre pedagogues have never advocated a separation of language and content. In fact, he highlights the risk that such an approach will not confront the day-to-day problems students encounter when writing the actual genres required by the content departments.

Bazerman (1997:19) brings a second counter-argument to the fore when asking the following rhetorical question: If situated learning is the only legitimate way to learn, how is it possible for content lecturers to teach the foundations of their subjects in the classroom, and not in the courtroom, the school, the translator's office, the archive, the foreign missions office, etc.?

The existence of "mixed" genres militates against genre approaches

The existence of so-called "mixed" genres (for example *narrative*s doing the work of *scientific explanations*, *procedures* doing the work of *expository challenge*, etc.) is often presented as evidence against classifying genres.

However, Martin (2002:278) argues that "if we find the notion of texts drawing on more than one genre useful, then we have to acknowledge the distinctive recurrent

configurations of meaning that are being drawn upon – the distinctive genres". The notion of "mixed genres" depends on having distinct ingredients to mix.

Furthermore, recent views that draw from critical approaches emphasize the fact that genre-mixing, arising from a need to manipulate generic conventions for social or political purposes, is a common phenomenon. In fact, these observations have led to increased sophistication in the teaching of professional writing (Dudley-Evans 2002:225).

Genre-based instruction perpetuates hegemony

From a critical perspective genres have been considered fossilized products of a dominant culture, which students have to acquire in order to succeed (compare Johns 2002a:4; Hyon 1996). Luke (1996) argues that learning dominant genres leads to uncritical reproduction of the status quo.

However, in the opinion of Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999) teaching about genres does not exclude critical analysis of them. In fact, genre-based teaching provides learners with the necessary base for critically reflecting on them, and for challenging hegemonic texts. Another counter argument is that those who are really powerful are those who break conventions, and not those who reproduce them (Cope & Kalantzis 1993:15).

The genre approach is eclectic or hybrid

According to Weideman (2001) eclecticism (hybrid approaches to language teaching) can be dangerous if it amounts to compromising the accountability of the language teacher and the integrity of the syllabus through inconsiderate application of whatever seems to work. Although I agree with Weideman in principle, it should be acknowledged that even "pure" approaches bear traces of other approaches. Process approaches differ vastly from product approaches, yet some process writing materials make use of sample texts (Badger & White 2000:157). All language teaching, especially of an additional language, tend towards creativity. Language teachers who are in feeling with their students will borrow or invent methods that produce the desired outcomes, even if these methods do not have names or are not mentioned in textbooks and syllabi.

This creativity is inherent in traditions such as ESP, which is overtly non-theory centred, and oriented towards developing procedures appropriate to particular groups of learners, whether their goals are educational or professional (Dudley-Evans 2000:3). Swales (1988:xvii) says about ESP practitioners that they "distrust theories that do not quite work out in the litmus-paper realities of classrooms".

Another position to adopt is to concede that genre is not an autonomous paradigm in language teaching, and to assert that hybridity is a strength because genre approaches are able to draw together the best aspects of other syllabus models in order to provide the basis for a coherent, cohesive and comprehensive framework for language teaching and learning (Feez 1998). Hybridity in this sense is usually the result of careful planning. Paltridge (2001) spells out the ingredients of such a hybrid model:

> A genre-based syllabus incorporates vocabulary and grammatical structures that are typically associated with structural syllabus types; functions and notions that derive from functional-notional approaches to syllabus design; a focus on situation, social activities, and topic that derives from situational and content-based syllabuses; and a focus on specific language learning tasks and activities that draws from task-based and procedural approaches to language teaching and learning (Paltridge 2001:9).

This kind of hybridity is not radical or new. Many language teachers would agree that this is what good teachers have always done, that the genre approach tries to encapsulate "the best of teacherly commonsense", and instinctively subvert "the excesses of whatever the prevailing pedagogical regime" (Cope & Kalantzis 1993:21).

Despite these and other criticisms, there is evidence that genre-based approaches to language teaching have been successful at school level (Martin 1984; Martin, Christie & Rothery 1987; Coffin, 2005; Veel 2005); at university level (Johns 1995; 2002c; 2005; Dudley-Evans 1989); and in professional communication (Bhatia 1993b; 2000).

The next section briefly outlines the purported benefits of genre approaches to teaching academic literacy.

1.4.2 Benefits

Many arguments have been put forward in support of genre as an organizing principle for the development of language teaching and learning programmes.

A focus on genre sets concrete learning goals

The most important benefit of a genre approach is that it is functional, drawing together language, content (theme) and the context of discourse production and interpretation, and provides ways for responding to recurring communicative situations. This approach offers a frame that enables individuals to orient to and interpret particular communicative events, and it offers teachers a means of presenting students with explicit and systematic explanations of the ways writing works to communicate (Paltridge 2001:3; Hyland 2004:6; 11). Differently phrased, genres provide both the teacher and the student with "something to shoot for" (Macken-Horarik 2002). Genre approaches also seek to offer writers an explicit understanding of how target texts are structured, and why they are written in the ways they are. A genre-based programme starts with genre as the overall driving force of the syllabus, yet includes both formal and functional aspects of language, and does not attempt to separate skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). It is a visible pedagogy that gives both teacher and learner a definite lingual purpose and target (Macken-Horarik 2002). In other words it makes clear what is to be learned rather than relying on inductive methods where learners are expected to acquire the genres they need from the growing experience of repetition or the teacher's notes in the margins of their essays (Hyland 2003). According to Hyland (2004:12), a genre approach shifts writing instruction "from the implicit and exploratory to a conscious manipulation of language and choice".

Genres embody a system of choices to accomplish social and cultural goals

From a systemic functional perspective, a genre approach relates language choices to cultural purposes (Bhatia 1993a). Linguistic patterns are seen as pointing to contexts beyond the text itself, implying a range of social constraints and choices, so that students are offered a way of seeing how different texts are created in distinct ways in terms of their purpose, audience and message. Teaching is therefore data-driven rather than intuition-driven. In order to create an effective text, students need to know how such texts are organized as well as the patterns of lexis and grammar that are typically used to express meanings in the genre. They need to have an understanding of how features of a situation may impact on the choices that they make in the production of a particular genre (Paltridge 2001:5). In addition they need to know the social purposes of

the text type, the kinds of situation in which its use is appropriate, who the audience is, what readers know, the roles and relationships between text users, the types of textual variation that are typical and possible, and how the genre is related to other genres (Hyland 2004:12).

However, empirical evidence needs to be provided in order to demonstrate that explicit knowledge of genres and purposes indeed translates into the ability to write coherently, and to do so within a specific genre.

Genre-based teaching is based on authentic user needs

A genre-based curriculum is never an end in itself. The teacher needs to be fully aware of learners' target writing contexts to determine the kinds of writing practices that they will be faced with. From an ESP perspective this advantage takes precedence over the first (setting concrete goals), in that if writing is embedded in real-life contexts, and if the relevance to immediate or recognizable future needs is clear, students are likely to find learning more motivating. They are also likely to be more successful in gaining control over target genres and to see variations in these texts, how they relate to other genres, and their connections to the contexts they have to work in (Hyland 2004:13). Authenticity is enhanced by integrating these genres into a course in the same way as they are integrated in real life, and thus give learners a realistic understanding of their use. An understanding of learner needs will not only determine what needs to be learned, but also how these elements will be sequenced in the course, and what types of assessment to incorporate.

The units of teaching and learning are "the right size"

According to Paltridge (2001:3) a genre-based approach to syllabus design has the advantage that the units are neither too small, as in a structural or functional syllabus, nor too large, as in a skills-based syllabus. Units in a genre-based language learning programme emphasize communicative purpose and allow for the demonstration of typical patterns of textual and linguistic organization. This enables curriculum designers to group together texts that are similar in terms of purpose, organization, and audience, and provides students with knowledge of the organizational and linguistic features of

genres that they need to have command of in their academic disciplines and professions (Dudley-Evans 2000).

Explicit guidance on genre structures and linguistic features is important for additional language learners

Particular benefits of genre approaches have been noted in the area of reading development (for example Hewings & Henderson 1987; Hyon 1996). These studies report positive effects of genre instruction on students' understanding of text structure and overall reading effectiveness.

In writing development a more prescriptive approach is often merited for additional language speakers with a limited range of target language abilities. First language speakers are typically immersed in a whole range of genres on a daily basis, and are able to identify the specific features of an unfamiliar genre by comparing and contrasting it with the wide range of genres with which they are already familiar. However, additional language learners may not be familiar with the subtle variations in form that apply to various genres. In other words they are not able to negotiate their way into engaging in a new genre in the way that L1 students are (Flowerdew 2002:100). Genre pedagogy, in this sense, is teaching students how language works, rather than leaving them to work out for themselves how it works. The pedagogy that underlies genre literacy uses explicit curriculum scaffolds to support both the systematic unfolding of the fundamental structure of a discipline, a philosophy or a professional product, and the recursive lexicogrammatical patterns of the language that is used to convey a particular purpose (compare Cope & Kalantzis 1993:18).

Certain scholars in the field of academic writing (compare Bruce 2008:82) do not restrict their support for a visible pedagogy to additional language speakers. Following Kaplan (1987), Bruce believes that academic writing (in general) is "learned rather than acquired". It first has to be identified, analyzed and described to provide a basis for instruction and learning. Then the stages and classificatory systems that constitute discourse-organizing knowledge also have to be learned. His view also links back to that of Widdowson (1989:135), *viz.* that communicative competence is knowing a set of pre-assembled patterns and being able to adapt them for specific contexts. This

suggestion has been confirmed by Skehan (1996) and Carr and Curren (1994), who provide evidence that explicit learning of structured material is generally superior to implicit learning. It seems to be the awareness of the learning itself, and of what is to be learned, that confers advantages.

Genre competence is a transferable skill

Proponents of genre approaches have inverted the antagonists' argument about these approaches instantiating "transmission pedagogy". In Bhatia's (1999a; 2000) opinion the acquisition of generic competence entails the ability to participate in and respond to new and recurring genres, including the ability to construct, use and exploit generic conventions to achieve particular communicative ends. He argues that practising a genre is like playing a game, with its own rules and conventions. Established genre participants are like skilled players who succeed by their manipulation of the rules of the game, rather than through strict compliance with the rules (Bhatia 1999a:25-26). Therefore, generic competence is not simply about the ability to reproduce discourse forms; it is the ability to understand what happens in real-world interactions and to use this understanding to participate in real-world communicative practices.

Unfortunately there is still too little empirical evidence to prove that this kind of transferable genre competence can be instilled through explicit teaching.

Genre-based instruction helps learners to gain access to discourses that have accrued social and cultural capital in society

Genre pedagogies offer the capacity for initiating students into the ways of making meanings that are valued in English-speaking communities. Valued genres are those that determine educational opportunities: regulate entry into professions; direct passage through career pathways; and have symbolic value in institutions, signifying the competency or status of their users (Hyland 2004:14). Paltridge (2001:8) argues that focusing on genre in language learning classrooms provides a context in which students can gain access to the genres of power. He also points to Delpit (1988:282), who also argues strongly for teaching genres, saying that if you are not already part of the culture of power, "being explicitly told the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier",

and gives learners access to the "hidden curriculum" of education and power. However, "being told" does not necessarily equal "giving access".

Genre-based teaching facilitates critical understanding and reflection

In the early 1990s proponents of the New Rhetoric genre school adopted a critical stance. Thus Cope and Kalantzis (1993) have warned against using a genre-approach merely as a tool for categorization, description and reproduction of uncontested shared beliefs and practices. They spurred teachers on to move beyond these categorizations, "towards using genre as an analytical tool for engaging with the multigeneric, intergeneric and heteroglossic texts of societies" (Cope & Kalantzis 1993:16), and toward using genre to establish a dialogue between the culture and discourse of institutionalized practice on the one hand, and the cultures and discourses of university students on the other.

This view has now become established in mainstream genre approaches. Genre pedagogues are increasingly emphasizing the potential that genre-based pedagogies have for critiquing the way that knowledge and information are constructed in texts. Hyland (2004:15) summarizes this advantage as follows:

> An understanding of the genres of the powerful not only provides access to those genres, however; it also allows users to see how they represent the interests of the powerful. Understanding how texts are socially constructed and ideologically shaped by dominant social groups reveals the way that they work to represent some interests and perspectives and suppress others. By focusing on the literacy practices writers encounter at school, at work and at university, genre pedagogies help them to distinguish differences and provide them with a means of understanding their varied experiential frameworks. What appear as dominant and superior forms of writing can then be seen as simply other practices and therefore become open to scrutiny and challenge.

Thus, effective genre writing is not merely "accommodationist", in that it entails being able to understand and draw on various types of systemic knowledge that are necessary for "producing discoursal artifacts" (compare Bruce 2008:10). It is also critical, meaning that even a novice writer should be able to exercise authority and reflective thinking by the innovative use of the various aspects of discourse knowledge at his/her disposal.

Genre-based teaching assists teacher development

Hyland (2004:15) is of the opinion that genre pedagogies have an important consciousness-raising potential for teachers, and may impact on both their understanding of writing and their professional development. He offers the following explanation: In a genre-based writing course teachers need to understand how language is used as a communicative resource, they have to categorize the texts their students need to write, identify the purposes the texts serve for writers, analyze the language (lexis and grammar), and understand the contexts they are used in. In this way teachers become more attuned to the communicative needs of their students and are in a better position to intervene successfully in their language learning: to provide more informed feedback and provide more appropriate assessment opportunities (Hyland 2004:16). Figure 1.1 below gives a schematic overview of the benefits of the new generation of genre approaches, as described in this section:

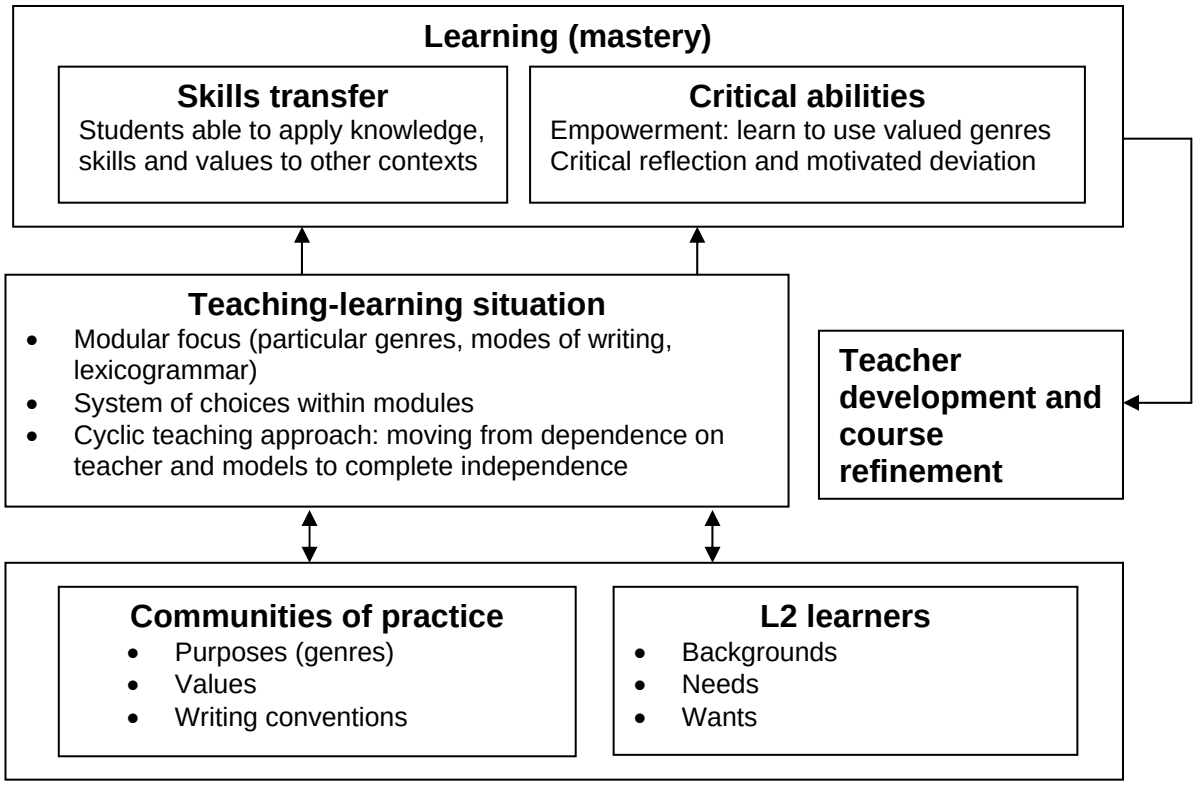


Figure 1.1 Schematic representation of the benefits of a genre approach in language teaching

From this explication of the rationale, based on a preliminary literature review, a number of research questions arose, which in turn shaped the objectives for this investigation.

1.5 Research questions, goals and objectives

1.5.1 Research questions

As indicated above, the proposed research project was primarily motivated by a practical problem, *viz.* university students' difficulty to acquire the writing conventions of the academy, and the desire to explore pedagogical solutions to this problem. A genre approach to teaching these conventions was proposed, and provisionally justified with reference to arguments for and against, as contained in the scholarly literature of the past twenty years. From this initial exploration, the following questions arose:

Question #1: How can genre-based approaches be justified theoretically (linguistically and pedagogically)?

The linguistic paradigm that has thus far been credited with providing the theoretical foundations for the genre approach is Systemic Functional Linguistics, which has been largely attributed to Michael Halliday (Halliday 1978; 1985; 1994; Halliday & Mathiessen 1994). However, SFL has been applied selectively in pedagogical contexts. It is only the Australian genre school that has made a deliberate attempt at aligning language pedagogy (including conceptualization and terminology) closely with SFL on a large scale.

One of the main problems with applying SFL in genre pedagogy is the tendency of Systemic Functional Grammar towards overlexicalization or "overterminological-ization", and its functional orientation. Although there is much to say for a functional orientation in terms of producing texts that fulfil important social purposes, students may find its categories confusing. It is yet another metalinguistic system that has to be mastered along with new specialized lexis and other subject-field conventions. Furthermore, not enough research has been done on the classroom application of SFL. Johns (2002c:237), for instance, has asked why some of "the finest minds in genre theory eschew discussion of the pedagogical implications of their work". Recent versions of SFL that are more inclined towards educational linguistics (compare Martin

& Rose 2007) have come closer to aligning theory with practice, yet beg further simplification to increase the usability of SFL and its universal acceptability. Other theoretical paradigms that have been invoked to justify genre pedagogy are Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis.

It is necessary to explore the theoretical sources of influence that have contributed towards shaping genre pedagogy as we know it today in order to paint a comprehensive picture of the interrelationships between theory and practice, and also to justify course design and classroom pedagogy.

Question #2: How effective are genre-based academic literacy interventions in tertiary education contexts?

Few empirically based studies on the effectiveness of genre approaches for improving tertiary level students' academic and professional discourse abilities, and case studies tracking students' progress through genre-based courses, have been done to date. In the ESP tradition, for example, not much has been published on how genre-based pedagogy plays out in individual classrooms. The New Rhetoricians have devised classroom procedures for raising university students' awareness of the social contexts that shape their writing, but do not provide students with explicit frameworks for learning the language features and functions of academic and professional genres. Moreover, applications have been reported on a case-by-case basis rather than in terms of larger initiatives affecting multiple classrooms, which makes it difficult to measure the ways in which genre scholarship in this tradition has affected classroom practices (Hyon 1996). Although the educational impact of genre has been measured in Australian systemic functional contexts, where genre-based pedagogy has influenced entire state educational systems, the arguments for and against this approach have been mostly theoretical, and few, if any, attempts have been made to evaluate its effectiveness empirically. Even recently published volumes on genre pedagogy, for example Johns (2002c) and Paltridge (2001), contain little empirically-driven evidence of the successes (or failures) of genre-based interventions, particularly in the area of writing, which is the primary mode of assessment in tertiary institutions. Moreover, the findings of research focused on the effect of formal instruction in the conventions of particular written genres are not always conclusive. Mustafa (1995), for instance, found that her

students' writing improved as a result of the instructions, yet she was not responsible for the final grading of students work. She also reported that the assessors' evaluations of the students' writing varied in terms of how much they focused on genre features (Paltridge 2001:10).

In particular, very few empirical studies have been focused on genres and genre elements in the humanities. Typological studies on writing assignments across various university disciplines include those by Rose (1983), Horowitz (1986a; 1986b), Canseco and Byrd (1989), Braine (1995); Hale, Taylor, Bridgeman, Carson, Kroll and Kantor (1996), Moore and Morton (1998), Melzer (2003), and Dunworth (2008). Genre-analysis studies, on the other hand, have primarily been focused on genres with a relatively stable discourse structure in the natural sciences, including genres such as the *laboratory report* (Dudley-Evans 1985), the *experimental report* (Bazerman 1984), professional genres in business and economics (Bhatia 1993; Jablin & Krone 1984; Jenkins & Hinds 1987; Hewings & Henderson 1987), genres in legal discourse (Bhatia 1983; 1993) and research genres such as the *scientific article*, the *article abstract*, the *master's dissertation* and the *PhD thesis* (Bhatia 1997; Dudley-Evans 1986; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans 1988; Swales 1981; 1990; 2004).

Studies that have focused on the humanities and/or social sciences typically fall into the category of writing manual, rather than the category of scholarly research (including genre pedagogy or genre-analysis), such as Becker (1986) on writing *theses*, *books* and *articles* in the social sciences; and Throgmartin (1980) on language use for students in the social sciences.

A number of studies have focused on the *academic essay* in general (not discipline-specific), for instance Hyland (1990), Kusel (1992) and Dudley-Evans (2002). Only two journal articles reporting on research genres in the social sciences have been located, *viz.* Brett (1994), who did a genre analysis of the *results section* of sociology articles, and Charney and Carlson (1995) who researched the use of *model texts* with a group of psychology majors. Hodge (1998) focuses on a research genre in the humanities, *viz.* the *PhD thesis*, but his work is advisory, rather than research-oriented.

The paucity of research on genres in the humanities may be ascribed to the fact that genre boundaries are less clearly defined than in the natural sciences, law and business, where genres such as the technical report, the laboratory report, various types of business letters and the project proposal have reasonably conventionalized structures, and have a history of being explicitly taught in the undergraduate curriculum. However, it remains an irony that an approach which is rooted in the humanities (Bhatia 1993b:16-20) has had so little effect on writing research with the humanities as its focus.

Question #3: Which is more effective: specific or generic approaches to genre-based teaching of academic literacy?

Genre scholars differ with regard to their views on the level of specificity at which genre should be taught. One question that has arisen is: Should genre practitioners focus on the prototypicality/generality of genre structures, or the variation in the discourse structuring of genres reflecting different epistemological and social practices in disciplines? This problem addresses the "common-core" versus "specific" debate in the area of language teaching. Scholars in favour of wide-angle approaches are Widdowson (1983) and Hutchinson and Waters (1987). Proponents of narrow-angled approaches include Faigley and Hansen (1985); Tedick (1990); Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995); Hewings and Hewings (2001); Dudley-Evans (2001); Biber (1988; 2006) and Hyland (2000; 2003; 2004; 2006). These scholars argue that genres are not merely formally linked to disciplines. They are intimately linked to a discipline's methodology, and they package information in ways that conform to a discipline's norms, values and ideology. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995:1) are convinced that the extent to which English second language writers are familiar with subject matter has a dramatic influence on their writing performance. A number of studies conducted by genre analysts have emphasized the systematic relationship between disciplinary purposes, genre and register (compare Bhatia, 2004; Hyland, 2000; Jones, 2004; Hewings, 2004; Hyland & Bondi, 2007a). However, few studies have thus far given a systematic account of form function relationships in specific disciplines, have used such information as input for course design, and have evaluated the effect of such courses.

Another question related to level of specificity is: Should genre be taught at a macro-level, which usually encompasses full documents, such as the *report*, the *journal*, the *proposal*, the *abstract* or the *academic essay*; or should the focus be on smaller units of text that display a similar style or rhetorical mode, such as *argument*, *comparison and contrast*, *description*, *exposition*, *instruction*, *exploration* and *self-expression*? In Australia, where genre-based teaching at primary and secondary school level has been incorporated in the educational systems of entire states, the focus of attention has been on units such as the *narrative*, *recount*, *exposition*, etc. Studies done within the ESP and the New Rhetoric traditions, on the other hand, have been fairly specialized, and have been focused on whole-text units, such as the *research article* (Bazerman 1988; Gosden 1993; Swales 1990), the *sales promotion letter* (Bhatia 1993), and the bank's *system evaluation report* (Smart 1992).

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

Following from the above research questions the following objectives were formulated:

1. to propose a theoretically justified design for a genre-based module aimed at improving the academic writing abilities of undergraduate students in the humanities at the University of Pretoria;
2. to evaluate the effectiveness of the design with two different groups of students: one group of which the members share a common academic subject-field, and the other comprising students with heterogeneous academic foci;
3. to elicit the opinions of both respondent groups after implementation of the interventions.

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Research design

The research design can be characterized as multimethod or mixed, in that it includes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions (compare Brown 2004). The first objective outlined above will be realized through (1) an extensive survey of the literature on linguistic theory, applied linguistics, language pedagogy, learning theory, and the writing conventions of the academic discipline chosen for the field-specific intervention; (2) a survey of writing assignments required by academic disciplines in the

humanities at the University of Pretoria, and discourse analyses of expert texts; and (3) qualitative research on the writing conventions and the purposes of a particular discipline, involving subject-field experts.

The second objective would be realized through quasi-experimental research. Normally a quasi-experimental design involves a pretest and a posttest administered to all the members of one respondent group. However, in order to answer the second research question on the effectiveness of genre-based courses, two groups were involved: one group receiving a programme focused on one particular academic subject, and the other accommodating students majoring in a variety of modules within the humanities (compare Table 1.1). Some methodologists refer to the type of design where the different experimental situations include different though equivalent materials as an "equivalent materials design".

Table 1.1 Quasi-experimental design with two programme groups

	Pretest	Intervention	Posttest
Programme group A	Test A1	Genre-based syllabus, with subject-specific materials	Test B1
Programme group B	Test A2	Genre-based syllabus, with generic materials	Test B2

In addition to measuring the effect of the two programmes, students' experiences of the two programmes would be recorded by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire would be an operationalization of the construct on which the syllabus is based, and would be administered at the conclusion of each intervention. The results would be described statistically.

1.6.2 Programme evaluation model

The model considered most suitable for planning and staging the research is that of programme evaluation – in particular Brian Lynch's well-known and respected "context-adaptive model" (CAM) (Lynch 1996). The term **evaluation** refers to a systematic attempt at gathering information in order to make judgments. Although "programme" may refer to a series of courses with a predetermined set of outcomes, it may also involve only a single course, or different versions of a single course which is being tried

for the first time in an EAP context. The CAM is a flexible and adaptable heuristic, which is particularly useful for inquiry into language education programmes which "constantly reshape and redefine themselves" (Lynch 1996:3) (compare figure 1.2 below):

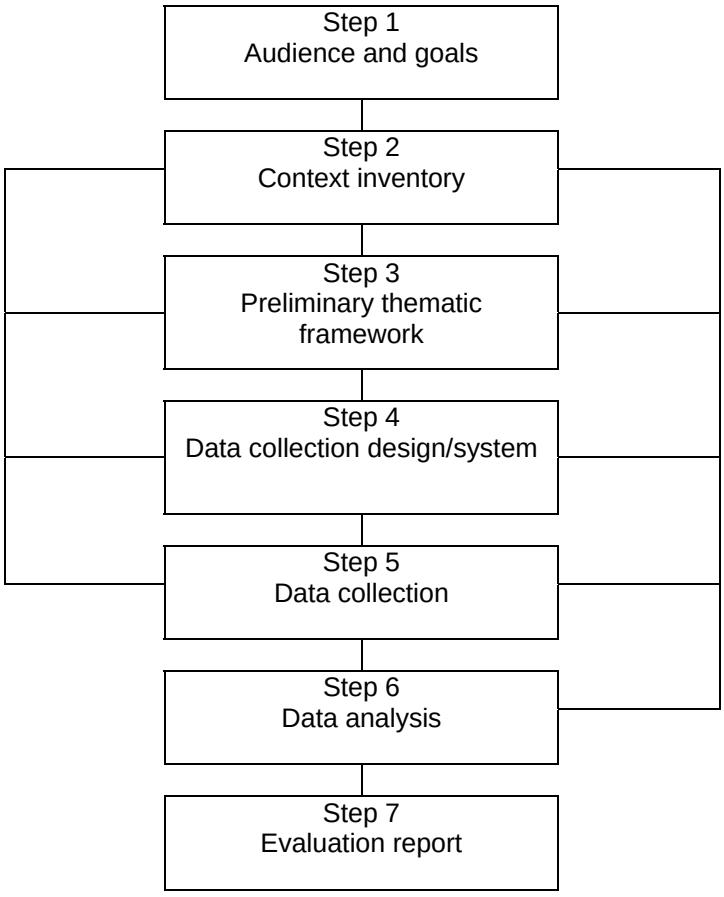


Figure 1.2 The context-adaptive model (CAM) (Lynch 1996:4)

Step 1, Audience and goals, requires answers to the questions Why is the evaluation required? (compare Alderson 1991:275-277), Who is requesting the evaluation?/Who will be affected by the evaluation? Alderson (1991:281) regards as goals general areas that are likely to need evaluation to be what students learned and how their behaviour changed, as well as how the opinions and attitudes of the participants changed.

Various stakeholders may be involved in an evaluation. In the context under scrutiny the most directly involved stakeholders are the researcher, students, the institution (the University of Pretoria), and the various academic disciplines that are served by the

course. A pivotal question that needs to be answered is what counts as evidence from these different perspectives. The researcher seeks quantifiable justification for the design, and descriptive information about how the instructional objectives are being realized in the classroom in order to improve the curriculum. Students need both formative and summative information on their performance: to learn from the experience, and to obtain a mark for the module. From the perspective of the University it is important to know whether students benefit from the course, and minimize their risk of failure as a result of inadequate writing abilities. The institution is also interested in enrolment figures and pass rates in order to justify the financial input it makes. Representatives from academic disciplines require information on how well the course serves generic and special-field needs in order to recommend or prescribe the course to their students.

Lynch (1996:10) contends that when the evaluation questions involve a combination of "Has it succeeded?" and "How has it succeeded?" a multiple research-methods strategy that leads program evaluation into complex qualitative-quantitative designs is called for.

The CAM addresses the issue of **context analysis** (**Step 2**) with a checklist or inventory (Lynch 1996:10) of potentially relevant dimensions of language education programmes in order to tailor them to the particular programme setting.

1. Availability of a comparison group
2. Availability of reliable and valid measures of language skills (criterion-referenced and/or norm-referenced tests, with programme-specific and/or programme-neutral content)
3. Availability of various types of evaluation expertise (such as statistical analyses and naturalistic research)
4. Timing of the evaluation (how much time is available to conduct the evaluation)
5. The selection process for admitting students into the programme
6. Characteristics of the students in the programme and comparison groups (mother tongue, age, gender, previous academic achievement)
7. Characteristics of the programme staff
8. Size and intensity of the programme (number of students, classrooms, course levels, number of contact sessions per week, duration of the programme)

9. Instructional materials and resources available (textbooks and readers, human resources, study guides, etc.)
10. Perspectives and purpose of the programme (notions, beliefs and assumptions regarding the nature of language and the process of language learning)
11. Social and political climate surrounding the programme (perception of the programme by the academic community, student and community attitudes toward the language and culture being taught, and the relationship of the programme's purpose to the larger social and political context).

The third step is to provide a **contextualization of the programme** in terms of the salient issues and themes that have emerged from the audience, purpose and context analysis. This step reflects the primary research questions of this study, *viz.*

- What are the ideal design characteristics of a genre-based programme for teaching academic writing to undergraduate students of the humanities?
- What are the effects of genre-based teaching of writing within a particular discipline, and how do these differ from the effects of semi-generic or cross-disciplinary genre-based teaching of writing?
- How should we interpret the outcomes of the research in terms of improving the curriculum to serve the needs of both source and target populations at a large urban university?

Step four comprises the **design for data collection**. According to Lynch (1996:6) the question here is how best to obtain the information necessary to answer the above questions: quantitative or qualitative. Given the fact that the above questions address both the issues of the extent to which students have improved as a result of the programme, and how the programme can be improved, the design should incorporate both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Particular researchers would refer to such designs as mixed or hybrid, while other scholars subsume them, together with purely qualitative designs, under the rubrics of "naturalistic" or "ethnographic". Pole and Morrison (2003:3), for instance, define an ethnographic research design with reference to the following characteristics:

- A focus on a discrete event or setting
- A concern with the full range of social behaviour in that event or setting

- The use of a range of research methods which may combine qualitative and quantitative ones, but which aim at insider understandings
- An emphasis on data and analysis which moves from detailed description to the identification of concepts and theories grounded in the data collected
- An emphasis on rigorous research where the complexities of the event are more important than generalizations.

Also Miles and Huberman (1994) subscribe to a more flexible version of research. Their ethnographically oriented research lends itself to educational research in that it acknowledges the value of empirically grounded existing models and theories, yet remains open to critical insights into educational processes and practices. Brown (2004:484-491) claims that research is neither entirely quantitative, nor entirely quantitative, but comprises a number of dimensions, each stretching between a quantitative and a qualitative extreme, for example inductive *vs.* deductive, emic (insider) *vs.* etic (outsider) perspective, longitudinal *vs.* cross-sectional, experimental *vs.* non-experimental data-collection methods; statistical *vs.* interpretive data-analysis; intrusive *vs.* non-intrusive data-collection methods. Table 1.2 gives a preview of how flexibility is accommodated in the present research design:

Table 1.2 Flexibility in the chosen research design

Quantitative dimension		**Qualitative dimension**	
etic	Classroom observation as a researcher	**emic**	Participating in classroom activities as a lecturer
cross-sectional	Post-intervention opinion survey	**longitudinal**	Pretest-posttest measurement
experimental	Comparison of different programme groups with pre- and post-intervention assessment	**non-experimental**	Discourse analysis, interviews, member-checking, end of programme survey
statistical	Measurement of inter rater reliability; comparison of pre- and posttest results	**interpretive**	Interviews with lecturers, class observation, journaling
non-intrusive	Discourse analysis (scholarly articles)	**intrusive**	Interviews, classroom observation, pre- and posttest, opinion survey

Steps 5 and 6 of the CAM, *viz.* **data collection and analysis**, follow logically from the quasi-experimental design chosen for the evaluation. The main question to be answered is whether the assumptions of the design have been met. The primary instruments of data-collection and analysis that will be used are expounded in Table 1.3:

Table 1.3 Data-collection and data-analysis instruments

Data collection	Data analysis
Compilation of a representative corpus of writing prompts from study guides volunteered by lecturers in the humanities	Frequency counts using the concordancing software program, Wordsmith Tools
Interviews with subject-field lecturers	Informal discourse analysis
Expert reviews of researcher's understanding of subject-field conventions, and feedback generated during a presentation on interim findings	Informal discourse analysis
Compilation and analysis of a corpus of expert texts (published scholarly articles).	Recursive use of qualitative text-tagging using the UVM Corpus Tool, and frequency counts using Wordsmith Tools
Pre- and posttest essays	Criterion-referenced measurement of writing abilities by two independent raters, using a research-based analytic scoring matrix to assess in-class essays Genre analysis of pre- and posttest essays, using a set of tags derived from main functional categories in Systemic Functional Linguistics together with the concordancing function of Wordsmith Tools
Measurement of students' improvement on the pre-and posttests of the two interventions: subject-specific and generic	Descriptive statistics: frequencies and percentages Wilcoxon signed-rank test
Opinion survey questionnaire based on pedagogical construct	Descriptive statistics: frequencies and percentages Wilcoxon signed-rank test
Measurement of the difference between the two interventions	Mann-Whitney U-test

Lynch (1996:9) cautions the evaluator to be extremely sensitive to audience and goals when producing **a final evaluation report** (**step 7**). The social and political climate of the context inventory needs to be considered carefully at this stage as well.

1.6.3 Ethical considerations

Observing Brown (2004:497-498) and Strydom (2002:68-73), appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the research process is fair, and that harm to the participants is minimized. These measures include informed consent by contributors of study guides, informed consent by the head of the academic department that was selected for the subject-specific intervention and the staff members who took part in an expert review, informed consent by participating students to use their essays and

questionnaire responses for research purposes, and ethical clearance by the Ethics and Research Proposal Committee of the Faculty of Humanities (refer to Appendices A–D on CD).

1.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has provided background to and a rationale for conducting research on the effectiveness of genre-based approaches – both narrow-angled and wide-angled – to teaching academic writing to students of the humanities. A research design was proposed on the basis of the research questions formulated for the thesis, which, in turn, were derived from a real-world problem.

The most important benefit of a genre approach that has been highlighted in this initial exposition is its functional drawing together of language, content and the context of discourse production and interpretation in order to provide ways for responding to recurring communicative situations.

It has been suggested that genre approaches do not constitute a novel or self-sufficient paradigm or method in language teaching. These approaches are hybrid by nature, making use of a range of principles and techniques that support a situated, collaborative and purpose-driven pedagogy. Genre approaches provide an overarching context through the notion of genre, for the development of a "mixed syllabus". This kind of syllabus is not based on a rigid methodology, but rather on a set of general teaching principles and a foundational understanding of both the source and the target domains in order to assist students to master the genres that are valued by the discourse community/communities into which they are being initiated.

Against this backdrop it is justified to draw from a rich repository of perspectives on research and pedagogical practices, the majority of which are broadly framed within sociocultural theories of language and learning. The perspective is aligned to a critical awareness of writer identities and disciplinary communities, the role of language in constructing those identities, and writing as a socially and culturally embedded practice (Jones 2004:255).

1.8 Chapter preview

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical foundations of genre approaches, with reference to linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching, writing pedagogy, and theories of learning. In chapter 3 the three schools of genre-based language teaching are explored in terms of theory, pedagogy and other salient dimensions. Chapter 4 expounds the pedagogical framework proposed for the intervention, while chapter 5 describes the results of a survey of writing assignments conducted in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. It comprises the first part of the contextual research for the teaching intervention. Chapter 6 comprises the second part, *viz.* a description of an in-depth study of the epistemology and the writing conventions of the academic discourse community on which the subject-specific intervention is focused. The 7th chapter reports on the evaluation of the subject-specific intervention, while chapter 8 does the same with regard to the cross-disciplinary intervention. In chapter 9 the difference between the two interventions is examined, and chapter 10 concludes the thesis by evaluating the extent to which the research questions have been answered.

Chapter 2: Theoretical underpinnings of genre approaches

2.1 Introduction

Designing language curricula is doing applied linguistic work. However, applied linguistics is not merely the practical application of linguistic theory. Quoting Corder (1972:5), Weideman (2007c) contends that to be a good applied linguist one must, in addition to theoretical knowledge, possess "both imagination and a sharp critical faculty". Furthermore, theoretical input should not be of a prescriptive nature. Now, more than 30 years after Corder's groundbreaking statement, applied linguists agree that the discipline has progressed from "prescription" to "understanding" (Allwright 2006:11).

According to Weideman (2008) the relationship between theory and application in applied linguistics is accounted for by a four-step process, of which the steps may be recursive. According to him, the process of designing an applied linguistic artifact involves: (1) an identification of the language problem; (2) bringing together the designer's technical imagination and theoretical knowledge that potentially has a bearing on the problem; (3) an initial formulation of an imaginative solution to the problem; and (4) a theoretical justification for the solution designed.

The language problem at hand (step 1), is that additional language undergraduate university students experience difficulty in acquiring the essayist literacy of the academy that should afford them access to the discourse communities of which they aspire to become members. For completing step 2, integrated theoretical knowledge is necessary about what language is and how students learn to write academically. Explicating relevant theoretical knowledge will also assist the researcher to justify the designed solution at a later stage. Implicit in the design phase, is the evaluation thereof, e.g. through piloting. Figure 2.1 is an interpretation of Weideman's model of the design process:

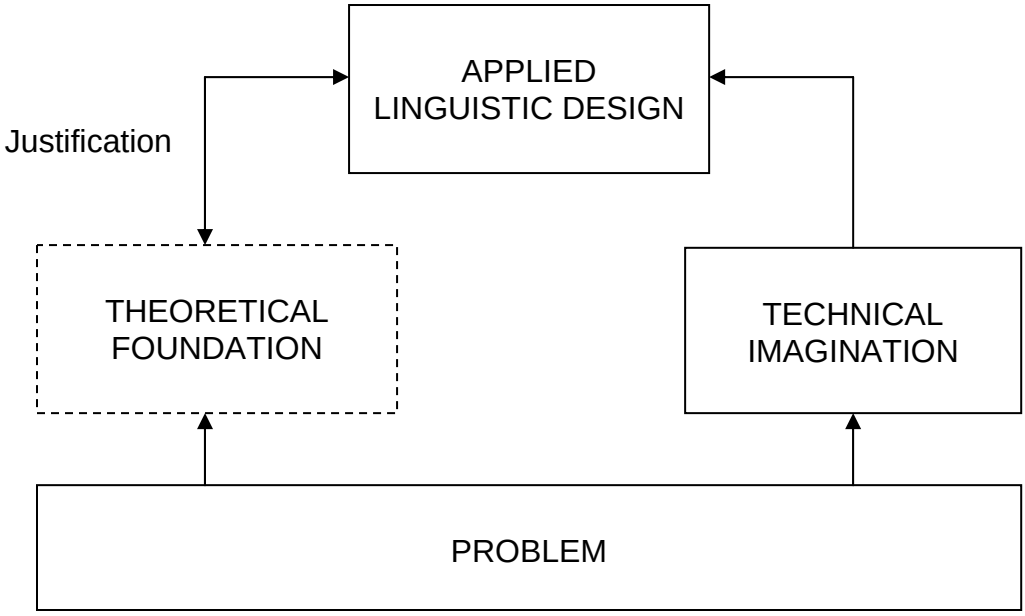


Figure 2.1 The design process in applied linguistics, based on Weideman (2008)

This chapter outlines relevant theories and theoretical constructs from linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching, writing pedagogy and learning theory that underpin and justify genre-based approaches.

2.2 Genre in rhetoric and linguistics

The concept of genre has featured in a number of scholarly fields, such as folklore, literary studies, rhetoric and linguistics. Initially, the main emphasis in genre studies – among folklorists, early rhetoricians and early literary theorists – was classification of texts. More recently literary theorists have started seeing genre more as a codification of discursive properties, and as having a clarificatory rather than classificatory function (Swales 1990:34-35). Since the 1980s, probably under influence of postmodernism, rhetoricians started becoming overtly anti-taxonomist. Their emphasis shifted to genres as vehicles for accomplishing social action. Interestingly, linguists as such have not devoted much attention to the notion of genre. Reasons might have been the literary connotation of the term, the traditional focus of linguistics on aspects of language below the level of the text, and thus a focus on register instead of genre (compare Swales 1990:38-42). However, for the purpose of this thesis it is necessary to explore the

rhetorical as well as the linguistic theories that might explain and justify the notion of genre.

2.2.1 Rhetoric

Early modern rhetoricians, such as Kinneavy (1971), constructed a closed system of categories based on function, such as expressive, persuasive, literary, and referential. Later rhetorical scholars, such as Jamieson (1975), followed a diachronic approach, studying the development of discourse over a period of time, and suggested, by way of comparing rhetorical similarities and differences, a potential method of establishing the genre-membership of a particular text (Swales 1990:43). Since the 1980s, probably under influence of postmodernism, rhetoricians have become overtly anti-taxonomist. Miller, one of the main proponents, unequivocally states that "the number of genres in any society is indeterminate and depends upon the complexity and diversity of such a society" (1984:163). She further argues that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centred not on the substance or form of discourse, but on the action it is used to accomplish" (1984:151). In the third place she emphasizes the intricate relationship between genres and the wider social context when observing:

> What we learn when we learn a genre is not just a pattern of forms or even a method of achieving our own ends. We learn, more importantly, what ends we may have […] (Miller 1984:165)

Out of the Rhetoric school, the New Rhetoric genre movement was born, with an overt focus on genre as a dynamic force.

In contrastive rhetoric, which originated with Kaplan's (1966) article on cultural thought patterns in intercultural education, genre assumes a prominent position. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) provide extensive evidence that contrastive rhetoric has originated from the study of literacy as language socialization, as well as the social construction theory and disciplinary studies of textual genre (compare Hinkel 2002:6-7). Work that has been done on contrastive rhetoric in academic genres includes Scarcella's (1984) review of discourse moves in introductions to essays, and Grabe and Kaplan (1987), Kaplan (1988) and Reid's (1993) investigation of textual divergences in various types of rhetorical modes in writing. These investigations have shed light on how findings in contrastive rhetoric can inform the teaching of L2 writing. Kaplan (1988), for example,

indicated that L2 students enrolled in US universities are expected to produce academic texts that are congruent with Anglo-American theoretical paradigms, while they bring to the academy the discourse paradigms that reflect their L1 conventions of writing in English. The importance of contrastive rhetoric in the development of genre theory is emphasised in Grabe and Kaplan's (1996) comprehensive volume on the theory of writing. Unfortunately no unified theoretical model of contrastive rhetoric has to date been developed, and thus divergent research methodologies in empirical studies of text and discourse in various rhetorical traditions have yielded results that are not always easy to compare.

2.2.2 Ethnography and sociolinguistics

The notion of genre has featured prominently in the work of ethnographers. The ethnographer Saville-Troike (1982:34) took genre to refer to a "type of communicative event," and mentions jokes, stories, lectures, greetings and conversations as examples. To her, it would seem, a category only qualifies to be a genre if a particular language has an appropriate metalinguistic label or lexical item to label such a category. In ethnography the units used for segmenting, ordering and describing data should be those of the group, and not a priori categories of the investigator. A question that arises is what to do if no label exists for a particular communicative event.

In sociolinguistics, register became a pivotal concept in the analysis of language varieties; understandably so because of the emphasis on the users of language, rather than the ways members of a community perceive, categorize and use texts (in other words the uses of language). The corpus linguistic work of the sociolinguist Douglas Biber (1988; 1989) seemed promising, in that he set out to develop a linguistic typology of text types of English, based on sets of syntactic and lexical features that co-occur frequently in texts. Whereas most analyses begin with a situational or functional distinction and identify linguistic features associated with that distinction as a second step, Biber claims to have followed the opposite approach: "[Q]uantitative techniques are used to identify the groups of features that actually co-occur in texts, and afterwards these groupings are interpreted in functional terms" (Biber 1988:13). However, the categories that were separated do not satisfy Swales' criterion, in that "the community's

category-labels" were not considered, and the resulting "clusters" do not coincide with genre categories recognized by the discourse communities in question.

2.2.3 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Overview

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is undoubtedly the branch of linguistics that had the most pervasive influence on genre theory and genre pedagogy. It goes back to scholars like Firth and Malinowski, but it is Michael Halliday (1978; 1985) who is generally regarded to be the father of SFL. Systemic Functional Linguistics is functional in that it holds the view that language cannot be understood separate from the social contexts in which it is used, and that language is inherently a social phenomenon. It is systemic in its emphasis on language as a system of choice. Language is viewed as a variety of lexical and syntactic choices that can be exercised in order to realize a particular meaning.

The epistemological basis of SFL is based on an experiential model: Young children become aware that the language surrounding them changes according to different situations. Later on, they realize that spoken language is subtly different from written language, and even that there are subsets within the larger spoken and written varieties (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop 2000:2). Adults develop a fine-tuned ability to use appropriate language at different times and for different purposes. This subconscious realization and concomitant ability represent a functional view of language and language use. Linguists merely go a step further, and systematically describe the changes that occur in different situations, as well as the reasons for these changes.

The maximal unit of analysis used by Systemic Functional Linguists is the text. A text is a piece of language in use, and always occurs in two contexts, one within the other. **Context of culture** includes the purposes, attitudes, values and shared experiences of people living in a particular culture. It also includes culture-specific expectations, which are "ways of getting things done" (Paltridge 2002b:45). In academia an example is the different formats used by academics or professionals in different disciplines to report on progress, argue a case and propose changes to existing structures or methods. Context of culture determines the "genre" to which a text belongs. The main difference between

Systemic Functional and Ethnographic approaches seems to be that the former derive all culturally relevant information mostly from the text itself, whereas the latter expresses the need to go beyond the text into ethnographic examinations of the social and cultural context in which the genre occurs to explore "insiders' views" on the genre (Paltridge 2001:46). Today, prominent genre scholars combine the two approaches, usually during the contextual analysis phase of genre research (compare Bhatia 1993; 2002). **Context of situation**, on the other hand, represents situation-specific variables that combine to produce the particular "register" of a text (Paltridge 2001:46; Butt *et al.* 2000:3). This term covers the extralinguistic variables that determine the linguistic structure of a text, such as the words and grammatical patterns that speakers and writers use to construct texts of different varieties.

Paltridge (2001:46) summarizes the relationship between context of culture, context of situation, genre and register as follows:

> The overall generic structure of the text is, in most systemic genre analysts' view, a product of the genre and, in turn the context of culture – that is, part of a culturally evolved way of doing things – whereas language features are a result of the particular context of situation, or register.

The situational differences between texts are accounted for by three parameters of the context of situation, *viz.* the field, tenor and mode of discourse. Field has to do with the topic, or content of the text, tenor refers to the relationship between the speaker and hearer (or reader and writer), and mode indicates the channel of communication as well as the ways in which the text hangs together. Differences in only one of these parameters are able to create substantially different texts. Compare, for instance, a summary of a report made to be read by the technical division-head of a company, prospective financiers, and non-technical officials of a local town council. In this case, there is only a difference in tenor.

In Hallidayan SFL each of the components of the situation is regarded as a condition determining the selection of options in a corresponding component of the semantics (compare Halliday 1978:143). In more general terms, it could be asserted that each of the three contextual variables reflect one of the three main functions of language:

- **Field** is related to the **ideational** metafunction, which uses language to represent experience – what is happening, what will happen, and what has happened. Field influences such language features as vocabulary choice and verb selection.
- **Tenor** is related to the **interpersonal** metafunction, which uses language to encode interaction. Tenor influences such aspects as expressions of probability, obligation, necessity, attitude and clause type (such as declarative, interrogative or imperative);
- **Mode** is related to the **textual** metafunction, which uses language to organize our experiential, logical and interpersonal meanings into a coherent whole. Mode influences, for example, patterns of cohesion and aspects of language that are characteristic of written or spoken text.

