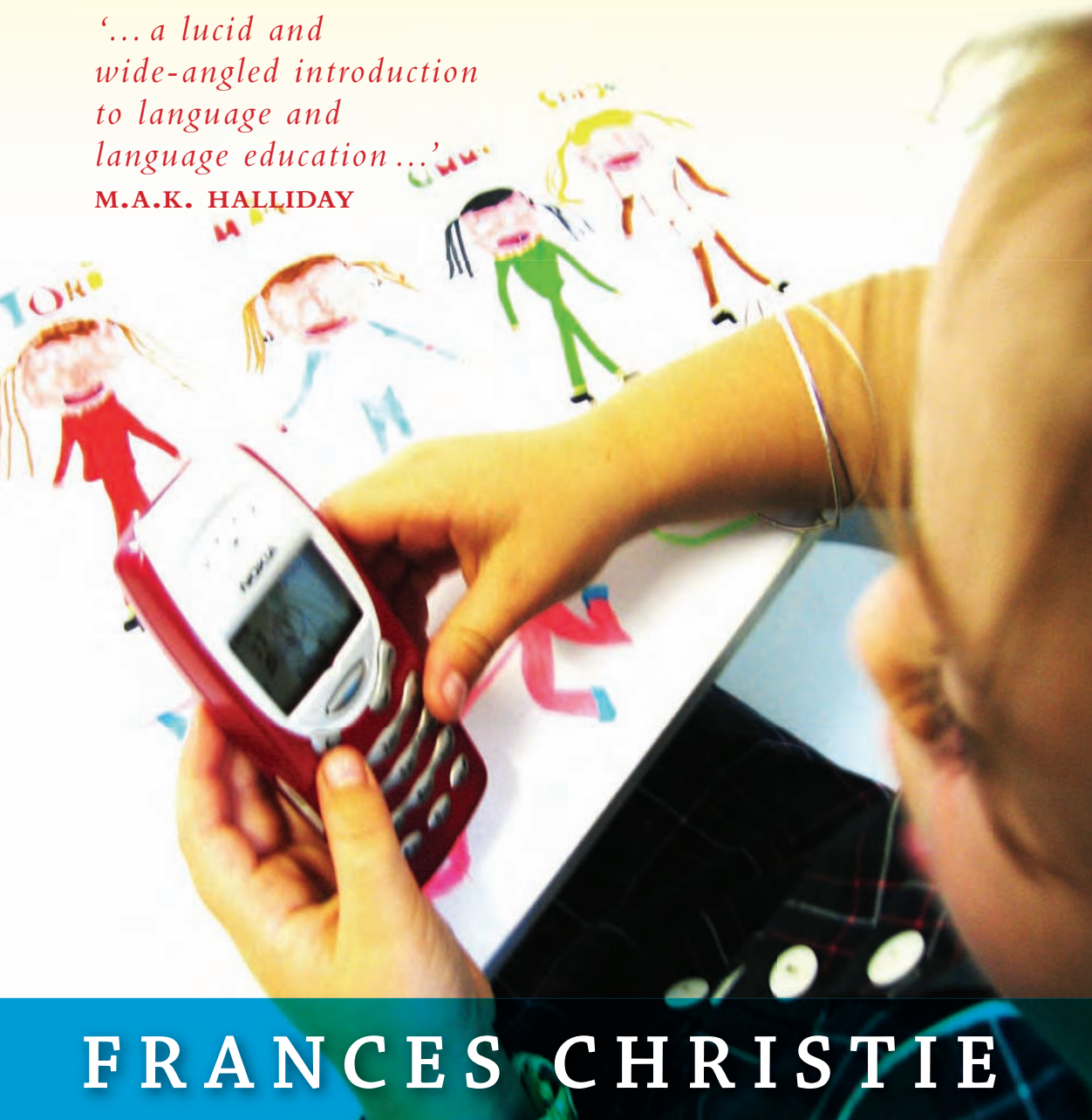
LANGUAGE EDUCATION in the PRIMARY YEARS

'... a lucid and wide-angled introduction to language and language education ...'

M.A.K. HALLIDAY



FRANCES CHRISTIE

Language Education in the Primary Years

A former school teacher, in the 1980s FRANCES CHRISTIE taught at Deakin University, where she developed new programs in Language Education at the Master's level. She later became Foundation Professor of Education at the Northern Territory University, and was then appointed Foundation Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne. Since her retirement, she remains Emeritus Professor at that university and Honorary Professor of Education at the University of Sydney. She has research interests in writing development, reading and its teaching, classroom discourse analysis, pedagogic models of grammar, and educational linguistics generally.

LANGUAGE EDUCATION

in the Primary Years

FRANCES CHRISTIE

UNSW PRESS

A UNSW Press **book**

Published by
University of New South Wales Press Ltd
University of New South Wales
Sydney NSW 2052
AUSTRALIA
www.unswpress.com.au

© Frances Christie 2005
First published 2005

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Christie, Frances, 1939– .
Language education in the primary years.

Includes index.
ISBN 0 86840 583 3.

1. Language arts (Primary) - Australia. 2. English language - Study and teaching (Primary) - Australia. I. Title.

372.6

Design DiZign
Cover Di Quick
Print Everbest, China

Contents

Foreword

Now and again a book turns up which stands out for its value both in an immediate perspective and in the long term; this is just such a book. There is always a need for first-rate professional contributions to primary education, those which manage to combine theoretical power with practical wisdom and guidance. But we are also just now in a period when there is exceptional pressure on teachers. They are being expected to raise the goals and achievements of schooling, to be assessed and evaluated in comparison with others – other schools, other systems, other countries – and in fact to take over responsibility for setting right most of the wrongs and shortcomings of modern society.

As I write this, the media are once again hooked in to the recurring argument about literacy teaching, dressed up now as 'phonics' versus 'whole language' and preoccupied as always with the fortunes, and misfortunes, of individual children and their parents. It seems there has to be one best method, for all contexts and all occasions. But we know very well that there is not. Occasions vary; and, more importantly, children vary: they do not all learn in the same way. I found this out many years ago when I was a foreign language teacher: learners vary in their ways of learning – not randomly, but along certain general lines of variation; and one noticeable variable is whether they prefer bottom-up or top-down strategies (or are equally happy with both). Every classroom needs to allow for these two angles of vision; and teachers (who also vary in their preferences) need to feel comfortable with both.

The primary school's concern with language goes way beyond the initial stages of literacy. But one thing remains essential for a teacher throughout all the school activities involving language: a deep and rich understanding of the nature of language and of the functions that language serves for us in our lives.

Frances Christie, herself a teacher, a teacher educator and Professor of Language and Literacy Education, has written this book – a lucid and wide-angled introduction to language and language education – with just such a need in mind. She has provided a well-informed and balanced discussion of language from the point of view of the teacher, and of the learners, in a primary school classroom. Her writing is clear and accessible, while at the same time she has avoided the temptation to make things look simpler than they are.

Language is complex. It reflects the complexity of the human brain – because, more than anything else, language is what shapes the human brain during that critical period in which each individual moves from infancy into and through early childhood. As adults, we tend to take language for granted; naturally so, because our survival in that post-infancy world depended on our being able to function linguistically without having to direct our conscious attention to everything we say and hear. But when we learn to read and write, and then to master the forms of discourse that go with the written channel, we have to bring our language up to the level of conscious awareness; and this means that we have to have ways of talking about these activities in systematic terms, just as we have to talk systematically about numbers and about measurement when we start to learn mathematics.

But numbers never did get buried below the level of conscious awareness; and teachers have always had (and recognised the need for) a systematic way of discussing them. Not so with language, where they have often relied on a patchwork of inherited beliefs which are often irrelevant and sometimes quite fallacious. Much of Frances Christie's professional work has been devoted to the development of language awareness at different educational levels; now she has found time to write a comprehensive account addressed specifically to teachers in primary schools. Fran is an experienced educator who knows that, as well as explaining about language, she has to explain why language needs to be explained. At the beginning of each chapter, we are told what that chapter is to be about. We are invited to browse (a reassuring note for compulsive browsers like myself!); but we are also made aware of the ordering principle that guides the book as a whole. This is just the right way to embark on a productive engagement with literacy; and there could be no better guidebook than the present one.

MAK Halliday
Emeritus Professor of Linguistics
University of Sydney

Acknowledgments

In writing this book, I received advice from a number of family members and friends who commented on some or all of the various chapters. While I did not necessarily follow all their advice, I always profited from receiving it and I am grateful for their constant support and encouragement. They include Margaret Burchett, David Duloy, Rhondda Fahey, Susan Feez, Linda Gerot, Mary Macken-Horarik, David Rose, Joan Rothery and Alyson Simpson. Apart from these people, there are a number of other friends and colleagues to whom I owe an immense intellectual debt, going back over many years. They include Beverly Derewianka, Brian Gray, Michael Halliday, Ruqaiya Hasan, Jim Martin, Clare Painter, Len Unsworth and Geoff Williams. I thank too several colleagues from the University of Melbourne from whom I learned a lot in working with them, including Sophie Arkoudis, Julie Hamstom, Kristina Love, Pam Macintyre and Ray Misson. Thanks also go to three colleagues who were once my students: Marina Aidman, Marie Quinn and Carmel Sandiford, whose work I have drawn on in this book. In a long professional life I have been singularly blessed in my friends and colleagues, and in my students, and I think of all these people with respect and affection.

Thanks must also be recorded to Debbie Lee of UNSW Press, who conceived the idea of my writing such a book, and to Ann Roworth of the same press, who helped with the time-consuming business of tracking down copyright holders.

Finally, I must record my heartfelt thanks to the many teachers whose classrooms I have researched and to the many children whose written texts have been used in this book. Without them, the writing of the book would not have been possible.

Frances Christie
Sydney

chapter 1

Language and literacy

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- briefly discuss theories about literacy, dating from the latter years of the 20th century;
- review debates over autonomous and ideological models of literacy, the former seeing literacy learning as a matter of learning basic technical skills, the latter as a matter of handling values and beliefs;
- argue that neither autonomous nor ideological models are adequate and that a functional model of language provides a better model, seeing language as a semiotic system, whose study considers both its meanings and values and the language structures in which these are expressed;
- outline some key concepts found in the functional account of language and literacy, including:
  - text and context (referring to the relation of a text or passage of language to its setting);
  - register and context of situation (referring to three elements of any situation that shape the context or setting in which language is used – field, tenor and mode);
  - three sets of meanings or metafunctions expressed in language – experiential (relating to field), interpersonal (relating to tenor) and textual (relating to mode);
  - text type or genre and context of culture (referring to the particular type of text or genre, and its status as part of the culture in which it is found);
  - the notion of language as offering options or choices for meaning-making, where these are often represented as system networks.

Introduction

So pervasive is language in our lives that it is easy to take it for granted, dismissing it as commonplace or even unremarkable. Language surrounds us, both in aural and visual modes, and while we all needed to learn a mother tongue, most of us have long since forgotten the effort that went into that, while we tend not to reflect on its significance in daily living. Yet it is because language is so pervasive that it is so important. It is a basic resource with which we negotiate relationship with others, construct our sense of our world, shape meanings, values and understandings. Above all, language is a basic resource with which we learn. Language is the fundamental resource or tool with which teachers and children work together in schools. This book is about language education in the primary years – those critical first years of a formal education in which children are initiated into many areas of learning that are relevant and significant in an English-speaking culture.

An important function of schooling is that it teach literacy, and in the minds of many in the community, the teaching of literacy is often held to be the most important thing that schooling provides. While literacy is indeed a very important matter to be learned in schools, the patterns of oral language are in fact just as important. It is in oral language that many of the basic understandings of schooling are established, whether these are understandings to do with appropriate patterns of interaction in the classroom, or to do with the knowledge, information and ideas that schooling seeks to impart. Teachers and children constantly move between spoken and written language, often mediated by visual images of various kinds. It is a wise teacher who recognises that oral language is as important as written language in the processes of school learning, and who actively promotes learning in talk as well as in reading and writing.

Having acknowledged this, it also needs to be recognised that the teaching and learning of literacy is a major responsibility of the primary school. While some children have some knowledge of literacy acquired before formal schooling starts, all will need the opportunities for learning to read and write that school provides. At the commencement of a primary education children know much more about oral language than about written language, and one would expect this, for a major developmental task of the years before school is that children learn a mother tongue. Possessed of that mother tongue, children can commence the formal tasks of learning to read and write. Without considerable proficiency in speech, children would not be able to take the necessary steps to learn literacy.

In contemporary Australia there are many children for whom English is not the mother tongue, and the language program of the primary school needs to acknowledge this, providing assistance for children of non-English-speaking background (NESB). Such assistance may take one of several forms: withdrawal of the children for intensive tuition by trained teachers; provision of English as a second language (ESL) teachers working along with regular teachers in mainstream classrooms; arranging of regular sessions with the ESL students by mainstream teachers while native speakers are provided with other tasks. The contemporary Australian classroom will have a mix of native speakers and NESB children, where some of the latter have considerable proficiency, while others are still mastering a great deal of English. This book addresses the language program of the contemporary mainstream classroom, and it makes no claims to address the needs of those beginners who may need some intensive assistance in withdrawal situations. Throughout the book, reference will be made from time to time to the needs of ESL students, indicating areas in which mainstream teachers should be aware of potential sources of difficulty for second language learners of English.

In this chapter we aim to establish some background theoretical assumptions about language and literacy, building a framework with which to proceed in greater detail in later chapters. We first examine recent interest in the concept of literacy, since it has gained considerable attention among researchers and teachers. We shall discuss debates over what are called 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy. We shall then argue the values of a social theory of oral language and literacy, of a kind that can provide a theoretical framework for development of a language program for the primary school.

Models of literacy

Teaching reading and writing have been themes in educational theory and practice for some time and we shall discuss something of the history of both in chapter 6 (devoted to reading) and chapter 9 (devoted to writing). But the word 'literacy', now so widely used in educational discussions, has had a relatively short history. The word comes from 'literate', and originally a literate person was a 'person of letters', though it sometimes also referred to a person who could read literature. This word 'literate' goes back several centuries in the history of English, but the noun, 'literacy', according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, dates only from the 19th century. What is more interesting and surprising, perhaps, is that the word 'literacy' has been extensively

used in educational theory and research only in about the last 20 years or so. Thus, for much of the 20th century, educational policy guidelines and research spoke of the teaching of reading, or of the teaching of writing, where these seemed to be independent entities. But the word 'literacy' began to achieve widespread use in educational discussions towards the end of the century. The year 1990 was the International Literacy Year, and this did much to bring the term to the forefront of people's thinking. But the holding of such a year does not in itself explain the new interest in literacy of the last few years, leading to large numbers of books and research papers on literacy and its teaching. Why has literacy achieved the significance it has, and is it in fact a good term for teachers to use?

It will be argued here that the term 'literacy' is a useful one, serving to emphasise as it does, the very close relationship of reading and writing. To learn to read or to write is to engage with using and interpreting the written code, and the best educational programs will stress the relationship of the two. Older educational practices, associated with the predisposition to see reading and writing as separate activities, tended to differentiate the two, so that the potential advantages of making connections between them were simply lost. It will be a good educational program that stresses the relationship of reading and writing, encouraging children to move between the two, using the experiences gained in one activity to inform and enrich the other.

Scholarly opinion began to turn away from seeing reading and writing as separable activities when it was realised that the two could more productively be viewed together, as two aspects of the same phenomenon: using written language. This development was a consequence of new research by linguists and others interested in language and its role in learning, dating from the late 1960s and 1970s. The new concerns led to a considerable body of research into literacy and oral language, much of it still ongoing, and some of it reviewed in this book. Such research examines, for example, the nature of written language and its relationship to oral language, the processes of learning language, oral and written, and the grammatical differences between speech and writing. The research has also addressed the nature of texts, where this term refers to any passage of coherent language, spoken or written (Halliday & Hasan 1985); the research seeks to characterise the types of texts that people learn to speak and to read and write. More recent research, stimulated by developments in computer technologies and the Internet in particular, has looked at **multiliteracies**, a term intended to refer to the range of forms of literacy often found in the one text, bringing together a variety of **semiotic** or meaning-making resources, visual, verbal and even auditory. Finally, and in this quick review of matters to do with literacy in the last few years, we should mention the emergence of an interest in

critical literacy – a term intended to capture a pedagogical concern to develop users of literacy who are critical and questioning about what they read, as well as discriminating about how they use writing themselves.

The new research and scholarly interests in oral language and literacy necessarily involve a profound interest in the nature of language as a social phenomenon. It is impossible in fact, to consider uses of language of any kind without addressing the social purposes for which language is used, as well as the social processes that control of language facilitates. Hence it is that this book will use a social theory of language that seeks to explain the nature of language and its role in human behaviour, as well as its significance in the shaping of social processes, including processes in school learning. Before outlining aspects of the social theory, it will be necessary to say rather more of debates about literacy in contemporary discussions.

Debates over 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy

In recent years a debate has developed (for example, Street 1993) over whether literacy is to be understood as what is termed **autonomous** or as **ideological**. An autonomous model of literacy, it is suggested, is one that sees literacy teaching and learning as a matter of mastering certain important but essentially basic technical skills in control of such things as the spelling and writing systems, and perhaps how to shape simple written sentences. In this model, it is suggested, literacy is a relatively simple and unproblematic matter, learned in the early years and then used and reused in whatever ways appear appropriate. A priority attaches to accuracy in control of the basic resources of literacy, and beyond that persons are assumed to be free to use literacy in ways that fit their purposes. Literacy in this model, it is implied, is a rather neutral thing, used to serve whatever purposes people may have, while the nature of the social contexts and meanings associated with literacy are not considered.

Writers such as Street (1984, 1993, 1997, 2001) have challenged what they hold to be such autonomous models, arguing that, far from literacy being a neutral thing, it is profoundly implicated in social experience and behaviour. In fact, argues Street, we can only understand the true nature of literacy if we accept that literacy is used in a range of different 'literacy events', and there are many 'literacy practices' involved. The term 'literacy events' is taken from Heath (1983), and it refers to occasions on which literacy is used in social contexts. The term 'literacy practices' refers to those practices that surround any event in which literacy is used: literacy events, it is said, will involve concepts and 'social models regarding what the nature of the event is that make it work and give it meaning' (Street 2001: 11). It is the values, beliefs and

ideologies that effectively determine the meanings associated with literacy practices. Hence Street proposes an 'ideological' model of literacy, which will recognise that there are many literacies, rather than any single or unitary model of literacy. An object of a teaching program, in this view, will be that students learn to recognise the range of literacy practices, rather than any single set of literacy behaviours. These literacy practices, furthermore, are to be understood along with other social practices, and as such, they are learned to satisfy the needs of particular literacy events. Theorists such as Heath, Street and also Gee (1996) are recognised as promoting the New Literacy Studies (NLS), and they are often held to challenge the older 'autonomous' models of literacy, which are essentially limited because they lack a sense of a social theory to motivate them.

