Chapter ii

Linguistics, Language Acquisition

CHAPTER II Travelling Uncharted Waters? REVIEWING THE LITERATURE 2. 1 Introduction: Storm in a teacup This part of my research journey was fraught with anxiety, distress and a sense of being lost. Reviewing the literature became my own storm in a teacup, as I found myself dizzily spiralling, being flung between not knowing on the one side, on the verge of knowing at the other, yet continuously feeling out of control, not being here nor there ... caught somewhere between locating, analysing, synthesising and reviewing the expert knowledge. Searching for literature and locating the literature, even with support, was a lonely road. Never have I felt that the more I began to read and know, the less I felt I knew, lost and alone amid so many theories, expert knowledge, data and findings. And so this genre journey became a rumbling of thoughts, ideas and theories to be summarised, referenced and sometimes even violently tossed aside. Reviewing the literature and writing up summaries was a cup of tea, yet I was slowly dissolving, losing my own voice and experiencing a sense of losing of my own identity. In robot-like fashion I found myself speaking and quoting studies done by experts in the field and then became aware of another storm brewing in my teacup: what miniscule contribution could I make? Would I be able to negotiate meaning for an expert audience in this genre field? Would I successfully structure the information according to issues pertinent to my research, and would I be able to identify themes that are linked to my research question? As I attempt to write, my teacup torments and reminds me again that I have become the echoing voice of experts. So during this process I am riding a storm of emotions, wondering whether I will remain a voiceless, writing wanderer, I wonder ... Yet, strangely losing my own voice,

reminds me of our learners and teachers at school who face so many challenges with this process called writing. Reflecting on my literature, I pondered putting to practice my knowledge of genre theory and this became one of my storm lanterns. Surely, researching the merits of such a theory should provide me with tools to deconstruct and conquer this silly storm brewing in my tea cup? And so finally, as I begin to let go, embracing this brewing cup of storm, I am steadfastly sensing that many storm lanterns have and will guide me in finding a way to indicate to an expert audience my ability to identify, search, locate and present a coherent review of the literature. At this point the storm is still brewing, at times even raging, never fully abating but it is becoming lesser in intensity. And so, I am realising that this willy-nilly writing storm brewing in my teacup is someone else's tornado and maybe both of these could be another writer's cup of tea. This chapter attempts to draw on literature from genre theory, specifically genre theory based on Systemic Functional Linguistics. Hyland (2002) refers to a genre-based approach to teaching writing as being concerned with what learners do when they write. This includes a focus on language and discourse features of the texts as well as the context in which the text is produced. My primary intention is to explore the literature on different approaches to teaching writing and more specifically in what ways a genre-based approach to teaching writing could facilitate the development of writing skills at a multilingual primary school. 2. 1. 2 Framing the problem Success after school, whether it is at a tertiary institution or in the world of work, is largely dependent on effective literacy skills. To succeed one has to display a range of communicative skills, for example, listening, speaking, reading and writing

tasks. But, most importantly, the quality of one's writing determines access to higher education and well paid jobs in the world of work. In these scenarios, success or entry is dependent on either passing an English writing proficiency test or on the skill of writing effective reports. However, writing skills are even essential in the most general forms of employment, for example, waitressing necessitates writing down customer orders and working at a switchboard implies taking messages, writing down memos or notes. Therefore, learning to write at school should be synonymous with learning and acquiring the formats and demands of different types of texts necessary in broader society. On this point, Kress (1994) argues that language, social structures and writing are closely linked. The written language taught at school reflects the more affluent social structures and thus the standard written variants are deemed more acceptable by society. However, the kind of writing taught and valued at school , that is, poetry, literature and essays is mastered by a very few learners and the control of written language is in the hands of a relatively few people. As a result of this uneven access to the types of writing valued in society, the ability to use and control the different forms of writing brings about exclusion from the social, economic and political advantages connected with writing proficiency. Consequently, in the push for greater equity and access, writing instruction globally has become a field of increasing interest in recent years. There have been numerous approaches to the teaching of writing in the history of language teaching for English as a first and second language, where first language refers to English mother tongue speakers and second language to learners who have English as a second or an additional language (see

Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Hinkel, 2006; Canagarajah, 2006; Celce-Murcia, 1997) Not surprisingly, this magnitude of approaches has resulted in many paradigm shifts in the field of language teaching and in developing countries like South Africa, these international trends, approaches and paradigms shifts impact on local educational trends, as encapsulated in educational policy documents. Ivanic (2004) argues that historically from the 19th and 20th century formal discourses have influenced a great deal of policy and practice in literacy education. Such discourses focused primarily on teaching of formal grammar, patterns and rules for sentence construction (pg 227). As a result, these discourses viewed language as a set of skills to be taught, learnt and mastered, and valued writing that demonstrated knowledge about language such as rules of syntax, sound-symbol relationships and sentence construction. Therefore, those writers that conformed to the correctness of grammar, letter, word, and sentence and text formation were viewed as competent writers. Furthermore, Dullay, Burt and Krashen (1982) state that the earliest work in the teaching of writing was based on the concept of controlled or guided composition and that language was seen as something that could be meaningfully visualised in taxonomies and rationalised into tables arranged across the two-dimensional space of the textbook page. This focus on the conscious acquisition of rules and forms meant that teachers were focusing on parts of speech, demanding standards of correctness, and being prescriptive about what were ostensibly language facts. However, such an approach was found to be extremely limited because it did not necessarily produce speakers who were able to communicate successfully. Therefore, although learners might master the lists, structures and rules, this