Three notions in SFL that are pivotal in this study are text type, register and genre. However, these notions cannot be directly paired with the parameters of the context of situation, or the three metafunctions, but are related to them in complex ways.

Particularly the concept of **genre**, and the linguistically longer established concept of **register** have been extensively discussed by systemic linguists (Swales 1990:40). In Halliday's seminal work *Language as a social semiotic* (1978) register is given precedence over genre (1978:110). At this stage Halliday regarded genre to be "an aspect of what we are calling the 'mode'" (Halliday 1978:145). However, in his early work, Halliday did not assign a pivotal role to genre. His linguistic analysis centres upon register variation, which is not a basis for classifying texts into formal categories, but "a tool for analyzing texts in their infinite variety and subtle variations" (Cope & Kalantzis 1993:14).

Jim Martin should be credited as the first analyst who became interested in disentangling genre from register. Early in the 1980s Martin and his colleagues revised traditional Hallidayan approaches to modelling social context (field, mode and tenor) by bringing genre into the centre of SFL (Martin 1985). Martin explains the relationship between genre, register and language as follows:

> Genres are how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them. They range from literary to far from literary forms: poems, narratives, expositions, lectures, seminars, recipes, manuals, appointment making, service encounters, news broadcasts

> and so on. The term genre is used here to embrace each of the linguistically realized activity types which comprise so much of our culture (Martin 1985:250).

He summarises the relationship between genre and register as follows:

> Genres are realized through registers, and registers in turn are realised through language (Martin 1985:250).

Martin (1985:250-251) supplies two kinds of reasons for establishing genre as a system underlying register. In the first place genres constrain the ways in which register variables of field, tenor and mode can be combined in a particular society. Secondly, genres comprise a system for accomplishing social purposes by verbal means.

Not all genre scholars have agreed with Martin. Couture (1986:86) regards register and genre as concepts operating at the same level. According to Couture (1986:86) registers impose constraints at the linguistic levels of vocabulary and syntax, whereas genre constraints operate at the level of discourse structure.

Today, Martin's views are generally accepted in SFL. Figure 2.2 (adapted from Butt *et al.* 2000) represents current mainstream thinking about register and genre:

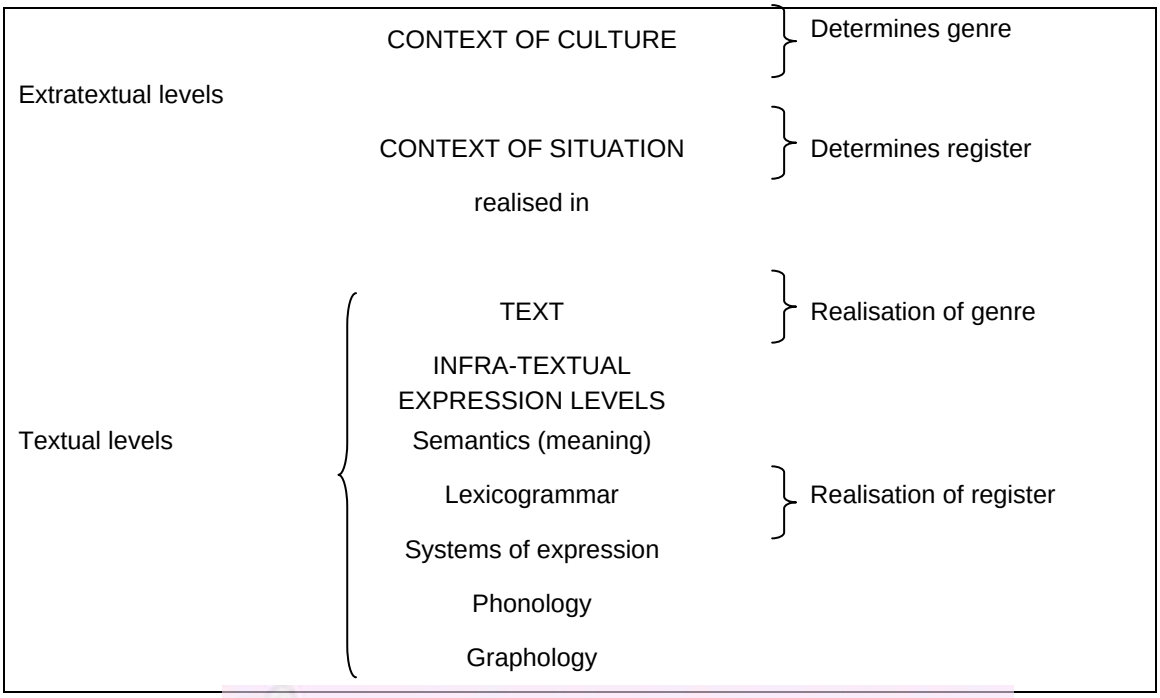


Figure 2.2 Levels of context, language and function in Systemic Functional Grammar

SFL has attempted to find the middle ground between prescriptive grammar rules and no rules at all. This middle way is a description of language in terms of pattern and function in its context of use.

First, SFL describes language in terms of a rank scale (compare Halliday 1994) or rank hierarchy, comprising the clause complex, the clause, the group or phrase, the word, and the morpheme. Second, SFL highlights the distinction between ideational or experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings, and claims that every clause reflects all three by representing experience, interacting with someone, and organising the message appropriately.

- **Experience** is packaged as participant, process and circumstance, each with a hierarchy of subordinate categories;
- **Interaction** is packaged as mood and appraisal: the kind of commodity being exchanged, such as giving or demanding information, and the way speakers take a position in their messages;
- **Textual meaning** is packaged as cohesion, theme and rheme, and text structure.

Implications for language teaching

The majority of language teachers want their students to be both accurate and fluent users of English, but they are faced with an educational paradox: If they are taught only the rules of traditional grammar, they may be unaware of style and register, and would not be acquainted with the principle of authenticity. On the other hand, if teachers expect learners to use English without knowledge of grammatical patterns, they may not know which choices they could or should make in various contexts. To resolve this paradox, SFL suggests that teachers and learners think about grammar in terms of pattern and function, and work with whole texts in context. SFL provides language teachers with a detailed schema of how language works. The schema is layered, and stretches from the cultural and immediate social situation to the actual language being used in whole texts to the micro levels of language structure, such as words and their phonological realisation. It also describes the systematic links between text and context. Butt *et al.* (2000:18) summarise the value of SFL for teachers and learners as follows:

> The more teachers know about the potential of each layer, the more they can draw students' attention to salient language features and patterns. The more students know about the potential of each layer, the more conscious, strategic and effective their language choices will be.

The grammar of experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings that is explicitly taught, reflects the following beliefs:

- The ability to control **experiential grammar** assists students to manage, among other things, the language of specialised academic disciplines (Butt *et al.* 2000:80);
- The ability to control the **interpersonal grammar** of interaction, assists students to assess the relative power of the participants, and the level of personal involvement between the participants; and controlling the interpersonal grammar of appraisal, will provide them with tools to explicitly and systematically position themselves in relation to their audiences and their subject matter (compare Martin & Rose 2003, Coffin & Hewings 2004; Martin & White 2005);
- The ability to control **textual grammar** raises students' consciousness about where they are going in the text; and helps them to organise a text into a cohesive and coherent whole (Halliday 1994, chapters 8 and 9) – that is, to mark and develop themes and subthemes; and to signpost the structure of different genres.

Within the framework of SFL an elaborate methodology for language teaching has been developed by the so-called Sydney School of genre. This methodology, known as the Teaching and Learning Cycle, addresses the paradox of accuracy versus fluency directly by designing cycles of teaching and learning around the use of whole texts in context. These cycles take students through a range of learning activities, *viz.* contextual exploration of texts, explicit instruction, guided practice and joint construction, and independent application of the acquired knowledge (compare Rothery 1996:86-123).

2.2.4 Cognitive Linguistics

Overview

Cognitive Linguistics is an approach to language that is based on the dynamic relationship between our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it. Central to this approach is that language is not merely used to communicate. One of its primary functions is for people to make sense of the world around them by means of experience-based cognitive devices such as metaphor,

metonymy, propositional models and schematic representations (compare Lakoff 1987:68-69).

Schema theory

A schematic representation or "schema" is a hypothetical mental structure for concepts stored in memory. Schemas are perceived to be frameworks created through experience with people, objects and events in the world, which on their part impose structure on new experiences.

Hyland (2004:56) explains the relevance of schema theory for genre theory as follows: Growing familiarity with a genre develops knowledge that is partly cognitive and partly social, and is shared with other text users. Every time a member of a particular discourse community is confronted with an exemplar of a genre that is represented by an existing cognitive schema, this schema serves as an expectation frame. However, the exemplar may also differ from the template in certain ways, because the exemplar is not an exact copy but a purposeful innovation in order to realize a specific communicative function.

Swales (1990) distinguishes between **content-based** and **text-based** schemata. Content-based or encyclopaedic schemata embody assumed knowledge of the topic or field. If a reader of an academic text lacks the necessary schema he/she will have difficulty in interpreting the text. Text-based schemata, on the other hand, comprise prior knowledge of text genres. Hyland (2004) distinguishes five different types of knowledge that constitute schemata: knowledge of the **communicative purposes** that a genre is commonly used to achieve; knowledge of the **reader roles** or **subject positions** that are available; knowledge of appropriate **text conventions** (to construct and interpret texts); knowledge of **content and register**; and knowledge of the **contexts** in which a genre is regularly found. These types of knowledge will be explored briefly in the next few paragraphs.

According to mainstream genre theory genres are defined by their outcome or **purpose**, such as a *letter of complaint*, a *research report*, a *project proposal*. Applied to academia, lecturers help learners to develop sociocultural schemata by extending their

knowledge to the discourse communities within which specific genres serve particular purposes (compare Hyland 2003:25; 2004:57). However, Bruce (2008:20-21) suggests that communicative purpose is not necessarily the primary structuring principle in texts. He is of the opinion that in academic writing ("extended monologic texts") particular types of knowledge and their related patterns of organization may influence overall structuring. According to him (Bruce 2008:21)

> [i]n extended monologic texts tenor and mode may provide relatively stable background influences, with the content-internal categorization systems of field (the ideational content of the text) playing a more foregrounded, structuring role, which has an influence on the ways in which such knowledge is represented.

Reader and writer roles are determined by the social purpose of a genre. Schema knowledge includes knowledge of interpersonal relations, the roles of readers and writers, and how these influence texts. An introductory textbook, for instance, is aimed at informing a novice audience. Therefore, the author adopts the role of the "expert knower" who explains the material.

Whereas the communicative purpose and writer-reader roles are often implicitly stated, **textual features** are those characteristics by which most people define genres. Members of a discourse community usually know how far they can bend the rules before a text becomes unrecognizable as an example of the target genre. In addition to knowledge of discourse structure, an understanding of grammatical options and the limits on their constraints is central to genre knowledge and writing instruction (Hyland 2004:64).

Knowledge of the **content** that is appropriate for a particular genre is important in making genre knowledge specific to the requirements of a particular situation and writing task. One of the biggest challenges that content presents to students is that their previous learning experiences may not have prepared them for the kinds of types and assignments they encounter in the classroom. Moreover, cultures attribute different meanings to events and human relationships and these cultural schemata influence what students write and how they write about them. **Register choices** tie in with content, in that they enable text writers to discuss activities and relate them to each other by linking participants with processes and with circumstances in recognizable ways, taking notice of the mode of transfer (e.g. spoken or written language).

According to schema theory, on each occasion of writing in a genre, the **context** slot is filled by analyzing and interpreting the purposes and uses of the completed text on the basis of a projection of the beliefs and understandings of potential readers. This ability develops with the user's knowledge of the community of readers who will make use of the text, the relationship of the text to other similar texts and the way the text is used in communicative activities (compare Fairclough 1992:117). The notion of context also incorporates ideas from New Literacy studies, *viz.* that writing and reading only make sense within wider social and cultural practices. In addition, it includes how institutions, societies, and cultures themselves influence writing (compare Hyland 2003:26).

Implications for language pedagogy

Since the early to mid 1980s schema theory has had a profound influence on reading instruction (compare Hudson 1982; Reutzel 1985; Carrell & Floyd 1989; Williams 1987), with particular emphasis on extending learners' content schemata by accommodating their cultural schemata and building on their prior knowledge. Top-down processing has been promoted through pre-reading activities such as questioning, semantic mapping and previewing.

Genre pedagogy recognizes the value of tapping into learners' existing schemata, as well as using joint exploration of the text at hand to "build" the field before students are required to compose their own texts jointly or independently.

2.2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis

Overview

The particular interest of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth abbreviated as CDA) is the relation between language and power (Wodak 2001:2). CDA specialists are particularly interested in looking critically at how language (as it is used in units larger than words and sentences) reflects the power that is located in social structures (social institutions, social groups, etc.). However, CDA is also interested in how language creates (constructs) power in society.

Critical discourse analysts endeavour to make explicit power relationships that are frequently hidden, and thereby to derive results that can be used to solve practical

problems and play an advocatory role for groups who suffer from social discrimination (Meyer 2001:15). Furthermore, CDA scholars aim to support the victims of such oppression and encourage them to resist and transform their lives.

For its analysis of texts CDA is indebted to SFL, but also draws on other paradigms, such as classical rhetoric, text linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics and conversation analysis.

In the domain of language teaching, a CDA perspective might explore the connections between genres, language learning, language use, and the social and political contexts in which these occur. Of particular importance is how these issues are reflected in particular texts, situational contexts and social contexts of production. The following diagram from Fairclough (1992) provides a framework for describing and analyzing socio-discursive practices:

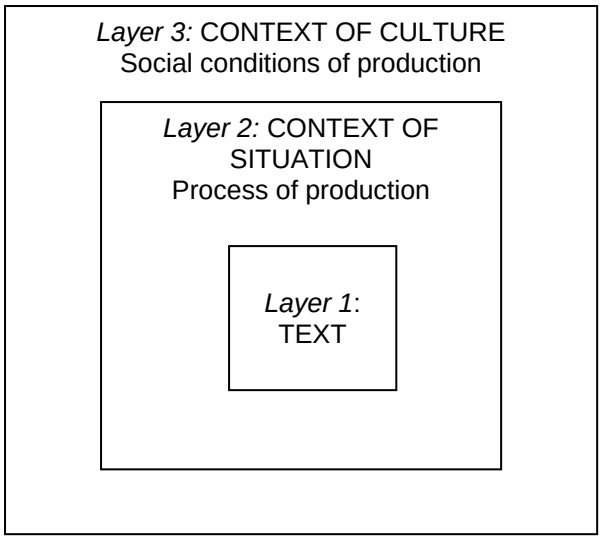


Figure 2.3 A framework for text-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1992)

Fairclough is not explicit on which layer accounts for the notion of genre. It may be the third or outer layer, because it is made up of "orders of discourse" (=configurations of discourse practices, which are constitutive of different social domains) to which a range of discourse practices belong. To the institutional order of discourse of higher education, for instance, belongs a range of discourse practices, including *seminars*, *lectures*, and *essayist writing* (Lillis 2001:36).

From a different perspective, however, the middle layer accounts for genres because they are "among the very processes by which dominant ideologies are reproduced, transmitted and potentially changed" (Threadgold (1989:107). Therefore, "performing" a genre is never just the application of a linguistic model but always the performance of a politically and historically significant process. This positioning appears to concur with Martin's characterization of genres as "linguistically realized activity types" (Martin 1985:250), and Swales's categorization of a genre as a "class of communicative events" (Swales 1990:58). Hyland (2000) uses the same argument to support discipline-specific teaching of writing:

> In other words, discourse is socially constitutive rather than simply socially shaped; writing is not just another aspect of what goes on in the disciplines, it is seen as *producing* them (Hyland 2000:3).

In other words disciplines are defined by their writing, and it is how they write rather than what they write that differentiates between them. Among these are different appeals to background knowledge, different vocabularies, different means of establishing truth, and different ways of engaging with readers (Hyland 2000:3). Hyland (2000:8) adds that the persuasiveness of academic discourse does not depend upon the demonstration of absolute fact, empirical evidence or impeccable logic; it is the result of effective rhetorical practices, accepted by community members. He regards each discipline as an "academic tribe" with its particular norms, nomenclature, bodies of knowledge, sets of conventions and modes of inquiry, constituting a separate culture (Hyland 2000:8).

Implications for language pedagogy

CDA makes the genre pedagogue aware of the dangers of explicit genre teaching, including activities such as genre templates and the uncritical use of model texts. The foundational principles of CDA underscore the importance of comparison within (and across) disciplines, as well as critical reflection on conventionalized genre features at both the level of discourse organization and the use of grammar and style. On the other hand, CDA also emphasizes the notions of social and cultural capital, which the language pedagogue may use as a motivation for providing students with the tools

necessary for mastering the genres of power (the genres which afford access to scholarly debate and professional advancement).

2.2.6 Multimodal Discourse

Overview

In recent years a shift of focus has taken place in linguistic enquiry, where language is no longer theorized as an isolated phenomenon (compare, for instance, Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996; 2001; Kress 2003). The analysis and interpretation of language use is contextualized in conjunction with other semiotic resources which are simultaneously used for the construction of meaning. For example, in addition to linguistic choices and their typographical instantiation, multimodal analysis takes into account the functions and meaning of the visual images, together with the meaning arising from the integrated use of the two semiotic resources. For its theoretical underpinnings, multimodal discourse analysis is indebted to CDA, graphic design, SFL, and Rhetorical Structure Theory (compare Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996; Kress 2003).

Multimodal discourse analysis was particularly influenced by the socio-semiotic work of Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress, who drew on CDA, SFL and graphic design (Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996). A number of studies have followed their book *The grammar of visual design*, one of which is a volume including analyses of artifacts/products from various modes of expression, using systemic functional theory as a basis, *viz.* O'Halloran (2004).

Rhetorical Structure Theory is in essence the brainchild of John Bateman (compare Bateman, Delin & Henschel 2002), who started a detailed consideration of multimodal document analysis and automatic generation in a project at the Institute for Integrated Publication and Information Systems in Darmstadt in the mid nineties. Their work involves the application and extension of notions of rhetorical structure to multimodal documents, making extensive use of computer programming. From this school the GeM (Genre and Multimodality) project (starting in 1999) originated. Their main focus is building "an empirically motivated construct of the linguistic notion of genre, extended to include realizations across modes" (Bateman *et al.* 2002). An important result of the GeM project has been to establish a basis for an extensively annotated multilayer corpus

of multimodal documents. However, although the focus seems to be genre, the model has only oblique value for applied linguists working in the field of language teaching, as it focuses mainly on document design (structure, layout and navigation in the case of web documents), and not on language.

The interface between genre theory and multimodal discourse analysis lies in the fact that different genres and different modes have different potentials and limitations for meaning. Novels encourage the reader to engage in the semiotic work of the imagination, filling the relatively empty words with the reader's meaning. Electronic texts such as web pages, on the other hand, are more often like images in their organization. They invite the reader to perform a different semiotic activity, offering different entry points and different reading paths, providing the reader the opportunity to design the order of the text for himself (Hyland 2007:52). Like verbal communication, other modes of representation vary with language, culture and genre, and are always imbued with ideology. For instance, visual elements in the popular press appear to function as evidence, but they are actually aimed at attracting the reader's attention and to explain or support the views of the newspaper or magazine, rather than to prove.

Implications for language teaching

An application of multimodality in the field of language teaching is the Multiliteracies approach of the New London group (New London Group 2000). Multiliteracies is a pedagogical approach that aims to account for the cultural and linguistic diversity of neo-capitalist societies as well as the variety of text forms associated with the information era. The notion of multiliteracies may also be extended to include disciplinary discourses, and the challenges facing students in higher education to master different genres, as well as variation in the same genre across disciplines. The multiliteracies approach in language teaching is addressed in more detail in section 2.4.2 of this chapter.

2.2.7 Summarizing thoughts

The notion of genre brings with it a long and fragmented history, and it is impossible to do justice to this history in the scope of a few paragraphs. However, the picture that

emerges from this overview is that very few scholars across disciplines still adhere to a view of genre focused on classifying the (mostly) written products of particular cultures in society. The generally shared view seems to be that genres are lingual entities of form and function that have developed over the course of time in particular cultural settings, and that their conventionalization or partial conventionalization is functionally motivated: They fulfil an important purpose for the community that sustains them, and if they vary or change, there are usually reasons for the mutation.

The linguistic theory that provides the most comprehensive account of genre is Systemic Functional Grammar. However, the application of SFL in genre-based pedagogy generally does not extend much further than explaining the link between social purpose and discourse structure, and relating the linguistic choices writers make to the notions of field, tenor and mode. The application of genre seldom, if ever, includes the full spectrum of functional-grammatical categories from SFL. The model represented as Figure 2.2 above is an attempt at capturing the essence of a systemic functional description of genre, and in this thesis it serves both to explicate the researcher's view of language, and to summarize theoretical knowledge that will help her to create a design for a discipline-specific, genre-based writing course. The essence of the diagram is that it "makes visible" the interface between context of culture and context of situation, and the choices at hand to realize these meanings in language (or any other semiotic or multimodal system). Genre and register are portrayed as cognitive structures, motivated by social purpose and social convention, and textualized by means of the grammar and lexis of semiotic systems. A pedagogy that uses SFL as theoretical input should also include genre and register (or lexicogrammar) as pivotal concepts, and its curriculum designs should emphasize the relationship between social purpose and textualization.

In Cognitive Linguistics the notion of cognitive schemata has been identified as potentially useful for explaining language users' genre knowledge.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a philosophy dealing with the issues of how power and ideology are created and sustained through semiotic structures. It borrows from a variety of other paradigms in and outside of linguistics to support its interpretations.

Genres, in a CDA context, are primarily repositories of institutionalized, subjective social, economic and political norms and expectations, and in cognitive terms these expectations can be described as "ideological knowledge" that helps to structure the interface between context and text.

In sum, genre theories across disciplines seem to be appreciative of the importance of genres for integrating past and present, and a recognition that they are situated within and shaped by discourse communities. Furthermore, there seems to be a growing understanding of the dialectic role of genres in society: their generative role in establishing and furthering rhetorical goals, and their affirmative role in recognizing the beliefs and expressive practices of discourse communities. On the other hand, there is a distrust of rigid classification and simple or premature prescriptivism, as well as a critical perspective that allows the structural and linguistic properties of genres to be challenged at any given time, should these no longer reflect the activities, the values, beliefs and expectations of the discourse community which they serve. However, genre is not a theory in itself. It can at most be regarded as a conceptual vehicle that mediates between culture and society on the one hand and discursive practices that are reflected in semiotic structures, on the other.

2.3 Genre and theories of learning: the Zone of Proximal Development

2.3.1 What is the Zone of Proximal Development?

Genre approaches in language teaching emphasize the role of the learner as an active maker of meaning and the role of the teacher and peers as engaging in dialogue with the learner to create new meaning. An applied linguist who is serious about theoretically justifying the design of a genre-based writing course would therefore be well advised to take note of theories that aim to explain why learning is promoted through learner action and interaction in a social environment.

Social Constructivism (from the domain of psychology) should be a valuable source of theoretical knowledge in this context, since it emphasizes how meanings and understandings grow out of social encounters. The most significant bases of a social constructivist theory were laid down by Vygotsky (1978) in his notion of the Zone of

Proximal Development (ZPD), although other scholars have been credited with interpreting the theory, e.g. Bakhtin (1986) and Lave (1988). In Second Language Acquisition Research, Sociocultural Theory has been used as an umbrella term for the multiple lineages of Vygotsky-inspired research (Lantolf & Thorne 2006:3).

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (proximal means "next") derives from his observation that when learners are tested on tasks they did on their own, they rarely did as well as when they were working in collaboration with an adult. According to Lantolf and Thorne (2007:210) "the ZPD concept begins with Vygotsky's genetic law of cultural development". Vygotsky's well-known formulation is that

> any function in the child's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition … [I]t goes without saying that internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Vygotsky 1978:57).

In relation to psychological theory in the early twentieth century, Vygotsky stated that the challenge in psychology is to

> show how the individual response emerges from the forms of collective life. In contrast to Piaget, we hypothesize that development does not proceed toward socialization, but toward the conversion of social relations into mental functions (Vygotsky 1981:165).

Piaget believed that learning and development are independent of each other, and that learning merely utilizes the achievements of development. For Lantolf and Thorne (2006:266) two issues stand out in Vygotsky's views: that cognitive development results from social and interpersonal activity becoming the foundation for intrapersonal functioning, and that this process involves internalization.

The most frequently referenced definition of the ZPD is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978:86). This implies that using imitation, children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults, than they are able to do on their own. If generalized, the ZPD suggests that learning is optimized in situations where tasks are more difficult than

individuals may be able to handle alone, but not so difficult that they cannot be resolved with some support. The ZPD is therefore not a permanent state, but a stage towards being able to do something on your own.

The ZPD is not only a model of the developmental process, but also a conceptual tool that teachers can use to understand aspects of learners' emerging capacities that are in the process of being developed. When used proactively, teachers using the ZPD as a diagnostic tool can create conditions that may give rise to specific forms of development in the future.

2.3.2 Interpretations of the ZPD

Its broad adoption has caused the proliferation of heterogeneous interpretations of the ZPD. Lave and Wenger (1991:48-49) indicate that various meanings have through the years been assigned to the ZPD. They categorize these interpretations into three groups:

The scaffolding interpretation

> The distance between problem-solving abilities exhibited by a learner working alone and that learner's problem-solving abilities when assisted by or collaborating with more experienced people (Lave & Wenger 1991:48).

The scaffolding approach has inspired pedagogical approaches that explicitly provide support for the initial performance of tasks to be performed without assistance later.

The cultural interpretation

> The distance between the cultural knowledge provided by the sociohistorical context – usually made accessible through instruction – and the everyday experience of individuals (Lave & Wenger 1991:48).

This interpretation is based on Vygotsky's distinction between scientific and everyday concepts, and on his argument that a mature concept is achieved when the scientific and everyday versions have merged. In other words internalization is viewed as individualistic acquisition of the cultural given.

The collectivist/societal interpretation

> The distance between the everyday actions of individuals and the historically new form of the societal activity that can be collectively generated as a solution to the double bind potentially embedded in [...] everyday actions (Lave & Wenger 1991:49).

According to this view, which reflects contemporary thinking in the tradition of Soviet psychology, the study of learning is extended beyond the pedagogical context, and places emphasis on connecting issues of "sociocultural transformation with the changing relations between newcomers and old-timers in the context of a changing shared practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991:49).

This exposition may be used to justify subtle differences between pedagogical approaches to genre, *viz.* the approach of the Australian genre school, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the approach of the New Rhetoric Movement. The approach of the former two schools may be termed the scaffolding approach, and the latter may be termed a cultural approach in terms of the above notions.

I turn below to a more detailed exposition of the first two of these interpretations.

2.3.2.1 The scaffolding interpretation

The scaffolding interpretation derives from teachers' experience with novice or inexperienced writers in the classroom situation at various levels (compare Christie 1985), such as in the context of the Systemic Functional genre school in Australia, which influenced genre-based language teaching in the entire school system. The scaffolding interpretation has also been embraced by ESP, although the term "scaffolding" does not feature overtly in the writings of proponents of this school. This interpretation has taken the expression *situated learning* to refer to two dimensions of a learning situation: teacher or lecturer assistance and collaboration among students.

Johns (2002b:245) reiterates that lecturers in content courses often expect that their students will be able to write classroom genres such as research papers without much assistance. However, she adds, "[b]y their very nature, students are novices and apprentices, and we, as teachers, have an obligation to initiate them". Johns (2002b) points to Gallimore and Tharp (1990), who have categorized methods for assisted

performance, or scaffolding, into the following: modeling an activity or process for imitation, contingency management through rewards and punishment, feedback through peer or instructor critique and evaluation, questioning to guide the students toward their goals, cognitive structuring through structures of explanation or structures of cognitive activities, and instructing through giving directives.

The second pillar of situated learning is student collaboration. The assumption is that students process concepts and information more thoroughly when multiple opinions, perspectives or beliefs are accounted for across a group. Hatch, Flashner and Hunt (1986) deal with this view of assisted performance under the heading *The experience model of language learning.* They discuss how, in interaction with more expert language users, learners are able to build and refine knowledge structures for conversational interaction. They argue that as new information is encountered, it is checked against the old, and the knowledge structures become progressively more refined, reorganized and efficient. In the language learning classroom, this learning is guided via learners' interactions with other learners who either explicitly or implicitly provide them with information about preferred discourse structures and relevant linguistic features in their interactions. Research by Ohta (2000) has also shown how language learners are able to reach higher levels of performance by working together and providing assistance to one another than they might have achieved by working on their own.

Lantolf and Thorne (2006:276 ff.) support a different categorization of scaffolding. They refer to Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) who have identified three "mechanisms of effective help" relating to intervention within the ZPD: graduated assistance, assistance contingent on actual need and dialogic process. Graduated assistance implies that no more help should be provided than is necessary, for the assumption is that over-assistance decreases the student's agentive capacity. At the same time a minimum level of guidance must be given so that the student can successfully carry out the action at hand. Assistance contingent on actual need rests on the belief that help should be removed when the person demonstrates the capacity to function independently. Dialogic process entails continuous assessment of the learner's ZPD and subsequent tailoring of help to best facilitate progression from other-regulation to self-regulation. In typical

SLA mode, Aljaafreh and Lantolf operationalized the quantity and quality of ZPD assistance in the format of a "regulatory scale" (Aljaafreh & Lantolf 1994:471). Lantolf and Thorne (2006:281ff.) quote numerous longitudinal studies that show the successes of ZPD-aligned help, particularly in the area of peer assistance. They point to Ohta (2000) who provides evidence of the extent to which second language learners exerted developmental influence on each other's interlanguage systems in observable ways (Lantolf & Thorne (2006:283-287).

On a cautionary note it should be said that the scaffolding interpretation of the ZPD should not be equated with a "skills acquisition" interpretation, *viz.* as

> a process of reduction and simplification such that it can serve to justify extant institutionalized practices and reinforce traditional views of the language classroom as a locus of skill acquisition in the service of standardized education (Kinginger 2002:53).

If this had indeed been the case, the criticism mentioned in the first chapter would be merited, *viz.* that the genre approach to language teaching amounts to mere "transmission pedagogy." In the same way the ZPD should not be analogized to Krashen's input hypothesis ($i + 1$) (Lantolf & Thorne 2006:273). In a sense it could be said that the scaffolding metaphor has tarnished the image of the ZPD. It is too mechanical in that it is built on an image of a framework that holds a passive structure in place, and thus ignores the dialogic character of human action, which is endemic to the genre approach.

2.3.2.2 Cultural interpretations

The second interpretation of the Zone of Proximal Development, the cultural approach, derives from observations of the professional activities of individual adult writers in disciplinary communities (compare Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995). Albeit not consciously, this interpretation has been adopted by the New Rhetoric genre school, of which the target group comprises advanced, mostly tertiary level, first language speakers and novice professionals. According to Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) genre knowledge is best conceptualized as a form of situated cognition derived from and embedded in the communicative activities of daily and professional life. Such knowledge continues to develop as adults participate in the activities of their disciplinary cultures. Rather than being explicitly taught, genre knowledge is

transmitted through enculturation, as apprentices become socialized into the ways of how language is used in particular disciplinary communities.

> Proponents of the cultural and collectivist approaches are opposed to the explicit teaching of genre features, since writing is viewed as a reflection of the individual learner's psychosocial maturation as a result of being exposed to the grammatical, syntactical and lexical features of language through reading, and in the course of classroom talk (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995:154). Therefore teachers should provide opportunities for developing the understanding of new concepts in the most "natural" way. Their view about genre acquisition at university level is that genre knowledge and social knowledge are acquired incrementally as students progress through a period of apprenticeship, normally at the graduate level (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995:13).

From an epistemological point of view, Berkenkotter and Huckin argue that genre knowledge involves both form and content, emphasizing the fact that disciplinary knowledge is part and parcel of genre knowledge (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995:14-17). They quote numerous studies of academic discourse that demonstrate how basic philosophical differences between social science research and humanistic scholarship are revealed in rhetorical and textual features.

Another prominent feature of the sociocognitive view of genre-acquisition is its dialectic nature. As experts draw on genre rules to engage in professional, institutional and organizational activities, they constitute social structures and simultaneously reproduce these structures. However, reproduction does not mean simple replication; it allows for changes and evolution. Thus also the collectivist interpretation of the ZPD (more specifically the notion of situated cognition) applies to the New Rhetoric school.

Berkenkotter & Huckin (1995:24) summarize their concept of genre as "the intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed", which must be flexible and dynamic, capable of modification according to the rhetorical demands of the situation. However, at the same time such scaffolds must be stable enough to capture the recurring aspects of these situations.

2.3.3 Implications for genre-based teaching

Although there are different interpretations of the Zone of Proximal Development, these interpretations do not need to be viewed as mutually exclusive. Both the cultural and the scaffolding approaches imply forms of mediated cognition. Both have as a core focus learning the patterns of communication that are embedded in the activities of social life.

Only in certain cultural contexts learning is more concentrated and less social. When children enter school, they learn situationally appropriate discourse conventions such as show and tell talk, sharing experiences, etc. This knowledge is stored in the format of spatially and temporally organized scripts or schemata, and the knowledge of how to manage in such contexts is characterized as "situated literacy" (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995:151). At more advanced levels they learn discourse conventions that are appropriate to more specialized activities, such as writing a short story or narrative, or giving a simple recount of events (orally or verbally). Even later, they learn to write the so-called "curriculum genres", (also termed "pedagogical genres", "educational genres" or "classroom genres") (compare Christie 1985; 1987; Kress 1989), which become longer, more complex and more abstract, and perhaps culminate in the academic essay. Learning to write a research report or an academic essay in a language which is not a student's first language, and which cannot be related directly to purposes the student wishes to achieve personally, is a quite a daunting task. Because of the institutionalized, didactic character of higher education, mastery of genres is not likely to occur through a process of "legitimate peripheral participation"[1] (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995:152; Lave & Wenger 1991:29-43), like it would typically happen in an apprentice situation where novice professionals are inducted into the practices of their trade.

The above discussion may be summarized in the following way: People learn both as students and as practitioners. Traditionally students are required to argue about topics construed by their lecturers, and resolve hypothetical problems. This tends to produce fixed meaning which does not necessarily transfer well to new situations. On the other hand, practitioners reason with unique cases, act on authentic situations and resolve complex problems. For novice professionals this learning is typically negotiated, and it is more effective because concepts "continually evolve with each new occasion of use, because new situations, negotiations, and activities inevitably recast it in new, more densely textured form" (Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989). This situation coincides with the teaching of skills by way of apprenticeships, before the times of universities.

[1] The term 'legitimate peripheral participation' denotes a complex concept, which cannot be defined in one simple sentence. **Legitimate** refers to belonging to a particular discourse community and for being a ratified member of that community; **peripheral** indicates movement towards the centre of the category, or in this case towards full participation ("the diversity of relations involved in varying forms of community membership") (Lave & Wenger 1991:37).

This juxtaposition does not necessarily indicate that genres should be learned once a student leaves the university and enters a profession. It suggests that teachers should consider the expert processes that are involved in completing a difficult task, and then authentic tasks should be designed to guide them into the processes and engage them in applying effective strategies. The teacher initially models the strategies that are needed, allows students to practice them independently, and is available for specific advice as needed. In this process students are encouraged to discuss their problems with peers, explain their problem-solving strategies, and to compare their processes to those of others.

The above discussion suggests that teaching students the genres that are important for them in their academic or professional lives is both historically and psychologically motivated, and that schools and universities have the legitimate role of acting as mediators of cognitive apprenticeship, especially where the environmental and social scaffolding has collapsed or does not exist (Christie 1985:21).

From conceptions of genre in learning theory we now turn to views about genre in applied linguistics and writing pedagogy.

2.4 Genre in applied linguistics and writing pedagogy

2.4.1 Applied linguistics

While linguistics is about a formulation of the laws that govern lingual reality, applied linguistics focuses on the norms that govern the actual making of something (Weideman 1987:108). In most instances this "something" is a design. Therefore, applied linguistics is described by Weideman (1987:64) as "pedagogical engineering."

Weideman (2007a) gives a schematic representation of the six major traditions or generations of applied linguistic work (particularly research). These are (1) the Linguistic/Behaviourist Model (the so-called "scientific" approach), (2) the Extended Paradigm Model (language as a social phenomenon), (3) the Multi-disciplinary Model (attention to language, learning theory and pedagogy), (4) The Second Language Acquisition Research Model (experimental research into how languages are learned) (5)

Constructivism (knowledge of a new language is interactively constructed), and (6) Post Modernism (political relations in teaching; multiplicity of perspectives).

The genre approach to writing pedagogy seems to have derived design principles from all these paradigms, except the Behaviourist Model. Table 2.1 relates the characteristic features of genre-based pedagogy to the paradigms in applied linguistics to which they are indebted:

Table 2.1 Features of genre-based pedagogy, and the paradigms in applied linguistics to which they are indebted

Paradigm in applied linguistics	Feature of genre-based pedagogy
Linguistic Approach	Emphasizing explicit teaching of structure
Extended Paradigm Model	Viewing "learning to write" as a social activity
Multi-disciplinary Model	Deriving its core features from a diversity of disciplines, *viz.* rhetoric, psychology, linguistics and pedagogy
Constructivism	Apprenticeship, scaffolding and situated performance
Postmodernism	Reflecting on genre structures and challenging genre boundaries Awareness of "genres of power," and the advantages of mastering them

What has largely fallen by the wayside in genre approaches, as in writing research more generally, is empirical research, as pointed out by Weideman (2007a). The fact that genre approaches in applied linguistics have not taken this crucial element from Second Language Acquisition research, is perhaps its most important deficit.

2.4.2 Language teaching

As far as language teaching is concerned, Weideman (2002) makes a broad distinction between Traditional Approaches and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Traditional approaches are again sub-divided into the Grammar-translation Method, the Direct Method and the Audiolingual Method, while Communicative Approaches are subdivided into various interpretations, such as Authentic Texts, and Mainstream CLT. Alongside these interpretations Weideman (2002) distinguishes between L (language) and P (psychological) emphases in CLT.

In Hyland's (2004:124) opinion, the genre approach has derived its teaching methods particularly from CLT. From this paradigm it takes tasks identifying the purpose and audience of a text, comparison of texts with a different audience, purpose or structure, and the revision of a draft in response to others' comments. However, if one considers the types of activities included in genre-based teaching programmes, it also draws from traditional approaches. For instance, it includes grammar exercises (although grammar is always related to function and purpose), scrambled text tasks, creating parallel texts using a model, and completing gapped paragraphs.

As language teaching has progressed beyond CLT in order to go "beyond methods" (Kumaravadivelu 2003; 2006; Bell 2003), so has the teaching of writing, which now similarly finds itself squarely in postmodern times, and perhaps even beyond these. Recent work by the New London Group, for example by Cope & Kalantzis (2000) suggests a third main approach in language teaching, *viz.* the Multiliteracies Approach. According to Cope & Kalantzis (2000:6) this recent development fills a gap, in that language teaching is in need of an open-ended and flexible functional model. This does not mean that existing patterns of form and meaning have to be discarded, but that we need to be more critical of their appropriateness. The principal aims of a pedagogy of Multiliteracies are

> to extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalized societies; to account for the multifarious cultures that interrelate and the pluralities of texts that circulate. Second, we argue that literacy pedagogy now must account for the burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technology (Cope & Kalantzis 2000:6).

Six design elements play important roles in the meaning-making process, *viz.* linguistic meaning, visual meaning, audio meaning, gestural meaning, spatial meaning, and the multimodal patterns of meaning that relate these modes of meaning to another. Of particular importance for this thesis are the four components of pedagogy identified by the New London Group (Cope and Kalantzis 2000:7):

- situated practice, which draws on the experience of meaning-making in lifeworlds, the public realm, and workplaces;

- overt instruction, through which students develop an explicit metalanguage of design;
- critical framing, which interprets the social context and purpose of designs of meaning; and
- transformed practice, in which students, as meaning-makers, become designers of social features.

Genre-based curriculum designers will probably subscribe to all these components; and may even profess to have included them already. Compare, for instance, classroom activities such as critical reflection on choices of genre, mode, and register – which is not uncommon in genre-based syllabi. Furthermore, admitting to be indebted to the Multiliteracies Approach should not be seen as a weakness of the genre approach. First, the multiplicity of semiotic realizations that students are faced with can no longer be ignored, and second, the genre approach have been shown to have an overtly eclectic character: taking the best design elements from almost all the paradigms in applied linguistics and combining them creatively to solve real-world problems.

In the next section it will be shown that although writing pedagogy may be perceived to be a subcategory of language teaching, it has a tradition of being separated from language teaching in general.

2.4.3 Writing pedagogy and writing research

Johns (2005:23) contends that the development of writing instruction parallels the developments in psychology, linguistics and rhetoric, which were present in three historical periods, the Current-traditional Period (1950s and early 1960s), the Learner-centred/Process Movement (mid-1960s and 1970s) and the Post-process Period. During the Current-traditional Period (also known as the Text-centered or Scientific Period), the Audiolingual Period, which parallels structuralism in linguistics and behaviourism in psychology, experienced its heyday. Learner-centred Approaches developed from the mid sixties, and were influenced by Chomskyan linguistics with its cognitive emphasis. This era culminated in the Process Movement. The Post-process Period focused more on the social and communicative aspects of writing, which includes the Genre Approach, with its emphasis on purpose and discourse community. Drawing from a

component of postmodernism, Critical Literacy approaches emphasize the relationship between language and power, more specifically the learning of writing in institutionalized contexts.

Weideman (2007b) highlights parallel and non-parallel phases in the development of applied linguistics and writing pedagogy. Following Ivanic (2004), who distinguishes six traditions or "discourses" in writing pedagogy, *viz.* the Skills Discourse, the Creativity Discourse, the Process Discourse, the Genre Discourse, the Social Practices Discourse and the Sociopolitical Discourse, he discusses the overlaps and divergence of approaches to the teaching of writing and to the making of applied linguistic designs in general. The Skills Discourse, together with a seventh type of discourse in writing distinguished by Hyland (2003:6), *viz.* the Functional Discourse, belong to Johns' Current Traditional Period. Functional discourse (also labeled Current Traditional Rhetoric) centres upon text functions, and the aim here is to guide students to produce connected sentences according to prescribed formulas and tasks which tend to focus on form, to reinforce positively model writing patterns. The Creativity Discourse and the Process Discourse can be subsumed under Johns' Learner Centred Approaches. Lastly, the Genre Discourse, the Social Practices Discourse and the Sociopolitical Discourse belong to Johns' Post-process period.

In his discussion of the "divergent agendas of writing and applied linguistic research" Weideman (2007a) singles out three traditions in applied linguistics that may have been skipped in the scholarly investigation of writing, *viz.* the Multidisciplinary Approach, Second Language Acquisition Research, and to a lesser extent Constructivism. It was noted above that Genre Discourse may have neglected empirical research on second language learning. One of the aims of this study is to obtain evidence based on students' progress in order to make claims about the effectiveness of interventions that have greater validity.

The following diagram is an attempt at reflecting the diachronic and conceptual relationships between approaches in applied linguistics, language teaching and writing pedagogy that were indicated in the discussion:

<table>
<tr><th>Applied linguistics</th><th>Language teaching</th><th colspan="2">Writing pedagogy</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td rowspan="2">Traditional approaches
Grammar-translation Method
Direct Method
Audiolingual Method</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Structuralist/Behaviourist/ Scientific model</td><td rowspan="2">Current Traditional Period</td><td rowspan="2">Skills Discourse

Functional Discourse</td></tr>
<tr><td>Extended Paradigm Model</td><td rowspan="4">Communicative approaches</td></tr>
<tr><td>Multidisciplinary Model</td><td rowspan="2">Learner-centred Approaches</td><td rowspan="2">Creativity Discourse
Process Discourse</td></tr>
<tr><td>Second Language Acquisition Research Model</td></tr>
<tr><td>Constructivism</td><td rowspan="2">Post-process Period
Multiliteracies approach</td><td>Social Practices Discourse
Genre Discourse</td></tr>
<tr><td>Postmodernism</td><td>The Postmethod Condition</td><td>Sociopolitical Discourse</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 2.4 Mapping of the most important paradigms in applied linguistics, language teaching and writing pedagogy

2.4.4 Paradigms in academic writing

In much the same way as articulated in the frameworks discussed in the previous section Baynham (2000:18ff.) identifies three perspectives in the teaching of academic writing, a Skills Approach, a Text-based Approach and a Practice-based Approach. The Skills-based Approach is roughly equal to the traditional "study skills" approach, and assumes that a generic set of skills and strategies exist, such as essay-writing or referencing, which can be taught. Students then take the skills they learn and apply them in their particular disciplinary contexts. According to Baynham (2000:19) the Text-based Approach draws on the resources of linguistic analysis, in particular register and genre-analysis, to understand the discipline-specific nature of writing tasks. Register analysis characterizes the language of a particular discipline, whereas genre focuses on the text types that are required, e.g. the *history essay*, the *laboratory report* and the *case study report*. The Practice-based Approach emphasizes the social and discursive practices

through which a discipline constitutes itself. Such studies look at how fields are constituted and maintained, and how novices are socialized into the practices which are constitutive of the field. Eventually Baynham chooses for a combination of the Text-based and the Practice-based approach, defending his position as follows:

> Language is, after all, a major means [...] by which disciplinary knowledge is constituted, reproduced, contested and added to, and learned. We need precise linguistic accounts of the linguistic means that are deployed in specific disciplinary contexts, but we also need to recognize the complexities and specificity of these contexts (Baynham 2000:19).

Genre approaches to academic writing typically also combine text-based and practice-based approaches, but the weighting of the ingredients differ. The Australian school would, for instance, be more text-based, while the New Rhetoric would have a stronger practice base, and ESP would be an equally weighted blend.

It thus seems that there is an increasing rapprochement between the various approaches to academic writing. Hybridity is in fact a characteristic of the majority of applied linguistic and writing paradigms that have seen the light since the mid 1990s (cf. Weideman 2007a). Genre approaches are no exception.

2.4.5 Genre-based approaches as hybrid or mixed approaches in writing pedagogy

It is widely believed that all varieties of genre approaches have developed as corrective reactions to the individualistic, discovery-oriented approaches that were dominant in the 1970s and 1980s (the so-called "progressivist curriculum"), which, in turn, were reactions to the earlier product approach. Although product and genre approaches are often juxtaposed (compare Gee 1997:25; Badger & White 2000:157; Hyland 2004:7) genre approaches often include process elements, and in that sense they are hybrid methods. Paltridge (2002b:55-59) says that many courses today draw on the whole range of developments starting with the guided composition of the mid 1940s to the mid-1960s, including the current-traditional rhetoric of the mid-1960s, the process approach, and the genre approach. Badger and White (2000) strongly argue for integration of the product, process and genre approaches, especially in writing. Their "synthesized" model is justified both in terms of their view of writing and their view of the development of writing:

> […] writing involves knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose of the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches) (Badger & White 2000:157-158).

and

> […] writing development happens by drawing out learners potential (as in process approaches) and by providing input to which the learners respond (as in product and genre approaches) (Badger & White 2000:158).

Hyland (2004:8) agrees with Delpit (1988:287) that teachers do students no service by suggesting that "product" is not important, because students will be judged on their product regardless of the process they have utilized to achieve it. Providing students with the "freedom" to write may encourage fluency, but "it does not liberate them from the constraints of grammar and form in public contexts of writing" (Hyland 2004:8). Of course, Hyland does not reject a process approach as such. He suggests that "[p]rocess methods should be combined with genre-based teaching to ensure that learners develop understanding and control of the processes of text creation; the purposes of writing and how to express these in effective ways; the contexts within which texts are composed and read and that give them meaning". Only, instead of addressing grammar at the end of the writing process, he advises teachers to ensure that students process this central resource for constructing meanings from the start and throughout the process (Hyland 2004:21).

In addition to highlighting an integration of the genre approach with the product and the process approaches, Hyland (2004:9-10) also indicates how genre pedagogies and the Social Practices Discourse complement one another:

> This view of literacy shows that writing (and reading) vary with context and cannot be distilled to a set of abstract cognitive or technical abilities. There are a wide variety of practices relevant to and appropriate for particular times, places, participants, and purposes, and these practices are not something that we simply pick up and put down; they are integral to our individual identity, social relationships, and group memberships.

Hyland (2004:10) also believes that literacies are mainly acquired through exposure to discourses from a variety of social contexts, and through this exposure individuals gradually develop theories of genre. In practice this means recognizing that writing is always purposeful, that it demands a range of skills and understandings of various genres, that it relies on knowledge of other texts, and that it has definite outcomes.

The classroom pedagogy of Ann Johns is an example of considered eclecticism, with a strong focus on genre. In her 2005 keynote paper, presented at the 25th anniversary of SAALA (South African Applied Linguistics Association) she details classroom pedagogy for an "integrated" approach to second language writing within a framework of "socioliteracy" (Johns 2005:24-25). This integrated approach – which includes elements from product, process and genre – draws together classroom activities and tasks from various traditions in language teaching. Her position in this regard is summarized by the following "manifesto":

> Yet, as a practising pedagogue, I would argue that each of these previous writing eras [from the Current-traditional to the Post-process period – AC] has value; each has something to offer literacy instructors and students as they teach and learn. […] we need to consider how we can draw from the best in the past and from current theory and research (Johns 2005:25).

2.5 Summary

Genre approaches have in common a socio-cognitive view of language as their theoretical basis, although different "schools" pledge allegiance to different theoretical foundations: Language oriented genre approaches draw upon Systemic Functional Grammar to justify their focus on the systematic way in which writers make vocabulary and grammar choices on the basis of determinants in the context of culture and the context of situation. Rhetorical approaches, on the other hand, emphasize the role of genres as vehicles for accomplishing social action. These approaches see genres as derived from and embedded in the communicative activities of daily and professional life, and regard their transmission as a result of enculturation as apprentices become socialised to the ways of speaking and writing in particular disciplinary communities. Cognitive linguistic approaches provide the conceptual link between text and context through the notion of cognitive schemata. Genre knowledge constitutes a schema, comprising knowledge of communicative purpose, reader and writer roles, text conventions, content and register. Critical paradigms such as Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodality add specific dimensions to the notion of a genre schema, for example knowledge of institutional processes and values, and power relations. These paradigms also focus the attention on the dynamic and dialogic nature of the relationship between culture, cognition and textualization. Multimodality makes

provision for textualization via different semiotic modes, and the ways in which genres both constrain and are constrained by delivery modes. Although ethnographic approaches have been criticized for their focus on classification, their contribution to genre theory should not be denied or underplayed because the preferred entry point to genre-based syllabi are still the a priori categories of the discourse communities served by the writing courses in question.

