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6. GENRE: LANGUAGE, CONTEXT, AND LITERACY[1]

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In the last decade genre approaches have had a considerable impact on the ways we understand discourse and in transforming literacy education in different contexts around the world. This chapter reviews the main directions of recent literature in both these areas, showing how the concept of genre is beginning to offer applied linguists a socially informed theory of language and an authoritative pedagogy grounded in research on texts and contexts. In terms of language description, I describe recent studies which seek to elaborate our understanding of generic integrity and variation, the ways that genres are seen as similar and different in terms of their internal structures and as systems of social processes. This research focuses on the contexts, lexi11 8grammatical features, and rhetorical patterns of genres. In terms of pedagogy, the chapter considers how genre approaches address central issues of language education and critical literacy and the ways that genre is applied in classrooms.

The last decade has seen increasing attention given to the notion of genre and its application in language teaching and learning. This interest has been driven by a dual purpose. The first is a desire to understand the relationship between language and its contexts of use. That is, how individuals use language to orient to and interpret particular communicative situations and the ways these uses change over time. The second is to employ this knowledge in the service of language and literacy education. This second purpose both complements research in New Literacy Studies, which regards literacy as social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996), and encourages us to explore language and pedagogies in ways that move beyond narrowly conceived formal and cognitivist paradigms.

Genre approaches have therefore had a considerable impact on the ways we see language use and on literacy education around the world by developing a socially informed theory of language and an authoritative pedagogy grounded in research of texts and contexts. The purpose of this article is to review some of the recent genre literature in both these areas, although the breadth of this work means

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I can make no claims to completeness. This review therefore covers those areas that seem most interesting and which offer the most for both research and teaching.

Some Background: The Situatedness of Genre Theories

Genres are abstract, socially recognized ways of using language. Genre analysis is based on two central assumptions: that the features of a similar group of texts depend on the social context of their creation and use, and that those features can be described in a way that relates a text to others like it and to the choices and constraints acting on text producers. Language is seen as embedded in (and constitutive of) social realities, since it is through recurrent use and typification of conventionalized forms that individuals develop relationships, establish communities, and get things done. So genre theorists locate participant relationships at the heart of language use and assume that every successful text will display the writer's awareness of its context and the readers which form part of that context. Genres are then, "the effects of the action of individual social agents acting *both* within the bounds of their history and the constraints of particular contexts, *and* with a knowledge of existing generic types" (Kress, 1989, p. 49).

Despite this general agreement on the nature of genre, analysts differ in the emphasis they give to either context or text; whether they focus on the roles of texts in social communities, or the ways that texts are organized to reflect and construct these communities. It is customary to identify three broad schools of genre theory (Hyon, 1996; Johns, in press). While it is possible to overemphasize the differences between what are essentially overlapping approaches, genre theories are themselves highly situated and this is a useful way of distinguishing different conceptions of genre in terms of the research and pedagogies they encourage.

First is the New Rhetoric group, consisting mainly of North Americans working within a rhetorical tradition and influenced by their work in universities and first language composition. This orientation draws on the seminal paper by Miller (1984) and is represented in the work of Bazerman (1988), Freedman and Medway (1994), and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995). Genre is regarded as "a socially standard strategy, embodied in a typical form of discourse, that has evolved for responding to a recurring type of rhetorical situation" (Coe & Freedman, 1998, p. 137). This orientation therefore principally concerns itself with investigating contexts, studying genre "as the motivated, functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation" (Coe, 2002, p. 195). Methodologies tend to be ethnographic, rather than text analytic, with the aim of uncovering something of the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the communities of text users that genres imply and construct. The approach has not tended to address itself to the classroom, generally regarding it as an inauthentic environment lacking the conditions for complex negotiation and multiple audiences. Some recent

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contributions however have suggested pedagogic applications for academic writing (Adam & Artemeva, 2002; Coe, 2002).

