Political control, subversion and survival: a grounded theory of the disempowerment of a profession

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CHAPTER 7
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study and the grounded theory of disempowerment of a profession it produced have wide-ranging implications for school education. The grounded theory reveals disparities in the relationships among key components of NSW school education as they strive to enhance teacher professionalism in the teaching of literacy in subject English in NSW secondary schools. The conceptual model developed by the grounded theory provides one account of those disparities as they interact and impact on literacy education in NSW secondary English classes.

It remains to now examine some of the implications this study raises. The implications of the study are organised under the three key areas it originally set out to explore: teacher preservice education, NSW DET policies and teacher practice. However, it is also argued that the conditions conceptualised in the grounded theory have extensive implications for a fourth area – the theories of literacy and language education meant to inform all three of the key areas under investigation and which help to inform the knowledge-base of the profession. Accordingly, then, this chapter explores the implications of the study for the following areas:

- NSW DET policies regarding literacy education
- Teacher preservice education
- Teacher practice in NSW secondary English classes
- The knowledge-base informing literacy education in NSW secondary English classes

In examining the implications for the knowledge-base of the profession a type of case study is drawn from the existing literature in support of the findings of this study. Such ‘supplementary validation’ is in keeping with the advice of Strauss and Corbin (1990) regarding grounded theory procedure. The final section of the thesis deals with my own recommendations for action regarding the study, along with my personal reflections on the grounded theory.
IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR NSW DET LITERACY POLICIES

Perhaps the most striking implication of this study for NSW literacy policies is that, despite policies being based on current – even emergent – conceptualisations of literacy and language education, the profession does not have ownership of the policies it is expected to implement. Indeed, it would appear that few teachers are able to even access the theories at an elementary level, much less challenge their theoretical validity and suitability to educational contexts. The professional phase of the model of the disempowerment of the profession presented herein reveals that socio/political/historical factors have contributed to a situation whereby teachers appear to have little input or control over policy development. Given the disjuncture between teacher practice and policy development it is questionable whether the policies can adequately meet the demands of modern classrooms and student needs. This appears to be at odds with the very concept of professionalism and might well be argued to be a hindrance to successful professional practice.

Those in control of policy development need to take the relationships among the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment into account in devising ways to break into the cycle and develop an alternative ‘cycle of professional empowerment’ in policy development and implementation. Such a cycle of empowerment would likely be a complex and difficult process, whereby ownership of the process by all stakeholders, including teachers, would appear to hold the key.

If policy makers wish to promote empowered professional practice in literacy education they need to be wary of stipulating single, all-encompassing approaches to the teaching of literacy within policy documents. Such prescriptive policies appear to lead to subversion and alienation of teacher professionalism and deny students the benefits of informed, eclectic and flexible educational practices. Policies need to reflect the broad range of the knowledge-base which informs the profession.

There is an urgent need for the development and implementation of professional structures within secondary English teaching which could facilitate teacher involvement and control of policy development. While it is necessary for employers to safeguard their own interests through policies, literacy education would benefit from a professional association or other regulatory body which could protect the professional accreditation and ethical concerns of secondary English teachers and the aims of the profession.
Current methods of consultation and development of policies appear inadequate for the task of developing professional literacy practices based on eclectic, detailed knowledge of conceptualisations of language and literacy education. Political and ideological struggles, dominated by an elite few, appear to control policy development in NSW. This is particularly evident in the current use of Functional Grammar and Text Types in policy documents and the stipulation that all literacy practices in NSW state schools be based on a Functional View of Language, despite the current ban on the use of Functional Grammar. The contradictions inherent to NSW policies are not even widely known amongst NSW English teachers or the general public. It is even doubtful that the political masters of the NSW system are aware that Functional Grammar remains the grammar used in NSW Syllabus documents. I would like to stress here that I personally favour the use of Functional Grammar and a Genre-based approach to writing as part of an eclectic professional knowledge-base. The above points are used to illustrate the implications of the nature of the cycle of disempowerment on policy development in NSW.

This situation appears to be exacerbated by the lack of research in literacy education conducted within secondary English classes. Teacher education is structured in such a way as to preclude secondary English teachers from initiating research in literacy education through the normal channels of postgraduate study. Most simply do not have the qualifications to do so and remain restricted to studies in the field of literature within Arts faculties or other disciplines. Even where secondary English teachers gain access to Masters programs in education faculties their undergraduate qualifications generally limit their ability to engage in research specific to language and literacy education. As such policies rarely reflect theories based on extensive research conducted specifically within high school English classes. There is no guarantee, therefore, that policies meet the needs of teachers or students in secondary English classes. Policies also appear to fail to take teacher knowledge into account or to specifically refer teachers to sources of the theory bases on which they are based. As such it is difficult for many teachers to understand the theories which policy developers often force on them or to implement the policies as they were intended to be used. This study suggests that the relationships amongst policies and classroom practice actually lead to, and encourage, subversion of both theories and policies and ultimately contribute to teacher alienation from both policies and theories.
Policy developers need to be aware that some teachers and teacher educators adopt policies as theories. This means that policies sometimes corrupt the knowledge-base of the profession, subverting the criteria of a profession. Policies are, after all, employer guidelines and should be guided by theories, rather than guiding student teacher constructions of the knowledge-base of the profession. The use of DET and BOS policies as guidelines for teacher education have particularly serious implications. Employer policies are not normally the focus of university education and employers have traditionally been responsible for educating their employees in their own policies. In teaching even those students not destined for the government or school system are educated heavily in DET and BOS policies. If student teachers are educated too heavily in policies and too lightly in the theories which underpin them, new graduate teacher choices in the classroom are likely to be severely restricted. Certainly, critical appraisal of policies through reflective practice must surely be negatively impacted upon by such a situation.

Lack of professional development appears to be a major barrier to the implementation of new policies. As new policies are released they need to be coordinated with efforts in professional development, in order to avoid contributing to the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment. It would appear that there also needs to be a concerted effort to ensure that professional development reflects current theories and, in turn, informs new policies. The current situation, whereby what little professional development is on offer is based on employer policies, appears to 'place the cart before the horse'. It would appear logical that the professional knowledge-base should drive professional development programs and that policies should then reflect that knowledge base. The current situation in NSW appears to be that policies are issued prior to teacher knowledge being developed. This situation means that teachers are not only unable to implement policies as intended but are unable to contribute to policy discussion and review in an informed manner.

The conditions generated within the cycle of disempowerment exacerbate this exclusion, ultimately leading to alienation from all aspects of what Rist (1994) described as the 'policy cycle'. Rist's model of the policy cycle is reproduced in Figure 7.1:
The three phases of disempowerment of a profession, developed in the grounded theory developed in this thesis, appear to ensure that the three stages of Rist’s ‘policy cycle’ are impacted on and corrupted at each stage of the cycle.

Distortions of teacher perceptions about policies and the theories which underpin them also have other serious implications for current understandings about policies and their role in education. For example, Bernstein’s (1977 & 1990) notion of ‘recontextualisation’ of theories and policies would appear somewhat well-founded, however, it would appear that teachers are often not ‘recontextualising’ the theories but rather building a ‘construct’, often from scratch, aimed at assisting them in their daily struggles with the conditions of disempowerment. (Bernstein, 1977, 1990) The actual theories and policies often play little, if any, role in helping define their constructs. Rather, previous knowledge and imperatives of the ‘here and now’ drive construction and reconstructions of policies and knowledge bases. Without new highly-developed theory bases or professional consensus the new constructions are likely to be mere reshaping of old knowledge, rather than ‘recontextualisation’ of new knowledge.

In summary, the conditions of the cycle of professional disempowerment appear to undermine the delivery of professional educational practice regarding literacy in at least some secondary English classes in NSW. The conditions also appear to threaten
future professional practices, through the inhibition of the criteria for a profession and their impacts on the following areas:

- Teacher preservice education
- NSW DET and BOS policies
- The knowledge-base of the profession

These areas, each of which is vital to ensuring quality teacher practice, will now be dealt with individually.

**Implications for Teacher Preservice Education**

The conditions of the cycle of professional disempowerment appear to be deeply rooted in, and nurtured by, the nature of teacher preservice education in NSW universities. Teacher preservice education in NSW is characterised by its lack of orientation towards establishing and developing the criteria by which professions are traditionally judged. The lack of professional infrastructures in NSW secondary English teaching appears to contribute to a situation where teacher preservice education in literacy and language education are politically controlled, predominantly through the policies and accreditation schemes of the NSW State Government through the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Board of Studies NSW (BOS) which are ultimately controlled by the Minister for Education. DET policies directly and indirectly control the nature and content of teacher preservice education regarding literacy and language education in secondary school English. Federal Government funding and policies also exert direct influence on the nature of universities and the programs they deliver. Marginson (1997) has presented a strong case suggesting that government concerns in higher education are, in turn, directly influenced by international market forces.

Political concerns appear to dominate student numbers, standards of entry and standards of graduates in teacher education. The use of policies to design courses threatens teacher access to the knowledge-base of the profession and undermines the ability of teachers to act in the best interests of their clients’ or the public good or to apply the knowledge-base in matters of self-regulation. The term ‘English Methods’ in
teacher education programs for teachers of secondary English has come to mean initiation into the policies of a single employing bureaucracy.

Secondary English teacher theory deficit appears to begin with the nature of teacher preservice education. New graduates appear to hold little knowledge of modern literacy and language education theories or pedagogies. This inhibits their ‘life-long continuum’ of professional development and appears to be the originating source of their alienation from theories which might inform policies and professional practice. The often reported reliance of English teachers on outdated, traditional prescriptive approaches to the teaching of literacy appear to have their initial sources in the inadequacies of the GEE system of teacher preservice education.

Teacher preservice education appears to be isolated from mainstream teachers and their daily work. There is a certain irony in the ways in which teacher preservice education appears dependent on employer policies as guidelines and content, yet remains alienated from the daily efforts of teachers striving to meet those policies. Lecturers work in overloaded environments, where they have little exposure to practicing members of the profession or to schools. The lack of professional infrastructures for all teachers appears to exacerbate the isolation of the teacher education system from the classroom. There appears to be a need for measure to address the lack of ‘connectedness’ between university education and school teaching.

There are indications that the conditions of the personal phase of disempowerment (survival, visibility, system subversion and alienation) have there origins in the life-cycle of teaching within teacher education programs. Students learn early-on how to deal with the cycle of disempowerment appear to either copy strategies modelled within the system by others or to arrive at similar conclusions to other teachers, lecturers and student teachers.

Of particular concern is the way in which standards appear to be subverted, while a veneer of visibility is maintained in teacher education programs. Not only are standards somewhat compromised, directly affecting the quality of graduates, but the system is manipulated in such a way as to make it appear that students are excelling at their work. This has serious implications for the profession, as it makes true introspection and action difficult and runs the risk of thwarting attempts to improve the overall quality of teaching and meet the challenges of the future.

It is, perhaps, at the level of teacher preservice education that the cycle of professional disempowerment might be broken and positively influenced. Alienation, a
key condition in ensuring the cyclic nature of disempowerment in secondary English teaching, appears to be incubated in many teachers during their preservice teacher education programs. The fostering of unity and collegiality amongst teachers, lecturers and student teachers would likely offer strength in any move by the profession to address the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment. Addressing the conditions of disempowerment which exist in teacher preservice education, particularly those of the professional phase, offers great hope of fostering truly empowered literacy education professionals within NSW schools.

The use of policies as professional guidelines also appears to have implications for the value of teacher qualifications and the ability of teachers to challenge social inequities through education. In his acclaimed examination of the marketisation of education Marginson (1997) has argued that:

There are two broad types of commodity produced in education markets. These are student goods and knowledge goods. Knowledge goods are tradeable intellectual property such as patented scientific discoveries and other research data, copy-righted books and works of art. Student goods are acquired by students during the course of study and, or, graduation.

Student goods may take two different forms, depending on who purchases them: self-goods and training goods. Self-goods are purchased by the student (or family) in order to enhance the attributes of that student. Training goods are purchased by employers in order to enhance the value-creating potential of their employees.

Self-goods are further divided into positional goods, seen as means to social advantage, and other goods of self-improvement. By far the most important commodities produced in education are positional goods.

(Marginson, 1997, p.38)

According to Marginson, Hirsch (1976) established that:

Positional goods have special economic characteristics. First, positional goods are hierarchical in character, because they confer places in a hierarchy. By definition, some are more valuable than others. Second, while all economic commodities are scarce, positional goods are scarce in absolute terms. There is a fixed limit to total supply. Standard economic goods are scarce at any moment in time, but availability can be increased through growth in production. But the number of positional goods (in this case, places in education that confer relative advantage at a given level) cannot be expanded.

Other kinds of positional goods include land with finite characteristics, such as city houses with water views, or a country retreats whose value lies in solitude.

Hirsch describes positional goods as ‘oligarchic wealth’ - consumed only by a privileged minority. Keynes talked about certain needs ‘which are relative in the sense that we feel them only if their satisfaction lifts us above, makes us feel superior to, our fellows (Hirsch, 1976, p.20-22)

(Marginson, 1997, p.40)

That is, the value of educational qualifications lies in their separation from employer-sponsored ‘training goods’, such as policies, and the ‘hierarchical’ nature of their status. The NSW DET policies for teacher accreditation in NSW have been widely accepted as
guidelines for entry to teacher preservice education programs and as the standard for entry to the profession. This alone would appear to devalue the worth of teacher qualifications.

However, the situation is made somewhat worse by the fact that the policies only require 2/9 of a degree in English Literature and one English Methods subject in order to fully qualify for accreditation as a specialised English teacher. In this way the policies of the DET counteracts the positional nature of teacher preservice education. The same priority for employment and status as a teacher is given to a teacher with the minimum qualification as is to a teacher with the highest qualifications attainable. Academic qualifications count for little in the professional world of teachers and GDE-style programs of teacher preservice education appear to be reduced to what Marginson might call 'training goods', which reduces their worth to the education system and to society as a whole.

Additionally, the lack of focus on theories within GDE-style programs appears to de-value theoretical knowledge about the policies and restricts the power such knowledge brings to an elite few. Such elitism de-values the role of ordinary teachers, who do not have access to the elite knowledge-base. Teacher knowledge of literacy and language remains a 'training good' while elite academics and policy makers enshrine their access to the 'ogliarchic wealth' of the more valuable 'positional goods' of professional knowledge. In short, the implication is that the current nature of teacher preservice education precludes ordinary teachers from the true power and wealth of professionalism that it might otherwise offer. Teacher preservice education, of course, also directly influences the nature of teacher practice in the classroom.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER PRACTICE**

The cycle of disempowerment impacts most directly on teacher literacy education practices in NSW secondary English classrooms. The grounded theory holds wide ranging implications for policy makers and teacher educators and their efforts to influence present and future teacher practices regarding literacy education in subject English.