The learning theory that best supports genre approaches is Constructivism – in particular Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The ZPD explains why individuals achieve better results when working in collaboration with a more knowledgeable person when trying to attain a goal that is just out of reach for that individual. It also supports a curriculum that guides the learner to independent construction of texts through exploration of prototypical examples of a particular genre, and discovery of its criterial linguistic and discursive features.

Regarding theories of applied linguistics, language teaching and writing pedagogy, genre approaches to academic writing are typical of post-process paradigms, in that they are generally a considered combination of language teaching principles and techniques as well as classroom activities. The primary aim of such approaches is to teach students how to communicate purposefully, drawing on the established conventions and values of their chosen disciplines, and making meaningful form-function choices. When genres are taught, their social, cognitive and textual dimensions need to be considered. First, the discourse structure and the language (lexis and grammar) should be in line with the purpose of the text in a particular context, and the norms and conventions of the discourse community they serve. Second, students should be encouraged to draw on their own genre schemas, but these are shaped and elaborated through the scaffolding provided by model texts, interaction with peers and with the teacher, and input from the expert community into which the students are initiated. Third, students – additional language students in particular – should be made aware of the graphic, discursive, rhetorical and linguistic options available to them for expressing the beliefs, values and knowledge of the subject-field in question.

The next chapter explores the three distinct traditions of genre-based teaching and learning that have emerged over the past thirty years. Each of these traditions will be discussed in terms of its target learners, theoretical underpinnings, pedagogy, terminology, and genre analysis procedures.

Chapter 3: Traditions in genre pedagogy

3.1 Introduction

As we have noted in the previous chapter, there are various interpretations of what constitutes a genre approach to the teaching of (academic) writing. Genre-based pedagogy has been conceived of in distinct ways by researchers in different scholarly traditions, and in different parts of the world, *viz.* English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics following the Hallidayan tradition (also known as the Sydney school), and North American New Rhetoric Studies. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss each of these schools in terms of similarities and differences regarding their target learners, theoretical foundations, pedagogy, terminology, and genre analysis procedures.

3.2 English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

The general focus of the ESP movement has been to develop teaching procedures appropriate to learners whose main objective is learning English for a purpose other than just learning the language system. This purpose may be educational or professional (Dudley-Evans 2000:3). Researchers in ESP are interested in genre as a tool for understanding and teaching the kinds of writing required of additional language speakers of English in these contexts. The ability to function competently in a range of written genres is a central concern for additional language learners, as it can determine their access to career opportunities, positive identities, and life choices (Hyland 2004:43).

3.2.1 Target group

ESP applications have been mostly concerned with the teaching of international (additional language) students at English-medium universities in Britain and abroad. The focus has been on "demystifying" the use of English in academic contexts and providing students with the language resources and skills that may help them to gain access to English language academic discourse communities (Paltridge 2001:16).

3.2.2 Theoretical underpinnings

It is difficult to identify ESP with a particular linguistic or pedagogical tradition, since the movement claims to be non-theory-centred, but pragmatic. In fact, ESP never intended to develop an elaborate theory based on a theory of learning. Swales (1988:xvii) says of ESP practitioners that they "distrust theories that do not quite work out in the litmus-paper realities of classrooms".

However, no set of procedures for teaching language can exist separate from a view of language and how learners learn that language. According to Dudley-Evans (2000) there are two possibilities of how a theory of genre has developed within ESP:

1. As a result of their mutual focus on learner and learning needs, language functionality, authenticity, etc., ESP became associated with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).
2. In the same way as the teaching procedures of ESP are linked to a view of language and learning, all ESP activity has to be linked to a view of text.

Dudley-Evans (2000:4) regards the latter to be the more productive of the two, and mentions the following possible influences:

- **Register analysis**, associated with the identification of key grammatical elements of scientific communication;
- **Rhetorical analysis**, associated with Lackstrom, Selinker and Trimble (1972), and Trimble (1985);
- The **Functional/notional approach** associated with textbooks;
- **Genre analysis**, which became the dominant approach in ESP through the work of Swales (1981; 1990) and Bhatia (1993a).

The above-mentioned two "foci" or "tendencies" in ESP have developed further over the past 30 years as a result of different influences. The first tendency (a focus on learners and learner needs), which developed under the influence of the sociology of science, has been a rather detailed analysis of the concept of discourse community and of actual discourse communities in practice. John Swales has been the leading actor in this trend. Initially, genre analysis in the Swalesean tradition seemed to be a fairly rigid and prescriptive text-based approach. However, proponents of ESP realized that text

analysis attempting only to establish a set of moves for a given genre or part-genre is insufficient. The move analysis needs to be supplemented by an analysis of sociological features of the context within which the text is used and of the discourse community that will read and judge the text (Dudley-Evans 2002:235). Between 1981 and 1990 Swales moved from the initial moves and steps analysis, towards the following description of the close relationship between discourse communities and their genres:

> Discourse communities are sociorhetorical networks that form in order to work towards sets of common goals. One of the characteristics that established members of these discourse communities possess is familiarity with the particular genres that are used in the communicative furtherance of those sets of goals. In consequence, genres are the properties of discourse communities (Swales 1990:9).

More recently, he modified this emphasis on communicative purpose as a defining feature of genre, and now suggests that genre may rather be seen as a "metaphorical endeavour" that can be more adequately characterized by the following metaphors, which offer a multifaceted view of genre (Swales 2004:61):

- **Genres are frames for action:** guiding principles for achieving purposes using language
- **Genres are language standards:** expected conventions of layout and language
- **Genres are prototypes:** instances of a genre are more or less similar to "core" exemplars
- **Genres are speech acts:** the conventional actions a genre is intended to perform

The second tendency within ESP (a focus on texts) has been the detailed analysis of specific features of language as used in particular genres, such as hedging, reporting verbs, verbs with inanimate subjects, boosters, differences in epistemic modality between genres and between different disciplines, and integral *vs.* non-integral citation structures. Although Ken Hyland has never officially aligned himself with any of the three genre schools, he has been widely credited for initiating and steering a function-oriented, text-based approach to genre analysis. It should, however, be stressed that although micro-level analyses of the Hylandian kind may remind of the structuralist/behaviourist approach in applied linguistics, and current-traditional approaches in language teaching, his approach to teaching and research never occurs without reference to purpose and function, which is also a defining characteristic of ESP. It is then perhaps no surprise that Hyland (2004:43) sees the theoretical framework

of the ESP genre school as eclectic (drawing from both Systemic Functional and New Rhetoric perspectives), and therefore difficult to separate from other theoretical strands. He in fact makes the following observation: "[L]ike the New Rhetoric, ESP employs notions of dialogism and contextual situatedness, but it also draws on Systemic Functional principles of pedagogy" (Hyland 2004:44).

3.2.3 Genre pedagogy

Initially, descriptions of genres served primarily as discourse models for ESP writing instructors, but did not provide them with detailed instructional methodologies for presenting this content in the classroom (Hyon 1996:702). However, more recently an increased prominence of genre-based approaches to the teaching of academic and professional writing has become a salient feature of ESP (Dudley-Evans 2002:225). The research has fed into the design of classroom activities. For instance, John Flowerdew (1993) developed classroom activities to raise foreign language students' awareness of new genres in English for professional communication, and Bhatia (1993a) developed materials for business and technology students. According to Hyon (1996:703) these materials have provided valuable insights for students into the ways of structuring these genres. Since the 1990s a number of publications with activities and classroom exercises to support genre approaches have seen the light. Two of the most widely cited works are Swales and Feak's *Academic writing for graduate students* (1994), of which a revised and updated edition was published in 2004, and Weissberg and Buker's (1990) *Writing up research: experimental report writing for students of English*, which is still highly relevant, especially for the natural sciences.

3.2.4 Genre terminology

ESP genre terminology derives from the writing needs of particular academic and professional groups, and teachers as well as researchers look to the naming practices of these groups. The approach is ethnographic, in that the point of departure is the a priori categories of the discourse community, and not those of the researcher.

Swales (1998:20) describes the relationship between communities, their genres and their naming practices as follows:

> Discourse communities evolve their own conventions and traditions for such diverse verbal activities as running meetings, producing reports, and publicizing their activities. These recurrent classes of communicative events are the genres that orchestrate verbal life.

Examples of the **academic** genres that have been identified and explored by teachers for use in ESP classrooms are *research articles*, *conference abstracts*, *book reviews*, *grant proposals*, *undergraduate essays*, *PhD theses*, *textbooks* and *reprint requests*. Examples of **professional** genres are *direct mail letters*, *business faxes*, *engineering reports*, *legal cases and briefs*, *e-mail memos*, *company annual reports*, *charity donation requests (fund-raising letters)* and *letters of recommendation*.

Although the basic level of organization for genres within ESP is that of the full text, in recent years some proponents have added higher- and lower-level terms to the metalanguage. Swales (1990:61) suggests an additional higher-level tier or layer in the taxonomy, *viz.* **pre-genres**, which are "multigeneric generalizations". One example is the *letter* (which may be realized in, for instance the *e-mail memo* and *the letter of application*). Grabe (2002) uses the term **macro-genre** for the two main classes under which all genres can be subsumed, *viz.* **expository** and **narrative** genres. Martin (2002:270; 274) situates his view within the cognitive theory of family resemblances, and distinguishes **families** or **galaxies** of meaning, such as *the service encounter family*, *the appointment family*, *the interviewing family*, and *control genres*. Bhatia (2002a:280) uses the term **genre colonies** when referring to *reporting genres*, *letter genres* and *promotional genres*. Furthermore, the terms **genre sets** or **genre systems** have been coined to refer to genres that cluster together as parts of broader social practices, and that are often sequenced in a particular way. For example, when seeking employment a person will search newspapers and the Web for *job advertisements*. Before applying for a job, the prospective applicant will first search *company profiles* on the Web, or perhaps *annual reports*. When he/she has decided that it may be a good prospect, a *curriculum vitae* is written or updated and attached to a *letter of application*. If the person is shortlisted, he/she is invited to a *job interview*. The successful candidate receives a *job offer*, upon which he/she either writes a *letter of acceptance* or *a letter of rejection*.

At the level below the basic level (the genre level), Swales and Lindemann (2002:106) distinguish **part-genres** or **sub-genres.** This category is what the name says: part of a real-world genre. An example of a sub-genre with wide significance in the academic world and in graduate education is the *literature review*. Much of the work done within the framework of ESP has centred upon the discourse structures of such subparts of genres. Swales (1981), for example, has focused on *article introductions*, and Dudley-Evans has done substantial research on the *discussion* and *introduction* sections of MSc dissertations (1986).

The majority of ESP genre scholars make a distinction between **genre** and **text type**. Text types "represent groupings of texts that are similar in their linguistic form, irrespective of genre" (Biber 1988:170). Examples are *exposition*, *narration*, *discussion* and *description*. Whereas genre is defined in terms of external criteria, text type is defined in terms of mostly linguistic criteria. The ESP notion of text type largely coincides with the **rhetorical modes** of North American composition studies of the 1950s and 1960s, and the Current-traditional paradigm in academic writing. Rhetorical modes include, for instance, *illustration*, *exemplification*, *comparison*, *contrast*, *partition*, *classification*, and *causal analysis* (Johns 2002a:6). This classification of text types seems to go back to the much older tradition of **modes of discourse** in the rhetoric studies of the eighteenth century, which became formalized in the 19th century (compare Grabe 2002:252). More recent rhetorical studies present similar categorizations of rhetorical types. Tribble (1996), for instance, *lists expositions*, *examples*, *processes*, *definitions*, *cause and effect*, *compare and contrast*, *division and classification*, *description*, *narration*, *argumentation* and *persuasion* as commonly taught text types. Bazerman (1998:24) describes these entities as **patterns of semantic organization** that dominate passages of text longer than a sentence, and Bloor (1998) describes them as **language styles**. Others, such as Kiniry and Rose (1993), describe *defining*, *summarizing*, *classifying* and *comparing*, which writers use across genres in different academic disciplines, as **critical reading and writing strategies**.

In essence all these classification schemes merely refer to functional notions in academic language usage (compare Jordan 1997, who calls this level of organization **rhetorical-functional**).

Hoey (1983) and Crombie (1985) suggest that there is an intermediate level of organization between genre and text type, which they refer to as **constituent structures** (Paltridge 2002a:77-78). Hoey (1983) distinguishes the following three structures:

- problem-solution (*advertisements*, *scientific reports*, *short stories*, *novels*);
- general-particular (*poems*, *novels*, *scientific texts*);
- matching-contrast (*poems*, *letters to the editor*);

to which Crombie (1985) adds

- topic-restriction-illustration (*advertisements*, *news reports*).

Grabe (2002:252) criticizes taxonomies of genre and text type by saying that they have been "conventionalized as a generic instructional format with unrealistic models that artificially highlight each mode (as well as patterns of arrangement such as comparison and contrast, cause and effect, classification, definition, and so on)".

The first serious attempt to standardize genre terminology in ESP that departs from an empirically based model probably came from Bhatia (2002a), who supports the teaching of genre, but criticizes "approaches that do not have any grounded description". Yet, in line with mainstream ESP thinking, he expresses the opinion that genre-based research should draw its strength more from application, rather than from theory, whether it is aimed at school, university or professional ESP-level application (Bhatia 2002:282).

On the basis of his profound experience in using a genre approach in teaching, Bhatia (2002a:280-282) proposes a three-tier hierarchy, comprising (from top to bottom):

- **Generic values** are independent of any grounded realities of social context. Examples are *narration*[2], *description*, *explanation*, *evaluation* and *instruction*.

[2] Narration and narrative genres are different in terms of theory, practice and application. **Narration** is a functional value that will be instantiated by a particular lexicogrammatic realization, depending on the genre. However, it is independent from a specifically defined rhetorical context. Narration may, for instance, also occur in non-narrative genres, e.g. in *persuasive genres*, *recounts*, etc. **Narrative genres**, on the other hand, constitute a colony comprising specific genres, such as *short stories*, *novels*, *epic poems*, etc.

Generic values are realized through lexicogrammatical choices, which in turn depend upon the nature of the specific genre of which it is a part.

- **Genre colonies** are clusters of genres rather loosely grounded in broad rhetorical contexts, and are identified on the basis of flexible and fluid overlapping of generic boundaries. Examples are *promotional genres*, *reporting genres*, *letter genres* and *expository genres*.
- **Individual genres** are typically grounded in sociorhetorical contexts. Examples are *book blurbs*, *book reviews*, *advertisements*, *sales letters* and *job applications*.

Bhatia (2002) sees two distinct applications of this hierarchy in language teaching, one at school level (associated with the Australian genre tradition), and the other at university and professional level (associated with ESP). The first one has a clear focus on the generality of genres, indicated by a downward movement from generic value to genre colony. The second one has a much narrower focus on the specificity of genres, indicated by an upward movement from individual genres toward genre colonies.

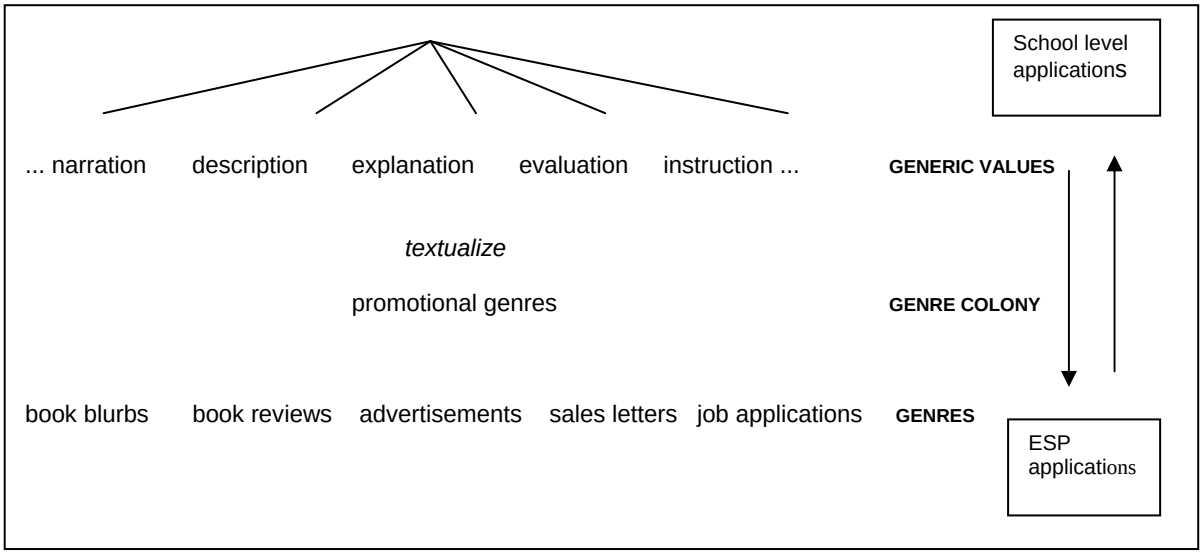


Figure 3.1 Bhatia's (2002a) genre hierarchy

According to Bhatia (2002a:283) the two applications have developed along these lines for good reasons. School-level writing tasks are often difficult to contextualize too narrowly, as the learners have a limited experience of the world and a limited awareness of the contexts in which language is likely to be used. It is also difficult to define the actual needs of the learners at that stage of their sociocognitive development. At the

ESP level, however, learners are more likely to have the discipline-specific and sociocultural knowledge associated with narrowly defined professional and academic contexts. They may also have specific needs in terms of effectiveness and pragmatic success of the intended communication.

Bruce (2008) proposes a distinction which coincides with that of Bhatia, for which he uses the terms **cognitive genre** and **social genre**. The choice between these foci for a genre-based syllabus relates to the level of the writers and the context of the course:

> If the course is pre-sessional and interdisciplinary, and the discourse competence level of the writers is relatively low, it is proposed that cognitive genres should be the central focus and should provide the basis for syllabus units of such a course. On the other hand, if the class is homogenous – containing writers all studying in the discipline – the discoursal focus of the course may involve both social and cognitive genres of the particular field or subject area of the writers (Bruce 2008:115-116).

In his view higher-level, such as tertiary-level, interdisciplinary writing classes also need to focus on both social and cognitive genre knowledge.

3.2.5 Genre analysis

Genre analysis, as conceived by Swales (1990) and elaborated on by Bhatia (1993), is based on three key and interlocking elements: the concepts of discourse community, genre, and language and learning task, driven by communicative purpose. Traditional genre analyses focused sharply on identifying a series of moves that make up the genre. Each move coincides with a distinct communicative act that is intended to serve a particular communicative purpose. Moves are often subdivided into a number of steps.

A fairly recent example is Yakhontova's (2002) study of conference abstracts in applied linguistics, as represented in table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 Move analysis of conference abstracts (Yakhontova 2002)

Move structure	Rhetorical strategies (steps) for realizing the move
Move 1: Outlining the research field	a. Referring to established knowledge b. Referring to previous research c. Asserting the importance of the area
Move 2: Justifying the research study	a. Indicating a gap in the previous research b. Making a counterclaim c. Raising a question about the previous research
Move 3: Introducing the paper to be presented	a. Stating the purpose of the paper (aims) b. Stating the focus of the paper (content)
Move 4: Summarizing the paper	a. Giving an overview of the whole paper b. Giving an overview of its parts in sequence
Move 5: Highlighting outcomes	a. Reviewing the most important results of the study b. Stating the implications or applications of the results

In recent years the scope of genre analysis has become broadened to include a more dynamic notion of genre in which "members of the discourse community (along with their physical situation) now become a primary focus of the analysis, equal to if not more important than the text" (Flowerdew & Peacock 2001:16). In both Britain and Australia research and pedagogy has shifted away from detached product-centred analyses of genres to research-centred analyses which provide a much richer account of the contexts in which the genres occur. In other words the process of genre-analysis has become a more critical and ethnographically informed account of the contexts in which writers (students in particular) are writing. This has also resulted in research-based evidence of the disciplinary variation of genres and a shift away from the view of academic discourse as homogeneous and monolithic (Jones 2004:257). This, in turn, has strengthened the role of linguistic theory, particularly the role of SFL in genre analysis. Flowerdew (2002:91) describes the approach as "grounded in the linguistic, but with a theoretically and ethnographically informed account of context and discourse communities".

3.2.6 Main advantages of the ESP approach

ESP **genre analyses** are known for the detailed information they provide about lexical and grammatical regularities: Bhatia (1993b), for instance, shows that legal documents are characterized by a high frequency of complex prepositional phrases, and Hyland and

Hyland (2001) emphasize the high frequency of interpersonal strategies in teachers' feedback comments on L2 essays.

One of the main advantages of ESP **genre teaching** is its efficiency in identifying the texts learners will need to write in a particular context (compare Hyland 2004:46) and the rationale it provides for sequencing and grouping texts. Furthermore, ESP has a systematic way of describing the typical features of key genres that students can draw on for their own communicative purposes in their professional or academic lives. ESP type curricula also provide, first, a way of seeing how genres are interrelated in real life and, second, an authentic context for developing skills in a range of spoken and written genres. Furthermore, they focus on an understanding of the roles and purposes of writers and readers.

3.3 The Australian genre movement (Sydney school)

The Sydney school emerged from linguists and teachers working to create a genre-based pedagogy consistent with Systemic Functional Linguistics, developed in particular by Halliday (1978), Martin (1992), Matthiessen (1995), Halliday and Mathiessen (2004), and a number of educational linguists (Christie 1999:759). In this view, language is a system of lexical and grammatical choices by which writers can communicate certain functions. The principles of SFL are combined with the Vygotskyan notion of scaffolding.

3.3.1 Theoretical underpinnings

This approach views texts as being connected to particular contexts. Two levels are of importance, *viz.* register and genre. When people create a text they make choices in register, along the dimensions of field (type of activity), tenor (relationships between participants) and mode (channel of communication) (Christie 1999:759-760). At the level of genre, linguistic choices are influenced by the writer's social purpose in using language, in other words what he/she sets out to do.

3.3.2 Domains of application

The Sydney school initially applied genre theory and research to pedagogy in the public school system, working with disadvantaged students and additional language students, and in adult migrant education (Johns 2002a:5). They have recently also applied their pedagogy to English-in-the-workplace programmes and to ESL in university settings (Paltridge 2001:12).

3.3.3 Genre pedagogy

In line with their theoretical underpinnings, genre is taught at a general, rather than a specific level. The Sydney school developed a curriculum to teach learners the structure and linguistic patternings that occur in important school genres, *viz.* the *recount*, *procedure*, *narrative*, *description* and *report* (Devitt 1996:608). Some teachers have also included *exposition*, *discussion* and *argument* (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop 2000). For pedagogical purposes, the Sydney school proposes a model of how language works to build the genres associated with school success, and to enable teachers to guide their students in learning them. This tradition has developed an instructional framework known as the Teaching Learning Cycle (LERN), initially comprising three phases: (1) modeling, (2) joint construction of text, and (3) independent construction of text (compare Hyon 1996:705; Cope & Kalantzis 1993:11), as exemplified by Figure 3.2:

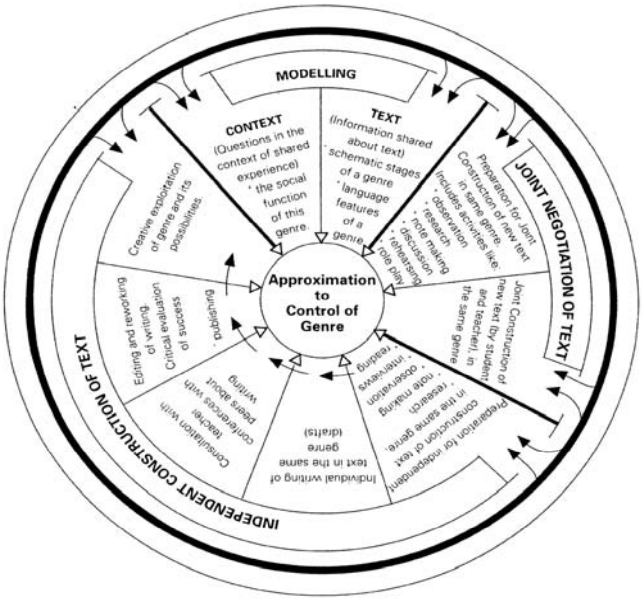


Figure 3.2 The Teaching Learning Cycle (Cope & Kalantzis 1993:11)

A later version comprised four phases, *viz.* (1) Building knowledge of the field (cultural context, shared experience, control of relevant vocabulary, grammatical patterns), (2) Modeling of text (cultural context, social function, schematic structure, linguistic features, using spoken language to focus on written text), (3) Joint negotiation of text (schematic structures, linguistic features, knowledge of the field), and (4) Independent construction of text (schematic structures, linguistic features, knowledge of the field) (Hammond, Burns, Joyce, Brosnan, & Gerot 1992:17).

Although the structure of the model has remained essentially unchanged since its introduction in the 1970s, a number of changes have occurred regarding the interpretation and implementation of the stages in the cycle. In addition to the sociocultural emphasis of the model, a critical dimension has been added. The modeling stage, for instance, has become known as the **deconstruction** stage, comprising "a critical analysis of models of the genre under focus" (Ellis 2004:211). However, in following Bernstein (1971; 1975; 1996) Ellis regards the most prominent "pedagogical renovation[s]" to be the introduction of "waves of weak and strong framing and classification" as appropriate to different stages of the learning cycle. According to Ellis (2004:212-213) **framing** refers to the degree of control the teacher and learner have over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship. **Weak framing** means that there are more options available to the learners during learning and **strong framing** means fewer options (more control) are available. **Classification** refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents. When framing weakens, students exercise more control, and when framing strengthens, the teacher is more in control. Similarly, with strong classification, the boundaries of the pedagogic discourse are strongly controlled, while weak classification would allow other discourses to enter into the substantive discourse.

Within the genre-based teaching cycle both **double framing** and **double classification** occur. These terms refer to the use of both weak and strong framing and weak and strong classification if deemed appropriate by the participants. If students demonstrate good control of the genre they need to master, then the framing and classification can be weakened. If they require more guidance, then the framing and classification can be

strengthened. Table 3.2 illustrates the waves of weak and strong classification in the genre pedagogy of the Australian school:

Table 3.2 The double classification and framing potential of genre-based pedagogy in the Australian tradition

Stage of the model	The nature of framing and classification at each stage
Deconstruction/ modeling	• Weak framing and classification occurs as teachers find ways of starting where students are at in order to open up the field and context of the genre. • Framing and classification values strengthen when a model text is introduced.
Joint construction	• Weak framing and classification occur as students open up a new field. • Framing and classification values strengthen when teacher guides the students into organizing the material. • Framing values split according to field (content offered by students) and genre (structure guided by teacher).
Individual construction	• Weak framing and classification occur as students open up a new field. • Weak framing but relatively strong classification occur, since students are aiming for a specific genre as they write a text on their own.

In other words the application of the cycle has become more pragmatic, and less focused on rigid application of a method.

3.3.4 Genre terminology

The scholars and teachers working in the Australian tradition tend to characterize genres in terms of broad rhetorical patterns. Although the naming of the patterns is based on current-traditional nomenclature, the patterns themselves have not been identified on an *a priori* basis. They are based on analysis of written work undertaken by theorists such as Martin (1989), Christie (1991) and Rothery (1996). According to these scholars their research has shown that different types of texts (e.g. *narratives*, *recounts*, *arguments*, *expositions*, *reports*, *procedures*, *explanations* and *descriptions*) are distinguished by distinctive patterns of vocabulary, grammar and cohesion. These patterns structure texts into stages, and in turn, each stage supports the purpose of the genre. Proponents of this school do not use the terms **text type** or **rhetorical mode**. They prefer the generic term **genre**, or the more specific terms **elemental genre**, **educational genre** or **curriculum**

genre to refer to texts that are similar in terms of discourse structure and internal linguistic criteria, rather than as discrete document types. For more complex genres such as *newspaper editorials*, *dissertations*, *laboratory reports*, etc., they sometimes use the term **macrogenre** (compare Hyland 2004:28). A macrogenre, such as a *newspaper editorial*, may be composed of several elemental genres, such as an *exposition*, a *discussion*, and a *rebuttal*.

Table 3.3 below is a summary of Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks & Yallop's (2000) "core educational genres" (elemental genres), showing their social purpose and possible "social locations" (macrogenres):

Table 3.3 Examples of important educational (elemental) genres, their main purposes and the (macro)genres of which they form part

Genre	Social purpose	Social location (macrogenre)
Recount	To reconstruct past experiences by retelling events in original sequence	Personal letters, police reports, insurance claims, incident reports
Procedure	To show how something is done	Instruction manuals, science reports, cookbooks, DIY books
Narrative	To entertain and instruct via reflection on experience	Novels, short stories
Description	To give an account of imagined or factual events, or of objects in real life	Travel brochures, novels product details
Report	To present factual information, usually by classifying things and then describing their characteristics	Brochures, government and business reports
Explanation	To give reasons for why a thesis has been proposed	News reports, textbooks
Exposition	To argue a case	Editorials, essays, commentaries

The genres are arranged from more simple and concrete to more complex and abstract. *Expositions* and *explanations*, for example, contain more complex forms and are therefore considered to be more demanding to write than *recounts* and *procedures*. Procedures, for instance, comprise of a series of steps that shows how to achieve a goal, and are typically based on simple imperative clauses using familiar action verbs and everyday objects. *Explanations*, on the other hand, typically require students to use sequential, causal and conditional conjunctions (compare Hyland 2004:29).

3.3.5 Genre analysis

The genre analysis done by the Australian school entails identifying the purposes of communication, the typical structures and linguistic features of each elemental genre that features prominently in the school curriculum, and the discourse structure (or stages) that each genre (or communicative act) requires.

From outside the strict boundaries of the Australian school, genre pedagogues working mainly in tertiary contexts have identified more of these curriculum genres (compare Grabe 2002), without necessarily drawing up inventories of their discourse and linguistic structures. *Evaluation*, *summary*, *hortation*, *recommendation*, *prediction* and *compare and contrast*, are mentioned by Paltridge (2002a:81) in reporting on Moore and Morton's (1998) study on genres at two Australian universities. Grabe (2002:255) refers to the educational psychologist Mosenthal, and adds patternings such as *classification*, *time sequence*, *cause and effect*, *problem-solution*, and *conditional* as examples of curriculum genres.

3.3.6 Main advantages of the Australian approach

According to Christie (1999:762) genre-based language teaching for second language students in Australia has been successful for reasons such as the following: First, it offers a principled way to identify and focus upon different types of English texts, providing a framework in which to learn features of grammar and discourse. Second, it offers students a sense of the generic models that are regularly revisited in an English-speaking culture, as well as the capacity for initiating students into ways of making meaning that are valued in such communities. Third, they form a potential basis for reflecting on and critiquing the ways in which knowledge and information are organized and constructed in the English language.

3.4 The New Rhetoric movement

The rhetorical perspective on genre made progress in the mid 1990s through three scholarly books, *viz.* Freedman and Medway's collections *Genre and the new rhetoric* (1994a) and *Learning and teaching genre* (1994b), as well as Berkenkotter and Huckin's

Genre knowledge in disciplinary communication: cognition/culture/power (1995). As indicated in chapter 2, the roots of the rhetorical movement reach back to the work of Aristotle. However, the most valuable contribution of the later rhetoricians was their anti-taxonomist approach, and their emphasis on genre as a means of social action within a wider sociorhetorical context. Devitt (1996:607) emphasizes that action receives precedence over form in the New Rhetoric.

3.4.1 Theoretical underpinnings

The New Rhetoric perspective on genre is not informed by linguistic theory. Rather, the New Rhetoricians draw on postmodern and literary theories (Bakhtin 1986), North American research into L1 rhetoric and composition (Freedman and Medway 1994a), and later Activity Theory (Russell 1997), of which the main tenet, according to Johns (2008:241), is that the cognitive cannot be separated from the social.

The New Rhetoricians are primarily interested in how contextual factors and institutional power relations may influence the practitioners of genres – to such an extent that their ways of thinking are influenced. In turn, genres may be challenged and reshaped to fit the needs of their users. From this perspective genres are ideological in nature. Coe (2002:198-200) identifies and discusses three important principles on which the New Rhetoric view is based:

1. Genres embody socially established strategies for achieving purposes in rhetorical situations.
2. Genres are not just text types: they imply/invoke/create/(re)construct situations (and contexts), communities, writers and readers (that is, subject positions).
3. Understanding genre will help students become versatile writers, able to adapt to the wide variety of writing tasks they are likely to encounter in their lives.

For the New Rhetoricians, then, understanding genres involves not only describing their lexicogrammatical forms and rhetorical patterns, but also investigating their social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Hyland (2004:36) summarizes the contribution of this movement in his observation that "through these contexts, we can understand the circumstances in which creativity is employed in writing and how meanings are negotiated". Textual regularities are not ignored, but they are regarded as evidence of

how people respond to routine situations in ways that differ by culture and by community.

The New Rhetoric has theorized and researched much about contexts and ideologies. A central topic is the socially constructed power relationships between texts, their writers and students who are learning about and are potentially oppressed by them. Regarding research methodology, the New Rhetoric movement is characterized by the use of ethnographic methods of data collection (participant observation, interviews and document collection) and analysis, and by "thick" descriptions of academic and professional contexts surrounding genres as well as school genres (including literary genres). Research publications of the New Rhetoric focus primarily on the historical evolution of genres (Bazerman 1997), the social processes involved in constructing important genres for a specific, powerful audience (Myers 1985), the study of genres in the workplace (Van Nostrand 1994) and contrastive studies of the attribution and uses of power within genres (Scollon 1997). Studies on genre in the workplace include sites such as tax accountants' offices, high technology companies, social work agencies, central banks, and industry (Paré 1991).

3.4.2 Domains of application

North American New Rhetoric studies have been geared toward a more academic audience than has ESP. The main audience comprises first language university students and novice professionals, rather than additional language learners.

3.4.3 Genre pedagogy

In general, the New Rhetoricians have expressed reservations as to whether genres can and should be taught. Berkenkotter & Huckin (1995:11-13) argue that what we know about genre and appropriate communicative behaviour results from our participation in the activities of our ordinary and professional lives, rather than being explicitly taught. They see genres as too complex and varied to be taken from their original rhetorical situations to be taught in the classroom.

The New Rhetoric assumes that genres can only be taught if they are static, as it would make no sense to teach flexible entities that are perpetually subject to change and reshaping by individual users. Therefore, New Rhetoric pedagogues do not provide students with explicit frameworks for learning the language features and functions of academic and professional genres (compare Freedman & Medway 1994a:10; Hyon 1996:703). A second reason why many New Rhetoric theorists reject the possibility of teaching written genres is that the classroom is seen to represent an inauthentic context for acquiring an understanding of writing. Like Social Learning theorists, New Rhetoric scholars believe that learning involves co-participation in community activities, and neither writing nor learning to write can be removed from its local historical and cultural context (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995:162-163). Another reservation they have is that education might assist students in acquiring conventional genres, and this may lead to reinforcing, rather than challenging the genres of power.

Despite their reluctance to teach genres explicitly, a number of New Rhetoricians have devised classroom procedures for raising university students' awareness of the social contexts that shape their writing, and some have devised tasks aimed at sensitizing students to the influence of rhetorical contexts on genres that they write (Adam & Artemeva 2002:185). Even Bakhtin (1986:41) has admitted that writers must be able to control the genres they use before they can creatively exploit them.

3.4.4 Genre terminology and genre analysis

New Rhetoricians have in general not been interested in naming genres or describing the linguistic similarities of texts for teaching purposes. Instead, the New Rhetoric has devoted more attention to investigating the ways in which such similarities are related to regularities of social activity (cf. Dias and Paré 2000).

3.5 The three genre traditions: similarities and differences

Even while most linguists and applied linguists today would call themselves anything but structuralists, categorization remains an important tool to gain control over a field of study, and to refer to important concepts in the field. Flowerdew (2002) prefers to divide genre scholarship into only two categories: a **linguistic** and a **nonlinguistic**. In

his view ESP and the Australian school take a linguistic approach, applying theories of functional grammar and discourse, and concentrating on the lexicogrammatical an rhetorical realization of the communicative purposes embodied in a genre, whereas the New Rhetoric is more focused on situational context, *i.e.* the purposes and functions of genres and the attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviours of the members of the discourse communities within which genres are situated. Johns (2002a:4) echoes this view.

Flowerdew (2002), however, neglects to highlight that ESP and the New Rhetoric are related in certain respects. Both ESP and the New Rhetoric prefer to depart from the *a priori* categories identified by the discourse communities themselves. The Sydney school, in contrast, departs from broad purposes or functions related to the school curriculum, which they have termed **elemental genres** or **curriculum genres**.

What the New Rhetoric and the Sydney school seem to have in common are their political agendas. However, the Sydney school emphasizes empowerment through genre knowledge: "Learning new genres gives one the linguistic potential to join new realms of social activity and social power" (Cope & Kalantzis 1993:7), whereas the New Rhetoric encourages students and professionals to challenge genre boundaries, and thereby resist the power of hegemony. This difference in the political agendas of the two schools has presumably been further influenced by differences between the audiences they target: the Sydney school focuses primarily on L2 learners and adult migrant labourers, whereas the New Rhetoric has L1 university students and novice professionals as its target group.

In summary, it would be possible to make a long list of partial similarities and differences regarding the three genre schools. However, since this exercise may have only peripheral value in supporting the main objective of this thesis, which is to design and evaluate writing courses for undergraduate university students in the humanities, it will not be pursued further at this stage.

Despite various differences between the three schools, as expounded in the foregoing analysis, they seem to agree at least on the following five principles (cf. Johns 2002:12; Hyland 2004:51):

1. Genres develop as a result of the recurrent ways people get things done in their social groups. Therefore, the influence of community and culture is important, both in text processing and production.
2. Because discourse communities are relatively stable, the genres produced in and by institutions achieve a certain stability over time, and this assists in giving coherence and meaning to social experience. This measure of stability entails that genres develop identifiable characteristics at the level of discourse structure and language. However, these characteristics are not only determined by the genre itself and the context in which it is used. They are also partially determined by the individuals reproducing the genre.
3. Genres are relatively stable, but they may change over time, both in terms of product and process, in response to changing needs.
4. When and if genres are taught, the discourse structure and the language (lexis and grammar) should be in line with the purpose of the text in a particular context, and the norms and conventions of the discourse community they serve.
5. Genres have social origins, and therefore different genres carry different degrees of power and status. Thus, some genres are valued more than others within a community, and these genres are therefore more worthy of being taught. Even in institutional contexts there are no texts that are free from the values, purposes and interests of those involved in producing and processing them. Since genres embody social and ideological dimensions, knowledge of text characteristics and of their social power, and critical reflection on these, should form part of any writing curriculum.

These five principles, as well as a considered combination of other best practices and principles from the three genre approaches, was observed in the design of the genre-based interventions discussed in chapters 6 to 8. However, first it is necessary to explore the context in which the interventions and their evaluation will be situated. Thus, in chapter 4 we turn to a survey of the writing demands facing undergraduate students in the humanities at the University of Pretoria.

Chapter 4: A survey of humanities genres

4.1 Introduction

Knowledge about the texts students need to write, the contexts in which they are written, and the ideologies that underlie them is a prerequisite for designing genre-based writing interventions.

The first important step for the applied linguist, after having explicated his/her approach to language and language learning, is to perform a contextual analysis (steps 1 and 2 of Lynch's CAM model). Such an analysis should ideally comprise both a **target context analysis** (the knowledge and skills required to perform competently in a target context) and a **source context analysis** (information about learners' current abilities, familiarity with writing processes and written genres, and their skills and perceptions). This chapter is aimed at exploring the target situation in its broader sense, *viz.* the institutional and disciplinary context of undergraduate students of the humanities, with specific reference to the University of Pretoria. It addresses the problem that students frequently find themselves having to meet different writing demands in different disciplines. What is more, knowledge of disciplinary variation is becoming especially important, with a growing trend towards inter- and multi-disciplinary study in higher education. Hewings and Hewings (2001:72) note that syllabi for academic writing in higher education are therefore focusing more and more on teaching students about the features of differing written genres, which, in their opinion, is a valuable development from earlier approaches which treated academic writing as a homogeneous entity.

In order to address the issue of genre variability on tertiary level, and to establish learner needs from an institutional point of view, this chapter has two main objectives: providing an overview of previous research on university genres and text types, and reporting on the survey conducted for the purpose of this thesis. The main aims of this phase of the research are to establish the types of writing required by undergraduate students in the humanities, and to pinpoint the similarities and differences between the various disciplines in terms of preferred genres and text types. This information will

then feed into the designs of two genre-based interventions – one with a subject-specific focus and the other with a cross-disciplinary focus.

4.2 A survey of the institutional context: university genres, text types and their characteristics

A target situation analysis for designing a genre-based syllabus should include an exploration of the institutional context, including the system in which genres are used.

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in the variability of genres in university settings. Genres vary over time (Bazerman 1988; Dudley-Evans & Henderson 1990), from one cultural context to another (Taylor & Chen 1991), and from discipline to discipline (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995; Prior 1998). Research on academic genres, their components and linguistic characteristics have been conducted from more than one angle. Some researchers have focused on compiling classification schemes in order to authenticate large-scale tests, such as TOEFL, others have attempted systematic, computerized analyses of corpora to refine the knowledge about the linguistic characteristics valued by particular disciplines, while others have departed from a rhetorical-functional perspective seeking correlations between rhetorical-textual features on the one hand, and the values, epistemologies and ontology of academic discourse communities.

4.2.1 Typological studies

A number of studies have examined the written genres and genre requirements for students studying at English-medium universities in the United States and Australia empirically.

Rose (1983) analyzed essay prompts, take-home examinations and assignment topics for undergraduate students from 17 academic departments at the University of California, Los Angeles, and developed a hierarchical scheme of simple to complex writing activities, including *listing*, *definition*, *seriation*, *classification*, *summary*, *comparison/contrast*, *analysis* and *academic argument*. She found that most writing assignments required *exposition* and *argument*.

Horowitz (1986b) examined 54 undergraduate writing tasks at a Western Illinois University. Faculty members representing 29 courses from 17 departments provided copies of writing assignment handouts and essay examinations. The required genres were (in order of frequency): *research essays*, *assignments requiring the connection of theory and data*, *summaries of/reactions to readings*, *case studies*, *research projects*, and an *annotated bibliography*.

Canseco and Byrd (1989) researched writing prompts in 48 postgraduate business courses at the Georgia State University. The most common writing requirements were the *formal examination*, *written versions of problems in the textbook*, *projects*, *case studies* and *reports*. Less commonly required genres were *surveys*, *business plans*, *audits*, *critiques*, *evaluations*, *diaries*, *project proposals*, and *political polls*.

Braine (1995) examined undergraduate writing requirements in 17 courses (80 assignments) in the natural sciences and engineering at the University of South Alabama. The required genres included *summary/reactions*, *laboratory reports* (75% of all assignments), d*esign reports*, *case studies*, and *research papers*.

In a study for the redevelopment of the TOEFL test that examined written genre and text type requirements of 162 undergraduate and graduate courses at eight North American universities, Hale, Taylor, Bridgeman, Carson, Kroll and Kantor (1996) found the most commonly required written genres to be *documented essays*, *summaries*, *plans/proposals*, and *book reviews*. The most frequently required rhetorical tasks in the humanities were *exposition*, *argument*, *cause-and-effect*, *problem-solution*, *classification/enumeration*, *compare-contrast* and *analysis*.

Moore and Morton (1998) did research into the written genre and text type requirements of undergraduate and postgraduate students at Monash University and the University of Melbourne in Australia. The most commonly required undergraduate genres were the *academic essay* (58%), *case-study reports* (7.2%), *exercises requiring the application of a discipline-specific model* (9.6%), *research reports* (6.4), *experimental reviews* (4.8%), *experimental research reports* (4.8%), *literature reviews* (1.8%), *summaries* (1.6%),

short answers (1.6%), and "*other*" *genres* (4.8%). The text types they identified are *evaluation* (26.8%), *description* (17.2%), *summary* (14.9%), *compare/contrast* (15.6%), *explanation* (10.8%), *recommendation* (7%), *hortation* (4.5%), *prediction* (2.8%), and *instruction* (1%).

Melzer (2003) analyzed 787 writing assignments from four disciplinary categories at tertiary institutions in the US, *viz.* the hard sciences, the social sciences, business and humanities. The most commonly required genres were the *short-answer exam* (23%), *journal* (13%), *term paper* (6%), *summary/response* (4%), *laboratory report* (4%), *abstract* (92%), and *review* (2%).

Dunworth (2008) conducted an empirical study at an Australian University of which more than 25% comprises international students. Her aim was to identify the range of tasks (including tests and examinations and oral participation in class) undertaken by first-year undergraduate students according to the four institutionalized academic divisions: business, engineering and science, health sciences, and humanities. Assessment of written work varied among disciplinary areas, but *timed essays* in examinations or tests were accorded the highest status in business, whereas *non-timed essays* (short essays and extended essays) were prominent only in the humanities (15% of all communication tasks undertaken by humanities students).

Studies that relied on self-reports by students, and survey questionnaires filled out by lecturers, e.g. Bridgeman and Carlson (1983) and Carson, Chase, Gibson and Hargrove (1992), were not included in this overview because of the fact that responding lecturers sometimes exaggerate the importance of writing or the variety of writing in their classes, either to put themselves in a positive light, or trying to give the researcher what the lecturer thinks he/she wants.

Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis and Swann (2003:46) generalized research outcomes to come up with groups of subject-fields that share particular written genres. The **natural sciences**, (represented by physics, chemistry, biology and geology) typically write *laboratory reports*, *project proposals* and *reports*, *fieldwork notes*, *essays*, and *dissertations*. The **social sciences** (for example, sociology, geography,

economics, politics, cultural and media studies, and psychology) prefer *essays*, *project reports*, *fieldwork notes*, and *dissertations*. **Humanities** subjects, such as English, history, languages, classics, fine art, religious studies, and nursing are known for *essays*, *critical analyses*, *translations*, and *projects*. A fourth grouping identified by Coffin *et al.* (2003:46) is the **applied disciplines**, under which business and management, philosophy, music, engineering, and health and social welfare are subsumed. They admit that it is a convenient way of grouping disciplines with certain similar characteristics, while acknowledging the complexity of demarcating disciplines and their affiliations. Unfortunately, however, no indication of the empirical base of the research is offered.

In all the studies that overtly included the humanities (Horowitz 1986b; Hale *et al.* 1996; Moore & Morton 1989; Coffin *et al.* 2003; Dunworth 2008) the *academic essay* (whether timed or non-timed; short or extensive) features prominently. However, generalization from these studies is complicated by the vastly different research designs, including different sampling techniques, variable definition of categories *(a priori vs. a posteriori*), and variable selection and definition of research units (genre, rhetorical mode, cognitive demand, etc.). Moreover, the frequency of task types depends heavily on how disciplines are clustered together in bigger groupings, such as schools or faculties, at a particular time.

In order to design and develop genre-based interventions for the purposes of a particular institutional context it was necessary to establish which genres and text types were preferred by the various disciplines, and to explore possible rhetorical-functional reasons for these differences.

4.2.2 Corpus linguistics

Douglas Biber (1988; 1989; 2006) is well-known for his research on university genres and text types from the perspective of linguistic theory. Initially, his work was aimed at describing linguistic variation across a large variety of spoken and written genres in English. He departed from the premise that a typology of texts is a prerequisite to any comparative genre analysis (Biber 1989:4), but contended that although there is wide agreement on the importance of four basic modes of discourse, *viz. narration*,

description, *exposition* and *argumentation*, there is a lack of agreement on the particular parameters distinguishing among them. Different definitions of *exposition* have, for instance, focused on one or a combination of the following parameters: content type, organization, objectivity, purpose, or information density.

Biber (1988) conducted a comprehensive linguistic analysis in order to present a unified model of genre variation in English. The model was developed by analyzing the co-occurrence distribution of 67 linguistic features in 481 spoken and written texts of contemporary English. He used large-scale text corpora, *viz.* the LOB corpus and the London-Lund corpus, representing 23 different genres, such as *conversation*, *broadcast*, *public speeches*, *academic prose* and *fiction* (Biber 1988:56). Some of these genre categories represent several distinct subgenres. For the genre *academic prose* there are seven sub-genres (Biber 1988:171): *natural science academic prose*, *medical academic prose*, *mathematics academic prose*, *social science academic prose*, *politics/ education/law academic prose*, *humanities academic prose*, and *technology/ engineering academic prose*.

Standardized computer-based text corpora and automatic identification techniques were then used to compute the frequencies of salient lexical and syntactic features. The co-occurrence patterns among these features were analyzed through multivariate statistical techniques (factor analysis) to identify the functional dimensions of linguistic variation among texts and to provide an overall description of relations among genres with respect to these dimensions (Biber 1988:56). Seven dimensions or factors were initially identified in this way, which were later (Biber 1989:10) narrowed down to five:

1. involved versus informational production
2. narrative versus non-narrative concerns
3. explicit versus situation-dependent reference
4. overt expression of persuasion
5. abstract versus non-abstract information

Biber (1988:170) concedes that genres are not necessarily coherent in their linguistic characterizations, and findings regarding humanities subjects are not really enlightening, such as that humanities prose can be either markedly narrative in focus or

markedly non-narrative (Dimension 2), which reflects the differences between historical studies on the one hand, and philosophical and analytical studies on the other (Biber 1988:193). He also notes that political sciences are quite persuasive relative to other academic sub-genres, while social science prose is typical of academic exposition in being non-persuasive. Thus it could be claimed that no systematic characterization of genres and their linguistic features resulted from Biber's research.