A second orientation, based on the theoretical work of Michael Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and known in the United States as the 'Sydney School,' has stressed the importance of the social purposes of genres and of describing the schematic (rhetorical) structures that have evolved to serve these purposes. Genre is seen as a staged, goal-oriented social process (Martin, 1992), emphasizing the purposeful, interactive, and sequential character of different genres and the ways that language is systematically linked to context. Work in this area has sought to explicate the distinctive stages, or moves, of genres together with the patterns of lexical, grammatical, and cohesive choices which "construct the function of the stages of the genres" (Rothery, 1996, p. 93). Significant contributions to this approach are Cope and Kalantzis (1993), Martin (1992, 1997), and Christie and Martin (1997). This approach is motivated by a commitment to language and literacy education, particularly in the context of schools and adult migrant programs (see Feez, 2001). A rich and sophisticated pedagogy has developed to provide the historically disadvantaged with access to the cultural capital of socially valued genres through an explicit grammar of linguistic choices.

The final perspective, generally referred to as the ESP approach, steers between these two views. Like the New Rhetoricians, it employs Bakhtinian notions of intertextuality and dialogism, but it also draws heavily on Systemic Functional understandings of text structure and, more sparingly, on Vygotskian principles of pedagogy. In fact, with its emphasis on communicative purpose and the formal properties of texts, the ESP approach might be seen as an application of SFL (Bloor, 1998), although it lacks a systematic model of language and does not make extensive use of a stratified, metafunctional grammar. Genre here comprises a class of structured communicative events employed by specific discourse communities whose members share broad communicative purposes (Swales, 1990). These purposes are the rationale of a genre and help to shape the ways it is structured and the choices of content and style it makes available. Those working in this tradition, such as Swales (1990, 1993), Bhatia (1993, 1999), and Johns (1997), like the Australians, are motivated by pedagogical applications. Much of their activity has thus focused on translating research findings into materials for both L1 and L2 tertiary students and professionals (Master, 2000; Swales & Feak, 1994, 2000).

Uniting these approaches is a common attempt to describe and explain regularities of purpose, form, and situated social action. For the Australian and ESP schools, there is an additional determination to render these understandings usable for teachers. In the following sections I will briefly review some of the directions that this work has taken in the last five years.

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Generic Integrity: Moves and Beyond

Genres are rhetorical actions that we draw on to respond to perceived repeated situations; we recognize certain patterns of language/meaning choices as representing effective ways of getting things done in familiar contexts. As a result, one fruitful line of research has been to explore the lexico-grammatical and discursive patterns of particular genres to identify their recognizable structural identity, or what Bhatia (1999, p. 22) calls "generic integrity." Analyzing this kind of patterning is the staple of much ESP and SFL research, and has yielded useful information about the ways texts are constructed and the rhetorical contexts in which they are used, as well as providing valuable input for genre-based teaching.

Some of this research has followed the move analysis work pioneered by Bhatia (1993), Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) and, most famously, Swales's (1990) description of the research article introduction. Recent work has focused on academic genres such as grant proposals (Connor, 2000; Connor & Mauranen, 1999), sections of the research article (Dubois, 1997; Holmes, 1997), and abstracts (Hyland, 2000). Studies have also explored business genres such as direct mail letters (Upton, 2001), application letters (Henry & Roseberry, 2001), and business faxes (Akar & Louhiala-Salminen, 1999). Move analyses have also interested those working within an SFL framework, and recent work here has described various macro-genres such as *narrative, recount, argument*, and *report,* both in school and university contexts, in terms of their *stages* (or rhetorical structures) and the constraints on typical move sequences (Butt, Fahey, Feez, Spinks, & Yallop, 2000; Lock & Lockhart, 1999).

While analyzing schematic structures has proved an invaluable way of looking at texts, analysts are increasingly aware of the dangers of oversimplifying by assuming blocks of texts to be mono-functional and ignoring writers' complex purposes and "private intentions" (Bhatia, 1999). There is also the problem raised by Crookes (1986) many years ago, of validating analyses to ensure they are not simply products of the analyst's intuitions. Move shifts are, of course, always motivated outside the text as writers respond to their social context, but analysts have not always been convincingly able to identify the ways these shifts are explicitly signalled by lexico-grammatical patterning.

Increasingly, then, mainstream research has moved away from simple constituency representations of genre staging to examine clusters of register, style, lexis, and other rhetorical features which might distinguish particular genres. An important feature of much recent work has been a growing interest in the interpersonal dimensions of academic and technical writing. This research has sought to reveal how persuasion in various genres is not only accomplished through the representation of ideas, but also by the construction of an appropriate

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authorial self and the negotiation of accepted participant relationships. Once again, academic articles have attracted considerable attention in this regard, with recent work looking at, for example, imperatives (Swales, Ahmad, Chang, Chavez, Dressen, & Seymour, 1998), personal pronouns (Kuo, 1999), and hedges (Hyland, 1998). This work has also addressed theme choices in engineering reports (McKenna, 1997), grammatical sentence types in e-mail memos (Price, 1997), mitigation in teacher written feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2001), and reader-oriented features of functional healthcare texts such as medicine-bottle labels (Wright, 1999).