The professional phase of disempowerment ensures that teachers must respond to the political control of policies and assessment tasks using what resources they have
available. Inadequate preservice education and professional development appear to contribute to ensuring that teacher responses are not the professional interpretations of assessment and pedagogy intended by policy makers or theorists.

The lack of critique of Pro-forma Text Types and the hybridisation of Functional Grammar illustrate the ways in which NSW teachers have lacked both the knowledge and voice to challenge and critique the directions forced on literacy education by the conditions of the professional phase of disempowerment. True professional regulation by teachers' own professional associations would appear to offer a means by which to intervene in the professional phase of disempowerment. Political and ideological battles for control of processes would, of course, be likely to continue, however, such structures would allow for a democratic multiplicity of voices to emerge from the ranks of teachers, policy developers, teacher educators and theorists and eventually to lead to collaboration on professional processes. Hargreaves (1994) has characterised such collaboration as offering 'situated certainty', claiming that:

Collaboration replaces false scientific certainties or debilitating occupational uncertainties with the situated certainties of collected professional wisdom among particular communities of teachers.
(Hargreaves, 1994)

A multiplicity of voices might facilitate constructions which could identify and evolve areas of consensus and disagreement within the profession of literacy education. Mechanisms allowing discussion and critique of theories, policies and practice might then allow ways to be found to move the teaching of literacy in secondary English classrooms forward in ways which empower professional teachers and enhance student learning.

Teachers in classrooms also appear to need greater access to the constantly evolving body of professional knowledge which might inform their practices, particularly through access to professional development. The cycle of disempowerment has ensured that professional development has remained largely a mechanism for education in the employer policy documents, rather than the exploration of the professional knowledge-base. The political control of education has been particularly influential in this regard.

Teacher professional associations, particularly the English Teachers' Association, need greater control of professional processes, including the regulation of teaching. This requires greater participation in the associations by practising teachers and a refocus of
mission by teacher professional associations. Associations might do well to examine other, more established and powerful professions for examples to the roles of professional associations in research, policy and professional development.

Empowerment of the profession appears to be crucial to addressing the condition of theory deficit and the obvious impacts it must have on teacher practice. It would appear that where theory deficit combines with other conditions of disempowerment teachers revert to what they know and teacher practice reverts to older, more prescriptive pedagogies, including a reliance on the notions of prescriptive grammar and the study of literary theory as a higher order of education. That teachers are largely ill-informed about influential conceptualisations of literacy and language education must raise serious concerns about teacher practice regarding literacy. Even where teachers have well-formed personal theories of literacy learning they often lack a professional metalanguage for discussing and exploring their ideas with colleagues or those in power. This would appear not only to disadvantage them in their daily practice in the classroom but also in their professional discussions with the wider community. If secondary English teachers are to fulfil their special role as teachers of literacy, as they must, they need mastery of the knowledge which might facilitate that role. Access to theories of literacy and language education, therefore, must be detailed and ongoing.

The institutional phase of disempowerment also has serious implications for teacher practice. It is through the conditions imposed by the professional and institutional phases that the conditions of the personal phase evolve. Political control, professional powerlessness, theory deficit, isolation and system overload place teachers in situations whereby the personal phase of disempowerment are almost inevitable. If policy makers and teacher educators wish to intervene at the level of the personal phase of disempowerment they need to explore alternatives and interventions throughout all the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment.

Some important implications of the cycle are revealed by such explorations of alternatives. Hargreaves (1994) has suggested the development of ‘cultures of collaboration’ as a means of addressing issues of professionalism in schools and the facilitation of a radical ‘metaparadigm shift’ in the way that professional relationships in schooling are structured. (Hargreaves, 1994, p.245) Hargreaves proposed a restructuring of the school system based on a number of principles of professional collaboration, outlined in the following excerpt:
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

Moral support. Collaboration strengthens resolve, permits vulnerabilities to be shared and aired, and carries people through those failures and frustrations that accompany change in its early stages, and that can otherwise undermine or overturn it.

- **Increased efficiency.** Collaboration eliminates duplication and removes redundancy between teachers and subjects as activities are coordinated and responsibilities are shared in complementary ways.

- **Improved effectiveness.** Collaboration improves the quality of student learning by improving the quality of teachers' teaching. Collaboration encourages risk-taking, greater diversity in teaching strategies, and improved senses of efficacy among teachers as self-confidence is boosted by positive encouragement and feedback. All these things impact upon and benefit student learning. 13

- **Reduced overload.** Collaboration permits sharing of the burdens and pressures that come from intensified work demands and accelerated change, so that individual teachers and leaders do not have to shoulder them all, in isolation.

- **Synchronized time perspectives.** Collaboration narrows the differences of time perspective between administrators and teachers. Participation in common activities and communication creates shared and realistic expectations about timelines for change and implementation. The same principles also apply to synchronization of time perspectives and expectations between teachers and students when they become partners in the learning process.

- **Situated certainty.** The two worst states of knowledge are ignorance and certainty. Collaboration reduces uncertainty and limits excesses of guilt that otherwise pervade teaching by setting commonly agreed boundaries around what can reasonably be achieved in any setting. Collaboration also creates collective professional confidence that can help teachers resist the tendency to become dependent on false scientific certainties of teaching effectiveness, school effectiveness and the like. Collaboration replaces false scientific certainties or debilitating occupational uncertainties with the situated certainties of collected professional wisdom among particular communities of teachers.

- **Political assertiveness.** Collaboration, in its strongest forms, enables teachers to interact more confidently and assertively with their surrounding systems and the multiplicity of reasonable and unreasonable innovations and reforms that come from them. Collaboration strengthens the confidence to adopt externally introduced innovations, the wisdom to delay them and the moral fortitude to resist them, where appropriate. In that sense, it also mitigates the effects of intensification and overload mentioned earlier.

- **Increased capacity for reflection.** Collaboration in dialogue and action provides sources of feedback and comparison that prompt teachers to reflect on their own practice. Others become mirrors for one's own practice, leading one to reflect on it and reformulate it more critically.

- **Organizational responsiveness.** Collaboration pools the collected knowledge, expertise and capacities of the teacher workforce to enable it to respond swiftly to changing constraints and opportunities in the surrounding environment, to scan the environment proactively for upcoming changes, and to seek out the opportunities they may offer. By involving members of that environment - parents, business, communities, etc. - in the collaborative process itself, the swiftness and appropriateness of schools' and teachers' responses is enhanced even further.

- **Opportunities to learn.** Collaboration increases teachers' opportunities to learn from each other between classrooms, between departments and between schools. Collaboration is a powerful source of professional learning, of getting better at the job. In collaborative organizations, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

- **Continuous improvement.** Collaboration encourages teachers to see change not as a task to be completed, but as an unending process of continuous improvement in the asymptotic pursuit of ever greater excellence on the one hand, and emergent solutions to rapidly changing problems in the other. Because of the way it promotes shared reflection,
professional learning and the pooling of collected expertise, collaboration is a central
principle of organizational learning.
(Hargreaves, 1994, p.245-7)

It is possible to argue that there are distinct similarities between Hargreaves’ principles
and the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment of a profession. Hargreaves’
principles align as alternatives to the conditions of disempowerment revealed by this
thesis. Such an alignment of alternatives might be arranged as in Table 7.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles of Collaboration</th>
<th>Conditions of Disempowerment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Political assertiveness</td>
<td>• Political Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Moral support</td>
<td>• Professional Powerlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to learn</td>
<td>• Theory Deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improved effectiveness</td>
<td>• Professional Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduced overload</td>
<td>• System Overload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Synchronised time perspectives</td>
<td>• Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continuous improvement</td>
<td>• Visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Situated certainty</td>
<td>• System Subversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political assertiveness</td>
<td>• Alienation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Hargreaves, 1994, p.245-7)

As is often the case, the above alignments can only serve as a rough guide, given the
complexities of the conditions and principles involved. They do, however, serve to offer
insights into possible alternatives to the conditions exposed by this grounded theory.

One key difference highlighted by this study is the need for professional structures
capable of delineating matters of teacher accreditation and regulation.

One of the key features of other models of teacher interaction, as shown in
Hargreaves’ model and the one developed by the Australian College of Education and
reproduced in Figure 5.22 has been the assumption that teachers understand the
professional knowledge-base and draw from it in their daily practice. This is what
Bernstein referred to as ‘recontextualisation’. (Bernstein, 1977, 1990, 1996) It has often
been assumed that teachers are able to access the professional knowledge-base in their
daily teaching. This appears to be an incorrect assumption. Certainly there are no
mechanisms, within the Australian context, which aim to ensure that teacher education
is suitable to the task of informing teacher practice. This study also finds that theory
deficit is a major problem for teachers of subject English regarding the teaching of literacy and language skills.

I would argue that professional structures are vital in ensuring that teacher collaboration is guided by the professional knowledge-base. Without access to such a knowledge-base, along with the other criteria for professionalism, the personal phase of disempowerment becomes almost inevitable for teachers struggling to cope with the realities of the classroom. Teachers, lecturers, student-teachers, policy developers and educational officials must all adopt survival strategies which make it appear, visibly, that they are implementing policies and theories which they are, in reality, subverting. Survival includes subverting procedures of accountability and hiding practices which might otherwise not be viewed favourably. The conditions of disempowerment appear to be part of daily routines for those involved in education and hold serious implications for policy developers and theoreticians. The question must be asked:

Of what value is a policy or theory if it is extensively subverted in practice, for whatever reason?

The value of such policies would appear to be more negative than might be thought. The conditions of disempowerment appear to directly contribute to the condition of alienation, which appears to disenchant teachers with the various processes which might enhance their professionalism and break the cycle of disempowerment.

This implication is vital for those concerned with the improvement of policies, teacher practice or teacher preservice education. It would appear that empowerment of teachers in the classroom holds the key to intervention in the cycle of professional disempowerment and the enhancement of literacy education generally.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE-BASE OF THE PROFESSION**

The conditions of the disempowerment cycle also hold wide-ranging implications for the knowledge-base of the profession. Chapter 3 of this thesis reviews literature pertinent to the teaching of literacy in secondary English classrooms, presented as conceptualisations of literacy and language education. As such it constructs a professional knowledge-base on which there is at least some consensus amongst literacy educators.
However, if the conditions divulged by the grounded theory exist within the profession, then the criteria of a profession in literacy teaching would appear to have been seriously subverted and, therefore, the very knowledge-base of the profession must be called into question. Without professional regulation (internal accountability) and an organised orientation directed primarily towards the client (or the social good) there are few mechanisms to ensure that any knowledge-base meets the needs of teachers, students or the wider community.

One of the key mechanisms to ensure the quality and focus of the professional knowledge-base is the conduct of ethical, rigorous and relevant research. The conditions of the cycle of disempowerment call the ability of educational research to meet the needs of teachers into question. The professional phase of disempowerment ensures that few teachers own research, or the ways in which research is applied in policies (political control), professional guidelines (professional powerlessness) or teacher education (theory deficit). The added conditions of the institutional phase mean that teachers remain isolated from professional development and other processes (isolation) and that new theories and research become part of unrealistic workload expectations (system overload).

The personal phase of disempowerment shows that teacher responses to developments in the professional knowledge-base include resistance to innovation (survival). The struggle to survive means that teachers seek means of making it appear that they are implementing new theories and policies, while continuing to rely on old approaches (visibility). Visibility strategies utilise tactics designed to achieve teachers' own, often ill-informed, aims in literacy education while appearing to meet the demands of new knowledge (system subversion). The conditions of disempowerment, particularly political control, theory deficit and system overload, lead teachers to feel disenfranchised from the kinds of professional processes which might give them better access to, or control over, the knowledge-base of the profession (alienation). In this way there appears to be minimal involvement of secondary English teachers with the knowledge-base relating to literacy and language education. Few teachers involved in this study held even elementary understandings of the established conceptualisations of literacy and language education. Additionally, most held only amorphous conceptualisations of their personal theories regarding literacy and language education. There is some evidence which suggests exploring whether university-based 'education' and school-based 'teaching' might well be considered as separate disciplines.
Control of the knowledge-base lies with academics, politicians or bureaucrats and there would appear to be doubt as to the ability of the knowledge-base to accurately represent the work or needs of the profession. Perhaps this may account partially for teacher feelings of alienation from, and animosity towards, theory and research uncovered by this study.

This has implications for the validity of the generally accepted conceptualisations of literacy and language education. There would appear to be some doubt as to whether teachers have had the resources, or the inclination, to critically examine or question the theories which have informed the conceptualisations of literacy and language education on which there appears to have been some consensus. Indeed, the validity of any perceived consensus must, in the light of the grounded theory presented herein, be called into question.

The review of literature conducted as an integral component of the grounded theory procedure utilised in this study confirmed grounds for such critical questioning. A Genre-based approach to writing, particularly the use of Pro-forma Text Type Scaffolds, has been one of the most influential conceptualisations of literacy and language education to have impacted on NSW literacy education since the inception of uniform comprehensive secondary education in the 1960s.

An examination of the theoretical framework of a Genre-based approach to writing, informed by the grounded theory model, offers what Strauss and Corbin (1990) termed as 'supplementary validation' of the model. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.52) By returning to the literature dealing with conceptualisations of literacy and language education the knowledge-base of the profession is re-examined in light of the grounded theory. In this way the grounded theory is validated not only by the presentation of data but by examination of established literature and research.

Such an examination suggests that the knowledge-base pertaining to literacy and language education in NSW may have been negatively impacted upon by the conditions revealed in the cycle of disempowerment. In order to do so it is necessary to validate the grounded theory in the existing literature and present the following:

- A Critique of Genre theory
- Implications for the knowledge-base of the profession
Validating the Theory in the Literature

A Systemic Functional View of language has dominated NSW literacy education more than any other conceptualisation of literacy and language education since the reliance on traditional, Skills-based Approaches of the 1950s. Functional Grammar, Genre-based approaches to writing and the use of Text Types underpin all NSW literacy education policies and numerous texts using the approaches have emerged from educational publishers in recent years.

Despite the popularity of a Functional View of Language (and my own admiration for the work of M.A.K. Halliday) the review of literature I conducted as a component of this study raised serious issues questioning the validity of the theoretical basis for a Genre-based approach to writing and the heavy reliance placed on it within the NSW education system. A historical examination of the development of the theoretical framework of Genre theory and the reliance on structure inherent to the use of Text Types serves to illustrate the way in which the conditions of the disempowerment cycle developed in this study appear to affect the knowledge-base of the profession.

