DESIGN AND PRACTICE: ENACTING FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

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LINGUISTICS AS SOCIAL ACTION

I have tried to practice linguistics as a form of social action, a practice which Halliday (e.g., 1985) has suggested cannot be other than ideologically committed. This practice dissolves the linguistics vs. applied linguistic opposition which has evolved in response to the hegemony of American formalism—whose idealizing reductivity comes nowhere near serving the needs of language users and their aids around the world. In its stead, linguistics as social action engages theory with practice in a dialectic whereby theory informs practice which, in turn, rebounds on theory, recursively, as more effective ways of intervening in various processes of semogenesis are designed (Martin 1997; 1998a). My own experience of this engagement has been mainly in the field of literacy, especially of writing development in primary and secondary school. Accordingly, I'll draw on this experience to address the sub-field 'Writing and Literacy,' writing as a linguist working across what is generally read and has been increasingly institutionalized as an applied vs. theoretical frontier.

WRITING DEVELOPMENT

The transdisciplinary literacy research to which I am referring evolved as an action research project in and around Sydney from 1979 (reviewed in Christie 1992, Cope and Kalantzis 1993, Martin 1993; 1998b, Rothery 1989; 1996), involving at key stages the Linguistics Department at the University of Sydney and the Metropolitan East Region of the New South Wales Disadvantaged Schools program. Our goal, as educational linguists, was to intervene in the process of writing development in primary and secondary school across various depths of time. As far as logogenesis was concerned, we attempted to provide students with knowledge about language (Carter 1996) that they could use in reading, writing, and editing. As for ontogenesis, we worked with teachers on the design of curriculum (learner pathways) and pedagogy (classroom activity). Finally, with

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respect to phylogenesis, we were committed to a redistribution of literacy resources and critical language awareness (Fairclough 1992) which we hoped would emancipate the meaning potential of the students we were working with, with a view to giving them ways of redesigning their world. To date, we have had some impact on the first two of these frames for intervention; only time will tell the extent to which the work has been socially empowering for the non-mainstream students involved.

To inform our interventions, we drew on the functional model of language in social context evolving around the work of Halliday (1994), especially the notion of genre (Martin 1992).[1] Genre was used to redesign both curriculum and pedagogy. As far as curriculum was concerned, we worked in secondary schools for example, to map disciplines as systems of genres (e.g., Coffin 1996; 1997, Veel and Coffin 1996 for secondary school history). From these maps, we developed learner pathways[2] as a guide for moving students through the uncommon sense discourses of the discipline. Our secondary school history pathway is outlined in Table 1.

The pathway begins with various recount genres designed to reconstruct personal and vicarious experience; it moves on through genres concerned with explaining cause and effect; it continues with argumentative genres; and it culminates with Foucauldian genealogy. (The general stages in each genre are indicated in brackets.) One critical factor in this development is the mobilization of grammatical metaphor (Halliday 1994; 1998, Halliday and Martin 1993, Martin 1993, Martin and Veel 1998)—resources for nominalizing processes, qualities, and modal assessments and resources for realizing logico-semantic connections inside the clause. Our work in this project convinced us that learning to read and write discourse heavily dependent on grammatical metaphor was the main linguistic task for teachers and students in secondary school; it is through grammatical metaphor that every discipline and institution we considered evolves the discourses which construe specialized knowledge and regulate populations (Christie and Martin 1997).