One important feature of this research has been the adoption of more varied and triangulated methodologies. Recent work has increasingly extended analyses beyond the page to the sites where relationships, and the rules which order them, can facilitate and constrain composing (Gollin, 1999), and to the communities in which texts will be used and judged (Hyland, 2000). Thus research has explored ethnographic case studies (Prior, 1995), reader responses (Locker, 1999), group composition and revising (Pogner, 1999), and interviews with insider informants (Hyland, 2000). Such approaches promise to infuse text analyses with greater validity and to offer richer understandings about the production and use of genres in different contexts.

Genre theorists have also recently begun to turn their attention to longer and more complexly structured genres. Addressing Stubbs's (1996) criticism that analysts have largely concentrated on conveniently short texts, writers have explored texts such as Stephen Jay Gould's popular science books (Fuller, 1998), school textbooks (Coffin, 1997; Veel, 1998), and Ph.D. dissertations (Bunton, 1999). Bunton, for instance, shows how writers use metatextual signals to orient and guide their readers through Ph.D. theses, employing devices which vary in terms of their scope and distance to structure texts which may be as long as 500 pages.

Eggins and Slade's (1997) *Analysing casual conversation* is also interesting in this regard, not only because of the relative paucity of work on spoken genres, but because of the uncertain status of conversation as a genre (e.g., Swales, 1990). Drawing on the analytical tools of both SFL and Conversation Analysis, Eggins and Slade argue that casual conversations are used to negotiate social identity and interpersonal relationships, and that they have clear structures beyond simple openings, closings, and adjacency, giving examples of *narrative, anecdote, recount,* and *opinion* as text types within conversational interactions. Further insights into spoken genres are likely to emerge when analyses of data such as that held in the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus, at the Universities of Warwick and Reading, and the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (http://www.hti.umich.edu/micase/) become available.

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Finally in this section, research has also begun to explore the complex interactions between verbal and nonverbal features of texts, building on the seminal work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). Much of this work has explored text-visual interrelations in academic genres, particularly as visual elements in science textbooks and papers have increased in both size and importance over the years (e.g., Bazerman, 1988; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). Myers (1997), for example, looks at the ways textbook diagrams refer and express certainty while Miller (1998) uses an SFL analysis to show the genre variation of visual elements in *Science* and *Newsweek*; noting how in one they function as argument and in the other as explanation. Lemke (1998) examines a number of science genres to show how scientific communication works by the "joint co-deployment" of two or more semiotic modalities. Characterizing science writing as primitive forms of hypertext, where readers typically jump between text, diagrams, and tables, he argues that "joint visual-verbal thematic formation" provides the basis for contextualizing and understanding multimedia texts.

Generic Resources and Functional Variation

All theories of genre rest on notions that groups of texts are similar or different, that texts can be classified as one genre or another. In addition to the research on specific genres, there is a growing body of work which examines language variation *across* genres and the resources available for creating meanings in a culture. This research is valuable in that it is beginning to reveal how the patterns of rhetorical features of specific genres construe different contexts. That is, how genres reflect the different personal and institutional purposes of writers, the different assumptions they make about their audiences, and the different kinds of interactions they create with their readers.

Examples of this research include Burgess's (2000) comparison of the rhetorical move structures of online and print academic book reviews in linguistics, Ferguson's (2001) examination of the ways conditionals are used across different genres of medical discourse, and Hyland's studies of the different frequency and purposes of metadiscourse in different sections of company annual reports (1998) and between textbooks and research papers (Hyland, 1999b). These last two analyses illustrate how metadiscourse comprises a range of linguistic resources for constructing an appropriately authoritative and persuasive rhetorical persona, allowing writers in different genres to convey their personality, credibility, reader sensitivity, and evaluation of propositional matter.