The conditions of cycle suggest that teachers, student teachers, teacher educators and policy developers often work at odds, but the literature also suggested that the conditions of the cycle have prevented proper professional critique and discussion of Systemic Genre theory, as developed by the Sydney-based ‘Genre School’. The cycle then, offers insights into the relationships among the areas under investigation and the actual theories [knowledge-base] which inform teacher education, policies and practice.

As discussed in Chapter 3, professionals require access to a detailed, broad, eclectic knowledge-base in order to re-construct knowledge in order to fulfil the criteria of professionalism in their daily work. Policies in NSW seek to deny teachers such eclectic knowledge constructions, claiming that only a Functional View of Language is required to achieve educational outcomes in literacy. (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 1998e, p.14)

That such an edict has gone largely unchallenged, at least in an organised profession-wide manner, indicates that the cycle of disempowerment may be adversely affecting the knowledge-base of the profession in that the conditions have ensured that no organised resistance has formally challenged or critiqued the narrowing of the knowledge-base. As is shown in the sections which follow, the ideological imperatives of a select group of linguistic researchers have been allowed to dominate the
knowledge-base of the profession, despite the existence of evidence which questions the theoretical validity of the outright reliance on structure inherent to Genre theory.

What follows is intended as a critique of Genre theory and as an illustration of the inability of the teaching profession to resist and challenge the implementation of a knowledge-base which is not their own and which may be theoretically flawed. In order to do this it is necessary to detail theoretical differences between the models of Genre theory developed by the Genre School and the Systemic Functional Linguistic framework on which Genre theory is claimed to be based. It is also necessary to examine the motivation and rise to power of linguists in the development of educational policies and to consider the implications of that rise for the professional knowledge base.

I would like to stress here that the critique I present here is not meant to denigrate Systemic theories but rather to highlight the ways in which disempowered teachers have been unable to engage fully with the knowledge-base of their profession and to challenge the heavy reliance of policies (and thereby practice) on single, exclusive, theoretical frameworks. As a literacy and language educator, both at school and university level, I find Systemic theories fascinating and informative in helping to construct my own eclectic professional understandings. My point here is that true advancement of knowledge lies in ethical critique and that the disempowerment cycle has denied teachers the opportunity to genuinely engage in professional relationships with their knowledge-base.

A Critique of Genre Theory

Undoubtedly the most influential aspect of Genre theory on NSW education policy has been the Martin / Rothery model of Genre and the subsequent development of Text Types by other members of the Genre School. Given that all models of Genre theory draw heavily on Halliday’s Functional Grammar as their analytical meta-language for analysing text structure, it serves well to first examine the differences between Halliday’s model of language and the influential model developed by Martin and Rothery. (Halliday, 1985a; Macken et al., 1989a; Macken & Rothery, 1991a; Martin, 1992; Martin & Rothery, 1980; Rothery, 1989)
The issues examined herein, while not widely known by teachers within Australia, have been voiced by some prominent members of the Genre School. Despite this the concerns remain largely unanswered by those who were most responsible for developing the type of Genre theory supported by the Genre School.

In raising the issues addressed in this section it is not sought to dismiss the theories of the Genre School but to highlight some of the major, but little-known, inconsistencies within the theoretical framework which underpins Genre theory in Australia. This highlighting, in turn shows the need for school teachers to be well versed in the theories which guide the pedagogies they are expected to implement in order for them to be able to operate as empowered professionals. The widespread acceptance of Genre theory in policies and teacher practice is argued to reflect the conditions of disempowerment exposed by the grounded theory presented in this thesis.

**Halliday’s Systemic Model**

The major area of divergence between Halliday’s Systemic model and the Martin/Rothery model adopted by the Genre School is in the location of Genre. Where Halliday describes Genre as a component of mode (within register) the Martin and Rothery model asserts Genre as an overriding and controlling agent outside register. Halliday’s model is reproduced below in Figure 7.2:
Figure 7.2: Halliday’s schematic representation of language as social semiotic and a child’s mode of access to it (Halliday, 1978, p.69)

Figure 7.2 clearly places mode (the site of Halliday’s Genre) within context of situation, shaping and being shaped by the ‘adult linguistic system’ and other aspects of language in use at the level of register to create text in ‘situation’. (See Chapter 3) Within Halliday’s model the notion of textual structure is clearly captured within the processes of tenor and mode, as components of register. The three variables of register are shaped by context of culture and intertwine to influence each other within context of situation (register) to create meaning at the level of text. This represents what Halliday refers to as a ‘dialectic’ relationship. (Halliday, 1994, cited in Hasan, 1995) Figure 7.3 reproduces Collerson’s representation of the Hallidayan view of a Functional View of language:
By comparing the models of a Functional View of language presented above with those of the Genre School it is possible to begin to identify disparities between each school’s conceptualisation of register, Genre and social context.

**The Genre School Model**

In an early pilot within the NSW Disadvantaged Schools Program Martin and Rothery’s re-positioning of Genre was represented in the model depicted below in Figure 7.4:
Figure 7.4: The Genre school relationship between text and context
(Callaghan & Rothery, 1988, p. 34)

The Martin / Rothery model clearly places Genre as a higher order strata, with structure as a dominant force in the creation of texts. Derewianka’s (1990) widely adopted representation of the Martin / Rothery model of a Functional View of Language is reproduced in Figure 7.5:

Figure 7.5: Derewianka’s model of a Functional Approach to Language
(Derewianka, 1990, p.19)
Derewianka’s model of the Martin/Rothery view of Genre as a ‘controlling’ agent provides a useful comparison with the Collerson model of Halliday’s Functional View of Language. In contrast to Collerson’s or Halliday’s models Derewianka’s diagram illustrates the Genre-School’s stratification of Genre as a controlling agent over the other components of language. Indeed, it elevates structure to a level within the hierarchy second only to the influence of culture.

The two models of a Functional View of Language appear contradictory and it is perhaps remarkable that there has been little, if any, open discussion amongst teachers about the discrepancies between the Genre School model of Genre’s place in language and the Hallidayan framework which is meant to underpin it.

*Forcing the ‘Fit’ of Genre*

Members of the Genre School have summarised their divergence with Halliday’s model as the result of an attempt to ‘fit’ their hypotheses about the role of grammatical structure as a controlling agent of text into a Hallidayan Systemic framework. Cope (1993) recalled the reasoning behind Rothery’s original re-positioning of Genre from Halliday’s original thus:

Rothery theorised that if purpose was made a controlling register variable, this would access the overall function of text and coordinate the way in which field, mode and personal tenor choices combine. Functional tenor was stratified with respect to field, mode and personal tenor in their early work.

From the start this, however, created a problem. Tenor now existed on two levels. So, influenced by Hasan’s work on generalised text structure, functional tenor was renamed as Genre, leaving personal tenor as tenor, and giving rise to the stratified model of register and Genre that continues to underpin the work of Martin and Rothery.

(Cope et al., 1993, p.232)

This forced layering of components of register at a higher, ‘controlling’ level was the genesis of the Martin/Rothery conceptualisation of Genre, where text structure determines other language variables. An important detail revealed here is that the genesis of Martin and Rothery’s ‘stratification’ of Halliday’s semiotic, and subsequent renaming of Functional tenor as Genre, was originally completed with the aim of developing a model which established form as the controlling agent of meaning. The theory was made to ‘fit’ the presuppositions of the theorist, rather than as the result of the analysis of language using Halliday’s metalanguage. The structure of the Genres, or
Text Types, was analysed using Halliday’s grammar but the importance of that structure appears to have been manufactured to support the aims of the researchers.

It is also significant that the basis and justification of the conceptualisation of Genre, as a theory of language use, has relied heavily on the work of Hasan. (Martin et al., 1987a, p.4) It is argued in what follows that much of the theoretical justification of the Martin/Rothery model of Genre is flawed. It will also be shown that, as the theorist argued to have provided much of the framework for the stratification of Genre outside register, Hasan has refuted much of the theoretical underpinning of this conceptualisation and argued that it is not in keeping with a Systemic framework or the Hallidayan tradition. (Hasan, 1995)

**Martin’s Genre As Controlling Agent**

The Martin model locates Genre at a higher strata, at the level of the context of situation, rather than as a product of it, as shown in Halliday’s model. Martin claims Genre as a semiotic system in its own right and defines this system thus:

In essence Genre theory is a theory of language use. The Genre theory underlying so-called ‘Genre-based’ approaches to writing development was developed by Hasan 1978, Kress 1982, Martin 1985 and others as an extension of earlier work on register by Systemic linguists including Halliday, Gregory, Ure, and Ellis.

Genre theory differs from register theory in the amount of emphasis it places on social purpose as a determining variable in language use.

Martin defines Genre as a ‘staged, goal oriented social process’. Most members of a given culture would participate in some dozens of these. Some Australian examples would include: jokes, letters to the editor, job applications, lab reports, sermons, medical examinations, appointment making, service encounters, anecdotes, weather reports, interviews and so on.

Genres are referred to as ‘social processes’ because members of a culture interact with each other to achieve them; as ‘goal oriented’ because they have evolved to get things done; and as ‘staged’ because it usually takes more than one step for participants to achieve their goals. (Martin et al., 1987a, p.3-4)

Martin has acknowledged that Genre theory emerged from the Systemic concept of register, claiming to have extended the work of Ellis, Ure and Halliday. (Martin et al., 1987a, p.4) According to Martin the key difference between Genre theory and Halliday’s register is:

the amount of emphasis it places on social purpose as a determining variable in language use. (Martin et al., 1987a, p.4)
In order to achieve this ‘emphasis’ on Genre structure as a ‘determining variable’ Genre must be elevated to a higher level than in the Halliday model, yet there appears to be little justification for such a positioning beyond the Genre School’s need to assert textual structure as a dominant factor in the creation of meaning. The motivation for such theorising would appear to be the desire to ‘put language [and therefore linguists] back into the picture’ of language education. (Martin et al., 1987a, p.15)

The emphasis, for Genre theorists then, appears to remain with forcing a ‘fit’ of structure as the highest determinant in language over the other components of Halliday’s social semiotic (tenor, mode and field). In this way Genre becomes the controlling social purpose directing and controlling field, tenor and mode, in virtual opposition to the Hallidayan view. Martin (1992) claimed that:

Martin’s alternative proposal is that text structure be generated at the level of Genre, as in Ventolas Systemic formulation of Mitchell’s work above. Genre networks would thus be formulated on the basis of similarities and of the realisation process, generic choices would preselect field, mode and tenor options associated with particular elements of text structure. Text structure is referred to as schematic structure in Martin’s model, with Genre defined as a staged, goal-oriented social process realised through register. (see Martin 1984b, 1985b, Martin et al. n.d., Ventola 1987:63-66)
(Martin, 1992, p.505)

Hasan articulated the obvious question arising from Martin’s claim that generic structure can represent social purpose:

What motivates the gloss of Genre as context of culture?
True, much of culture is construed by talk, but certainly not simply through the structural form that talk takes.
(Hasan, 1995, p.280)

Martin’s model attempts to account for the influences of culture but appears to fail to take account of the myriad of other social factors involved in language exchanges, as accounted for in the model of semiotics offered by Halliday. Martin offers an explanation of the differences in this theoretical positioning in his major work, English Text (1992):

The tension between these two perspectives will be resolved ... by including in the interpretation of context two communication planes, Genre (context of culture) and register (context of situation), with register functioning as the expression form of Genre, at the same time as language functions as the expression form of register. Register can then itself be organised with respect to field, tenor
and mode, reflecting metafunctional diversity in its expression form, leaving Genre to concentrate on the integration of meanings engendered by field, tenor and mode as systematically related social processes. (Martin, 1992, 495)

Figure 7.6 contains Martin’s outlining of his ‘three plane model’:

![Figure 7.6: Martin's stratifying context as language’s content plane (Martin, 1992, p.495)](Please see print copy for images)

In further developing this stratification Martin introduced a fourth plane, that of ideology, as the driving force behind all language. Figure 7.7 shows this fourth plane in Martin’s new model:

![Figure 7.7: Martin’s visual representation of ideology as fourth communicative plane (Martin, 1992, p.495)](Please see print copy for images)

In Martin’s representation the relationships between the planes is clearly hierarchical, with the higher order directly controlling the lower order strata, as indicated by Martin’s
arrows. It is important here to note that Martin makes no allowance for his ‘redounding’ between the planes in this representation, it is clearly represented as a downward flow. The inference is that ideology, as undeveloped a concept as Martin presents it, sits above Genre but that Genre remains a controlling agent over all other components of his stratification. (Martin’s concept of ideology is called into question later in this chapter, indeed, it is shown that Martin later dropped ideology as a controlling plane without offering a clear alternative.)

Key to Martin’s Genre theory is his removal of Genre as a component of register. Whereas Halliday sited Genre as a component of mode, Martin has hypothesised that structure can be removed from its didactic relationship with the components of language and considered in isolation, at a higher strata - a controlling agent of the other components of language. Martin’s theory of register, then, varies from the established Systemic definition.

This variation is highlighted by the Genre School’s definitions of the Hallidayan concepts of tenor, field and mode. Table 7.2 summarises Derewianka’s (1990) definitions of the components of Martin’s register:

**Table 7.2: The components of register in Martin’s Genre theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the roles of the participants and their relationship eg • how well they know each other • their ages • their relative status • how they feel towards each other</td>
<td>Refers to ‘what is going on’ - the doings and happenings, • who or what is involved in them (participants) and • the circumstances in which they are taking place (Where and when). • Basically we could say it is the subject-matter of the text.</td>
<td>Mode deals with the channel of communication - • how distant the speaker / writer is from the listener / reader in both time and space (eg. a face to face conversation as opposed to a book written for an audience the author will never meet) • the extent to which the language accompanies the action going on (as in an oral commentary on a cricket match) or is distanced from the action (as in newspaper article written after the match).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Derewianka, 1990, p.21)

The definitions offered by the Genre School appear to conflict with those offered by Halliday and Collerson. In the Martin / Rothery conceptualisation of a Functional View...
of language structure is removed from the definition of mode and placed as a higher strata in its own right, at the level of Genre. There would appear to be very little justification for such an important re-positioning.

Martin’s theory fails to account for ways in which other components of field, tenor and mode might contribute to, even determine, textual structure and appears to give Genre and text structure a primary position over the components of register, as outlined by Halliday and Hasan. (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Hasan, 1995) Hasan (1995) has given examples of texts which challenge Martin’s views on context of situation and bluntly contradict Martin’s omission of tenor in contributing to text structure:

One does not have to look very far to see that, quite apart from the theoretical and conceptual objections to the dissociation of activity from agents of activity, it just is not true that tenor plays no part in motivating text structure.
(Hasan, 1995, p.281)

Hasan has also directly challenged Martin’s exclusion of other aspects of field, mode and tenor in the creation of text structure,

Martin claims that, by stratifying ds-language, m-register, and m-Genres, he is able to create a situation whereby his field now is always realised by experiential metafunction, and tenor by interpersonal.
Perhaps so; I would be surprised. For example, there is the question of the realised of mode: What realises mode? Is dialogic mode purely realised by the textual metafunction? Does the logical metafunction play any role in construing the distinction between written and spoken mode?
Is field realised by the ideational metafunction?
If so, how does Martin account for speech and writing differences?
Then, too, it is not true that such textual phenomena as the degree of cohesive harmony is entirely a realisation of some mode choice.