GENRE [staging]	INFORMAL DESCRIPTION	KEY LINGUISTIC FEATURES (Halliday 1994, Martin 1992)
personal recount [Orientation^Record]	agnate to story genres; what happened to me	sequence in time; 1st person; specific participants
autobiographical recount [Orientation^Record]	borderline - agnate to story & factual genres; story of my life [oral history]	setting in time; 1st person; specific participants
biographical recount [Orientation^Record]	story of someone else's life	setting in time; 3rd person (specific); other specific & generic participants

historical recount; [Background^Record]	establishing the time line of the grand narrative	setting in time; 3rd person; mainly generic participants (but specific great 'men')
historical account; [Background^Account]	naturalizing linearization rendering the grand narrative inevitable	incongruent external causal unfolding; 3rd person; mainly generic participants; prosodic judgement
factorial explanation [Outcome^Factors]	complexifying notion of what leads on to/from what	internal organization of factors; factors externally linked to outcome; 3rd person; mainly generic participants
consequential explanation [Input^Consequences]	complexifying notion of what leads on to/from what; hypothetical variant - if x, then these outcomes	internal organization of factors; consequences externally linked to input; 3rd person; mainly generic participants
exposition - one-sided; promote [Thesis^Arguments]	problematic interpretation that needs justifying	internal conjunction keying on thesis
challenge - one-sided; rebut [Position^Rebuttal]	someone else's problematic interpretation that needs demolishing	internal conjunction keying on thesis
discussion - multi-sided; adjudicate [Issue^Sides^Resolution]	more than one interpretation considered	internal conjunction keying on thesis; + internal organization of points of view
deconstruction [Foucault]	avoiding reductive temporal & causal linearization into grand narrative, effacing voices of the 'other'…	replace naturalizing time/cause explanation with 'spatial' discursive formation realizing episteme

Table 1: Learner pathway for secondary school history genres (by genre [including staging] and language features)

As for pedagogy, in order to provide the scaffolding needed to move learners along pathways of this kind, a teaching/learning cycle was developed, and refined for secondary school along the lines of Figure 1 (from Rothery and Stenglin 1994:8). In this model, setting up the social context of the genre and building field-knowledge are generalized across all stages of the model (Deconstruction, Joint Construction, and Independent Construction). The point of this cycle is to emphasize the instrumentality of shared understandings about disciplines/institutions in their cultural contexts for scaffolding to proceed effectively (Martin 1998b). In order to establish effective zones of proximal development, in other words, the knowledge that teachers and students can all assume is vital.

Figure 1. A teaching/learning cycle for secondary school (from Rothery and Stenglin 1994:8)
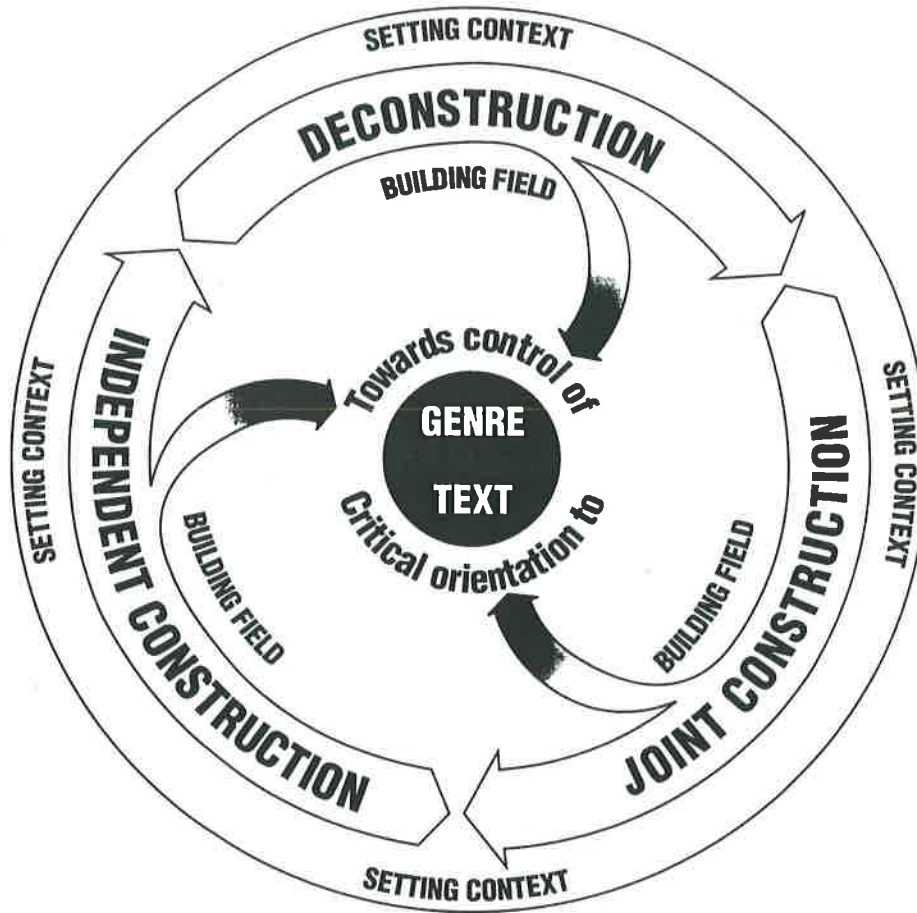
In addition, the goal of the model is explicitly oriented to both control of, and a critical orientation to, the discourse under consideration. This goal reflects a concern that genres be taught as part of a critical language awareness program (Fairclough 1992, Hasan and Williams 1996) which gives students opportunities to critique and renovate genres alongside mobilizing them to interrogate power relations in the culture (Christie and Misson 1998).