It is important to recognise that some practices of the past, to do with the teaching of reading and writing have tended to dissociate the learning of literacy from social values, and from the meanings expressed in written language. To this extent, the criticisms of autonomous models of literacy seem justified. Thus, so-called 'phonic' methods of teaching reading (discussed in chapter 6) have often focused on the teaching of the spelling and writing systems at the expense of sense or social purpose. Indeed, a view was sometimes held that children should master the 'basics' of reading before they were allowed to read simple texts, while their entry to writing was delayed even further. Late 20th century research and theory (see chapter 2) have demonstrated that language is used to shape meanings, values and beliefs, serving important social purposes. In this sense, it is clear that ideologies and beliefs are always involved in the uses of literacy. Furthermore, so a great deal of educational research would confirm, children learn literacy best and in the most productive and rewarding ways when their interests in meanings and purposes in language are actively engaged. Finally, much educational and linguistic research demonstrates that in learning literacy across the years of schooling, children learn to handle aspects of the written language in many different ways, creating what are now sometimes called 'subject-specific literacies' (for example, Green 1988; Unsworth 2000; Coffin 1997; Veel 1997). For all these reasons, we can acknowledge the importance of social activities and ideologies, as Street has written of them.

But does it follow that the apparent dichotomy between autonomous and ideological models of literacy is justified, or even that this manner of characterising literacy is useful? In this book, we shall argue that the distinction is an unfortunate one, mainly because it deflects attention away from the nature of language itself as a semiotic or meaning-making system. Language is said to express or 'realise' social

experiences and meanings. In the systemic functional model of language adopted here (for example, Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Martin & Rose 2003), language is said to be a resource or a tool, employed to build functionally relevant meanings. When we teach language we teach meanings, values and knowledge. However, we also teach the linguistic structures in which these are realised or expressed. It is in this sense that a functional **grammar** has much to offer education, for its concerns are simultaneously with meanings and with the structures in which they are given substance. In a teaching cycle, it is true, the teacher may move between focusing on language structures and on meaning. Sometimes one will be emphasised rather more than the other. But both will be foregrounded appropriately over a full teaching program. It would be educationally insufficient and inadequate to become preoccupied either with structure or with meanings, for an understanding of both is essential to effective learning.

If, like Street and other NLS theorists, we see learning literacy as a matter of learning 'literacy practices', where these are understood as merely 'social practices', there is a risk of conceptualising literate activity as no more than any other practice or form of behaviour, such as dressing in certain ways or using appropriate table manners. This is hardly an adequate way to think about language, so significant is it to identity and cognition, and hence to learning. But the notion of 'literacy practices' also has other problems. As we have indicated, it fails to acknowledge the nature of the linguistic structure and how it is organised, so it has nothing to say of the nature of the grammar of a language, which one must learn in order to control it properly. Furthermore, the notion of 'literacy practices' has nothing to say of the nature of written as opposed to spoken language, and this is very serious for teaching purposes, for it gives teachers few principles with which to teach literacy. A great deal of important research of the last years of the 20th century (see chapter 4) has examined the grammatical differences between speech and writing, drawing attention to the lessons children must learn in coming to understand and use literacy. In addition, so the research on literacy reveals, there are developmental changes that should occur in children's control of written language as they grow and move up the primary school and beyond into the secondary years (see chapters 9 and 10 in particular). Here, teachers have an important role in teaching literacy and fostering growth if children are to come to terms with the language-learning needs of late childhood and adolescence. The talk of 'literacy practices' does not acknowledge these matters, primarily because it lacks a strong sense of the nature of language and its organisation.

A social theory of language

A social theory of language of the kind adopted in this book has certain key concepts, which will be briefly outlined. As already noted, language is said to be a social sem iotic. The study of semiotics is the study of meaning making. When people engage in meaningful behaviours of various kinds, they are said to engage in acts of semiosis. Humans have many ways of making meanings, including gestures, dance, painting, singing and other forms of making music, to mention a few. Language is an important semiotic system we use, though it is in practice sometimes hard to separate it from the other forms of semiosis in which we engage. The study of language is of interest to many theorists and scholars, including linguists. We shall suggest in this book that some knowledge of language – in this case, the English language – is essential for teachers, especially those in primary schools, where children take their first steps in a formal education.

Why is the notion of language as a social semiotic significant and useful? It is significant and useful for at least three reasons. Firstly, such a notion focuses attention on the important role of language in negotiation of relationship and meanings (see chapter 2), and it suggests the importance for teaching purposes of working with children's sense of meaning and purpose in language uses. Secondly, the notion is significant because it focuses attention on the nature of the language structures in which meanings are expressed, opening rewarding ways to examine its grammatical organisation. Thirdly, the notion is useful because it suggests that learning language is not primarily a matter of learning rules, as has sometimes been suggested in the past. Instead, it suggests that in learning a language one learns how to employ a resource or tool to construct meanings of many kinds. It is true, of course, that some aspects of literacy learning involve some learning of rules, such as those that pertain to the English spelling system (see chapter 7) or the rules of socially acceptable standard written English (see chapter 10). But learning these things, while certainly important, is not the primary goal of the English language program in the primary school. The primary goal is that children learn to use, play with, adapt, and enjoy the wonderful resource that is a language. It is an essential resource for shaping and organising information and ideas, and it has a fundamental role as children are apprenticed into an understanding of the culturally valued areas of knowledge found in the school curriculum.

Two terms that are essential to the understanding of the functional model of language used here are **text** and **context**. The term 'text' has a long history in the English language, for it is used metaphorically, having been taken originally from

weaving: a woven cloth was a text because it 'hung together'. So too, in modern thinking, a text is a meaningful passage of language that 'hangs together' to serve some social purpose. The term 'context' refers to that which surrounds, or is with, the text, and it also was used originally in weaving. The functional model of language used here states that text and context are intimately related, so that a context is known because of the text that gives it life. Conversely, a text is known only because of the context that makes it relevant.

How are we to explain the relationship of text and context? Here the functional grammar proposes an answer that states that when language is used in any context, there are always three variables that apply, shaping the organisation of the language used, and hence the meanings that are made. They are known as the three variables or elements associated with **register**, which is a term also used metaphorically, and taken from music theory. Just as singers change registers when they sing, so too do people change registers in using language, depending on social context and purpose. Thus, when one moves into any **context of situation**, there are some features of the language that are primarily to do with the meanings, ideas and values expressed. These features relate to the **field of discourse**. Other features of the situation are to do with the nature of the relationships of the people involved in the context, and these are to do with the **tenor of the discourse**. Finally there are some features of the language that are primarily to do with the nature of the language and the **mode of communication** that is involved (for example, is it spoken or written? if spoken, is it face-to-face or at a distance as on the telephone?, and so on; the permutations are considerable).

If the three variables of register are to be recognised, we need to identify those elements of the language in which each is expressed or realised. It was Halliday and his colleagues who proposed that the grammar of any natural language works in systematic ways to create meanings (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004 provide a recent discussion). Some meanings are primarily to do with the field, others are to do with the tenor and others still are primarily to do with the mode of communication. The meanings to do with field are said to be **experiential** because they involve the 'content' or social activity. Those to do with tenor are said to be **interpersonal** meanings because they are involved in building relationship. Those to do with the mode of communication are said to be **textual** meanings, because they are primarily involved in organising the text, so that it 'hangs together'.

We have already noted that we are using a functional grammar, one which seeks to understand the functions that language serves in meaning making. Looking at the three areas of meanings alluded to, Halliday has taken the three terms used to identify the different sets of meanings, and has proposed that they be used to identify

three **metafunctions**, or functions that cut across any natural language. They are the experiential, interpersonal and textual. Table 1.1 displays the relationship of the three elements of register and the three metafunctions in language.

Table 1.1 Relationship of elements of register in a situation of use and the meanings realised in a text. (Adapted from Halliday in Halliday & Hasan 1985, p. 26)

Situation: features of the context	Realised by	Text: Components of meaning
Field of discourse (what is going on or 'content')		Experiential meanings
Tenor of discourse (the relations of people taking part)		Interpersonal meanings
Mode of discourse (the role of language in organising meanings)		Textual meanings

The operation of the metafunctions will be explained more fully in later chapters, including chapters 2, 3 and 4 in particular, where we shall examine aspects of the grammatical choices in which they are realised.

When people select from the various metafunctions, using certain combinations of language items in order to make meanings, the choices are generally not conscious, especially in speech, though literacy does require a degree of conscious reflection, as we shall see later on in this book. However, it is important to stress that language is said to allow speakers/writers to exercise choices in making meanings. People select from various systems for making meanings (for example, choices with respect to **tense** or **number**), and the meanings are often represented using what are called **system networks** (or networks showing choices that can be made), examples of which will be displayed in chapters 2 and 3.

Two other matters need some explanation in this introductory account of the functional grammar. They are to do with the two terms, context of situation, already used above, and **context of culture**, now introduced for the first time. Both terms come from the work of Malinowski (1923, 1935), who was an anthropologist who studied communities of people in the Pacific, and who was interested in the language used by the people whom he studied. He coined the term 'context of situation' to refer to the immediate context or environment in which a text was found, and argued that the text must be understood as a feature of that context of situation. In later

work, reported in 1935, he moved on to refer as well to the wider 'context of culture' in which people operate, for he recognised that values relating to context in both senses actually are shaped in any text. Both need to be understood in order to comprehend what is constructed in a text. There are the immediate meanings of the context of situation, but there are also the meanings of the context of culture, and these differ. Consider, for example, trading encounters, and how different are the behaviours depending on whether one is bargaining in an Asian market, or shopping in a western supermarket. In the latter two contexts of culture, very different values and practices apply.

How are we to characterise the nature of the text that is found at any time, since it is said to be in part a condition of the immediate context of situation and in part of the broader context of culture? Our answer to that will be developed from the work of Martin and his colleagues (for example, Christie & Martin 1997 and Martin & Rose 2003). The nature of the particular text is partly a response to the register values that apply with respect to the field, tenor and mode, and these are a feature of the context of situation. But the text is also in part a response to the context of culture, and this accounts for the **text type** or **genre** selected. Thus, for example, we can imagine two stories that have a similar pattern, involving an opening 'Orientation' that introduces characters, followed by some kind of problem that befalls them, and then this is followed by a 'Resolution' of the problem before there is a 'Closure'. The text type or genre would be termed a narrative. But the particular details of the story (for example, is it do with a class visit or an imagined tale of bears in a wood?; is it told in the first or third **person**?; is it told as a verbal text or as a verbal text with visuals?) are all aspects of the particular register choices. Considerably more about the details of registers and genres will be said in later chapters, especially chapters 6, 8, 9 and 10.

Overall, then, language operates to serve important social functions. Language is a meaning-making system. We learn to select from the possible range of meaning-making choices available in a language, so that we can create texts in contexts of use. The choices are partly to do with register and the immediate setting, and partly to do with the broader culture in which we operate.

All this is very important for the purposes of educational activity, for it provides a theoretical framework for thinking about the teaching of language and literacy in schools. An important object of schooling will be that the young are apprenticed into the ways of making meaning that are valued in an English-speaking culture. This will involve both mastering the language system and learning to deploy or use the language to construct the various areas of school knowledge of importance. By

understanding the language system – its literate forms in particular – teachers can assist their students to master the areas of knowledge, thereby achieving growing competence in understanding and ability. They can teach children to reflect on language and its uses, to play with it, to recognise and use the different text types or genres, and they can teach them to critique texts where appropriate, developing strong critical capacities. They can also use the framework as a basis for assessment of students' performance as well as evaluation of teaching programs.

Using this book

Like any other book, this one can be browsed through, the chapters selected and read in any order the reader chooses. There is, however, an order intended in the several chapters, which will be worth outlining. Chapters 1 to 5 are intended to establish a strong background knowledge of language – the English language in particular – as a basis on which to proceed to later chapters devoted to aspects of the language and literacy program. Chapters 6 to 8 look at the teaching of reading, examining principles for teaching reading and spelling as well as visual literacy. Chapters 9, 10 and 11 look at aspects of the teaching of writing, examining a number of text types or genres, and considering aspects of the design of texts. Chapter 12 draws on all these earlier chapters to focus in particular on the teaching of literature, while the final chapter discusses aspects of language programming and assessment.

A glossary of terms is provided at the back of the book. Terms that appear in the text in colour (for example, **metafunction**) will normally appear in the glossary, though an effort has also been made to indicate meanings in the text where such terms first appear.

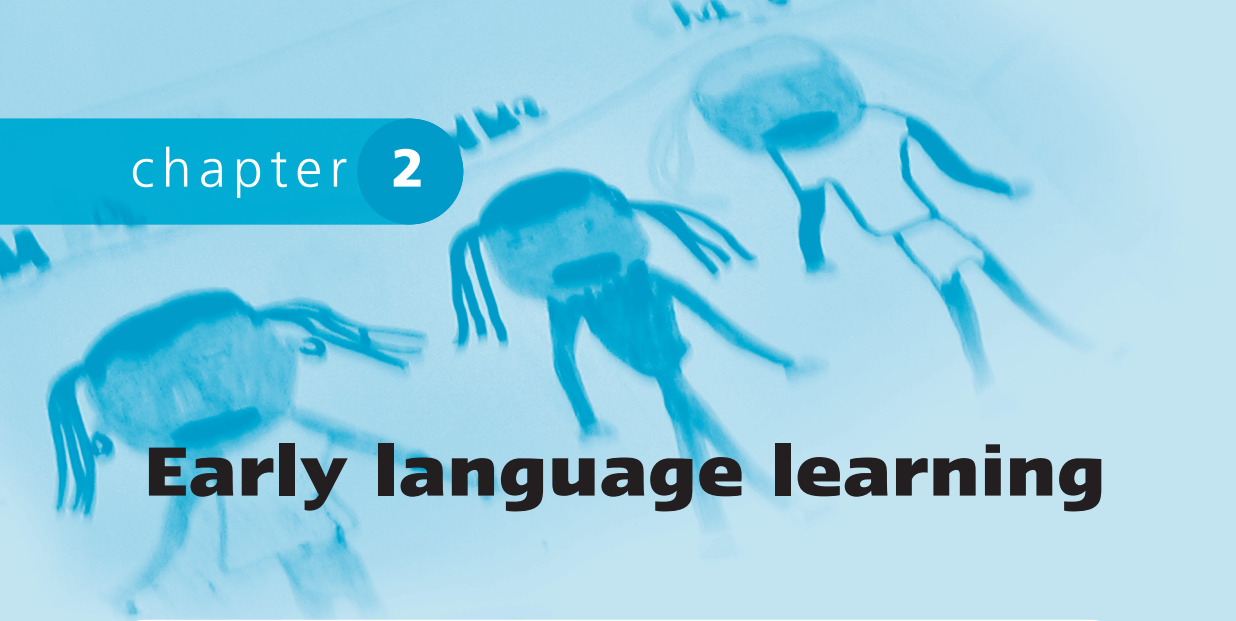
Further reading

Christie, Frances & Misson, Ray (1998) 'Framing the issues in literacy education'. In Frances Christie & Ray Misson (eds) *Literacy and Schooling*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 1–17.

Christie, Frances & Unsworth, Len (2000) 'Developing socially responsible language research'. In Len Unsworth (ed.) *Researching Language in Schools and Communities*, Cassell, London and Washington, pp. 1–26.

Malinowski, Bronislaw (1923) 'The problem of meaning in primitive languages'. Supplement 1. In CK Ogden & IA Richards (ed.) *The Meaning of Meaning*, (International Library of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method) Kegan Paul, London.

Street, Brian (1997) 'The implications of the "New Literacy Studies" for literacy education'. In *English in Education*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 45–59.



chapter 2

Early language learning

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- outline debates about language learning in the early years;
- develop a functional account of early language learning, briefly examining early phases and focusing on functions served in learning language;
- identify the importance in language learning of interpersonal meanings (to do with relationship or tenor) and of experiential meanings (to do with the fields of experience and knowledge built in language);
- introduce the grammatical notion of an English clause, recognised by the presence of a verb;
- make a grammatical distinction between class labels (to do with classes of words) and functional labels (to do with functions expressed through the word classes);
- use the notions of clause, class and functional labels to demonstrate how experiential and interpersonal meanings are expressed in language, including early language learning.

Language and the 'nature–nurture debate'

In the 20th century considerable debate often waged about the most important factors that influenced human character and behaviour: inborn or 'innate' inheritance, or social and environmental conditions. This has sometimes been referred to as the 'nature–nurture debate'. On the one hand, it is said that persons are as they are because of the characteristics they inherited from their parents (the 'nature' argument). On the other hand, it is sometimes said, people are as they are because of the environmental influences, whether good or bad, to which they have been exposed (the 'nurture' argument). On the face of it, this is a debate that has important consequences for education. For those who hold the 'nature' view, education can do no more than promote abilities that are present in children anyway; it will not fundamentally alter whatever character and/or abilities are present. For those who hold the other view, environmental fostering (including teaching) can challenge, develop and transform children's abilities, fundamentally altering their capacity to function in the world.

The 'nature–nurture debate' has appeared in many guises, one of the most significant in discussions over language and its emergence in the human species. Even in this guise the debate is relevant for teachers. Thus, linguist Noam Chomsky (1972, 1980, 1988, 2002) has argued for an 'innatist' (sometimes also called 'nativist') view of language, and many psychologists have agreed with him. The 'innatist' view says that if we look at any normal child the most remarkable matter to note about its language is the speed with which that child masters the mother tongue. Language is very complex, Chomsky argues, having a grammar that children master in the first few years of life. The only way we can explain the rapidity of the mastery of grammar is by accepting that the human brain has a deep understanding of grammar, which is innate. Chomsky proposed the presence of a 'language acquisition device' (sometimes called the LAD) in the human brain. He later extended his theory to some extent, proposing the presence in the human brain of a 'Faculty of Language' (FL), which is a specialised 'language organ'. The FL accounts for the presence of the 'Universal Grammar', which, regardless of the actual language a child learns (for example, English, French or Chinese), provides a common 'deep linguistic' structure, available to all children born normally endowed. It is this common linguistic structure that the child uses, and language emerges as the child grows.