Bondi's (1999) monograph length study of a variety of key genres from economics is a good example of what detailed analyses of genre variation can tell us about similarities and differences in the contexts created by discourse. Using functional and rhetorical analyses, Bondi explores the dialogic features of academic argument in both the expert-expert discourses of research papers and abstracting

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journals and the 'dissemination' genres of textbooks and newspaper articles. Her analyses show how argument is always dialogic, "not only because it presupposes the active role of an addressee, but because it involves a plurality of voices" (p. 5). Focusing on a range of features such as argument forms, voice, patterns of quantifiers, the use of hypotheticality and analogy, theme choices, and speech act verbs, the author suggests some of the ways that writers construct both expert and novice audiences and shows how this construction offers a representation of the discipline of economics.

The social dependency of genre practices can also be clearly seen in their variability across time. Historically, research papers looked much like the argument forms of theology and philosophy until the mid-17th century when Boyle and his colleagues laid down verification procedures which encouraged a rhetoric which gave primacy to the constructive role of the observer. In their notable studies of the evolution of scientific discourse, both Valle (1999) and Atkinson (1999) employ detailed textual analyses to show how changing social conditions, particularly the growing professionalism and specialization of academic disciplines, have gradually transformed textual practices. Research genres have become less affectively and 'narratively' focused and more 'informational' and abstract. They have increasingly displayed an emphasis on discussion and the embedding of texts in codified frames of knowledge at the expense of descriptions of experiments and results. Although they focus on the progressively greater anchoring of research papers in discourse communities, these studies also clearly demonstrate the wider importance of understanding genres as dynamic and socially situated.

From the SFL perspective, the relationship between language and context is also seen in the varied uses to which language is put, with genres being particular configurations of field (what is going on), tenor (who is involved), and mode (what the role of language is). Genres are patterns of discourse for expressing meanings in context, and the basic components of meaning, or macro-functions, are called ideational, interpersonal, and textual (see Martin, this volume). Researchers have therefore explored the linguistic resources for expressing these macrofunctions, modeling the ways that writers and speakers represent the world, interact with each other, and control textual flow, that can be used in different genres.

One example of this work is Halliday's (1998) continuing interest in *grammatical metaphor* in physics writing. This explores how scientists reconstrue human experience by presenting processes as things, packaging complex phenomena as a single element of clause structure. Grammatical metaphor freezes an event, such as *atoms bond rapidly,* and repackages it as an object, *Rapid atom bonding*. Adverbs become adjectives, processes become nouns, and nouns become adjectival, creating a noun phrase. Turning processes into objects in this way embodies scientific epistemologies that seek to show relationships between entities.

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Grammatical metaphor is also central to physics because it allows writers to thematize processes in order to say something about them and to manage the information flow of a text more effectively. But while grammatical metaphor has developed with modern science, the pressure to organize ever more, and more technical, information into written texts has also seen its emergence in many contemporary bureaucratic and institutional genres (Iedema, 1997; Rose, 1998).

In addition to this focus on ideational resources, writers have also recently started to explore interpersonal uses of language, particularly evaluative language (Coffin, 1997; Hunston & Thompson, 2001). Evaluation refers to a speaker/writer's attitudes and values, often termed 'stance,' 'affect,' or 'appraisal,' and it is important both as a system of organizing discourse and a means by which individuals express their value systems and those of their communities. Building on his earlier work, Martin (2001) characterises the resources of appraisal as affect (for expressing emotion), judgment (evaluating behavior in ethical terms), and appreciation (for valuing objects aesthetically), with additional resources for amplification and engagement. The appraisal system is often used in tandem with the separate system of involvement, including naming, slang, technical, or taboo terms, etc., which is designed to negotiate solidarity. Clearly these kinds of typologies can reveal patternings of interpersonal meanings across genres, and work has already begun to show how these resources work in fictional narrative (Martin, 1997), biography (Martin, 2000), and school history textbooks (Coffin, 1997).

Generic Variation and Cultural Contexts

While analysts regard genre as ensuring a degree of inherent rhetorical stability, they also recognize that it implies variability. A single genre can differ in relation to culture, historical period, social community, and communicative setting because users are always aware of their contexts and draw on other texts they are familiar with. The notion of generic integrity is therefore seen in terms of constraints on allowable configurations rather than the identical reproduction of features. Swales's (1990) notion of *prototypes* and Hasan's (1989) concept of *generic structure potential* are useful here, suggesting that texts spread along a continuum of approximation to core genre examples with varying options and restrictions operating in particular cases. Our ability to recognize the resemblance of any text to a genre prototype is thus a consequence of exposure to these genres and our experience of using them in specific contexts. In this section I will look at some of the work which reveals this variation.