... So far as I can see MCS [Martin’s Connotative Semiotics] has proliferated strata / c-planes or whatever they are, without explaining anything whatever.
(Hasan, 1995, p.281)

Hasan also claimed that Martin’s stratification of Genre outside register places structure above social context:

the overall structure of talk is activated by the configuration of the relatively more primary situational choices, from field, tenor and mode (Hasan, 1978; cf. Gregory, 1986), in the MCS approach [Martin’s Connotative Semiotic] the schematic structure of the text is ‘predicated’ by single - shall one say simple? - considerations. [social purpose]
(Hasan, 1995, p.278)
In separating Genre from register, Martin’s model of ‘connotative semiotic’ compacts Halliday’s concepts of register and context into the one, ‘undifferentiated’, term of ‘register’. (Hasan, 1995, p.198) This separation of some components of the Systemic notion of register into a separate conceptualisation of Genre places the notion of Genre at a higher, separate level in the creation of meaning in text. This ostensibly places text structure, determined according to Martin by ideology, at a higher, determining level controlling all other aspects of language use.

Martin openly claimed that, while social processes might ‘negotiate with each other and evolve, text function and structure is better viewed as performing a higher level, controlling role in language:

*teleological perspective on text function might be better set up as superordinate to - rather than alongside or incorporated in - field, mode and tenor. The register variables field, tenor and mode can then be interpreted as working together to achieve a text’s goals, where goals are defined in terms of systems of social processes at the level of Genre ... Genres are social processes, and their purpose is being interpreted here in social terms, not psychological terms. Nor does the model imply the cultures as a whole are goal-directed, with some over-riding purpose governing the interaction of social processes. Social processes negotiate with each other and evolve.* (Martin, in press, cited in Hasan, 1995, p.279)

Here Martin is claiming a ‘teleological’ relationship between the factors of social purpose, but only above, or ‘superordinate to, the components of register in his model. Clearly, according to Martin the components of register are subordinate to social purpose and structure. Simply put, according to Martin structure must control the context of situation, rather than the context of situation controlling structure.

Given that the Genre School work is based on the use of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar as the metalanguage for the analysis of sample texts it serves well to compare the Martin / Rothery conceptualisations with those of Halliday, the originator of the Systemic Functional model.

**Comparison with Halliday’s Semiotic Theory**

Hasan (1995) illustrated Martin’s ‘connotative semiotic’, showing the transplanting of social activity, rhetorical mode and linguistic structure from register to Genre in the diagram reproduced in Figure 7.8:
Halliday and Hasan’s original work on social semiotics and the nature of register presented textual structure as a ‘dialectic’ relationship between social activity and the language system, realised through the components register; field, tenor and mode. (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Hasan, 1995) In this model text creates and is created by context and all aspects of the social creation of meaning come together at the level of text in situation. The components of the context of situation (register: field, tenor and mode) are central to this dependant relationship. It is within the components of register that the variables combine and affect each other:

A text is created by its context, the semiotic environment of people and their activities that we have construed via the concepts of field, tenor and mode; it also creates that context. The relationship that we refer to as ‘realisation’ between ‘levels’ of semiosis - situation (doing) realised in lexicogrammar (wording), and so on ... is a dialectic one. (Halliday, 1994, cited in Hasan, 1995, p.183)

In this way textual structure both affects and is affected by other components of context, through negotiations at the level of register. The social purpose is negotiated within the other components of register and are inseparable from that context of situation. Hasan put it thus:
the structure of the texts is not something separate from the text as an instance of register realising a context; in this view, textual structure becomes simply one feature of diatypic variation. (Hasan, 1995, p.246)

Hallidayan Systemicists believe that this ‘dialectic’ relationship, between context and the language system, must not be fragmented if true learning is to occur and literacy fostered. Halliday has claimed:

to be literate is not just to have mastered the written registers (the generic structures and associated modes of meaning and wording) but to be aware of their ideological force: to be aware, in other words, of how society is constructed out of discourse - or rather, out of the dialectic between the discursive and the material. (Halliday, 1996, p.366)

Martin, along with other members of the Genre School, claims textual structure lays outside this context and hold that the ‘situational choices’ (Halliday’s field, tenor and mode) are controlled by the text structure (context of culture / social purpose / Genre). (Martin, 1992) Hasan has claimed that, for Martin:

schematic structure is the expression of purpose or the goal of the social activity. (Hasan, 1995, p.246)

The aim of the Genre School is clearly to place form as the dominant feature, rather than in a ‘teleological’, ‘metaredundant’ or ‘didactic’ relationship with the other components of register and the language system. Hasan has undertaken a rigorous study of Martin’s work, from within a Systemic framework, and has condemned Martin’s views of connotative semiotics as ‘bemusing’ and inadequate as a workable model of semiotic theory. (Hasan, 1995, p.278-9) The critique is one hundred pages long and goes into great detail on dozens of points of weakness in Martin’s focus on Genre theory. Hasan supported the reading of Genre theory presented in this section of this thesis and hints that the Genre-based approach to language parallels the traditional grammarians’ concept of text as product rather than process:

What is amazing is Martin’s suggestion that these purposes expressed as elements of a schematic structure ‘constrain a culture’s legitimate combinations of field, mode and tenor variables’ (Martin, 1985, p.252): Speaking informally he is claiming that the speaker’s conception of the overall shape of her talk determines what he or she is going to do, who will be taking part in it, and what the role of the language is in all of this! The question naturally arises: Where does the speaker’s conception of the overall shape of his or her talk arise from? I am at a loss to explain how this conception of Genre is less static, and why it is not guilty of treating text as a finished product rather than as a process. (Hasan, 1995, p.246)
Martin's stratification of language, in his 'connotative semiotic framework' is clearly at odds with Halliday's Systemic Functional framework, on which the theories of the Genre School are based. Hasan, Halliday's co-researcher, represented the differences between the two models in Figure 7.9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Martin's CS</th>
<th>Halliday's SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 ideology</td>
<td>context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 genre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 register</td>
<td>semantics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 discourse</td>
<td>lexicogrammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lexicogrammar</td>
<td>lexicogrammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 phonology</td>
<td>phonology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.9: Strata in Martin's connotative semiotic and in the Systemic Functional model (Hasan, 1995, p.272)

Martin attempted to justify the Genre School view in the major work, English Text (1992), hypothesising that the stratification of the planes is not linear (as indicated in the model), but that processes 'redound' between the strata, allowing each component to influence the others. Martin stated:

In this projection metaredundancy (Lemke, 1984) is reflected through the metaphor of concentric circles, with larger circles recontextualising smaller ones; the size of the circles also reflects the fact that the analysis tends to focus on larger units as one moves from phonology to ideology. Thus the tendency at the level of phonology to focus on syllables and phonemes, at the level of lexicogrammar to focus on the clause, a the level of discourse semantics to focus on an exchange or 'paragraph', at the level of register to focus on a stage in a transaction, at the level of Genre to focus on whole texts and at the level of ideology to focus on discourses manifested across a range of texts. More in the spirit of Firth than Hjelmslev, this projection lends itself to a reading whereby meaning is constructed on all levels, backgrounding the form/content dualities structuring Fig.7.1 & 7.2 (Martin, 1992, p.496)

Martin diagrammed this 'redounding' in the diagram reproduced in Figure 7.10:
The concept of ‘metaredounding’ does not appear to take into account Martin’s position that, in a ‘teleological perspective on text function’ the higher strata are:

better set up as superordinate to - rather than alongside or incorporated in - field, mode and tenor.
(Martin, in press, cited in Hasan, 1995, p.279)

It appears that Martin argues that metaredundancy, or a teleological relationship, somehow operates throughout all his strata but is at the same time somehow stronger at the levels above register, i.e. Genre and ideology. This position clearly places Genre as a controlling agent, directing the strata below, rather than in ‘teleological relationship’. This point is given weight, somewhat, by Martin’s later removal of ideology from the model, which leaves Genre as the only layer at which ‘text function’ might be ‘superordinate’ to register (Martin, 1997), as depicted in Figure 7.11:
In other words, social purpose is negotiated at, and is totally accounted for in, the strata of Genre. (The removal of ideology from the construction of social purpose is addressed later in this chapter.)

In Martin's own words his positioning of Genre makes it 'superordinate to - rather than alongside or incorporated in - field, mode and tenor'. Once again this positioning clearly places structure, as represented through Genre, as a controlling force over the components of register - field, tenor and mode. This appears to be incompatible with accepted Systemic theory, on which Martin claims the theory is built.

**Genre as a Skills-based Approach**

The positioning of structure as the controlling agent in language appears to allow for generalisations about dominant and favoured forms of language to take a central role in any subsequent view of language to emerge from the theory. As pointed out by Hasan, the favouring of particular structures treats ‘text as a finished product rather than as a process’ and risks favouring more powerful, dominant forms. (Hasan, 1995) This positioning of structure at the primary, hierarchal position seems to herald a return to traditional views of language use, albeit with a new, somewhat different set of grammatical ‘rules’. The situation is also exacerbated by the fact that Derewianka has
re-written Halliday’s Functional Grammar using traditional grammatical terminology. (Derewianka, 1998) The presentation of Systemic Functional Grammar as a traditional, rule-based grammar would appear to negate the rhetorical nature of Functional Grammar and present it as a prescriptive set of rules which must be adhered to in ‘correct’ language use. Such approaches to language appear to be out step with the Hallidayan Systemic Functional View of Language.

Hasan supports this reading of Martin’s Genre theory, claiming that Martin has abandoned the very tenets of the Systemic tradition:

> It seems to me that the Hjelmslevian premise of homogeneity, introduced on a pro tern basis for its convenience, ultimately exacts a price by forcing a conception of language which is surely not acceptable in Systemic Functional Linguistics without abandoning some of SF’s very basic tenets. It may well be that Martin believes those tenets need to be abandoned, but if so there should be some discussion: They should not be abandoned by default.
> (Hasan, 1995, p.197)

Martin places structure and form above, rather than as a contributing component of function. As pointed out by Kress and Hasan this clearly appears at odds with the traditional Systemic Functional model of language. (Hasan, 1995; Kress, 1993a) Hasan has criticised this separation of Genre and register and the notion of meta-redundancy (Martin, 1992) as having no theoretical basis within current theories of language.

> It would be one thing to agree that language participates in a connotative semiotic, functioning as the expression form of context of situation; it is quite another proposition to suggest that language itself is the expression plane of its own varieties; this would run counter to the notion of register in the sense in which that term has been used by Halliday from the early 1960’s to date. And no one to my knowledge has yet shown any reasons for not thinking of register as a variety of language.
> (Hasan, 1995, p.198)

Martin’s notion of Genre as the guiding influence at a higher order contradicts Halliday’s notion of a dialectic relationship between all the components of register and the language system. For Halliday form follows function, it does not control it. Although Martin claims that the relationships between his strata are not linear, despite his assertion that they are hierarchal, he offers virtually no evidence to support his hypothesis. The hypothesis appears to have been established first and then an attempt has been made to arrange the evidence to fit the theory.

Hasan has presented a strong case, again framed within the very theories with which Martin works, to question the ability of Martin’s model to successfully represent the social processes at work in the construction of language. The issue of the social
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

construction of language lays at the very heart of Systemic Functional Linguistics. According to Hasan, Martin’s theory is especially weak when attempting to apply it to spoken language. Hasan criticizes Martin for failing to justify his position:

Language as conceptualised by Martin is in the first place autonomous; its genesis, and therefore its development, is not tied to the sociality of human beings; it is in fact, Hjelmslev’s homogeneous system, which just happens to satisfy the need of its speakers. How it comes to do this, Martin does not ask. (Hasan, 1995, p.275)

Martin’s theory falters in his description of the relationships between the components other than Genre. Martin proposes a fourth communicative plane, ideology, with Genre, register and language as its expressive form. (Martin, 1992, p.496) In this way Genre, register and language are seen as consequences of ideology, rather than ‘redounding’ throughout the processes involved. In this way ideology produces Genre, which produces register, which produces language. On the question of ideology and structure in Martin’s model Hasan made the following observation:

does the context plane of ideology motivate schematic structures? An affirmative answer would be amazing, because the schematic structure of a Marxist’s chapter will be pretty much along the same lines as the ultraconservative’s! (Hasan, 1995, p.282)

Hasan goes on to offer a view of this stratification which might just as easily critique the role of Genre in Martin’s view of language:

Disembodied ideology separated from the speaking subject is not a dynamic force; it is simply an abstraction of the most synoptic kind indeed. (Hasan, 1995, p.282)

While Martin claims that his view of Genre allows for ‘teleological’ direction, towards ideology, mixed with ‘redounding’ of components, the model - and Martin’s articulation of it - clearly sets each component out at different strata, linked in a hierarchal chain, but standing in isolation at the same time.

Just as in Hasan’s example of a Marxist text, the structure of the text is unlikely to determine the content. Both texts might well be structured in the same manner, as far as generic structure is concerned, but ultimately both the Marxist and ultraconservative seek to achieve quite different social purposes and the tenor, mode and field might vary
considerably. The question then begs, can generic structure truly represent (and thereby explain) social purpose in text?

It would seem that isolating such components serves to fragment the text and reduce the context of the language experience. This again seems to be at odds with the Systemic tradition, with its focus on context of culture and situation as intertwined and inseparable components of the meaning system. Indeed, Hasan calls the very question of ‘metaredundancy’ in Martin’s model into question, stating:

The notion of metaredundancy requires at least three strata of the same order, which is not found in Hjelmslev’s ds-language, nor is it to be found in Martin’s connotative semiotic. The structure of that semiotic is biplanar, quite irrespective of whether the planes are referred to as communication plane or as content expression planes. So while some of Martin’s planes have three levels permitting intraplanar metaredundancy, it is not viable to suggest as he seems to do that his content plane metaredundants with his expression plane; this would be a case of interplanar metaredundancy, and that would call for a semiotic which has at least three planes.

(Hasan, 1995, p.215)

This redounding appears to have been invented to ‘fit’ the theory, to identify the structures that Martin and Rothery (and other members of the Genre School) seek. As Hasan puts it,

the edifice of the series of connotative semiotics would be a harmless game if it were not being implied as it is that somehow this feature - which is so remarkably without demonstrated theoretical basis - is a revolutionary innovation as a result of which MCS manages to do things that synoptic systems such as Halliday’s, Bernstein’s, Hasan’s, and so on, are incapable of doing.