Those who have challenged Chomsky have argued that the notion of the 'language acquisition device' or of the FL is unhelpful, since it tells nothing of the nature of the human brain wherein that device is supposed to reside. Other critics have argued that

the presence of an environment in which children are constantly exposed to language ensures that children learn their language. Furthermore, it has been said, the notion of a Universal Grammar is not necessarily useful, because it is in practice difficult to distinguish between the underlying linguistic structure Chomsky claimed marked the Grammar, and the surface structure one must study to establish the 'deep structure'. Unlike many others who have studied language learning (for example, Bloom 1970; Brown 1973; Wells 1981; Halliday 1975; Painter 1990, 1999, Torr 1998), Chomsky did not study actual instances of language in use, so he had nothing to say of what children did in using language. Instead, he preferred to examine sentences that he said could be studied for evidence of the 'deep structure' that children mastered in learning language. Critics have argued that, in order to study language as he did, Chomsky was forced to leave out the role of interaction with others, including caregivers, and he did not consider the significance of dialogue or the importance of context. Above all, he did not look at the importance of language in making meaning. Overall, because he took such a strong 'innatist' position, Chomsky denied interest in the purposes for which children learn language, the role of adults in mediating and supporting language learning, and the importance of language as a fundamental resource in living and in learning. In short, he did not look at what language is used *to do*, and because of that, he failed to understand its true nature or significance.

While Chomsky and some of his colleagues still hold to the views he has proposed, an increasing body of opinion, which draws on psychology, linguistics, anthropology, ethnography and the study of the human brain, would suggest that his observations are insufficient to explain the remarkable phenomenon that is language. Language has evolved in the human species over a very long period of time, and brain and language probably evolved together. Most scholars today from several disciplines (for example, Coulmas 1989; Edelman 1992; Deacon 1997; Tattersall 1998; Tomasello 1999; Carter 1998; Halliday 2004a, 2004b; Matthiessen 2004; Oppenheimer 2003) agree with the proposal that the human brain is designed to use language. Use of language is to that extent 'innate'. However, most scholars now also state that language is necessarily learned in complex social processes. It is learned because of relationships and interactions of many kinds with other people, including caregivers, all of which stimulate the need to engage in meaning-making behaviours, including that of talking.

The 'nature–nurture debate' is now outmoded. Ridley (2003) provides a recent discussion of the debate in the light of the discovery of the human genome, whose title, *Nature via Nurture*, suggests contemporary thinking. However, the debate reappears from time to time, sometimes in educational discussion. With respect to language it is particularly dated, because we can now say that possession of language

requires both an inborn capacity in the human brain and participation in social processes. There have been a few recorded cases of children left in grossly deprived circumstances soon after birth, denied all the normal opportunities for human interaction and stimulation that would provoke development of language. The evidence suggests that, if found too late, such children do not successfully master a language, and this probably indicates that there is an optimal age for language learning. One famous case was recorded in France in the late 18th century, when a 'wild child' was found in the woods outside Paris, living the life of an animal. The child – a boy – was thought to be about 12 years old, and he passed into the care of Jean Itard, a doctor, who took him into his home and looked after him, keeping a careful record of his progress. The boy, whom Itard called 'Victor', did not initially respond to language, and though he did eventually come to understand a great deal of what was said to him, he did not become an independent speaker. Another case, referred to by Carter (1998: 156) and Ridley (2003: 169–70) concerns the example of a girl, aged 13 years, found in 1970 in the USA, who had been kept in a dull room without social interaction and activity. She had only two words when found, and though efforts were made to teach her others, she did not develop a grasp of a language system, including its grammar, so that she did not become capable of initiating conversation in independent ways. Children such as this do not function as adequately independent human beings. Human interaction, with all its emotional support, its activities and its stimulation, is essential if children are to grow and become successful language users.

The significance of all this for what we do in schools should be clear. If language is learned in the early years of life in interaction and in participation in activities of many kinds, schooling should, at the very least, seek to stimulate and extend language learning activities in comparable ways. The role of the teacher – though not the same as that of the parent – will certainly be to challenge and extend language learning, for this will be essential to development of successfully independent learners. Adults have a critical role in guiding, challenging and supporting language learning in schools. In order to pursue the point a little more fully, it will be necessary to say more about early language learning.

Learning language in the early years

Some years ago, researchers interested in the emergence of language in very young children (for example, Bullowa 1979, Halliday 1975; Trevarthen 1987) proposed that the process starts very early indeed. Some (for example, Decasper & Fifer 1980, cited in Tomasello 1999: 58–9) have suggested that it commences while the baby is still in the uterus. Bullowa (1979) invented the term **protoconversation** (or first

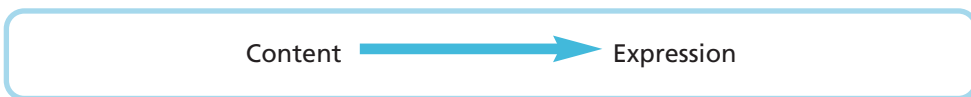
conversation) to refer to the complex patterns of interaction that appeared between baby and mother shortly after birth, constituting a kind of original or 'primitive' conversation. The protoconversation was represented in such things as changing facial expressions, smiling, eye-to-eye contact, or the changing sounds in the mother's voice, stimulating pleasure in the baby. Long before anything like true conversation emerges, both Bullowa and Trevarthen demonstrated, the baby engages in various acts of making meaning with its mother. The process of symbolically making meaning with others has thus begun, leading eventually to participation in dialogue.

Halliday argued the importance of recognising such protoconversational behaviour, for, he has suggested, understanding and interpreting the earliest acts of meaning making in children is essential to an understanding of the mature language system. For Halliday (1975, 2004a, 2004b) and his colleagues (for example, Painter 1984, 1990, 1999; Torr 1998; Hasan 2004; Butt 2004), unlike linguists in the tradition of Chomsky (briefly discussed in Halliday 1975: 1–7), the interest in studying language is not uniquely in structure, but it is in meaning, function and structure. A preoccupation with structure alone focuses the early language researcher on looking at early language expressions, and on forming judgments about what aspects of the mature linguistic structure the child has apparently mastered. But this is unsatisfactory, Halliday suggested, for at least four reasons. In the first place, it causes the researcher to forsake any interest in meaning, leaving unresolved the matter of how meaning becomes a part of the linguistic system. Secondly, it avoids interest in the many contexts in which children use language and the role that other participants have in the contexts. Thirdly, the preoccupation with structure means that the researcher's focus often starts rather late in the child's development – at perhaps 18 months of life, and sometimes later – when a great deal of important development, cognitive, emotional and social, will have been occurring. Finally, the concern to observe aspects of mastery of the adult language tends to cause the researcher always to see the child's efforts as reasonably limited versions of what the adult is able to do: a more constructive and enlightening approach will focus on what children *can do* from early in life, what this tells us of their development, and what it tells us of the nature of language itself. Indeed, a focus on what young children can do in interaction with others from the earliest months of life tells a great deal of the functions for which language is learned, and hence a great deal of the nature of the mature language system.

A functional perspective on language

Halliday (1975, 1993, 2004a, 2004b) did one detailed study of his own child's language development, and this has been significantly supported and extended by studies of Painter (1984, 1990, 1999, 2003, 2004) of her own children's language

development. Working as a field linguist, Halliday kept notes on his child's early acts of meaning, including early vocalisations, and he documented in particular the period when the child – called 'Nigel' – was aged six to 18 months. The child's utterances, which were not expressions of the mother tongue (being rather expressions the child produced at his own initiative), were held to be nonetheless significant, provided they occurred in some systematic way and appeared to be regularly associated meaningfully with some activity and/or entity in his world. It was at the age of nine months that Nigel created a **protolanguage** – a first language – in which he expressed meanings. According to Halliday, the protolanguage has just two levels or 'strata':



In a protolanguage, for each expression (or utterance) there is one 'content' or one meaning of some kind. The situation normally provides the contextual information with which others can successfully interpret what is intended. Thus, for example, Nigel might produce some sound systematically in such a way, and in such a context, that it was clear he wanted something handed to him. The mother, by responding to him, revealed that she had understood, and moreover, she probably provided some linguistic rejoinder of her own, such that a kind of dialogue (certainly an interaction) was ensured between child and caregiver. This reinforced Nigel's developing awareness of the functions that could be served in engaging in acts of meaning with others, including, eventually, those expressed in the mother tongue. It was because of this kind of observation that Halliday (1975: 8) suggested that 'a child who is learning his first language is learning how to mean'. Painter's observations of her son, Hal, accorded quite closely with those of Nigel. Early in his study, Halliday hypothesised the likely emergence of seven functions in his child's uses of the protolanguage (see Halliday 1973: 9–21 and Halliday 1975, 2004a), though he modified his argument to some extent in the light of experience. In fact, he found evidence for most, but not all the functions in the early stage, as we shall see below. Painter's study more or less accorded with Halliday's. However, both would state that it does not follow that all children necessarily develop their language in the same ways.

Adapting Halliday's terms, Painter found that three early functions appeared in Hal's protolinguistic phase: (i) the 'instrumental' (having to do with obtaining goods or services of some kind); (ii) the 'interactional' (having to do with greeting and/or responding to another); and (iii) the 'personal' (expressing sense of curiosity about

some thing or person.) Halliday's child showed a 'regulatory' function as well as an instrumental function (they are very similar in that the regulatory function refers to use of language designed to regulate the behaviour of others). Both children developed an 'imaginative' function late in the protolinguistic phase, having to do with language use for play. A 'heuristic' function (to do with seeking why something is so, or perhaps how something is named) that Halliday had hypothesised, did not appear in the case of Hal, and it was not clear whether it appeared in the case of Nigel, since the information was ambiguous. Language for heuristic purposes did emerge later. Neither child showed the 'informative' function (having to do with the use of language to communicate information to others). This was not surprising, since an understanding that language can be used to tell others of matters and events that they were not part of is a late development. Both Halliday and Painter found that language for this purpose emerged much later.

Table 2.1 Summary of the early functions in use of language hypothesised by Halliday (1973: 11–17)

The instrumental function	'I want'
The regulatory function	'Do as I tell you!'
The interactional function	'Me and you'
The personal function	'Here I come'
The heuristic function	'Tell me why'
The imaginative function	'Let's pretend'
The representational function	'I've got something to tell you'

Both Halliday's and Painter's case studies showed that a subsequent transitional phase of language development occurred beyond the phase of the protolanguage, and it emerged at about 14 months. In this phase, some of the **lexis** (or vocabulary) of the mother tongue began to emerge in the child's utterances, and while this was significant, what was most significant was the child's expanding capacity to make meanings. Broadly, focusing closely on the ways in which utterances emerged in both their young children, Halliday and Painter were able to identify what they termed two **macrofunctions** in language use, so-called because they served to combine some of the earlier discrete functions associated with the various utterances of each child. The two macrofunctions were distinguished by the intonation patterns (termed by linguists 'intonation contours'). Utterances said to be made using a high-pitched tone,

or sometimes a rising one, were said to be to do with action or getting things done, and hence were termed 'pragmatic'. Utterances made on a falling tone were said to be to do with learning and exploring aspects of the world, and were called 'mathetic'.

Two examples from Painter's discussion will serve to illustrate the points here. At 18 months of age, Painter's son, Hal, was looking at a picture book. He pointed to a dog's tail, and then took the book over to the family cat, pointing at the tail in the book and at the cat's tail in turn. He repeated several times 'tàil' with a falling tone (indicated with `) (Painter 1991: 23). This was said to be an instance of the mathetic function, since the child was learning how to categorise an aspect of the world. Many other examples occurred in his language at about the same time.

As for the pragmatic function, Hal, also at 18 months, was in the kitchen with his father sitting at the breakfast table, and the following exchange occurred (Painter 1991: 27), where the symbols ¯ and ´ indicate a level tone and a rising tone, both said to be to do with interaction:

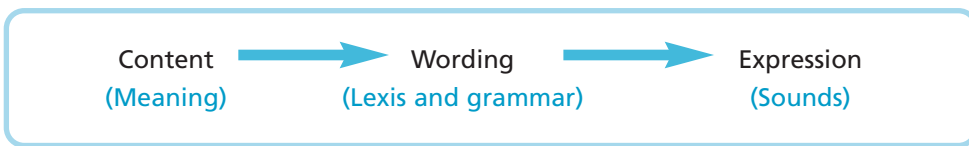
Hal:	T¯oast; t¯oast; t¯oast *(looking around at father and toaster)*
Father:	Toast?
Hal:	T¯oast; t´oast; m.
	(Father brings toast to table)
Hal:	T¯oast; t¯oast.
Father:	*(buttering it)* Yes, toast is coming.
Hal:	T¯oast; d¯add¯a.

Of course, individual instances of the kind cited might not in themselves be said to be significant. However, both Halliday and Painter were able to demonstrate by reference to other examples how the two children used their utterances, to achieve some learning about the world on the one hand, and on the other hand, to achieve some goal such as, in Hal's case, getting some toast.

In this second phase of early language development then, so the functional theory says, children have broadly two kinds of functions served in using language and also a growing command of the 'lexis' (or 'content' words) of the mother tongue. In that the mathetic function has a lot to do with learning about one's context, its concerns are with what, in the full language system Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) would term **experiential meanings**: that is, meanings that are primarily concerned with representing aspects of the world. In that the pragmatic function has to do with getting things done in the world, where this normally involves influencing the behaviour of others, its concerns are with **interpersonal meanings**: that is, meanings

to do with relationship with others. The functional theory suggests that experiential and interpersonal meanings are quite fundamental to all our uses of language, leading to two of the three major metafunctions said to be found in any natural language, and already alluded to in chapter 1.

It is in the third phase of early language development that the entry to the full linguistic system occurs, for it is at this point that young children begin to master the third of the 'strata' of language that Halliday identifies – that of 'wording':



A functional theory states that a language system consists of three levels or strata, the first of which is the meaning to be expressed, the second of which is the wording in which this meaning is realised, and the third of which is the expression – the sounds of the mother tongue that gives expression to what is meant.

A functional theory of language, it should now be clear, starts by looking at what young children do in their first efforts to mean and then traces the emergence of the mother tongue, its sounds, its lexis and its grammar. In doing this, it reverses the processes of studying language in the tradition of Chomsky and others, since the latter focus on aspects of the overall structure of children's language, seeking to deduce from that what young children know of the grammar of the adult language. Such a tradition does not look primarily at meaning.

Table 2.2 A simplified model of early language development in young children (based on Halliday 1975: 158), showing the transitions from very early language use to control of the full metafunctional system

Phase I	Phase II (transitional)	Phase III
content → expression **Expressed in:** capacity to mean simply, using discrete or independent utterances	+ grammar (including vocabulary) → **Expressed in:** simple dialogue	content—form—expression **Expressed in:** capacity to mean in an expanded way, using the full linguistic system: sounds, grammar and vocabulary

Why does it matter that one starts with a functional perspective? It matters because, as we shall argue throughout this book, it is important to understand what children

do in their language, so that we can assist them in their learning. It also matters because an awareness of the functional nature of language and its development in young children tells us a great deal about the nature of the mature language system. In later chapters we will look rather more closely at the functional nature of language, in particular discussing the metafunctions more fully. First, we shall look a little more closely at what is learned in developing the mother tongue in the critical years of life before school.

Learning language as a resource for learning about one's world

The functional perspective on language that we have outlined has already suggested that language is learned to make meaning, and that this always occurs in contexts of use. But what is implied when we say that language makes meaning? Using language is a behavioural activity. Like other behaviours, any instance of language is never neutral, for it always involves construction of some aspect(s) of experience, and some sense of personal relationship with others. Thus, as young children learn their language, they also learn about their world, its familial and social institutions, its cultural practices. In this sense, the language is a resource or a tool for living. Let's look a little more closely at some aspects of the English language to see how it is directly involved in building the experiential and interpersonal information with which children learn about their world.

Earlier we noted that at the end of the protolinguistic stage, children begin to learn some of the lexis of their mother tongue, and they have also begun to master a great deal of the intonation systems of their language. Lexis is one aspect of the stratum of 'wording' referred to in the simple model of language given above. But what of the grammar, which, together with the lexis, combines to create what is often referred to as the **lexicogrammar**? Where the lexis provides the vocabulary or 'content words' found in a language, the grammar provides the principles by which passages of language are put together in meaningful sequences. The best way to start to look at English grammar is to look at the English **clause**. We speak and write in clauses, and young children actually master aspects of the English clause as they learn, though they are of course not conscious of this. We can think of a clause as a group of words that must contain a verb and that makes a message in some way. Using the functional grammar, we can examine how the clause works to build its message. Any clause will simultaneously build experiential information (which relates to the 'field of activity', referred to as one aspect of register in chapter 1) and interpersonal information

(which relates to 'tenor', another aspect of register introduced in chapter 1). In order to understand this, we will need to look a little more fully at some aspects of the grammar of the clause, and of the functional grammar used here.

Class labels and functional categories in the English clause

Understanding how experiential meanings are made

The functional grammar seeks to look at the functions served in using language, and to do this, it examines functions as they are expressed in different linguistic elements. We can look at the elements of a clause in two ways, by looking at:

- the classes of words used, and
- the *functions* they serve.

It is important to understand both **class labels** and **functional labels** and these will be used throughout this book. They are both essential for developing a technical language for talking about language. In this chapter we will introduce them as aspects of exploring experiential and interpersonal meanings, and we will look at them again more fully later.

Class labels identify categories of words in terms of their structures: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions and articles. Examples of these will be displayed below.

Any English clause will be made of some of these classes of words, for they have an essential role in providing the structures in which meanings are expressed or realised. Functional labels, on the other hand, identify the functions in making meaning that are expressed in the **word classes**. Consider the following series of short sentences, each consisting of one clause.

The boy kicked the ball.
The boy was the captain.
The boy told a lie.
The boy believed the story

All these sentences have a noun acting as the subject of a verb, followed by the verb and then there is another noun. In this sense, they all have the same structure. But if we look at the meanings of the sentences, we can see that these differ. Each serves a

different function in representing an aspect of experience. Functional labels seek to identify the different meanings. As children learn language, so they learn to deploy different classes of words in order to create different meanings. Our interest is in both the classes of words that children learn to use and the meanings they can thus express in them.

Experiential meanings

Here is a little clause produced by Painter's son Hal (Painter 1991: 36): We can recognise it as a clause because of the presence of the verb *is* (expressed in speech as *'s*):

That's mummy's coffee.
(Meaning 'That is Mummy's coffee.')

In terms of class labels here we can label the words thus:

That	's	mummy's	coffee.
Pronoun	Verb	Noun	Noun

Verbs are words of doing, seeing, being, feeling or thinking, and, as already noted, one must have at least one verb to create a clause. Nouns identify or name things, people and phenomena of many kinds. A pronoun is a substitute for a noun. In practice, as we use nouns, we tend to use more than one word, creating what will be called here a 'noun group' (sometimes also called a 'nominal group' or even a 'noun phrase'). For convenience we can also use this term to label even the pronouns, because they also name.