Although analyses of English language texts dominate the literature, a flourishing field of research has begun to address the ways that preferred patterns of exposition, argument, and interaction differ across cultures and languages (see Connor, 1996, in press). Recent research includes comparisons of move structures

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of sales letters in English and Chinese (Zhu, 2000), letters of recommendation by writers in Germany, Eastern Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Precht, 1998), and the rhetorical choices of the same news stories in the Chinese and English language press in Hong Kong (Scollon, 2000). Contrastive rhetoric has lately been criticized for often characterizing groups as static and homogenous (Spack, 1997), for dichotomizing the rhetorical practices of East and West (Kubota, 1999), and for the ideological implication that all English users should conform to Anglo-American genre patterns (Kachru, 1999). However, there is little doubt that cultural contexts influence writing in important ways, and to ignore these differences is to ignore the pluricentricity of genre construction and perhaps the chance to use such knowledge to develop cross-cultural understandings and teaching materials.

In addition to the ways that national or linguistic cultures influence writing, research in ESP has increasingly begun to explore the impact of corporate, institutional, and disciplinary cultures on genres. Berkenkotter and Huckin once famously observed that "genre conventions signal a discourse community's norms, epistemology, ideology, and social ontology" (1995, p. 21), and research into the relationships among textual form, social action, and cultural expectations has revealed the inherently social nature of genres and their power to shape both our individual perceptions and social institutions. Recent work here includes the edited collections by Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (1999a) and Gunnarson, Linell, and Nordberg (1997) on professional genres, and by Samraj (2000) and Hyland (1998, 1999b, 2000, 2001) on academic disciplines. This research suggests that argument, content, structure, and interactions are community defined and that genres are often the means by which institutions are constructed and maintained. It shows that by focusing on the distinctive rhetorical practices of different communities, we can more clearly see how language is used and how the social, cultural, and epistemological characteristics of different disciplines and professions are made real.

Clearly this work draws on the rather contested, yet powerful, metaphor of *discourse community* to join writers, texts, and readers in a particular discursive space. Often criticized as altogether too structuralist, static, abstract, and deterministic, the notion of discourse community nevertheless foregrounds the socially situated nature of genre and helps illuminate something of what writers and readers bring to a text, implying a certain degree of intercommunity diversity and a degree of intra-community homogeneity in generic forms. For the most part, recent research has sought to capture the explanatory and predictive authority of the concept without framing communities as sociological utopias of shared and agreed upon values and conventions. Instead we find attempts to re-evaluate, and rehabilitate, the idea of discourse community, replacing the idea of an overarching force that determines behavior, with that of systems in which multiple beliefs and

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practices overlap and intersect (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999b; Hyland, 2000; Swales, 1998).

Interdiscursivity, Genre Mixing, and Genre Sets

While early genre studies may have set out to identify genre-specific language, the use of corpora has shown this to be a more complex task than first realized (e.g. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999). The research sketched above therefore seeks to characterize and show relationships among particular genres rather than define their immanent properties. In this regard genre analysis has been considerably influenced by the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity (Bakhtin, 1986) and the processes by which texts and events are mediated through relationships with other texts. Sometimes these relationships involve the mixing of genres in ways that blur clear distinctions, perhaps to the extent that new genres become recognized in a community's nomenclature (e.g., *infotainment, advertorial,* and *docudrama*).

The notion of genre mixing has been widely discussed by Bhatia (1997). He notes that while a genre is identified by reference to the typical communicative purpose that it tends to enact, many professional genres serve a variety of purposes associated with novel and changing contexts. Like Fairclough (1995), Bhatia sees the increasing intrusion of promotional elements into information-giving genres as diverse as news editorials, academic book introductions, legal documents, and bureaucratic reports. In addition, however, he also identifies a tendency of professional genres to mix not only a variety of communicative purposes, but also private intentions within the context of socially recognized communicative contexts (Bhatia, 1997).