might not lead to the development of language fluency or to the ability to transfer such knowledge into coherent, cohesive and extended pieces of writing in school or beyond it. During the late 1970s more functional approaches developed. These were more concerned with what students can do with language, for example, meeting the practical demands in different contexts such as the workplace and other domains. Examples of writing tasks included filling out job applications, preparing for interviews, and writing applications. However, these involved minimal writing other than completing short tasks ‘ designed to reinforce particular grammar points or language functions’ (Auerbach, 1999: 1). Moreover, such tasks were taught in classrooms and out of context of issues that could emerge in real contexts. As the limitations of a formalist approach to language teaching became increasingly obvious, teachers and researchers turned to a more process-oriented methodology. This focused more on the writing process than on the product and advocated expressive self-discovery from the learner/writer through a process approach to writing. Such a writing approach ‘ focus[ed] on meaningful communication for learner-defined purposes’ (Auerbach, 1999: 2). As a result, the learner is taken as the point of departure, and goes through a process of drafting, editing and redrafting; the teacher’s role is less prescriptive, allowing learners to be self-expressive and explore how to write. As such, the process approach won favour with those who were of the opinion that controlled composition was restrictive, viewing a liberal-progressive approach as more suited for first language classrooms (Paltridge, 2004). This approach was taken up by researchers interested in Second Language Acquisition (see Krashen, 1981; Ellis, 1984;

Nunan, 1988), and in second language classes learners were also encouraged to develop ideas, draft, review and then write final drafts. On the other hand, Caudery (1995) argues that little seems to have been done to develop a process approach specifically for second language classes. Therefore, it appeared that the same principles should apply as for first language learners, for example, the use of peer and teacher commentary along with individual teacher-learner conferences, with minimal direction given by the teacher who allows learners to discover their voices as they continue through the writing process. This lack of direction was highlighted by research in different contexts carried out by Caudery (1995) with practising teachers of second language writing. Based on questionnaires, findings showed that teachers in second language classes had differing perceptions and methods of implementing a process approach. This could however be ascribed to the different contexts that these second language teachers found themselves in, for example, large classes and different ways of assessing writing. One finding of the study was that teachers could easily dilute the process of writing into disconnected stages where both L2 learners and teachers could perceive it as steps to be followed towards an end product. As a result, the writing process became viewed as a means to an end. In addition, learners understood the process but did not explicitly learn the language features associated with different types of writing. A third approach that has gained prominence in recent decades is the socio-cultural practices approach which seeks to affirm the culturally specific literacy practices that learners bring with them to school. Social practice advocates argue that literacy is not a universal, solely cognitive process but that

literacy varies from context to context and culture to culture (Street, 1984, Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000). As a result, if literacy varies from context to context and culture to culture, then it follows that learners would bring to school different ways of writing. Accordingly, educators in multilingual classrooms should value learners' cultural knowledge and ways of writing or use them as a bridge to new learning (Auerbach, 1999). Furthermore, the manner in which writing is taught transmits profound ideas to learners about who they are, what is entailed in the process of writing, and what they can do with writing. Therefore, the way in which writing is taught and learnt is a powerful tool for shaping the identities of learners and teachers in schools (ibid, 1999). Proponents of a fourth approach, the genre-based approach, have argued that both the socio-cultural and the process approaches to teaching writing result in learners being excluded from opportunities and that these approaches are in fact disempowering them (Delpit, 1998, Martin & Rose, 2005). They contend that certain domains, contexts and cultures yield more power than others and that if learners tell their stories, find their voices and celebrate their cultures; this is not enough for them to gain access to these more powerful domains. Therefore they suggest that learners should be empowered through access to writing the discourses of power, focusing on culture, context and text. Such approaches also enable an analysis of how identities, cultures, gender and power relations in society are portrayed in texts. Genre research done in Australia (see Disadvantaged Schools Project Research, 1973) where the additional language is the medium of instruction for aboriginal learners had major educational rewards for teachers and learners participating in the project. Singapore too moved