4.2.3 Rhetorical-functional research

The following differences between the so-called "hard sciences" and "soft sciences" have been noted by Hyland and other colleagues, and linked to functional explanations:

- Genres such as *laboratory reports*, *project proposals and research reports* feature prominently in the natural sciences and engineering, whereas *academic essays* and *critical analyses* are frequently required in the humanities. The explanation offered by Hyland (1994:352). is that in the natural sciences describing procedures, defining objects, and planning solutions are required, whereas in the humanities analyzing and synthesizing multiple sources are important
- Research articles in the natural sciences and engineering are much more conventionalized in their discourse structure than articles in the social sciences and humanities (Holmes 1997:332). The latter, on the other hand, display greater complexity and elaboration at the beginning rather than the end (the reverse is the case in the hard sciences). Furthermore, the discussion sections in the social sciences are less complex and less predictable than those in the hard sciences (Holmes 1997:332). The conventionalization in the natural sciences is a reflection of the higher degree of bureaucratization (use of quantitative data, collaborative authorship and external financial support). Hewings and Hewings (2001:74) explain this by contending that hard disciplines have a more cohesive body of agreed knowledge than soft disciplines. Given the lack of consensus on goals and methods of research in the social sciences, there may be greater need to establish the parameters of research more overtly.
- Articles from the humanities contain 75% more stance items (hedges and boosters, and explicit markers of evaluation and attitude) than the sciences and engineering. On the other hand, articles from science and engineering contain more arguments based on theoretical models and experimental results (Hyland 2006:30). This can be

explained by the fact that in the soft sciences problems are less clearly defined and thus explanations are likely to be less assured. Thus, writers have to "work harder" to engage their audience and shape their arguments to the shared perspectives of the discipline. Furthermore, writers of science and engineering frequently offer their research as contributions to pressing real-world issues, whereas writers in the humanities tend to examine unresolved disciplinary relevant problems (Hyland 2006:24).

- Self-citation is more common in the hard knowledge fields than in the soft fields (Hyland 2003). However, natural science writers usually downplay their personal role or own voice, whereas first-person reference is common in the humanities. The explanation given by Hyland (2006:32) is that downplaying personal involvement in the natural sciences highlights the phenomena under study, the replicability of research activities, and the generality of the findings. On the other hand, in the humanities personal credibility, explicitly getting behind the arguments and personally intervening to evaluate material and express a point of view play an important role in creating a convincing discourse en seeking agreement for it.
- Articles in the humanities comprise twice as many citations as in the science disciplines. In the soft sciences the writers also give more prominence to the cited author through use of integral structures and by placing authors in subject position (Hyland 2006:25). This is ascribed to the fact that scientific knowledge in the "hard" sciences develops in a more linear way than in the humanities. As a result, natural scientists participate in relatively discrete areas of study and their research proceeds along well defined paths. Therefore, they can presuppose a certain amount of theoretical, background, procedural expertise and technical lexis (Hyland 2006:25).
- Reader pronouns occur much more in humanities and social science papers (particularly philosophy) than in science and engineering papers, which can be explained by the fact that reader pronouns are intended to appeal to scholarly solidarity, presupposing a set of mutual, discipline-identifying understandings, which link the writer and reader (Hyland 2006:33-34).
- In the choice of grammatical subject the humanities have a preference for animate subjects. On the other hand disciplines with epistemic subjects, such as the natural sciences, foreground research methods, inferences and findings, and prefer inanimate subjects. The explanation for this finding is that the humanities are more

concerned with specific people, places and events, whereas the social sciences and natural sciences rely more on generalizations and abstractions. This is particularly reflected in the choice of grammatical subject.

Understandably, the genres and the language of the humanities demonstrates much more human involvement than the language of the natural sciences, and even the social sciences, and the intrusion of the writer-researcher into the academic text is much more acceptable than in other disciplinary clusters.

Against the backdrop of existing typologies and the relationships between genre preferences and disciplinary purposes, a survey was done in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria to establish which genres and text types were preferred by various disciplines in the humanities, and to explore possible rhetorical-functional reasons for these differences.

4.3 Survey of writing requirements in the humanities

4.3.1 Methodology

During the first quarter of 2007 ten university departments were approached to contribute copies of their study materials for analysis, *viz.* Music, Sociology, Historical and Heritage Studies, Visual Arts, Communication Pathology, Philosophy, Political Sciences, English, Social Work and Criminology, and Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences. The goal was to obtain a balanced representation of the humanities. Toward that end, the following procedure was used.

First, an appointment was made with each head of department to explain the purpose and goals of the project, and to request copies of undergraduate study guides as well as other materials containing writing prompts. Some of the heads of department preferred to consult with their lecturing staff first. Two departments mentioned complicating factors, *viz.* the Department of Music and the Department of Communication Pathology. It was then mutually agreed to exclude these departments from the study. Written, informed consent was obtained from the heads of the other eight departments, as well as from each individual author who contributed materials. One of the limitations of the

sampling method was self-selection: Lecturing staff contributed study materials on a voluntary basis. This entailed that generalization would be restricted.

The format/medium in which study materials was received, varied: Philosophy, Social Work and Criminology, Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences, Visual Arts, and Sociology provided hard copies of study guides, whereas English, Historical and Heritage Studies and Political Sciences provided their documents in electronic format. When entering the data it was observed that the interpretation of certain writing prompts depended on guidelines for academic writing provided in general departmental manuals. These departments were requested to provide copies of such documents for contextualization purposes. However, the manuals were not used to contribute data for the investigation.

Writing tasks were recorded by discipline. The procedure entailed search-reading the study materials, marking all writing prompts, and converting them to a computer readable text format. The word-processing data was then transferred to a multicolumn matrix in Microsoft Word. This matrix contains slots for the code and name of each module, the full text of each writing prompt, the name of the genre as it occurs in the study guide – unless only a generic label such as "assignment" or "task" appears in the study guide, or the prompt has not been labelled – and a column for assigning a generic label that would form part of a formal classification scheme. Hale *et al.*'s (1996, 11-12) scheme, which was designed to assist in conceptualizing the manner of assessing writing on the 2000 TOEFL test, was minimally adapted for this purpose. A possible weakness of this procedure is its reliance on a set of *a priori* genre categories combined with an interpretive categorization procedure. However, the fact that many departments use only superordinate labels in their study guides rendered the use of *in vivo* categorization unsuitable.

The first version of the classification scheme comprised seven genre categories: *essay* (the statement or development of a proposition or a point of view in a discursive format); *summary* (condensing information, without discussion or elaboration); *case study* (*analysis* and presentation of a case situation); *research report* (a combination of prescribed forms of writing, such as a statement of objectives, description of a method,

and presentation of results); *plan/proposal* (the approach used for addressing an issue or solving a problem); *book review* (summary of the content and analysis/evaluation of the points made); *unstructured writing* (putting thoughts on paper without structural constraints, or where the writer records thoughts and events as free-standing observations, such as journal entries).

During the process of analyzing and categorizing data, the following adjustments were made to the schema:

- Instead of adding a category to accommodate the *literature review*, it was subsumed under the category *essay*, as most essays require the consultation of external sources.
- For the genre *critical analysis* a separate (eighth) category was created because the discourse structure of this genre is largely standardized. A critical analysis typically involves a summary of the content, relating some aspect of that content to the topic, providing a thesis statement, and developing the argument by providing details from the artefact being analyzed.
- The category *research report* was found to be too specific to subsume the large variety of report types required, and therefore the superordinate *report* was used.
- Following Hale *et al.* (1996, 11), assignments in which the writer is asked to analyze an already written case study were subclassified as a *case study analysis* in the *essay* genre.
- To accommodate multimodal genres involving a substantial amount of written text, a ninth category was added, *viz.* the *audiovisual presentation.*
- For the sake of completeness *portfolio* was added.

Based on the assumption that the instructional verbs used in writing prompts provided students with cues about the modes of writing that are required, a systematic analysis of all writing prompts was conducted, using Wordsmith Tools version 4.0. A point of criticism that might be raised against this procedure is that the boundary between rhetorical mode and cognitive demand, as instantiated by Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, becomes blurred. Although such reservations might be warranted, one could also argue that instructional verbs have a dual function: They give an indication of whether the required action is at a higher or a lower level, and of the rhetorical organization of the content. *Describe*, for instance, represents a lower-level

cognitive demand, and it also indicates to the student that a recording has to be given of sense impressions and qualities of a type, class or group (compare Hale *et al.* 1996, 12-13).

First, a list of search terms for building concordances was compiled from scholarly sources, including Weissberg and Buker (1990, 184-192), Cope and Kalantzis (1993, 9-10), Hale *et al.* (1996, 12-15); Macken-Horarik (2002, 21-22; 37-38), Paltridge (2002a, 81-82), and Hyland (2006, 48). The eventual list contained search terms (mostly wildcards) for the following rhetorical modes: *analysis*, *argumentation (give your opinion)*, *cause and effect*, *classification*, *comparison and contrast*, *definition*, *description*, *discussion*, *exemplification*, *explanation*, *exposition*, *evaluation*, *illustration*, *narration*, *procedure*, *process*, *recount*, *reflection*, and *summary (make a synopsis)*. The following screen capture (Figure 4.1) shows the first twenty-one lines of the concordance for the search term *expla** (representing *explain*, *explanation* and *explanatory*):

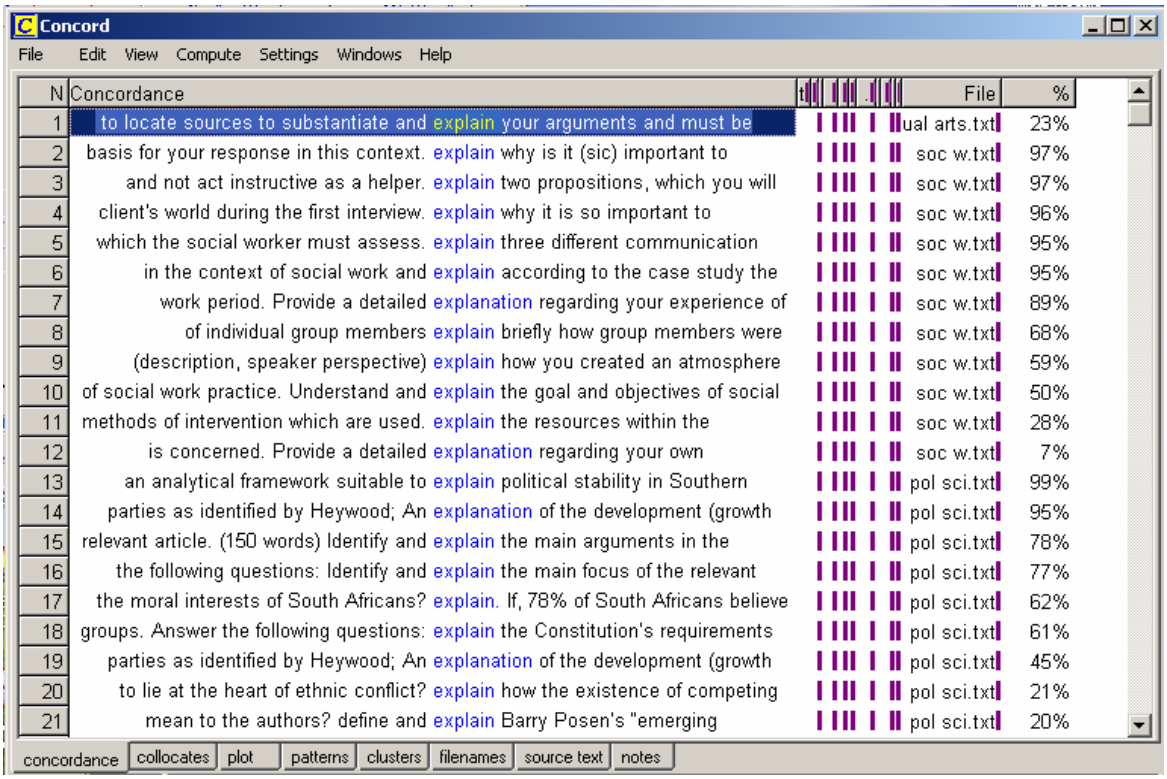


Figure 4.1 Screen capture of the concordance for *expla**

After recording the findings by department, a summary was sent to each head of department, with an invitation to comment if it was felt that the discipline was misrepresented. Three departments responded: English, Historical and Heritage Studies, and Social Work. English and Social Work were satisfied, and Historical and Heritage Studies questioned the researcher's interpretation of their use of the verb *discuss*. The criticism was regarded to be valid and constructive, and the final report (included below) has been adjusted accordingly.

4.3.2 Findings according to discipline

Already at the data recording stage meaningful variation across disciplines became apparent, particularly in terms of reference to rhetorical modes, and preferences with regard to genre and rhetorical mode. In this section a partially quantitative and partially interpretive overview of the findings will be given according to discipline, followed by tabulated summaries of the data.

Department of Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences

The Department of Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences contributed 21 study guides. Since sport studies is largely an applied science, it was anticipated that assignments would be less "essayist" than other disciplines in the humanities, and more oriented towards application, teamwork and organization. This was, in fact, borne out by the findings: 17 of the 22 assignments in the subcorpus are *group assignments*, six of which are written *essays* with a strong emphasis on application of theory. Eleven assignments belong to a genre that does not occur in any of the other subcorpora, *viz.* the *expo assignment*, which is typically an oral group presentation, supported by a poster, a model, or an electronic slide show. The expo assignment was assigned to the category *audiovisual presentation* in the formal classification scheme.

Only one individual written assignment (*essay*) and one individual *oral presentation* occur in the subcorpus. The remaining genres comprise three *portfolios* (containing written work of restricted scope) and a *business plan*. The latter is required for a module on sports management.

In the Biokinetics subcorpus *illustrate*, with its variants *illustration* and *illustrated*, is the only rhetorical mode to occur relatively frequently, mostly in prompts for expo assignments (15 times out of 25 occurrences in the combined corpus). If one considers that in seven instances (in the combined corpus) *illustration* and *illustrated* refer to visual material, instead of speech acts, the number of occurrences of *illustrate* in the Biokinetics corpus is 15 out of a total of 18. Of the remaining three, one occurs in the Visual Arts corpus, one in the Historical and Heritage Studies corpus and one in the Social Work corpus. *Reflect* and its past tense form occurs six times out of a total of 15. However, it is not used to refer to a mode of writing, and therefore not relevant for consideration in this regard. Compare, for instance: "Expo material must reflect scientific research methods" (x2), "[…] reflect a specific theme", and "[…] reflect an understanding".

Department of English

The seven study guides volunteered by the Department of English contributed 31 assignments to the corpus: 14 *critical analyses* and 17 *essays*, of which six require a primarily argumentative mode of exposition, three require *compare and contrast* as their principal structuring mechanism, two call for the description of a *process*, and one is overtly *descriptive*. Five of the essays are described as "more challenging", including two *comparisons*, one *description* and two *explanations*.

The rhetorical modes that feature most prominently in the English corpus are *argumentation*, and (critical) *analysis*. This finding is not surprising, as much of the academic activity in English literature courses is focused on evaluating literary artefacts by analyzing them and giving reasons for interpretations. The collocation *critical analysis* occurs no less than 12 times in the subcorpus. A critical argumentative mode is further signalled by the prolific use of the word *comment* (both the noun and the verb). The English corpus accounts for 27 instances out of a total of 33. Furthermore, *discuss* and its morphological variants occur 20 times out of 107.

Department of Visual Arts

The Department of Visual Arts contributed 11 study guides containing ten writing prompts: five *essays*, four *critical analyses* (of works of art, exhibitions and artefacts),

and one *research report*. Four of the five essays are critical reflections on the artist's own work, required in practical modules such as Information Design. The importance of self-reflection is underscored by the use of cognition verbs such as *reflect*, *contemplate*, *consider* and *understand*.

The relative prominence of the rhetorical mode *analysis* in theoretical modules, *viz.* History of Art, is predictable in light of the salience of the *critical analysis* genre: eight out of 61 is quite significant given the moderate amount of data provided by the Visual Arts department. In most instances the instructional phase *critically discuss* is used (seven times out of a total of 35 occurrences of this collocation in the combined database), and usually involves selecting one or more representative examples, critiquing these, and supporting evaluative statements with evidence from an exhibition/work of art, theory, research, etc. Another rhetorical mode with a fairly strong representation is *argumentation*. The noun *argument* and its morphological variants occur eight times out of a total of 31. This finding is not surprising, as arguments usually need to be put forward in support of analysis and evaluation.

Department of Historical and Heritage Studies

The Department of Historical and Heritage Studies houses three subdisciplines, *viz.* History, Cultural History and Heritage and Cultural Tourism. Twenty-one study guides were received in an electronic format, comprising 76 writing prompts of which 62 call for *essays*: 25 long, 23 short, one comparative, two descriptive, five explanatory, and six argumentative. Other assignments include two *book reviews*; two *critical analyses*; 75 *essays*: one *itinerary*, one *oral presentation*, two *portfolios*, and six *reports* on museum visits. The subdiscipline of History is dominated by essays, whereas Cultural History and Heritage and Cultural Tourism make use of a larger variety of genres, including *essays*, *reports on museum visits*, *book reviews*, an *itinerary*, *portfolios* and an *oral presentation*. The variation in these subdisciplines is comparable to practice-oriented disciplines, such as Social Work, and Biokinetics Sport and Leisure Sciences.

According to sources on writing about history, such as Marius and Page (2005:52-74), historical writing is characterized by four main rhetorical modes, *viz. narration*, *description*, *argumentation* and *exposition* (for which *analysis* is often used as a

synonym). In the field of history *exposition* and *analysis* invariably require *explanation*, which in turn require identifying possible *causes* for particular effects.

All four modes were found to enjoy prominence in the Historical and Heritage Studies subcorpus, albeit not explicitly. *Analysis/exposition* is represented by the verb *explain*, which occurs 25 times out of a total of 51. The high frequency of the verb *explain* in the History corpus is in line with one of the core objectives of this subject field, *viz.* "to make sense of a historical event by providing reasons for it having occurred" (Department of Historical and Heritage Studies 2006:8). *Describe* occurs 13 out of a total of 51, and fulfils more than one rhetorical function: it denotes both *narration* ("relating a series of events in a chronological order") and *description*, in the sense of "recording a particular sensory experience". Initially *argumentation* seemed to be underrepresented in the subcorpus, given the emphasis it receives in the departmental study manual. However, after close scrutiny of the various concordances it became apparent that *discuss**, which occurs 25 times out of a total of 107, invariably implies argumentation. Compare the definition given for *discuss* in the study manual (p. 8): "to examine critically through argument". Supporting evidence for the importance of argumentation in the field of Historical and Heritage Studies is also found in the prominence of the noun *opinion*, which occurs five times out of a total of ten in the combined corpus.

Department of Philosophy

The five study guides that were provided include eight *essay* assignments. Four of these are overtly argumentative, as suggested by expressions such as *argue, discuss, take a definite stand on, develop your own point of view*, and four belong to other essay types. One assignment, a service module offered to Commerce students, is a *journal*.

Argumentation is clearly the most salient rhetorical mode, despite the relatively few occurrences of its lexical instantiations in the subcorpus: four out of 31. The relatively low frequency in the essay prompts may be partially due to the size of the subcorpus, and owing to the elaborate explanation of this mode in general departmental literature. Compare, for instance, the following description of the mode in the organizational component of the introductory first year module:

> Start with the assumption that your reader knows nothing about the subject that you are writing about, or if your reader knows something about the subject, that s/he does not share your point of view. Your readers will only share your view if you could convince them. Consequently you have to provide convincing reasons in support of your point of view.

Department of Political Sciences

Twelve study guides, which include 14 writing prompts, were received electronically. Eight of these are *essays*, ranging from 1400 to 3000 words per essay. Longer essays have to be accompanied by a *synopsis*. The rest of the corpus consists of a *research report*, two comprehension tests requiring relatively short answers, two more difficult comprehension exercises, and a *critical group discussion* of a scientific article, followed by a *report* by the group leader. The comprehension tests and the *critical group discussion* were categorized as *critical analyses.*

The rhetorical modes featuring prominently in this subcorpus are *discuss*, *argue*, *summarize* and *explain*. *Argumentation* assumes a central position: The verb *argue* and other morphological variants occur 12 times out of a total of 31 instances; and the word *discuss* and its variants occur 29 times out of the total of 107. An interesting finding was the prominence of *summarizing*: The word *summarize* occurs three times out of a total of ten, and the word *synopsis* occurs ten times, which represents the total number of occurrences in the entire corpus. Possible reasons for the emphasis on summarizing are improving reading skills, assessing comprehension, and facilitating preparation for professional activities that require condensing a bulk of literature. Similar to Historical and Heritage Studies, Political Sciences focus strongly on issues of cause and effect, albeit focused more on the present and the future than on the past. It is thus not surprising that the word *explain* and other morphological variants comprise a fifth of the total of 51 occurrences.

Department of Social Work and Criminology

The Department of Social Work and Criminology contributed ten study guides, of which only two came from the criminology subdepartment. It was decided not to include the criminology materials, since the data would not be sufficient to allow generalization.

The Social Work materials include 20 assignments, dominated by *reports* on social interventions with individuals, groups and communities. Included are: a *report on voluntary work*, a *community profile* (based on a *situation analysis*); a *report on observation at an NGO*, a *report on social work intervention with individuals* (interview), and a *report on projects addressing specialized fields.* One *research report* was required. In three cases the report comprises a genre set, *i.e.* it is made up of two or more genres that contribute towards a common purpose. Two genres are associated with the activity "intervention with communities", *viz.* a *preparatory report*, and a *final report*. Another genre set, which is associated with "intervention with groups" comprises a *group work proposal*, a *report on the course of a session* (also called a *process report*), and a *comprehensive group work report*. For each type of report a template prescribing the discourse structure is provided in the study guide for Social Work Practice. In the theoretical component of Social Work the following genres are required: an *analysis of a scientific article*, two *literature reviews*, a *research report*, one individual and one group *essay* on professional values and processes (and their practical applications), a *critical analysis of a case study*, and a *critical evaluation* of a previous assignment.

The three text types/rhetorical modes with the strongest representation in the Social Work subcorpus, are *evaluation* (31 out of a total of 51), *description* (28 out of a total of 51, *analysis* (11 out of a total of 61), and discussion (22 out of a total of 107). The high frequencies of *evaluation* and *description* can be explained with reference to the main purpose and the discourse structure of reports in this subject field: Reports mainly comprise a descriptive component and an evaluative component. Processes, actions, events, outcomes and institutions are typically described after close observation (compare phrases such as "~ the target group", "~ the organization", "~ the experience you gained", "~ the knowledge you gained", "~ your impression of […]", "~ the roles you played", "~ the value of […]", and "~ your own perception"), and then evaluated or reflected upon. An analysis of the concordance materials revealed that *discuss* and *discussion* are used as synonyms for *describe* and *description* in 50% of the instances (11 out of 22 in the concordance of 107 occurrences). In the other half of the cases *discuss* primarily requires the student to consider a problem or an issue from more than one point of view (the primary rhetorical meaning of the term). In a few instances a

recount, *procedure* or *narrative* is required, as in "Discuss the course of the intervention", "Provide a discussion of how you plan to assess", "Discuss the aim and objectives", and "Discuss your introduction to the client".

Department of Sociology

Three essay prompts occur in the 4 study guides received from the Department of Sociology, two of which are *research reports*, and the third is an *argumentative essay*. All essay prompts are underpinned by a comprehensive set of guidelines provided in the *Departmental Guide*. The pivotal rhetorical mode seems to be *argumentation*. The verb *argue* and the nominal forms *argument* and *argumentation* occur seven times in the subcorpus – almost a quarter of the total number of occurrences in the corpus.

4.3.3 Summary and interpretation of data

The quantitative findings concerning genres and text types are summarized in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Summary of salient genres and text types/rhetorical modes in the humanities

Department	No. of study guides (no. of prompts)	Genres and no. of occurrences		Salient genres	Salient modes and no. of occurrences as a fraction of the total	
Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure Sciences	21 (23)	Presentation Essay Portfolio Plan/proposal	12 7 3 1	Presentation Essay (group)	Illustrate Reflect	15/18 6/15
English	7 (31)	Critical analysis Essay	17 14	Critical analysis	Comment Analyze Discuss	27/33 24/61 20/107
Historical and Heritage Studies	21 (76)	Essay Report Book review Critical analysis Portfolio Plan/proposal Presentation	62 6 2 2 2 1 1	Essay	Explain Discuss Describe	25/51 25/107 13/51
Philosophy	5 (9)	Essay Freewriting	8 1	Essay	Argue	4/31
Visual Arts	11 (10)	Essay Critical analysis Report	5 4 1	Essay Critical analysis	Argue Analyze	8/31 8/61
Political Sciences	12 (14)	Essay Critical analysis Report	8 5 1	Essay	Argue Summarize Discuss Explain	12/31 3/10 (10/10) 29/107 10/51
Sociology	4(3)	Report Essay	2 1	Report	Argue	7/31
Social Work	8 (20)	Report Plan/proposal Critical analysis Essay Presentation	9 2 2 5 2	Report Essay	Evaluate Describe Analyze Discuss	31/51 28/51 11/61 22/107

To the extent that these figures are representative, the findings regarding genres largely coincide with the categorization of Coffin *et al.* (2003), *viz.* that the humanities have a preference for *essays* and *critical analyses*, and the social sciences prefer *project reports* and *essays*. Table 4.2 gives a breakdown of the preferred assignment genres per academic department:

Table 4.2 Ratio of salient assignment genres to total number of assignments per department

Department	No. of assignments in salient categories (with ratio in brackets)			Total no. of assignments per dept.
	Essays	Reports	Critical analyses	
Social Work	5 (20%)	9 (45%)	0 (0%)	20
Sociology	1 (33%)	2 (66%)	0 (0%)	3
Biokinetics, Sport and Leisure	7 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	23
Historical and Heritage Studies	62 (82%)	6 (8%)	2 (3%)	76
Philosophy	8 (89%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9
Political Sciences	8 (57%)	1 (7%)	5 (36%)	14
Visual Arts	5 (50%)	1(10%)	4 (40%)	10
English	14 (45%)	0 (0%)	17 (55%)	31

These figures may be used as a rationale for concentrating on the academic essay in writing courses aimed at students in the humanities and research-oriented social sciences. For the students in service-oriented social science departments, such as Social Work, a course on report-writing may be useful.

As far as rhetorical modes are concerned, the data indicates that *discussion* is the most prolific (107 occurrences in the combined database), followed by *analysis* (61 occurrences), *description* (51 occurrences), *explanation* (51 occurrences) and *argument* + (give your) *opinion* (41 occurrences). Although these figures shed some light on the salience of rhetorical modes in the humanities they still do not tell us whether certain genres favour specific modes. To explore possible affinities separate databases were built for each of the terms denoting the most salient genres, *viz. essay*, *report* and *critical analysis*. Table 3 summarizes the findings with regard to the modes highlighted above.

Table 4.3 Relationships between salient genres and preferred rhetorical modes

Genre (Word count per genre category in brackets)	Rhetorical mode	No. of occurrences of the rhetorical mode in the genre subcorpus
Essay (4201 words)	discuss	48
	explain	27
	argue (+ give your opinion)	12 (+ 8) = 20
	describe	13
	analyze	8
	evaluate	0
Report (2219 words)	evaluate	27
	describe	23
	discuss	18
	explain	3
	analyze	0
	argue	0
Critical analysis (489 words)	analyze	16
	argue	8
	discuss	4
	describe	0
	explain	0
	evaluate	0

According to the table *discussion*, *explanation* and *argumentation* are the rhetorical modes favoured by essays, *evaluation*, *description* and *discussion* by reports, and *analysis*, *argumentation* and *discussion* by critical analyses.

Given the fact that verbs such as *analyze*, *discuss*, and *explain* usually presuppose argumentation, and given the emphasis on the skill of arguing a case in departmental manuals, it is a far more important mode than reflected by the concordances. In general, the findings should be interpreted with circumspection, because of the ambiguity of certain lexical items: *Discuss*, for instance, is used in three distinct senses: (1) "to consider a problem or an issue from more than one point of view in the light of some kind of frame or position"; (2) "to provide a detailed account of a particular sensory

experience", and (3) "to provide an account of an event in the order that things happened or should happen". In other words it is also used to denote *description*, *narrative*, *recount* and *process*. With regard to the report genre, the term is mostly used in sense (1), and occasionally in sense (3), whereas the *essay* genre mostly activates sense (2). Conventions of the subject-field also play a role in this regard: In the Social Work corpus sense (1) dominates, whereas sense (2) dominates in Historical and Heritage Studies and Political Sciences. *Describe* is also ambiguous in terms of senses (2) and (3) above, which it shares with *discuss*.

In other words, although certain generalizations can be made on the basis of frequency counts, it is important, in addition, to analyze data qualitatively in order to take note of the idiosyncratic conventions of different discourse communities.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the types of writing valued by institutions of higher learning. Although various empirical studies have been conducted in the English-speaking world, which have indicated that particular clusters of disciplines favour particular genres, course design should be guided by local research if the designer is committed to a truly target- and needs-driven curriculum.

The research reported on in section 4.3 of this chapter has shown that the *academic essay* is the written genre most frequently required by lecturers in the humanities and research oriented social sciences at the tertiary institution under scrutiny. Practice-oriented social sciences, such as Social Work, seem to favour informative *reports*. It has also been established that students are expected to master various modes of writing. In essay-writing *argumentation* (for which the synonym *exposition* is often used in scholarly literature on writing) is a critically important mode.

In terms of specificity narrow-angled and wide-angled approaches seem to be supported by the outcomes of the research. Narrow-angled courses (which are termed "field-rich" by Drury 2006:235) require a close fit between the purposes and conventions of disciplinary communities on the one hand, and the writing conventions that are taught. Such courses should ideally be mapped on the syllabus of the subject-field in question,

and close collaboration between writing teachers and academic lecturers is desirable. The remaining option would be semi-generic (or "context-rich") courses. Such courses may focus on generally required genres such as the *academic essay* or the *report*, and target students within a cluster of disciplines with limited variation, such the humanities. Chapter 6 deals with the process of in-depth contextual research that would facilitate the design of a curriculum for writing academic essays within a subject-specific context, while chapter 8 deals with the design of a semi-generic course for students who are enrolled for qualifications in the Faculty of Humanities. However, course design cannot take place in a vacuum. Such a venture should depart from a principled pedagogical approach that is based on the applied linguist's beliefs about what language is and how students learn to write. The issue of a model for teaching writing is dealt with in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Instructional model

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 has outlined theoretical knowledge from linguistics, applied linguistics, psychology, and learning theory, which provide insight into the nature of genre in language, while chapter 3 has indicated how language professionals in North America and Australia have combined theoretical knowledge, empirical evidence and experience of L2 teaching and learning to design genre-based syllabi for university-level academic literacy courses. From the exposition in Chapter 3 it is clear that the three genre schools have gradually moved closer to one another in terms of pedagogy. ESP has relinquished its rigid moves and steps model, and the Sydney School has adopted a much more critical approach since its beginnings in the 1980s. In general, genre approaches have moved from applying genre as a "teaching method" to broader socio-functional approaches that focus systematically and visibly on addressing the needs and purposes of discourse communities. Chapter 4 has, in terms of this study, instantiated the first step in the course design and evaluation research process, by reporting on a survey of the writing demands made on undergraduate university students at the University of Pretoria.

This chapter proposes a framework for addressing learner needs and the demands of the target situation. Along with postmodern language pedagogues it is believed that the course designer should depart from a principled, yet flexible, instructional framework. First, the notions of "method" and "postmethod" are juxtaposed below in order to highlight differences between traditional and postmodern perspectives to course design. This is followed by a discussion of a set of pedagogical principles that appear to be shared by most post-process approaches to language teaching, and a model is proposed to account for the centrality of these principles in the context of higher education. Finally, a "presyllabus" is proposed for teaching and learning the genre that has been identified as pivotal to becoming initiated into the practices of the humanities, *viz.* the academic essay.

5.2 Method versus postmethod

5.2.1 The notion of "method"

The concept of "method" refers to established designs conceptualized and constructed by experts in language teaching. Kumaravadivelu (2003) classifies them into three broad categories, *viz.* language-centred, learner-centred and learning-centred. **Language-centred** methods are based on the assumption that linguistic systems are simple enough to formulate explicit rules of thumb, and explain them in such a way that the learner can understand and assimilate them. **Learner-centred** methods are principally concerned with language use and learner needs. These methods seek to provide opportunities for learners to practice preselected, presequenced grammatical structures, as well as communicative functions. The assumption is that a focus on form and function will ultimately lead to target language mastery. In other words, language development is considered intentional rather than incidental. **Learning-centred** methods assume that language development is nonlinear, and therefore does not require preselected systematic language input. These methods seek to provide opportunities for learners to participate in open-ended meaningful interaction through communicative activities or problem-solving tasks in class. They draw insights from the findings of Second Language Acquisition research (Kumaravadivelu 2003:26-27).

In terms of the above characterization genre approaches seem to fall somewhere between learner- and learning-centred approaches. The following representation attempts to plot the three genre schools in terms of this tripartite distinction:

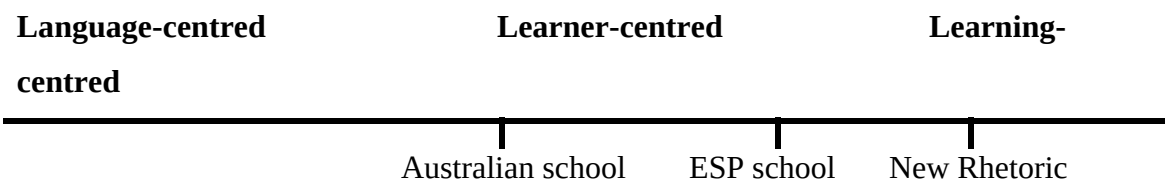


Figure 5.1 Alignment between the three genre schools and the three main methodological categories

Richards and Rogers (1982) have proposed a three-tier framework for understanding the notion of "method": approach, design and procedure. According to Paltridge (2001:40) **approach** refers to the theory of language and language learning that underlies a

particular method as well as syllabi developed on the basis of the method; **design** entails the objectives, organization and content of a particular syllabus type, the kinds of teaching and learning activities, teacher and learner roles, and the role of instructional materials, and **procedure** describes the actual classroom techniques and practices that might be employed within the particular method or approach. This tripartite framework is hierarchical, in that approach informs method, and method informs procedure.

Kumaravadivelu (2006:87) criticizes this three-tier framework by contending that approach is treated as a theorist/researcher activity, design as a syllabus designer/materials producer activity, and procedure as a classroom teacher/learner activity. He is of the opinion that the second tier – method or design – should be part of the first component "because we can, by all means, think of principles of syllabus design, principles of materials production, principles of evaluation, and so forth" (Kumaravadivelu 2006:89). On the other hand he agrees with Richards and Rogers on the delimitation of the third tier, and consequently proposes a two-tier descriptive framework for teaching methods or teaching syllabi, comprising only **principles** and **procedures**. This simplification allows the applied linguist to focus on design principles, and to leave the development of appropriate procedures in the hands of the classroom teacher.

5.2.2 The postmethod condition

Principles should not be confused with methods. The term **method** has come under critical scrutiny in recent times. Methods may be based on idealized concepts geared toward idealized contexts (Kumaravadivelu 2003:28), and scholars such as Allwright (1991), Pennycook (1989), Prabhu (1990) and Stern (1992) have cautioned language teaching professionals against the uncritical acceptance of untested methods. They have gone even further, counseling pedagogues against the very concept of method itself, arguing that the concept is surrounded by a number of myths (Kumaravadivelu 2006:163-168), or even worse, that it is "dead". Nunan (1991:1) believes that the pendulum effect of devising method upon method that does not work, often recycling the elements of older methods, can be overcome by deriving appropriate classroom practices from empirical evidence on the nature of language learning and use. In this way the teacher can form insights into what makes learners tick. Alistair Pennycook

(1989:600), in turn, criticizes the sociocultural and political agenda of methods. He explains how the concept of method introduces and legitimizes "interested knowledge" that plays an important role in preserving and promoting inequities between the participants in the learning, teaching and teacher education processes.

Benesch (1999:313-314) links the critical approach to genre-analysis by criticizing the traditional approach to needs analysis, in which students' needs are described in terms of the genres and skills they will need for their target courses, and which have served as a justification of many EAP courses. Benesch regards the EAP enterprise as too "accommodationist" and "overly "pragmatic". Such an approach merely reinforces the dominant ideology of the university and aims to "assimilate … students uncritically into academic life" and society (Benesch 1993:714).

Out of the awareness of the failures of "method" and criticisms accommodationist approaches, has emerged the "postmethod condition". The postmethod condition will be discussed in terms of three important **attributes** that distinguish it from method, the interrelated **parameters** on which it pivots, and a set of **macrostrategies** that are based on theoretical, empirical and experiential knowledge.

Attributes

The postmethod condition signifies three interrelated attributes. First, it signifies an **alternative to method** (not an alternative method), which is in essence a product of bottom-up processes. The postmethod condition enables practitioners to generate location-specific, classroom-oriented innovative strategies. Second, it signifies **teacher autonomy**. According to Freeman (1991:35) the concept of method "overlooks the fund of experience and tacit knowledge about teaching which the teachers already have by virtue of their lives as students". The postmethod condition recognizes teachers' potential to know how to teach and act autonomously within the academic and administrative constraints imposed by institutions, curricula and textbooks, and also how to develop a critical approach to their own teaching practice (Kumaravadivelu 2003:33). The third alternative is **principled pragmatism**. As opposed to eclecticism, which is putting together practices from established methods, principled pragmatism is based on the pragmatics of pedagogy where the relationship between theory and

practice is realized only within the domain of application. Teachers follow this principle by developing what Prabhu (1990:162) calls "a sense of plausibility", which is their subjective understanding of the teaching they do. This sense of plausibility is shaped by self-observation, self-analysis, and self-evaluation.

In addition to flexibility in terms of syllabus, principled pragmatism has a critical dimension, which is referred to as **critical pragmatism** by Pennycook (1997). Critical pragmatism attempts to deconstruct not only methods, but also the "discourses of neutrality", which was found by Pennycook (1997:257-263) in much of EAP, as embodied by claims for the universality of academic discourses and genres. In reaction, critical pragmatism recognizes that "language, knowledge and culture form a complex tangle that cannot be avoided" (Pennycook 1997:257).

Parameters

Kumaravadivelu (2003:34) visualizes a postmethod pedagogy as a three-dimensional system, consisting of the parameters of particularity, practicality and possibility. **Particularity** requires that

> any language pedagogy must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu (Kumaravadivelu 2003:34)

Practicality relates to the relationship between theory and practice, with a teacher generated theory of practice, which entails that

> [i]t recognizes that no theory of practice can be fully useful and usable unless it is generated through practice (Kumaravadivelu 2003:34).

Possibility is derived from the ideas of postmodern pedagogues such as Paulo Freire, who take the position that any pedagogy is implicated in relations of power and dominance (Kumaravadivelu 2003:36), which calls for recognition of learners' and teachers' subject-positions: class, race, gender, and ethnicity, and for sensitivity towards their impact on education.

In Kumaravadivelu's opinion the boundaries of these parameters are blurred, and each one is shaped by the other two. Furthermore, the result of the relationship is shaped by context, and depends on what the participants bring to the situation.

Macrostrategies or guiding principles

It is assumed that the three pedagogical parameters outlined above constitute the basis of a postmethod pedagogy. However, a coherent framework is needed for guiding teaching professionals to "translate" the features of the pedagogy to the classroom context. In other words the principles must have generative power. In line with this way of thinking, postmethodology theorists outline universal principles or strategies for learning an L2 (compare Bell 2003). For instance, Brown's (2002:12) **principled approach** lists 12 "relatively widely accepted theoretical assumptions", and Kumaravadivelu (2003; 2006) outlines a framework of 10 **macrostrategies**, *viz.*: Maximize learning opportunities; Facilitate negotiated interaction; Minimize perceptual mismatches; Activate intuitive heuristics; Foster language awareness; Contextualize linguistic input; Integrate language skills; Promote learner autonomy; Ensure social relevance; and Raise cultural awareness.

Macrostrategies are guiding principles derived from current theoretical, empirical and experiential knowledge of L2 learning and teaching (Kumaravadivelu 2006:208). They serve as broad guidelines on which teachers can generate their own location-specific, needs-based **microstrategies** or classroom procedures, and they have the potential to constitute the operating principles for a situation-specific postmethod pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu 2006:201).

5.2.3 Macrostrategies as generic pedagogical principles

Although I fully support the notion of design principles, I wish to argue that these principles are not unique to postmodern perspectives. The idea of identifying general principles for course design is also found in Butler's doctoral thesis (2007:42 ff.), which formulates method-neutral design principles for the facilitation of writing interventions in academic contexts. Although Butler's "key issues in the teaching and writing of academic writing" have a wider scope than Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies (they include pedagogical principles, institutional constraints as well as show significant

resemblances with principles that can be inferred from genre-based writing methodologies). The following table highlights similarities between Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies, Butler's key issues in the teaching and learning of academic writing, and principles underlying genre-based writing pedagogy:

Table 5.1 Kumaravadivelu's postmethod principles, Butler's key issues in the teaching and learning of academic writing, and foundational principles of genre-based pedagogy

Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategies	Butler's key issues in the teaching and learning of writing	Core principles in genre-based pedagogy
K1 Maximize learning opportunities	B4 Consider learners' needs and wants as a central issue in academic writing	Identify learners' needs (Paltridge 2001:40ff)
K2 Facilitate negotiated interaction	B9 Acknowledge assessment and feedback as central to course design	Stretch learners' abilities through interaction with teachers and more knowledgeable peers (Vygotsky 1978)
K3 Minimize perceptual mismatches	B9 Acknowledge assessment and feedback as central to course design	Facilitate a "visible pedagogy" (Hyland 2004:88)
K4 Activate intuitive heuristics	B3 Engage students' prior knowledge and abilities in different literacies to connect with academic literacy in a productive way	Validate learners' prior knowledge and draw upon students' previous experiences (Paltridge 2001:40ff)
K5 Foster language awareness	B11 Include productive strategies that achieve a focus on language form	Provide sufficient information about text structure, grammar and lexis, so as to empower students to make informed choices (Hyland 2003:131; 2004:104-105)
K6 Contextualize linguistic input	B10 Provide relevant, contextualized opportunities for engaging in academic writing tasks	Contextualization of linguistic input is implicit in all genre-based designs, since all applications are related to authentic texts and real-world problems.
K7 Integrate language skills	B13 Focus on the interrelationship between different language abilities in the promotion of writing	Integrate reading and writing skills (Johns 2005:35; Hyland 2004:113)
K8 Promote learner autonomy	B5 Create a learning environment where students feel safe to explore and find their own voices in the academic context	Note: *Promoting learner autonomy is a feature that is only weakly represented in genre-based designs.*
K9 Ensure social relevance	B2 Include an accurate account of the understandings and requirements of lecturers/supervisors in specific departments or faculties regarding academic writing	Identify the kinds of writing that learners need to do in their target situations (Hyland 2003:93) Make learners aware of how disciplinary conventions reflect the purposes of discourse communities.
K10 Raise cultural consciousness	B3 Engage students' prior knowledge and abilities in different literacies to connect with academic literacy in a productive way	Validate and draw upon students' previous experiences (Paltridge 2001:40ff) (their content schemata in this case)

In the remainder of this section I will discuss in more detail how Kumaravadivelu's 10 macrostrategies for language teaching and learning can be reconciled with key issues in the teaching of writing (Butler 2007), and with foundational principles of traditional genre approaches.

Macrostrategy #1: Maximize learning opportunities

This macrostrategy is based on the belief that teaching is a process of creating learning opportunities, and maximizing learning opportunities entails a willingness on the teacher's part to modify lesson plans continuously on the basis of ongoing feedback, in order to meet specific learner needs, wants, and situations. This strategy also addresses a key issue in the teaching of writing, which is formulated as follows by Butler (2007:4): "Consider learners' needs (and wants) as a central issue in academic writing".

Both Kumaravadivelu's macrostrategy #1 and Butler's 4th key issue appear to be underpinned by the belief that learning to write is needs-oriented, which is also one of the central beliefs of traditional genre approaches (Hyland 2004:88). Genre scholars firmly believe that learners are more motivated when they are allowed to focus on the types of writing they have to do for their chosen academic disciplines or which are related to their future professions, than when the writing is only indirectly related to their immediate purposes. This does not necessarily imply a staged curriculum. In fact, most present-day genre scholars no longer adhere to a rigid curriculum. Hyland (2003:67), for instance, reiterates the importance of continuous validation of a course design to ensure social relevance when saying:

> Behind every successful writing course there is a continuous process of questioning and revision to check the original results, evaluate the effectiveness of the course, and revise objectives.

Furthermore, Hyland (2004) says in connection with the stages involved in designing a genre-based course: "[T]hese steps are often more simultaneous than sequential". He adds that the extent to which a teacher has the freedom to make such course decisions depends on the situation, and that teachers have the flexibility to select materials, tasks and contexts, or even start with "a broad process objective" (Hyland 2004:93).

Macrostrategy #2: Facilitate negotiated interaction

Negotiated interaction means that the learner should be actively involved in interaction "as a textual activity, interaction as an interpersonal activity and interaction as an ideational activity" (Kumaravadivelu 2006:202). It seems to be based on the belief that learning to write is a type of apprenticeship, during which the teacher facilitates learners' understanding and use of language as system, language as discourse between interlocutors, and language as representative of real-world concepts, including ideology. Kumaravadivelu (2006:202) invokes studies on interactional modifications as empirical evidence to demonstrate that what enables learners to move beyond their current receptive and expressive capacities are opportunities to modify and restructure their interaction with their interlocutors until mutual comprehension is reached.

Genre approaches are fully compatible with this strategy (Faigley 1986:535; Hyland 2003:88). Building on Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, genre pedagogues claim that learners' abilities are stretched through interaction with teachers or more knowledgeable peers. To facilitate optimal development within each individual, the proponents of genre approaches encourage collaborative classroom activities, which include joint exploration of texts, negotiated construction of texts, and even generation of content (compare Hall 2001:232; 238).

Butler's (2007:49) 9th key issue, "Acknowledge assessment and feedback as central to course design" is fully compatible with Macrostrategy #2, Facilitate negotiated interaction. Butler's principle involves continuing dialogue between lecturer and student on the implementation of feedback in a non-threatening environment (Butler 2007:51). In particular, he advises that there should be sufficient opportunities for peer feedback and negotiation of meaning with lecturers and peers, which includes the involvement of learners in the process of materials development and task design.

Macrostrategy #3: Minimize perceptual mismatches

A definition of communication as "a gradual reduction of uncertainty", seems to be underpinned by the belief that learning to write is optimized through transparency on

the part of the facilitator, which I believe is what underlies macrostrategy 3. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006:203) it is essential for teachers "to sensitize themselves to the potential sources of mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation", which may be of a cognitive, communicative, linguistic, pedagogic, strategic, cultural, evaluative, procedural, instructional or attitudinal nature. An example of minimizing perceptual mismatches is provided in Butler's (2007:51) discussion of Key issue 9, "Acknowledge assessment and feedback as central to course design," *viz.* ensuring the transparency of assessment criteria.

Genre pedagogy seems to be in tandem with this macrostrategy, since most genre scholars believe that learning to write requires explicit outcomes and expectations (Hyland 2004:88). Genre pedagogues from ESP and Australian persuasions suggest that teachers should be explicit about what is being studied, why it is being studied, and what will be expected of students at the end of the course. This is what Bernstein (1990:73) calls a "visible pedagogy." The difference between method and postmethod positions in this regard is that postmethodologists seek to iron out perceptual mismatches through negotiation of understandings rather than by top-down communication of understandings.

Classroom strategies that may be derived from this principle are to be explicit about what is being studied and why it is being studied, and by formulating clear outcomes for the various lesson units.

Macrostrategy #4: Activate intuitive heuristics

Chomsky (1970) has argued that one cannot learn the entire grammatical structure of a language through explanation and instruction beyond the rudimentary level, for the reason that no teacher/lecturer possesses enough explicit knowledge about language structure to provide adequate explanation and instruction. The teacher can at most assist learners' grammatical abilities by designing classroom activities in such a way as "to give free range to the creative principles that humans bring to the process of language learning … [and] create a rich linguistic environment for the intuitive heuristics that the normal human being automatically possesses" (Chomsky 1970:108). It is this perspective more than any other, that has confirmed, for most language teachers, the

underlying belief that learning is optimized if learners' existing cognitive schemata are utilized.

This strategy coincides with Butler's (2007:44) third key issue, *viz.* "Engage students' prior knowledge and abilities in different literacies to connect with academic literacy in a productive way". According to Kumaravadivelu (2006:204) one way of activating the intuitive heuristics of the learner is to provide enough textual examples so that the learner can infer certain underlying rules of form and function. This advice is based on empirical studies showing that self-discovery plays a crucial role in learner comprehension and retention, regardless of learners' language ability (Kumaravadivelu 2006:204). It is, of course, also in accord with the procedures and techniques of one of the more influential traditional methods of language teaching, the Direct Method (Weideman 2002:17).

Macrostrategy #4 features indirectly in genre pedagogy, in that it can be inferred from certain classroom procedures proposed by genre pedagogues. First, it is manifested in familiarization activities – drawing on students' prior knowledge of the genre(s) in question, the contexts in which they are written, or the discipline in question. In this way students' previous experiences are validated, and integrated into the curriculum (Johns 2005:26). Second, the strategy is manifested by procedures such as eliciting (specific) existing knowledge about text structure, language and context to predict or pre-empt what is needed in the target situation (Paltridge 2001:40ff). Genre scholars from ESP and the Australian tradition use model texts to elicit tacit linguistic knowledge, a practice for which there is empirical support (Charney & Carlson 1995:111-112). Charney and Carlson (1995) show that models influence, in particular, the content and organization of students' texts. The explanation is as follows: Seeing a related or an analogous concept in a model may increase the salience or activation level of associated concepts in the writer's memory.

Macrostrategy #5: Foster language awareness

In the context of L2 learning and teaching language awareness refers to the deliberate attempt to draw learners' attention to the formal properties of their L2 in order to

increase the degree of explicitness required to promote L2 learning. Kumaravadivelu (2006:205) explains this strategy as follows:

> Language awareness is based on strategies that emphasize understanding, general principles, and operational experience. Strategies based on language awareness have intellectual appeal and instructional applicability needed to speed up the rate of learning. They also help learners sensitize themselves to aspects of the L2 that would otherwise pass unnoticed, and unlearn initial incorrect analyses by supplying negative evidence.

Underlying this principle must be the belief that learning to write is enhanced by explicit knowledge of language structure and disciplinary culture.