(Hasan, 1995, p.280, emphasis added)

By negating the impact of the components of register on textual structure Martin effectively removes structural choices from the full spectrum of Halliday’s ‘context of situation’ (the components of register) and grammatical structure is able to be considered as creating social context, rather than being directed by it.

The crucial point here is that Martin appears to offer little evidence for suggesting the hierarchal nature of his strata or for his assertion that his notion of ‘redounding’ between strata is grounded in actual analysis using either his own framework or that of Halliday and Firth. (Martin, 1992) Hasan has dismissed Martin’s assertions about context of situation as being theoretically flawed:
If Martin maintains his connotative semiotic claim without changing his concept of context of situation, then either

• he is being illogical in that there is nothing whatever outside such denotative semiotic - language that could be said to be context of situation;
• or he is making a false claim in saying that the context of situation aspect of his register is even approximately the same as that of Firth or of Halliday.

... clearly we cannot have a connotative semiotic of Martin’s kind.
(Hasan, 1995, p.208)

In Martin’s view Genre is identifiable by grammatical structure, using the level of language for analysis. It then becomes an articulated structural framework which can directly control the components of register and the language system. This clearly places Martin’s theory of connotative semiotics, and the positioning of Genre ostensibly as a controlling agent able to be isolated from context of situation, at odds with Systemic theory in general and specifically with Halliday’s notion of ‘realisation as dialectic’.

Hasan summarises this conflict thus:

The concept of realisation as a dialectic at the higher strata of coding, and the postulate of language as a multiple coding system in the Systemic functional theory, make the notion of connotative semiotic a la Martin, not only unnecessary, but unviable. ... SF does not need a connotative semiotic of this kind.
(Hasan, 1995, p.216)

The ‘redounding’ claimed by Martin can be seen to function in the way that the lower plane of ‘language’ is used to analyse and articulate the structure of the higher level of Genre, which becomes the overriding framework. The model does not, however, articulate just how the lower strata directly affect the structures of the higher orders. The lower orders are indeed relegated to a merely prescriptive role in providing the frameworks for the higher orders. As pointed out by Hasan,

the stratification of Genre and register, the collapsing of the social and the verbal, at both these planes, which in turn entails a questionable view of language, has a highly deleterious effect; It moves the whole issue of text structure and its activation from active, feeling, reacting participants co-engaged in some interaction to given forms of talk that represent the ways things are done in our culture, as if the culture is unchanging and as if the participants are simply preprogrammed.

This is somewhat ironic, for it was precisely to avoid these sorts of outcomes that Martin wished to reject my GSP approach, which too had its problems.
But I do not think that Martin - or any of his colleagues for that matter - have produced a better alternative where the reasoned and reasonable analysis of text structure is concerned.
(Hasan, 1995, p.283)
In responding to Hasan, Martin reiterated his theory of metaredundancy but once again offered little evidence to support his hypothesis. (Martin, 1997) In this later work Martin represented metaredundancy with Figure 7.12:

![Figure 7.12: Martin’s revised model of metaredundancy planes (Martin, 1997, p.8)](Please see print copy for images)

In the above revised model Martin removed the ‘superordinate’ ideology plane, accompanied with the following statement:

In earlier models of context (e.g. Martin, 1992), and additional layer of context was set up, referred to as ideology, to focus attention on the distribution of discursive resources in a culture, and the divergent ways in which social subjects construe social occasions. This modelling strategy does not appear to have fostered the dialogue among functional linguists and critical theorists that was intended ... For purposes of this volume, then, the metaredundancy model outlined [above] will suffice. In such a model, register (encompassing field, tenor and mode) contextualizes language and is in turn contextualised by Genre.

(Martin, 1997, p.7)

If Martin’s new model is accepted then his assertion of teleological relationships being ‘superordinate’ to register means that the only teleological relationship left operates at only one strata in a downward flow, from the level of Genre. There appears to be no ‘teleological’ relationship, or ‘metaredundancy’ in an upward direction and Genre remains as the ‘superordinate’ controlling agent in language.

In contrast Halliday (1996) has produced a diagram illustrating the Systemic Functional View of literacy acquisition reproduced below in Figure 7.13:
In presenting the model Halliday hints that literacy acquisition is not dependant on the mastery of ‘generic’ Text Types prior to the ability to blend Genres but rather learners move through what Hasan termed ‘levels’ of literacy in individual, context-dependent ways:

Leaving aside considerations of maturity, an adult moving into the literate world could operate from the start with concepts from any stage. This principle is clearly enshrined in Hasan’s discussion of ‘levels’ of literacy …

(Halliday, 1996, p.369)

It is also significant that in Halliday’s model the writing system remains at a lower hierarchy to other components. Structure, for Halliday, remains but one component of a complex system of meaning making, dependent on other components of the system as part of a complex, fluid process, rather than a concrete product standing in isolation.

Martin seems to offer few answers to the criticisms raised by Hasan, Kress or the points illustrated herein. Indeed, the general response to criticism by members of the Genre School has been that their theories are working well in practice.

This, of course, remains difficult to substantiate over such a short period. Children in schools often learn despite the efforts of teachers. Students have learned to read and write, to speak and listen, to do so critically and to take our understanding of literacy beyond its previous bounds throughout the periods of history dominated by various earlier, often discredited, conceptualisations of literacy and language education.
Hasan points out that the Genre School’s argument that their theories might need refinement but are working well in practice are illogical:

It is sometimes said that the proof of the pudding is in the eating: If Martin’s approach to discourse analysis has been so successful in its practical application, then this shows that he must be right. I disagree with the logic of this approach. For we do not know exactly when we have met the proof of the pudding! Practice can hardly be better than the theory permits; otherwise, the practice is better despite the explicitly held theory.
(Hasan, 1995, p.283)

Perhaps it is fitting here to repeat the quote with which the review of literature in Chapter 3 of this thesis is opened:

What is right in theory must work in practice. And if it does not there is a mistake in the theory: Something has been overlooked and not allowed for and consequently what is wrong in practice is wrong in theory, too.
(Schopenhauer, cited in Parker, 1985, p.7)

The analysis of data during this study suggested that Genre theory was implemented in prescriptive, formulaic ways in classrooms. The flaws in the theoretical framework of a Genre-based approach to the teaching of writing might offer some explanation of the flawed implementation of them in practice.

The metaredundancy claimed by Martin between register and Genre and the way context controls language usage appears to remain fragmented and hierarchal in his newer model. There is little point in insisting that Genre metaredounds with register and cannot be placed in higher order of importance if the focus of the theory does indeed place Genre in a position of hierarchal superiority in the minds of teachers. This higher positioning and articulation of structures as controlling influence clearly focuses on structure and grammar as the priority focus in teaching language. The roles of the other components of context, inherent to register, are placed in a subordinate position and the importance of the ‘dialectic relationship’ (Halliday, 1994) between all the components of context must be diminished.

As such, the very basis of the Genre theory, a Functional View of language based on Hallidayan grammar, becomes perverted and runs the very real risk of becoming prescriptive rather than descriptive. Prescriptive grammars, as the Genre School interpretation of textual structure might be considered, are by their nature bound to become rule-governed despite the best intentions of the original theories. As such, the
stratification of Genre as a controlling influence outside of the context of situation (register) carries a significant risk of being interpreted as being similar to a rule-based, traditional grammar similar to those in vogue prior to the valuable work of Chomsky in the 1950s in establishing a focus on the creation of meaning, rather than the observance of rules. This view of language clearly allows for structural frameworks (Pro-forma Text Type Scaffolds) to be viewed as primary agents for the prescription of language usage - that form should control content and the construction of meaning.

**Other Linguistic Concerns with Martin's Genre**

Gunther Kress, an influential pioneer of Genre theory, has also expressed concern over theoretical flaws in the Genre School's model of Genre. Kress became involved in the work of the Genre School whilst working at the University of Adelaide, in South Australia and was influential in the early days of Genre theory development. Kress identified two major weaknesses in the theories of the Genre-school in attempting to establish a more equitable pedagogy:

- A lack of concern for the broad domain of literacy and not just writing, and
- the question of an understanding of the range of Genres and their projected social structures in all the languages of the society.  
(Kress, 1993a, p.30)

For Kress a suitable literacy curriculum aimed at achieving global social and economic equity must consider four central points:

1) Equal importance to oral language and its place in education and society.
2) Central attention to the whole set of connections of culture, society and language, codings of value systems, structuring and realisations of systems of power, and to the possibilities of making meanings in language as such, and in the languageages of a specific plurilingual society in particular.
3) Relations of the various languages in that society in the existing particular configurations of power, and make available means of analysing and ... developing critiques ... and ... the possibilities of change.
4) Pose as a central question ... the relation between a language curriculum, society, and societal change in general ... concerning possibilities of fundamental cultural, social, economic innovation.  
(Kress, 1993a, p.29-30)
As one of the early pioneers of Genre research Kress is concerned with the social processes involved in the ‘composition of text’. Central to this end is the examination of power relationships in text composition focused:

not on the task being performed by or with the text, but rather on the structural features of the specific social occasion in which the text has been produced and ... these as giving rise to particular configurations of linguistic factors in the text which are realisations of, or reflect, these social relations and structures.
(Kress, 1993a, p.33)

In this way Kress has remained primarily interested:

in the realisation of relationships of power between ... the producers of the text, and in the linguistic form which results, in terms of both grammatical detail and overall textual form.
(Kress, 1993ap.33)

Kress’s research in Genre theory has led them to remain committed to Halliday’s placing of Genre as merely one component of register. According to Kress, rather than a controlling agent Genre remains:

one term which, together with others, forms the complex which constitutes significantly different types of text; to which I am happy to give the label ‘register’.
(Kress, 1993a, p.35)

Kress’s diagrammatic conceptualisation of Genre is reproduced below in Figure 7.14:

Please see print copy for images

Figure 7.14: Kress’s elements of the composition of text
(Kress, 1993a, p.35)
Cope has summarised one of the key differences between Kress's view of context and that of Martin thus:

Kress starts by describing the social relations between the participants before he begins to take apart a text. Martin, on the other hand, advocates 'a semiotic theory of the social' and starts with the text itself.
(Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a)

It is precisely this focus on text that Hasan argues collapses context into text. Rather than context controlling the structure of text the structure becomes the overriding focus. Cope's interpretation of Hasan's argument is that Martin's model:

makes it seem that text is a finished product to be described [and thereby prescribed by generic forms - author] rather than a process to be explained. All too easily, this can lead to a structural formalism which does not reflect the fluid social and textual relations that characterise text in context (Hasan, 1992).
(Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a, p.14)

Kress's conceptualisation of Genre, then, remains closer to the Hallidayan concept than the Martin Rothery model. Kress perceives Genre and Text Types to be different entities and only part of social and linguistic processes involved in the creation of register types.

As such, Kress remains critical of the Martin / Rothery conceptualisation of Genre, arguing that the focus on structural form actually undermines the stated goals of equity and social reform. This is a similar argument to that used by Callaghan, Knapp and Noble (1993), against the Rothery/Martin conceptualisation of Genre. For Kress, and the others, a focus on structure runs the very real risk of merely reproducing the most powerful, dominant social structures:

If attention is not given to the written Genres of all the language groups in the society, then the possibilities of using the language or literacy curriculum as a means of developing the possibility of a multicultural society will be unused.
Worse, the powerful Genres of the dominant cultural group(s) will be taught in an unreflecting fashion as if they were a politically, socially and ideologically neutral set of forms, as a kind of universal commonsense.
(Kress, 1993a, p.30)

Such a re-establishment of 'politically, socially and ideologically neutral' language norms harks back to the ways in which language was viewed prior to the work of Chomsky, Smith, Goodman and others. The danger that a focus on the structure of
written forms is likely to re-introduce the problems associated with prescriptive,
traditional grammars is obvious to Kress:

If attention is not given to literacy as such - to all the considerations around reading as much as
those around writing - then the producer-centred emphasis of mainstream linguistics will simply
be reintroduced into Genre work, with all its attendant problems.
(Kress, 1993a, p.30)

Kress also raised the spectre that education systems, especially given the conservative,
traditional history of literacy teaching which has dominated this century, are highly
likely to corrupt the focus on structure to mean a return to prescriptive pedagogies:

a curriculum based on knowledge of form is always more disposed to be taught via a more
authoritative and teacher-centred, rather than a less authoritative and child-centred, pedagogy.
(Kress, 1993a, p.31)

These early fears, as voiced by Kress, have recently been echoed by other Systemicists,
such as Kalantzis, Lankshear, Kamler, Threadgold, Luke, Lee and other proponents of
the evolving Social View of Language. (Kamler, 1997; Kamler et al., 1997; Lankshear,
1996; Lankshear et al., 1997; Lee, 1997; Luke & Freebody, 1999)

Indeed, Kress even warns that the dichotomy presented by many members of the
Genre School, between ‘progressivist’ pedagogies and their own, runs the risk of
lending weight to the ‘back to basics’ movement and working against the interests of
social reform:

Given that there is now a relentless attempt on the part of reactionary forces to reimpose older
pedagogies, one needs to be wise in attempting to establish what kind of pedagogy will produce
young adults who will need to find their way in an even more difficult set of social and economic
circumstances in the next two or three decades.
A simplistic choice between process or product (content) oriented pedagogies will not do. Skills,
knowledges, habits and dispositions needed will be those of analysis and critique; understanding
and acceptance of heterogeneity and difference; the ability to respond to social changes by
producing the requisite linguistic forms, or conversely to affect social changes by productively
using the resources of language to produce forms which aid the production of social change.
A pedagogy which is satisfied to leave knowledge of forms - even where this is accompanied by
explicit discussion of the social and cultural effects and effectiveness of forms - as a sufficient goal
will fail in terms of the larger pedagogical and social aims.
(Kress, 1993a, p.31)

An interesting point here is that Kress argues this dichotomy, generally presented as a
‘Whole Language’ vs. ‘Genre’ dispute, could actually prove to be the vehicle to prevent
the Genre School from achieving many of the benefits Kress perceives as resulting from
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

‘progressivist’ pedagogies. Indeed, Kress has indicated that theories should build on each other and lauded the:

positive effects which it [progressivism] achieved in terms of producing resilient young adults who have in so many ways proved to be extremely competent in coping with social and economic systems, which in their turn did not prove equally adaptable.
It is unlikely that the products of the older authoritarian pedagogic systems would have proved as competent.
(Kress, 1993a, p.30)

Another concern expressed by Kress is Martin’s ‘project of infinitely continuing to classify new Genres as a result of educational practice’ (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993c, p.31), a task bound to take up more time and resources as new Genres evolve and are identified. This problem is highlighted by the recent completion by Joan Rothery of her project to identify the Genres commonly required of students in secondary English classes. The project consumed a number of years of research and must now be monitored for emerging, ‘new’ generic forms. As culture and society evolves so, too, will generic forms. This on-going project runs the very real risk of producing the very ‘rules’ able to be adopted by practitioners seeking formulaic pedagogies and of being out of date before they are integrated into teaching practice.