towards a text-based approach with the introduction of their 2001 English Language Syllabus (Kramer-Dhal, 2008). This approach has paid dividends for the Singapore education system, for example, continuous improvement in examination scores and achievements in international league tables, compared to the learners' past underachievement in literacy tests (see PIRLS 2001, Singapore results) and this is maintained in the 2006 PIRLS testing of literacy and reading. The next section will draw on literature from genre theory, providing a brief overview of the notion of genre and how it has evolved as a concept. Then, literature on three different scholarly genre traditions New Rhetoric Studies, English for Academic Purposes and Systemic Functional Linguistics and their different educational contexts, purposes and research paradigms is explored and discussed. However this chapter mainly investigates literature relating to the Systemic Functional Linguistic perspective on genre, the history of genre theory and research done in Australia, the implications for schools and classrooms and how genre theory has impacted on the pedagogy of teaching literacy in disadvantaged multilingual settings. A brief overview focusing on critiques of Systemic Functional Linguistics is also provided. 2. 2 Defining Genre Johns (2002) argues that the term ' genre' is not new and cites Flowerdew and Medway (1994) who state that for more than a century genre has been defined as written texts that are primarily literary, that are recognised by textual regularities in form and content, are fixed and permanent and can be classified into exclusive categories and sub-categories. However, a major paradigm shift has occurred in relation to notions and definitions of genre, and texts are now viewed as purposeful, situated and ' repeated' (Miller,

1984). These characteristics mean that genres have a specific purpose in our social world, that they are situated in a specific cultural context and that they are the result of repeated actions reflected in texts. Similarly, Hyland (2004) defines genre as grouping texts that display similar characteristics, representing how writers use language to respond to similar contexts. Martin and Rose (2002) place more emphasis on the structure of genre, seeing it as a ‘ staged, goal oriented social process. Social because we participate in genres with other people; goal oriented because we use genres to get things done; staged because it usually takes us a few steps to reach our goals’ (pg 7). 2. 2. 1 An Old Concept revisited As stated above, traditionally the concept of ‘ genre’ has been used to define and classify literary texts such as drama, poetry and novels in the fields of arts, literature and the media Breure (2001). For example, a detective story, a novel or a diary are each regarded as belonging to a different genre. In recent years interest in the concept of genre as a tool for developing first language and second language instruction has increased tremendously (Paltridge, 2004; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002). In second language writing pedagogy in particular much interest has been focused on raising language students’ schematic awareness of genres as the route to genre and writing development (Hyon 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Johns, 2002; Paltridge 2004). However there are various theoretical camps and their different understanding of genre reveals the intellectual tensions that are inherently part of the concept (Johns, 2002). These intellectual tensions arise from the divergent theoretical understandings of whether genre theory is grounded in language and text structure or whether it stems fundamentally from social theories of context

and community. Hyon (1996) argues for three schools of thought: Systemic Functional Linguistics, New Rhetoric Studies and English for Academic Purposes whereas Flowerdew (2002) divides theoretical camps into two groups: linguistic and non-linguistic approaches to genre theory. Genre, in short, continues to be ‘ a controversial topic, though never a dull one’ (Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998: 308). I have chosen to follow Hyon’s (1996) classification for reviewing the genre literature because this classification makes it easier to highlight the similarities and differences in definitions, purposes and contexts, and allows for a greater understanding of various approaches to genre in three research traditions. As a result, three schools of thought New Rhetoric Studies, English for Academic Purposes and Systemic Functional Linguistics and their approaches to genre will be discussed. 2. 3 The Three Schools of Thought During the last two decades, a number of researchers who were disillusioned with process approaches to teaching writing saw genre as a tool to develop both first language and second language instruction (Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002; Feez, 2002). Hyon (1996) in her analysis of ‘ Genre in Three Traditions and the implications for ESL’ argues that three dominant schools of thought, English for Specific Purposes, North American New Rhetoric Studies and Australian Systemic Linguistics have resulted in different approaches, definitions and classroom pedagogies of genre (see also Hyland 1996, 2002, & 2004). As Cope and Kalantzis (1993: 2) put it, ‘... genre has the potential to mean many things to many people’. Paltridge (2002) calls it a ‘ murky issue’. An understanding of the theoretical roots, analytical approaches and educational contexts of the different schools of thought is thus essential. 2. 3. 1 New Rhetoric Studies Genre

Theories The first school of thought is the New Rhetoric approach to genre (Dias & Pare, 2000; Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Pare, 1999) which recognises the importance of contexts and the social nature of genres but it is rooted in Bakhtin's notion of dialogism. This notion of dialogism means that language is realised through utterances and these utterances exist in response to things that have been said before and in anticipation of things that will be said in response, and thus language does not occur in a vacuum (Adams & Artemeva, 2002). As a result, genre is a social phenomenon born by the specific goals and circumstances of interaction between people. Therefore, advocates of New Rhetoric Studies argue that genres are dynamic, relational and engaged in a process of endless utterances and re-utterances (Johns, 2002). As such, the focus of this theoretical camp is on the communicative function of language. Consequently, their perspective on genre is not primarily informed by a linguistic framework but draws on post-modern social literary theories. Accordingly, for these proponents, understanding genres involves not only a description of their lexico-grammatical format and rhetorical patterns but that also that genre is ' embedded in the communicative activities of the members of a discipline' (Berkenkotter & Hucklin, 1995: 2). This view of genre as a flexible instrument in the hands of participants within a community of practice has meant that the use of text in the classroom situation has not been a major focus (Johns, 2002). Theorists concentrate on how ' expert' users manipulate genres for social purposes and how such genres can promote the interest and values of a particular social group in a historical and/or institutional context. Context Hyon (1996: 698) states that, as with English for Specific Purposes (ESP),