That	's	mummy's coffee.
Noun group	Verb	Noun group

Each of the items labelled with a class label is said to serve a function in making meaning. Thus, in terms of the functions served in the clause we can label the items thus:

That	's	mummy's coffee.
Participant	Process	Participant

The process is expressed in the verb, and the term 'process' is used because it seeks to capture the kind of thing that is going on, be that doing, feeling, being, thinking or talking. The word **participant** does not necessarily refer to any person. Instead, it just refers to any person, thing or entity that is expressed in a noun. The participants are always involved in some way in the process.

In the case of Hal, in using part of the verb *to be*, he created a 'relational' or being' process. In doing so, he was building a statement about a small aspect of his experience. Hence the process and participants are said to build the experiential information in his clause. Relational or being processes occur early in young children's language, for they are useful in building description about one's world. Thus, we can now label Hal's clause this way:

That	's	mummy's coffee.
Participant	Process: relational	Participant

The other kind of process that tends to emerge early is one of action, which is also called a 'material process', as in the following, also from Hal at much the same age as the first clause (Painter 1991: 36):

Daddy putting slippers on.
(Meaning 'Daddy is putting his slippers on.')

Daddy	is putting	his slippers	on.
Noun group	Verb group	Noun group	
Participant	Process: material	Participant	

Here it will be noted that we have labelled the verb the 'verb group' for the same reason we have chosen the label 'noun group' in the case of nouns: verbs often have more than one item within them. By the way, the adverb *on* here is not labelled because it is regarded as part of the verb group. The child could have said *Daddy is putting on his slippers*, where the placement of *on* makes clear it is to be regarded as part of the verb group.

Overall, action and being processes appear in young children's talk, the one to build description of aspects of the world, the other to build actions people engage in, in the world.

One other aspect of the linguistic resources in which experiential information is expressed should be introduced. That is the way we build additional information about the **circumstances** associated with events or states of being. In English, circumstantial information is often about place or about time, as we like to tell where an event occurs or perhaps when it occurs. Consider the following made-up examples of a kind that young children will learn to produce quite early, in which some circumstantial information is provided:

Pussy's playing in the garden.
The picture is in the book.

In both cases the clause has been extended by using a 'prepositional phrase' (so-called because it starts with a preposition) to provide additional information.

Pussy	's playing	in the garden.
Noun group	Verb group	Prepositional phrase
Participant	Process: material	Circumstance of place
The picture	is	in the book.
Noun group	Verb group	Prepositional phrase
Participant	Process: relational	Circumstance of place

Prepositions are numerous in English, and while they have other roles from starting phrases, they certainly do a lot of work in building phrases. They are sometimes a source of difficulty to people learning English as a second or foreign language, and teachers need to be aware of this in helping their ESL students.

We can also provide circumstantial information by using adverbs, which add to verbs in some way. Here are some made-up examples:

We	played	with the pussy	yesterday.
Noun group	Verb group	Prepositional phrase	Adverb
Participant	Process: material	Circumstance: accompaniment	Circumstance: time
The children	played	happily.	
Noun group	Verb group	Adverb	
Participant	Process: material	Circumstance: manner	

The prepositional phrase *with the pussy* creates a circumstance of accompaniment because it tells what accompanied *we* when we played. The adverb *yesterday* builds circumstantial information about time, but *happily* builds such information about manner. The language has many adverbs, and since they are often also used in groups such as *very happily*, or *so slowly*, we will henceforth refer them as 'adverb groups'.

Overall experiential information is expressed in processes, participants and circumstances, and children begin to learn these quite early in order to build their sense of their world, though they are not of course conscious of the categories they use. Two of the commonest of the **process types** learned are relational or being and

material or action, while the commonest circumstances are either place (*in the garden*; *in the book*) or time (for example, *on Saturday* or *yesterday*.)

Teachers need to be aware of both the class labels and the functional labels that we have introduced here, and use them to direct their teaching. It is important that children be taught the range of class labels, identifying them in sentences, and playing with ways they can be used to structure sentences. In this way, they learn a technical language for talking about language. Teachers need also to teach the functional categories, introducing these when they judge the children able to use them, and adding to the range of technical terms the children have for learning about language.

Representing the choices made with respect to processes and circumstances

The choices available with respect to processes and circumstances may be said to represent a 'system of choices'. We can represent the choices in the English clause in the system network displayed in figure 2.1.

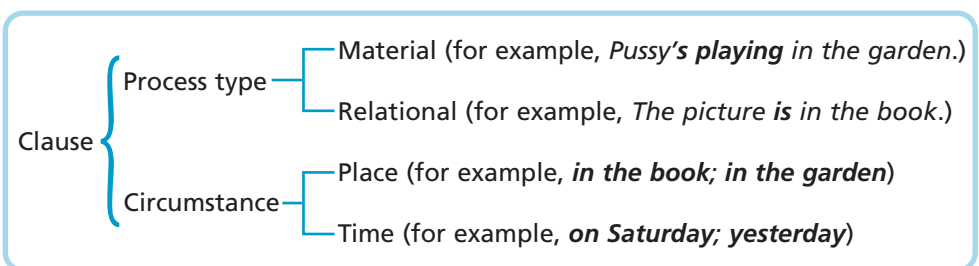


Figure 2.1 Some choices for making experiential meanings represented in a simple system network

The system network is to be read from left to right. The curly bracket indicates the two sets of choices that are made within the clause with respect to experiential meaning. Not all clauses have a circumstance, but when they do occur, the choice is simultaneous with the choice for process type. The choices with respect to each are then shown using squared brackets. The object in representing choices in a system network is to stress that a language gives the speaker or writer choices in making meaning, although these choices are not conscious. The functional grammar is very much concerned with the notion of choice in using language. We will take up experiential meanings again in later chapters.

Interpersonal meanings

Very early, children begin to sort out the different roles they can take up in using language. These roles are expressed in choices with respect to **mood**. The term is a technical one, and it is not the same as the word 'mood' we use if we say that someone is in a 'good mood' or 'bad mood'. This is best explained by use of examples:

We can, for example, offer information, using the **declarative mood**:

Pussy's playing in the garden.

We can ask a question to seek information, using the **interrogative mood**:

Is pussy playing in the garden?

We can seek to direct the behaviour of others using the **imperative mood**:

Give me the pussy!

One additional aspect of the ways interpersonal meanings can be expressed should be mentioned here. That is the choice with respect to **polarity**: whether something is expressed as a positive or a negative:

Pussy's playing in the garden.	Positive
Pussy is not playing in the garden.	Negative

The system network in figure 2.2 displays the mood and polarity choices in English.

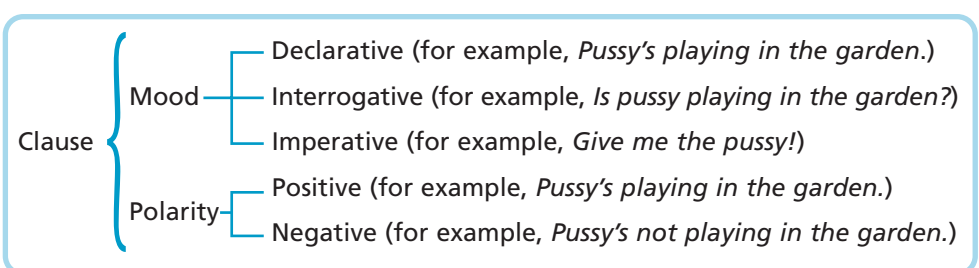


Figure 2.2 A simple system network displaying choices for making interpersonal meanings

Young children learn the mood system early in life, because it facilitates or makes possible the building of relationship. With a sense of mood, children can interact with others, offering information, asking questions and seeking information or goods or services.

Conclusion

We shall have more to say about the functional grammar in the later chapters of the book. For now, we have said enough to give a sense of what is involved in learning the resource of one's mother tongue, at least with respect to interpersonal and experiential meanings. As children learn to express and build relationships, so too they also learn to build information and/or knowledge about their world. It is in this sense that a language can be thought of as a tool for living and for learning. Interaction with others, with all the support and comfort that it brings, is essential to the learning of the mother tongue. The critical early years before school are very important for language learning. But schools and teachers too have an essential role in teaching language as well.

Further reading

Bruner, Jerome (1986) *Actual Minds: Possible Worlds*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London.

Gibbons, Pauline (2002) *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.

Halliday, MAK (1975) *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language* (*Explorations in Language Studies Series*. Eds Peter Doughty & Geoffrey Thornton), Arnold, London.

Hammond, Jennifer (ed.) (2001) *Scaffolding Teaching and Learning in Language and Literacy Education*, Primary English Teaching Association, Newtown, New South Wales.

Painter, Clare (2000) 'Researching first language development in children'. In Len Unsworth (ed.) *Researching Language in Schools and Communities*, Cassell, London and Washington, pp. 65–86.

Wells, Gordon (1999) *Dialogic Inquiry: Toward a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education*. (Series eds Roy Pea, John Seely Brown & Jan Hawkins, *Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives*), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

chapter 3

Oral language in schools

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- examine the role of talk in three different primary classrooms, since oral language is a major tool for school learning;
- argue that the language of schooling brings new demands for children as they go to school;
- argue that the language of the classroom is a distinctive feature of schools, showing characteristics rather different from the language in other social contexts;
- examine how patterns of talk are used to construct knowledge in many ways;
- argue that in successful classrooms, the nature of the language used changes considerably, as students and teachers engage in a range of tasks and as the students' knowledge grows and develops;
- review the nature and meaning of the term 'scaffolding' in classroom language, discussing why clear scaffolding is important to students' learning.

The challenge of school language

A few years ago it was commonplace for theorists interested in language development to say that when young children arrived at school they had mastered the grammar of their mother tongue. There was at least an implication that the school's role in teaching language was therefore less significant than had hitherto been imagined. The idea is attractive in some ways, but it is also misleading. It certainly is the case that young children aged about five know a great deal of the resource that is their mother tongue, and they can engage in interactions with others. They do indeed know a great deal of the grammar of their mother tongue, but that is itself the basis for much subsequent language learning and it is inadvisable to imply that the most significant language learning has been done prior to the entry to school. Schooling requires that children learn to manipulate their language in new ways, both oral and written, as they enter into relationships with their teachers and others, and as they master the registers and text types of the various school subjects.

Classroom talk brings new demands, as children learn to function in school classrooms and playgrounds, to work in class groups, to respond to teacher questions, to know when to initiate talk and when to be silent as others talk. In fact, some classroom discourse patterns are sometimes condemned (discussions are found in Edwards & Westgate 1994 and in Christie 2002) on the grounds that they stifle capacity to talk freely, and oblige children to be silent for too much of the time. Wells (1983) has suggested that classroom talk does not allow sufficient scope for teachers and students to construct meanings, and he has argued that teachers should adopt more open patterns of talk, closer to the patterns found with parents. It is true that in many classrooms teachers do not allow sufficient opportunity to children to initiate and talk freely. Since oral language is an important tool for learning, a strong case can be made for fostering patterns of talk that allow children to explore new ideas and new learning. But it is doubtful that school classrooms could ever emulate the patterns of parent–child talk, nor would it be sensible to try. The social context that is the school, the nature of the relationships shared with teachers and other children, even the pattern of the school day broken into teaching–learning sequences from about 9 am to about 3 pm, all tend to place particular demands on the ways language is used; those demands are not the same as those in family situations with parents and others. A great deal of school talk and its associated learning require the guidance and direction of teachers as children work towards specific pedagogical goals. Parents, it is true, also guide and teach their children, and to that extent their behaviour is purposive, but it is not directed to achievement of particular educational goals in the manner of the teacher.

Classroom talk

Patterns of classroom talk are various, and they tend to change over the years of schooling as children grow older and enter into different relationships with their teachers as well as learning new areas of knowledge. Still, throughout the world there are many features that remain common to classrooms and to the talk found in them. Teachers generally are responsible for the directions taken in teaching–learning activity. They are responsible for the pedagogical goals, and they largely shape the pacing of activity as well as the assessment of students' performance. All this is part of shaping what the sociologist Bernstein (1990) referred to as the pedagogic activity of schools. Overall, schools seek to assist the young to develop skills, knowledge and values of many kinds, and language is a fundamental resource in their development.

Consider the following fragment of early childhood talk in text 3.1, taken from research by Hasan (1987). The teacher had displayed a picture book to her class of very young learners.

T: Well now, here is another picture. Now what do you think this is a picture about? Have a look at it.

Ps: A bus.

T: Yes, it's a picture of a bus. All right, well, who do you think is going to catch the bus? Who's catching that bus?

Ps: Kindies.

T: You think it might be kindies. What about you Tony?

Tony: Um … school [? girls].

T: You think it could be a school bus. I think it could be too. Have a good look at it. What do you think Kim?

Kim: I think it's a preschool.

T: You think it could be a preschool. Might be preschool. What about you Verity?

Verity: First class.

T: First class and what do you think about it Jennie?

Jennie: [? I think it's a preschool].

T: You think it's a preschool. Well who can tell me something about … the picture?

Ps: Me.

T: Tell me all the things you can see in it. Right … Len?

Len: People.

T: You can see people in the picture. Yes, Steve?

Steve: [? I can see wheels] in the picture.

T: I didn't hear you Steve. Can you call out a little bit louder?

Steve: Wheels.

T: Yes, there's wheels, wheels on the bus, aren't there? *(Some pupils are amused.)*

Pupil 1: If there wasn't any wheels on the bus, it would go bang. *(Thumps his fist in his hand.)*

P 2: I know.

T: It certainly would. It wouldn't be able to drive along the street. Terry?

We can make a number of observations about the patterns of language here, and about the probable pedagogic goals of the teacher. Firstly, the tenor of the discourse reveals the unequal status of the participants: it is the teacher who asks all the questions, thus guiding the directions taken in the talk. In order to guide the talk, she uses a number of WH questions (so-called because they start with 'WH'; for example, *what do you think this is a picture about?*; *who do you think is going to catch the bus?*), and these tell us something of the interpersonal relationship she sets up with the children, for the WH questions tend to invite speculation about aspects of the picture. Turning to the field of activity and the experiential meanings, there are at least two ways we can think about these. At one level, the activity is about the details in the picture, and at least some of the process types are relational, building features of items in the picture (for example, *it's a picture of a bus*), while others are material and build actions (for example, *who's catching the bus?*). At another level the teacher uses different process types, in particular those of thinking or cognition (for example, *who do you think is going to catch the bus?*; *what do you think Kim?*) and verbal or saying processes (for example, *who can tell me something about the picture?*). These process types are intended to elicit information about, and interpretation of, the details of the picture, and the teacher indicates that she is accepting of different interpretations. Thus, one child offers the opinion, *I think it's preschool*, and the teacher responds, *You think it could be preschool. Might be preschool*. Her use of the word *might* suggests there is room for interpretation about this opinion, though the teacher does not reject it. (The use of *might* by the way, is an instance of **modality**, used here to suggest that the matter may, or may not, be so. See chapter 5 for more details.)

It is the teacher's uses of the interrogatives and the series of thinking or cognition and verbal or saying processes that in particular shape the activities of the children, and their effect is to cause them to offer judgments and opinions about the details in the picture. Why does the teacher guide directions in this way? We can respond to that by suggesting that she intends to guide the children towards ways of shaping aspects of knowledge. They are asked to view, interpret and talk about the pictures, making inferences from what they see. Capacity to do these things is an important skill for school learning and it is because of this that the teacher is guiding the children as she does. They are learning how to build school knowledge. In this case, they draw on their own experiences and observations of out-of-school experiences in order to interpret the picture, though as they grow older and develop a reservoir of school learning, they will also draw on that as well to inform future learning. The picture talk, then, has clear pedagogical goals to do with development of persons who can function successfully as learners.

The talk takes a different direction when one child draws attention to the wheels on the bus. This prompts another child to offer a hypothetical observation, signalled by starting with a conditional clause, (that is, a clause that introduces some condition that will apply when something else is to happen; such clauses are often started, as this one is, with the conjunction *if*): *If there wasn't any wheels on the bus, it would go bang.* The teacher responds positively to this: *It certainly would, it wouldn't be able to drive along the street.* Even in an activity as seemingly simple as this, children can be engaged in both making inferences from what they observe and building hypotheses about it. It might be suggested that parent–child talk can also generate exchanges of the kind revealed in text 3.1, though Hasan (1987, 1989, 2002), who studied preschool parent–child picture book reading activities as well as early childhood school teacher–child talk, found little evidence that parents do in fact guide the talk in quite the way revealed here. Williams (1995) has made a similar observation. Teachers guide the talk of the classroom towards educational goals, where these are rather different from those found in parent–child exchanges.

Text 3.2, also from an early childhood classroom, reveals a teacher and students again working with a book, and this time building some shared scientific knowledge about the life cycles of chickens. To do so, they draw both on personal experience outside the school and on matters already learned about in school. The children involved were in a classroom where the teacher had introduced an incubator and some eggs, so that the children could follow aspects of the process of development and observe the chickens when they hatched. The teacher displayed a little book called *Egg to Chick*, and the talk developed around it.

T:	*(displaying picture)* Oh, I wonder if someone can tell me what's happening in this picture?
Child:	It's a special place.
T:	Yes and what's happening in this special place. Joseph?
Joseph:	It's on a farm.
T:	Have you ever seen great big long silver sheds
Several:	Yes – where chickens are kept or hens are kept for laying eggs? They're called batteries or battery chickens or battery hens.
Olivera:	Battery cage.
T:	And when they lay their eggs, the eggs fall down into this little chute.
Anthony:	Mrs L, I know where they are. I know where they are.
T:	Where are they?
Anthony:	That's where you buy the chickens.
T:	That's right. And are these little eggs *(points to a different page)* going to turn into chickens?
Chorus:	No.
T:	How do you know they're not going to? Diana?
Diana:	'Cos the mother's not in a warm spot, and they're not keeping warm.
T:	That's right. She can't sit on them.
Diana:	'Cos the steel is cold. *(A reference to a metal chute in the picture, down which the eggs are directed.)*
T:	That's right. Jeffrey?
Jeffrey:	They're falling down. *(Refers to eggs passing down a chute in the battery)*
T:	Yes, they're falling down into this little chute, and they're taken away.
Child:	*[Indecipherable]*
T:	They're taken away to be eggs on your table. *(Turns a page in the book.)* Here's another little egg. Now something's interesting about this one over here. Can you see a little spot of blood?

Overlap

Several:	Yes.
T:	Well sometimes you'll get an egg that's got a little spot of blood on it. It doesn't mean that the egg is going to grow into a chicken. It's just something that sometimes happens to the egg. Which part of the egg does the little chicken start to grow? Jodie, which part of the egg does the little chick start to grow?
Jodie:	*(A long pause)* The middle?
T:	Mm. What's the middle part of the egg called?
Several:	The yolk.
T:	This is the inside of the egg and this little spot here is where the little chicken will start to grow. That's the yolk that it will feed on. It's got that little tube to his tummy.
Anthony:	A chord.
T:	Yes, a little chord. And that's, he feeds on all of that yolk. As he grows he feeds on that yolk and the yolk shrinks. It gets smaller and smaller.
Anthony:	Well when I et my egg at home, I seen a yolk in it.
T:	Mm. And that white part *(turns the page)* you know when he comes out and he's all wet?
Several:	Yes.
T:	That's the white part.
A boy:	That's the white and he's all wet.
T:	And the yolk is his food and the white part keeps him nice and warm.
Anthony:	He gets yellow feathers.