However, while genres are dynamic and subject to manipulation (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995), genres typically respond significantly to contextual changes only over relatively long periods. How then can we determine the degree of flexibility that is possible within generic constraints? The extent to which we can identify particular features as 'borrowing' from other genres is uncertain because the notion of 'mixing' presupposes the possibility of 'pure' and independent generic forms. It assumes that academic introductions, for instance, were once neutral informational texts that became infected with persuasive or promotional features. To describe certain genres as hybrid, then, we need to establish what an actual 'homogenous' text looks like and come up with a model of how mixing is accomplished (Hyland, 2000). This is an important area that is only likely to be clarified when we have more research evidence to sharpen our theories about genre variation and change.

The Systemic writers view this issue rather differently, preferring to look at genre features in terms of the co-occurrence of linguistic patterns which relate

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them to their contexts, rather than to vague notions of 'promotional' or 'informational' elements. One approach to genre blends is to distinguish the categories of *genre* and *text-type* (Paltridge, 2002), enabling a genre to include more than one 'text type.' Thus rhetorical components can combine serially rather than mix together so that an editorial might be composed of an exposition, a discussion, and a rebuttal. Equally, more than one genre may share the same text type, allowing us to see how scientific lab reports, instruction manuals, recipes, and directions for self-assembly furniture all consist of a sequence of commands optionally prefaced by a list of ingredients or apparatus (Rose, 1998).

Mainstream SFL does not make a theoretical distinction between genre and text type, although political debates in Australia have led to the latter term being used in teacher education, instructional materials, syllabus documents, and so forth. Instead, Martin (1995) has proposed the term *macro genre* for texts which combine more fundamental *elemental genres* such as recounts, narratives, explanations, and so on. He further suggests (Martin, 1997) a number of complex structuring principles to describe how interpersonal, ideational, and textual features can range over an entire text. These he calls *partitioning*, where the text unfolds segmentally in various ways, typically through layout, headings, etc.; *staging*, where layers of theme and new elements help scaffold a text; and *phasing*, whereby a text is organized with more or less abrupt transitions (Martin & Rose, in press).

There is, then, clearly enormous potential for internal heterogeneity and feature-blending of genres which raises important issues of unity and identity. This obviously forces us to examine how we see and use genres and suggests that our understanding of discourse is itself socially constructed by the ways we see and act in the world. Genres help unite the social and the cognitive because they are central to how we understand, construct, and reproduce our social realities. But while we need a shared sense of genre to accomplish understanding, genre research increasingly shows that we do not need to assume that genres are fixed, monolithic, discrete, and unchanging.

Related to this growing interest in the ways texts are produced and connected to other texts is the concept of 'genre sets' or 'systems,' originally discussed by Devitt (1991) and Bazerman (1994). While this concept has yet to be fully explored and elaborated, it is clear that genre sets may be an important way of conceptualizing social contexts and understanding the ways texts cluster to constitute particular social and cultural practices. Genres may be networked in a constrained linear sequence, for example, as in the case of those contributing to a formal job offer (Paltridge, in press), or the progress of an academic paper from submission to publication. Alternatively, they may more loosely cohere as a 'repertoire' of options in a particular context, such as the choice of a formal letter, a brief e-mail, or a social chat as a means of finding some information (Swales,

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2000), each mode selection requiring different genre options. Systemists talk here of 'genre agnation' (Martin, 1997) and seek to model systems of genres through a topological perspective which locates texts on a cline of functional similarity and difference. These systems can then be used to identify learner pathways for teaching about texts and provide students with a means of making sense of non-prototypical cases.

Equally, the notion of genre sets and systems is likely to play an increasingly important role in the ways we understand and study connections between the structural properties of institutions and individual communicative actions. Further research here will not only reveal how genres evolve, but perhaps reveal more about how disciplines and professions are organized and orchestrated through their systems of genres. The implications of this for teaching also need to be elaborated, but there would seem to be obvious advantages in describing the systems of genres relevant to our students (Christie & Martin, 1997, Paltridge, 1995).

Genre, Literacies, and Ideology

A central principle of genre theory is that genres are ideological. This is true in both the sense that no texts are free of the values and beliefs of their users and the sense that some genres are more dominant and hegemonic within a community. Genres are systems of meaning which help construct the social realities within which we live, and so this advantages those who have access and control of valued genres and disadvantages others who do not. Conceptions of genre thus have a close affinity with current work in literacy studies. They reinforce the view that all uses of written language are socially situated and indicative of broader social practices (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000), and bring an important text-analytic dimension to literacy studies.