Butler's 11th key issue, *viz.* "Include productive strategies that achieve a focus on language form" (Butler 2007:54), may be brought to bear on this principle. He cautions against a focus on form in the traditional structural sense, but supports timely, selective attention to specific classes of linguistic items through the use of pedagogic tasks that draw students' attention to "aspects of the target language code" (Butler 2007:55). Particular emphasis is placed on language structures that "dominate academic discourse".

There seems to be a good measure of consensus between postmodernist and genre approaches in this regard. Genre scholars adhere to the belief that when learning to communicate effectively, students learn that they have to make choices from grammar and vocabulary that relate to their particular purposes and contexts. Therefore the teacher should provide sufficient information about text structure, grammar and lexis, so as to empower students to make informed choices.

Classroom activities following from this principle or strategy include using relevant texts as catalysts to elicit sociocultural understandings about the context and discourse community in which the text is situated (Johns 1995; 2005); identifying the rhetorical modes that feature prominently in the discipline and the genre under scrutiny; and identifying cohesive elements, tense, the preferred way of self-reference, politeness markers, formality markers and hedges (compare Hyland 2003:131; 2004:104-105).

Macrostrategy #6: Contextualize linguistic input

Syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features of language cannot be understood as isolated linguistic components with a unidirectional information flow. They are acquired together in authentic contexts. It is therefore essential to bring to the learner's attention the integrated nature of language. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006:205) the responsibility for contextualizing linguistic input lies more with the classroom teacher than with the syllabus designer or the textbook writer.

Butler's 10th key issue (2007:53), "Provide relevant, contextualized opportunities for engaging in academic writing tasks that students feel contribute towards their development as academic writers in the tertiary context", partially overlaps with this macrostrategy. However, he emphasizes the broader disciplinary context, rather than the specific situational context, and develops a strong argument in favour of discipline-specific writing courses.

Genre approaches are by nature integrated and contextualized, in the sense that their main focus is social action (meaning-making) in a particular context within a particular discourse community. Therefore, genre pedagogues prefer to depart from authentic writing tasks and prototypical examples of target domain texts. This aligns them, historically, with what Weideman (2002:29f.) calls the first important interpretation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Macrostrategy #7: Integrate language skills

Language-centred movements in TESOL have taught the so-called "language skills" (listening, speaking, reading and writing) separately (Kumaravadivelu 2006:206). However, there is very little empirical or theoretical justification for such a pedagogy. In fact, the available empirical, theoretical, and pedagogical information points to the need to integrate language skills for effective teaching because the nature of L2 learning involves parallel integration of language. The current, widely held belief that L2 learners do not acquire language skills separately is thus backed up by a sufficient body of evidence.

Butler's (2007:55) 13th key strategy, "focus on the interrelationship between different language abilities in the promotion of writing", coincides with this macrostrategy. Butler (2007) refers explicitly to an integration of reading and writing.

Although genre approaches are primarily aimed at improving writing, skills integration is emphasized by genre scholars such as Johns (2005) and Hyland (2004). Johns (2005:35) contends that "any course that ostensibly teaches writing also must integrate the other traditional skills, especially the careful, analytical reading of texts". Hyland (2004) applies this principle in a genre-based marketing communication syllabus that is structured according to the ways genres are sequenced and used in actual language events. Some of the genres are spoken and others are written. He claims that a syllabus which reflects a real-world use of genres "reaps the benefits of closely integrating reading, speaking and writing activities in the classroom" (Hyland 2004:113).

Genre knowledge is best acquired if students discover for themselves how they work. This can be facilitated by requiring students to read given examples in various ways (skimming, scanning, search-reading and comprehension reading) to elicit salient characteristics, and generalize on the basis of these.

Macrostrategy #8: Promote learner autonomy

Kumaravadivelu (2006:206) believes language learning to be an essentially autonomous activity. He urges language teachers to help learners learn how to learn, and to equip them with the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective strategies necessary to self-direct their own learning. In this way the consciousness of good language learners are raised about the learning strategies they seem to possess intuitively, and the strategies are made explicit and systematic so that they are available to improve the language learning abilities of other learners as well. Butler's (2007:45) fifth key issue, "Create a learning environment where students feel safe to explore and find their own voices in the academic context", clearly ties in with this macrostrategy.

In contrast to the previously mentioned strategies, promoting learner autonomy is not one of the key features of genre-based approaches. Although the process of assisted learning includes a gradual reduction in teacher assistance and reliance on models,

traditional genre-based syllabi leave little scope for self-directed learning. More time should be spent, not only at the end of a course, to encourage students to figure out on their own how new genres work. Students should also have the freedom to challenge genre boundaries and genre conventions throughout the course, and not merely after they have "mastered" one or more genres. The critical edge that postmodernism has added to our understanding of language practices and their teaching and learning requires that we should be critical also of the shape of the lingual units we deal with, lest we (and our students) become victims of ossified structures and practices, rather than creative users of them.

Macrostrategy #9: Ensure social relevance

According to Kumaravadivelu (2006:207) any serious attempt to understand L2 education entails an understanding of social and political contexts in which language use is embedded. A large majority of post-process pedagogues believe that learning to write is a purpose-driven activity. Therefore, determining learning purpose is one of the language teacher's most important tasks.

Genre approaches are built on the premise that effective teaching entails identifying the kinds of writing that learners will need to do in their target situations, and incorporating the findings in the curriculum as well as in the materials selected and designed (Hutchison & Waters 1987:60; Hyland 2003:93). This macrostrategy may be seen as pivotal in teaching discipline-specific writing courses, particularly if the teacher departs from authentic writing prompts in disciplinary study materials.

Butler's 2nd key issue (2007), "Include an accurate account of the understandings and requirements of lecturers/supervisors in specific departments or faculties regarding academic writing", may be subsumed under the notion of social relevance, because in actual fact this issue has a bearing on the target situation of academic writing interventions (Butler 2007:43), *viz.* the disciplinary context. This context includes both surface features and the rhetorical characteristics of the discourse community.

The classroom teacher can implement this principle by departing from authentic disciplinary writing tasks, and making these kinds of writing the focus of classroom activities and teaching materials.

Macrostrategy #10: Raise cultural consciousness

Traditionally, one of the goals of culture teaching was to help the learner gain an understanding of first language speakers from a cognitive, affective and behavioural perspective (Stern 1992). Recent explorations by L2 educationists seek to expand the horizon of culture learning and teaching to include the development of sociocultural knowledge through additional language learners of English. In other words the L2 learner is treated as a cultural informant (Kumaravadivelu 2003:268-270). Raising cultural consciousness then implies a belief that language-learning is enhanced if the teacher takes cognisance of how L2 learners construct meaning in cross-cultural encounters, and are encouraged to share their own experiences and perspectives with the teacher and peers.

This principle ties in with Kumaravadivelu's (2006) strategy #5, "Foster language awareness," which deals with a heightened consciousness of and reflection on certain practices in society. In addition, both can be related to an overt aim of genre-based disciplinary writing, *viz.* to build on learners' content schemata (Hyland 2004:55-56).

Strategies associated with this principle are to elicit content and subject-field knowledge from students, and making them aware of how knowledge they already possess ties in with writing conventions. An article or a chapter from a book may also be selected in co-operation with a subject-field teacher, which may sensitize them to important epistemological considerations in the field.

5.3 A possible explanation for shared pedagogical foundations

The previous section has alluded to a possible explanation for the striking similarities between the sets of principles derived from Kumaravadivelu (2003; 2006), Butler (2007), and genre approaches to teaching writing: methodologists as well as postmethodologists seem to share certain core beliefs about how writing abilities are

acquired, and these beliefs translate into pedagogical principles that are consciously or unconsciously applied in course design and classroom teaching. However, methodologists usually depart from classroom experience; they distil from this experience a set of beliefs about how students learn, build a syllabus around these beliefs (without defining mediating principles), and map classroom activities directly on teaching methods. Postmethodologists, on the other hand, claim to depart from "empirical evidence", draw general principles from the evidence, and then allow classroom teachers the freedom to devise activities on the basis of these principles, without confining them to syllabi.

Despite this apparent irreconcilability of method and postmethod they seem to be underpinned by a single design process, of which certain phases are foregrounded and others are backgrounded, resulting in different trajectories within the larger process. Figure 1 below represents the purported underlying process, and indicates the trajectories mapped out by proponents of the two opposing paradigms:

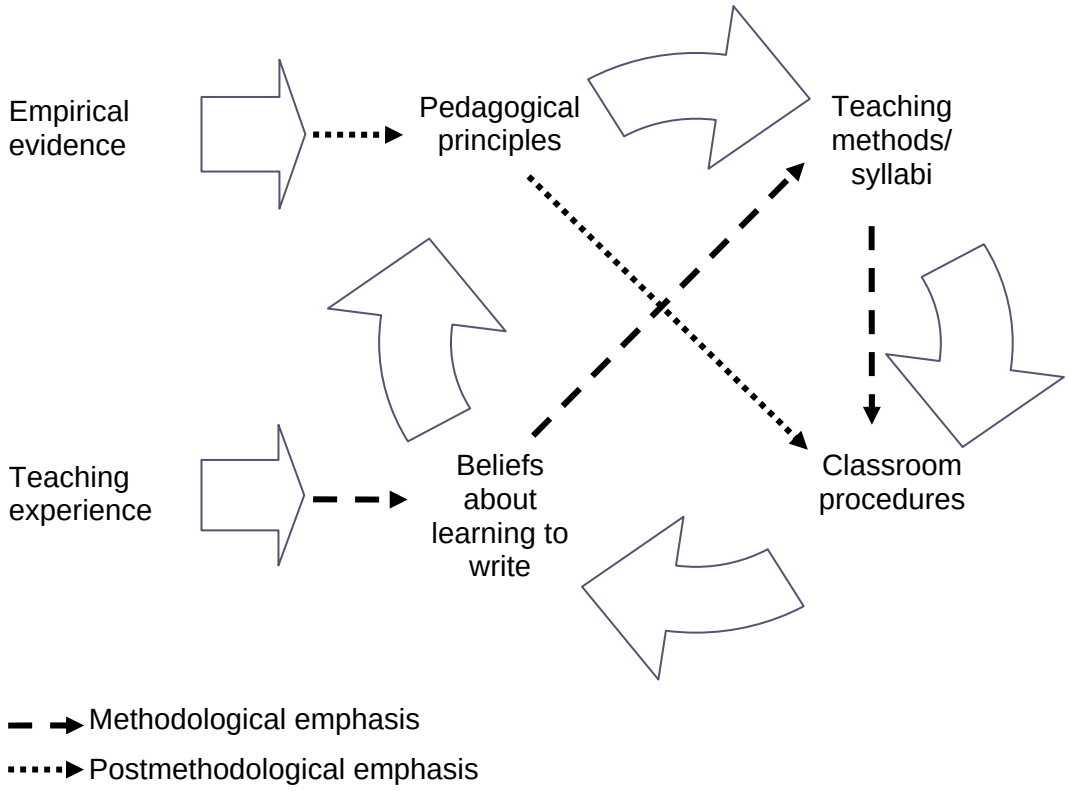


Figure 5.2 Pedagogical cycle underlying methodological and postmethodological approaches

The next section demonstrates how the notion of an underlying pedagogy can be integrated into a model for teaching genre-based disciplinary writing at tertiary institutions.

5.4 A method-neutral model for teaching genre-based writing at tertiary institutions

The foregoing explanation suggests that the difference between method and postmethod is a matter of focus, rather than a matter of mutual incompatibility. This line of thought resonates with Bell's (2003) preference for a position that mediates between top-down and bottom-up. Bell (2003) argues that "to believe in what we as teachers are doing inevitably requires us to have a set of prescriptions when we arrive in the classroom – a set of beliefs we are committed to". Even scholars of postmodern persuasions seem to be willing to concede that there is some kind of structure that mediates between a loose set of pedagogical principles and classroom practice. For instance, Kumaravadivelu (2006:101-102) provides space for a **presyllabus** – a syllabus that is continuously revised on the basis of learner feedback; and Prabhu (1990:175) acknowledges that methods have the "power to influence – to invoke, activate, interact with, alter in some way, and generally keep alive – differing teachers' differing senses of plausibility, thus helping to promote and enlarge the occurrence of 'real' teaching." However, unlike modernists, who tacitly adhere to a unidirectional (top-down) model, postmodernists posit a dialectic relationship between theory or principle, and classroom practice. The model represented by figure 5.3 below derives its basic design from Breen, Hird, Milton, Olivier, and Thwaite's representation of "Teacher conceptualizations and classroom practices" (Breen, Hird, Milton, Olivier & Thwaite 2001:473). However, it pivots on the postmodern notion of principled pragmatism, and is situated in the context of teaching and learning to write according to tertiary-level institutional and disciplinary norms.

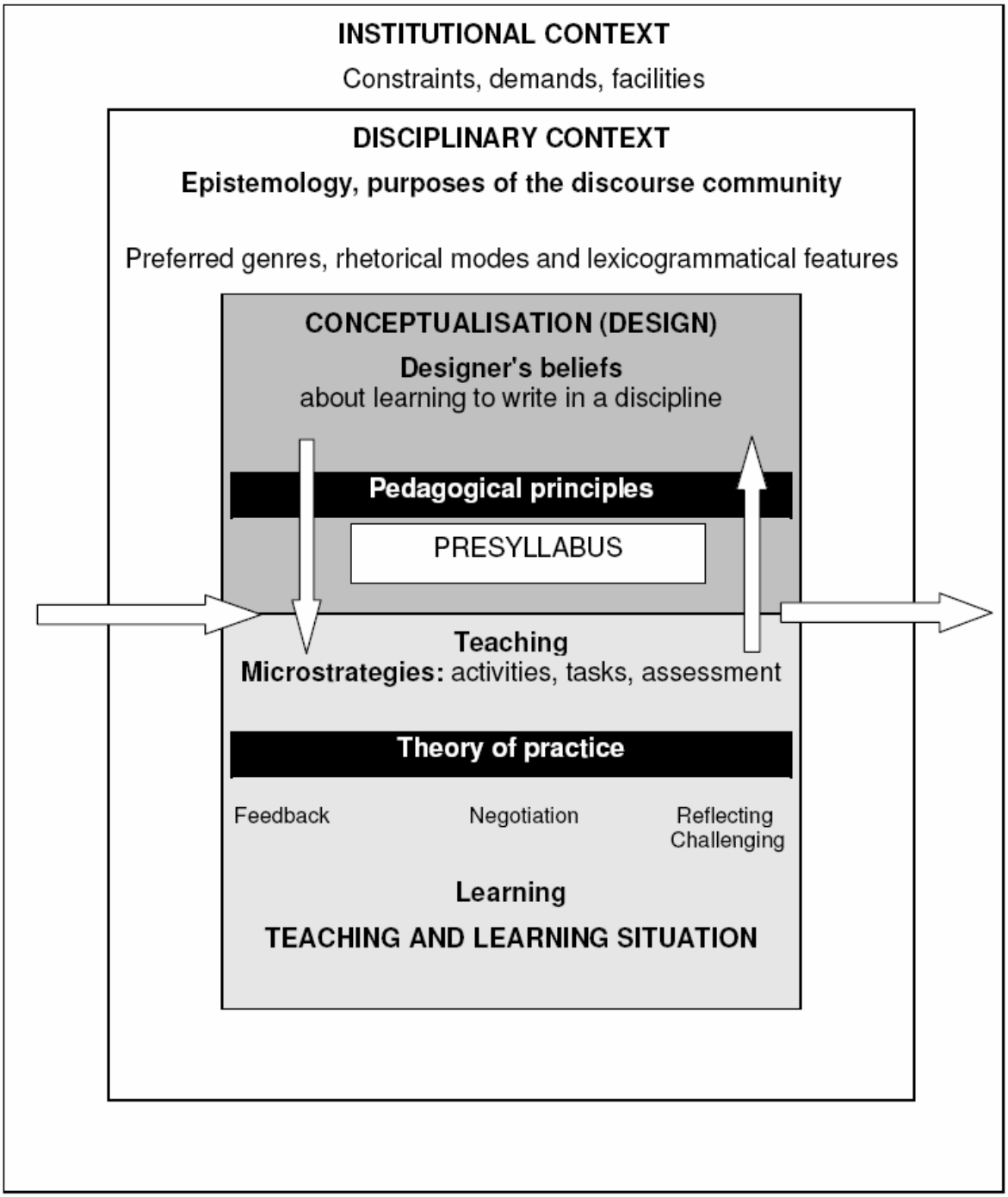


Figure 5.3 A teaching and learning model for tertiary-level disciplinary writing

The model can be explained in the following way: Pedagogical principles (macrostrategies) and their related beliefs constitute the core of this applied linguistic design. However, these principles and the procedures generated from them form part of a network of dynamic relationships. Both the design component and the practical component (teaching and learning) are embedded in an institution imbued with specific

ideologies, practices, demands and constraints, and both components are surrounded by academic disciplines, whose interests have to be served by courses aimed at improving students' academic literacies. A dialectic relationship exists between disciplinary communities and the language professionals who are responsible for course design and presentation. The teacher of disciplinary writing classes is presumed to have the ability, the responsibility and the freedom to adapt and transform design principles according to learner needs. The teacher, in turn, is transformed by his or her experience in the teaching-learning situation. Over time, language teachers evolve a coherent pedagogic framework which will eventually lead them to construct their own theory or theories of practice.

Justification of the model is derived from Weideman's (2008) characterization of applied linguistic designs, as expounded and schematically interpreted in the introductory section of Chapter 2. Similar to Weideman's conceptualization, the model proposed in Figure 2 presupposes a problem or a need arising from the institutional and disciplinary context. Combining the designer's beliefs about learning to write and sound pedagogical principles, the designer proposes an instructional design or presyllabus, which is modified and fine-tuned through evidence generated from application in the teaching and learning situation. The remainder of this chapter focuses on a presyllabus for an essay-writing module.

5.5 The academic essay

5.5.1 Students' problems with writing academic essays

The academic essay, also known as the 2000- or 3000-word assignment, is often the undergraduate student's first acquaintance with comprehensive independent academic writing. The academic essay is also the most commonly written undergraduate genre in the humanities and research oriented social sciences, as empirically noted by various researchers abroad, and as borne out by the results of the research conducted at the University of Pretoria.

The academic essay involves "the presentation of a written argument to defend or explain a position, typically drawing on library sources rather than research that the

student himself or herself has conducted" (Hyland 2009:130). This form of extended student writing is regarded by some scholars as a **curriculum genre** rather than an **expert genre** (compare Johns 1995; 1997; 2002). Hyland (2009:132) takes this point further by asserting that the essay is "a key acculturation practice" that encourages a critical and questioning attitude to the direction of the acculturation, however is nonetheless to encourage development through a curriculum genre to competence in an expert genre. It guides students in making connections between theory and practice, linking theories, evaluating research, arguing cases and providing evidence.

However, non-mother tongue English speaking students, in particular, seem to find essay-writing demands daunting. Hinkel (2002:74) found that non-mother tongue students experienced particular difficulty at the level of style. According to him their essays display many features of personal narratives, such as first person pronouns and a preponderance of the past tense, vague nouns, coordinating pronouns and predictive adjectives.

Many reasons have been proposed for students' difficulties in writing academic essays. Hounsell (1987:114) argues that it is difficult, if not impossible, for students to work out what their lecturers expect them to do in their essays, and exemplifies this claim by giving the following example of a student's (mis)understanding of argumentation: "Well, from the comments on the essay, I gathered the tutor wanted me to argue about something, but I mean, by presenting the material as the research had demonstrated, it was a mild form of argument. I wasn't going to get aggressive, in an essay" (Hounsell 1987:115). Through a number of examples of students' reflection on their own essay-writing experiences, Lillis (2001:60-72) demonstrates that essay-writing is a mystery for the majority of students, and that teacher feedback does not do much to improve the situation. When asked about what a successful response to an essay question was, Bridget, a first-year social work student, said the following with regard to an essay for which she obtained a higher mark than for her other essays:

> It was better in terms of marks. It was one of those essays I wrote and I didn't really know whether I was writing what she wanted. So I just sort of did it to the best of my ability. And it turned out she liked it.

Lillis' view ties in with Swales's (1996) notion of the academic essay as a member of the class of **occluded genres** practised in the academy. He characterizes occluded genres as "research-process genres" or "genres that operate to support and validate the manufacture of knowledge" (Swales 1996:46–47). Other examples are request letters, research proposals, recommendation letters, and grant proposal reviews. These genres are labeled "occluded" as it is difficult for students and novice professionals to obtain examples or models in order to distil the relevant criteria for writing in these genres. The counter-observation in this regard is that students are novice writers. Practices being learned are always by definition "occluded", not patent, to novices. The challenge for those teaching writing, as for those receiving such writing tasks, is to make the requirements patent.

With regard to essays in particular, Paltridge (2001:62) contends that even though a university department may have a collection of samples to look at, it is often difficult for students to know which of these are "best examples". As such this does not make them occluded, but very often assessment criteria are not readily available. He adds that the requirements for essays vary extensively between disciplines and departments, both in terms of structure and language.

5.5.2 Approaches to teaching academic essays

Dudley-Evans (2002:227) distinguishes between general approaches and more scholarly approaches to teaching the academic essay. General approaches are said to emphasize certain skills required in writing academic essays, such as (1) planning, writing drafts, revising; (2) summarizing, paraphrasing and synthesizing; (3) continuous writing in an academic style organized appropriately; (4) using quotations, footnotes, bibliography; and (5) finding and analyzing evidence, and using data appropriately. Some of the general works, including style guides and textbooks, focus strongly on process, e.g. Oshima and Hogue (1999), while others emphasize rhetorical-functional purposes such as *narration*, *explanation* (primarily through discussing cause and effect), *exposition*, *similarity* and *contrast*, etc. (compare, for instance, Leki, 1989; Savage & Mayer 2005; Redman 2001). Certain manuals suggest that rhetorical mode should be used as the guiding principle to structure the essay as a whole, resulting in templates for writing *narrative/chronological, descriptive, argumentative, cause and effect,* and *comparison*

and contrast essays (compare, for example, Savage & Mayer 2005; Oshima & Hogue 1997). Others, for example Turley (2000), use the three-part structure of the essay (introduction, body and close) as the main organizing principle, interwoven with threads on grammar, punctuation and referencing.

In opposition to general, eclectic approaches is the attempt by Hyland (1990) to account for the structure of the academic essay, the argumentative essay in particular, using Swalesean genre analysis as a point of departure. He suggests that the argumentative essay type has three stages: a thesis, an argument and a conclusion, each comprising a number of optional "moves". The **thesis** could potentially comprise a gambit (a controversial or dramatic statement), information (background material), a proposition (which states the writer's position and delimits the topic), an evaluation (brief support for the proposition) and a marker (which introduces the rest of the essay by providing a list of the main parts); the **argument** could be staged into a marker (which signals the claim and relates it to the text), a restatement (a rephrasing or repetition of the proposition), a claim (which provides a reason for acceptance of the proposition), and support (grounds that underpin the claim); and the **conclusion** could include a marker (which signals the conclusion boundary, a consolidation (relating the argument to the proposition), an affirmation (which restates the proposition) and a closing statement (which widens the context or perspective of proposition).

Dudley-Evans (2002:228) has criticized Hyland's approaches with regard to the optionality of moves, the generic nature of the template, and its apparent rigidity. In view of their optionality, he does not regard them to be "moves" in the true sense of the word, or rather in the Swalesean idiom. To him they are what Young (1994:165) describes as "strands of discourse that recur discontinuously throughout a particular language event and, taken together, structure that event". These strands recur and are interspersed with others, resulting in an interweaving of threads as the discourse progresses. Thus he argues that Hyland's model is limited and seems to be based more on an idealized essay structure than a detailed analysis of an authentic corpus of essays (*i.e.* empirical evidence). Dudley-Evans's main point of criticism is that the model fails to account for the fact that there is considerable variation among the essays required by different disciplines or even within one discipline among different subject lecturers.

With this criticism Dudley-Evans (2002:228-231) clearly reverts back to the more general rhetorical-technical approach, as demonstrated by the syllabus he proposes. His course design focuses on issues such as preference of formal to informal verbs, avoidance of colloquial expressions, avoidance of contracted forms, preference for nominalized verbs, avoidance of run on expressions, selective use of personal forms, and the use of hedging devices when making claims. In essence these features comprise a checklist that would be equally valid for other genres in academic writing.

Postmodern thinkers are opposed to seeking a solution in simply teaching the conventions of essayist literacy in a straightforward and explicit way. However, some of them agree that a measure of explicitness is necessary (compare Lillis 2001:56-57). In Lillis' view student writers need to become familiar with the writing conventions of the academy. Key terms should be clarified, such as what a claim is and what counts as supporting evidence in a particular subject field. However, she emphasizes a collaborative relationship between lecturer and learner and the need for more contact between student writers and "knowledgeable insiders" in order to negotiate the nature of specific tasks, including the conventions surrounding particular essay questions and the conventions that the student writers are expected to write within. "Writing for someone who, they feel, is working with them at meaning making" is extremely important for students at this stage of their participation in higher education" (Lillis 2001:76). Her views are clearly aligned with those of critical genre pedagogues, who have moved away completely from the supposedly prescriptive templates of the moves and steps era, although the notions of discourse community and shared purpose still play pivotal roles in their way of thinking.

5.6 A critical genre-based presyllabus for essay-writing interventions

For the purpose of the present research an approach of considered eclecticism was chosen to outline a presyllabus for teaching essay-writing to students of the humanities: I draw upon the postmodern idea of a principled (but non-prescriptive) programme, the Vygotskyan notion of scaffolding, as well as the neo-Vygotskyan ideas of cognitive and social apprenticeship as adopted by the New Rhetoricians, and the Teaching and Learning Cycle of the Australian genre school (anchored in Hallidayan Functional

Grammar). Figure 5.4 outlines a proposed presyllabus for subject-specific as well as generic contexts:

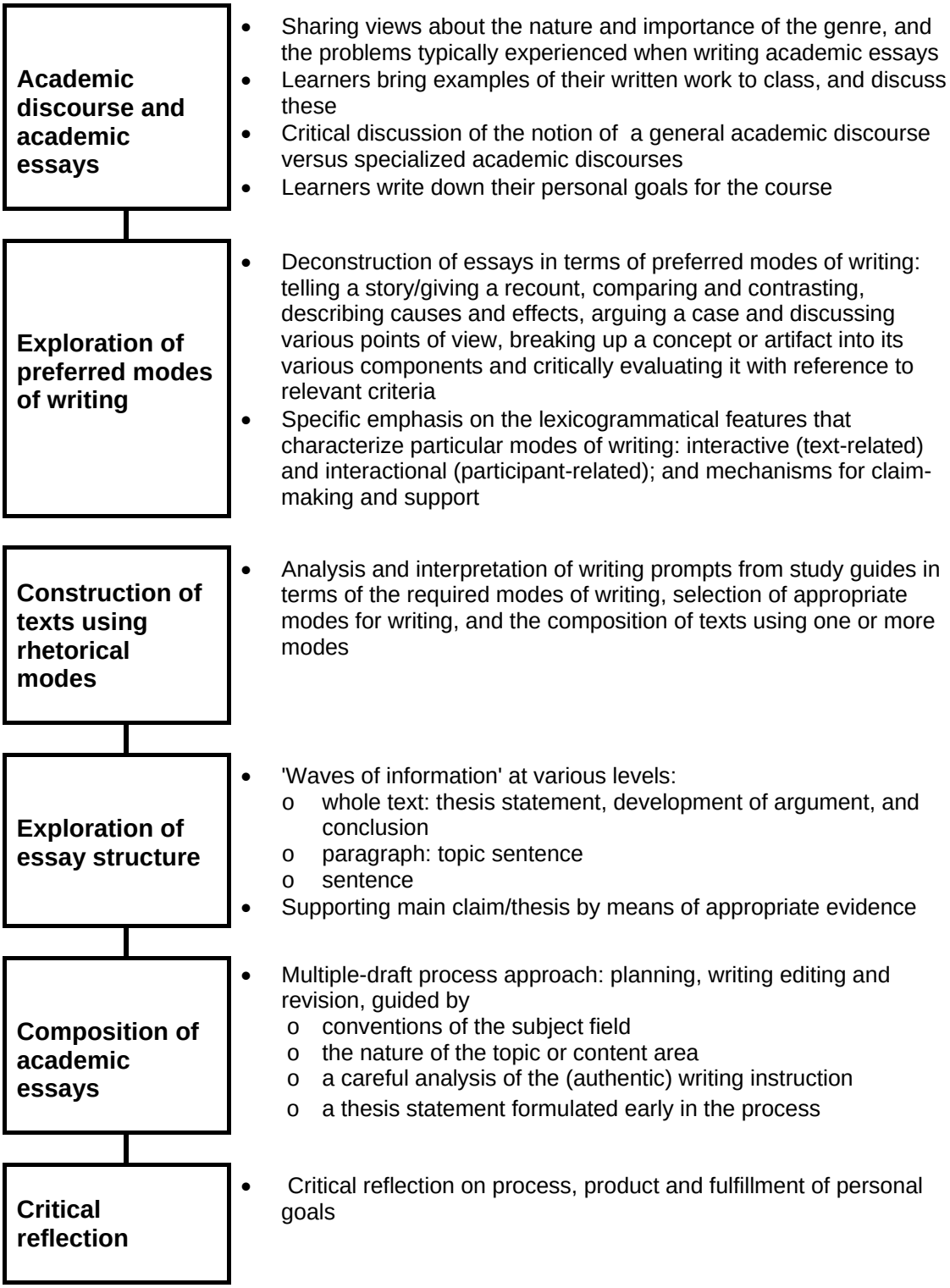


Figure 5.4 Presyllabus (Teaching Learning Model) for essay-writing interventions

Potential constraints in implementing this presyllabus are the following: In the case of narrow-angled (subject-specific) foci close co-operation between language experts and subject-field experts would be needed to reconcile target-domain needs and the aims of language pedagogy, and even in ideal circumstances it might be difficult for a language expert to learn enough from contextual analysis of the content discipline in question to really bring an "insider" perspective to the classroom. An institutional constraint would be the allocation of full-time or contract staff from an academic literacy unit or a writing centre to each and every discipline within the University.

Wide-angled approaches (generic or semi-generic), on the other hand, pose problems of generalizability, as the features of pedagogical genres can differ considerably across disciplines. Hyland (2009:129) cites Braine (1995), who for example, found with regard to *laboratory reports* that despite their common name, no two technical and engineering disciplines used the same generic structure. Prior's (1998) ethnographic studies confirm this diversity. My own study of eight humanities disciplines at the University of Pretoria reinforces this picture. Not only are instructional verbs that signify rhetorical modes used differently in different subject-fields; also the "moves" or elements included in introductions and the structure of arguments differ.

A question that arises out of this quandary, is which of the two approaches is more feasible and more effective than the other, and how should benefits be offset against disadvantages?

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that writing course design that is focused on preferred genres in institutional settings cannot simply be dismissed as prescriptivist. Approaches across the spectrum, stretching from post-process methods to different varieties of postmethod pedagogy, seem to share a common underlying structure. The components of the model are beliefs about language learning, principles or methods derived from them, a presyllabus, and teaching strategies or classroom procedures.

For the purpose of this thesis the presyllabus prototype has been extended by means of Vygotskyan-type scaffolding and the neo-Vygotskyan ideas of cognitive and social apprenticeship. It is dynamic and goal-oriented in that the syllabus moves from a sturdily scaffolded instructional base towards free-flowing creativity – broadly framed upon the Australian Teaching and Learning Cycle. Hallidayan Functional Grammar fills in the detail of the presyllabus and ensures purpose-driven choices from lexis and grammar.

The genre focus of the presyllabus is the academic essay, which has been empirically proven to be the most frequently required academic genre in the humanities but is nevertheless an extremely problematic genre for undergraduate students. This chapter has suggested that both sharp (subject-specific) and wide (generic) foci are merited for essay-writing interventions. Chapters 6 and 7 will describe the design and evaluation of a narrow-angled intervention, whereas chapter 8 deals with a wider-angled intervention.

Chapter 6: Essay-writing course for students of history – contextual analysis

6.1 Introduction and rationale

Chapter 5 proposed an instructional framework for designing academic writing courses, and outlined a presyllabus for the academic essay. It was indicated that the presyllabus may serve as the basis for designing both narrow-angled and wide-angled interventions. This chapter deals with a narrow-angled approach, more specifically the exploration of the discourse of a particular academic subject-field, which will serve to inform the design of a subject-specific writing intervention.

The present inquiry is merited through increasing evidence from corpus, discourse and genre analysis that there is significant variation between disciplines in the way that they structure their discourses, in particular their written genres (Dudley-Evans 2001; Hyland 2001; 2006; Biber 1988; 2006; Hewings & Hewings 2001). Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995:1) argue that genres are not merely formally linked to disciplines; they are also intimately linked to a discipline's methodology, and they package information in ways that conform to a discipline's norms, values and ideology.

A number of studies conducted by genre analysts have emphasized the systematic relationship between disciplinary purposes, genre and register (compare Bhatia 2004; Hyland 2000; Jones 2004; Hewings 2004; Hyland & Bondi 2007). However, few studies have thus far given a systematic account of form function relationships in specific disciplines, have used such information as input for course design and have evaluated the effect of subject and/or genre-specific teaching interventions.

For the present research history was chosen as the field of focus, first because academic essays were found to be the most prolific genre in study materials of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies (in comparison with other departments in the Faculty of Humanities); and second, because history as a subject-field exists primarily by virtue of language, as confirmed by Schleppegrell, Achugar and Oteiza (2004:88):

> History provides a particularly good example of discipline-specific literacy because it is constructed through texts that cannot easily be experienced hands-on.

The next section describes the procedure and findings of the contextual research that informed the design of a subject-specific writing intervention for students of history.

6.2 Procedure

Following the advice of Bhatia (1993; 2004) on where and how to start conducting contextual research for genre-based pedagogy, four recently published manuals on writing about history (cf. Marius & Page 2005; Rael 2004; Rampolla; 2004; and Storey 2004) were studied. On the basis of the researcher's understanding of the purposes of historical writing and how they tie in with writing conventions, an overview document was compiled and subjected to member-checking.

Involving practising members of the disciplinary culture is one of the most effective ways of bringing an insider perspective to the analysis of a genre (Hyland 2000:143). Although experts may be unaware of the effects of their practices, their understandings are important, because these may confirm the researcher's findings, validate his/her insights and add psychological reality to analyses that are done. Four senior staff members from the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies were approached to perform the first expert review on a summary the researcher had made of the epistemology and writing conventions of history as a subject-field: one lecturer with ten years' experience, one associate professor and two full professors. The experts' responses, included as comments on the electronic copy of the summary, as well as additional suggestions included in e-mailed responses, pointed out a number of weaknesses and gaps in the researcher's overview. Most prominent was the fact that the researcher had relied too heavily on style guides and writing manuals. The experts pointed out that this genre (writing manuals) tends to present the conventions of the discourse community in a rather simplistic and often prescriptive way. One of the experts included a list of scholarly sources on historical writing to assist the researcher in gaining a more balanced perspective of historical writing. The recommended sources included scholarly overviews of trends in historical writing from different ideological perspectives and historical periods (Burke 2001a; Evans 1997; Marwick 2001; Shafer 1980; Sharpe 2001; Tosh 2006), as well as overviews of historical writing on South

African history (Smith 1988; Saunders 1988). This review led to a thorough revision of the researcher's initial understandings, which in turn served as the basis for the first draft of the syllabus.

The next section comprises an overview of the purposes of historical writing, as understood by the researcher after the expert review.

6.2.1 The purposes of historical writing

Similar to most other scientific disciplines, historians have delimited their field of practice and scholarly inquiry in vastly different ways throughout the ages. Not only have the awareness about history and the purported "uses" of history undergone major changes since the early 19th century, but different theoretical and thematic emphases have also occurred in different parts of the world. Next, a brief overview is given of the major trends in historical writing.

The 19th century

In the early 19th century history became professionalized. Almost all leading historians were professionals (Burke 2001a:5-6). During this time European history was primarily associated with Romanticism (Burke 2001a:1-2), which was the dominant paradigm in European thought and art around 1800. Romanticists believed that the past had to be valued for its own sake, and should be detached from present-day concerns. The intellectual movement that advocated this view is known as **historicism**, and historicism represented the academic wing of the Romantic obsession with the past (Tosh 2005:6-8). The leading figure was Leopold von Ranke, a professor at Berlin University from 1824 to 1872 (Tosh 2006:7). Rankean historians thought of history as essentially a narrative of events (Burke 2001a:4; 19; 2001b:283). The thematic emphasis was national and international, rather than local; particularly the politics of the nation state as viewed through the deeds of "great men" (Burke 2001a:5; 31). Therefore, the sources had to be official records, emanating from governments and preserved in archives. This thematic focus is referred to in the historical literature as "a view from above".

The New History

The 1950s and 1960s saw the upcoming of the so-called New History (*nouvelle histoire*), which originated in France (Burke 2001a:2). Much of the New History has been written in deliberate reaction against the traditional paradigm, particularly in reaction to the belief that there is only one truth, which has to be uncovered by the historian. New historians have deliberately moved away from "the voice of history" to heteroglossia or varied and constructed opposing voices (Shafer 1980:18), and to cultural relativism (the belief that humans perceive the world through a grid of conventions, schemata and stereotypes) (Burke 2001a:5-6). In line with a more relativistic approach, New Historians advocate the examination of a greater variety of evidence, such as oral, visual, and statistical. In addition, they no longer focus only on the grand narratives of the past (Burke 2001a:4; 15; 20), but begin to look toward other new branches of historical enquiry as well, such as economic history, social history, and cultural history (Evans 1997:21). Hence the slogan "total history". This concern with the whole range of human activity has encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration with social anthropologists, economists, literary critics, psychologists, and sociologists. However, the rapprochement with the social sciences introduced a passive, anonymous written style in the work of New Historians (Evans 1997:38), which may have reinforced the trend in style guides for writing about history to prohibit all reference to the author as an individual, particularly the word "I" (compare Rael 2004:18). "Social science history" reached its most extreme form in the US during the late 1960s and 1970s. The influence of the social sciences is particularly pronounced in the area of methodology (Shafer 1980:34): the search for regularities and generalizations in order to predict (and even prescribe) goals for conduct, and the tendency to be concerned more with analysis than narrative (Shafer 1980:11; Burke 2001b:282). During the 1970s and 1980s a number of the New Historians started concerning themselves with "history from below", which reflects a determination to take ordinary people's views and their experience of social change more seriously (Burke 2001a:3). This trend was furthered in the Marxist and Postmodern traditions.

Marxism

Marxism is underpinned by the belief that the driving force of history is the struggle by human societies to meet their material needs, which is why the Marxist theory is known

as "historical materialism". The highest form was believed to be industrial capitalism, which was destined to give way to socialism, at which point human need would be satisfied. However, after the fall of international Communism, belief in historical materialism has sharply declined. Because it is a schematic interpretation of the course of human development – a progression from lower to higher forms of production – Marxist history is widely regarded as metahistory (Tosh 2005: 29).

From the perspective of its rhetorical emphasis, Marxism is structural or analytic history, as opposed to narrative history. One of the important contributions of Marxist history is its focus on questions of cause and consequence, and its explanation of the origins of the economic and political transformations of the day (Tosh 2005:149).

Postmodernism

Despite the changes that took place in historians' outlook, the foundational way that historians "know" the past – *viz.* that in essence empiricism and rational analysis (inference) determine the content and the form of the historian's narrative – had seemingly remained largely unchanged until Postmodernism, or the "narrative-linguistic turn" during the 1970s (compare Munslow 2001). One of the main characteristics of postmodernism is the emphasis on language (Munslow 2001). In the postmodern view, identity is constructed by language, which is fractured and unstable, and therefore all knowledge of the past becomes part of discursive constructions (Tosh 2005:194). According to postmodernists there are no grounds to be found in historical records themselves for preferring one way of construing its meaning rather than another. Therefore, they argue, the past cannot be uncovered, it can only be invented (Tosh 2005:202-203). Postmodernists are particularly concerned with narrative. However, for them the function of story-telling is to make sense of one's own experiences, and not to reconstruct an objective past. They are generally sceptical about the "grand narratives" or "metanarratives" of traditional historians, contending that the past can merely be arranged into a multiplicity of stories that are open to a vast number of interpretations, which are all equally valid (or invalid) (Tosh 2005:198).

Postmodernists have experimented with narrative in various ways. Burke (2001b:290-297) describes a number of these. One option for the historian is to tell his/her story

from more than one point of view. Another strategy is to relate a series of events, and at the same time to analyze these events from the position of a later, better-informed observer. Yet another possibility is described as "micronarrative", and stands in opposition to "grand narrative." A micronarrative is a kind of microhistory, which is the telling of a story about ordinary people in their local setting (in other words social history), but at the same time using narrative to illuminate structures. An example of this kind of history is the social history of the South African historian Charles van Onselen, who uses illustrative stories, like the story about the 18th century sharecropper Kas Maine, to convey how the social structures, life cycles, and political and economic conditions were experienced by actual people (Tosh 2005:157). Table 6.1 summarizes the most important traditions in historical writing in terms of their conceptual and rhetorical foci.

Table 6.1 Overview of the most important Western traditions in historical writing

Paradigm	Conceptual foci	Rhetorical foci
Rankean history (19th century)	• Political history (history from above) • Truth-centred • Official records the only "legitimate" evidence	• Narration – as retelling • Chronology
New history (mid 20th century)	• Social history (history from below) • Interdisciplinary influences • More rigorous research methodologies • Variety of evidence-types	• Analysis • Cause and effect
Marxist history (1960-)	• Historical materialism (interprets and evaluates human development in various forms of development) • Class-centred	• Analysis • Cause and effect • Explanation
Postmodern history (1970-)	• Anti-positivist • Language is central in the formation of historical knowledge • Socially reflective • Recognition of a "multiplicity of voices"	• Narration - as (re)construction • Critical reflection

When considering these foci, three prominent notions or concepts emerge: time, which is an essential element of narratives; causality, which is part and parcel of analysis; and evaluation, which is integral to critical analysis. These notions are captured in the following explications of the purposes of historical writing from writing manuals:

- To tell the story in the present of something that happened in the past (Munslow 2001);

- To explain why certain things in the past happened as they did (Rampolla 2004:1);
- To become aware of, appreciate and judge perspectives other than one's own, both through historical data, and through interpretation of what other historians have said (Marius & Page 2005:1-4).

Thus, despite the various emphases in the historical writing of different periods, three concepts stand out, and are pivotal to understanding why historians write as they write or prefer to write. Eggins, Wignell and Martin (1993:75) have captured the centrality of these concepts in their summary of what students of history should learn:

> a sense of time, a sense of cause-effect relationship, an understanding of the interaction of past and present, and an understanding that history is a dynamic relationship of people, place, and time in which some events can be judged to be more significant than others.

A number of scholars working in the tradition of Systemic Functional Grammar have attempted to explicate the systematic relationships between historical purposes, the main concepts related to them, and the preferred genres and modes of writing (Coffin 2003; 2006; Martin, 2003; Martin & White 2005; Schleppegrell & Achugar 2003; Schleppegrell *et al.* 2004). Table 6.2 summarizes the essence of the complex relationships described by these authors:

Table 6.2 Relationships between the concepts of history and writing conventions of historians

Purpose	Concepts	Genres	Salient rhetorical modes
(Re)tell a story	Time	Autobiography Biography Historical recount Historical account	*Record* Narrate Describe
Understand and explain why things happened as they did	Cause and effect	Explanation (factorial or consequential)	*Explain* Cause and effect Compare and contrast
Appreciate and judge events, structures, other historians	Judgement and evaluation	Exposition Discussion Challenge	*Argue* Reflect Discuss Critically analyze

If time, cause/effect and judgement are the central conceptual dimensions of historical discourse (although judgement differs from the other two, in that it belongs to the interpersonal rather than the conceptual or ideational dimension of discourse), and if these concepts are systematically encoded in historical text and language, salient patternings should be explored for pedagogical application. The next section explores these notions within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar, and offers some suggestions on how they can be taught and learned in an academic writing course for second-year students of history.

6.2.2 Exploration of time, causality and judgement in historical writing

6.2.2.1 Time

Time is particularly relevant to writing autobiographies, biographies, historical recounts and historical accounts, where the specific purpose of the writing is to (re)tell in the present a story about the past. In such cases the historian or the student of history primarily assumes the role of a "recorder" of past events. Therefore the modes of writing or text types that feature prominently are narration and description.

According to Lomas (1993:20), "without chronology there can be no real understanding of change, development, continuity, progression and regression". Coffin (2006:97) considers linear and cyclical time, and their interconnection with historical notions of continuity and change as overarching concepts. **Linear time** can be described as "an abstract, spatial quantity that is divisible into single units; as a two dimensional linear, directional flow or succession of equal rate that extends from the past to the future or vice versa" (Adams 1995:33). It is further characterized by irreversibility and inevitability, increasing complexity, and often implies progress and "a grand plan" (Carr 1986:29). Linear time ties in with chronology, calendar time, and narratives or recounts, since calendar time makes it possible to develop time lines and chronologies, which in turn makes it possible to tease out primary sources in the form of historical narratives, and build in causal links. **Cyclical time**, on the other hand, is based on the metaphor of natural processes such as being born, to live and to die. The emphasis is on sameness and repetition (Adams 1995:33), as found in cycles of war and peace; economic boom, recession and depression; the rise and fall of civilizations and empires, etc. The

vocabulary of natural life-cycles – birth, growth, death – is often used to describe historical cycles.

Systemic Functional Grammar offers a number of lexical and grammatical resources for construing time, such as temporal circumstances (*in the 1930s*); processes (*preceded by*), systems of tense (*past, present*), temporal conjunction + dependent clauses (*when the Romans came*), conjunctive adjuncts (ordinatives) (*first, second*), mood adjuncts (*still, yet*). However, Coffin (2006:101-102) favours a set of semantic categories that cuts across grammatical classifications:

- **Sequencing time**, using temporal conjunctions, such as *when, after, before*
- **Setting in time**, using prepositional phrases, such as *at the beginning of the 20th century*
- **Duration in time**, using a prepositional phrase starting with *for*, as in *for nearly half a century*
- **Phasing time**, using different constructions to indicate beginning, duration and end, such as *at the onset of the Smallpox Epidemic; towards the end of the Great Trek.*
- **Segmenting time**, using nominalizations that have become part of the special lexis of the subject-field, such as *the apartheid era*, *The First British Occupation*, *The Great Depression*, etc.
- **Organizing through time**, as in the temporal organization of textual items; for example, *The first reason was opposition to the war.*

As in most other subjects, the learning of time-related concepts proceeds from the concrete and literal to the abstract and metaphorical. Sequencing in time is probably one of the first temporal devices mastered by learners, followed by setting in time, duration in time, segmenting time and organizing through time. Segmenting time and organizing through time are important resources for construing causality. Segmenting time is referred to by Martin (2003:27) as "packaging time". This entails that activities and periods are construed as things, which are often related to one another in a causal relationship (Martin 2003:28-29). Examples are nominal expressions such as *The Transvaal Location Commission (1881-1899), the Anglo-Transvaal War (1880-81),* and *the period of British administration (1877-1881),* etc.

A dimension of time that is not dealt with by Coffin or Martin is tense; presumably because tense does not fit in neatly with either calendar-related linear time or cyclical time. However, for second language speakers in particular, tense is an important issue, and is dealt with by the majority of style guides on writing about history. Two out of the four writing manuals consulted, Rael (2004:69) and Storey (2004:88), advise that the past tense should always be used in historical writing. The other two, Rampolla (2004:66-67) and Marius and Page (2005:152), state that it is only necessary to use the past tense when writing about events that took place in the past. These authors maintain that the present tense should be used when describing a document, referring to a document or something an author of a published source has said, because these documents or sources are assumed to be always present to the person who reads or observes them (Rampolla 2004:66-67; Marius & Page 2005:152).

For the purpose of creating in students an awareness of the resources available for construing time a hybrid classification scheme seemed to have the greatest practical value. The scheme would contain categories from SFL as well as semantic categories, *viz.* **sequencing time**, **setting in time** (which includes **segmenting time**), **temporal process** (phasing in time), (text internal) **temporal organization**, **temporal modality**, **temporal duration** and **tense**. It was argued that these categories need not be applied rigidly by students, yet simple guidelines on issues such as tense could be helpful, for example: Use past tense to retell or refer to events that took place in the past, and use present tense or present perfect tense to refer to existing sources (primary or secondary).

6.2.2.2 Causality

Cause and effect, which is the primary concept in understanding and explaining why things happened as they did, is pivotal to explanatory essays which give an account of the factors or causes that have contributed to a particular state of affairs or the consequences that occurred as a result of a certain event or series of events. In explanatory essays the writer assumes the role of an "interpreter" of events.

Similar to mastering time, learning causality seems to progress from the more concrete to the more abstract. Three ways of construing cause and effect are manifest in historical writing:

(a) Indicating sequential causal relations between external events

In its simplest form, the notion of cause is realised through conjunctions and process verbs that represent the connections between events in a relatively straightforward way, since they link events as they unfold in time. This is sometimes referred to as the "billiard ball model" (compare Coffin 2006:116), using conjunctions such as *because*, *therefore* and *thus*, as in

> The state hoped to win more support for these policies from the country's black population *because* Luthuli was highly respected in these communities (Sithole & Mkhize 2000).

(b) Indicating simultaneous causes or effects

Tawney (1978:54) points out that sometimes it is necessary for the historian to indicate significance by mentioning a number of causes and effects simultaneously. In such cases causality is packaged as nouns that occur in sentence- and clause-initial positions, as in *there are a number of factors …; the main reason…; a second reason …*

The causal relationship becomes more abstract because a single cause and its effect are no longer linked together by a relational element. Compare the following examples:

> The Great Trek had *the following consequences*: The first ….
>
> There are *several reasons* why the development of the history of women in South Africa might well be expected to follow a different pattern from that of the rest of the continent (Hetherington 1993).

One motivation for packaging cause nominally in this way is to manage information flow: cause, nominalised as a thing, can act as a departure point or Theme. In explanation genres, in particular, such nouns are frequently placed in Theme position, which then foregrounds and emphasises the analytical nature of the genre. It enables the writer to stage the explanation and lend cohesion and texture to the text. It also enables the writer to enumerate cause and effect.