As in text 3.1, the tenor or the nature of the relationship, is unequal, in that it is the teacher who guides the directions the discourse takes, drawing the children into talk into a number of ways. She employs the interrogative mood to ask a number of questions, sometimes using a WH question (for example, *what's happening in this picture?*) and sometimes a 'polar question' (that is, a question that invites a yes or no answer; for example, *have you ever seen great big long silver sheds?*). Even though it is the teacher who directs the talk, she is accepting of contributions offered by the children, apart from those she directly seeks (for example, *Mrs L, I know where they*

are; *they're falling down*; *he gets yellow feathers*), so that there is a sense of some **joint construction** of the discourse involved.

Experientially, the teacher and children are building knowledge about how chickens develop, and they draw partly on fields of personal experience (for example, *well when I et my egg at home, I seen a yolk in it*) and partly on previously learned fields of knowledge since having the incubator in the classroom and discussing the need to keep the eggs warm (for example, *'Cos the mother's not in a warm spot, and they're not keeping warm*). Process types are either material and to do with building actions (for example, *they're falling down into this little chute*; *he feeds on all of that yolk*), or relational, and involved in building descriptions (for example, *the mother's not in a warm spot*; *this is the inside of the egg*; *that's the yolk that it will feed on*; *it gets smaller and smaller*). (The verb *gets* creates a being process because it means 'becomes', so it is classified as relational. Later in this chapter, in text 3.4, the same word *get* is a material or action process.) As the students and teacher work together, they build quite a lot of shared language for talking about chickens, to do with keeping eggs *warm*, *the middle part of the egg*, which is *the yolk*; *that little tube to his tummy* and *the white part of the egg*.

Such joint construction of shared knowledge is an important part of classroom activity and the teacher has a significant role in assisting the children in participating in the joint construction. Building shared knowledge is essential to what Gray (1999) and others have termed 'intersubjective learning' – that is, learning in which the various 'subjects' (students and teacher) jointly build language and understandings with which they move forward. Gray was writing of Aboriginal students, though the general principles he proposed have relevance for any community of students. As students work together with their teacher, they build both a shared understanding and a repertoire of skills they can draw upon in later teaching and learning. Constructing intersubjective learning is an aspect of the processes of **scaffolding**, about which more will be said below.

Not all successful classroom talk has as much overt teacher direction as is displayed in texts 3.1 and 3.2. Indeed, in order to understand what happens in teaching–learning activity one really needs to study whole cycles of curriculum work, often over two, three or four weeks or more, to see the ways the discourse patterns change as students and teacher move into taking up different responsibilities. In undertaking studies of this kind (for example, Christie 2002) I have found that in successful classrooms the patterns change substantially over time, and this is as it should be, given that learning tasks and the associated language demands will also change. However, it is also clear that successful teaching–learning activities will

always depend on the direction and guidance of the teacher, for it will be he or she who determines the goals for learning, the pacing of the activities and the assessment of the learning that is done. Thus, over a substantial unit of work, it will be the teacher who initiates and directs the student learning, and, as often happens, as the curriculum cycle proceeds, students may well take a more overt role in direction of activities, while the teacher steps back to allow the students to work independently or in small groups. But the success with which they work either independently or in a group will depend on the extent to which the goals have been made clear, and that is the responsibility of the teacher.

Thus, for example, sometimes the teacher will use the patterns of classroom talk to build a summary of key language items and the concepts they represent, as in the case of the teacher in an upper primary school classroom who had the class look at a short film about machines, and then invited the children to help him build a 'quick summary' of the matters viewed. A short extract from quite a long sequence is shown in text 3.3.

T:	All right, a quick summary of uh … what we have just seen. *(Writes 'summary' on the board.)* Quick.
Andrew:	Lever.
T:	Hold on.
Daniel:	Seesaws.
T:	Right. Just wait till we are all here. Have you got enough scrap paper on your desk please? You'll probably only need two or three pages.
	[Children get the pages and text is left out for a few minutes in which students move about and get ready to make notes of their own.]
Andrew:	Levers.
T:	*(Writes 'levers' on board.)*
	[Text is left out.]
Brad:	An inclined plane.
T	*(Writes this on the board and repeats it as he does so.)* Inclined plane.
	[Text is left out.]
Naomi:	A seesaw.
T:	*(Writes 'seesaw' on board.)*

Joanne:	Lever.
T:	No, we've done that.
Brad:	Baseball bats.
T:	Baseball bats *(pause)* any bat really. But likewise the same. *(Writes 'baseball bat' on the board.)*
Joanne:	*(very quietly)* Flying fox.
T:	Pardon? Flying fox? *(Writes 'flying fox' on the board.)*
	[Text is left out.]
T:	Now is there anything else that you can think of that wasn't in the movie that possibly uses the principles of a machine?
Stephen:	Door handle.
T:	Door handle, good one, hey. *(Writes 'door handle' on board.)* Anything else? Jade? No? Shane?
Shane:	Shovel.
T:	Shovel. *(Writes 'shovel' on board.)* Add more. All right, all right, come one, come on, Naomi.
Naomi:	A rake.
T:	A rake, excellent. *(Writes 'rake' on the board.)* Isabel?

The pattern of talk here is reminiscent of a great deal of classroom talk, which has been referred to as the IRE or IRF model of talk. IRF (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) stands for 'Initiation, Response, Feedback', while IRE refers to 'Initiation, Response Evaluation' (Mehan 1979). The pattern can be demonstrated thus:

Initiation	Now is there anything else that you can think of that wasn't in the movie that possibly uses the principles of a machine?
Response	Door handle.
Feedback/Evaluation	Door handle, good one, hey.

Even in those cases where there is no overt question asked by the teacher, the pattern is in fact very similar, as students give one word, or at least very short, answers (for example, *an inclined plane*), and the teacher affirms this by writing it on the board while also repeating it. The language is in fact very characteristic of a great deal of natural talk, in that short responses are all that are needed for the joint construction

of meaning. Such language use is actually known as 'elliptical', meaning that much is left out but understood by the participants.

The IRF pattern has been often criticised on the grounds that it locks students into one-word responses, leaving them little freedom to talk at more sustained length. In fact it can be problematic if it is allowed to prevail, as it does in many classrooms. However, the extract displayed here occurred in one lesson only in a unit of work that lasted over a fortnight. When one understands that, the role of the language in this lesson is both more defensible and acceptable. The teacher used this lesson in which to build essential knowledge of the field being dealt with, to do with machines. This activity needed to be a shared enterprise because all students needed to have the necessary language of the field in order to go on to work in small groups making their own models of machines, and in this sense the learning was again intersubjective. In this text, then, the teacher was working to build some relevant school knowledge of a kind that the children would later employ in more independent ways.

Later in the unit of work, the students worked in small groups following sets of written instructions in order to make their own models of machines. One such group of girls were making a model of a windlass, and part of a very long passage of talk (lasting for the best part of an hour) is reproduced in text 3.4.

TEXT 3.4

Naomi:	Read the instructions. *(Points to the paper.)*
Aranthi:	Where's the … is there another one? Is there a cork?
Naomi:	Oh well do that after, first we'll figure this. *(Starts to read through the instructions.)*
Yvonne:	*(pointing to part of the paper)* This is already done.
Chanoa:	No, let's do the proper thing.
Naomi:	Here get the rope. *(Begins to attach it to a pulley.)*
Aranthi:	It's not meant to *(inaudible)*
	(Later one of them gets a Stanley knife to cut some of the implements they are working with.)
Chanoa:	*(pointing to a plastic bottle)* Here, I'll cut it, I'll cut.
Katrina:	See cut along there. *(Points to the bottle.)*
Naomi:	Be careful. *(Refers to the girls' handling of the Stanley knife which is very sharp.)*
Katrina:	That's how long it has to be.

Aranthi: Yeah. *(Continue cutting.)*

Yvonne: *(Reads the instruction.)* Wait wait wait!

Naomi: We need glue.

Yvonne: I need the sticky tape.

Much of the language here is 'exophoric', meaning that it refers to objects in the context and outside language. Hence we do not always know what the girls are talking about. However, we can make some useful observations about the patterns of talk here. The most important matter to draw attention to is how very different the talk is from that above when the teacher was directing the joint construction of a board summary. Here the talk shows none of the features of the classic IRF pattern, and the teacher's voice is silent (though he was present in the room). The tenor of the discourse is different, for the girls enjoy equality of status and they work together collaboratively. Sometimes they direct each other using an imperative (for example, *here get the rope*; *wait, wait, wait!*). Sometimes they inform each other using the declarative mood (for example, *oh we'll do that after*) and sometimes they use the interrogative to ask questions of each other (for example, *is there another one?*) Looking at the field, it very much involves action, so that most of the process types are material (for example, *let's do the proper thing*; *get the rope*) though occasionally there is a relational process (for example, *be careful*), and in this case the speaker is concerned about the safety of the others using a very sharp implement.

Much later in the fortnight's unit of work – in fact at the end of the fortnight – the same small group of students displayed the model of a windlass they had produced, and gave the little jointly constructed talk set out in text 3.5, which represented an instance of a procedural recount (Veel 1997; Unsworth 2000), typically found in science.

TEXT 3.5

Orientation

Naomi: Hi, my name is Naomi. *(points to the others)* Aranthi, Yvonne, Katrina and Chanoa. Our project was to make um, a lift using a windlass. We needed a cork, bendable wire and about 35 cm of string, cork, a match box, a heavy nut and 8 pins and a coil. *(Indicates for the next person to speak.)*

Record of Events

Aranthi: Um, we cut the coil and stuck the bendable wire in and we bent it like that *(demonstrates)* and we put cork in the wire

and wrapped the string around a couple of times and attached the string to a match box and a heavy nut and then um, and then turn the handle and *(demonstrates)* it should go up and down.

Significance

The mechanical advantage of this is um, when you wrap it around, um, it's easier to um — Overlap

Yvonne: Turn the cork

Aranthi: Yeah.

Yvonne: And the windlass is the wire and the cork and it helps it lift *(demonstrates)*.

Here the language was different again both from that in text 3.3 and text 3.4. The teacher's voice was silent, though he was present in the assembly hall where the talk was given. Interpersonally, it was the children who took the initiative and together directed the talk, whose effect was monologic, even though more than one person contributed to its construction. Experientially the text began with some relational processes that established the participants and their task (for example, *my name is Naomi*; *our project was to make a lift using a windlass*) Subsequent experiential meanings in the 'Record of Events' were material, to do with the actions of making the windlass (for example, *we cut the coil and stuck the bendable wire in*), while relational processes are again used towards the end to help build the significance element (for example, *the mechanical advantage of this is when you wrap it around, it's easier to turn the cork*).

Overall, the discourse patterns of classroom talk need to be understood as aspects of the social institution of schooling, and they are directed towards the achievement of educational goals. They are always worthy of study and teachers should feel challenged to keep developing opportunities for their students to learn and use language in new and independent ways. But the patterns of classroom talk need to be recognised and understood as different from other patterns of discourse in other areas of life, involving registers and text types particular to the institution of schooling.

Oral language and scaffolding

One of the major functions of oral language in the classroom is to scaffold students' learning, and since the term 'scaffolding' is now used quite extensively in discussions of language education, it will be useful to clarify and explain it. (An introductory discussion has been provided by Hammond 2001.) The term 'scaffold' is a metaphor,

taken from the building industry. As a building is put up, scaffolds are used in order to support those people working on the structure, and they are eventually withdrawn as the building takes shape and the people can work independently. It was the psychologist Bruner (1983, 1986) who selected the metaphor of scaffolding in order to refer to patterns of talk in which caregivers and others help young children learn aspects of their mother tongue. They assist the children by engaging in joint construction of the language, gradually withdrawing their support as the children master the language themselves. In developing his ideas, Bruner was drawing on the work of another psychologist, Vygotsky. Vygotsky died in the former Soviet Union in 1934, while still a young man, and until recent years his work was not well known in the west. However, because of the interest of Bruner and others, Vygotsky's work has been translated and is now better understood.

Vygotsky (the version used here was translated by Kozulin 1986, though an earlier English language version had appeared) had a particular interest in the relationship of language and thought. Since Vygotsky was a psychologist, his goals were different from those of linguists such as Halliday and Painter, whose work we outlined in chapter 2. However, there are some interesting parallels between their work, and these are discussed in detail by Wells (1999). In different if complementary ways, both have stressed the role of participation in interaction with others in learning one's language and hence in also learning about one's culture. For both, the language is learned in interaction and activity, and then internalised, so that it becomes an instrument for thought as well as for further action.

Looking in particular at the processes by which adults worked with children in teaching them, Vygotsky was interested in how children were challenged and extended in their learning. He was critical of the idea that instruction should be directed simply towards, or at least close to, what children already knew and were able to achieve more or less independently. He argued that the most successful learning occurs when children are drawn by adults towards learning in new areas where they could not go alone. They will, in other words, be supported and challenged to achieve new knowledge and skills that push them past their present level of development, and hence towards new development. The skill for the teacher is to recognise what children can do, and challenge, but also support, them as they strive beyond that towards new learning. Vygotsky invented the term 'zone of proximal development' to refer to the area or 'zone' in which teachers and children work as the children move towards independence. Of course, with new and expanding learning, the nature of the 'zone' changes, for learning is not static, and teachers and children will move on towards new areas of knowledge.

It was in looking closely at Vygotsky's work on the zone of proximal development that Bruner invented the term 'scaffolding', and he wrote the following:

> To Vygotsky we owe a special debt for elucidating some of the major relations between language, thought and socialization. His basic view … was that conceptual learning was a collaborative enterprise involving an adult who enters into dialogue with the child in a fashion that provides the child with hints and props that allow him to begin a new climb, guiding the child in next steps before the child is capable of appreciating their significance on his own. It is the 'loan of consciousness' that gets the child through the zone of proximal development.
>
> (J Bruner 1986 *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London, England, p. 132)

A great deal of successful classroom talk provides appropriate scaffolding to students as they learn new language and new knowledge. A major unit of work, for example, will tend to start with considerable teacher input, in that the teacher will both direct the nature of the tasks and guide a lot of the learning as students learn the language and the knowledge that is encoded in it. With growing confidence, the children will in time move on to use the language and the knowledge with increasing independence, assuming enhanced responsibility for their own learning. Wells (1999: 221) suggests that it is the 'transfer of responsibility' that is one of the major goals of good scaffolding. He cites (ibid., 221) a study by Mercer and Fisher (1993), who argue that there are three conditions that should apply when scaffolding occurs: learners should be enabled to 'carry out a task that they would not have been able to manage on their own'; the learners should achieve 'a state of competence' that will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own; and there should subsequently be 'evidence of the learners having achieved some greater level of independent competence as a result of the scaffolding experience'.

Evidence for the results of successful scaffolding will not always be immediately available. It may emerge over some weeks as children undertake different tasks, use language in a variety of ways, both written and spoken, and sometimes revisit what they have learned with their teachers over time. If we return for a moment to the unit of work in upper primary school science referred to above in texts 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5, those text extracts were drawn from a fortnight's work, in which the class studied about the principle of the 'mechanical advantage' conferred by the invention and use

of machines. They began with a guided viewing of a film, and this was followed by the building of the blackboard summary of machines that was used for subsequent research in books, and then later again used in working in groups to build models of machines, with the students offering group oral explanations of these at the school assembly, and eventually producing written texts. The group, part of whose text we read above, produced the following written procedure, text 3.6, accompanied by a diagram (not reproduced).

TEXT 3.6

The lift

Apparatus

a cork, bendable wire, about 35 cm of strong string, a matchbox, a heavy bolt, 8 pins, a plastic drink container (Coke bottle)

Objective

to find the mechanical advantage (of) using the windlass

Procedure

- Get a medium sized bottle (approx 30 cm in height).
- Cut the bottle about 6 cm down from the top.
- Cut a doorway about 6 cm.
- Make two holes opposite each other around 5 cm from the base of the bottle.
- Get the piece of wire, e.g. a coat hanger.
- Thread wire a quarter way through one of the holes in the bottle.
- Make a hole [going through the centre of the cork].
- Holding the cork inside the bottle, push the wire through the other hole in the cork. Put the remaining wire through the other hole in the bottle.
- On one end of the wire leave 3–4 cm protruding from the bottle and on the other end leave around 11 cm.
- Bend 3–4 cm wire at a right angle turn. Then get the other end of the wire, leave 3 cm, then bend down at a right angle. Then leave 4 cm of wire and bend at a right angle sideways. Refer to diagram.
- Get the matchbox, take the inner part of the box out, put a hole in the side of it and thread the string 35 cm in. Tie a knot so the string does not slip out. Re-assemble matchbox.
- Take the heavy bolt and tie it on the other end of the string.
- Wind one end of the string around the cork a couple of times so both the matchbox and bolt are dangling downwards.
- Rotate the handle and the matchbox should go up and down.

Result

Problems were encountered because the string had unstable balance, therefore it was consistently sliding off when the handle was turned. To fix this problem pins were pushed in the cork to make a pathway for the string to follow. See diagram 4 below.

Conclusions

This concludes the experiment of the lift. The model that has been made shows one of the uses of mechanical advantages – the windlass. It changes the direction of force to help lift things.

Applications

The lift may be used in tall or large buildings, in the office, home or school. Variations of the lift can be used almost everywhere.

The necessary scaffolding to enable the group of girls to create this independently written text had developed over the fortnight. Since the girls were in the upper primary school, they had had considerable prior learning of literacy on which to draw in producing such a written text, and it is worth noting how different is the written language of the text compared with the patterns of classroom talk quoted above. This provides further evidence for the point made earlier that where successful teaching and learning occur, there will be variety in the nature of the language used over the total unit of work. It follows that if we are to make a fair judgment about the value of a unit of work, then we must be willing to trace developments in the nature of the language used over extended periods of time, the better to evaluate the kind of learning that has occurred.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the importance of classroom talk in building school knowledge, and it has considered the role of the teacher in facilitating such talk and in scaffolding learning. Oral language provides a major tool for learning, and it is important throughout all the years of schooling. It also provides the basis on which the learning of literacy is developed. Literate language is different in many ways from oral language, and there are important developmental tasks for children learning to control written language. These are matters we shall look at more closely in chapter 4.