Bernstein's work on pedagogic discourse (Bernstein 1990, Christie 1998) provides a model for considering this pedagogy in relation to alternative positions in their idealized form, as reviewed for *ARAL* in Martin (1993).

Janks (in press) suggests a comprehensive framework for assessing language in education interventions of this kind, organized around the issues of access, dominance, diversity, and design. In relation to genre-based initiatives, *access* focuses attention on the extent to which pedagogy and curriculum redistribute control of genres to non-mainstream groups. *Dominance* deals with issues of power—which genres are selected, how critically is their social function addressed? *Diversity* considers the range and hybridity of subjectivities involved in institutional learning, for example, divergent orientations to literacy, and the problem of valuing non-mainstream discourses at the same time as offering access to mainstream ones. *Design* takes up the question of creativity and innovation: Does renovation indeed depend on mastery of a genre, and how do we provide opportunities for students to rework genres in line with their interests and goals? Our experience is that the approach to curriculum and pedagogy outlined above is flexible enough to address issues of this kind (Callow 1999). Naturally, some measure of redesign is to be expected as it is recontextualized in new social environments, for example, the challenge of reconstruction in South Africa, as outlined by Janks.

BEYOND GENRE

Functional linguistics is concerned with relating language to the social in a motivated way. The utility of genre theory in language education derives from its articulation as recurrent configurations of meanings, so that the social (genres) can be naturally related to language (meanings). Interventions in Australia have tended to move into education from the genre, and then move on to look more closely at meaning as resources permit. Underpinning genre with functional grammar has turned out to be a vexing political issue, with the print and electronic media and politicians voicing a variety of reactionary concerns (see Martin 1997 for discussion). And not much progress has been made with bringing discourse analysis (e.g., cohesion, following Martin 1992) and register analysis (e.g., Christie and Martin 1997, Eggins and Slade 1997, Martin and Veel 1989) into schools by way of mediating the connection between grammatical meaning and genre. Clearly, the next phase of intervention will have to address the problem of constructing functional grammar, discourse analysis, and register analysis as tools for teachers and students to use when relating language to the social, whether as part of literacy programs, or as subject-specific learning across the curriculum. Hasan's elaboration of Bernstein's work on coding orientations (e.g., Hasan 1996) will also have a critical role to play, especially in relation to Janks' diversity issue noted above.

