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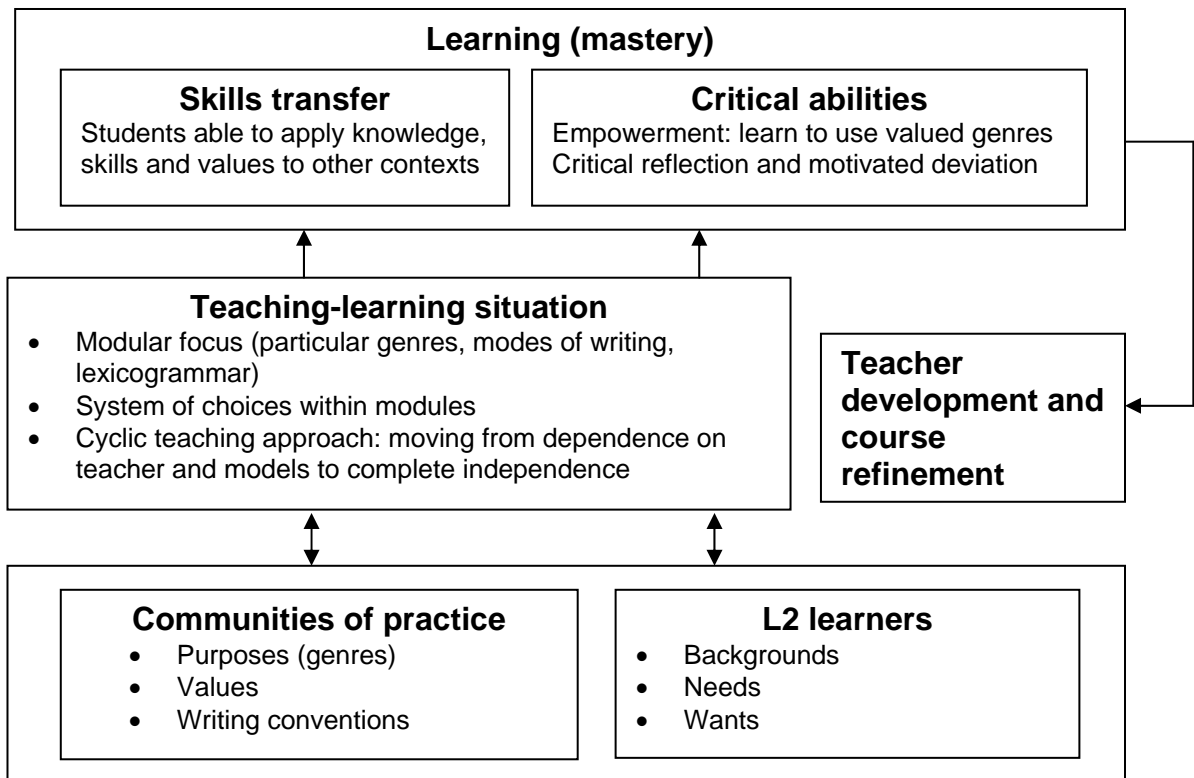
Figure 1.1   Schematic representation of the benefits of a genre approach in language teaching

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".

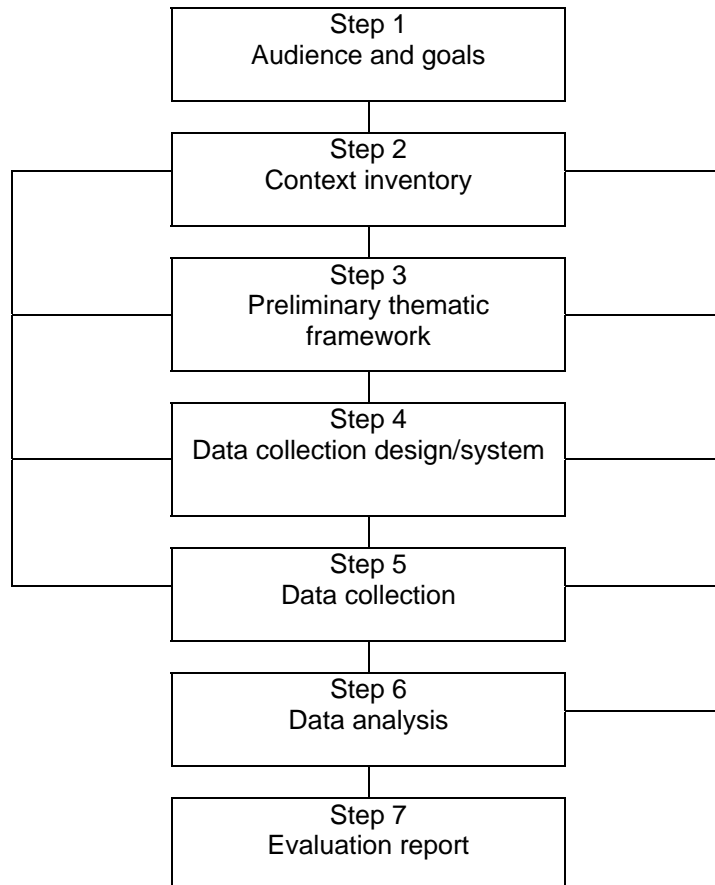**Table 1.1 Quasi-experimental design with two programme groups**