Further reading

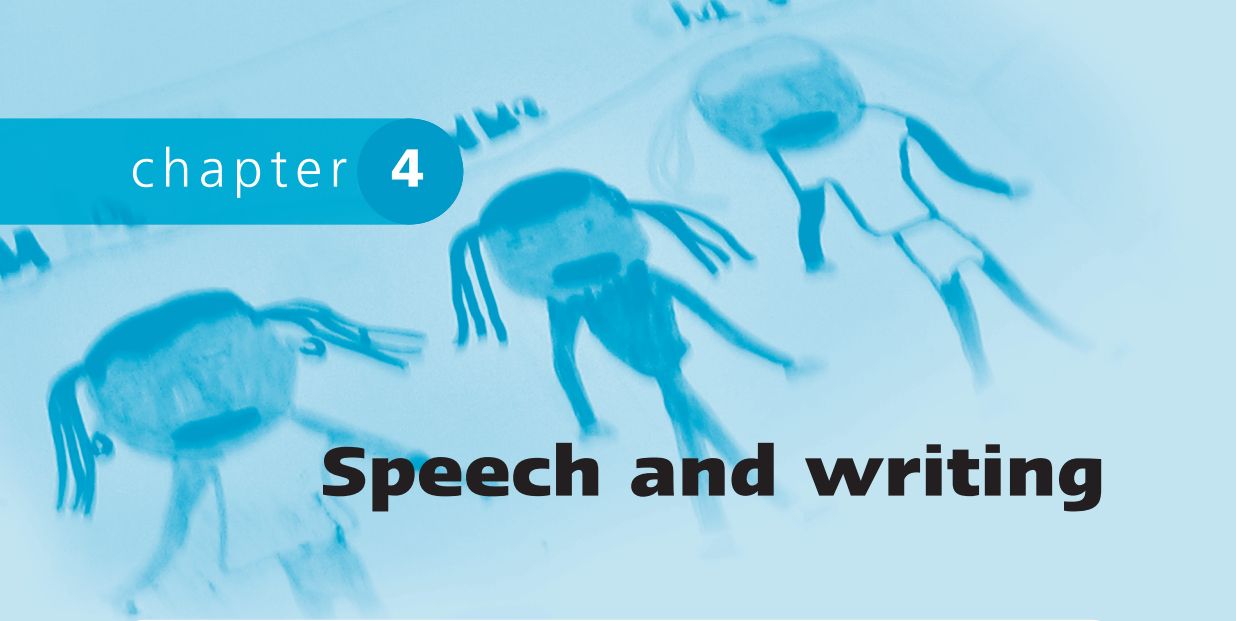
Christie, Frances (2002) *Classroom Discourse Analysis: A Functional Perspective*, Continuum, London and New York.

Edwards, AD & Westgate, DPG (1994) (rev. edn) *Investigating Classroom Talk*, Falmer Press, London and Washington.

Hammond, Jennifer (ed.) (2001) *Scaffolding Teaching and Learning in Language and Literacy Education*, Primary English Teaching Association, Newtown, New South Wales.

Gibbons, Pauline (2004) 'Changing the rules, changing the game: a sociocultural perspective on second language learning in the classroom'. In G Williams & A Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 15–44.

Wells, Gordon (1999) *Dialogic Inquiry: Toward a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education*. (Series eds Roy Pea, John Seely Brown & Jan Hawkins, *Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives*), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.



chapter 4

Speech and writing

Overview

In this chapter we shall outline four ways in which the grammatical organisation of speech and writing differ. They are differences in uses of:

- reference (involving the ways in which participants are introduced into texts and then subsequently tracked through the texts, so that we know what or whom is being referred to);
- theme (referring to what is made prominent or put first in English clauses). A sequence of themes across several clauses helps to build order and coherence, and it is part of the textual metafunction;
- lexical density (referring to the ways in which lexical or 'content' items are used in language). In general, the lexical items are more numerous in writing than in speech and this creates what is called 'lexical density';
- a tendency to shift from uses of the first person in speech to uses of the third person in writing, though this does depend on the genre or text type being written.

The entry to literacy

During the primary school years children need to learn literate language in a variety of ways, so that by the end of Year 6 they should have a range of registers and text types they can recognise, read, interpret and write. Many children have some knowledge of reading and writing before they start school. Nonetheless, while previous learning before school is always useful, all children will need assistance in mastering the written code.

Literate language is different in many ways from oral language, and while the differences become more and more marked as children mature and move up the years of schooling, even at the start there are important developmental tasks for children in learning to control written language. The most important source of the difference lies in the fact that oral language is learned and generally used in face-to-face interaction, while writing is produced at some distance from interaction and event. In these senses, speech is typically 'dialogic', and involves more than one participant in the talk, while writing is 'monologic', and involves one voice – that of the writer. These differences account for the many grammatical differences found between speech and writing. They are, in fact, differences primarily with respect to mode – the third of the elements of register we introduced in chapter 1. It will be recalled that mode refers to the role that language itself plays in the activity in which people engage. In speech, language is part of any social activity, but in writing, it is the written language that constructs what is there. In this sense, the writing is said to 'constitute' the activity (though of course the verbal text is often these days accompanied by illustrations, diagrams and so on). Differences with respect to mode will bring us to the third of the metafunctions said to be features of language, referred to in chapter 1 – the **textual metafunction**. The textual metafunction is to do with the ways choices are made to organise and sequence language to make it intelligible.

Children will need frequent exposure to models of written language, in what they have read to them and in what they read themselves, and in what they write, both in shared and independent activities. It will be the responsibility of teachers to understand the patterns of written language that children must master and to guide them in learning these. Overall, it is the distancing effect of writing that causes the shifts in the organisation of written language, as it moves away from the immediacy of speech.

Reference in English

We will introduce notions of **reference** in two senses here: (i) to do with building coherence within texts; and (ii) to do with the ways some participants are referred to as 'specific', while others are said to be 'generic'. We will consider the former sense first.

Endophoric and exophoric reference

In chapter 3, we looked at a text involving some girls working together to make a model machine. Some of their language used **exophoric references**; that is, references to things outside the language and in the context. This is a common feature of language as speech, and we can all think of examples of activities where language is used in such a way. For example, in any sporting activities such as playing football, the object is to play the game and that is the major social activity. Any language that is used accompanies the physical activity, but it is not a substitute for it. Text 4.1 is an example of a fragment of conversation in a kitchen where one participant ('A') was cooking, and it makes use of exophoric references.

A: Pass **that** over please.

B: Okay … although **it** seems to be broken, or cracked anyway.

A: Oh no … blast. Where?

B: See … along **the side** there's a crack. You could probably still use **it**, but **it**'ll leak a bit.

A: Well okay. I guess it's age. I'll have to try to replace **it** next time I manage to find a Breville distributor. Right now I'll have to use **it**.

The most obvious point to make about this fragment of talk is that the item talked about is never directly named. Instead, the speakers make references to it using pronouns such as *that* and *it*. The reason for this is that the language used is very closely part of the context of situation in which the two participants are talking. (As many readers will have worked out, the object talked about was a kitchen mixer, manufactured by the company Breville.)

One of the most important early lessons children learn is that, when writing, they need to build up references within the text that make it more internally coherent than is apparent in text 4.1. For some young children, this is quite a hard lesson to

learn. Consider text 4.2 (taken from Elms 1988), written by a young child very soon after she had commenced her schooling. It reveals that she was still working out how to write a text that was understandable apart from the context of which she wrote.

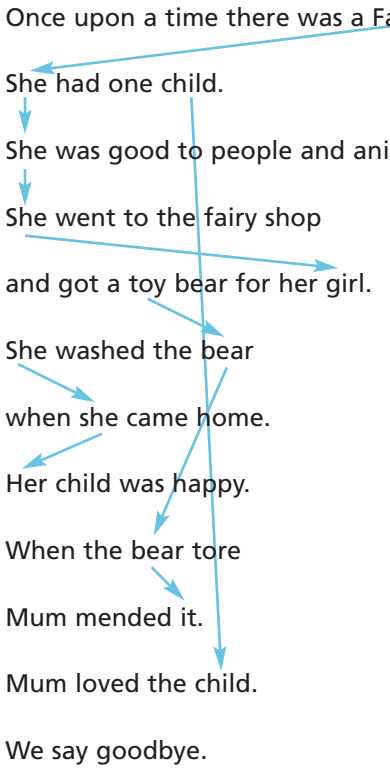
I smelt gum nuts they smelt like something sweet. (I) felt rope and grass and material. **The one in the shade** smelt sweet.

The child had been involved in a class activity using a range of objects and materials for discussion, and she attempted to write about them. The object referred to when she wrote *the one in the shade* is not made clear and it is impossible for us, the readers, to retrieve what it was, since we are not aware of the context. References that build coherence within the text are called **endophoric references**.

Anna, a child aged 6 years, wrote text 4.3 (from Aidman 1999), showing that she had a much better developed sense of how to create a text and, in particular, how to build internal or endophoric references than the writer of text 4.2, though she was not totally successful.

Once upon a time there was a Fairy who was pretty. She had one child. She was good to people and animals. She went to the fairy shop and got a toy bear for her girl. She washed the bear when she came home. Her child was happy. When the bear tore Mum mended it. Mum loved the child. We say goodbye.

Anna demonstrated that she understood a great deal of the organisation of narrative structure (see chapters 9 and 10 for more detail), and this is apparent for several reasons, one of which is evident in the opening: *once upon a time*. This is a very stereotypical way to start a story and very familiar to young children. But it is worthy of comment here, because in using it, Anna chose to distance herself from her readers and to create a context (albeit a very simple one) with which she could then develop her tale. She thus revealed that she already knew she should give her readers sufficient information to proceed in their reading. Creation of the context of the story is then assisted further by Anna's largely successful uses of endophoric references. We can set the text out to show how successful she was for most of the text, though she lost some control of the endophoric references towards the end.



There are two main reference chains that are developed in this text, all using endophoric references in order to build coherence. The chains refer to *a Fairy* and *her girl* and to a *toy bear* that she bought her child. Anna introduced the first character in her story using an indefinite article *a* in *a Fairy* and after that she referred back to this character with the personal pronoun *she* or *her* in *her girl*. These steps build endophoric reference. She used a similar strategy to introduce *a toy bear*, and after that she referred back to it, using the definite article *the*, in *the toy bear*, and later *it*. This is the normal pattern in English for introducing participants into text: we use an indefinite article to identify them for the first time, then later refer back using the definite article or a pronoun. These apparently simple resources in the English language are quite crucial in building endophoric reference in a text, though they are not familiar to all students in our schools. That is because many other languages do not use articles in this way. Anna, the child who wrote text 4.3, was actually a native speaker of Russian, though she had been learning English from early in life. Russian does not use definite and indefinite articles at all. Hence, we can regard Anna's achievement as even greater because of that.

One other chain links *one child* and *the child*, and though a native speaker has no trouble understanding that these refer to the participant also referred to as *her girl*,

the relationship between the two chains is not made overt. There are two clauses in which another slight lapse occurred in the use of referential items. They came when the writer referred to *Mum* in the second and third last clauses. Again, any native speaker reading the text does understand that *Mum* refers to the fairy. Despite this, there is some discontinuity in the way *Mum* is introduced into the text, since there is no overt reference to reveal that this refers to the fairy. As for the personal pronoun *we* in the final sentence, this has a different status. It is used as part of a final clause to wind up the story, and here Anna 'pulls back' a little from the events to bring matters to a conclusion. Professional story writers often employ such a device, and it is possible that Anna modelled what she wrote in the final sentence on stories that had been read to her.

Of course, both speech and writing use exophoric and endophoric reference. But as this short discussion has sought to demonstrate, the patterns of reference are different in speech from those in writing, because the requirements of the textual metafunction are different. Since young children know much more about speech than about writing when they first go to school, the different patterns of reference in writing are among the many aspects of the grammatical organisation that children need to learn. If the children do not speak English as a first language, they will need assistance in mastering this aspect of written English, because the textual organisation of English often differs quite markedly from that of many of the languages spoken by families who have settled in Australia.

Specific and generic reference

A second way to think of reference concerns whether participants are introduced as specific, as in stories, or as generic, as in much scientific writing. **Generic reference** refers to members of a class or genus, as in:

> **Wombats** are marsupial mammals.
> **The Kangaroo** is an Australian animal.

Specific references identify individuals, as in:

> Once there was a fairy. **She** was pretty.
> I have a nice uncle, called **Uncle Sam**, and **he** comes to visit often.

Such distinctions between specific and generic reference become important as children grow older and learn to differentiate the language choices needed for different registers and text types.

Theme and thematic progression in English

When we talk, we often tell others about events that have occurred during the day or perhaps at some more distant time. In order to do this we often create long strings of clauses, each one developing some aspects of the event(s), and we link them together to build a coherent text. One of the grammatical resources we use to do this apart from reference is **theme**. This term refers to what we choose to foreground or – in English at least – what we put first in the clauses we create. Consider the child called Stacey who, in a morning news session, had the following exchange with her teacher.

Stacey:	My mum's got a horse …
T:	Oh that's exciting. Where is it?
Stacey:	Out at Lara.
T:	And who bought the horse?
Stacey:	My dad. She doesn't behave so every time she gets a saddle on she mucks up, so we have to sit in the car when she puts the saddle on. And she's in the paddock. And it's just up that dirt road in Lara. And she always knows us when we come.

If we focus just on what Stacey says after identifying her dad as the person who bought the horse, we can see how she organises the little piece of text to build connections and carry the text forward. For ease of reference, I have numbered the clauses.

1. she doesn't behave
2. **so** every time she gets a saddle on
3. she mucks up.
4. **so** we have to sit in the car
5. **when** she puts the saddle on.
6. **and** she's in the paddock.
7. **and** it's just up that dirt road in Lara.
8. **and** she always knows us
9. **when** we come.

In clauses 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 there is a series of language items serving to link the clauses, and they do this in two ways. In the first way, they are said to build 'texture', because they help to build a coherent whole, so they are called **textual themes**. In this first way of linking clauses, their role is primarily as part of the textual metafunction. The second way in which the items link the clauses together is as **conjunctions**, whose function is to build some logical connection between the clauses. Conjunctions such as *and* build addition, while conjunctions such as *when* build time, so that these each create a different logical connection between clauses. Looking at the clauses in another way we can see that in all but clause 2 Stacey puts first the participants in the little tale, and to do this she uses pronouns: *she*, *we*, *it*. Each of these is the subject of a verb. Each is also called the **topical theme** because in each case the word is said to identify a topic for the clause. (There is in fact some uncertainty as to who *she* is in clause 5: it probably refers to Stacey's mother who puts the saddle on the horse. The confusion would not have been a problem in the actual spoken situation.) The exception in the sequence of topical themes occurs in the clause where *every time* is put first, making it the topical theme. The expression *every time* builds a circumstance of time (see chapter 2). Stacy puts this first because she wants to foreground or emphasise information about the times something happens, and she uses this to help carry her ideas forward.

In chapter 2, we noted that capacity to use language to narrate about events to others emerges rather late in young children. In fact, young children are still often learning about it when they arrive at school, and this is why some teachers involve young children in activities like Morning News or Show and Tell, when they have an opportunity to tell some news to their classmates (though, as we shall note in chapter 13, such activities are not necessarily the best for promoting oral language capacity).

Whenever any of us tells others about the events of our lives, we tend to create strings of clauses much as Stacey did, for that is the nature of speech. We create a series of messages, each expressed in a clause, and link them together to build a coherent text. It is because speech is like this that many young children, when taking their first steps in writing, tend to express themselves in a similar way. They know much more about the grammar of speech than of writing, so they use that in their early writing, as did the child who wrote text 4.5 (spelling corrected), which is a recount.

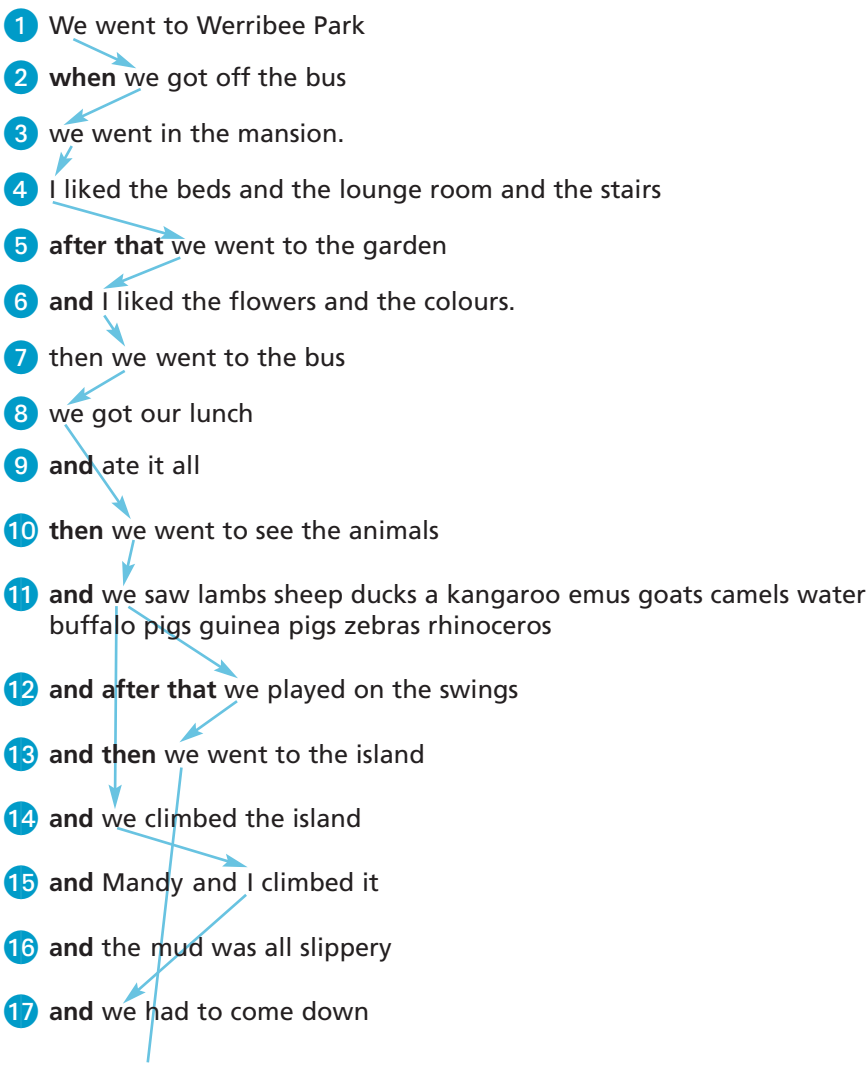
TEXT 4.5

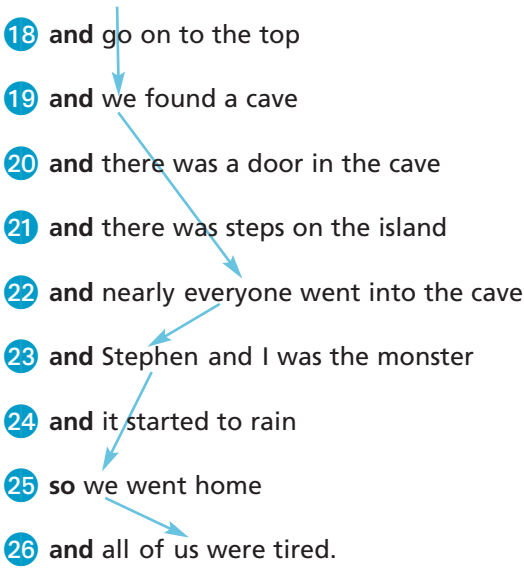
A class visit

We went to Werribee Park when we got off the bus we went in the mansion. I liked the beds and the lounge room and the stairs after that we went to the garden and I liked the flowers and the colours. Then we went to the bus we

got our lunch and ate it all. Then we went to see the animals and we saw lambs sheep ducks a kangaroo emus goats camels water buffalo pigs guinea pigs zebras rhinoceros and after that we played on the swings and then we went to the island and we climbed the island and Mandy and I climbed it and the mud was all slippery and we had to come down and go on to the top and we found a cave and there was a door in the cave and there was steps on the island and nearly everyone went into the cave and Stephen and I was the monster and it started to rain so we went home and all of us were tired. The end.