(c) Linking a proposition and evidence

At an even higher level of abstractness, cause and effect conjunctions are used to argue historical significance, using conjunctions such as *because, therefore,* and *thus*; and process verbs such as *prove, show, explain, illustrate, indicate, suggest, attest, be explained by,* and *confirm*. Attributing significance to historical events or "internal reasoning" is particularly important in explaining and arguing genres. Compare the following examples from scholarly articles:

> Unlike the American legislation which excluded mainly Chinese labourers, the Cape act went all out and dealt with 'all classes' of Chinese and was *therefore* made applicable from the outset to the 'whole of the Chinese race' (Harris 2006).

> As such, official tallies of gross population mortality are undoubtedly incomplete, which *explains* why Jordan's initial compilations, which were based on these official numbers, are widely considered inaccurate today (Heaton & Falola 2006).

Successful (first language) students learn to control these uses of cause and effect as they progress. They learn that while the recording genres are largely concerned with people and events, explaining genres are concerned with more abstract trends and structures, and arguing genres with judging and negotiating their explanatory power.

However, second language learners may benefit from explicit instruction on how causality is construed. For them it might be helpful to make a dichotomous distinction between sequential and simultaneous causes and effects, and the most frequently used lexicogrammatical resources for expressing these relationships. It is argued that teaching students the linking devices that characterize certain rhetorical modes, such as *explanation* (cause and effect) should assist them in making their writing more logical and cohesive.

6.2.2.3 Judgement and evaluation

At more advanced levels the student of history is expected to exercise judgement and evaluation with regard to past events, social and political structures, and also the writings of other historians. The *Study Manual* of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies at the University of Pretoria explicitly sets the following requirements for written material at third-year level:

- Critical analysis and evaluation of facts
- Identification and explanation of different viewpoints

Research studies such as Lee and Ashby (2000), and Perfetti *et al.* (1994) have highlighted students' difficulty in identifying sub-texts and hidden agendas in the sources they have to read. Reading historical texts uncritically may be partially ascribed to the way in which school history textbooks and older scholarly works have been written and handled in pre-university instructional settings. In, addition, in many secondary sources the authorial voice is completely backgrounded, and events are construed as objective truths, creating the impression that history writes itself (Barthes, 1970:148). Students' writing shows a similar lack of evaluative skills. They are hesitant to express their own judgement of historical figures and historical events overtly, and to explicitly endorse or differ from the views of others. This claim is supported by the researcher's analysis of 12 examination essays by third-year University of Pretoria students in June 2008 on the topic of *How Lenin and his Bolshevik government managed to remain in power from 1917 to 1924 despite numerous setbacks*.

There may be more than one reason for the lack of overt appraisal in students' work. They may perceive the instructions they receive from their lecturers as mixed messages: They are required to convey their personal opinions in genres such as the academic essay, yet objectivity is often an absolute norm (Mitchell & Andrews 1994:92). Certain style guides on writing about history still preach this false objectivity as gospel. Rael (2004:18), for instance, prohibits all reference to the author as an individual, particularly the word "I". It is then almost ironical that essays by students who make more use of strategies to explicate authorial stance are typically rated higher than those who use less (Coffin 2006:149-150). The objectivist bias may also hark back to the Social Science Turn in historical writing during the 1950s and 1960s (Evans 1997:37), which induced a

"passive, anonymous written style" (Evans 1997:38). Another reason may be students' lack of command of the formal systems of Judgement and Engagement.

Twentieth century research on the construal of objectivity was largely focused on the omission of the authorial "I", and ignored the array of linguistic techniques that communicate values, instil bias and persuade the reader of the truth of the message. Only recently has a new development in Systemic Functional Linguistics started to address the ways in which language gives value to historical phenomena and to propositions made by the author. This new development is known as Appraisal, which refers to the subjective presence of writers (or speakers) in texts "as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate" (Martin & White 2005:1). It relates to the interpersonal metafunction in SFL, which is concerned with the exchange of attitudes. In particular, it is concerned with how writers construe for themselves particular authorial identities, how they align themselves with actual or potential respondents, and how they construct a real or an intended audience.

Appraisal theory was introduced in SFL at a time when historians themselves, particularly under the influence of postmodernism, had started realizing that objectivity in historical writing is a myth. Warren (1998:27) asserts that historical writing is subject to "evasions, biases, silences, relationships of power and the type of knowledge legitimized by authority". Historians, for instance, make use of linguistic resources to naturalize points of view, resist alternative readings and agree or disagree from others' viewpoints in relative measures. The following examples illustrate these evaluative devices:

- Naturalize points of view:

  Chief Mangosutho Buthelezi, for instance, also skilfully exploited the subtleties of apartheid to increase his own power, wealth, and social standing (Waddy 2003-2004).

- Resist alternative readings:

  We all know that the usual "script" for South African history, and *indeed* for all of African history is (*quite understandably*) the oppression of blacks by whites (Sithole & Mkhize 2000).

- Agree or disagree from others' viewpoints in relative rather than absolute measures:

> Much can be read into Leue's choice of metaphors, much that *might not be substantiated* (Kriel 2007).

The Appraisal framework in applied linguistics is divided along three main axes, *viz.* Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation (Coffin & Hewings 2004:159-166). Attitude subsumes three main sets of resources: Affect, Judgement and Appreciation**.** Affect is appraising experience in affectual or emotive terms. Terms of affect are likely to be used in autobiographies and other types of recount. Coffin (2006:141) offers the following example:

> These people looked like gods with white skin and clothes in different colours [...]. *I was scared very scared.*

However, in academic writing overt affect is not encouraged. Like Affect, Judgement also appraises past behaviour of human beings, but does so with reference to a set of institutionalized norms or an ethical framework about how people should and should not behave (Coffin 2006:141), as in the following example:

> Unintentionally, it seems, historians have absolved [the reverend] Colin Rae of all the *scandal* and reservations that have *shrouded* his career (Kriel 2002).

The judgement subcategory is further divided into Social esteem, and Social sanction, with further sub-classifications. Appreciation (particularly the subcategory Social valuation), comprises a set of norms for valuing processes and products rather than behaviour (Coffin 2006:141-142). In history both judgement of past behaviours and evaluation of processes and institutions are important. It is therefore suggested that writing tasks that invite students to use appropriate terms of judgement and appreciation be designed. Table 6.3 gives an indication of the available options in each of these subsystems.

Table 6.3: Examples of Judgement and Appreciation (compiled from Coffin, 2003; 2006; Martin 2003; Martin & White, 2005)

Main systems	Primary categories	Examples	
		Positive	**Negative**
Judgement (attitudes to people and the way they behave)	**Competence** (capacity)	able, astute, charismatic, effective, enterprising, intelligent, powerful, pragmatic, shrewd, skilled, strong, successful, tactical, talented	failure, foolish, flawed, incompetent, lacking judgement, short-sighted, weak
	Strength (tenacity)	committed, courageous, daring, dedicated, determined, disciplined, fearless, formidable, hard working, heroic, passionate, risk taking, self-reliant, tenacious, vigorous, willing	arrogant, badly organised, cowardly, despondent, inflexible, low morale, rigid, stubborn
	Truthfulness (veracity)	credible, genuine, honest, truthful	complicit, deceitful, deceptive, dishonest, hypocritical
	Ethics (propriety)	fair, just, respectable, responsible, self-sacrificing	abusive, brutal, corrupt, cruel, heartless, immoral, oppressive, ruthless, unfair, unjust
Appreciation (evaluations of objects, institutions and structures)		appealing, appropriate, authentic, balanced, consistent, detailed, effective, efficient, elegant, exceptional, harmonious, helpful, innovative, intricate, logical, long awaited, lucid, original, precise, profound, unified, unique, valuable, welcome, worthwhile	amorphous, common, contradictory, conventional, dated, discordant, distorted, everyday, fake, flawed, grotesque, ineffective, insignificant, monolithic, prosaic, reductive, simplistic, unclear, unbalanced

Graduation comprises a set of resources for grading evaluations. These may increase or decrease Force or Focus. For increasing force, intensifiers are often used, such as *very*, *really*, *slightly*, *somewhat*. Focus may be sharpened by using words such as *typical*, and blurred by using phrases such as *some sort of*. Although students occasionally use hedges like these, it would do no harm to focus their attention on the strategies used in language to narrow and broaden categories, and the linguistic choices available for doing this.

Engagement comprises resources for engaging with and negotiating the alternative positions activated by an utterance. In the Appraisal framework "bare assertions" that appear to express uncontested truths, are termed Monogloss, for example

> In the first four decades after the permanent settlement of white emigrants from the Cape Colony north of the Vaal River, little progress was made with the allocation of land to African communities (Bergh 2005a).

Heterogloss, on the other hand, refers to the various ways an author construes for the text a backdrop of prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses (Martin & White 2005:97), using hedges such as *probably*, *seemingly*, *it is likely that*; reporting verbs such as *claim, assert, contend, argue,* etc.; and terms that indicate disagreement or difference, such as *I disagree with X* /*reject X's claim,* etc.

As alluded to above, mastering the tools of engagement is one of the most important skills the student of history has to learn. However, the Engagement system comprises a complex network of categories that are often difficult to keep apart, even for the versed genre analyst. In order to determine how engagement is lexicalized in historical discourse, a corpus analysis of restricted scope was undertaken. Twenty scholarly articles on aspects of African history, published in accredited journals, were scanned and converted to text, using optical character recognition. The entire corpus, comprising 60 000 words of running text, was tagged using the UAM Corpus Tool, a computerized corpus analysis program, designed for appraisal analysis. With a view to the pedagogical focus of the project of which the analysis forms part, I decided not to use the program's default engagement framework, but a simplified version of a framework proposed by Martin and White (2005:97-98). The result is a typology comprising the following four main categories:

1. **Disclaim**: The authorial voice positions itself as at odds or rejecting some contrary position
2. **Attribute**: The authorial voice invites other voices to speak
3. **Entertain/Probabilize**: The authorial voice does not fully endorse a position expressed by him-/herself or by another voice invoked in the text
4. **Proclaim**: The authorial voice represents its position as plausible or generally agreed, thereby suppressing or ruling out alternative positions

After tagging the corpus, search queries were done on all four categories, which in turn became the input for generating word frequency lists and concordances in Wordsmith

Tools. The word frequency lists were searched for frequently occurring lexical items; and the concordances were studied to verify that the search term was indeed used to express Engagement, and not some other rhetorical value. In the Probabilize subcorpus concordances were built for *seem, appear, apparent, perhaps, may, might, could probably, possibly/possible*; in the Attribute corpus for *argue, claim, say/said, according to, explain, state, note, write, see, reveal, describe, refer,* and *conclude*; and in the Proclaim corpus the search terms included *clear, indeed, (in) fact, important, significant, obvious(ly), of course, certain, natural, must, surely, likely, should* and *remember*. The Disclaim corpus was found to be rather small. It does not contain any of the terms that are typically used to signal the speech act of disagreeing. For instance, the words *disagree*, *reject*, *refute*, and *contest* do not even occur once in the entire subcorpus. The only relevant items with a frequency of three and more, are *not, speculative, neither, rather* and *hardly*. Upon scrutiny of the UAM search query for Disclaim, it transpired that authors are reluctant to confront other positions head-on. When differing from alternative positions a range of more subtle expressions are used, such as *We doubt that; X has underestimated the importance of; It is more likely/correct that; X's claims are exaggerated.* Rhetorical questions are also sporadically used in a disclaiming function, for instance: *But are labels like these really justified?* (implying that they are not). Table 6.4 summarizes the results of the corpus analysis.

Table 6.4 Summary of engagement markers in the corpus of history articles

Proclaim		Disclaim		Attribute		Probabilize	
certain/certainly	44	Overt negation (no, not, etc.)	14	say	92	seem	97
indeed	43	hardly justified	6	argue	86	might	61
it is a fact that/in fact	29	More likely/correct	4	claim	58	appear	52
of course	24	X's claims are speculative	2	according to	55	apparent(ly)	49
undoubtedly/no doubt	16			state	52	perhaps	49
it is/becomes clear	14			write	40	probably	30
it must be remembered/ understood/noted	12			explain	37	possible/ possibly	13
it is/seems likely	9			note	29		
obviously	8			see/saw as	25		
it should be seen/ remembered/noted	4			describe as	23		
				refer	19		
				conclude	15		

It is important that second-year students should be made aware of the ways in which judgement about historical figures, processes and institutions is expressed in historical discourse, and of the resources that are available for engaging with other authors. One way of creating such awareness is to include critical language awareness exercises during the exploration phase of the curriculum, when historical texts are deconstructed (compare Study Unit 1 of the syllabus expounded in Table 6.5 below).

It should be noted that designing classroom activities to cultivate critical language awareness is not new. Ten years ago Luckett and Chick (1998) reported on the success of a research-based curriculum development project of this nature in a history department at another South African university.

In addition to deconstruction exercises the lexicogrammatical choices available to historians could be explicitly taught later on in the course, when students jointly and independently construct history essays (compare Study Unit 4 of the syllabus in Table 6.5 below).

6.3 The (pre-)syllabus

The syllabus for the subject-specific intervention, which was designed on the basis of the contextual research reported on in this chapter, is expounded in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 (Pre)syllabus for a module on essay-writing for students of history

Study unit theme	Syllabus themes
STUDY UNIT 1 Introduction to historical discourse	• Why study history and why write about it? • Different perspectives to writing history (critical exploration of texts from the main traditions: Rankean History, New History, Marxism, Postmodernism)
STUDY UNIT 2 Exploring preferred modes of writing in historical discourse	Identifying parts of texts with different functions: • Giving an overview/summarizing • Telling a story/describing an event • Describing an object or an experience • Comparing and contrasting • Indicating and describing causes and effects • Arguing a case

STUDY UNIT 3 Using rhetorical modes in historical writing	• Analyzing and interpreting writing prompts • Selecting appropriate modes for assignments • Writing short texts using a particular mode
STUDY UNIT 4 Getting acquainted with history essays	• The three-part structure of academic essays • (Optional) subsections • Three main essay genres in history, and their prototypical structures: recording, explaining, judging and interpreting • Important stylistic, lexical and grammatical dimensions: time, causality, evaluation, and abstractness
STUDY UNIT 5 Joint composition of history essays	• Jointly analyzing writing prompts in terms of required content, structure and language • Brainstorming and planning content • Jointly composing subsections of essays • Revising • Critiquing the essay and reflecting on the process
STUDY UNIT 6 Writing your own history essay	Independent composition of a first and second draft, with peer and teacher feedback as well as personal reflection.

In line with the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings outlined in the previous chapters the syllabus reflects (1) the belief that genres embody the purposes of the discourse communities they serve (Swales 1990); (2) the introduction and gradual removal of scaffolding, derived from the Vygotskyan notion of a Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1978); and (3) a Teaching and Learning Cycle (as proposed by the Australian genre school), starting with the exploration of texts (deconstruction), followed by joint construction of texts by the teacher and the class, independent construction of texts, and critical reflection on the basis of self-, peer and teacher evaluation (compare Cope & Kalantzis 1993; 2000).

6.4 Conclusion

The research that is reported in this chapter supports the assumption that disciplinary purposes shape texts in a discipline, and demonstrates that there is a clear relationship between the main purposes of a subject-field and its writing conventions. However, the designer of an academic literacy intervention for students of history should be constantly aware of the fact that the ideological paradigm within which the writing takes place will, to some extent, co-determine the choice of mode, lexis and grammar.

Generally important findings are that the three main purposes of historical writing are (re)telling a story, understanding and explaining why things happened as they did, and judging events, structures and the words of other historians. Thus, **time**, **causality** and **judgement/evaluation** are the central conceptual dimensions of historical discourse. These concepts are expounded in certain conventional genres: Time is the central notion in autobiographies, biographies, historical recounts and historical accounts; Causality constitutes the core concept of explanations; and Judgement/Evaluation is found in expositions, discussions and challenges. From a rhetorical point of view it can be said that in genres focusing on time the main purpose of the author is to *record*; if the focus is on causality the author wishes to *interpret*, and if the emphasis is on judgement the author finds him-/herself primarily in an *evaluative* or reflective mode.

In historical texts time, causality and judgement have been lexicalized and grammaticalized in systematic ways, and their institutionalization in lexis and grammar have been described in various ways. As far as **time** is concerned, Systemic Functional Grammar offers categories such as temporal circumstances; processes, systems of tense, temporal conjunction + dependent clauses, conjunctive adjuncts (ordinatives) and mood adjuncts. Other authors working within the domain of applied linguistics (language teaching) prefer semantic categories that cut across grammatical classifications. Coffin (2006:101-102), for instance, uses the categories sequencing time, setting in time, duration in time, phasing time, segmenting time and organizing through time. A hybrid scheme was proposed – not to use as a template, but to create awareness of the resources available to the student of history for construing time in ways that are acceptable to expert members of the discourse community of historians, and also manage temporal concepts.

Cause and effect is pivotal to explanatory essays which give an account of the factors or causes that contributed to a particular state of affairs or the consequences that occurred as a result of a certain event or series of events. The two most prominent ways of construing cause and effect in historical writing are (a) to indicate sequential (chronological) causal relations between external events, lexicalized in the format of temporal conjunctions and prepositions and (b) to indicate a number of causes and

effects simultaneously, typically by making use of nouns that occur in clause- and sentence-initial positions.

One of the important differences between school-level historical writing and tertiary-level historical writing is the demonstrated ability to **critically analyze** and **judge** or **evaluate** facts; and also to identify and explain different viewpoints. However, students are hesitant to express their own judgement of historical figures and historical events overtly, and to endorse explicitly or differ from the views of others – possibly due to the "objectivist bias" introduced by the Social Science Turn in historical writing during the 1950s and 1960s, but perhaps also because they have never been taught the formal systems of Appraisal in language, as described by the vast literature available within the framework of SFL. Since it is so important for historians to use the resources of stance and engagement appropriately, it is ideal that they should learn from meaningful exercises and authentic examples. For this purpose a corpus of scholarly articles on African history was compiled and analyzed.

Using the instructional framework and the presyllabus expounded in Chapter 5 as a foundation, and intermeshing into this framework the outcomes of the contextual exploration described in this chapter, a dedicated (pre)syllabus was compiled for a writing intervention aimed at students of history. The next chapter reports on the implementation of this (pre)syllabus, and the evaluation of its effectiveness.

Chapter 7: Evaluation of the subject-specific intervention

7.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a comprehensive description of the process that was followed to administer the essay-writing intervention for students of history, and discusses the results of the evaluation.

7.2 Quantitative evaluation of the effect

7.2.1 Method

After having been informed about the course in one of their history classes sixteen students with history as a major subject in their second year of study self-selected to register non-formally for the semester course on essay-writing described in chapter 6. Eventually 10 students completed the course: one mother tongue speaker of Afrikaans, one mother tongue speaker of English (of Indian descent) and eight speakers of African languages. The relatively high attrition rate might have been due to the course being non-credit bearing.

The 14 week intervention (two contact sessions per week) commenced in July 2008. A part-time lecturer in the Unit of Academic Literacy with both English as a major and a master's degree in History was recruited to teach the course. She was remunerated from the author's research account. Course materials consisted of a 50 page study guide based on the syllabus, a reader comprising a selection of scholarly articles and chapters from books on historical subjects, the *Study Manual* of the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, and a number of model essays.

All students who took part in the project received the intervention along with a pretest and a posttest. The participants signed a letter of consent at the beginning of the course to allow the use their essays and their survey responses for research purposes. The pretest assumed the format of a 50 minute in-class essay during the second week of the module, on a topic related to the content of the second-year history curriculum, *viz.*

Discuss black reaction and resistance to the Natives Land Act of 1913. Students were required to study source materials from the reader during the preceding week, and were allowed to use the reader as an in-class resource. The conditions for the posttest were exactly the same as for the pretest, only the topic differed: *Discuss how segregation affected the social and economic situation of black South Africans.*

The assessment instrument was a scoring rubric comprising 15 items. The values were defined as percentage ranges to assist the assessors in conceptualizing each mark in terms of a benchmark that would resonate with generally conceived achievement levels:

7 = 85-100%	**6 = 75-84%**	**5 =65-74%**	**4 = 50-64%**	**3 = 36-49%**	**2 = 26-35%**	**1 = 0-25%**
Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Below average	Poor	Very poor

A "not applicable" (NA) option was included for items that might not be relevant for a particular assessment.

Seven-point scales were used for fourteen of the items, while the 15th had to be rated on a two-point scale. The rationale for rating Legibility and layout on a two-point scale was to obtain a cumulative score of 100. Items 16 and 17, the Total and the Overall percentage, were numbered only for statistical purposes. Items 1-15 were clustered into four dimensions: Use of source material, Structure and development, Academic writing style, and Editing. Three empirically based and internationally accredited analytic rating scales contributed input for the instrument: the *TOEFL writing scoring guide*; the *Scoring profile* of Jacobs *et al.* 1981 (cited by Weigle, 2002:113-115); and the *Masus rating sheet* of Bonanno and Jones (2007:2, 13). The scale was not intended to be overtly genre-based, because the purpose of the intervention was not to teach students a particular pedagogical approach, but to assist them in learning how to write academic essays. Table 7.1 is a reproduction of the scoring instrument.

Table 7.1 Analytic scoring rubric for the assessment of academic essays

	USE OF SOURCE MATERIAL								
1.	Relevance of source data	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
2.	Integration of source data with text	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
3.	Stance and engagement	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
	STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT								
4.	Thesis statement: clarity and focus	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
5.	Development of main argument	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
6.	Conclusion	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
7.	Paragraph development	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
	ACADEMIC WRITING STYLE								
8.	Syntax: phrase and clause structure, sentence length	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
9.	Concord and tense	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
10.	Linking devices	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
11.	Technical and subtechnical lexis	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
12.	Style (formality; rhetorical mode)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
	EDITING								
13.	Spelling, capitalization and punctuation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
14.	Referencing technique	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NA
15.	Legibility and layout	good 2				poor 0			NA
16.	**Total**								
17.	**Overall percentage**								

Prior to the intervention the instrument was piloted on 12 essays on the topic of *How Lenin and his Bolshevik government managed to remain in power from 1917 to 1924 despite numerous setbacks*, which was one of the questions in the history semester test. Adjustments were made on the basis of the relative ease and/or difficulty of use of the rating instrument, and the general agreement between the results of the analytic scoring

and an impression mark. It was decided to use the "Not applicable" option for item 14 (Referencing technique), since referencing is normally not required for timed in-class essays, and also for item 15 (Legibility and layout), since design features cannot easily be adapted in a single draft, timed essay (as opposed to a multiple draft, homework essay).

After the pretest essays had been written they were scored independently by the course designer (Rater 1) and the class lecturer (Rater 2), using the adapted rubric. The same rubric was used for the posttest. However, fairly large discrepancies occurred between the scores of the two raters, regarding both the pretest and the posttest. On average the pretests were scored 7.1% lower by Rater 2 than by Rater 1. The converse was true for the posttests, which were on average scored 6.6% higher by Rater 2 than by Rater 1. Possible explanations for the discrepancies are that (1) the two raters focused on different aspects of essay quality: content in the case of Rater 2, and form in the case of Rater 1; (2) Rater 2 had ample experience in rating history essays, but less experience in assessing academic writing, whereas Rater 1 had 25 years of experience in the assessment of writing; and (3) Rater 2's scores might have subconsciously been influenced by a desire to prove the effectiveness of the intervention.

On the basis of the large discrepancy between the scores of the two raters and the results of the preliminary statistical analyses, it was jointly decided by the researcher and the statistician who supervised the quantitative process to use only Rater 1's scores.

7.2.2 Presentation and discussion of students' results

The total score for each of the 10 respondents was converted to a percentage for ease of interpretation (compare Figure 7.1):

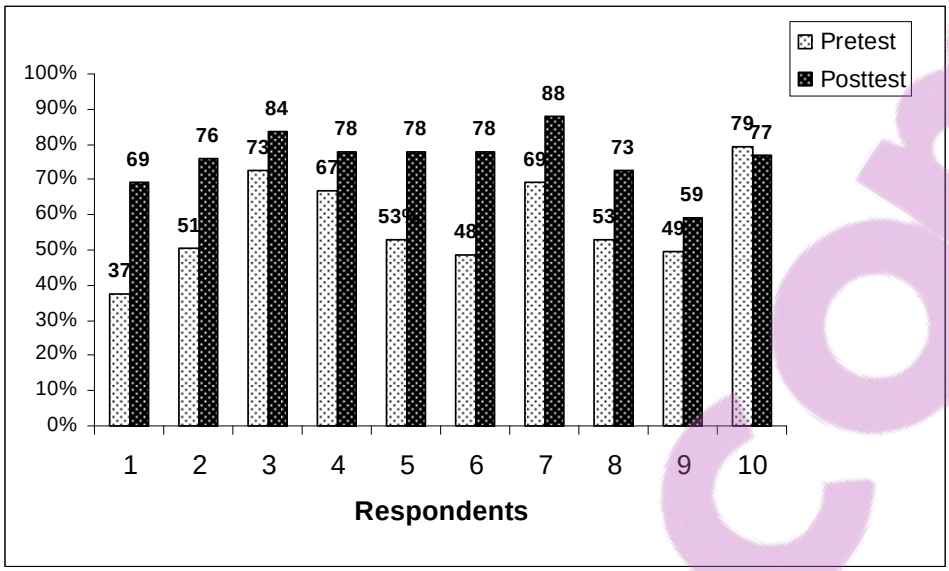


Figure 7.1 Comparison of pre- and posttest results from the subject-specific intervention per respondent

The average improvement of the 10 respondents was 19%. Nine respondents performed better on the posttest than on the pretest. The single student who performed worse on the posttest, did so by a mere 2 percent.

Figure 7.2 displays the average results per item after conversion to percentages:

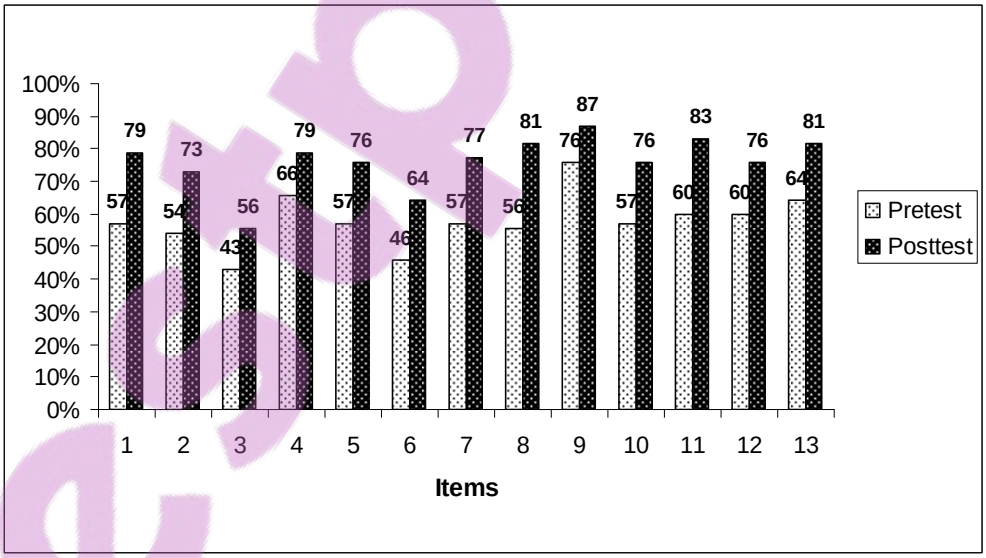


Figure 7.2 Comparison of pre- and posttest results from the subject-specific intervention per item

Per item, all the posttest ratings were higher than the pretest ratings: On four items the improvement was between 20% and 26% (items 1, 7, 8 and 11), on six items the improvement was between 15% and 19%, (items 2, 5, 6, 10, 12 and 13), and on the remaining 3 items the improvement was between 11% and 13%.

7.2.3 Statistical analysis

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (SPSS version 17; Williams, Sweeney & Anderson, 2009: 764-770) was used to assess if the differences between the pre- and posttest ratings on each of the 13 questions comprising the instrument were significant. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test is a non-parametric test that is suitable for the analysis of small samples, as in the present case. The test indicates the probability of a significant difference between pre- and posttest ratings, and is appropriate for comparing data from the same participants – in this case the pre- and posttests written by each of the respondents who participated in the subject-specific intervention.

The improvement proves to be consistent across the three primary dimensions of the rating scale, *viz.* Use of source material, Structure and development, Academic writing style and Editing. Table 7.2 shows the subtotals for the four dimensions converted to percentages:

Table 7.2 Percentage improvement of the subject-specific group per dimension

Dimension	Mean: pretest	Mean: posttest	Improvement
1. Use of source material (Items 1-3)	51%	69%	18%
2. Structure and development (Items 4-7)	56%	74%	18%
3. Academic writing style (Items 8-12)	62%	81%	19%
4. Editing (Item 13)	64%	81%	17%

The results presented in Figure 7.2 should be interpreted against the probability values obtained from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test on the three dimensions. The hypothesis is that the intervention improved students' skills, resulting in higher ratings on their essays. A one-sided probability value (p-value) is therefore reported. P-values less than 0.05 indicate that there is a significant improvement from the pre- to the posttest ratings

awarded by Rater 1 at a 5% level of significance. Table 7.3 indicates the p-values for the four dimensions:

Table 7.3 One-sided p-values of the pre- and posttest ratings on the four dimensions of the subject-specific intervention

Dimension	P-value
Dimension 1: Use of source materials	0.004
Dimension 2: Structure and development	0.006
Dimension 3: Academic writing style	0.003
Dimension 4: Editing	0.008
Overall	**0.002**

According to Table 7.3 the improvement between the pre- and posttest ratings is significant at the 5% level for all four the main dimensions of the scoring instrument: Use of source materials, Structure and Development, and Academic writing style. In order to establish whether the p-values of all the individual items were significant, ratings from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was obtained for them as well, as represented by Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4 One-sided p-values of the pre- and posttest ratings on the 13 items in the subject-specific intervention, obtained from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Item	P-value
1	0.006
2	0.011
3	0.074
4	0.043
5	0.002
6	0.086
7	0.004
8	0.002
9	0.047
10	0.004
11	0.004
12	0.031
13	0.008

According to Table 7.4 the improvement between the pre- and posttest ratings is significant for all the items, with the exception of items 3 and 6, which are significant at

the 10% level. A larger sample might have resulted in significant improvement at the 5% level for these two questions as well.

Although the findings indicate that the intervention was successful in terms of the improvement of students' performance, the information still needs to be interpreted and converted to revision strategies for future interventions. For the purpose of curriculum review a more fine-grained diagnosis of students' performance is desirable. Text analysis is one of the instruments that may provide this type of information. However, the analysis of a corpus of full length essays with regard to all the lexicogrammatical and discourse-level features included in the analytic scoring rubric that was used is an extremely ambitious task. The question was on what basis to select features for in-depth analysis. Since there is no correct or immediately obvious answer it was decided to justify the selection theoretically. Systemic Functional Grammar was chosen, with particular focus on features that are representative of the three main functions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual:

- Because of the "universality" or partially generic nature of logical relations among concepts, **Logical relationships** was chosen to represent the ideational function.
- **Appraisal** was selected to represent the interpersonal function on the basis of the importance of signaling relationships between discourse participants.
- In recognition of the crucial role that thematic development plays in essay-writing, **Theme** was selected to represent the textual function of language.

The following section describes the procedure and the outcomes of the text analysis aimed at determining how well the subject-specific intervention students mastered the skills related to these dimensions between the pretest and the posttest.

7.3 Textual analysis of the essays

7.3.1 Method

First, the pre- and posttest essays of all the students taking part in the intervention were tagged electronically for Logical ideation and Appraisal, using literature-based sets of categories and subcategories (compare tables 7.5 and 7.6 below). Concordance lists were compiled for both these dimensions and their subcategories, using

WordsmithTools version 4.0. For the analysis of thematic development it was decided to perform a Theme analysis on the pre- and posttest essays of only one respondent in order to determine whether a significant difference between pre- and posttest scores is supported by a comparable mastery of thematic development. This analysis procedure was chosen instead of tagging, because tagging is typically used for units below the sentence, and thematic development operates at higher levels, including clause level, paragraph level and whole-text level.

7.3.2 Presentation and discussion of findings

7.3.2.1 Ideational analysis

The ideational function of language does not only deal with construing participants, processes and circumstances that populate human experience, but also with construing experience as logically organized sequences of activities. This aspect of ideational meaning will be referred to as "logical ideation". Following Martin and Rose (2007: 122-153) logical ideation was explored with regard to the categories **Addition**, **Comparison**, **Causation** and **Time** as well as their subcategories. Along with Coffin (2006: 101-102) it is believed that logical relations are not only expressed by means of conjunctions, and thus the notion of logical ideation cuts across grammatical categories. Compare, for instance, the following resources for expressing cause and effect: *because* (conjunction); the *cause(s) of* X (prepositional phrase); *the result* was (noun phrase), X was *caused* by Y (verb), *hence*, *consequently* (adverbs). Table 7.5 gives an overview of the main categories of Logical Ideation, and mentions a number of prototypical examples:

Table 7.5 Categories of logical ideation

Categories	Subcategories	Examples
Addition	Additive	and; besides; in addition; not only ... but also; for example; such as; as well as; besides; further; namely
	Subtractive	neither ... nor
	Alternative	or; if not … then; alternatively
Comparison	Similar	like; as if; similarly; likewise; in the same way
	Contrast	but; yet; whereas; on the other hand; although; while; instead; even though; however; rather
Consequence	Result/consequence	therefore; thus; consequently; so; hence; resulted in; as a result of; the effect of; the consequence(s) of;

Categories	Subcategories	Examples
	Cause	because (of); since; as; due to; for; with; enable; cause; reasons for; causes of
	Means	by; by means of; through; with the help of
	Purpose	so as; in order to; lest; for fear of; toward, the aim of;
	Condition	if; provided that; unless
Time	Temporal setting and phasing	1913 (as a metonymy for an event that took place in 1913); in 1913; at the onset of the Smallpox Epidemic; towards the end of the Great Trek; at the same time; by 2008
	Temporal process	culminated; concluded; ended; started; at the beginning of
	Time sequence	then; after; subsequently; before; previously; again; as; while; meanwhile; the following; the previous
	Text-internal time	Firstly; secondly; first; second; the first reason …
	Temporal duration	for; continue (to) + V
	Temporal mood	still; yet
	Tense	

A complicating factor is that logical organization of activity sequences is not restricted to the ideational function of language. One side of the system of logical organization does indeed interact with the ideational function, but the other side interacts with the textual function: certain logical relationships are text-internal (having to do with the organization of information in the text itself). A subcategory that serves only a text-internal function is Text-internal time. Many conjunctions and adverbs have internal (textual) functions in addition to their external (experiential) functions, for example *later*, *earlier*, *meanwhile*, *subsequently*, *towards*, *further*, etc. In some of the SFL literature the text-internal uses are often referred to as "grammatical metaphor" (compare Martin & Rose 2007). Others classify text-internal logic as "metadiscourse" (compare Hyland 2005; 2009). This dual functionality of logical markers seems to support Bruce (2008:20-21) in his scepticism about the appropriateness of the SFL distinction between field, tenor and mode for "extended, written, monologic" texts, such as academic essays.

In the text analysis, no distinction was made between text-external and text-internal uses. This was a conscious decision, because in the field of history the relationships between real-world events and entities is just as important as those between different elements of the text.

Figure 7.3 shows the difference in how the students handled logical relationships in their essays before and after the intervention. For each subcategory (Addition, Comparison, Causation and Time/tense) both the number of correct usages and the number of incorrect usages are indicated. This was deemed necessary because the researcher was not only interested in how many times students used a particular resource, but also in how many times the use was appropriate.

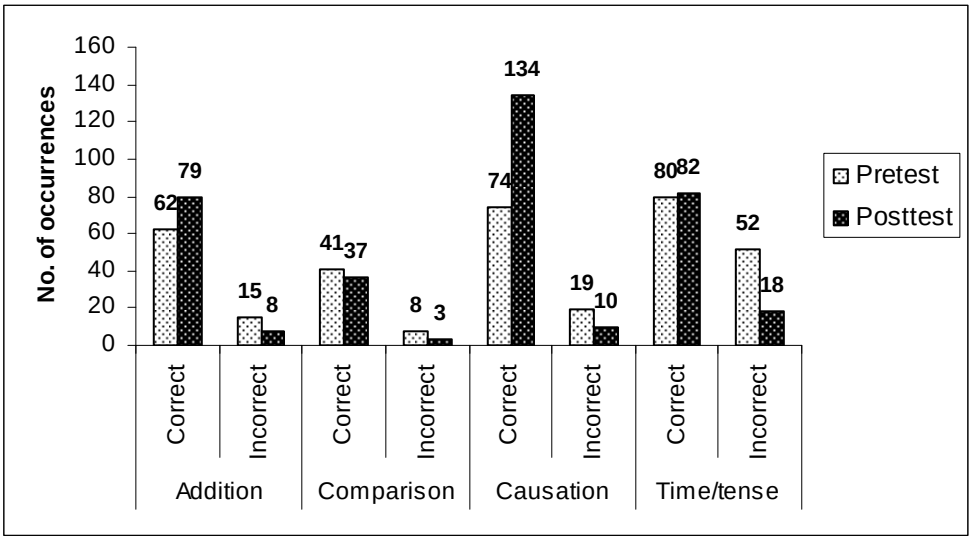


Figure 7.3 Logical ideation: comparison of pre- and posttest results in the subject-specific intervention

According to Figure 7.3 the most significant increase in the number of appropriately used markers of logical relationships occurred in the Causation category, which includes the subcategories Consequence/result, Cause, Means, Purpose and Condition. A reason for the dramatic increase (from 74 to 134 = 81% for the category) could be the emphasis that the intervention had placed on explanation of historical events in terms of chains of cause and effect in historical essays. Also, cause and effect is lexicalized in many different ways in English, using various parts of speech and differing degrees of abstractness, ranging from conjunctions to adverbs, verbs and nouns.

It is not surprising that the relation of Addition was handled well in both the pretest and the posttest, because coordination is one of the types of conjunction to be mastered first

by children. Regarding the representation of the subcategories Addition remained fairly constant across the pretest and the posttest (60 and 67 instances, respectively), whereas markers of Subtraction increased from 0 in the pretest to 2 in the posttest; and Alternation from 2 in the pretest to 10 in the posttest.

Since none of the essay topics overtly called for comparison, it is not surprising that Contrast and Similarity markers occur in relatively low frequencies in both the pretest and the posttest. Contrast features more prominently than Similarity (38 in the pretest and 32 in the posttest, as opposed to 3 in the pretest and 6 in the posttest). A possible explanation is that the history of segregation in South Africa, which constituted the overarching topic for both the pre- and the posttest essays, emphasizes differences rather than similarities.

The overall "correct" use of temporal markers remained fairly constant across the intervention period. The temporal subcategories Setting in time and Sequencing of time were well represented in both the pre- and the posttest: 43 markers of Setting in the pretest and 40 in the posttest; and 31 markers of Sequence in the pretest and 37 in the posttest. The relatively consistent mastery of these resources could perhaps be explained by the importance of chronology and the positioning of events in historical time in historical writing. Perhaps the most disappointing finding is that text-internal time (temporal organization of textual parts) was so sparsely used as a structuring mechanism. Only 3 instances occurred in the pretest corpus, and 5 instances in the posttest corpus.

While the number of temporal markers remained constant, the number of local ideation errors decreased between 47% and 65% in each of the four subcategories. According to the relevant concordance list the number of Tense errors alone (thus excluding other incorrectly used markers of temporal relationships) decreased from 43 to12. A possible explanation for this decrease may be that before the intervention the history students had never been explicitly taught that when referring to past events past tense should normally be used, and when referring to published sources present tense should typically be used.

7.3.2.2 Interpersonal analysis

The interpersonal function of language is addressed by the Appraisal framework in SFL. The subcategories listed in Table 7.6 were condensed from Martin and White (2005) for the analysis (compare section 6.2.2 for examples):

Table 7.6 Appraisal categories

Categories	Subcategories	Examples
Attitude	Affect/emotion (appraising experience in affectual terms)	(contributed to) discontent and anger; more of angered misery than rage; disappointing; (expressed their) bitterness; (it is) sad (to see); (fills the reader with) revulsion; gory image;
	Judgement (attitudes to people and the way they behave)	(X displayed) genuine sympathy; fearless traitor; corrupt officials
	Social valuation (evaluation of objects, institutions and structures)	repressive (laws); viewed as inferior; cruel world; degrading (conditions); victim of teenage pregnancy; riddled with corruption
Engagement	Attribute (attribute what is being/ has been said to another author)	According to; (Author X) supports; (Author X) argues; X has firmly stated; X implies that
	Proclaim (express the writer's own point of view)	This essay attempts; It is important to note; The truth of the matter is; In other words; Clearly, …; X can be regarded …;
Graduation	Force (intensifying/mitigating)	devastating threats; huge disparity; strikingly visible; a major role; extreme vulnerability; very rarely
	Focus (sharpening or blurring reference points)	… in particular; the root cause; more or less; just enough; around X%

Although agreeing or disagreeing with others or expressing one's own commitment toward a proposition in relative measures ("modalizing") constitutes an important dimension of Engagement, it was not included as a subcategory because of the regular integration with authorial stance (Proclaim) and reporting (Attribute), e.g. "one should agree", "this report suggests", and "[Author X] seems to argue". Similarly, Disclaiming was excluded as a subcategory of Engagement, since disagreement is also entangled with authorial stance. Furthermore, few second-year students have the confidence and assertiveness to disagree with expert sources, and no examples were found in the students' work.

Figure 7.4 shows the differences in the handling of Appraisal resources between the pretest and the posttest.

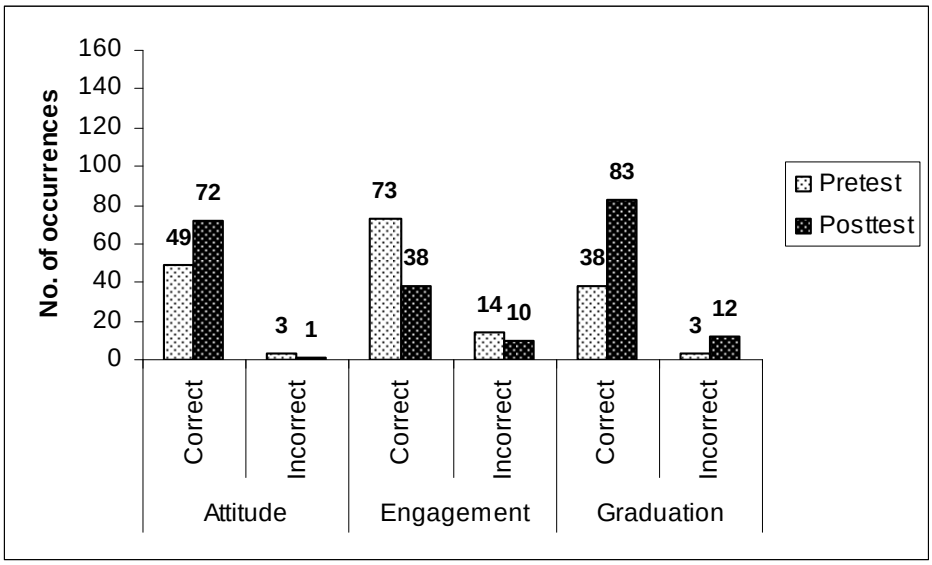


Figure 7.4 Appraisal: comparison of pre- and posttest results in the subject-specific intervention

As far as Appraisal is concerned, students' improvement was not consistent across the three main categories: Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. There was a noticeable increase in the use of Attitude markers (47%). A possible explanation is that through interaction with sources and attending academic lectures students gained a substantial amount of content knowledge on the history of political and economic segregation in South Africa during the semester, and this may have contributed to enhanced confidence in stating what they know. On the other hand it could be partially ascribed to the topic of the posttest essay, *viz.* black people's reaction to the policy of segregation, which demands the valuation of social institutions and the judgment of people's behaviour.

The handling of Graduation (Force and Focus) also showed significant improvement: All 10 respondents used Graduation markers in the posttest, and there was an overall improvement of 118%. However, despite the improvement in the use of Attitude and Graduation resources students made more Graduation errors in the posttest than in the pretest.

The sharp decrease in correct uses in the Engagement category (73 in the pretest and 38 in the posttest, which marks a 92% decline) was disappointing, since students' ability to make their own voices heard and to engage with other voices is one of the most

important characteristics of tertiary-level academic discourse. One could only guess at the reasons for this tendency. Perhaps the same reason for the increase in Attitude markers – the increased amount of content knowledge – made them less dependent on sources during the posttest. This hypothesis could be supported by the fact that although the students were allowed to consult their history readers for reference purposes during the essay exam, many did not make use of this opportunity. If there is any substance to this claim, it could also explain why there is a more significant decrease in Attribute markers (from 44 to 13), which signify references to other authors, than Proclaim markers (from 29 to 25), which signify the "intrusion" of the authorial voice.

The interim conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of these findings is that during the intervention not enough emphasis was placed on strategies for entering into a debate with authors of scholarly works. Although the course designer had compiled an empirically based set of notes on how experts in the field of history deal with Appraisals, no dedicated classroom exercises were designed for practising these skills, and students were thus either not sufficiently alerted to the importance of using Appraisal devices, or the knowledge was not internalized through practice.

7.3.2.3 Textual analysis

To keep readers informed about where they are and where they are going, the writer needs to organize experiential and interpersonal meanings into a linear and coherent whole (Butt *et al.* 2000: 134). This is known as the textual function of language. One of the most important instantiations of the textual function is information flow (compare Butt *et al.* 2000: 137-147), or "periodicity" (Martin & Rose, 2007: 187 – following Pike 1982). Martin and Rose conflate the traditional dichotomies of Theme and Rheme, which is a speaker-centred distinction, and Given and New, which is a hearer-centred distinction, (compare Weideman, 1988: 27-29) into one dichotomy, *viz* **Theme** and **New**. Martin and Rose (2007: 188) developed a hierarchy of periodicity, starting with the clause level (Theme and New), moving on to the paragraph (hyperTheme and hyperNew), and finally to the whole text (macroTheme and macroNew). I shall start my brief overview with the clause level: Theme and New.

Theme and New

The Theme is the signpost for a speaker or writer's point of departure in each clause, and New is the part of the message that the writer considers interesting or important. In a typical clause the Theme includes everything up to and including the participant that functions as the Subject of the clause. At the other end of the clause is the New, which includes the information the writer is expanding upon as the text unfolds. Compare the following example (the theme is underlined):

> Segregation affected the social and economic situation of black South Africans in multiple ways, ranging from underdevelopment to social cohesion.

There are, of course, many clauses with atypical or "marked" themes, where the clause would begin with circumstantial elements such as places or times, or even participants that are not the Subject of the clause, e.g.

> Under the Union government the land Parliament passed the Natives land Act.

In order to assist the reader in following the development of the text, the writer uses two mechanisms:

- Elements from the New of one clause are placed into the Theme of the next.
- Meanings from the Theme of one clause are repeated in the Theme of the next clause.

Compare the following examples:

(a) The Native Land Act of 1913 had dire consequences for the African community.

Africans were forced to become farm labourers.

(b) The Native Land Act of 1913 set aside 75% of the land as reserves.

It prevented Africans from competing with white farmers for land.

The closer the thematic links are between clauses, the easier it is for readers to follow the development of the argument.

HyperTheme and hyperNew

HyperThemes predict what each paragraph of discourse will be about. In traditional composition teaching the hyperTheme was called the "topic sentence", which is then "developed" in the rest of the paragraph (Martin & Rose, 2007:195). If the New information is condensed in a concluding sentence (at the end of the paragraph), it is called a hyperNew. Compare the following example from one of the posttest essays:

> Life on the reserves was unbearable; blacks found themselves being faced with many ills [hyperTheme]. These included landlessness, overcrowding of the reserves, hunger and the migration of blacks to the cities, with all the problems of urban life encountered there. As men went into the urbanised cities to look for jobs, women were left behind in the reserves with the duties typically conducted by men. The women had to find means to support their families while their husbands were away on the mines. This had a negative impact on the family structure of black households [hyperNew].

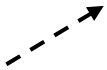
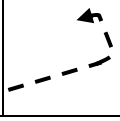
MacroTheme and macroNew

MacroThemes are higher level themes that predict hyperThemes. In academic essays the thesis statement typically functions as the macroTheme. The part of the concluding paragraph that embodies the final conclusion reached by the writer on the basis of the exposition following the thesis statement is the macroNew. The following introductory and concluding paragraphs from one of the posttest essays exemplify these notions:

> Segregation (1934-1948) had a very negative effect on black South Africans. Through a series of laws and regulations it resulted in black urbanization, squatting, and so forth, which are only a few examples of the consequences of segregation on the blacks [macroTheme].
>
> […]
>
> Through these paragraphs we can clearly see that black people were negatively affected by segregation: socially and economically. Socially because they couldn't live in better, bigger houses in better neighbourhoods and couldn't do high-class jobs. Economically because of the work reservations. Black people could only do hard labour and "low-class" jobs which didn't pay well. […] Also, as a result of oppressing laws black people were always going to be regarded inferior to whites [macroNew].

The focus was set on waves of known and new information at the clause level (Theme and New), since none of the items included in the analytic scoring rubric dealt with this level of development in particular. Because of the labour intensiveness of such analyses, and because of the generally consistent improvement of almost 20% between the pretests and the posttests, it was decided to analyze only the pre- and posttest essays of Respondent 1 (compare Appendix F on the CD). The procedure described by Butt *et al.* (2000: 143ff) was followed for the analyses: First, each essay was divided into clauses. Thematic progression was then traced by indicating the transitions according to the type of bond and its relative strength. Table 7.7 below shows the types of bonds that were distinguished:

Table 7.7 Types of thematic bonds

Strong bonds to directly preceding Theme	Strong bonds to directly preceding New	Strong bonds to earlier Theme (s)	Strong bonds to earlier New(s)	Weak bonds to directly preceding Theme	Weak bonds to earlier Theme	Weak bonds to directly preceding New	Weak bonds to earlier New(s)	Absent (no) bonds
								Ø

* Curly brackets { are used for indicating a bond with more than one earlier Theme/New.

Tables 7.8 and 7.9 are excerpts from Respondent 1's pretest and posttest.