The New Rhetoric perspective, with its emphasis on the socially constructed nature of genre and on unpacking the complex relations between texts and contexts, provides important insights and support for ideological views of genre. Research here has helped to reveal the social, cultural, ideological, and political foundations of texts; the ways they evolve and change in response to their contexts; and how this also works to reshape those contexts (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Coe, 2002). It thus opens up the possibility of challenge and resistance. But while this perspective underlines the position that literacy is not the single set of technical skills or a monolithic competence it is often perceived to be, this orientation has not directly engaged with the central issues of ideology and literacy education. These issues include the most effective ways of providing students with both access to the powerful discourses and genres of particular communities and the means to critique these textual and cultural practices.

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The goals of Australian and ESP genre pedagogies, however, have been to intervene in the process of literacy development, providing students with an explicit knowledge of relevant genres so they can act effectively in their target contexts. The teaching of key genres is seen as a means of helping learners gain access to ways of communicating that have accrued cultural capital in particular communities. In ESP this represents demystification and control of the academic and professional genres that will enhance or determine learners' career opportunities; in Australia it constitutes access to the complete range of life choices for marginalized social groups (Feez, 2001; Macken-Horarik, 2002; Martin, 2000). The central notion here is that students stand more chance of success in a transparent curriculum which makes the genres of power visible and attainable through explicit induction.

For critical literacy theorists, however, this commitment to a redistribution of literacy resources is not enough (e.g., Benesch, 2001). Providing access to the dominant genres of our culture does nothing to change the power structures that erect and support these prestigious practices, nor to challenge the social inequalities which are maintained through exclusion from them. This, of course, is a charge that could be leveled at most other approaches to literacy—but surprisingly rarely is. U.S. process pedagogies, for instance, have not been noted for their impact on sociopolitical consciousness-raising. Indeed, by failing to provide students with better access to powerful genres, such pedagogies simply perpetuate inequalities. Typically, valued genres are abstract, technical, and metaphorical, increasingly infiltrated by valorized scientific and bureaucratic discourses (Rose, 1998), and sharply differentiated from vernacular genres of the home and neighborhood (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Without the resources to understand these genres, students will continue to find their own writing practices regarded as failed attempts to approximate prestigious forms (Christie, 1996; Johns, 1997; Lea & Street, 1999).

Genre approaches, in fact, seem to offer the most effective means for learners to both access and critique cultural and linguistic resources (Hammond & Macken-Horarik, 1999). The provision of a rhetorical understanding of texts and a metalanguage to analyze them allows students to see texts as artifacts that can be explicitly questioned, compared, and deconstructed, so revealing the assumptions and ideologies that underlie them (Fairclough, 1995). Moreover, because genre theories take a social view of language use, they show that literacy varies with context and cannot be distilled down to a set of cognitive or technical abilities. Literacy is revealed as a relative term, representing a wide variety of practices appropriate for particular times, places, participants, and purposes. By focusing on the literacy practices they encounter at school, at work, and at university, genre pedagogies help learners to distinguish these differences and provide them with a means of conceptualizing their varied experiential frameworks. Highlighting variability thus helps undermine a deficit view which sees writing difficulties as

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learner weaknesses and which misrepresents writing as a universal, naturalized, self-evident, and noncontestable way of participating in communities (Barton et al., 2000; Candlin & Plum, 1999).

Genre-based Pedagogies

Genre-based pedagogies rest on the idea that literacies are community resources which are realized in social relationships, rather than the property of individual writers struggling with personal expression. This recognition, however, has been applied in a variety of different ways and educational contexts.

The New Rhetoricians' emphasis on situated learning theories (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996) and their reservations about the value of explicit genre teaching have largely restricted their pedagogic contribution to providing a 'facilitative environment' for engaging with academic or workplace writing. In ESP and SFL pedagogic contexts, however, teachers cannot take learners' motivation for granted, nor rely on them having the appropriate cultural, social, and linguistic background to effectively 'engage' with genres. Instead, pedagogies begin with the assumption that students' current norms and literacy abilities are widely different from those that they need, and that clear, research-grounded, genre descriptions are required to bridge this gap. Learning to write thus involves acquiring an ability to exercise appropriate linguistic choices, both within and beyond the sentence, and teachers can assist this by providing students with an explicit functionally-oriented grammar and models of effective texts.