Strong contributions are also to be expected in the area of evaluative language (Martin 1999b on appraisal), where frameworks have now been developed that systematically account for the construction of value in texts. This focus on attitude (embracing affect, ethics, and aesthetics) helps balance the ideational bias which often colors discourse analysis, especially where factual writing is concerned. It also calls into focus the issue of subjectivity and reading position,

since evaluative language is so patently sensitive to class, gender, ethnicity, and generation; as such, it provides additional scope for incorporating critical language awareness into language-in-education programs (as encouraged by the various papers in Fairclough 1992).

Alongside appraisal, multimodal text analysis is generating considerable interest (following Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, van Leeuwen 1999). Callow (1999) shows how a concern with both the verbiage and the image can be incorporated in various ways into the primary-school curriculum. Once we add sound and music to the picture, then a rich framework for considering texts from a wide range of registers inside and outside the school is enabled. One of the intriguing developments in this work has been the use of image analysis as a way into the analysis of language, especially functional grammar. The pedagogical implications of this reorientation should be a fertile area of Australian action research in the next decade.

Alongside the expansion of resources for analysis, new sites for intensive intervention seem to be emerging as we struggle to rebuild our post-colonial world. One Australian site has to do with English literacy for indigenous people; Brian Gray, Wendy Cowey, and David Rose are currently developing relevant curricula and pedagogy as part of a well-funded federal initiative, initially in South Australia (Gray and Cowey 1999). The South African challenge of providing access to education to the 'lost generation' is also of immense significance (Hart 1999). I would expect these sites of reconstruction and reconciliation, and related sites around the world, to pose challenges for the dialectic of theory and practice in language education. The dialectics will reshape our conception of what language education is about and how educational linguistics can help out.

DIALOGUE

We have been asked to comment on obstacles to our field (by the editor), and I can sum up my perspective in this regard around the theme of dialogue. For linguistics as social action to be effective, it has to evolve—to be recontextualized in relation to new problems and in relation to informing theories (Martin 1998a). To get this kind of dialectic working, we have to communicate across frontiers, as part of transdisciplinary initiatives. Based on past experiences, an interdisciplinary endeavour is unsatisfactory. Dividing up a problem so that it can be addressed by different theories doesn't encourage the dialogue we need. Rather, we need to move beyond difference towards overlapping and intruding expertise (Martin 1997). In Australia, for example, our efforts thrived in proportion to the amount of linguistics our educators could learn, and the amount of educational theory and practice our linguists could absorb. We tried to develop a linguistic theory of learning (genre-based pedagogy) and a linguistic theory of knowledge (genre-based curriculum); or, turning this around, we had to reconceive language development as pedagogy and social context as curriculum for purposes of institutionalized learning.

Looking forward (Wells 1994), ideal partners in a transdisciplinary dialogue of the kind I have in mind here would be systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and neo-Vygotskyan learning theory (the Mind, Culture, and Activity group [MCA] anchored by Cole and Wertsch). The SFL community starts with language and tries to interpret activity, image, and sound as meaning; the MCA group starts with action, and tries to interpret language as activity (with genres as cultural artifacts for example; Kamberelis and Bovino 1999). SFL and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) would also be promising partners. To the extent that regionality, technicality, and power-infested human foibles of various kinds discourage dialogue of this kind, then, to that extent, the evolution of linguistics as social action will be impeded—at the expense of those it is trying to serve. I see the lack of dialogue as our major obstacle.

The emergence of the field of applied linguistics itself is a major problem in this regard, since it symbolizes the alienation of formal linguistics from the needs of the community. I personally find it hard to imagine how a centripetal formalist linguistic discourse, however hegemonic it now appears, can withstand the marketing pressures of economic rationalism. For me, it puts the discipline of linguistics itself at risk—leaving it perhaps to applied linguists to rebuild departments a generation hence. This dialogic gulf is fraught with challenges and needs to be faced by linguists looking back to the examples of Fries and Pike and Firth for inspiration so that some disciplinary reconciliation might get under way (a kick-start is probably overdue).