Table 7.8 Thematic bonds in par. 3 and 4 of Pretest 1 in the subject-specific intervention

3	11	However the introduction of the idea of land as a commodity	* had arosed in the Transvaal
		↑	
	12	which	could be brough and sold.
	13	And a black South African	had the right to register land
		↑	
	14	and therefore X	made its own.
	15	Therefore Africans from the Transvaal	had purchased 286 farms
	16	and later on more farms	were purchased.
		Ø	
4	17	Under the Union government and land Parliament	had passed the Natives land Act in June 1913.
	18	And restrictions of Africans buying or owning a peace of land	got tighter and tigher.
	19	This Act however	which included the reserves, locations and many farms owned by the Africans at that time
		↑	
	20	which	prohibited Africans from buying land in freehold outside of designated "scheduled areas".
		Ø	
	21	In this case one	might conclude that
	22	this	had gave the Native men to be angry
	23	and therefore X	resist any commi--- to come from the passed land Act of June.

Table 7.9 Thematic bonds in par. 4 of Posttest 1 in the subject-specific intervention

4	27	The gold price	left the mining industry, for example, with little room to manoeuvre.
		Ø	
	28	In the overall costs analysis cheap labour	was an essential component.
	29	Recruiting for the mines	was not a simple and straightforward task.
	30	Without the reserve system, which,	was an integral part of segregation
	31	it	would have been much more difficult.
	32	But segregation	not only appealed to the mining industry.
		↑	
	33	It	also protected white workers from cheaper black labourers,
		↑	
	34	and in rural areas it	gave white farmers additional leverage over their labourers and tenants.
	35	The umbrella nature of segregationist ideology	even extended to those Africans in the reserves,

The quantified results of the Theme analysis are represented in Tables 7.10 and 7.11 below. Each type of bond is calculated as a percentage relative to the total number of clauses in the essay.

Table 7.10 Pretest 1: Subject-specific intervention (overall score: 58%)

No. of words: 680
No. of paragraphs: 10
No. of clauses: 68

Strong bonds to directly preceding Theme	Strong bonds to earlier Theme(s)	Strong bonds to directly preceding New	Strong bonds to earlier New(s)	Weak bonds to directly preceding Theme	Weak bonds to earlier Theme	Weak bonds to directly preceding New	Weak bonds to earlier New(s)	Absent (no) bonds
7	7	6	6	11	5	7	1	18
10%	10%	9%	9%	16%	7%	10%	1%	26%

Strong bonds: 26 (38%)
Weak and absent bonds: 42 (62%)

Table 7.11 Posttest 1: Subject-specific intervention (overall score 79%)

No. of words: 645
No. of paragraphs: 8
No. of clauses: 62

Strong bonds to directly preceding Theme	Strong bonds to earlier Theme (s)	Strong bonds to directly preceding New	Strong bonds to earlier New(s)	Weak bonds to directly preceding Theme	Weak bonds to earlier Theme	Weak bonds to directly preceding New	Weak bonds to earlier New(s)	Absent (no) bonds
18	10	12	7	2	0	4	2	6
29%	16%	19%	11%	3%	0%	06%	3%	10%

Strong bonds: 47 (76%)
Weak and absent bonds: 14 (23%)

Respondent 1's pretest and posttest essays were of roughly equal length (680 words versus 645 words; and 68 clauses versus 62 clauses). However, the results show that the number of strong bonds increased from 26 (38%) in the pretest to 47 (76%) in the posttest, and the number of weak and absent bonds decreased from 42 (62%) to 14 (23%). Thus, the student's overall improvement of 21% according to the analytic scoring seems to be more than justified in the light of her increased ability to handle thematic development at the clause level.

We now turn to an aspect of the evaluation which is not concerned with performance but is equally important to measure effectiveness, *viz.* a survey of student's opinions regarding the intervention.

7.4 Opinion survey

7.4.1 Conceptual framework

An opinion survey was conducted to measure students' attitudes regarding the various dimensions of a critical, genre-based, subject-specific writing intervention. At the conclusion of the module all ten students who followed through from the pretest to the posttest filled in a questionnaire comprising 29 statements. These statements operationalized typical features of critical genre-based syllabi, *viz.* Scaffolding, Social apprenticeship, Needs-driven and Critical orientation, with the exception of Target-centredness. The decision to exclude target-centredness was motivated by the author's conviction that second-year students are not yet equipped to judge the fulfilment of disciplinary requirements. Instead, Skills transfer was added to prove/disprove the most important criticism against genre-based approaches: that these approaches revert back to the Scientific Approach to language teaching, foster transmission pedagogy and cultivate passive learners (compare Prior, 1995). Table 7.12 explicates the construct that was operationalized in the questionnaire:

Table 7.12 Explication of the five dimensions of the construct underlying the opinion survey

Dimensions	Description
1. Staged and scaffolded teaching and learning model	• Explicit pedagogical framework (visible pedagogy) • Modeling (using exemplars as model texts) • Gradual progress from maximal teacher- and peer-assistance to complete independence • Explicit teaching of discourse structure • Explicit teaching of lexicogrammar

Dimensions	Description
2. Purposeful social apprenticeship	• Aimed at attaining goals that are important to expert members of the discourse community into which the student wishes to be assimilated • Learning through actively engaging with authentic subject matter, while being supervised by the master/lecturer, and assisted by peers
3. Needs-driven syllabus	Content and pedagogy are attuned to the wants, needs and skills level of the learner.
4. Critical orientation	• Explicit knowledge of the conventions of valued academic genres empowers students and heightens metacognitive awareness to facilitate self-evaluation • Critical analysis of texts enables students to unveil ideology and hidden agendas • Students are encouraged to challenge prescriptive genre conventions
5. Skills transfer	The principles of structure and language that are taught can be transferred to other contexts and genres. Therefore it cannot be asserted that this approach stifles creativity or cultivates passive learners.

Students had to indicate their responses to the statements comprising the questionnaire (attached as Appendix E) on standard five-point Likert scales. The response options were *strongly agree*, *agree*, *uncertain*, *disagree* and *strongly disagree*. Thirteen of the 29 statements were phrased in a negative way, meaning that *strongly agree* and *agree* indicated a negative evaluation of the particular characteristic of the course, whereas *strongly disagree* and *disagree* indicated a positive evaluation. The scales for 13 of the statements (statements 1, 4, 5, 7, 13, 16, 19, 20 21, 23, 24, 25 and 27) had to be reversed to enable the correct interpretation of the responses. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

7.4.2 Presentation and discussion of students' opinions

The average rating was obtained for each student on each of the five dimensions of the construct. Figure 7.5 summarizes the results:

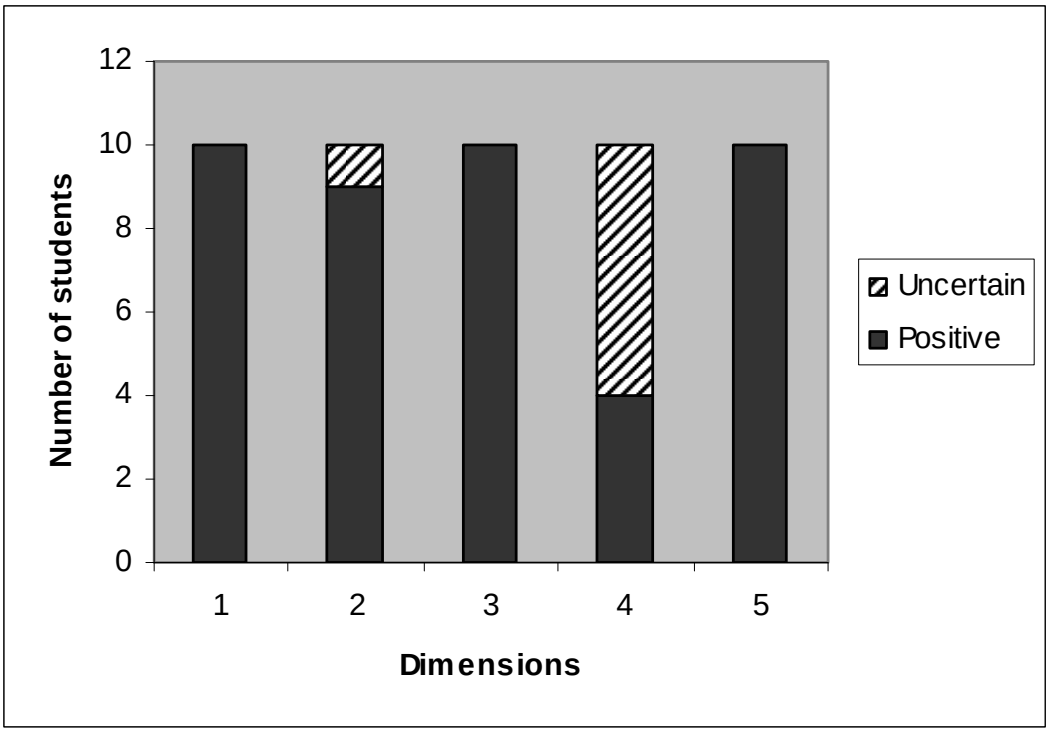


Figure 7.5 Students' opinions on the 5 dimensions of the construct: subject-specific intervention ("positive" means "favourably inclined towards the course regarding the concept in question")

Even though some students rated some of the individual statements negatively, on average the responses to the statements comprising each dimension were predominantly positive. It had been expected that students would appreciate the scaffolding (Dimension 1), working together with peers with similar academic and professional interests (Dimension 2), and the overt emphasis on student needs (Dimension 3). These expectations were largely fulfilled. Although approximately 5% of the students indicated that they were uncertain as to whether all their personal needs had been addressed (Dimension 2), 5% uncertainty was not regarded to be a reason for concern. The overwhelming positive response to the statements in Dimension 5 was a pleasant surprise because of the regular criticism that the genre approach fostered passive learning. The students clearly thought that the skills they had learned were transferable to other contexts.

Experience with course evaluations over 25 years had taught the author that students were hesitant to admit that any university courses had taught them critical skills. The generally negative response to the statements in Dimension 4 (60%) was therefore not a complete surprise. However, it still called for further investigation. The original (unreversed) responses to the statements comprising Dimension 4 – summarized in terms of agreement, disagreement and uncertainty – are displayed in Figure 7.6. (The scales for Statements 23-25 were reversed for the statistical analysis to bring their polarity in line with that of Statements 21 and 22.)

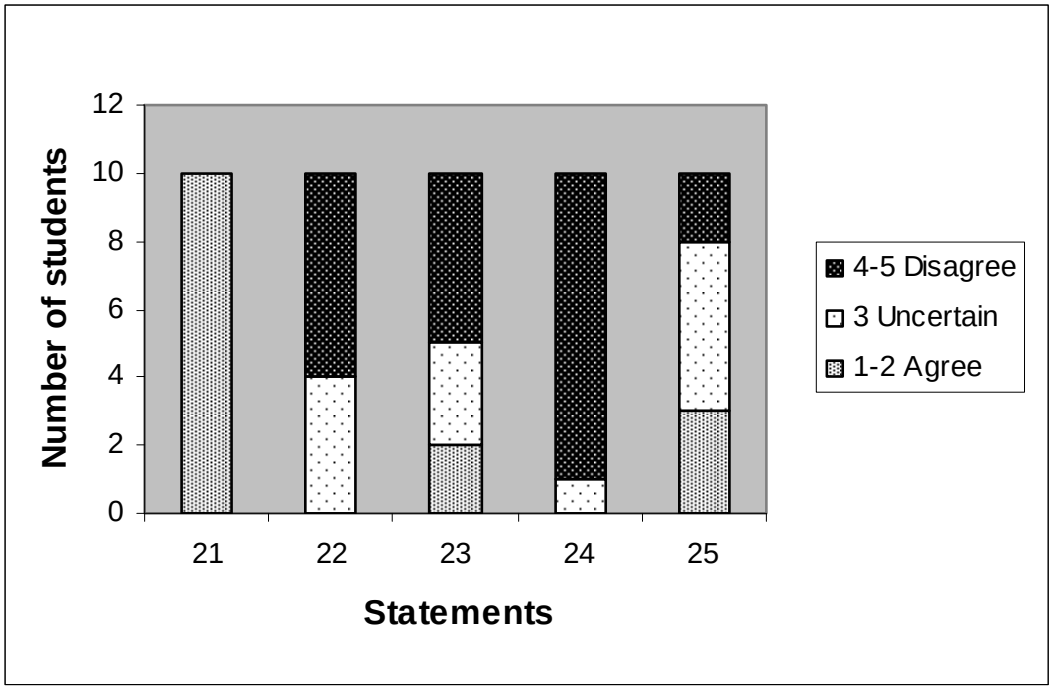


Figure 7.6 Responses to the concepts evaluated by statements 21-25 (= Dimension 4)

The results indicated on the graph can be interpreted and explained as follows:

Statement 21: *It is empowering to know how to write in the genres valued by academics*. The statement was phrased positively; thus the graph indicates100% positive evaluation of empowerment through genre knowledge.

Statement 22: *If one of my academic lecturers says that it is forbidden to refer to myself ("I") in academic writing, I will take issue with him/her*. The statement was phrased positively; thus 60% hesitated to challenge the authority of the lecturer. Possible explanations are that the students may have been

unfamiliar with the phrase "take issue with", or that second year students do not yet have the self-confidence to challenge the authority of a subject-field lecturer.

Statement 23: *One should accept the content of textbooks and academic articles as true*. The statement was phrased negatively; thus a third of the students believe that the authority of prescribed sources should not be questioned or challenged.

Statement 24: *It is impossible to criticize one's own work*. The scale has a negative polarity; thus 90% of the students believe that self-reflection comprises an essential part of successful academic writing.

Statement 25: *Empowerment in tertiary education means that students should be allowed to write as they speak*. The statement is phrased negatively; thus 80% of the respondents harbour a misconception regarding an important objective of the intervention. This misconception might have originated in erroneous interpretations of Communicative Language Teaching encountered at school level. Another possible explanation is that the learner-centredness and the rigorous scaffolding that underpinned the intervention might have created the impression of an accommodationist approach.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that a significant improvement occurred between the pre- and the posttest essays of students who underwent the fourteen week subject-specific essay-writing intervention, and it is highly probable that the intervention itself contributed to this improvement. The overall improvement was about equal on the three primary dimensions measured by the analytic pre- and posttest assessment: Handling of source materials (18%), Structure and development (18%) and Academic writing style (19%).

The qualitative analysis performed on both the pretests and the posttests suggests that dedicated exercises on interpreting and using appraisal resources should be included in future interventions. More attention should also be paid to the lexicogrammar of some

of the "neglected" categories of logical ideation, for instance Text-internal time, Means, Purpose, Condition and Similarity. Students should also be made aware of the important role of grammatical metaphor (internal logical relations) in academic writing.

The results of the opinion survey indicate that students were generally positive about the effect of the intervention on their academic writing abilities. They showed appreciation for all the "signature" features of a genre-based approach, and their responses seem to refute the criticism that genre approaches promote "transmission pedagogy". The responses also indicate that some erroneous beliefs are still held regarding formality and precision in academic writing. Lecturers should also encourage students to make their own voices heard, and to instil in students the self-confidence to challenge the authority of lecturers and lecturing materials, if merited.

In conclusion it should be noted that the outcomes of this evaluation do not necessarily disprove the possible effectiveness of more generic writing interventions. To facilitate comparison a similar intervention with a broader subject-field focus was designed, administered and evaluated, using the same evaluation instruments. The next chapter reports on the design and evaluation of a cross-disciplinary intervention.

Chapter 8: Implementation and evaluation of the cross-disciplinary intervention

8.1 Introduction

Whereas chapters 6 and 7 reported on planning, designing and evaluating a subject-specific essay-writing intervention, this chapter follows a similar design and procedure for an intervention with a broader disciplinary focus, and compares the results, using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis and evaluation. First, an overview is given of the current debate regarding wider-angled approaches, followed by a description of the research methodology that was followed to measure the effectiveness of the cross-disciplinary intervention, and a presentation and discussion of the results.

8.2 Rationale and approach

As stated previously, the common-core versus subject-specific debate in language pedagogy has been going on for more than 20 years. In the context of teaching undergraduates to write academic essays, the most compelling argument from the side of common-core approaches might be that it is imperative for university students to move comfortably between the discourses of a number of academic disciplines. They need to "control a range of genres appropriate to each setting, and to handle the meanings and identities that each evokes" (Hyland 2009: 129). Thus, according to Bruce (2008: 34) there has been a movement away from discipline-based ESP course designs and methodology to a more "discourse and genre-based cross disciplinary approach". This trend, combined with the universal reality of undergraduate students being underprepared to engage in academic discourses (Johns 1995; 2002; Lillis 2001; Hyland 2004), and the researcher's desire to compare the effectiveness of narrow- and wide-angled approaches within a genre framework justified the design and evaluation of a cross-disciplinary academic writing intervention.

Following suggestions made by an external review panel that was appointed to evaluate the work of the Unit for Academic literacy, and reinforced by the research in progress,

the institution of a second-year module in academic writing was approved by Faculty in 2008, with commencement in 2009. The institutionalization of the module, in turn, increased the relevance of the research.

Limitations were that the module was not officially prescribed or recommended by any of the existing academic programmes in or outside the Faculty. A further constraint was that the alpha code UAL was assigned to the module, whereas all other modules offered by the Unit for Academic Literacy bore the code EOT, which may have had an impact on the visibility of the module (in an alphabetically organized prospectus). Finally, there was the added financial burden of R2000 (the cost of the module) added to students' annual programme fees. Although more than 30 students indicated interest, this price was too high for a "nice to have" that was unlikely to be covered by a bursary or student loan. Eventually only 14 students registered, of which 11 completed the module.

Another limitation was the researcher's lack of foreknowledge regarding the disciplines that would be represented by the students, and thus the specificity of the syllabus and the materials that could be designed in advance.

8.3 Design and implementation of the intervention

8.3.1 Respondents

Despite the constraints outlined above, 14 students registered for the module, of which 11 followed through. The attrition rate of 21% can be accounted for as follows: One of the students was an international exchange student from Germany who only attended seven weeks of the 14 week course; another indicated that she was interested only in political analysis, and that the content of the course was not entirely suited to her needs; and the third discontinued the module in the third week because of work load. The remaining 11 were registered for the following academic programmes: BA (2); BPolSci (5); BA Languages (3); BCom (1). The subjects which they were registered for included Accounting, Criminology, Economics, English, Journalism, History, History of Art, Political Sciences, Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, and Visual Studies. Their sociodemographic profile could be summarized as follows: 2 white males with Afrikaans as their mother tongue; 1 white male with English as his mother tongue; 2 white females with Afrikaans as their mother tongue; 1 black female with Portuguese as

her mother tongue, 4 black females with an African language as their mother tongue, and 1 black male with an African language as his mother tongue.

8.3.2 Syllabus and materials

To facilitate comparison of the two interventions, and limit variability, the same broad syllabus structure was used as for the subject-specific module, focusing on the use of rhetorical modes, types of claims and types of support in developing an academic argument, while following the Teaching and Learning Cycle of the Australian genre school. Argumentation was given a more prominent role, and using rhetorical modes became one of the secondary threads. This was necessary because of less pronounced relationship between essay structure and primary rhetorical mode in subject-fields other than history. In addition, more emphasis was placed on stance and engagement, because of the lack of the history students' improvement in this area. Table 8.1 represents the presyllabus for the cross-disciplinary intervention.

Table 8.1 Presyllabus for the cross-disciplinary intervention

Study unit 1: Academic discourse(s) *The generic features of academic discourse are discussed with reference to authentic texts, followed by the study of texts from specific disciplines in the Humanities in order to emphasize the need for mastering the characteristic features of disciplinary discourses.* Themes • What is academic discourse? • Is there only one academic discourse?
Study unit 2: Modes of writing (text types) *The mastery of rhetorical modes is practised during a cycle comprising the exploration of excerpts from authentic academic texts, freewriting, explicit teaching of the lexicogrammatical features that characterize each mode, identification of frequently used modes, and independent writing of paragraphs or short essays.* Themes • Chronological writing: narratives, recounts and processes • Description • Comparison and contrast • Cause and effect • Exposition • Analysis

Study unit 3: Academic arguments: formulating claims

Examples of essays are analyzed to identify the types of claims contained in thesis statements. Students also formulate their own claims on the basis of given topics.

Themes

- Fact and opinion
- What is a claim/thesis?
- Positioning of the main thesis of an essay
- Types of claims (factual; causal; evaluative; recommendations)

Study unit 4: Academic arguments: invoking evidence

Examples of essays are analyzed to identify types of support and types of evidence, focusing on lexicogrammatical markers.

Themes

- Types of support (comparison; definition; well-chosen examples; statistics; appeals to audience needs; appeals to authority; addressing a counterargument)
- Using appropriate types of support for different types of claims

Each study unit comprised a set of outcomes and a learning component containing theory, model texts and a variety of authentic task types, some of which were done collaboratively in class, and some as homework tasks that had to be submitted for marks.

Course materials consisted of a 100 page study guide *cum* workbook, based on the presyllabus, a reader (hard copy) comprising 4 broadly focused articles on the theme selected for the content of the module, *viz. Poverty in Africa*, and a partially interactive Blackboard-based website. (This theme was suggested by lecturers from the departments who contributed materials for the writing task survey, because of its relevance across disciplines.) The website contained administrative information about the lecturer, the content and assessment as well as a calendar with important dates. Via a link to the library students had access to a variety of scholarly articles (for which copyright clearance was obtained) and web resources. The Discussion Tool allowed students to interact with one another on matters of common interest, and the Announcement Tool was used to alert students to important dates and events on the calendar. Additional class notes and the list of topics for the final examination were uploaded to folders on the home page for the module.

Although the workbook contained a selection of texts from a variety of disciplines in the humanities, it was realized that these might not be relevant to the core foci of the students who would register for the course, and that one would need to substitute some of the examples and exercises with more relevant materials through the course of the module. This procedure was regarded to be completely in line with the postmethod strategy of a basic presyllabus, which is adapted on the basis of feedback and learner needs.

Assessment was done in accordance with faculty regulations. The semester mark (progress mark) was based on continuous assessment of written homework tasks submitted and marked throughout the semester, and the exam mark, each contributing a weight of 50%. The 14 week intervention (two contact sessions per week) commenced in February 2009.

8.4 Quantitative evaluation

8.4.1 Method

All students enrolled for the module had to write a pretest and a posttest. The pretest assumed the format of a 50 minute in-class essay during the second week of the module. All participants received the reader (containing four articles on general aspects of poverty in Africa) a week in advance, and were requested to prepare for the pretest essay. They were allowed to use the reader as an in-class resource. The pretest did not count towards the students' final marks, as they had not received any tuition on essay-writing at that point. Before writing the pretest consent was obtained to use unattributed extracts from participants' essays as well as the analytic scores awarded by the raters.

The posttest comprised the summative evaluation of the module. The students were allowed to choose from a list of topics on various issues relating to poverty in Africa, which had been requested from the relevant academic departments. They were given one month in which to prepare for the essay exam. The planning, literature search, literature review, outlining, writing and reviewing had to be done without assistance from the lecturer in order to determine whether the scaffolding introduced throughout the module had equipped them to independently apply the linguistic and structural

principles they had acquired. Table 8.2 shows the topics that were chosen by the students:

Table 8.2 Essay topics chosen by students in the cross-disciplinary group

Topic (and description)	Subject-field	No. of students
To what extent was poverty an inevitable by-product of European colonialism in Africa?	History	1
Whose obligation is it to do something about poverty in society: the rich or the poor?	Philosophy	2
Whose obligation is it to do something about the moral problem of poverty: the poor or the government?	Philosophy	1
Analyze the poem "London" by William Blake (in the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*) OR "An abandoned bundle" by Oswald Mtshali (in the *Paperbook of South African Poetry* ed. Chapman) paying close attention to the way the poem depicts both physical and spiritual poverty.	English literature	1
Discuss how Boesman and Lena are dehumanized by poverty and racial discrimination in Athol Fugard's *Boesman and Lena*. Refer closely to the text throughout your discussion.	English literature	3
The policy gap and poverty.	Political Sciences	1
Evaluate the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a global strategy to arrest poverty, by referring to the MDGs' normative as well as practical contribution to the plight of the poor.	Economics	1
Famine and hunger are often associated with poverty. How can this be combated through policy initiatives?	Sociology	1

The exam was taken in the Computer Based Testing Laboratory of the Informatorium on campus. Students were allowed to bring into the venue a sheet of paper with five citations, not exceeding 100 words, which they could integrate in their essays. This concession was made to facilitate the assessment of their ability to engage with other authors. Students had to use the 2003 version of Microsoft Word, since not all of them were familiar with the 2007 version. The spell- and grammar-checker was disabled.

The pre- and the posttest essays were scored independently by the course designer, who also presented the generic course (Rater 1), and a part time lecturer with more than 20 years experience in teaching English literature, language and academic literacy, as well as a doctorate in Applied Linguistics from a reputable South African university (Rater 2). The assessment instrument was the same as for the subject-specific intervention (compare Table 7.1 in Chapter 7).

Rater 1 scored students higher than Rater 2 on both the pretests and the posttests: on average the pretests were scored 3.4% higher by Rater 1 than by Rater 2, and the posttests were scored 2.4% higher by Rater 1 than by Rater 2. The correlation coefficients of the scores of the two raters are 0.96 for the pretest and 0.97 for the posttest, therefore warranting the use of the average of the two raters' scores as a measure of each student's performance.

After the rating process had been completed, the two raters discussed their experience with scoring the essays. The second rater suggested that the formulation of certain items should be adapted with a view to future rating exercises, first because the relative weight of certain items was regarded to be either too high or too low, and second, to explain and clarify the scope of particular items, especially in cases where the rater would not be familiar with the terminology of certain paradigms in applied linguistics:

- Items 1 and 2 should be combined into one item, Use of source material, because of difficulty to make a clear distinction between Relevance of source data and Integration of source material. Because of the second rater's uncertainty as to the scope of these items, as well as his relative unfamiliarity with the sources that the students had used, he tended to award an average score of 4 on items 1 and 2.
- Item 5 (Development of main argument) should be explained by means of bracketed information such as (coherence and logic).
- Item 9 (Concord and tense) may be weighted too heavily, and its scope could be extended to "Use of verbs".
- For essays in the humanities item 11 (Technical and subtechnical lexis) might not be entirely relevant, first because certain subject-fields do not have as distinctive a nomenclature as others, and second because the use of subtechnical lexis overlaps with item 12 (Style). (Academic vocabulary may be seen as part of academic writing style.)

8.4.2 Presentation and discussion of results

The total score for each of the 11 respondents was converted to a percentage for ease of interpretation (compare Figure 8.1):

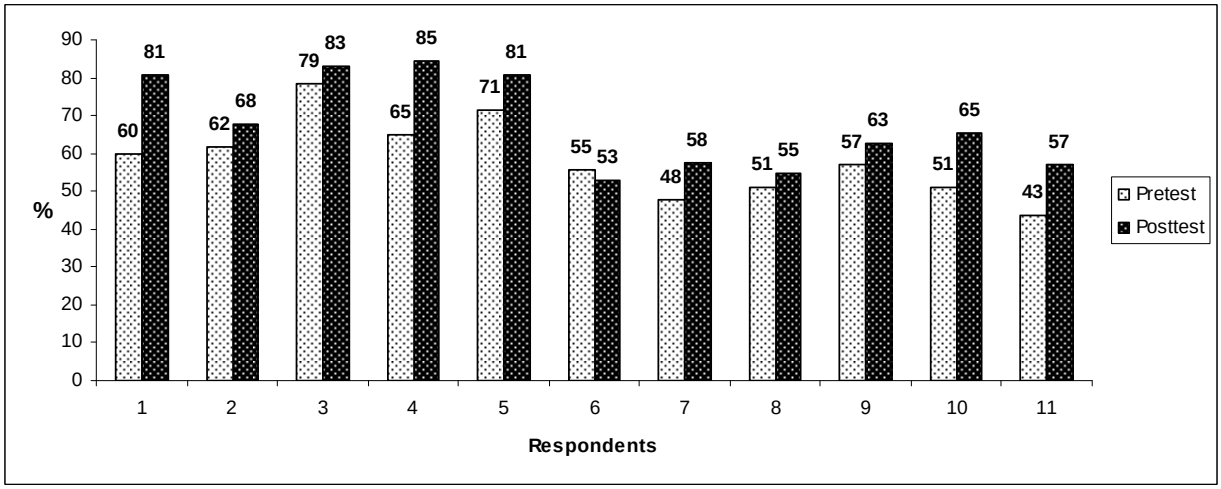


Figure 8.1 Comparison of pre- and posttest results of the cross-disciplinary group per respondent

The average improvement of the 11 respondents was 10%. With the exception of a single student – whose posttest score was only 2 percent less than her pretest score – all the students showed progress, with the largest improvement being 21%.

Figure 8.2 displays the average results per item after conversion to percentages:

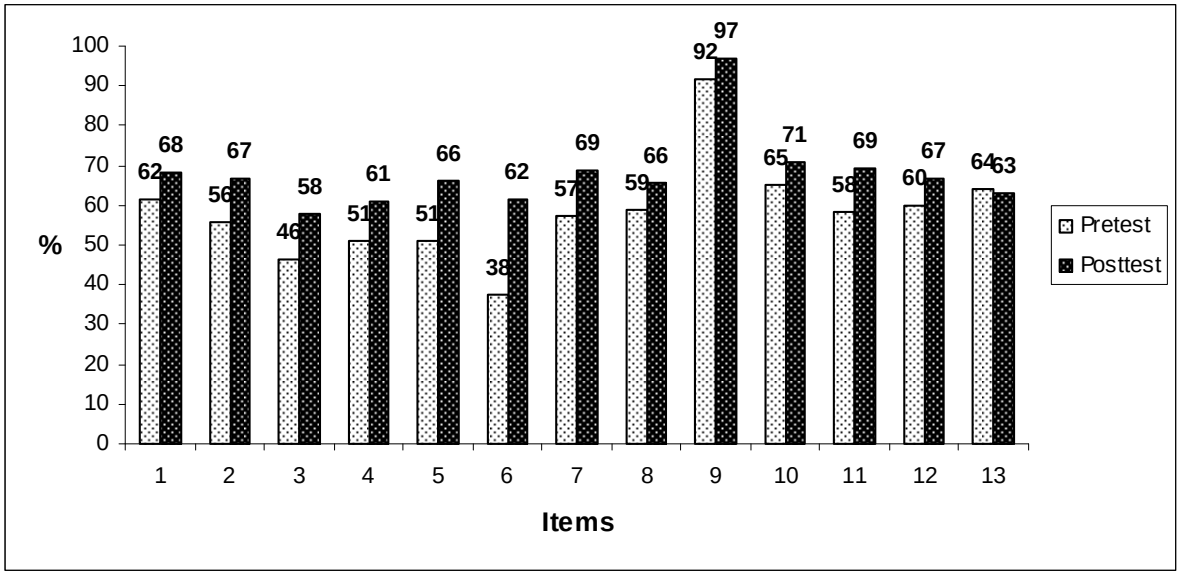


Figure 8.2 Comparison of pre- and posttest results of the cross-disciplinary group per item

Per item, all the posttest ratings were higher than the pretest ratings, except item 13, which was 1% lower. For item 6, the improvement was 24%, while the improvement

was between 10% and 15% on a further six items (items 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 11). On the remaining five items the improvement was more than 5%.

On the three primary dimensions of the analytic scoring instrument the improvement varied between 7% and 15%: Table 8.3 shows the mean improvement on the four dimensions of the instrument.

Table 8.3 Percentage improvement of the cross-disciplinary group per dimension

Dimension	Mean: pretest	Mean: posttest	Improvement
1. Use of source materials (Items 1-3)	54%	64%	10%
2. Structure and development (Items 4-7)	49%	64%	15%
3. Academic writing style (Items 8-12)	67%	74%	7%
4. Editing (Item 13)	64%	63%	-1%

8.4.3 Statistical analysis

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (SPSS version 17; Williams, Sweeney, & Anderson 2009: 764-770) was again used to assess if the differences between the pre- and posttest ratings on each of the 13 questions comprising the instrument were significant. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test is a non-parametric test that is suitable for the analysis of small samples, as in the present case. The test indicates the probability of a significant difference between pre- and posttest ratings, and is appropriate for comparing data from the same participants – in this case the pre- and posttests written by each of the respondents who participated in the intervention.

The results presented in Figure 8.2 should be interpreted against the probability values obtained from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test on each of the 13 items, which are represented in Table 8.5. As in the case of the subject-specific intervention one-sided probability values (p-values) are reported, based on the hypothesis that students' skills would improve as a result of the intervention. P-values lower than 0.05 indicate that there is a significant improvement from the pre- to the posttest ratings at the 5% level of significance. Table 8.4 indicates the p-values for the four dimensions:

Table 8.4 One-sided p-values of the pre- and posttest ratings on the four dimensions of the cross-disciplinary intervention

Dimension	p-value
Dimension 1: Use of source materials	0.022
Dimension 2: Structure and development	0.003
Dimension 3: Academic writing style	0.004
Dimension 4: Editing	0.321
Overall	**0.001**

According to Table 8.4 the improvement between the pre- and posttest ratings is significant at the 5% level for three of the four the main dimensions of the scoring instrument. Only on dimension 4 (Editing) the improvement was not significant (p = 3205). In order to establish whether the p-values of all of the individual items were significant, ratings from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was obtained for each of the 13 items, as represented by Table 8.5 below.

Table 8.5 One-sided p-values of the pre- and posttest ratings on the 13 items in the cross-disciplinary intervention, obtained from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Item	p-value
1	0.086
2	0.018
3	0.016
4	0.076
5	0.016
6	0.003
7	0.013
8	0.023
9	0.011
10	0.080
11	0.013
12	0.065
13	0.321
*16	0.002

*Item 16 was included as it shows the average improvement on all 13 items.

Overall, based on the total difference between the pretest and posttest scores (item 16), the improvement is significant with a p-value much smaller than 0.05. For the remainder of the items, the improvement between the pre- and posttest ratings is significant at the 5% level, with the exception of items 1, 4, 10 and 12, which are significant at the 10% level, and item 13, on which students did not show any significant improvement. This was to be expected, since the average percentage for this item was 63% in the pretest and 64% in the posttest. It should be noted again, however, that in the case of items 1, 4, 10 and 12 a larger sample might have resulted in significant improvement at the 5% level for these two questions as well.

Similar to the subject-specific intervention, an analysis of the pre- and the posttest essays was also conducted for the cross-disciplinary intervention, focusing on the following key resources within a Systemic Functional perspective: **Logical ideation**, representing the *ideational/experiential* function of language, **Appraisal,** representing the *interpersonal* function, and **Theme** representing the *textual* meaning.

8.5 Textual analysis of the essays

8.5.1 Method

Similar to the subject-specific intervention, the pre- and posttest essays of all the participants were tagged electronically for Logical ideation and Appraisal, using the categories and subcategories expounded in Tables 6.5 and 6.6 in chapter 6. Concordances were also built in the same way, using WordsmithTools version 4.0. Regarding thematic development a case study on the pre- and posttest essays of Respondent 1 was performed, comparable with the subject-specific intervention. Analogous to the subject-specific evaluation the focus was set on waves of known and new information at the clause level, using Butt *et al.*'s technique (2000: 143ff).

8.5.2 Presentation and discussion of findings

8.5.2.1 Ideational analysis

Figure 8.3 represents the summarized results of the ideation analysis:

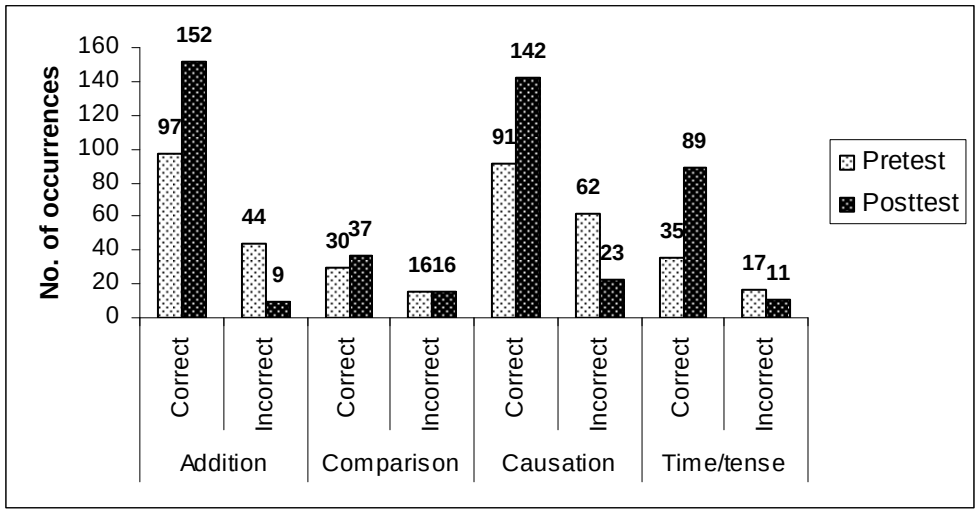


Figure 8.3 Logical ideation: comparison of pre- and posttest results in the cross-disciplinary intervention

According to the graph the cross-disciplinary intervention students used more markers of logical relationships in the posttest than they used in the pretest – in all four main categories. There was an increase of more than 50% in each category, except Comparison, where the improvement was 23%.

Analogous to the subject-specific intervention, significantly more tokens of Causation and Addition were used in the posttest than in the pretest. There was also a significant decrease in the number of errors in these categories between the pretest and the posttest (80% decrease in the number of Causation errors and 62% in the number of Addition errors). Upon further scrutiny it transpired that the posttest yielded more variety in the use of Causation resources (thus more variety in the representation of subcategories): Where the pretest yielded 7 correct usages of Condition, 4 of Means and 8 of Purpose (with 31 instances of Cause and 41 instances of Consequence), the posttest yielded 19 of Condition, 21 of Means, and 24 of Purpose (with 44 instances of Cause and 34 of Consequence).

Also noteworthy is the decrease of 35% errors in the Time/tense category. This decrease cannot be ascribed to an improved mastery of tense, but to an improvement in the use of other markers of temporal relationships. A possible explanation for the relatively few Tense errors in both the pretest and the posttest may be that the overarching topic for both the pretest and the posttest, *Poverty in Africa*, demanded less skill in moving back

and forth between present and past, than was demanded by the topics of the subject-specific intervention.

8.5.2.2 Interpersonal analysis

Appraisal

The Appraisal analysis of the cross-disciplinary intervention used the same three categories of analysis as the subject-specific evaluation, *viz.* Attitude (with subcategories Emotion, Judgement and Social Valuation), Engagement (divided into Attribute and Proclaim) and Graduation (split into Force and Focus). Figure 8.4 represents the summarized results:

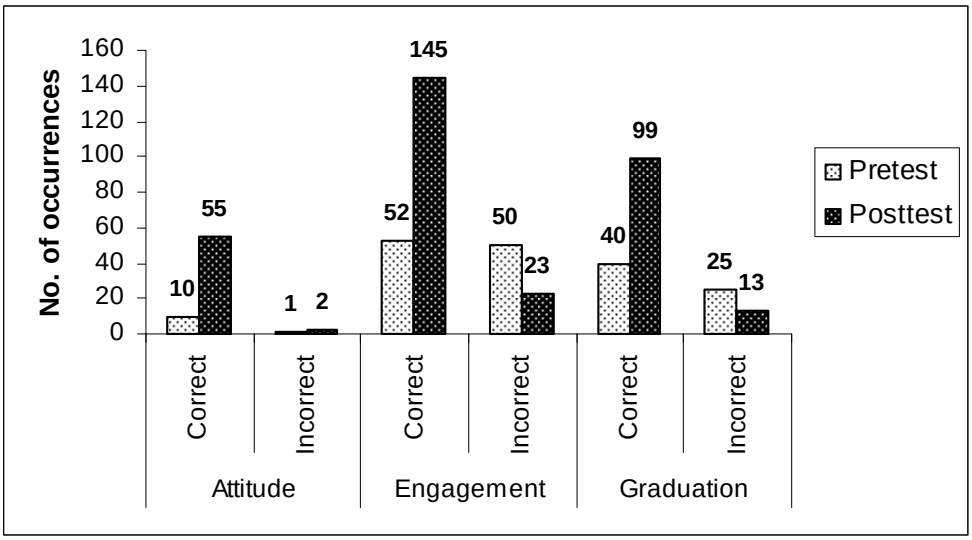


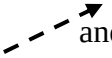
Figure 8.4 Appraisal: comparison of pre- and posttest results in the cross-disciplinary intervention

Figure 8.4 shows that on all three dimensions separately, there were significant improvements: On the Attitude dimension there was an increase from 10 to 55 (= 450%); the number of Engagement markers increased from 52 to 145 (= 173%), and the number of Graduation markers increased from 40 to 99 (= 148%). The steep increase in the number of Engagement markers in the posttest could possibly be ascribed to the lecturer *cum* researcher's emphasis on the importance of entering into debate with other authors. Even with 14% error on the posttest, it still proves worthwhile to teach students strategies of Engagement – even at undergraduate level. It is particularly encouraging that only 38 incorrect or inappropriate usages of any of the Appraisal resources occurred in the posttest.

8.5.2.3 Textual analysis

Theme and New

Theme analysis was conducted similar to the subject-specific intervention. In an analogous way Respondent 1's essays were selected for the case study, using the following symbols to categorize thematic bonds:

- bold vertical arrows ↑ and vertical bracketed arrows  to indicate strong thematic bonds with previous Themes;
- Oblique arrows  and oblique bracketed arrows  to indicate thematic bonds with previous News;
- non-bold vertical arrows ↑ and broken bracketed arrows  to indicate weak thematic bonds with previous Themes;
- oblique broken arrows  and oblique broken bracketed arrows  to indicate weak thematic bonds with previous News;
- the symbol **Ø** to indicate the absence of a thematic bond.

The quantified results of the Theme analysis of the pre- and posttest essays of Respondent 1 are given in Tables 8.6 and 8.7 below (compare Appendix G on CD for the full essays):

Table 8.6 Cross-disciplinary intervention: Pretest 1 (60%)

No. of words: 434
No. of paragraphs: 9
No. of clauses: 43

Strong bonds to directly preceding Theme	Strong bonds to earlier Theme (s)	Strong bonds to directly preceding New	Strong bonds to earlier New(s)	Weak bonds to directly preceding Theme	Weak bonds to earlier Theme	Weak bonds to directly preceding New	Weak bonds to earlier New(s)	No bonds
5	5	10	3	2	3	1	0	12
12%	12%	23%	7%	5%	7%	2%	0%	26%

Strong bonds: 23 (53%)
Weak and absent bonds: 18 (42%)

Table 8.7 Cross-disciplinary intervention; Posttest 1 (81%)

No. of words: 649
No. of paragraphs: 7
No. of clauses: 61

Strong bonds to directly preceding Theme	Strong bonds to earlier Theme (s)	Strong bonds to directly preceding New	Strong bonds to earlier New(s)	Weak bonds to directly preceding Theme	Weak bonds to earlier Theme	Weak bonds to directly preceding New	Weak bonds to earlier New(s)	Absent bonds
30	4	11	12	1	0	0	0	4
49%	07%	18%	20%	02%	0%	0%	0%	02%

Strong bonds: 57 (93%)
Weak and absent bonds: 5 (8%)

Although the Theme analysis indicated that the pretest contained more strong than weak bonds, there was still a remarkable improvement if compared to the results of the analysis of the posttest: Strong bonds increased from 53% to 93% and weak and absent bonds decreased from 42% to 8%.

In order to further decrease the probability that Respondent 1's improvement between the pretest and the posttest was due to chance, another respondent was randomly selected, *viz.* Respondent 7 (compare Appendix G). In her case the improvement in handling thematic development was less dramatic than in the case of Respondent 1: The pretest contained 18 (33%) strong bonds and 35 (65%) weak and absent bonds, whereas the posttest contained 25 (41%) strong bonds and 34 (56%) weak and absent bonds. In view of the fact that she improved by only 10% between the pretest and the posttest according to the analytic scoring (48% versus 58%), a more modest improvement in terms of her ability to handle thematic progression could be expected. It is important, nonetheless, to observe that the improvement is again present, and noteworthy.

8.6 Opinion survey

Similar to the subject-specific intervention an opinion survey was conducted, using the same questionnaire and the same procedures for recording the data and analyzing the results.

Figure 8.5 summarizes the average rating per student on each of the five dimensions of the construct.

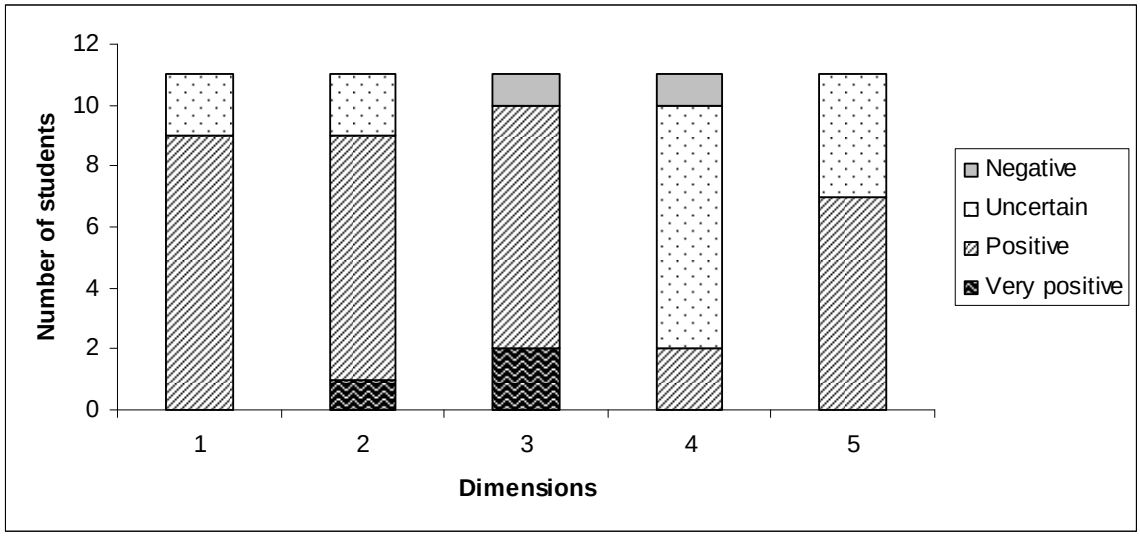


Figure 8.5 Students' opinions on the 5 dimensions of the construct: cross-disciplinary intervention

The students' general lack of commitment, and the fact that the lecturer had to reprimand certain individuals for their relative indifference, predicted a less favourable evaluation of the course. However, although few students chose the extremely positive option on the scales, their opinions regarding the course were still generally positive.

The dimension that evoked the most favourable responses was the Needs-driven syllabus (Dimension 3). From the raw data it could be determined that only 1 student "disagreed" that his/her expectations had been fulfilled (Statement 15) and that the most important questions he/she had had about essay-writing (Statement 17) had been fulfilled. He/she was "uncertain" as to whether the lecturer had been interested in addressing his/her personal needs (Statement 17).

Dimension 4 evoked the least favourable responses. For two reasons this finding was not surprising. As mentioned in the discussion of the subject-specific opinion survey in Chapter 7, students are generally skeptical about the potential of university courses to teach them critical thinking skills, and this perception was sustained by the outcome of that survey on Dimension 4. It would therefore be surprising if the students who

participated in the cross-disciplinary intervention would give a positive rating. Thus, the fact that only two students responded positively to this dimension, eight were uncertain and one was negative, did not come as a surprise. In order to gain insight into the responses to the individual statements comprising this dimension, a graph was generated (Figure 8.6). (Note again that the scales for Statements 23-25 were reversed for the statistical analysis to bring their polarity in line with that of Statements 21 and 22.)

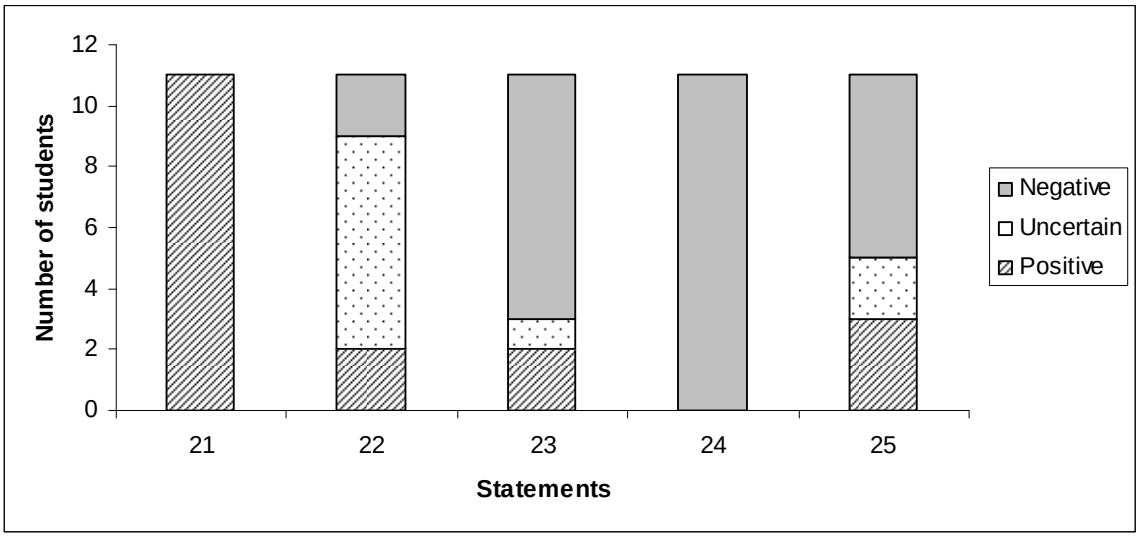


Figure 8.6 Responses to the concepts evaluated by statements 21-25 (Dimension 4)

The results indicated on the graph can be interpreted and explained as follows:

Statement 21: *It is empowering to know how to write in the genres valued by academics.*

Six students responded extremely positive (1), while the other five responded moderately positive (2). Since the statement was phrased positively the responses indicate a generally positive evaluation of empowerment through genre knowledge.

Statement 22: *If one of my academic lecturers says that it is forbidden to refer to myself ("I") in academic writing, I will take issue with him/her.*

Seven students were uncertain whether they would challenge a lecturer, two were moderately sure that they would, and two were very certain that they would not. The mixed responses were not surprising, since it became very clear during the intervention that subject-fields hosted divergent views in this regard. Furthermore, some tolerated individual differences, while others insisted on following the conventions laid down by

the particular discourse community. For instance, certain subject-fields almost prohibit self reference (History), others tolerate it if used in moderation (for example, Economics), while others encourage it (Philosophy). Thus, in a sense this question did not necessarily measure opinions, but rather knowledge of subject-field conventions.