genre teaching within this framework is predominantly concerned with first language university students and novice professionals. It is concerned with helping first language students become more successful readers and writers of academic and workplace texts. Unlike, ESP and SFL, therefore the New Rhetoric Studies refers to first language development. One consequence of this is that their focus is much less concerned with formal classroom instruction. Purpose The focus of writing in this framework is thus on making students aware of the contexts and social functions of the genres in which they engage (Bazerman, 1988) and not on their formal trimmings. Proponents view genres as complex, dynamic, ever changing, and therefore not amenable to explicit teaching (Johns, 2002; Coe, 2004; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). They argue that it is through understanding of context that students can become more successful readers and writers of genres. 2. 3. 2 English for Specific Purposes Genre Theories The second major school of thought in relation to genre is English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The potential to perform competently in a variety of diverse genres is frequently a pivotal concern for English second language learners since it can be a determining factor in admission to higher paid career opportunities, higher educational studies, positive identities and life choices. As a result, ESP theorists ‘ scrutinise the organisation and meaning of texts, the demands placed by the workplace or academic contexts on communicative behaviours and the pedagogic practices by which these behaviours can be developed’ (Hyon, 1996). Advocates of this paradigm are concerned with genre as a device for understanding and teaching the types of texts required of second language English speakers in scholarly and specialized contexts (Bhatia, 1993;

Flowerdew, 1993; Gosden, 1992; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990). They propose that genre pedagogy could assist non-native speakers of English to master the functions and linguistic conventions that they need to read and write in disciplines at higher institutions and in related professions. According to Paltridge (2004), ESP genre studies are predominantly based on John Swales's (1981, 1990) work on the discourse structure and linguistic features of scientific reports. Swales's work had a strong influence in the teaching of ESP and more so on the teaching of academic writing to non-native English graduate students at higher institutions. Swales (1990) defines genre as ' a class of communicative events with some shared set of communicative purposes and a range of patterns concerning structure' (pg 68) Furthermore, Swales argues that the communicative purpose of a particular genre is recognised by members of the discourse community, who in ' turn establish the constraints on what is generally acceptable in terms of content, positioning and format' (Paltridge, 2004: 11). Context Given the focus on scientific and other kinds of academic writing within this framework, genre teaching occurs mostly at universities teaching English for academic purposes and in English classes for specific writing needs, such as professional communication, business writing, and other workplace-related writing needs. However, Hyon (1996) argued that, at the time of writing, many ESP researchers had managed to present their descriptions of genres as useful discourse models but had failed to propose how this content could be used in classroom models. For example, Dudley-Evans and Hopkins presented their analysis of cyclical move patterns in scientific master's dissertations as a teaching and learning resource but did

not describe how this model could be converted into materials, tasks and activities in the classroom (Johns, 2002). Purpose As the focus of this theoretical camp is on international students at English-medium universities in Britain and abroad, their focus is on demystifying rather than on social or political empowerment (Paltridge, 2004). Due to the concern in this paradigm with English for academic and professional purposes, they focus on the formal aspects of text analysis. In fact, many ESP researchers particularly emphasise the teaching of genre structures and grammatical features (Hyon, 1996) or ‘ moves’ in texts as to referred by Swales (1990). The purpose of genre teaching in this framework is therefore on teaching students the formal staged, qualities of genres so that they can recognise these features in the texts they read and then use them in the texts they write, thus providing access to ‘ English language academic discourse communities’ (Paltridge, 2004: 16). As a result, in their approach to textual analysis ESP theorist have paid specific attention to formal elements of genres and focused less on the specialised functions of texts and their social contexts (Hyon, 1996). 2. 3. 3 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) Genre Theories This underplaying of the social context is taken up by the third school of thought, Systemic Functional Linguistics, which analyses the formal features of text in relation to language function in social context. SFL, referred to as ‘ the Australian school’ in the United States of America, is rooted in the theoretical work of Halliday (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Johns, 2002). As a result, this theoretical camp is based on systemic functional linguistics and semiotics from which emerged the register-theory (Breure, 2001). Halliday developed his linguistic theory in order to give an