The question of transferability of such projects also remains a problem. There appears to be no guarantee that the Genres demanded of a student at one location, or indeed in one district, or in one class, will be the same as those expected of another. Indeed, the fluid, dynamic nature of society and culture would seem to make this a highly questionable practice.

On the question of the theoretical disparities, between the various approaches within Systemics towards the notion of generic structure, Kress’s experience with both education systems and Systemic theory places him in a unique position to comment on the implications for literacy education:

But does this theoretical difference matter? It does matter in a social and cultural account, as the two approaches imply differing social and cultural structures and processes. I also believe it matters in terms of education, which is where the theory is making its impact.
The Martin / Rothery account necessarily tends towards a firmer view of generic structure, a greater tendency towards the reification of types, and an emphasis on the linguistic system as an inventory of types.
With such a tendency goes a corresponding tendency pedagogically towards an emphasis on the matter of form, and a tendency towards authoritarian modes of transmission.
...Given that in education modes of pedagogy have a fundamental role in the formation of the pupil-subject, I am certain that there are clear choices to be made...
(Kress, 1993a, p.35-36)
These concerns have been voiced repeatedly in the Australian context, chiefly from those involved in pioneering Process and Whole Language and literary approaches to the teaching of literacy. The Genre School responses generally have presented short, elitist, repetitive arguments that Genre the critics do not understand Systemic or Genre theory. Specific criticisms have rarely been answered. (Brock, 1998; English Teachers' Association NSW, 1996b; Grover, 1995; Kamler, 1997; Martin et al., 1987a; Martin, 1993, 1997; Morrow et al., 1994; Richardson, 1994b; Sawyer, 1993, 1995; Sawyer et al., 1998; Walshe, 1986; Watson & Sawyer, 1998) Despite Kress and Hasan's obvious credentials, in both Systemic and Genre theory, their concerns remain largely unanswered by members of the Genre School.

The key question raised by these issues is not so much whether Martin's Genre theory is valid within its own framework but rather that even prominent Systemicists raise the spectre that Martin's Genre-based approach to teaching writing is open to a formulaic, prescriptive implementation. Even the most evangelical Genre theorist is likely to agree that any move towards a prescriptive, formulaic view of language, with its inherent notions of 'correct usage' based on structure runs the risk of being a retrograde step in the teaching of literacy. It was this very type of teaching that student-centred, Process and Whole Language approaches worked diligently to displace from the 1950s onwards and which both camps, critical social theorist and progressivist, agree should be avoided. As is shown later in the following sections there have been other events in the evolution of Genre, and in turn Pro-forma Text Types, which seem to justify the fears alluded to above.

A Linguistic Power Grab

The shifts in linguistic theories heralded by Chomsky's development of a 'transformational grammar' in the 1950s led to a rapid decline in the status of linguistic studies and grammar in literacy education in subject English. These shifts were exemplified in the student-centred conceptualisations of Whole Language and Process-oriented pedagogies.

There appears to be compelling evidence that, within the Australian context, the emergence of Genre-based conceptualisations of literacy education are at least partially an attempt to re-establish linguistics as a dominant force in Australian education.
Much about this agenda of the Genre School is disclosed in their repeated attacks on 'progressivist' pedagogies, the very movements which freed students and teachers of the failures of traditional approaches. These attacks regularly feature mention of the lack of respect in progressivist pedagogies towards teacher knowledge in general and about grammar, in particular. In many ways the arguments are similar to the 'back to basics' movement, who advocate a wholesale return to traditional, Skills-based Approaches and Latinate grammar.

Once traditional grammar's place in education had been successfully usurped linguists had virtually no purpose or place within educational circles and were gradually replaced by educational theorists. The acceptance of Process Writing and Whole Language saw a shift in control of syllabus documents and political influence to educational theorists, generally associated with the newly formed education faculties in NSW universities during the same period. (For a historical overview of this process see Chapter 2.)

Systemicists have openly challenged the right of educators to retain control of literacy policies and theories, claiming that linguistics and the study of texts as social artefacts is a more fitting discipline for developing theories to be implemented in the classroom. This belief is implicit in the role of teachers as the apprentices of linguists proposed by members of the Genre School. (See Chapter 3) That Genre theory is seen as an avenue by which linguists and language, as an artefact, might be returned to a dominant role in language education is illustrated in the following excerpt from Martin's response to critics of the focus on structure in the then emerging Genre-based approach to writing:

The fact that Sawyer and Watson include no texts at all in their critique is symptomatic, and they are in good company - if it were not for the occasional consideration of children's texts from the point of view of handwriting and spelling most process writing publications would not contain any examples of children's writing, either, let alone analysed texts (e.g. Walshe, 1987; Turbill, 1982; Graves, 1983, 1984; Walshe, 1986; Cambourne and Turbill, 1987) Similarly Dixon, 1987 considers only a single text, and that is taken from Christie, 1984! Twenty years ago, this was perhaps forgivable. Many of the tools required simply did not exist. But since that time various schools of linguistics, especially Systemic theory, have developed socially based theories of language and language learning that are directly applicable in classrooms.

The problem is now not with linguistics but with education.

Most educators are either unable or unwilling to look seriously at language. They take it for granted in a way that has and will continue to make it impossible for them to achieve their goals. Genre theory puts language back into the picture.

(Martin et al., 1987a, p.20)
When combined with the Genre School’s proposals for ‘master/apprentice’ relationships in literacy education (examined in Chapter 3) the above quote adds weight to the notion that linguists within the Genre School have long been dissatisfied with their political influences in education and have sought ways by which to regain control of literacy and education in schools. In addition to Martin’s assertions about linguists taking control of political machinations and bringing about a new social order, he appears to be attempting to return linguists to their pre-Chomskian position of authority in language education.

Lending weight to the notion that Martin and the Genre School led a push by linguists to regain prominence is the fact that little recognition is given to past work, even to Chomsky’s focus on meaning, as leading the way to current theories. Added to this is the fact that detailed accounts of the theories used in developing Genre theory and Pro-forma Text Types remain largely unavailable to teachers. This is particularly true of detailed theoretical critiques of Martin and Rothery’s original Genre framework. (Macken et al., 1989a, 1989b, 1989c; Macken & Rothery, 1991a; Martin, 1992, 1993, 1997; Martin & Rothery, 1980, 1981, 1986, 1993; Rothery, 1989) The mere fact that much of what the Genre School has published justifying Genre and Text Types has been based on complex linguistics and appears only in linguistic publications precludes many teachers from engaging with the theories at an appropriate, deeper professional level.

Martin’s apparent bias towards attempting to prove grammar as a cure-all is revealed in much of his writing. As with much of Systemic argument, the aim appears to be to justify the use of grammar as a key teaching tool, rather than searching for educationally sound methods for incorporating literacy and language education into classroom practice. In answering criticism by Sawyer and Watson (1987) about the value of teaching grammar, where they cited research discrediting the value of such approaches, Martin merely claimed that ‘Functional Grammar’ was different and that:

no one has seriously studied the effectiveness of teaching this kind of knowledge about language in this way.
(Martin et al., 1987a, p.19)

Martin’s defence has been merely to state that no-one has discredited a Genre-based approach. He did not point out that no study has been done which proves its worth. Martin went on to cite one study, which claimed that the research which widely
discredited the drilling of grammar skills in classrooms as being ‘methodologically suspect’. (Martin et al., 1987a, p.19) This assertion about the value of grammar is quite surprising, given the extensive research indicating that knowledge of grammar and structure does not necessarily improve writing skills. (For an overview of such studies see McCormick Calkins, 1981; Watson & Sawyer, 1998) As Gee, an ardent Systemicist, succinctly stated:

It is a truism in the literature now, but one we nonetheless must hold constantly in mind, that a person can know the grammar of a language and still not know how to use that language.
(Gee, 1990, p.139)

No comprehensive, conclusive study examining the effectiveness of explicitly teaching ‘Functional Grammar’ has, to date, been done. The research would tend to indicate that specific knowledge of grammatical structure is ineffective in improving student writing.

The evidence would suggest that one of the prime motivations behind the work of the Genre School is their stated mission of returning linguists (and their appended linguistic departments in universities) to positions of power within the education system and society generally. Such deductions are supported by critical analysis of the other openly stated aim of the Genre School, the desire to address issues of social equity. In the following section it is argued that the Genre School’s version of social equity also places its members squarely at the top of the ladder of social power.

**Discourse, Ideology, Literacy And Morality**

Morality and social equity are deeply intertwined and imbedded in Systemic views of language education using discourse analysis and the explicit teaching of critical literacies. For the Systemicist ideology is interwoven into the social creation of meaning:

By ‘ideology’ I mean a social theory (tacit or overt, primary, removed or deferred) which involves generalisations (beliefs, claims) about the way(s) in which ‘goods’ are distributed in society.
(Gee, 1990, p.23)

Ideology is viewed as being key to grounding:

beliefs ... actions... and social worlds (reality), ideologies simultaneously explain, often exonerate, and always partially create (in interaction with history and the material bases of society and the distribution of goods. Since everything that makes us human in the honorific sense of the term (the
ability to think freely, believe, desire, feel, and create with others in a material world whose resources we share) is a 'good' in probably all, but at least some, societies, then ideologies are what construct not only human worlds but humans. (Gee, 1990, p.23)

A Functional View of language holds that, implicit in ideology are imbedded the influences of gender, class, ethnicity and other areas of conflicts of power. It is this manipulation of power, and the lack of it, through inherent ideologies in language that discourse analysts seek to expose and challenge, through the development of 'critical literacies'. Lankshear and McLaren claim for this to happen, Critical Literacy practitioners need to adopt 'sociological imagination' and:

- adopt a view that society is not merely structured, but that under capitalism, patriarchy, race and ethnic hierarchy, and so on it is structured in a way that creates conflict between the interests of different groups of human beings, and systematically privileges the interests of certain groups at the expense of others.
- It presumes that ideological representations of reality will typically mask and distort the 'real' nature of social practices and relations in their informal and institutionalised forms alike. (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993a, p.31)

By exposing ideology, through language features and structures, [and a stated control of pedagogy] Systemic linguists believe they can bring about social change, perhaps even a revolution in the very nature of humanity. Gee put it thus:

To the extent that ideologies are tacit, removed or deferred and self-advantaging, they are the root of human evil and leave us complicit with, and thus responsible for, the evil that is in the world. We cannot, perhaps, remove the evil, but we can remove our moral complicity. We do this, I believe, by doing a species of linguistics, namely discourse analysis (explicating our tacit and removed / deferred theories, especially our tacit and removed / deferred ideologies). That is why linguistics is a moral matter and why, in the end, to me, linguistics matters. (Gee, 1990, p. 24)

These notions of leadership in morality and equity, through linguistics have been echoed by other Systemicists. Many Systemicists believe that they must not only challenge the social order, but subvert and control it. Their perceived safeguard against the 'evil' which might spring from their own ideologies is meant to be in the supposedly open and deliberate critiquing of their own discourses. In his framework for 'governing ethical human discourse' Gee states,

if I hold a belief, make a claim, or engage in an action which implies a theory (as all beliefs, claims and actions do) which is (to a large extent) tacit and is at best a removed theory and at worst a deferred theory, and I have good reason to believe (or others argue convincingly that I ought to have a good reason to believe) that my holding this theory gives me or people like me (however this is defined) and advantage over other people or other groups of people, then my
continuing to hold this theory in a tacit and removed / deferred way is unethical.
I have an ethical obligation to explicate my theory (making it overt) and to engage in the sort of thought, discussion and research that would render it a primary theory for me.
(Gee, 1990, p.22)

In this way elements of the Systemic school believe they can (and do) police the influence of their own ideologies, discourses and discursive practices.

This is one of the areas of most contention within the debates surrounding the influence of Systemics within the NSW context. Opponents of the Genre-school criticise Systemicists for their lack of engagement with the ideas of others and for failing to criticise views expressed within their own disciplines, despite obvious gaps and disagreements between theories within the Systemicist framework. Reid summarised these concerns and raised questions regarding Gee’s ‘ethical principles’ in the following excerpt:

It is significant, for example, that notes to most of their [Genre School’s] articles cite each other’s work predominantly, rather than engage directly with alternative lines of inquiry. There is, of course, nothing particularly unusual or reprehensible about this; it is an accepted convention of much academic writing; but particular generic choices are involved here, based on protocols of discipleship and orthodoxy.
[goes on to give examples of refutations of theory and agreement on disagreements between the Genre school]
... By seeming to proceed as if these revisionist statements were not in general circulation, Systemic linguists risk leaving themselves open to the charge of ignoring inconvenient criticisms or collaborative possibilities in the interests of doctrinal solidarity.
(Reid, 1987, p.2)

Members of the Genre school regularly meet at Universities in NSW and Victoria in order to plan strategies for achieving influence over educational policies in state education systems. Martin, one of the most influential of all Systemicists within the Australian context, has gone so far as to criticise his colleagues for failing to act quickly enough to suit his own agenda. Martin’s major work on Genre theory ends with the admonition:

Where critical linguistics has fallen short of evolving into a form of social action lies in its observer as opposed to an intruder role.

Even in educational contexts critical linguists have tended to stand back and let teachers and consultants do the work of changing education transmission (see Hasan & Martin 1989:3), being somewhat reluctant to shunt themselves between theory and practice.
As far as linguistics as social action is concerned this is not adequate. The theory has to be developed to the point where it informs interventions in political processes - where critical linguists take charge for example of public relations for the ANC [African National Congress] or intervene directly with education ministers in curriculum debates. This involves developing
appropriate theories of semiotic subversion - How can critical linguists de-automate facilitation? How can they fill in disjunctions (i.e. ideologically motivated gaps in the ways in which field, mode and tenor combine)? How can they evolve Genres which will challenge power? How can they distribute them?