Statement 23: *One should accept the content of textbooks and academic articles as true.*

Since this statement was phrased negatively a "positive" answer would have to be either 4 or 5 on the scale. Since eight of the students ticked either 1 or 2, almost two thirds seem to believe that the authority of prescribed sources should not be questioned or challenged.

Statement 24: *It is impossible to criticize one's own work.*

All 11 students ticked either 1 or 2, which means (seeing that the question has a negative polarity) that they are all convinced of the value of self-reflection. Of course, this does not mean that they necessarily always take the time to actively pursue this goal.

Statement 25: *Empowerment in tertiary education means that students should be allowed to write as they speak.*

The responses to this question were rather mixed, which might have resulted from the negative polarity. Strictly according to the answers only 45% of the respondents seem to harbour a misconception regarding an important objective of the intervention (6 students ticked 1 or 2), two were uncertain, one indicated moderate disagreement, and one indicated complete agreement. The swing of the pendulum in a negative direction does therefore not seem to be meaningful.

These explanations indicate that the slightly negative response to Dimension 4 was not a reason for too much concern. Only statement 23 seem to merit further investigation, but perhaps the first semester of the second year at university is still too early to have developed a critical orientation towards work produced by experts, and hopefully students will develop a more interrogating stance as they move closer to graduation.

Because of the importance to prove or disprove the measure in which genre-based interventions facilitated transfer, Dimension 5 was also teased out some more. It

transpired that all students responded positively or moderately positively to Statement 26 (*The course has contributed towards improving my writing ability in English*) and Statement 28 (*Much of what I have learned about essays I can also use when writing reports and other text types*). Furthermore, the majority (8 and 9 respectively) gave positively evaluating answers to Statement 27 (*I find it difficult to apply the principles we have learned in this course to writing tasks in other subjects*) and 29 (*Since I started this module my marks for written work in other subjects have improved*). Those who did not respond positively indicated uncertainty. These results are encouraging, particularly in the light of the less than desirable level of commitment and perseverance demonstrated by the students who registered for the cross-disciplinary module.

8.7 Author's reflection on the cross-disciplinary intervention

The varied performance of students in the cross-disciplinary intervention seems to derive, at least partially, from their reasons to register for the course. While some of the students who registered had a genuine desire to learn how to write academically in their chosen disciplines, others enrolled simply to accumulate credits towards their degrees. This reflection attempts to highlight the relationship between students' achievement in the essay-writing module and their perceptions about the instrumental value of their learning. It also emphasizes the dialectic relationship between learning to write and writing to learn.

Hyland (2009:124) claims that benefits of courses teaching students how to write in an academic way "are only perceived as such if students value what this literacy allows them to do". The present experience with administering the semi-generic intervention resonates with Hyland's claim, and echoes the findings of Lillis (2001:85), Lin (2000), Canagarajah (1999) and Ivanic (1998), *viz.* that certain students passively resist the assumptions and values which they are assumed to acquire. The fact that some students do obtain average to above average marks in content disciplines may reinforce this passive resistance. The following example is a case in point: After performing well below average on the third assignment in the cross-disciplinary module, one student remarked:

> Ma'am, I don't understand; in my other subjects I get good marks for my assignments, but in your class I fail. It's not like I don't like you or so; I enjoy your classes. You can see I always attend.

In contrast, students with a genuine desire to acquire the essayist literacy of the academy, and who experienced the benefits of applying this literacy in their content subjects, flourished. Respondent 5, for example, obtained high grades in secondary school, and matriculated with distinctions in Afrikaans and English. However, in philosophy, which is one of his major subjects at university, he obtained a just above average mark, and registered for the essay-writing module to improve his marks. Fortunately, for him, the essay topics contributed by the Philosophy Department were related to the philosophy curriculum. It is thus not surprising that this student's marks in the essay-writing module improved by 20% between the pretest and the posttest. His philosophy lecturer testified that his improvement in the content subject was about equal.

Thus, motivation alone is not sufficient for success. Subject-field knowledge is another prerequisite. The following anecdote is offered to further support this claim: Respondent 5, a student who is registered for a degree in Journalism, and who chose the same topic as the philosophy student (Respondent 4), *viz. Whose obligation is it to do something about poverty in society: the rich or the poor?* did not demonstrate the same improvement as the philosophy student between the pretest and the posttest. In fact, she scored four percentage points lower than he did in the posttest. Although her work was grammatically correct, her style, development of the main argument and selection of evidence remained "generic". The most plausible explanation is that although Respondent 5's proficiency in academic English was superior to that of Respondent 4 (based on her score in the pretest and her participation in class) she departed in her posttest essay from a zero knowledge base, since she had not been initiated into the "discourse of philosophy" through regular interaction with reading matter, lecturers and peers in the domain of philosophy.

This anecdote highlights a serious design error by the researcher. Students in the cross-disciplinary group were allowed free choices from the topics provided by the content departments. It was anticipated that they would choose topics relevant to their core university disciplines. However, some made their choices on the basis of familiarity, such as topics related to the literary works they had previously studied in English

Literature. To be specific, three students chose the drama *Boesman and Lena* by Athol Fugard, and one chose the poem *An Abandoned Bundle* by Oswald Mtshali, although only one student in the group was registered for a language programme. As confirmed by discussions at the conclusion of the module, some students' choices were motivated by convenience, rather than the ideals of the Vygotskyan Zone of Proximal Development. For two of the students (Respondents 8 and 9), unfortunately, convenience became a trap, because they deviated from the main focus, which in both cases was *the physical and spiritual effects of poverty in apartheid South Africa*, as portrayed by the particular author. When discussing their first drafts, it was difficult to convince these students, who had structured their essays according to literary elements instead of characteristics of physical and spiritual poverty, that their essays were "off topic".

Based on the researcher's teaching experience, combined with self-reflection, the following improvements for future interventions are suggested:

- Introduce extensive writing earlier in the semester.
- Build a corpus of authentic materials.
- Facilitate a close fit between students' core disciplines and their focus in an essay-writing intervention.

Introduction of **extensive writing** at an early stage is motivated by the empirical observation that students only became convinced of the implications of their lexicogrammatical, stylistic and structural choices after having written a full essay, which was after the 10th week of the 14 week module. A second reason for suggesting that full essays be written much sooner is the clear lack of engagement observed in the students when writing shorter assignments, such as paragraphs or parts of full essays. The haphazard and untidy way in which some of the shorter homework tasks had been executed supports the hypothesis that authenticity feeds into motivation, and motivation plays a major role in the quality of the output.

The solution supported by the majority of students during the post-intervention feedback session was to start writing complete essays very soon after the commencement of the course. This does not mean changing the content of the syllabus,

but in the context of a genre approach it suggests that joint exploration and joint construction in respect of each of the discourse skills emphasized in the course (rhetorical modes, making and supporting claims, thematic development, cohesion, and stance and engagement) should immediately be followed by independent writing of a full essay. In the assessment of the essays the primary focus should be on the particular skill or ability that the students had practised during the preceding week or fortnight.

Concerning materials design, **authenticity** has been confirmed as a core principle. The researcher relied heavily on exemplars from writing manuals published in the US and the UK (for example Barnet 2008; Oregon State University 1997; Richlin-Klonsky & Strenski 1994; Rosnow & Rosnow 1998; Schmidt 2005), but although some of the essays were good overall examples, not all of them were exemplary in terms of every aspect of the syllabus. In order to address these deficits future interventions could draw on essays written by local students who have successfully completed the intervention. Good examples could serve as model texts, whereas poorer attempts could be used to practise editing.

Finally, the designer of an intervention should ensure a close link between the texts and topics that are selected for writing purposes and the content that students have to learn in their core disciplines. It has been proven that writing helps them to master content, while at the same time content knowledge helps them to develop fluency and accuracy.

8.8 Conclusion

The results obtained from the quantitative evaluation indicate that students definitely benefited from the cross-disciplinary intervention. However, unlike the subject-specific intervention the improvement was not equal on the three primary dimensions measured by the analytic pre- and posttest assessment: On the dimension Handling of source materials the average improvement was 10%, on Structure and development they improved by 15% and on Academic writing style there was only 7% improvement. The most plausible explanation for the fact that the improvement in the use of source materials was moderate, or less than expected, may have been the fact that students did not need to study the content of the sources in depth for assessment in their content disciplines, and thus they might have been less motivated to engage with sources on the

broad topic selected by the course designer. Also, they did not necessarily consult the same sources for the pretest and the posttest, and thus did not become familiar with core resources. A possible reason for the slight improvement on academic writing style is that the respondents' grammar and vocabulary were on already at a fairly high level when they entered the course (67% on average). Furthermore, the intervention did not pay any specific attention to the improvement of grammar, and neither was style explicitly taught, except for brief pointers on issues of formality. The fact that the most significant improvement occurred on the dimension of structure and development was not a complete surprise, in that discourse structure, comprising thematic development at the level of the whole text (thesis and conclusion) the paragraph (topic sentence and paragraph development) and clause level (manipulation of Theme and New), is one of the dimensions that can be taught via templates and explicit instruction. Moreover, both stronger and weaker students are able to grasp the main principles and apply them.

The snapshots taken of students' performance on aspects of the three primary areas of meaning-making according to Systemic Functional Grammar indicates that explicit teaching of the grammatical resources for encoding these meanings does pay off. The fact that the students used significantly more Appraisal markers than the subject-specific intervention students is particularly meaningful, since the lecturer made a concerted effort at teaching Appraisal resources to the cross-disciplinary group.

According to the opinion survey, students were positive to moderately positive about the intervention. Although not all the respondents thought that their personal needs had been addressed, they were generally of the opinion that they had learned valuable skills, which they could apply in other contexts, and which had already stood them in good stead. However, the overall impression gained from the outcomes of the opinion survey and the personal experience of the course researcher was that the success of future interventions of this nature would depend, to a large extent, on the authenticity of the materials used and the ability of the classroom lecturer to engage students and ensure active participation.

Chapter 9: Comparison of the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary interventions

9.1 Introduction

Chapters 6 to 8 reported on the design, development and evaluation of two genre-based writing interventions – one aimed at second-year students of history, and the other aimed at second-year students registered for a variety of subjects in the humanities. This chapter compares and evaluates the findings from the two interventions.

First, the statistical results of the two interventions obtained from the analytic scoring of the pre- and posttest essays are juxtaposed, followed by a statistical comparison of the improvement resulting from the two interventions. Subsequently, the findings of the SFL-based textual analyses are compared. Lastly, the results from the questionnaire surveys are statistically compared to give an impression of students' appraisal of the effectiveness of the respective interventions.

9.2 Comparison of the essay ratings

The evaluation of the subject-specific as well as the cross-disciplinary intervention pivoted on a comparison of the pre- and posttest essay scores, where a standardized analytic scoring instrument was used. The primary aim was to test the hypothesis that students' essay-writing abilities would improve significantly as a result of a genre-based writing intervention, irrespective of the disciplinary scope. The second aim was to establish the difference (if a difference should be found) between the effectiveness of narrow-angled and wide-angled genre-based interventions. For each intervention descriptive statistics were used to indicate the improvement per candidate, per item, and per cluster (dimension) of items. Thereafter statistical tests were conducted to calculate the probability that the improvement was statistically significant.

Table 9.1 below compares the improvement, per intervention group, on each of the four primary dimensions of the analytic scoring instrument (Use of source materials, Structure and development, Language and style, and Editing) as well as overall:

Table 9.1 Comparison of the two intervention groups in terms of their improvement on the four dimensions of the scoring instrument

Dimension	Mean: pretest		Mean: posttest		Improvement	
	S-specific	***Generic***	***S-specific***	***Generic***	***S-specific***	***Generic***
1. Use of source materials	51%	54%	69%	64%	18%	10%
2. Structure and development	56%	49%	74%	64%	18%	15%
3. Academic writing style	62%	67%	81%	74%	19%	7%
4. Editing	64%	64%	81%	63%	17%	-1%
					18%	**8%**

According to Table 9.1 there is a 10% "overall" difference between the groups in terms of their improvement as a result of the particular intervention. The table shows that the overall improvement of the subject-specific group was about equal on the three primary dimensions measured by the analytic pre- and posttest assessment (between 17% and 19%), while the overall improvement of the cross-disciplinary group was more moderate (8%), and also more variable: 10% on Use of source materials, 15% on Structure and development, 7% on Academic writing style and -1% on Editing.

According to the Wilcoxon signed-rank test (the non-parametrical equivalent to the paired T-test) both groups, individually, showed a significant overall improvement between the pretest and the posttest. Compare Table 9.2 below:

Table 9.2 The significance of the difference between the improvement of the two groups in the four dimensions of the scoring instrument

	Subject-specific	Generic
Dimension	**One-sided p-value**	**One-sided p-value**
1: Use of source materials	0.004	0.022
2: Structure and development	0.006	0.003
3: Academic writing style	0.003	0.004
4: Editing	0.008	0.321
Overall	**0.002**	**0.001**

Both interventions proved to be successful in their own right. The p-values for three of the four dimensions – Use of source materials, Structure and development and Academic writing style – were well below 0.05 for each group, and thus the improvement was statistically significant for each. Only on Dimension 4, Editing, did the improvement of the cross-disciplinary group not prove to be significant ($p = 0.3205$), which was predictable in the light of the fact that the performance of the group as a whole decreased by 1% between the pretest and the posttest.

In order to establish whether the **difference between the two interventions** (subject-specific and cross-disciplinary) was statistically significant, the Mann-Whitney U-test was applied. The Mann-Whitney U-test is the non-parametric equivalent of the independent samples T-test for assessing whether two independent samples of observations come from the same distribution, which is particularly useful for small samples. In statistical terms it assesses the ranked positions of scores in two different groups. If there are significant differences between the two groups, the p-value associated with the test statistic will be smaller than 0.05. The main finding was that overall, the subject-specific group performed significantly better than the cross-disciplinary group, as predicted by the simple comparison in Table 9.1. A **p-value** of **0.043** was obtained.

Because of the significance of the overall difference found between the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary interventions, separate Mann-Whitney U-tests were run for each of the four main dimensions of the holistic scoring instrument. Table 9.3 shows the p-values for the four dimensions, as well as the overall value. Two-sided values are reported because one group was not necessarily expected to perform consistently better than the other.

Table 9.3 Two-sided p-values of the scores from the Mann-Whitney U-test

Dimension	p-value per dimension
DIMENSION 1: Handling of source materials	0.223
DIMENSION 2: Structure and development	0.809
DIMENSION 3: Academic writing style	0.020
DIMENSION 4: Editing	0.020
Overall	**0.043**

According to the separate Mann-Whitney U-tests, the subject-specific group did not perform significantly better than the cross-disciplinary group on every dimension. A significant difference was only found with respect to Dimension 3, Academic writing style, and Dimension 4, Editing (p-value, in each case = 0.02). For both these dimensions significant differences were expected on the basis of the simple comparison in Table 9.1. Since the value of the fourth dimension, Editing, was derived from a single item (item 13) a generalization can not be made. It can only be concluded that the subject-specific group succeeded much better than the cross-disciplinary group in improving their spelling and appropriate use of capital letters.

No significant difference was found with regard to Dimension 2, Structure and Development (p-value = 0.809). This was not surprising, because according to the tabulated comparison, the improvement of the two groups differs by a mere 3%: 18% for the subject-specific group and 15% for the cross-disciplinary group. According to my own belief, the basic principles of developing an argument at various levels of the text (the whole essay, paragraph and sentence) are largely subject-neutral, and can be taught and learned successfully through a combination of explicit instruction, model texts and sufficient exercise.

Similarly, no significant difference between the two groups in terms of Dimension 1, Use of source materials (p-value = 0.223) was indicated by the Mann-Whitney U-test. This finding might seem to be contrary to the result of the simple comparison in Table 9.1. A larger sample may result in a significant p-value.

Figure 9.1 shows the distribution of the data on the dimensions of the instrument comprising more than one ratable item (in other words Editing is excluded):

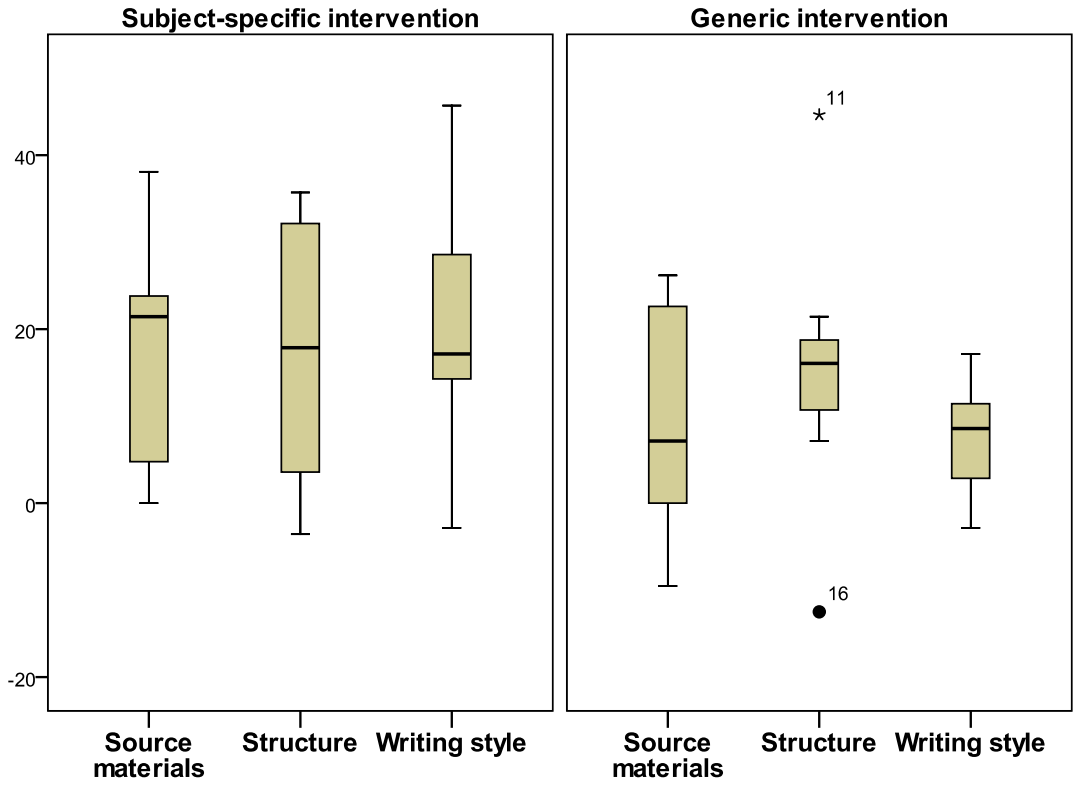


Figure 9.1 Box plots displaying the differences between the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary intervention groups with regard to the three most important dimensions of the analytic scoring instrument according to the ranks assigned by the Mann-Whitney U-test

The box plots representing the data for Structure and development and for Writing style show that the cross-disciplinary intervention data are less spread out than the subject-specific intervention data. Furthermore, the middle 50% (between the 2nd and 3rd quartiles) overlap for both Use of source materials and Structure and development. As a matter of fact, for Use of source materials the distribution of the generic data constitutes a subset of the distribution of the subject-specific data. In the case of Academic writing style there is much less overlap: The middle 50% of the generic data clearly occupy lower ranks than the subject-specific data.

In order to establish whether individual items may have influenced the p-values on the main dimensions of the scoring instrument, Mann-Whitney U-tests were run for all 13 individual items of the holistic scoring instrument (compare Table 9.4). No Bonferroni corrections were made for the multiple testing (to avoid the inflation of the type I error

rate) as it had already been established that a significant difference existed between the two groups.

Table 9.4 Two-sided p-values of the raters' scores from the Mann-Whitney U-test per item

Dimension	Item	p-value per item	p-value per dimension
DIMENSION 1: Handling of source materials	1 Relevance	0.051	0.223
	2 Integration	0.349	
	3 Stance and engagement	0.654	
DIMENSION 2: Structure and development	4 Thesis statement	0.756	0.809
	5 Development of argument	0.863	
	6 Conclusion	0.557	
	7 Paragraph development	0.223	
DIMENSION 3: Academic writing style	8 Syntax	0.005	0.020
	9 Concord and tense	0.314	
	10 Linking devices	0.099	
	11 Lexis	0.114	
	12 Style	0.387	
DIMENSION 4: Editing	13 Spelling and capitalization	0.020	0.020
OVERALL	**16**		**0.043**

This more detailed analysis identifies specific items that may have exaggerated or diluted the p-values of the dimensions. In the case of dimension 3, Structure and Development, Syntax (item 8, with a p-value to 0.005, and thus significant at the 5% level) and Linking devices (item 10, with a p-value of 0.099, indicating significance at the 10% level) greatly influenced the p-value for the dimension as a whole. On the other hand, although the difference between the intervention groups regarding dimension 1, Use of source materials, was not significant according to the Mann-Whitney test ($p = 0.223$) the p-value for one of the three items comprising the dimension (item 1, Relevance of source materials) indicates a statistical difference between the cross-disciplinary and the subject-specific groups at the 10% level ($p = 0.051$).

It should be noted that the findings regarding the individual items were not surprising, and plausible explanations for significant differences (or a lack thereof) were not hard to find. Items 1 and 8 will be explored in more detail. With regard to Item 1 it can be argued that the history students actively engaged, quantitatively and qualitatively (in both their history classes and the academic literacy classes), with scholarly sources on a

specific theme, *viz. The history of Apartheid in South Africa*, with particular emphasis on *the Native Land Act of 1913*. They also became familiar with the core sources included in their history reader, which was also used for the essay-writing module. In contrast, the mixed group was exposed to fairly generic sources on the topic of focus, *Poverty in Africa*. They might have been less motivated than the subject-specific group to engage regularly with scholarly sources on this topic, since it was not necessary to internalize the content for assessment in their core modules. Furthermore, the students in this group were allowed to write their final exam essay on any of the topics provided by lecturers in the Faculty; and some of them chose topics that seemed to be interesting, but fell outside the focus of the academic programmes for which they were registered. For instance, one of the students, who was registered for a degree in Journalism, chose the topic *Whose obligation is it to do something about poverty in society: the rich or the poor?* This topic requires familiarity with philosophical ways of arguing. The student managed to structure her essay well and to invoke evidence from relevant sources, but she failed to exhibit mastery of the discourse of philosophy. Against this backdrop it is not surprising that the subject-specific group improved significantly more than the cross-disciplinary group on Item 1.

The p-value of Item 8 can be explained as follows: Although none of the interventions paid specific attention to the improvement of syntactic well-formedness, the subject-specific group had the advantage of becoming familiar with the historian's ways of formulation through extensive reading and writing in the discipline. During the course of the semester they wrote at least eight full academic essays on topics related to the history of Apartheid in South Africa. The respondents in the mixed group – with the exception of the two students who studied Philosophy – wrote only three full essays on aspects of poverty during the course of the semester-long essay-writing intervention.

Although plausible explanations can be found for the p-values of the primary dimensions, with specific reference to the impact of individual items, the findings raise questions regarding the validity of the construct underlying the scoring grid. More specifically, they raise questions about the researcher's (and other researchers') clustering of items in analytic scoring instruments for academic writing. Specific questions include:

- Can it be claimed that grammar (which might include syntax and cohesive devices), lexis and style constitute the construct Academic writing style?
- Is the ability to handle stance and engagement in any way connected to the ability to integrate facts and ideas from source materials in a composition, and the relevance of those facts and ideas to the topic at hand?

We now turn to the discourse analyses of the pre- and posttest essays for possible justification of the statistical data, but more specifically to find evidence that might assist course designers to adapt or refocus syllabi and/or teaching materials for future essay-writing interventions.

9.3 Text analysis of pre- and posttests

The discourse analyses that were performed on the essays were focused not so much on an overall impression of students' performance but were actually "enlarged detail" snapshots of students' abilities to handle key aspects of meaning-making in academic texts – as identified and described in the literature on Systemic Functional Grammar. Another aim was to explore the value of theory-supported discourse analysis in justifying rating scores.

9.3.1 Logical ideation

On the dimension of logical ideation (logical relationships between intra- as well as extra-textual concepts) the **subject-specific** group showed a large improvement in handling Causation. There was an overall increase from 74 correct usages in the pretest to 134 correct usages in the posttest (= 81% improvement). A moderate improvement was found in the Addition category (from 62 to 79 = 27%), and a slight improvement in the Time/Tense category. Temporal setting and Temporal sequence were mastered fairly well, already at the time of the pretest, and little improvement was demonstrated in the posttest. However, the number of tense errors decreased dramatically (from 43 in the pretest to 12 in the posttest = 72%). A possible explanation is that the history students had never been explicitly taught how to handle tense in historical writing (personal communication with the lecturer). It is likely that the explicit instruction and continuous feedback during the intervention assisted them in internalizing the system.

The **cross-disciplinary group** showed an increase of more than 50% on three of the Logical Ideation categories: Addition, Causation and Time/tense, and 23% on Comparison. Analogous to the subject-specific intervention, Causation and Addition were handled well, and errors also decreased significantly in this category (an 80% decrease in Causation errors and a 60% decrease in Addition errors). It was also encouraging that more variety occurred in their use of causation resources in the posttest: In addition to the subcategories Cause and Consequence, also Condition, Means and Purpose featured prominently in the posttest. Similar to the subject-specific intervention, Temporal relations and Tense were handled well by the cross-disciplinary intervention students in both the pretest and the posttest, but in contrast to the subject-specific intervention students (whose pretests contained many tense errors) the cross-disciplinary intervention students committed very few tense errors, even in their pretest essays. Only one tense error was recorded in the pretests and two in the posttests. This might be explained by the fact that in humanities disciplines other than history time does not play such a crucial role.

9.3.2 Appraisal

The **subject-specific** students improved inconsistently in their use of Appraisal resources. They showed the most marked increase (47%) in the Attitude category, which includes the subcategories Emotion, Judgment and Social valuation. This may be ascribed to their increased content knowledge, and thus their confidence in evaluating historical figures, institutions and events. The category of Engagement produced disappointing results, in that there was an overall decline from 73 to 38 correct usages. This was mostly due to a decline in the number of Attribution markers (from 44 to 13). The only plausible explanation is that an increase in students' subject-field knowledge – resulting from attending lectures, reading, studying and intensive writing on the history of segregation in South Africa – made them less dependent on sources when writing the posttest essay.

The students participating in the **cross-disciplinary intervention**, on the other hand, improved significantly in their command of Appraisal resources. In the Attitude category correct usages increased (from 10 to 55), in the Graduation category from 40 to 99, and in the Engagement category from 52 to 145. The steep increase in the use of

Engagement markers (Attribution, from 19 to 55 and Proclamation, from 33 to 94) stands in stark contrast to the decrease in the subject-specific intervention. Apparently, the emphasis that the lecturer for the cross-disciplinary intervention had placed on a command of Appraisal resources, and the increased amount of exercise in using these, paid off.

It is likely that the cross-disciplinary group's increased use of stance and engagement markers, as opposed to the slight and inconsistent improvement by the subject-specific students, contributed to the fact that no significant difference was measured on item 3 by the Mann-Whitney U-test.

9.3.3 Thematic analysis

The pre- and posttest essays of the first respondent in the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary intervention respectively (henceforth Respondent S1 and Respondent G1) were sampled to analyze and plot thematic progression. In both cases improved capability to handle thematic progression was anticipated on the basis of the sizeable difference between the respondents' analytic scores on the pretest and the posttest: Respondent S1's overall score improved from 37% to 69%, and Respondent G1's score improved from 60% to 81%. Further predictors of improvement were the two respondents' scores on the dimension Structure and development, particularly on item 7 (Paragraph development). Respondent S1 scored 2 for this item on the 7-point scale in the pretest, and 5 in the posttest, whereas Respondent G1 scored 3 on the pretest and 6 on the posttest. Although the overall difference between S1's pre- and posttest scores (28%) was more impressive than the difference between G1's scores (21%), G1's scores fell into a higher bracket than those of S1, and thus it could be expected that the percentage of strong thematic bonds in G1's essays would also fall into a higher bracket than the number of strong bonds in S1's essays.

This prediction was borne out by the findings: In S1's essays the number of strong bonds (in relation to the number of weak and absent bonds as percentages of the total number of clauses) increased from 38% to 76%, whereas the number of strong bonds in the G1's essays increased from 53% to 93%. Conversely, the number of weak and

absent bonds in S1's essays decreased from 62% to 23% and in G1's essays from 42% to 8%.

These findings, which signify an impressive improvement in the case of the subject-specific as well the cross-disciplinary intervention student, are in line with the statistical finding of no significant difference between the two interventions on the dimension of Structure and development.

9.3.4 What the discourse analysis reveals

Although no grand generalizations can be made on the basis of these quasi-comparisons, there is a clear indication that both the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary interventions afforded students tools and mechanisms to improve their academic writing. At least some of these resources must have been internalized to facilitate the improvement that took place between the pretest and the posttest.

In general, the students who took part in the subject-specific intervention became less reliant on sources, which might have impacted negatively on their explicit use of stance and engagement markers, but could have contributed to the enhanced relevance of the source materials (facts) they used in their essays. In contrast, the students in the cross-disciplinary group acquired a more marked command of stance and engagement than their subject-specific counterparts. They also demonstrated a more varied repertoire of cohesive devices. However, it is more likely that the intensified focus of the generic module on these lexicogrammatical devices (as a result of what the course designer had learned from the subject-specific intervention) had caused the improvement, and not the contextual focus (subject-specific or generic).

Based on the thematic analysis of two sample essays (one per intervention) students in both groups benefited from the intervention in terms of developing an argument systematically. This inference is supported by the statistical finding that there is no significant difference between the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary group in terms of improvement on the dimension of Structure and development.

9.4 Opinion survey

In order to compare the results of the post-intervention opinion surveys, a Mann-Whitney U-test was performed for each of the five theoretical dimensions of the opinion survey, *viz.* (1) Staged and scaffolded teaching and learning model, (2) Purposeful social apprenticeship, (3) Needs-driven syllabus, (4) Critical orientation and (5) Skills transfer. For each of the two interventions the total score for the items comprising each dimension was obtained. The scales were reversed where necessary to facilitate uniform polarity. The spiderweb plot represented as Figure 9.2 shows the differences between the means of the responses of the two groups (after reversal of the scales with a negative polarity):

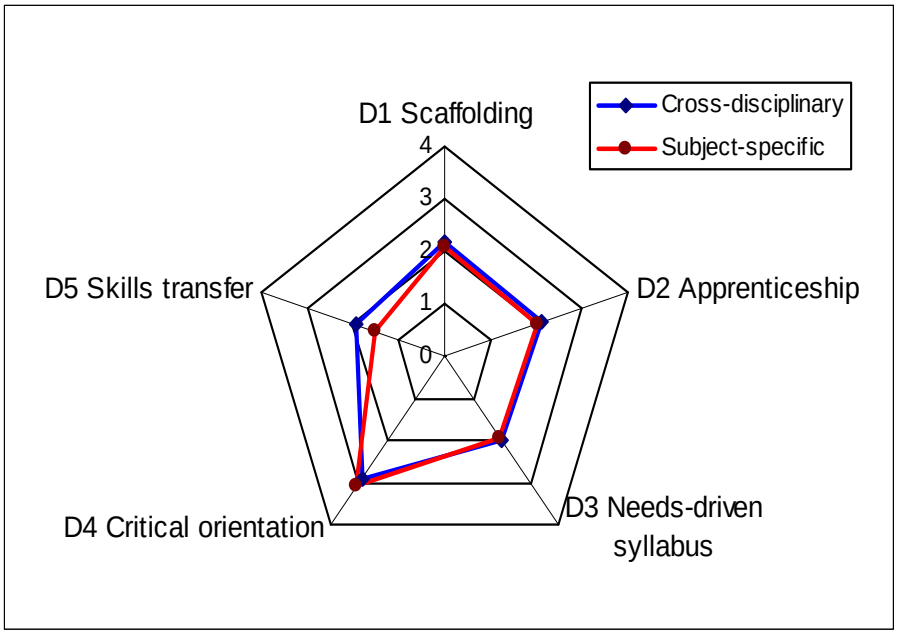


Figure 9.2 Spiderweb plot of the means of the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary groups in the opinion surveys

From the graph it can be read that, on average, both groups felt reasonably positive about the way that a staged and scaffolded teaching and learning intervention assisted them in improving their academic writing skills (dimension 1); that both groups were, to a large extent, convinced of the positive effects of learning as a member of a discourse community (dimension 2); and also that the module had addressed their personal needs and goals reasonably well (dimension 3). On the other hand, both groups were uncertain as to the effect that the course might have had on their development of a critical

orientation (dimension 4). Although both groups were positive about the transferability of the skills they had learned (dimension 5), a predictably higher rating on this dimension (between positive and extremely positive) was obtained from the subject-specific group.

According to the Mann Whitney U-test (compare Table 9.5) the overall opinion of the two groups about the intervention did not differ significantly. As suggested by the differences in the statistical means for Skills transfer, a significant difference (at the 10% level) was found on this dimension:

Table 9.5 Two-sided p-values of the opinion survey findings regarding the 5 theoretical dimensions, obtained from the Mann-Whitney U-test

Dimension	p-value
1 Staged and scaffolded teaching and learning model	0.209
2 Purposeful social apprenticeship	0.260
3 Needs-driven syllabus	0.568
4 Critical orientation	0.130
5 Skills transfer	0.081
TOTAL	0.860

The subject-specific group was thus more inclined to think that the skills they had learned in the course were indeed transferable to other contexts. Further analysis of the data showed that although some students in the cross-disciplinary group were convinced that they could apply what they had learned to more than one discipline, others were much less positive about the transferability of the skills.

9.5 Conclusion

From the multifaceted comparison described in this chapter it can be concluded that both the subject-specific and the cross-disciplinary interventions were effective in their own right. In both cases there was a significant improvement in students' writing abilities between the pretest and the posttest: For the subject-specific intervention a p-value of 0.002 was obtained, while a p-value of 0.001 was obtained for the cross-disciplinary group.

A statistical comparison of the performance of the two groups reveals that the students who took part in the subject-specific intervention improved significantly more than those who took part in the cross-disciplinary intervention. Percentage-wise the subject-specific group improved by 19% overall, while the cross-disciplinary group improved by 8% – a difference which proves to be significant according to the Mann-Whitney U-test: $p = 0.004$. The improvement of the subject-specific group was also more consistent across the four dimensions of the scoring instrument than the improvement of the cross-disciplinary group.

Although both groups expressed fairly positive opinions about the intervention in general, the subject-specific group was significantly more positive than the cross-disciplinary group about the transferability of the skills they had learned. A p-value of 0.086 was obtained on the Mann-Whitney U-test, which means that the difference is significant at the 10% level.

These results indicate that genre-specific writing interventions can be effective, whether narrowly or more broadly focused. However, interventions that are more sharply focused on a particular discipline seem to be more effective, primarily as a result of enhanced motivation and more profound engagement with the subject matter through reading and writing with clearly delineated disciplinary foci.

Although language proficiency, especially grammar, might not noticeably improve through explicit teaching of lexicogrammar, the findings of this study indicate that a greater awareness of the lexicogrammatical resources can be facilitated through explicit teaching and tasks that make use of authentic materials.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

The following research questions were formulated in the first chapter to address the issue of undergraduate students' inadequate academic writing abilities: (1) Can genre-based approaches be justified theoretically? (2) How effective are genre-based academic literacy interventions? (3) Which are more effective: specific or generic approaches? Question 1 relates to the input for and justification of the proposed applied linguistic design, while questions 2 and 3 relate to implementation and evaluation of two variations on a particular language teaching approach. Figure 10.1 shows how the research questions have been accommodated in the research design:

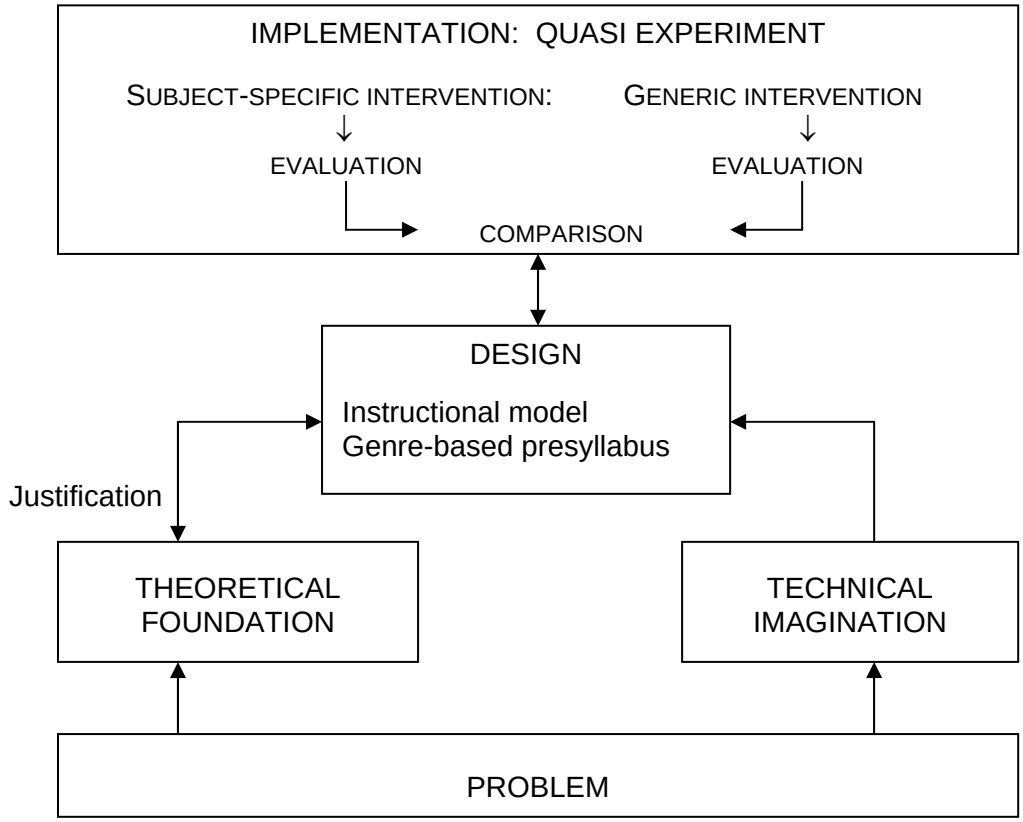


Figure 10.1 Summary of research strategy to address the research questions

This chapter attempts to indicate to what extent the research questions have been answered in order to make evidence-based recommendations for the design of future

academic writing interventions aimed at undergraduate students in the humanities. First, the theoretical justification of genre-based writing interventions is summarized. This is followed by an overview of the effectiveness of narrow-angled versus wide-angled interventions, and the significance of the difference between the two, as proven by the empirical research. Finally, some limitations of the study are briefly discussed, and recommendations are made regarding the application of the knowledge gained throughout the research process.

10.2 Theoretical justification

Genre approaches to teaching academic literacy have drawn from a diversity of linguistic, applied linguistic and language teaching theories. Figure 10.2, which should be read bottom-up, gives a schematic overview of the theories that underpin genre-based approaches:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">WRITING PEDAGOGY</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Skills-based approach</td><td>Practice-based approach</td><td colspan="2">Text-based approach</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">LANGUAGE TEACHING THEORIES</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Multiliteracies
Critical literacies</td><td colspan="2">Communicative language teaching</td><td>Traditional Approaches</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">APPLIED LINGUISTIC THEORIES</td></tr>
<tr><td>Post-modernism</td><td colspan="2">Constructivism</td><td>Extended Paradigm Model</td><td>Linguistic approach</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">LINGUISTIC THEORIES</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">CDA
Multimodality</td><td rowspan="2">New Rhetoric</td><td rowspan="2">Cognitive Linguistics</td><td colspan="2">Systemic Functional Linguistics</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Sociolinguistics</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 10.2 Theoretical foundations of genre-based writing pedagogies

Among the linguistic theories, Systemic Functional Grammar is the theory that is regarded to have contributed most significantly to the theoretical grounding of genre pedagogies. SFL emphasises the systematic way in which language users make vocabulary and grammar choices in particular cultural and situational contexts. This

paradigm has had a profound influence on particularly the Australian (Sydney) genre school. Other linguistic theories that have been referred to for justification of specific features of genre approaches are Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. Cognitive Linguistics foregrounds genre knowledge: knowledge of content, communicative purpose, participant roles, discourse structure, and register. Critically oriented theories of language and other semiotic systems, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, add a political dimension to genre knowledge, *viz.* knowledge of power relations and institutional processes, and also emphasize the dialogic relationship between culture, cognition and semiosis. Among the genre schools it is particularly the New Rhetoric and the Sydney schools that are associated with CDA, because of their emphasis on social and intellectual empowerment through genre knowledge, as well as their encouragement of students and professionals to challenge the hegemonic power of conventional genres.

The **theory of learning** that best supports genre approaches is Constructivism. Genre-based approaches draw strongly upon the work of Vygotsky, in particular his Zone of Proximal Development. The ZPD is supported by two pillars, *viz.* cognitive and social apprenticeship, and scaffolding. Cognitive and social apprenticeship are linked to the rhetorical notion of learning as a member of a discourse community, while a scaffolded curriculum aims at initially providing strong peer and teacher support, and then gradually removing the support until the learner is knowledgeable and confident to construct full examples of the genre independently. Vygotskyan views feature prominently in all the so-called "post-process paradigms" in academic writing pedagogy.

The methodological input that genre-based approaches have received from **language teaching theories** derives particularly from Communicative Language Teaching. However, regarding the types of activities included in genre-based teaching programmes, genre-based pedagogy also draws from Traditional approaches and Critical Literacies approaches.

When narrowing down the focus to **theories of academic writing**, it is clear that genre approaches combine Text-based and Practice-based approaches: Text-based approaches

draw on the resources of linguistic analysis to understand the functional (rhetorical) and discipline-specific nature of writing tasks. Practice-based approaches emphasize the social and discursive practices through which disciplines constitute themselves.

The version of genre-based pedagogies adopted for the present research has relied heavily on Systemic Functional Linguistics with regard to drawing on the established conventions and values of academic disciplines, and making meaningful form-function choices. This version is in essence constructivist, in that the role of the learner as an active maker of meaning is emphasized, as well as the role of the teacher and peers as engaging in dialogue with the learner to create new meaning. The approach is overtly post-process, in that it is a considered combination of language teaching principles and techniques as well as classroom activities, with sufficient opportunity for critical reflection.

In the next section an overview is given of the design and evaluation of genre-based writing interventions drawing on the above theories. In particular, the question of effectiveness is addressed.

10.3 The effectiveness of genre-based approaches in general

Although a large number of empirical and quasi-empirical studies have been conducted to establish affinities between genres, text types and disciplines at tertiary institutions, it is believed that *in situ* research is a prerequisite for designing effective interventions – in this case genre-based academic writing courses for second-year undergraduate students of the humanities at the University of Pretoria.

To chart the target landscape, a survey of writing tasks was conducted. The results showed that the *academic essay* is the written genre most frequently required by lecturers of humanities disciplines, and that academic essays are made up of a variety of rhetorical modes. Those that feature most prominently are *discussion*, *explanation*, *description* and *(critical) analysis*. Subject-fields differ with regard to the rhetorical modes they prefer, the labels they use, and the way they combine different modes. On the other hand academic essays are structured in a fairly similar way across disciplines.

They typically comprise an introduction, body and conclusion, and develop an extended academic argument, supported by evidence. However, the nature of the evidence is subject-specific.

Against this backdrop it seems that both narrow-angled (subject-specific) interventions, with a close fit between the purposes and conventions of disciplinary communities, and more wide-angled (generic) interventions, which focus on one or more genres shared by a cluster of disciplines (such as the academic essay), could be effective. This is probably the reason why these two distinct approaches still exist within the domain of language pedagogy. However, few experimental or quasi-experimental studies have been conducted to prove the desirability (or the feasibility) of either of these intervention types.

The design of any genre-based intervention is ideally preceded by thorough contextual research. For the purpose of designing and evaluating a subject-specific intervention, in-depth research was conducted on the conventions of historical writing. History was chosen as the discipline of focus for a subject-specific intervention because the academic essay has been found to be the primary vehicle for undergraduate historical writing. The choice of history as the focal subject was also purposive and convenient, since the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies had expressed interest in the project and had been willing to offer its cooperation. Main findings were that the three main purposes of historical writing are (re)telling a story, understanding and explaining why things happened as they did, and evaluating events, structures and the writings of other historians. In historical texts these concepts have been lexicalized and grammaticalized in systematic ways. Concerning **time**, seven categories, straddling the boundaries of syntax and semantics, were defined to assist course designers and students in constructing and deconstructing time in historical texts, *viz.* sequencing time, setting in time, temporal process (phasing in time), (text internal) temporal organization, temporal modality, temporal duration and tense. Two primary ways of construing cause and effect were distinguished: sequential (chronological) causal relations between external events, and "simultaneous" mentioning of causes or effects. In terms of judgment or evaluation the most important categories for the historian are Attitude,

Graduation and Engagement, as distinguished in the Appraisal framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics.

In order to design a cross-disciplinary intervention research was conducted on the relationship between disciplinary purposes and writing conventions in a number of humanities disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, psychology, history of art and political sciences. Summaries were made of the most important conventions, and exemplars of essays and parts of essays were excerpted from these sources.

A basic genre-based presyllabus, comprising one or more cycles of exploration, explicit instruction, joint construction, independent construction and critical reflection, was adapted for subject-specific and generic purposes. Emphasis was placed on rhetorical modes, logical development of an argument from the thesis statement to the conclusion, and engagement with the authors of primary and secondary sources. However, the syllabi differed with regard to the specificity of the disciplinary focus, and thus also the themes of the materials and exercises.

10.4 The effectiveness of narrow-angled versus wide-angled interventions

The statistical analyses of the essay scores show that both narrow-angled and wide-angled genre-based interventions can be effective. The overall improvement of the students in both groups was statistically significant, although the size of the improvement differed across the four dimensions of the scoring instrument. Only on the dimension of Structure and development was the improvement of the two groups roughly similar (18% in the case of the subject-specific group and 15% in the case of the cross-disciplinary group). Thematic analyses of sampled pre- and posttest essays support the finding that both groups benefited from the instruction on structure and development: both students showed a sizeable improvement in their ability to develop an academic theme systematically.

Students from both groups were generally positive about the effect of the intervention on their academic writing abilities, and indicated that their personal needs had been more than adequately addressed. On the other hand, both groups were less positive

about their acquisition of critical thinking skills, which was not surprising in the light of the responses typically given by undergraduate students to questions about their acquisition of critical thinking skills. The only significant difference between the two groups was their perceptions about skills transfer. The subject-specific group was more positive, which probably went hand in hand with the fact that they engaged more with relevant subject matter and were more motivated.

Despite their more modest overall improvement in comparison with the subject-specific students, the cross-disciplinary group exceeded the researcher's expectations in terms of their mastery of Appraisal resources, particularly Attitude, Engagement and Graduation. The steep increase in their use of Engagement markers stands in stark contrast to the decrease in the essays of the subject-specific group. The improvement in the cross-disciplinary group's mastery of Appraisal resources should probably be ascribed to the lecturer's efforts in exposing the generic students more explicitly to these resources, and designing more appropriate classroom materials.

10.5 Limitations of the study

The main limitations of the study include (1) the relatively small sample size, (2) using the scores of only one rater for the subject-specific essays, and (3) the fact that the two interventions were not administered simultaneously. The small sample size may be seen to have impacted negatively on generalization. However, the statistical tests that were chosen (the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and the Mann-Whitney U-test) compensated for this limitation, as they had been designed for small samples. The non-parallel presentation of the interventions limits comparability because the syllabus and materials for the cross-disciplinary intervention were designed with some foreknowledge of what had (not) worked well in the subject-specific intervention. This could have influenced the significance of the statistical difference found between the two groups, as well as differences found in students' use of certain lexicogrammatical resources.

10.6 Summative remarks and the way forward

Although it would be dangerous to make grand generalizations on the basis of a quasi-experiment with fairly small samples there is a clear indication that genre-based,

scaffolded interventions do assist students in mastering the structural, conceptual and linguistic resources for meaning-making in academic discourse. On the basis of the findings it is believed that subject-specific interventions have a greater chance of succeeding than wider-angled interventions. Their greater success is primarily ascribed to the enhanced motivation that accompanies students' prospects of improving their achievement in content subjects. This prediction is underpinned by the finding that the superior performance of the subject-specific group is statistically significant. Furthermore, it seems that transferability of skills – or at least students' perception of transferability – is enhanced by extensive reading and writing with a particular thematic, and by extension, disciplinary focus.

Although narrow-angled interventions seem to be more beneficial than wide-angled interventions, such interventions may, however, be less feasible in that few tertiary institutions have the resources for offering dedicated writing modules – one for each discipline. This suggests research on alternative models for subject-specific teaching of academic writing, such as collaboration with content lecturers in a team-teaching or adjunct teaching context. It also points to the exploration of a combination of narrow-angled and generic designs in the same course.

Despite the less pronounced effects of wide-angled writing interventions, they do have some effect, and are therefore better than no intervention at all. This has been demonstrated by the significant improvement of the students on the generic course. Definite advantages of cross-disciplinary interventions are the opportunities they afford for making students aware of the dimensions along which subject-fields differ, and acquainting students with the conventions that tie in with the content, epistemology and philosophical underpinnings of a range of subject-fields. If capacity is available, a department, unit or centre with responsibility for teaching academic writing should conduct research on the relationships between subject-field purposes and writing conventions in a whole range of disciplines. It should also be considered to develop genre-based training courses for tutors, who might be Masters or PhD students in the disciplines where writing support for undergraduate students is desired.

In any event, attention should be paid to gathering, designing and developing authentic materials. It is desirable to compile a database of authentic model essays to demonstrate the successful application of essay-writing principles in specific subjects, at the level of the students, and relevant to the local (at least the South African) context. Published examples of good essays lack authenticity and are often not exemplary in every respect. In addition, students should ideally focus their writing on a particular discipline for the duration of a semester-long writing module, even within the boundaries of wide-angled modules. The greater effectiveness of the subject-specific intervention has shown that immersion into the content and materials of a specific discipline enhances engagement and encourages skills transfer. Finally, students should ideally be engaged in extended writing assignments from the beginning to the end of an intervention: the more text students produce, the more significant their improvement is likely to be.

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