account of the ways in which the English language functions as social practice (Halliday, 1985; Hasan & Halliday, 1989). As a result, this theoretical paradigm focuses on the systemic function of language from which choices are made to convey meaning within a specific context and with a specific purpose. Therefore, proponents within this framework propose that when a series of texts have similar purposes, they will probably have similar structures and language features. They are thus grouped as the same genre. Building on the work of Halliday, the idea of Systemic Functional Linguistics as a basis for language teaching emerged from the work of theorists such as Martin (1989, 1992). Christie (1991) and Rothery (1996) made attempts to take genre and grammar analysis a step further by providing and expanding scaffolds which bridge systemically between grammar and genre. They argue that texts need to be analysed as more than just mere sequences of clauses and that text analysis should focus on how language reveals or obscures social reality. Such an analysis can illuminate the ways in which language is used to construct social reality. Educational Context Cope and Kalantzis (1993) state that genre-based teaching started in Sydney as an ‘ educational experiment’. The reason is, because by 1980, it seemed clear that the newly introduced progressive curriculum did not achieve the educational outcomes that it professed to (pg 1). As a result, researchers became interested in the types of writing and texts that learners in primary schools were expected to write as part of the process approach (Martin, 1989, 1991). These researchers were concerned that learners were not being prepared to write a wide enough range of texts needed for schooling, for example, findings showed that teachers mostly favoured narratives and

recounts. So, genre-based research has predominantly been conducted at primary and secondary schools although it has also begun to include adult migrant English education as well as workplace training programmes (Adult Migrant Education service, 1992). As a result, in the Australian framework, the efforts of research are mostly centred on child and adolescent contexts unlike their ESP and New Rhetoric counterparts (Drury & Webb, 1991). A group of researchers in the late 1980's started the Literacy in Education Research Network (LERN) (Cope, Kalantzis, Kress & Martin, 1993: 239). Their aim was to develop an instructional approach to address the inadequacies of the process approach for teaching writing. For researchers in this paradigm, learners at school need explicit induction into the genres of power if they want to participate in mainstream textual and social processes both within and beyond the school (Macken-Horarik, 1996). Those learners who are at risk of failing fare better within a visible curriculum and this applies particularly to learners for whom the medium of instruction in not a home language. Purpose Systemic genre analysts contend that genre pedagogy should focus on language at the level of whole texts and should also take into account the social and cultural contexts in which texts are used (Martin, 1985, Rose & Martin, 2005). Furthermore, genres are viewed as social processes because '... texts are patterned in reasonably predictable ways according to patterns of social interaction in a particular culture' (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993: 6). Consequently, SFL genre approaches see social purpose, language and context as interrelated in texts. Textual patterns reflect social conventions and interactions and these are executed through language. Therefore, genre teaching should move from linguistic description to an

explanation and an understanding of why texts are shaped the way they are and how they achieve their particular goals (Paltridge, 2004). As a result, the basic principle underlying all such language approaches is that learners must learn not only to make grammatically correct statements about their world, but also develop the ability to use the language to get things done. The purpose of the Australian framework is to assist learners at school become more successful readers and writers of academic, school and workplace texts (Hyon, 1996). Their goal is to help primary and secondary school learners ‘ participate effectively in the school curriculum and the broader community’ (Callaghan 1991: 72). Their focus is on learners learning to write in English as a second language and the challenges these learners might experience when writing and learning in a language that is not their mother tongue. Therefore they argue for explicit teaching through a cycle that ‘ models and makes explicit the dominant forms of writing or text types valued in schools’ (Gibbons, 2002: 52). Writing in an American context of disadvantaged students, Delpit (1998) strongly argues for the teaching of the genres of power, stating that if a learner is not already part of the culture of power, explicitly teaching the rules of this culture through genre makes access easier. Consequently, research on genre theory has been both politically and pedagogically motivated: a pedagogical project motivated by the political project of allowing equal access to social, economic and political benefits of Australian society through an explicit and visible literacy curriculum (Kress, 1993). As a result, Australia is often referred to as the place in which practitioners have been most successful in applying genre theory and research to pedagogy (Johns, 2002). My intention is to explore the use of SFL

genre-based teaching as an alternative approach to teaching writing in grade six at a multilingual primary school. However, approaches to research and pedagogy of SFL have not been accepted without critiques. These critiques originate from advocates of progressive literacy approaches (Lankshear & Knobel, 2000) and also from within genre camps practicing genre theory from different theoretical understandings. In the next section, I provide details of these critiques and a personal response to each critique. 2. 4 Critiques of genre of SFL There have been many critiques of SFL genre-based approaches, as mentioned in the previous section. Here I discuss three of the most telling: liberal progressive critiques, socio-cultural practice theorist critiques, and critical discourse analysts' critiques about teaching the genres of power. The liberal progressivists claim that genre literacy entails a revival of transmission pedagogy. It seems to mean learning formal ' language facts' again. It is sometimes claimed that genre literacy teaching is founded on a pedagogy that will lead us back to the bad old days of authoritarian classrooms where some students found the authority congenial and succeeded, while others found the authority uncongenial and failed (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). However, in contrast to transmission approaches which often treated texts in isolation and grammar as separate and external from the text, a genre-based approach views texts as closely linked to social context and uses linguistic analysis to unpack the choices that are made for social purposes. Rather than unthinkingly replicating rules, learners are assisted towards conscious control and can be encouraged to exercise creativity and flexibility on an informed basis. The ' authority' provided acts as a scaffold and is gradually withdrawn, thus shifting responsibility towards