One final obstacle I would like to highlight, concerns the lack of what I call positive discourse analysis (Martin 1999c). By this, I mean discourse analysis, however informed, which focuses on social change and how it comes about. It seems to me that we have no end of critical discourse analysis which focuses on power and how it oppresses. What we are lacking is a complementary focus on how social subjects design change—how Mandela and the ANC achieved their goals, how feminists have renovated our world, how Irish Catholics in Australia mobilized across social class, and so on. If we understood change for the better, then we could use these understandings to inform our interventions in whatever practice is undertaken. We could stop being so monologically depressing all the time when talking about language and power. More Foucault please, complementing Gramsci. We need to take heart in pursuit of our ideals.

METALANGUAGE

I also would like to comment on the training and development of future generations. I have strong views in this regard, and they run against the grain of current practice, which tends to emphasize eclecticism. This practice seems to be driven by the idea that no single theory can serve all needs; and so practitioners need to take a little speech act theory here, a little conversation analysis there, some critical discourse analysis here, a little variation theory there, some language acquisition here, a little gender analysis there...until a range of pressing problems

are somehow addressed. The problem with this catholic approach is that applied linguists end up as pidgin speakers of a range of theories, with theory so divorced from practice that any possibility of creolization is pretty much foreclosed. For eclecticists, the possibility of a genuine theory/practice dialectic is simply out of reach. Ultimately, this approach de-professionalizes the applied linguistics community as a whole.

Alternatively, perhaps complementing eclecticism, we could encourage the institution of a metalinguistic *lingua franca*, a common theoretical language shared across the community for purposes of working together on problems and feeding practice back into theory. For this investment to be worthwhile, the theory selected will have to repay the costs of both its technicality and the boundaries it places on what can be thought. In this regard, we should perhaps recall Kenneth Pike and the development of tagmemics in relation to bible translation around the world. Two critical properties of Pike's designs were (i) extravagance (a model of language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior), and (ii) fractality (redeployment of theoretical concepts across levels and modalities).

Currently, the model which most clearly partakes of these properties and which is already emerging as a *lingua franca* for discourse-oriented applied linguistics is Systemic Functional Linguistics, as developed by Halliday and his colleagues around the world. The best resourced part of this framework is Halliday's functional grammar (1994), which I would therefore recommend as part of the training and development of future applied linguists. The concepts on which this grammar is based are mobile ones, and can be redeployed across languages (Caffarel, *et al.* in press), across levels (including phonology, discourse, and context), and across modalities (including image, sound, music, and action). The model has also proven itself to be a practical one, regularly redeployed across an expanding range of practices (e.g., language teaching, forensics, museology, psychosis, computational linguistics, and so on; see Unsworth 1999.) Over time, I believe, the cost of learning the new terminology and theoretical design of SFL can be repaid.

In our post-Fordist information society, training has to include re-training: Pre-training is simply an initiation into a lifetime of in-service education. This expectation puts an additional pressure of adaptability on any *lingua franca* we promote. Future applied linguists need a flexi-theory they can adapt to new concerns; pre-training can't cover all contingencies, and it's just too costly to learn a new theory on the go for each new job.

Alongside SFL, how many serious contenders do we have for the *lingua franca* that I think we need? If none, why none? How can we encourage their development if SFL isn't up to the job?

Developing an adaptive framework for applied linguistics is one great challenge for a new millennium! The other great challenge, along with keeping

their own house in order, is that applied linguists will have the job of resuscitating linguistics as a discipline—one with a more socially responsible role to play in a post-colonial, post-modern world.

NOTES

1. Our social perspective on genre evolved from 1980 in ways that resonate with work by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993), Kamberelis and Bovino (1999), Miller (1984), Russell (1997), and Swales (1990); the development of the model is reviewed in Martin (1999a).

2. We would not argue that every student follow this pathway precisely, but we would point out that genres further along tend to presuppose resources in preceding genres and that this meaning potential has to be developed in other ways if the genres in question are in some sense 'skipped.'

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