...in Hjelmslev’s words:

_Humanitas et universitas_

(Martin, 1992, p.587)

Martin’s position appears to conflict with notions of Critical Literacy and with a Social View of Language, which hold that imbalances in power relationships perpetuate inequity. Such an approach to ‘liberating language education’ would appear to be the antithesis of the work of respected literacy educators such as Paulo Friere, where the key is held to lay in empowering students to take control of processes themselves and seek ways for them to voice their own ideologies and gain power over their own lives using language. Indeed, such approaches generally seek to acknowledge and offer power to the home ideologies of the oppressed, rather than seeking to offer it through conformity to more powerful ideologies, as suggested by Martin. In many ways the Systemicist argument appears to parallel Bernstein’s ‘cultural deficit’ model, whereby a learners’ home discourse is viewed as inferior and the need for conformity is reinforced.(Bernstein, 1977; Halliday, 1978; Street, 1995)

As such equality lays in conformity to the dominant ideologies and denies equity for learners’ home ideologies. The faith of Systemicists’ views of the validity of their own perceptions of ideological and political power and their belief of their right to regulate the ‘social goods’ of language by direct political intervention and manipulation of curriculum, often subversively, appears to be at odds with Gee’s ‘First Principle Governing Ethical Human Discourse’:

‘First Principle Governing Ethical Human Discourse’. That something would _harm_ some one else (deprive them of what they or the society they are in view as ‘goods’) is _always_ a good reason (though perhaps not a sufficient reason) _not_ to do it.

(Gee, 1990, p.22)

Perhaps of even greater concern is the fact that members of the Genre school have already organised subversions and deliberately infiltrated the school system in Australia, in order to further their own agenda. Such subversions emerged during data collection and analysis, as exemplified by the retention of Systemic Functional Grammar in NSW syllabus documents and the imposition of a Functional View of
Language and a Social View of Language within DET literacy policies. (See Chapter 5) Members of the Genre School openly admit to such subversions of the DET as an attempt to control the professional work of teachers. They also admit that their actions are, at best, questionable when compared to modern educational practice:

> group members knew they needed to **strengthen their foothold in the school system itself**, if they were to refine their concepts and demonstrate their validity. This Genre-based approach might, on the surface at least, **appear to be the antithesis of liberal education practice**, but in real terms it was soon to prove itself a revolutionary step forward. It might be unashamedly explicit, and appear to leave nothing to chance.

> It might not appear to embody liberal educational psychology and progressivist pedagogy. But it did not align itself with the reactionary ‘back to basics’ movement. More importantly, it soon gained the support, not just of teachers who had consistently rejected the progressivism of the process methods, but also of those who had been struggling for a long time to make this process-based pedagogy actually work.

>Cope et al., 1993, p.239-240 emphasis added

Cope made the broad generalisation that the Genre movement, in subverting the education system and removing ‘progressivist’ pedagogies from policies had the:

> support, not just of teachers who had consistently rejected the progressivism of the process methods, but also of those who had been struggling for a long time to make this process-based pedagogy actually work.

>Cope et al., 1993, p.240

Such claims are unlikely to be justifiable. Process and Whole Language pedagogies presently enjoy widespread support throughout Australia and other countries, as demonstrated by the popularity of networks such as Teachers of Whole Language Support groups (TAWLS) in a number of organizations throughout both the United States and Australia. Memberships of TAWLS in organizations such as Frameworks, the National Council of Teachers of English and the Australian Literacy Educators Association clearly indicate that many teachers feel they have made the pedagogies ‘actually work’ - whatever that might mean.

Having briefly questioned the motivation of the Genre School in seeking to take control of educational policies in NSW it now remains to critique differences revealed by the literature between Genre theory (after Martin, Rothery, Macken, Derewianka, Callaghan, Cope and Kalantzis et al.) and the theoretical framework on which it is meant to be based, the work of M.A.K. Halliday.
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

*The Knowledge Trichotomy*

The tactics of the Genre School to gain influence, both within academic and political circles, are worthy of examination. For the first time in the history of the NSW DET a single pedagogy has become official policy. By publicly adopting a Functional View of language and the Genre-based approach to writing as the sole ‘official’ approaches to teaching literacy the NSW DET has implicitly adopted the criticisms and rejection of ‘progressivist’ approaches, including Process Writing, Whole Language. The denial of the influence of previous theoretical frameworks, both in policies and theories, has serious implications for the body of knowledge which informs professional literacy educators.

Of major concern in Genre School’s criticisms of ‘progressivist’ pedagogy is the blanket, almost personal, loathing displayed against Process and Whole Language approaches in the literature aimed at establishing the credentials of Genre as a worthy pedagogical successor. Indeed, much of the Genre School criticisms of ‘progressivist’ pedagogies claim that the reduced focus on grammar and structure has impacted negatively on educational outcomes. (For examples of such arguments see Callaghan *et al.*, 1993; Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Christie, 1986; Christie, 1996, 1990b; Christie & Martin, 1997; Cope, 1988; Cope *et al.*, 1993; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a, 1993c; Gee, 1990; Hasan & Williams, 1996b; Kamler, 1995; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993b; Luke, 1988, 1993; Macken, 1990; Macken *et al.*, 1989a; Macken & Rothery, 1991a; Martin *et al.*, 1987b; Martin, 1993; Martin & Rothery, 1980, 1993; Ravelli, 1996; Rothery, 1989; Threadgold, 1995, 1997)

Cope and Kalantzis (1993), in introducing a major collaboration between the major players of the Genre School, depicted Genre theory as a new ‘direction’, rather than as an extension of established theory:

Genre theorists all believe that Genre literacy leads to a third pedagogical direction, beyond traditional and progressivist curriculum.
(Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a, p.9)

Such an interpretation of the evolution of literacy pedagogies can be represented in the diagram contained in Figure 7.15:
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

It is argued in what follows that such divisions in educational theories have negative implications for the knowledge-base of the profession and, therefore, teacher practice, teacher preservice education and the development of policies.

The Genre School view of a contested evolution of literacy pedagogy creates a dichotomy between Genre theory and ‘progressivist’ approaches. Arguments have generally revolved around an ‘either / or’ style of dispute. Instances of theorists and practitioners seeking to use both schools of thought to inform practice are rare. In this way Genre theory is viewed as incompatible with what Genre theorists term either ‘traditional’ or ‘progressivist’ approaches. This is despite the fact that much of the pedagogical approaches adopted by the Genre School are based on Process and Whole Language approaches, developed during the 1970s and 1980s. Brainstorming, concept mapping, graphic outlines, modelled writing, joint construction, independent construction, group work, discussion, editing, reworking are all methods developed by teachers using Process and Whole Language approaches and have been whole-heartedly adopted into the ‘curriculum cycle’ model developed by Martin and Rothery. (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988, p.; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a, p.11) Such an ethos amongst literacy educators appears to deny the historical influences of both Systemic and ‘progressivist’ frameworks on each other.
On the Shoulders of Giants

*If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.*

*Sir Isaac Newton, 1642-1727.*

(Anstey & Bull, 1996; Australian Language and Literacy Council, 1995; Richardson, 1995) This denial, of the value of the ‘theories of others’, attempts to deny professional literacy educators the ability to draw on a rich, wide-ranging body of knowledge to inform their teaching practice. Such a denial of the validity of other fields of knowledge seeks to disempower teachers as professionals, given that professionals need access to a wide ranging knowledge base in order to better meet the needs of their clients. (See Chapter 3)

In stark contrast to the Genre School approach, Process and Whole Language proponents have sought to incorporate Genre theory and ‘Functional Grammar’ into their teaching philosophies and approaches. (See, for example, Turbill *et al.*, 1991; Watson & Sawyer, 1998; Wing Jan, 1991a, 1991b) Indeed, the Whole Language based *Frameworks*, probably the most successful of all Australian teacher professional development programs, incorporates detailed components dealing with Genre theory and ‘Functional Grammar’. (Turbill *et al.*, 1991) Reactions against pedagogies of the past may well have be necessary to promote deeper critique and understandings of established thought and it is certainly not unusual for animosities to develop between rival camps. As Misson has stated:

> It is usually a feature of anything that is ‘post’ that it throws the certainties of whatever it is ‘post’ to into doubt.
> (Misson, 1998, p.144)

However, such reactions can be damaging and balance between the old and new would seem prudent. It is fitting here to consider the words of Foucault, one of the great influences in critical discourse analysis. Foucault warned of the dangers of setting up
opposing dichotomies between the new and the old, without carefully considering what
the old has to offer:

I think that there is a widespread and facile tendency, which one should combat, to designate that
which has just occurred as the primary enemy, as if this were always the principal form of
oppression from which one had to liberate oneself. Now this simple attitude entails a number of
dangerous consequences:

First, an inclination to seek out some cheap form of archaism or some imaginary past forms
of happiness that people did not, in fact, have at all... there is in this hatred of the present or the
immediate past a dangerous tendency to invoke a completely mythical past.

Second, there is the problem raised by Habermas: if one abandons the work of Kant or
Weber, for example, one runs the risk of lapsing into irrationality.

... If it is extremely dangerous to say that Reason is the enemy that should be eliminated, it
is just as dangerous to say that any critical questioning of this rationality risks sending us into
irrationality.
(Foucault, 1984)

As a potent example of the dangers of total reliance on ‘new’ rationality, Foucault cited
one of the greatest social injustices ever to be ‘rationalised’ by its perpetrators:

One should not forget - and I am not saying this in order to criticize rationality, but in order to
show how ambiguous things are - it was on the basis of the flamboyant rationality of social
Darwinism that racism was formulated, becoming one fo the most enduring and powerful
ingredients of Nazism. This was, of course, an irrationality, but an irrationality that was at the
same time, after all, a certain form of rationality ...
(Foucault, 1984, p.249)

This is not to dare to compare the issues here with the Holocaust, but merely to indicate
that there are dangers in denying the richness and opportunities presented by opposing
theories or views.

It is possible to argue that the faith that the Genre School show in their own
theories (despite the obvious questions which arise from their work) and the contempt
they have expressed for ‘progressivist’ pedagogies can be argued to contain a certain
‘rationality’ of argument and disregard for established knowledge. (For examples of
argument which are dismissive of ‘progressivist’ theories see Callaghan et al., 1993;
et al., 1993; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a; Gee, 1990; Hammond, 1990; Kamler, 1995;
Lankshear & McLaren, 1993b; Luke, 1988; Martin et al., 1987b; Ravelli, 1996;
Rothery, 1989; Threadgold, 1995)

Such a ‘rationality’ towards professional knowledge would seem to have greatly
influenced the Genre School’s decisions to intervene in political and systemic processes
in education, as evidenced in this study. It also is possible to argue that it may be
responsible for the ways in which the Genre School has consistently refused to criticise its own work or to respond more fully to the criticisms of others. There is also some evidence that the kind of ‘rationality’ described by Foucault above may be responsible for the denial of influences and benefits of past theories towards building a healthier professional knowledge-base.

Despite the constant criticisms of progressivist pedagogies by members of the Genre School it became apparent during the course of this study that their work has been greatly influenced by the work of ‘progressivist’ theorists. Evidence of the influence of ‘progressivist’ pedagogies on Genre theory can be found in the models of writing pedagogy developed by the two camps. The following Figures 7.16, 7.17 and 7.18 contain reproductions of the most popular models of writing pedagogy produced by both the Process Writing movement and the Genre School. The diagrams are presented in the chronological order in which they were produced:

Please see print copy for images

Figure 7.16: Walshe’s model of process writing
(Taken from Turbill et al., 1994, p.5)
Many of the features of the curriculum cycle bare striking resemblance to the features of the Process Writing model, drawn up more than a decade earlier. Each model contains three distinct phases with similar components in each. The development of the Process model has been well documented over the years and is based on psycho-linguistic and
educational research. (See Chapter 3) In presenting the curriculum cycle the Genre School members did not acknowledge the sources or reasons for the inclusion of the various steps contained in their model. (Callaghan et al., 1993; Callaghan & Rothery, 1988; Derewianka, 1990; Macken, 1990; Macken et al., 1989a; Martin & Rothery, 1980; Rothery, 1989) It would appear reasonable, given the obvious similarities, to assume that at least some of the stages of the curriculum cycle were influenced by the innovations of ‘progressivist’ pedagogies.

In addition, two of the methods advocated by the Genre School are ‘modelled writing’ and ‘joint construction’ of texts. These approaches were pioneered by Process Writing theorists such as Donald Graves, Bob Walsh, Jan Turbill and Brian Cambourne among others. There have been numerous resource books containing these as recommended strategies over the years, including the Whole Language professional development course Frameworks. (Cambourne, 1988; Goodman, 1986; New South Wales Department of Education, 1979, 1987; Torbe, 1980; Turbill, 1983; Turbill & Butler, 1994; Turbill et al., 1994, 1991; Walshe, 1981a, 1981b, 1986, 1994, 1998, 1981c; Watson, 1987; Wing Jan, 1991a, 1991b)

The influence of earlier work has also been acknowledged by Derewianka (1990) in her extremely popular text Exploring How Texts Work. Derewianka’s book is aimed at teachers and has enjoyed more than a dozen reprints by the Primary English Teachers’ Association since it was first published. Perhaps some of its appeal to teachers is due to the way in which Derewianka attempts to fit a Functional View of Language into the established broader body of professional knowledge. Like Halliday and Hasan, Derewianka warns against formula driven approaches in literacy pedagogy:

**HOW MIGHT YOU USE A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM?**

A functional approach to language does not advocate teaching about language by handing down prescriptive recipes. Rather it is concerned with providing information about the development of effective texts for particular purposes, and providing it at the point of need within the context of real, purposeful language use.

A functional model of language can be drawn upon during classroom activities based on a ‘process’ or ‘whole language’ philosophy - wherever children are engaged in the construction of texts and opportunities are created for explicit discussion of these texts. Such opportunities might occur, for example, during the modelling of a text, during a shared book activity, during the construction of a class text, or during a conferencing session.

(Derewianka, 1990, p.5)
Derewianka’s work urges teachers to implement a Functional approach to language in holistic ways, concentrating on meaning, avoiding rules and a focus on convention and to continue to utilise many of the techniques developed by ‘progressivist’ pedagogies, such as group work, conferencing and the reading of real books, rather than sterile school texts which convey little of real world experiences to children. Derewianka even goes so far as to articulate the ways in which a Functional View of language actually builds on Whole Language and Process approaches, as shown in the following excerpt:

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO LANGUAGE?

- A functional model of language complements modern classroom practice based on holistic approaches to language teaching and learning.
- Like Whole Language, it is interested above all in meaning, not in empty conventions.
- Because meaning is found within a text as a whole, a functional model of language describes how language operates at the text level, not at the level of individual words and sentences in isolation.
- A functional approach to language stresses how meanings are made in conjunction with other people. This strongly supports the small groupwork and conferencing practices of today’s classrooms.
- It is concerned with real language used by real people - not schoolbook exercises contrived purely to teach some point of grammar, or reading texts devised to teach some aspect of reading.
- It is not interested in simply teaching language for the sake of teaching language. Rather, it demonstrates how language operates in all areas of the curriculum.
- In primary classrooms today, there is an emphasis on writing for specific purposes. A functional approach to language attempts to show how texts can most effectively achieve these purposes.
- Children today are also encouraged to write with a particular audience in mind. A functional model describes how texts will vary according to whom you are addressing and how distant the audience is.
- Perhaps most importantly, the knowledge of language provided by a functional model helps us to identify what children’s strengths are and to make clear and positive suggestions as to how they might make their texts more effective, instead of vague, superficial comments or mere corrections of spelling and punctuation.
- If children have an explicit knowledge of what language resources are available, they are in a better position to make informed choices when developing texts of their own.