the learner. A second major critique has been raised by social practice theorists such as Lave and Wenger (1991) whose research focus is from a situated learning perspective. These advocates of situated learning view genres as too complex and diverse to be detached from their original contexts and taught in a non-natural milieu such as the classroom context. Also, they argue that learning occurs through engaging with authentic real world tasks and that learning to write genres arises from a need in a specific context. Therefore, in authentic settings, writing involves the attainment of larger objectives, which often involve non-linguistic features, and thus the disjuncture between situations of use and situations of learning is unbridgeable. However, although this theory offers a persuasive account of how learning takes place through apprenticeship and mastery roles, especially how an apprentice becomes a fully literate member of a disciplinary work group, it does not propose a clear role for writing teachers in the language classroom (Hyland, 2004). In a SFL genre approach by contrast, the selection of topics and texts can highlight how cultures are portrayed as either negative or positive. It can help learners become aware of how language choices in texts are bound up with social purposes (Lankshear & Knobel, 2000). This awareness is necessary for entry into intellectual communities or social discourses and practices, and can help make learning relevant, appropriate and applicable to the context in and outside of the classroom. It can also include a critical element as it provides learners with a linguistic framework to analyse and critique texts. A final important critique is that teaching of the genres of power will not automatically lead to social and economic access in a fundamentally unequal

society (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). While this may be true, the consequences of not teaching these genres could lead to English second language speakers' from poor working class backgrounds being disadvantaged in perpetuity. The discourses of scientists, doctors and lawyers, for example, are often incomprehensible and obscure, denying access to many, particularly second English language speakers and those not familiar with the conventions of their associated genres. These social exclusions are marked linguistically (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). Therefore, SFL genre theorists' notion of genres as textual interventions could provide access and equity to those not familiar with a particular discourse in society. Consequently, genre teaching in this framework has the intention of empowering disadvantaged and underprivileged students by providing them with the linguistic resources to critically analyse and become more proficient writers of different text types, thus potentially providing access to the socio-economic and political domains currently denied to many learners at schools. A related point is that a genre-based approach runs the risk of reproducing the status quo (Luke, 1996). However, a genre approach should be able to include issues of inequality and power relations in the teaching context by adopting a critical education theoretical perspective, which strives to unveil existing deep-rooted ideologies within society with the intention of empowering students to question and change the status quo. If teachers are made aware of such aspects in texts, how meaning is constructed and negotiated in texts, and how this shapes our thinking about the world, they might be able to raise awareness and consciousness about power inequalities through the development of effective critical literacy skills in

English additional language classes. At the same time, ‘ functional ways of talking and thinking about language facilitate critical analysis’ (Hyland, 2004: 42). As a result, it may assist learners to distinguish texts as constructs that can be debated in relatively accurate and explicit ways, thus becoming aware that texts could be analysed, evaluated, critiqued, deconstructed and reconstructed. Such awareness is crucial for further education or academic studies at higher institutions of learning. Thus a genre-based approach to teaching writing might bridge the gap between writing required at school and the academic writing skills essential for undergraduate studies. Having sketched the broad parameters of the three main approaches to genre and how genre approaches have developed in different ways and with different underlying goals, I now focus in greater detail on the Australian Framework. This approach appears to offer the greatest scope for South African contexts given its intention to provide equity and access to social and economic spheres in society, which is also a central principle of the South African Constitution (1994) and C2005. Furthermore, the focus on English second language learning contexts and aboriginal learners from disadvantaged, poor working class communities is similar to learners from disadvantaged communities who learn mostly through a medium of instruction which is not their home language. Another important reason for focusing on this approach is that this genre-based approach could inform the teaching of writing and future teacher training frameworks that aim to improve the literacy outcomes of learners in the intermediate phase in South African contexts. 2. 5 A Closer look at The Australian Framework It was Michael Halliday (1975) a professor of Linguistics at the University of Sydney, who

was the founding father of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and provided the catalyst for the development of genre theory in Australia (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). Halliday and his theory of systemic functional linguistics introduced the theme of ‘ learning language, learning through language, learning about language’ (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993: 231). As discussed above, SFL focuses on language and how it functions or is used in cultural and situational contexts and argues that language can be described or realised by means of a framework comprising cultural context, situational context and linguistic features. The Australian framework is therefore rooted in a text-context model of language (Lankshear &Knobel, 2000; Gibbons 2002; Derewianka 2003). Furthermore, SFL interprets the context of situation and the context of culture as two interrelated domains (Christie & Unsworth 2000). The context of situation is the immediate context in which language is used. However this context of situation can vary in different cultures and as such it is culture-specific. This situational context is described in three main categories of semantic resources, field, mode and tenor, and collectively this is referred to as the register of a text (Lankshear & Knobel, 2000) The field describes the subject-matter of the social activity, its content or topic; tenor focuses on the nature of the relationships among the people involved; mode refers to ‘ medium and role of language in the situation’ (Martin, 1997: 10) Therefore, it is the register (field, tenor and mode) which influences how language is used because it provides the social purpose of the text through answering ‘ what is going on, who is taking part, the role language is playing’ (Martin & Rothery, 1993: 144). Hence, SFL explores the relationship between language and its social functions. The earliest work on applying this