If we set out text 4.5 clause by clause, we can see how clearly the theme choices work to carry the text forward:





Most of the topical themes here identify class members, using the pronouns *I* and *we*. Occasionally, the young writer assumes we know the identity of participants referred to, as in the references to *Mandy* and *Stephen*. A more mature writer would find some other way to introduce such participants by using some expression such as 'My friend Mandy and I', or 'one of the boys, called Stephen'. But for the most part the text works well enough in terms of the topical theme progression. The series of textual themes also serves to help tie the text into a coherent whole. The conjunctions are mainly additive (*and*) or sometimes time (*when* or *then*, or *after that*) and sometimes consequential (*so*).

The text does not make good use of punctuation, though as the writer was very young, she did reasonably well overall. Of course, if she were to go on writing in this way for many years into her primary years of schooling, her teachers would have cause to be concerned. That is because, while it is appropriate for the young to write thus, drawing on the grammar of speech in the initial years, it is important that children move on into mastering many of the features of true written language. Among other matters, this will mean developing greater facility in handling different types of theme choices.

One example will be given here to indicate how older children begin to show greater facility with their theme choices, and in the process they learn to produce written language that is closer to mature writing. The example is drawn from Perera (1984: 18), who notes that one 12-year-old produced a text that recounted some aspects of personal experience, and he used two very useful topical themes that were expressed in circumstances of place (that are realised in prepositional phrases):

We built the house because it was very simple and we had a lot of bricks to build it with. **Around the house** we put a fence and three gates in it. We built a bus stop outside the house with three people waiting for a bus. **Inside the fence** we put two trees.

Like text 4.5, this one was written in the first person, so it did sometimes make use of the pronoun *we* in topical theme position. However, the writer of the text extract showed great facility in his selections of topical themes: note the way in which *around the house* refers back to *the house*, introduced in the first sentence, and note how *inside the fence* refers back to *a fence*, introduced in the second sentence. Such resources are very useful in building a strong sense of connectedness in the text. Children as young as the writer of text 4.5 often do not write a text with such topical themes, although in chapter 9 we shall display at least one interesting example of an explanation genre by a young writer who did reveal good control of varied theme choices. In general, it takes some years to develop a sense of the range of possible ways to create themes for writing and hence to carry the discourse forward in interesting ways.

Lexical density in English

A broad distinction is made by linguists between language items that are **lexical items** and those that are **grammatical items**. Lexical items are vocabulary or 'content' items, and we keep creating new examples, because people go on creating new inventions and/or developing new ideas. Many new items have been created in recent years, for example, to do with such areas as the Internet, mobile phones, stem cell research, globalisation, IVF, AIDS and so on. While lexical items keep being generated, grammatical items remain 'closed', for we do not create new examples. Grammatical items include: pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, some types of adverbs (such as *very*), and auxiliary verbs (such as *are* in *we **are** going*, or *will* in *they **will** see us tomorrow*). As a general principle, spoken language makes less use of lexical items per clause than does writing. Writing is thus said to be 'lexically dense'.

Text 4.1 is reproduced here, with the lexical items shown in bold:

A: **Pass** that over please.

B: Okay … although it **seems** to be **broken**, or **cracked** anyway.

A: Oh no … blast. Where?

B: **See …** along the **side** there's a **crack**. You could probably still **use** it, but it'll **leak** a **bit**.

A: Well okay. I **guess** it's **age**. I'll have to **try** to **replace** it **next time** I **manage** to **find** a **Breville distributor**. Right now I'll have to **use** it.

Grammatical items have a role in helping to structure English clauses. What is of interest is the manner in which grammatical items are much more numerous normally in spoken language than in written language. This is partly because, as we noted above, speech is very much part of the contexts in which people use it. Matters that could be referred to by using lexical items are often not named, for it would be pointless to do so. But written language must construct information in much more explicit ways. For this reason, written language is sometimes said to be more 'context independent' than speech, and though this contains some truth, it is also rather misleading. No text is really 'context independent', though written texts typically build their meanings in more explicit ways than do spoken texts, and to do this it makes more use of endophoric reference. If we add to this the fact that a number of lexical items are so often used that they do not carry a lot of content, then we can see that in many passages of language – especially in speech – the significant content words are reasonably few. Halliday (1985: 64–65) has suggested that there are a lot of such words, including, for example, *thing*, *people*, *make*, *do*, *have* and *get*. In text 4.1 the following lexical items do not carry much content: *bit*, *try*, *next*. By contrast with speech, lexical items in written language do carry more content. Look, for example, at the opening sentence that started this chapter, in which all the lexical items are shown in bold:

> During the **years** of a **primary education children** will need to **learn literate language** in a **variety** of **ways**, so that by the **end** of **Year 6** they should **have** a **range** of **registers** and **text types** they can **recognise**, **read**, **interpret** and **write**.

Like most of the passages of language found in this and other books, the language here is lexically dense (although *have* occurs once). Broadly, there are three areas of the grammar in which we build **lexical density**. They are in:

- the noun groups that identify participants in texts (for example, *the years of a primary education*);
- the verb groups that build processes (for example, *they can recognise*);
- the prepositional phrases and adverb groups that build circumstances (for example, *in a variety of ways*).

Anna, who wrote text 4.3, which was a narrative, wrote the following text in Year 2, when she was learning about aspects of factual writing. We should note that at this stage of her development, Anna was capable of producing more complex expressions in speech than she was in writing, and this is the norm. Children's language development regresses somewhat in the first years of schooling and as they master writing. One can see how Anna has begun to use the resources of language to build up the lexis in her writing and 'pack in' some content. In particular, she expanded her noun groups.

The zoo

The zoo is a place where there are lots of animals. The biggest animal in the zoo is an elephant. The tallest animal in the zoo is a giraffe. Lots of tourists visit the zoo.

There are of course some simple noun groups here, such as *the zoo* in the first sentence. But notice the way in which, in defining the zoo, Anna was able to expand the next noun group she used and provide more information by doing so, using what is called an 'embedded clause'.

The zoo is **a place [[where there are lots of animals]].**

The clause, *where there are lots of animals* is said to be 'embedded' within the noun group because it expands on and gives more information about the simple noun *a place*. The double square brackets [[ ]] indicate an embedded clause. Embedded clauses like this are sometimes called 'defining relative clauses'. Their function is to add important information to a noun.

In the second sentence, Anna again expands one of her noun groups though she uses different resources in the grammar to do so, for this time she uses an embedded prepositional phrase rather than an embedded clause. (The general rule in the functional grammar is that when there is an embedded phrase in a noun group, we use single square brackets [ ].)

The biggest animal [in the zoo] is **an elephant**.

Anna uses the same kind of linguistic pattern in her next sentence:

The tallest animal [in the zoo] is **a giraffe**.

The final sentence uses a noun group of a different sort, providing information in front of the noun *tourists*:

lots of tourists visit the zoo.

Here, the expression *lots of* functions rather like an adjective, for it means much the same as 'many'.

Overall, Anna revealed considerable skill in using the resources of the noun group to build up some content information in her text. By the time she had

reached the last years of the primary school she was able to write rather like the Year 6 student who wrote an explanation about how plants fertilise. We will look only at the first paragraph of this text, and return to it in chapter 10. The noun groups are shown in bold.

(extract only)

How do plants fertilise?

The reproductive female part of a flower consists of **a stigma**. **The male parts** are **the stamens** and **the anthers**. **These** are **the parts [[that make fertilisation possible]]**.

There are in all seven noun groups here, including one that is expressed in the pronoun *these*, which serves here as a referential item. Because the text is building scientific information, the noun groups are using quite a lot of technical language, such as *stigma*, *stamens* and *anthers*, and these are all very important. But note in addition the two large noun groups: *the reproductive female part of a flower* and *the parts [[that make fertilisation possible]]*. These both compress or condense a great deal of information in a manner that is characteristic of written language. In the case of the first, if the student were to express the same information in spoken language she would say something like this:

> 'A flower reproduces by using a female part called the stigma.'

Here we can see that there is a verb, *reproduces*, which in the written version is turned into an adjective *reproductive*, which then becomes a significant element in the total noun group. In the case of the other large noun group, we can see that the writer used an embedded clause and this again compressed a lot of information: *the parts [[that make fertilisation possible]]*.

While expressions of the kind found in these two large noun groups are found in speech, they are less common in talk than in writing. That is because writing takes experience or information and compresses it in a variety of ways. This helps to create the lexical density that is characteristic of writing.

In order to think about how the other resources of verb groups and circumstances build information through lexical density, look at another text extract, this time from a story written by a boy in junior secondary school. The prepositional phrases that build circumstances are shown in bold, while verb groups are underlined.

(extract only)

Down in a small village just outside a small town two men [[called Jack and Small]] and a lady were sitting **near an old fireplace in a small broken down house** waiting for their boss. As they sat there the door swung right open and **in that moment** lightning struck. The shadow of a tall big man appeared **in the doorway**. All three of them felt their heart jump up **into their throat** and then **back down due to the fright [[they got]]**.

We can see how important the circumstances expressed in prepositional phrases are for building a sense of atmosphere in the story: *down in a small village just outside a small town*; *near an old fireplace in a small broken down house*; *in that moment*; *in the doorway*, and so on. These all provide essential information for building and developing the story. The verb groups are relatively simple, but the processes they realise are nevertheless important in providing content or information: *called*, *were sitting*, *struck*, *appeared*, *felt*, *got*. Only the last of these verbs does not carry much content.

There is one other language resource in which circumstantial information is created, and that is in adverb groups. Often we can have just a single adverb, as in this made-up example:

The children sang **loudly**.

But in practice, we often use more than one word, creating adverb groups, as in:

The children sang **very loudly**.

We will look more fully at aspects of the language resources in which lexical density is created in chapter 10.

The shift from first person to third person

A great deal of speech uses the 'first person', as we talk about ourselves in a large variety of ways. It was evident in text 4.1, the conversation in the kitchen about a kitchen appliance. The first person is also often found in young children's writing, and indeed even in the writing of adults at times, when they write in particular of personal experience. Nonetheless, the tendency of written language rather than of speech is to move more and more into the 'third person', as writers detach themselves

from immediate personal experience and write about events, knowledge, information at a distance. The language of this book is an obvious example.

We have already noted that Anna, who wrote the narrative in text 4.3, revealed she understood the requirements of writing a tale that was not of first-hand experience. She used a circumstance of time to start the tale – *once upon a time* – and to create a simple sense of the context for her story. She also wrote the text in the third person, distancing herself even further from the events of the tale. Both Anna and the writer of the factual piece of writing about plant fertilisation, demonstrated some maturity in handling the requirements of writing by choosing to write in the third person. The effect of selecting the third person is to distance the writer from the reader.

One of the developmental tasks in the primary years is learning to handle the third person to distance oneself from the topics written about. There is a responsibility here for teachers to offer children many varied models of written language, both in the texts read to them and in the texts jointly constructed in class. Teachers can also encourage children to discuss the uses of the first, second and third persons in English, and consider why we have all three persons. What kinds of advantages do we enjoy in having all three? What would life be like if we did not have the first, second and third persons to use?

Conclusion

In this chapter we have explored some of the grammatical differences between speech and writing. Speech is the mode that is learned first, and it remains of prime importance throughout life. Written language is learned as a feature of schooling, and a major task is to learn the ways in which the grammatical organisation of writing differs from that of speech. As we have seen, there are at least four ways in which writing differs from speech: in its uses of reference and of theme, in its enhanced lexical density with which it 'packs in' a lot of content, and in its tendency to move away from the use of the first person to the third person. All these are part of the ways writing distances the writer from the events and/or experience and information written about.

Further reading

Christie, Frances & Soosai, Anne (2001) *Language and Meaning 2*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne.

Halliday, MAK (1985) *Spoken and Written Language*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.

—— (2004) 'On grammar as the driving force from primary to higher-order consciousness'. In G Williams & A Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 15–44.

chapter 5

Knowledge about language

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- introduce the notion of ranks in English grammar, revealing that language items operate at different levels or ranks to structure and build up meanings;
- use both class and functional labels to examine ranks and the meanings expressed in them;
- examine experiential meanings in some detail, exploring material, relational, verbal, mental and behavioural processes and how they build experiential information and knowledge;
- examine interpersonal meanings, expanding earlier work on the role of mood and polarity, and introducing modality;
- argue that children need to learn to recognise both word classes and functions expressed in them, as part of the processes of developing some conscious knowledge about language.

Developing models of knowledge about language for teachers

This chapter is in particular concerned with discussion of areas of knowledge about language – 'KAL', as it is sometimes called – for teaching purposes. Earlier chapters have already introduced some KAL, and here we shall examine some aspects in greater detail, while also taking some up again in later chapters. Overall, this book offers an introductory account of KAL, drawing on functional grammar. As we have already noted, functional grammar uses traditional class labels and functional labels, and both will be used in this chapter. Developing knowledge about language is an important aspect of schooling. A great deal of language learning is of course not conscious, because it is learned while engaging in activities in which it is the activities, rather than the language used, that are held to be important. However, school learning – and especially learning of literacy – does require that children develop some conscious knowledge about the language system and how it works to create meanings. Learning about language can in any case be pleasurable and fun, causing children to reflect on the ways language is used, and encouraging them to play with it, examining the effects that can be created by different patterns of language use.

Rank scales in English clauses

In chapter 1 we introduced notions of text and context, and of text types or genres. We also introduced the notion of register, and its three variables – field, tenor and mode. A text is any meaningful passage of language, spoken or written. Texts are always intimately part of contexts, and texts can be analysed and described with a view to identifying different text types. In chapters 2, 3 and 4 we briefly looked at aspects of language 'inside texts', as it were. Thus, we introduced the notion of a clause in English, and the manner in which it is identified because of the presence of a verb. We also made a distinction between grammatical items (giving structure and order to a clause) and lexical items (the 'content' words). In addition, we drew a distinction between class labels and functional labels, suggesting that both are important for educational purposes. We now need to look more closely at a number of these matters.

We will begin by thinking about the ways in which linguists think of language as working on several layers or scales, or **ranks**. The notion of 'ranks' here is a little like that of ranks in the armed services: soldiers are classified in certain grades or ranks, where each rank takes precedence over what come beneath. Language functions on a number of ranks, each one incorporating the elements that lie beneath it, as set out in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Rank scales in English

Clause complex
Clause
Group or phrase
Word
Morpheme

As already suggested, a clause is a message that is recognised because it has a verb within it. The term 'clause complex' refers to any combination of clauses, as in examples linked by conjunctions (which we introduced in chapter 4).

Thus, this is a clause:

> The children were singing.

This is a clause complex, where the double slash indicates the break between the two clauses:

> The children were singing // when I saw them in the classroom.

Groups and phrases were introduced in chapter 4, where we outlined class labels and functional labels. We also introduced noun groups, verb groups and adverb groups, as well as prepositional phrases. The term 'morpheme' has not been used before. The word 'morpheme' is a linguist's term, which it is useful for teachers to know. It refers to the smallest, or, more accurately, the most minimal linguistic units in words. Some examples will illustrate. Take the words: *elephant*, *economy*, *mystery*. Each of these is a single morpheme, for they cannot be broken down into smaller units of meaning. We can, however, add morphemes to them, to create the following:

elephant (s), elephant (ine)	**2 morphemes**
economy (ies), economy (ic)	**2 morphemes**
mystery (ies), mystery (ious)	**2 morphemes**

Morphemes are not to be confused with syllables. Morphemes are units of meaning, while syllables are units of pronunciation. The word *elephant* has three syllables, but it consists of only one morpheme.

All these matters are made much clearer if we look at an actual sentence, which is made up of three clauses.

A clause complex:
Surprisingly, the economy is showing signs of improvement // even though some economists predict // that in the new year the economy may go into recession.

Clauses:
surprisingly, the economy is showing signs of improvement
even though some economists predict
that in the new year the economy may go into recession

Groups:

Noun groups	*Verb groups*	*Adverb groups*	*Conjunction groups*
the economy	is showing	surprisingly	even though
signs of improvement	predict		
some economists	may go		
the economy			

Phrases:
Prepositional phrase
in the new year
into recession

Words
(This is an incomplete list.)
surprisingly
the
economy
predict
that
new year
into
recession

Morphemes:
(This is an incomplete list.)

surpris(e)	+ ing	+ly
recess	+ion	
show	+ing	
econom (y)	+ ists	
improve	+ ment	

When displaying how morphemes change a word, it is the custom to display the original spelling of the word – for example, *surprise* – and then reveal how the spelling varies, in that *surprising* removes the *e*.

Embedded or 'downranked' clauses

In chapter 4, when looking at aspects of lexical density we saw how a noun group can be expanded by using either an embedded clause or an embedded phrase. The notion of rank should help us understand these rather better. The two examples we had were:

The zoo is a place [[where there are lots of animals]].	Embedded clause
The biggest animal [in the zoo] is an elephant.	Embedded phrase

Another way to refer to such clauses or phrases is to say they are 'downranked'. Thus, the expression *where there are lots of animals* is a clause because it has a verb in it. However, it is a downranked clause, meaning it does not have status as a separate clause. Instead, it has status only within the noun group. The same observation can be made about the phrase *in the zoo*, which does not have status separate from the noun that it is expanding.

Here are two other made-up examples to demonstrate the point a little more fully.