	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):

```
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 1           │
            │   Audience and goals    │
            └─────────────────────────┘
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 2           │
            │    Context inventory    │
            └─────────────────────────┘
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 3           │
            │  Preliminary thematic   │
            │       framework         │
            └─────────────────────────┘
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 4           │
            │ Data collection design/ │
            │        system           │
            └─────────────────────────┘
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 5           │
            │    Data collection      │
            └─────────────────────────┘
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 6           │
            │     Data analysis       │
            └─────────────────────────┘
            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │        Step 7           │
            │    Evaluation report    │
            └─────────────────────────┘
```

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.
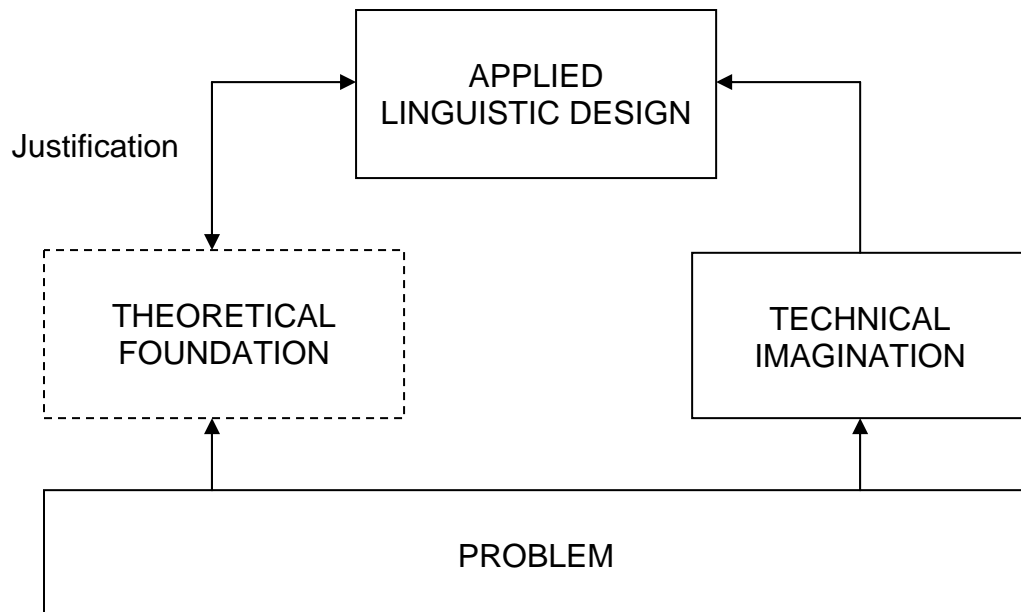
Chapter 2: Theoretical underpinnings of genre approaches

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:

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │      APPLIED        │
              ┌────▶│  LINGUISTIC DESIGN  │◀────┐
              │     └─────────────────────┘     │
   Justification    │                           │
              │     ▼                           │
   ┌─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─┐              ┌──────────────────┐
   ┆ THEORETICAL ┆              │    TECHNICAL     │
   ┆ FOUNDATION  ┆              │   IMAGINATION    │
   └─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─ ─┘              └──────────────────┘
          ▲                              ▲
          │     ┌────────────────────┐   │
          └─────│      PROBLEM       │───┘
                └────────────────────┘
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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).
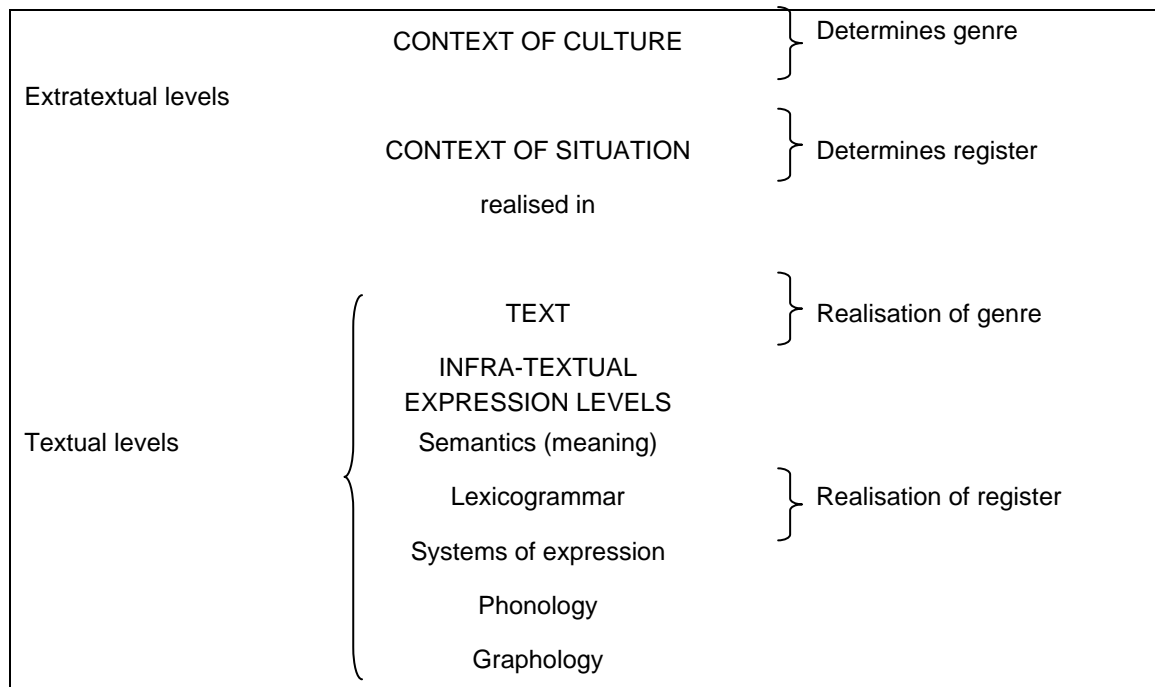
He summarises the relationship between genre and register as follows:

> 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:

Extratextual levels	CONTEXT OF CULTURE	Determines genre
	CONTEXT OF SITUATION	Determines register
	realised in	
Textual levels	TEXT	Realisation of genre
	INFRA-TEXTUAL EXPRESSION LEVELS	
	Semantics (meaning)	
	Lexicogrammar	Realisation of register
	Systems of expression	
	Phonology	
	Graphology	

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.

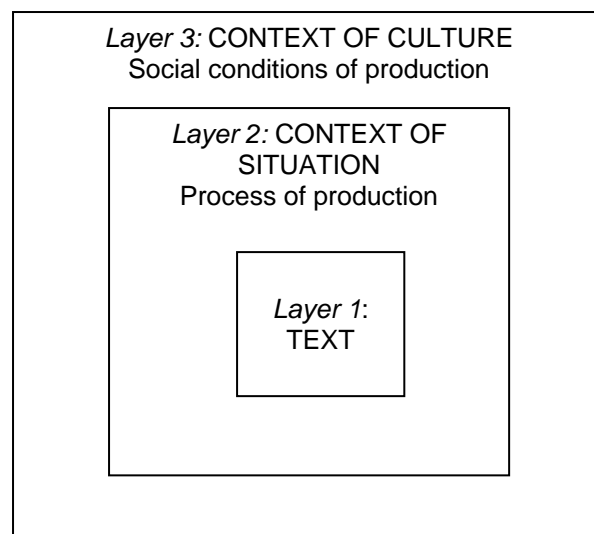## 2.2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis

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:

Layer 3: CONTEXT OF CULTURE
Social conditions of production

Layer 2: CONTEXT OF
SITUATION
Process of production

Layer 1:
TEXT

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.

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[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:

Applied linguistics	Language teaching	Writing pedagogy	
	Traditional approaches Grammar-translation Method Direct Method		
Structuralist/Behaviourist/ Scientific model	Audiolingual Method	**Current Traditional Period**	Skills Discourse Functional Discourse
Extended Paradigm Model	**Communicative approaches**		
Multidisciplinary Model		**Learner-centred Approaches**	Creativity Discourse Process Discourse
Second Language Acquisition Research Model			
Constructivism		**Post-process Period** **Multiliteracies approach**	Social Practices Discourse Genre Discourse
Postmodernism	**The Postmethod Condition**		Sociopolitical Discourse

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.