framework to education was carried out by Martin and two of his students Rothery and Christie who started a research project in 1978 using the field, tenor and mode framework to analyse writing produced in schools (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Kress, 1993). In 1980 Martin and Rothery examined student writing that had been collected over numerous years (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). Their findings indicated that most school valued texts were short and limited to a few genres for example, labelling, observation, reports, recounts and narratives, with observations and recounts being the dominant genres (pg 233). Furthermore, they found that the texts produced in textbooks lacked development, even within story genres, were extremely gendered, and irrelevant to the needs of the community or secondary schools. They then developed the hypothesis that genres at schools should be explicitly taught by teachers. This research resulted in the development of a curriculum cycle providing scaffolding and explicit teaching through setting the field, deconstructing a text, modelling writing, jointly constructing a new text and culminating with individual writing (Macken-Horarik, 1998; Feez; 2002; Paltridge, 2004; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Martin& Francis, 1984). Building field and setting context is critical to each phase of the cycle and this refers to a range of activities which build up content for the genre and knowledge about the contexts in which it is deployed (Martin & Rose, 2000). In this way, learners move from everyday, common sense knowledge towards technical, specialist subject knowledge, and are gradually inducted into the discourse and field knowledge of school subjects. As a result, this approach can strengthen and promote learning language and about language across the curriculum. The logic of the curriculum cycle is based on

the notion of ‘ scaffolding’. Hammond (2000) and Gibbons (2002) refer to this as ‘ scaffolding language’ based on Vygotsky’s (1976) zone of proximal development (Derewianka, 2003). In this process the teacher takes a more direct role in the initial phase, with the learner in the role of apprentice. As the learner develops greater control of the genre, the teacher gradually withdraws support and encourages learner independence (Derewianka, 2003). Therefore, genre literacy has the intention to reinstate the teacher as professional, as expert on language, whose role in the classroom should be authoritative but not authoritarian as opposed to the teacher as facilitator in more progressive teaching models (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). As a result, the curriculum cycle and its scaffolding approach could be valuable in activating the schemata of English second language learners as opposed to a context where English teaching approaches are traditional and narrow. Such approaches could have negative educational impacts on disadvantaged learners. 2. 6 The Disadvantaged Schools Programme Luke and Kale (1989: 127) argue that monolingual and monocultural practices permeated official language and education planning in Australia prior 1970. Similar to South African apartheid policies, Australia practiced a ‘ White Australian Policy’ (Luke & Kale, 1989: 127). However, in the early 1970s the Australian government recognised that aboriginals and islander learners should be integrated into mainstream schools (Luke & Kale, 1989). As a result, the need to acknowledge Aboriginal and migrant languages became a priority in educational policies. Furthermore, Diane Russell (2002) states that up to 1967 very few Aboriginal students in South Australia entered secondary school unless they were wards of the state and, given this history of

disadvantage, much of the literature about the education of Aboriginal students since then refers to the poor retention and attainment rate of Aboriginal students compared to their non-Aboriginal peers. As a result, the Disadvantaged Schools Programme (DSP), an initiative of the Interim Committee of the Schools Commission (1973), was initiated to reduce the effects of poverty on learners at school (McKenzie, 1990) and participation was based on the social and economic conditions of the community from which the school draws its learners. Thus the intention of the DSP was to improve the learning outcomes of learners from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds in Australia to increase their life choices (Randell, 1979). Therefore, a fundamental aim of the DSP was to equip disadvantaged learners with power, through education, to enter and share fully in the benefits of society as a matter of social justice. Furthermore, a majority of Aboriginal people grow up in homes where Standard Australian English is at most a second dialect, sometimes first encountered on the first day of school. Accordingly, accepting the language children bring to school and using that to build competence in Standard Australian English is the ‘ key to improving the performance of Aboriginal students’ (www. daretolead. edu. au). Genre theorists have been concerned with equitable outcomes, thus discourses of generation, ethnicity and class have been a preoccupation. These theorists argued that progressive pedagogies were marginalising working-class Aborigine and other disadvantaged learners (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). For Burns (1990) progressive curriculum approaches led to a confusing array of approaches and methodologies and failed to provide a well-formulated theory of language. Further, Cope (1989) argued that an ‘