(Derewianka, 1990, p.4-5)

In describing the curriculum cycle for implementing Genre-based teaching in the classroom Derewianka even goes so far as to recommend ‘immersion’ in meaningful texts as an important strategy in both the preparation and modelling stages. (p. 6 &7)

This is clearly a reference to Cambourne’s condition of ‘Immersion’, taken from his well-known model of the conditions of Whole Language learning. (Cambourne, 1988)

During the joint construction and independent construction stages of the curriculum cycle (p.7-9) Derewianka recommends many of the conferencing, editing, revision and drafting strategies originally articulated in models developed by Process Writing theorists Walshe and Turbill. (See Chapter 3)
As Kress, one of the original contributors to the Genre School framework, has put it in dissenting with the Martin view of Genre and the anti-progressivist stance which normally accompanies it:

process oriented pedagogies had a revolutionary potential and a liberating effect. At the same time this progressivism promised to produce citizens more able to adapt to what were seen, entirely correctly, as decades which would bring a period of rapid and unpredictable change.

Progressivism in that form was thus not simply some left-liberal subversive ideology, but was grounded in quite pragmatic social and economic goals. In the current reaction to its effects it is very easy - for both left and right - to overlook completely the positive effects which it achieved in terms of producing resilient young adults who have in so many ways proved to be extremely competent in coping with social and economic systems, which in their turn did not prove equally adaptable.

It is unlikely that the products of the older authoritarian pedagogic systems would have proved as competent.

(Kress, 1993a, p.30)

Kress pointed out that a narrowly focused competition, between Process and Genre, works against the interests of both views of language and learning by allowing those who seek to implement traditional, Skills-based Approaches to once again seize control of the curriculum. Kress also stresses the importance of developing more involved, complex and eclectic views of language and learning:

Given that there is now a relentless attempt on the part of reactionary forces to reimpose the older pedagogies, one needs to be wise in attempting to establish what kind of pedagogy will produce young adults who will need to find their way in an even more difficult set of social and economic circumstances in the next two or three decades. A simplistic choice between process or product (content) oriented pedagogies will not do.

(Kress, 1993a, p.31)

Hasan, Kress, Kamler, Kalantzis and Cope have all expressed fears about Martin’s view of Genre possibly leading to simplistic, formulaic implementation of prescriptive teaching methodologies by practitioners not familiar with the obviously complex theories involved in Genre-based teaching. (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Hasan, 1995; Kamler, 1997; Kamler et al., 1997; Kress, 1993a) The fear is, in effect, that teachers may do little more than revert to traditional, skills-based teaching strategies which were discredited by during the 1950s and 1960s. This study found that such fears may be well-grounded.

‘Progressivist’ pedagogies were developed specifically to counter such approaches during the 1970s and 1980s. Given that Genre-based approaches, such as the curriculum cycle, draw heavily from Process and Whole Language techniques, it seems prudent that ‘progressivist’ approaches be retained, indeed fostered, to ensure
Genre theory is not interpreted or implemented in a narrow, formula-driven, traditional, skills-based way.

There appear to be alternatives to the setting up of separate camps competing for sole domination of educational practices, policies and teacher education. True professional regulation offers the hope for the integration of eclectic theories into a truly empowering professional knowledge-base. That such professional regulation is possible in literacy education is evidenced by the work of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in the United States of America. The NCTE publishes, every ten years, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts*, aimed at informing and guiding teacher preservice education and professional development. The document is extremely eclectic in orientation and seeks to build a dynamic continuum of professional knowledge which is informed from a myriad of theoretical orientations. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p.63) Regarding the criticisms of ‘progressivist’ pedagogies by linguists the 1996 Committee stated:

> Although ‘process’ has become a negative word in many people’s lexicon, these guidelines reflect a perspective that recognizes that language use is a process: a process that begins with the use of oral language in very young children, and continues throughout life; a process that is holistic (itself a controversial term) and integrates the traditional ‘language arts’ of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Research and theory in the field of linguistics from the last ten years have added support for this belief that undergirds both the 1986 and 1996 Guidelines. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p.3-4)

The committee pointed out that a nexus between new and old theories is vital to ensuring a healthy continuum of development for the profession. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996, p.63-68)

Rather than denigrating the work of earlier pioneers in educational theory, perhaps a more appropriate tactic, in the interests of true professionalism, would be to use existing theories and approaches to provide a springboard into new areas of professional knowledge, along the pathway of continuing professional knowledge. In this way a new path is not started afresh, bound to encounter many of the problems of narrowness experienced by those who came before, but continues on its way strengthened by, and well grounded in, tested and proven professional contexts. One does not have to support all theory that came before, but it is wise to learn what good it has to offer as well as the problems it encountered along the path on which all in the profession journey. In contrast to the competitive model shown in Figure 7.15, a model based on such an eclectic approach might present the continuum represented below in Figure 7.19:
Unfortunately there is, at the time of writing, no mechanism for the regulation of the profession in NSW which might assist in drawing the various schools of thought together to allow such a democratic continuum to prosper.

Summary

Using the grounded theory it is now possible to construct an account of how the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment facilitated the situation where a questionable school of thought (the Genre School’s version of a Functional View of Language) came to be the sole approach advocated in NSW policies and to consider the implications for the greater body of knowledge which is meant to inform literacy education in secondary English classes in NSW schools.

The Genre School, while developing their theories undertook a mission of establishing a powerful foothold in the NSW education system. (Cope et al., 1993, p.239-40) The conditions of political control and professional powerlessness meant that this placed them in a position to exercise great influence over policies and teacher practice, without being accountable to the profession generally.

The condition of theory deficit in teacher knowledge, particularly about Systemic Functional Linguistics, ensured that teachers were unable to challenge the theoretical basis of Genre theory and Pro-forma Text Types more fully. This has been exemplified by the dearth of articles in the teacher-accessed English Teachers’ Association (ETA)
quarterly journal. The nature of the ETA journal can also be closely related to the professional and institutional phases of the disempowerment cycle. Inability to critique Genre theory and Pro-forma Text Types are also influenced by the conditions of the cycle of disempowerment on teacher preservice education. Even newly graduated teachers have little working knowledge of Genre theory.

The conditions of professional isolation, both physical and temporal, and system overload have exacerbated the condition of theory deficit. Genre theorists have remained isolated from the profession in that their theories are complex and relatively unaccessed by teachers. The political control of policies in NSW, as shown in the Ministerial withdrawal of overt Functional Grammar in schools also isolated the Genre School from the political processes which governed NSW policy decisions. Members of the Genre School responded to this isolation by developing strategies of survival, visibility and system subversion as outlined in Chapter 5.

Teachers simply have not had the resources or time to investigate, question or critique Genre theory and the use of Pro-forma Text Types. The lack of professional development and professional structures ensured that teachers remained isolated and fragmented professionally particularly on the issue of the implementation of Pro-forma Text Types.

Instead, this study suggests that the personal phase of disempowerment has ensured that teachers develop survival strategies aimed at creating the illusion of visibility – the illusion that they are meeting the theoretical and policy demands involving the new theories. This process involves system subversion, whereby teachers appear to subvert the intent of both Genre theory and DET and BOS policies in response to, and in creating, the conditions of the personal phase of disempowerment. Genre School proponents appear to have been successfully deployed their strategies of survival, visibility and system subversion in their bid to enshrine their own version of a Functional View of Language and Functional Grammar in NSW policies.

One of the outcomes of the effects of the disempowerment cycle on literacy theory in NSW has been the condition of alienation. The profession remains fragmented. There remains no avenue through which consensus on constructs of knowledge can be reached. Branches of knowledge are presented as either/or arguments rather than as potential contributors to an eclectic knowledge-base. It is likely that such animosities and dichotomies restrict advancement of all branches of theory. Policy documents now stipulate that a single approach to language be used in NSW schools
and teachers are ill-equipped to critique and build on the professional knowledge-base, particularly regarding Genre theory. This alienation of professionals from the theories which are meant to inform their work also appears to have adversely affected those theories, as evidenced by the inability of the profession to challenge the questionable theory-base of Genre theory within the Systemic Framework. Perhaps this is the most disempowering aspect of the cycle – the denial of the profession’s right to access, understand, critique, trial, evaluate and regulate its own theoretical knowledge-base.

These implications, of course, raise far more questions than they answer. It remains now to consider recommendations for further research arising from the study.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study sought to examine three very broad, but influential areas, of education. It is, perhaps difficult to imagine three broader areas than theory, practice, policy and preservice education. The areas investigated sit at the very heart of the most important outcome in school education – student learning.

In developing a grounded theory which attempts to ‘pull together’ such important areas of literacy education the study raises many issues which call for further investigation and research. There can be little doubt that the model presented herein could be refined, modified or changed dramatically as a result of any further research into relationships between components of the education and political system. Such further research might enhance areas of both teacher professionalism and student learning regarding literacy and language education in secondary English classes. There is also the possibility that the grounded theory developed may have application for professions other than teaching and this possibility requires further investigation. The following are areas and issues raised by this study which are recommended for further study:

- Replication of this study, on a wider scale and in more depth, in order to further investigate the findings of this project.
- The theoretical basis for a Genre-based view of a Functional View of Language.
- The theoretical basis for the use of Pro-forma Text Types in teaching English.
- Examination of the relationships among the conditions of the cycle of professional disempowerment, teacher morale and quality teaching.
- Investigation into teacher reactions to the cycle of disempowerment.
- Examination of policy developers’ reactions to the cycle of disempowerment.
- Examination of student teacher reactions to the cycle of disempowerment.
- Examination of teacher educator reactions to the cycle of disempowerment.
- Examination of political responses to the cycle of disempowerment.
- National trends in the professional disempowerment of teachers.
- International trends in the professional disempowerment of teachers.
- Comparison of the nature and structure of government and bureaucratic control of teaching compared with other major professions.
- Investigation of the involvement of teacher professional associations in professional development and policy development.
- Examination of the appropriateness of procedures for determining content of teacher preservice education programs.
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

- An examination of the benefits of ethnography and prolonged engagement in researching teacher actions.
- The nature and effects of policy development processes in school education in Australia.
- The nature and effects of teacher involvement in policy development in NSW.
- Comparison of assumptions inherent to theories and policies about secondary English teacher knowledge regarding literacy and language education with actual teacher knowledge.
- Examination of the implementation of new theories and policies by teachers in NSW secondary schools.
- Identification and examination of survival and system subversion strategies employed by teachers and policy makers.
- Examination of the influence of teacher alienation on teachers’ professional lives.
- The impacts of professional isolation on teachers.
- Examination of the impacts of the recent deluge of policies relating to the teaching of English in NSW.
- The role of visibility in NSW secondary English classes.
- Political motivation for fostering political control and professional disempowerment among teachers.
- Examination of the need for professional regulation in NSW secondary English teaching.
- An examination of the implications of proposed government controlled teacher accreditation in NSW.
- The nature and effects of DET regulation of teacher preservice education in Australia.
- Investigation of possible structures of professional regulation for teachers of secondary English in NSW.
- Investigation of methods for fostering greater teacher involvement in developing the knowledge-base of the profession.
- Investigation of methods for fostering stronger professional ties among teachers of secondary English, policy makers, teacher educators and educational researchers.
- Investigation of methods for increasing secondary English teacher access to detailed theoretical frameworks informing the various conceptualisations of literacy and language education.
Chapter 7: Implications & Recommendations

REFLECTIONS ON THE GROUNDED THEORY

If I had to do it again, I hope as editor I'd have the courage to push harder for a democracy of voices. This in part would involve staying with the mess and conflicts that teachers successfully mediate as they go about each day struggling to nurture horizontal, collaborative relationships in the environments in which they play and work together.

Too often tidiness and success are rewarded to the exclusion of the complex stories of the real lives of teachers who are frequently in a muddle, agonizing over both failures and triumphs. These are the details that count, but the tedium in facing them must also be acknowledged. Yet it is precisely at this level of the profession, in the democratic solidarity of teachers' lives and purposes, where I would hope to widen the circle of possibility.

(Pradl, 1996, p.223)

The above quote has stuck with me since I first read it during the early days of this study. I have had a deep concern that my own constructions regarding the lives of teachers do justice to the complexities they face each day. As a practising teacher I am all too aware that there are no easy answers and no permanent solutions to the problems which good education seeks to address. Still, in this process I must seek to offer some hope of solutions or of insights to the dynamic that is teaching.

For the last few years I have wrestled with my attempts to better understand and conceptualise the grounded theory I have presented here. During my journey I have attempted to question my own readings as well as those of others. My peers will judge my ability to do so. One of my greatest concerns has been dealing with what others have termed the 'sixth moment' of qualitative research, or the problem of narrative. (Denzin, 1997; Lincoln & Denzin, 1994) Knowledge and experience are rarely linear and sequential and my own constructions have been no exception, yet the problem remained at the end to fit them into a linear and stylised genre – that of the doctoral thesis.

My greatest fear has been that in meeting institutional demands I do an injustice to the informants who gave so generously of their time and energy. Much of what I have documented herein is able to be interpreted in ways which would prove upsetting to some of the informants involved in the study. Informants opened their lives to me and I was able to record many aspects of teachers' lives which few would be able to access. This was a serious trust by informants. They trusted me to represent their best interests. I am, after all, one of them. I remain concerned that these trusts, as is so often the case in education, are open to narrow interpretation and abuse. Theory deficits, survival and
visibility strategies, system subversions and aspects of alienation expose teachers to criticism when taken out of context of the nature of the grounded theory presented here. My constructions strike me as being somewhat negative when fragmented and considered in isolation. However, when viewed within the context of the school system and when options and alternatives are considered, I believe that this grounded theory of the disempowerment of a profession offers hope for change and improvement. Rather than criticising teachers knowledge or practice this study shows that if the cycle of disempowerment is to be addressed effectively then ways must be found to place teachers at the centre of professional processes. This study has convinced me that such empowerment of the profession is offered through the fostering of what Pradl called a ‘democracy of voices’ for teachers, based on ‘the democratic solidarity of teachers’ lives and purposes’. (Pradl, 1996, p.223) Regardless of the impact of my own constructions I have faith that teachers will continue to ‘mediate’ the ‘mess and conflicts’ of their daily lives and help to build on the wonderful traditions of their profession.

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