The SFL pedagogic model typically conceives of the teaching and learning process as a cycle, allowing students different points of entry and enabling teachers to gradually and systematically expand the meanings students can create through increasingly sophisticated understanding of how texts work (e.g., Rothery, 1996). This methodology draws on Vygotsky's notion of a scaffolding to support the learner through an interactive process of contextualization, analysis, discussion, and joint negotiation of texts. An excellent example of this approach can be explored online in the New South Wales, Australia, K-6 English syllabus (http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/k6/k6english.html), and recent elaborations can be found in Feez (2001), Hammond and Macken-Horarik (1999), and Macken-Horarik (2002). In addition, classroom ideas have lately been proposed for modeling theme (Fries, 1997), focusing on genre and text-types (Paltridge, 2002), exploiting genre sets (Paltridge, in press), and establishing text-based syllabuses (Feez, 1998).

ESP has tended to adopt a more eclectic set of pedagogies, united by a commitment to needs analysis, contextual analysis, and genre description (see Johns, 1997, in press). These pedagogies, however, are becoming increasingly explicit and coherent as a number of recent notable contributions have begun to

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spell out procedures, materials, and rationales more clearly and to ground them in both sound theory and solid research. Johns (1997), for instance, recommends teaching genres using methods that require students to reflect on their genre practices, investigate the texts and contexts of their disciplines, and produce mixed-genre portfolios. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) emphasize the importance of cooperative pedagogies, Swales and Lindemann (2002) address themselves to teaching the literature review, and Flowerdew (2000) shows how the problem-solution pattern can be taught in engineering reports. A textbook by Swales and Feak (2000) employs a genre-based approach which has a strong focus on rhetorical consciousness-raising through student analyses of the practices and discourse in their fields. Benesch (2001) takes a critical perspective to reveal how the teaching of genres can be related to the ability to critique them.

Finally, research has also recently turned to evaluating the effectiveness of genre teaching in ESP contexts, with positive benefits noted for both reading (Hyon, 2002; Sengupta, 1999) and writing (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). Some experienced teachers, however, remain cautious and recommend careful planning to avoid prescriptivism and ensure appropriate attention to context (Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998). Doubtless these teachers will be reassured, encouraged, and greatly assisted by two new books. Johns (2002) and Paltridge (in press) offer practical, accessible, and theoretically grounded approaches to genre pedagogy and include many sensible suggestions for classroom practice.

Conclusion

While I have attempted to cover some core areas of current research and practice in genre, I am aware of huge gaps. There is, for example, little here on work in languages other than English, on new electronic genres, on the constraints of composing contexts, or on genre and reading research. These omissions are partly due to limits of space and awareness, but also highlight areas of relative neglect in genre work. Nevertheless, I hope to have shown something of the range, dynamism, and potential of genre theories to research and pedagogy. Genre approaches have their flaws and exclusions, but through their attempts to unite language, purpose, and context, they continue to refine our conceptions of discourse, literacy, and community and to extend the ways we practice applied linguistics.

Notes

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Bargiela-Chiappini, F., & Nickerson, C. (Eds.) (1999a). *Writing business: Genres, media and discourses*. London: Longman.

A wide-ranging, well-written and strongly interdisciplinary collection concerned with the analysis of business genres in commercial settings, particularly those using electronic media.

Christie, F. & Martin, J.R. (Eds.) (1997). *Genre and institutions: Social processes in the workplace and school.* London: Continuum.

An excellent showcase of current SFL work in genre. The collection shows how genres enact social practices and facilitate apprenticeship in a variety of institutional contexts. In so doing it presents a coherent theory of genre in constructing experience.

Hyland, K. (2000) *Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing*. London: Longman.

This book takes a broadly social constructionist perspective focusing on the interactional rhetorical elements of various key academic genres. Using corpus analysis and insider interviews the author attempts to show how genre choices reflect and construct the epistemological and social realities of the disciplines.

Johns, A. (Ed.) (2002). *Genre in the classroom: Multiple perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

An outstanding collection of articles providing a clear and readable understanding of the issues and problems of applying genre-based pedagogies. The papers draw on theory, research, and practical experience to illustrate what each of the three schools of genre can offer teachers.

Paltridge, B. (in press). *Genre and the language learning classroom*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

A well-written, informative, hands-on book for teachers. The book provides both a clear and comprehensive overview of the main theoretical and practical issues of genre-based teaching for newcomers together with sensible and imaginative advice for applying genre in the classroom.

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