authoritative' pedagogy for the 1990s was needed to replace the progressive curriculum of the mid-1970s as this had neglected to make explicit to learners the knowledge they need to gain to access socially powerful forms of language. Due to the above kinds of debates in the SFL genre theory camp, a literacy consultant, Mike Callaghan, working with the DSP in Sydney, decided that SFL might be a viable theory and this resulted in the Language and Social Power Project. Teachers who were disillusioned with progressive teaching methods became eagerly involved in this project (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). Additionally, Cope and Kalantzis (1993) report that teachers discovered that genre theory did not dismantle all the progressive language approaches; in fact, it enhanced progressive language teaching and highlighted that there is a social purpose in writing. This, however, meant teachers' knowledge and skills about language in social contexts had to be developed through extensive in-service training and in-class support 2. 7 Research originating from the Disadvantaged Schools Programme Scholars like Martin and Rothery (1986) began to analyse texts using SFL theory. This took the form of linguistic analysis with each text being deconstructed into its structural features, or schematic phases, and then being analysed for its typical language features. Most of these projects aimed to link theory and practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). As a result, teachers gained knowledge and an ability to critically analyse the texts that they used in practice. Research identified factual genres such as reports, expositions, discussions, recounts, explanations, and procedures, which could be used in classrooms. Furthermore, as this project progressed, the data were translated into classroom practice using a pedagogical model developed by project

members that resulted in a major breakthrough for the classroom, that is, the curriculum cycle or the teaching and learning cycle (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988). The National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research was commissioned in 1990 to evaluate the effectiveness of projects like the Language and Social Power Project and was asked to report on improvements in learner writing as well as on the impact of genre pedagogy on teachers' knowledge of the social function of language and their ability to assess the effectiveness of learners' writing (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). The findings of the report highlighted an ' overwhelmingly' positive response from participating teachers (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). Teachers praised the in-service and the in-class support of the demonstration lessons as well as the backup support material, both printed and audio-visual. Furthermore, in terms of evaluating the learners' written texts, it was found that learners from participating schools wrote a broader range of genres, that these included more factual texts, and that these learners had a higher success rate than learners from non-participating schools (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). 2. 9 SFL and the School Writing Curriculum Kress (1994) states that until recently ' writing has been regarded as an alternative medium of language, giving permanence to utterances' (pg 7) and attention on writing was thus focussed on mechanical aspects. However, increasing evidence indicates that speech and writing have distinct grammatical and syntactic organisation, and further that writing and speaking occur in distinct social settings which have significant effects on the syntactic and textual structures of speech and writing (Kress, 1993). Literacy in many Western schools presupposes that learners have developed spoken language skills in the

relevant language but this may not be the case for second language learners (Gibbons, 2004). As a result, these learners would have even more to learn about writing because learners initially use their knowledge about spoken language to bridge the divide between speaking and writing (Kress 1994). The school writing curriculum and its teachers are then powerful in developing or hindering the writing development of learners in primary school. As discussed above, writing curricula drawing from progressive theories which stress the process of writing over content, see the teacher as a facilitator of writing, and no focus on linguistic rules for speaking or writing could result in English second language learners being denied access to development as writers. Therefore, writing curricula which focus on the teaching of genre are potentially powerful in that they could provide ‘ generic power’ to learners. ‘ Power to use, interpret, exploit and innovate generic forms is the function of generic knowledge which is accessible only to members of disciplinary communities’ (Bhatia, 2003: 67). Accordingly, the teaching of SFL genre approaches and their linguistic frameworks could provide a scaffold for English second language learners to be inducted into social contexts, purposes and linguistic features of both spoken and written dominant discourses. Such approaches might lead towards opportunities for equity and access for non-native speakers of English. A writing curriculum rooted in genre theory would have implications for the classroom and the next section discusses some of these implications for pedagogy. 2. 9. 1 SFL Genre in the classroom The teaching of genre in the classroom requires explicit teaching of language at text level and of the interdependence of language use and context (Paltridge, 2004). Halliday and Hasan (1985) state

that SFL deals with language in context: ‘ The context of situation, the context in which the text unfolds, is encapsulated in the text, not in a kind of piecemeal fashion, not in the other extreme in a mechanical way, but through a systemic relationship between the social environment on the hand, and the functional organisation of language on the other. If we treat both text and context as semiotic phenomena, as modes of meaning, so to speak, we can get from one to the other in a revealing way.’ (Pgs 11-12) Such an approach implies that language teachers in primary and secondary schools should not only have English subject knowledge but also understand and have knowledge of linguistically informed genre-based literacy pedagogy. 2. 10 Conclusion This chapter has provided an overview of the three main schools of thought in relation to genre and then focused in more detail on the theoretical perspective which seems to offer the most productive insights for the South African context, Systemic Functional Linguistics. The next chapter describes the methodology I used to investigate the potential of such an approach in one primary school. Bibliography Adams, C. & Artemeva. N. (2002). Writing Instruction in English for Academic (EAP) classes: Introducing second language learners to the Academic Community. In M. A Johns (ed), Genre in the classroom: Multiple perspectives. Mahwah, New Jersey & London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers (pp. 179-196)) Atkinson, D. 2005. Situated Qualitative Research and Second Language Writing. In P. K. Matsuda & T. Silva (eds), Second Language Writing Research: Perspectives on Process of Knowledge Construction. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers (pp 49-64) Auerbach, E. (1999). The Power of Writing, the Writing of Power. In Focus on

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