The man [in the ticket office] sold me three tickets.	Embedded phrase
The man [[who was in the ticket office]] sold me three tickets.	Embedded clause

In one way, the various items found at the ranks just explained seem to be simple. Certainly it is true that in using language, we endlessly cycle and recycle a limited range of language items, and it is very easy to take them for granted. Yet the remarkable thing is that language allows us to make a potentially infinite number of meanings. It is this capacity to make meanings in so many ways that accounts for the functional notion that a language system provides choices. This is why the functional grammar uses system networks, introduced in chapter 2, to demonstrate the kinds of choices for making meaning that a speaker/writer enjoys.

One set of choices already introduced in chapter 2 is the set of choices with respect to experiential meanings. We looked briefly at relational or being processes and action or material processes. Below we shall look at an expanded list of available process types.

Experiential meanings

Experiential meanings refer to those meanings to do with the content, information, feelings or ideas constructed in language. These are expressed in:

- verbs, that create processes,
- noun groups (or their equivalents), that build participants in processes and
- prepositional phrases or adverb groups, that build circumstances.

Process types

As already noted, processes are said to be expressed in verb groups. The functional grammar recognises several process types, all involved in different ways in helping to build the experiential meanings in texts. In chapter 2, we saw that very young children appear to learn two types of process quite early: material or action processes that build actions in the world, and relational or being processes that build description and states of being. The principal process types recognised in the functional grammar are: material or action; relational or being; verbal or saying; behavioural or behaving; and mental or thinking, feeling and sensing processes.

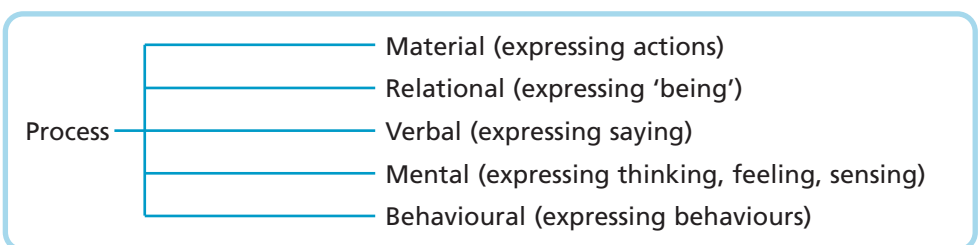


Figure 5.1 A simplified network for process types in English

Material processes

The English language has many material processes, and they are the ones we use more than any others, as we construct the details and events of our daily lives. They are found a lot in recounts and other stories because they help build the series of events that occur, and that give interest to stories. But many other people use them, including poets like Ronald Strahan.

Red kangaroo

Through mulga and mallee, with soft, thudding sound,
*The red kangaroo **moves** in bound after bound*
On the tips of its toes in a firm, steady pace
*That **covers** the country with effortless grace.*

Since pasture is scanty and waterholes few
In the harsh, arid home of the red kangaroo
*It **must travel** great distances, never once **stopping,***
*But endlessly, patiently, **hopping** and **hopping.***

(Ronald Strahan)

The range of material processes here is part of the pleasure of the poem, capturing the sense of the actions in which the kangaroo endlessly engages. Children could be asked to identify the action processes in the poem, and substitute others to test the effect of using other words. The participants, expressed in noun groups, are relatively few: *the red kangaroo*, *the country*, *pasture*. However, the circumstances (which of course often have noun groups within them) are very rich. The following are all expressed in prepositional phrases: *through mulga and mallee*; *with soft, thudding sound*; *in bound after bound*; *on the tips of its toes*; *in a firm, steady pace*; *in the harsh, arid home of the red kangaroo*. Other circumstances are expressed in adverb groups: *endlessly*, *patiently*. All these add a great deal to the meaning of the poem, building a strong sense of the movement of the kangaroo as it leaps across the landscape. Indeed, so the poet has advised, the rhythm of the poem is intended to capture the sense of the graceful kangaroo loping over the land. Children could be guided to identify these circumstances and discuss how they help build the meanings. They might try removing them to see what is lost or, alternatively, they might try to think of substitutes. They should also read the poem out loud, listening to the sounds created through the language and the rhythm.

In reading activities more generally in stories and in factual texts, students can be guided to look at the sections or passages where material processes in particular occur, and discuss their role in building meanings. They can also build up word banks of material processes, being encouraged to draw upon these in their own writing. They can also build up word banks of prepositional phrases, noting how the different prepositions (*in*, *on*, *beneath*, *beyond*, *during* and so on) help create different information. Some other material processes are listed in table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Some material processes

To tumble	The billy cart tumbled down the hill.
To dance	She is dancing in the school ballet.
To interrupt	He often interrupts other people.
To live	She lives in Spain.

To eat	He ate his dinner quickly.
To build	They are building a new house.
To play	They often play at our house.
To rain	It rained all day.
To disappear	The ghost will disappear on stage in the play.
To make	He made a kite.

Relational processes

As is true of material processes, the English language has many relational processes. They are expressed in particular in parts of the verb *to be*, but they are also found in the verb *to have*, as in *she has blue eyes*. They are called 'relational' because they build some relationship – descriptive, defining or possessive – between participants in a clause. They build a considerable range of meanings, and are found in narratives and other stories, as well as much factual and scientific writing. The following poem makes consistent use of one type of relational process, and it will be noted that one participant in each case is created using an embedded clause as part of a noun group. One can see how the embedded clause serves to 'pack in' a lot of information in each instance (though the poet did not identify these embedded clauses himself).

I am the song

I am the song [[that sings the bird]].
I am the leaf [[that grows the land]].
I am the tide [[that moves the moon]].
I am the stream [[that halts the sand]].
I am the cloud [[that drives the storm]].
I am the earth [[that lights the sun]].
I am the fire [[that strikes the stone]].
I am the clay [[that shapes the hand]].
I am the word [[that speaks the man]].

(Charles Causley)

The regular repetition of *I am* in this poem accounts in part for its effect. In each case, this expression opens up a clause that goes on to identify some thing: *the song that sings the bird*, or *the word that speaks the man* and so on. This poem reverses the usual way we think about things. Thus, we normally think that 'the bird sings the song', or that 'the man speaks the word'. So in the manner of many poems, this one

seeks to overturn the normal order of things, and have us think differently about experience and the world. This could be a matter for discussion.

Another matter to note in the poem is the regular use of the definite article *the*. In chapter 4 we noted that articles, which are commonplace in English, are often not found in other languages, some of which are spoken by children growing up in Australia. Reading a poem like 'I am the Song' can be a useful thing for promoting discussion of the uses of the two articles – the definite *the* and the indefinite *a*. Children could be asked in each line of the poem to substitute *a* for *the*, and then consider how the meanings are changed. They could be encouraged to see that the regular use of *the* helps a sense of definition and of force in the poem. Another classroom activity could involve children in removing the information in each embedded clause, and considering what is lost in the removal. Children might also experiment with using expressions other than the embedded clauses to see what kinds of meanings might be created instead.

Some more relational processes are shown in table 5.3. Note that some describe, using an adjective, as in *he became angry*, while others identify or define, as in *Tom Cruise plays the hero*, and others still build possession, as in *he has a cold*.

Table 5.3 Relational processes

To become	He became angry.
To get	He gets seasick when at sea.
To look	He looked unhappy.
To keep	She kept quiet.
To turn	The frog turned into a handsome prince.
To play	Tom Cruise plays the hero in that film.
To equal	One plus one equals two.
To spell	C-A-T spells 'cat'.
To have	He has a new bike.
To own	She owns that dress.

ANOTHER 'BEING PROCESS'

There is one other type of process expressed in parts of the verb *to be* that should be mentioned here. It is the kind that is found in expressions like:

> Once **there were** three bears. They lived in a wood …

We often use expressions like *there were* in this way to start a story or to bring something into existence, so we can talk or write about it. In such cases, the expression *there* (which is the subject of the verb) is nonetheless empty of content. There is only one participant that comes after the verb: *three bears*. The verb *to be* does not create a relational process here. It is just called an 'existential process', because it brings something into existence.

Here is a little poem that uses an existential process, though it changes the tense:

Common sense

*'**There's been** an accident!' they said,*
'Your servant's cut in half; he's dead!'
'Indeed,' said Mr Jones, 'and please
Send me the half that's got my keys'.

(Harry Graham)

Verbal processes

Verbal processes are processes of saying, and English has many of these. We often use them in reconstructing what people have said, and they are thus often found in stories, especially stories for young children, where a great deal of what happens is unfolded using verbal processes to introduce what people have said. Here is a poem that makes considerable use of verbal processes.

The King's breakfast

*The King **asked***
The Queen, and
*The Queen **asked***
The Dairymaid
'Could we have some butter for
The Royal slice of bread?'
*The Queen **asked***
The Dairymaid,
The Dairymaid
***Said**, 'Certainly,*
*I'll go and **tell***
The cow
Now
Before he goes to bed.'

The Dairymaid
She curtsied,
*And went and **told***

The Alderney:
'Don't forget the butter for
The Royal slice of bread.'
The Alderney
***Said** sleepily:*
*'You'**d** better **tell***
His Majesty
That many people nowadays
Like marmalade
Instead.'

The Dairymaid
***Said**, 'Fancy!'*
And went to
Her Majesty.
She curtsied to the Queen, and
She turned a little red:
'Excuse me
Your Majesty
For taking of
The Liberty,
But marmalade is tasty, if
It's very
Thickly
Spread.'

*The Queen **said***
'Oh!'
And went to
His Majesty:
*'**Talking** of the butter for*
The Royal slice of bread,
Many people
Think that
Marmalade
Is nicer.
Would you like to try a little
Marmalade
Instead?'

*The King **said,***
'Bother!'
*And then he **said,***
'Oh, deary me!'
*The king **sobbed**, 'Oh deary me!'*

And went back to bed.
'Nobody,'
*He **whimpered**,*
'Could call me
A fussy man;
I only want
A little bit
Of butter for
My bread!'

*The Queen **said,***
'There, there!'
And went to
The Dairymaid.
The Dairymaid
***Said**, 'There, there!'*
And went to the shed.
*The cow **said**,*
'There, there!
I didn't really mean it;
Here's milk for his porringer
And butter for his bread.'

The Queen took
The butter
And brought it to
His Majesty;
*The King **said,***
'Butter, eh?'
And bounced out of bed.
*'Nobody', he **said**,*
As he kissed her
Tenderly,
*'Nobody', he **said***
As he slid down
The banisters,
'Nobody,
My Darling
Could call me
A fussy man –
BUT
'I do like a little bit of butter to my bread!

(AA Milne)

Each of the stanzas in this poem makes use of verbal processes, and one can see, looking over the whole poem, how much they serve to structure the unfolding of the little tale, though of course other processes are important as well. There are some material processes, but the sequence of events depends very much on reporting what one person *said* to another. While *said* is the most commonly used verbal process one can see that others are used, including *told*, *sobbed* and *whimpered*. Children in a class situation might experiment with using other verbal processes in each case, and discuss how meanings change. They could also build word banks of verbal processes, having a class competition to see how many verbal processes people could think of. Finally, they might be encouraged to use them themselves in writing their own poems.

Turning to the participants in this poem, we can see that these are very simple: *the King*, *the Queen*, *butter*, *the Dairymaid*, *marmalade*, and so on. There are very few circumstances, most of which are realised in prepositional phrases: *and went to the Dairymaid* or *and went to the shed*, though at one stage an adverb is used: *The Alderney said sleepily*. Overall, the language used is simple, though there is considerable skill in writing the poem so cleverly, in particular its rhythm and rhymes. As with all the other poems reviewed here, this one should be read out loud in order to enjoy the pleasure of its sounds, as well as the poem's absurdity.

Table 5.4 sets out some more verbal processes.

Table 5.4 Verbal processes

To remark	He remarked that it was a nice day.
To narrate	She narrated her story.
To show	The clock shows the time.
To indicate	The sign indicates the direction to take.
To speak	He will speak at the meeting.
To report	They reported the accident.
To demand	You must demand the truth.
To ask	I shall ask a question.
To shout	He shouted, 'I am lost!'
To quote	He quoted the poem.

Mental processes

Mental processes are very varied. Some are to do with thinking or cognition, as in *I think*. Others are to do with sensing, or perception, as in *I heard a noise*, while others still are to do with feeling or affect, as in *I love that book*. Mental processes are sometimes found in poems, but they are also used a lot in stories of various kinds to tell readers how participants in the stories are feeling. If we know how they feel, we are generally more interested in what is happening, for the mental processes reveal aspects of characters and their responses to events.

Consider the following extract from *Winnie the Pooh*, in which Pooh's friend Piglet, finds himself in his house in the woods when there is very heavy rain that causes a flood.

> It rained and it rained. Piglet told himself that never in all his life, and he was goodness knows how old – three, was it, or four? – never **had** he **seen** so much rain. Days and days and days.
>
> 'If only', he **thought**, as he looked out of the window, 'I had been in Pooh's house, or Christopher Robin's house, or Rabbit's house when it all began to rain, then I should have had company all this time, instead of being here all along, with nothing to do, except **wonder** when it will stop.' And he **imagined** himself with Pooh, saying, 'Did you ever see such rain, Pooh?' and Pooh saying, 'Isn't it awful, Piglet?' and Piglet saying, 'I **wonder** how it is over Christopher Robin's way', and Pooh saying, 'I **should think** poor old Rabbit is about flooded out by this time' …
>
> Then suddenly he **remembered** a story which Christopher Robin had told him about a man on a desert island who had written something in a bottle and thrown it into the sea; and Piglet **thought** that if he wrote something in a bottle and threw it in the water, perhaps somebody would come and rescue him!
>
> (AA Milne)

One mental process (*had seen*) does not tell about Piglet's inner world of thought and imagination; instead it indicates that he perceives something – namely that it is raining. But apart from that, the other mental processes are all to do with cognition or thinking, and they build a sense of Piglet's inner world. Without these, the actions that are expressed in material processes would be less interesting. Looking over the extract, one can see how the material and mental processes together work to help

weave the details of the story together, some to do with actions in the world and others to do with thought processes in Piglet's head as he responds to the world.

Working with children, one can take any suitable story they read and go through it, guiding discussions to look for the mental processes. They can talk about how they help build the meanings, and how in particular they often introduce what people are thinking, as in: *he thought, 'If only I had been in Pooh's house …'* As in the case of other types of processes mentioned above, children can try substituting other mental processes of their own for the ones used. They can also have a competition to build up their own word banks of mental processes and be encouraged to use them in their writing. Table 5. 5 provides some more mental processes.

Table 5.5 Mental processes

To meditate	He meditated on the problem.
To hate	I hate pumpkin.
To believe	I believed what he said.
To hope	He hoped for the best.
To hear	He heard a noise.
To anticipate	She anticipates a good result.
To expect	I expect that I shall see them.
To like	She likes ice cream.
To understand	I understand the problem.
To despise	I despise dishonesty.

Behavioural processes

These processes are a little like material processes and also a little like mental processes. They are processes that are to do with observable behaviours that have some mental quality as well. The following little poem shows some behavioural processes:

*The crocodile **will** often **smile***
As if to show its secret guile,
But when it swallows its hapless prey
*It **laughs** aloud and yells 'Hooray'!*

The processes of smiling and of laughing are observable behaviours and they also suggest some inner or mental state. Table 5.6 sets out some other behavioural processes.

Table 5.6 Behavioural processes	
To sigh	He sighed deeply.
To cry	That child is crying.
To frown	The teacher frowned.
To cough	She is coughing.

Such processes are very common and are used a lot, but there are not as many as there are material or mental processes. Behavioural processes are often found in stories, where the object is to reveal both how people appear and what they seem to be feeling. Banks of such processes could be amassed by children to reveal how behaviours are suggested by writers.

Overall, when teaching the various verbs and the process types that they realise, teachers need to make regular use of passages of written language: poems and stories read in class, factual texts studied for information in science and social science, and of course in the texts children write themselves. The interest is always in looking at the ways process types and their participants cluster in particular types of texts. For example, material processes build actions in stories, relational processes build description in stories but also in science, and they also often build definitions; verbal processes identify how things are said and by whom; mental processes tell a lot about inner states of feeling, perception and thought; behavioural processes tell how people are observed to behave. The secret in teaching about these things in lively and imaginative ways is always to look for the kinds of meanings we can make by choosing process types and associated participants and circumstances.

As already noted, the choices in language to do with processes, participants and circumstances are to do with experiential meanings. However, there are also choices with respect to interpersonal meanings, which we did introduce when we looked at the mood system in chapter 3. We shall now say a little more about interpersonal meanings, expanding on the earlier introductory account.

Interpersonal meanings

Interpersonal meanings are those that express aspects of personal relationship. Whenever we use language, we take up some relationship towards others, and we use the mood system to make choices in building relationships. In chapter 3 we produced a simple network for the mood system. Here we produce a slightly different version of the network, again showing both mood and polarity choices. The principal

difference we are introducing here is to do with mood. Earlier we introduced the mood choices of declarative, interrogative and imperative. This distinction is maintained, but it is represented a little differently. The two choices for declarative and interrogative are said by linguists to be both choices within the **indicative mood**, which is contrasted with the imperative mood in figure 5.2.

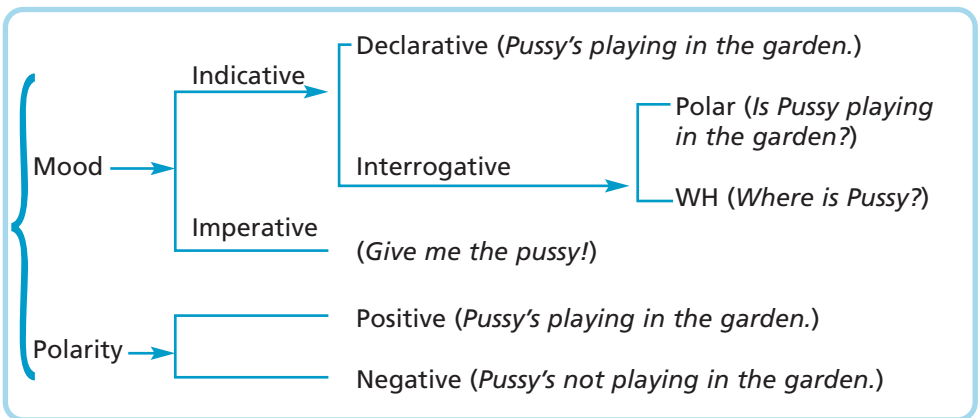


Figure 5.2 Mood and polarity in the English clause

Reading the network from left to right, this figure tells us that simultaneous choices are made for both mood and polarity. The mood choice has selections for the indicative or the imperative mood. If one selects the indicative mood, one then makes a further choice of either the declarative or the interrogative mood.

The mood system allows us to inform others of something (declarative), to ask something of them (interrogative) or perhaps to order them to do something (imperative). The polarity system allows us to indicate whether something is the case (the positive pole), or if it is not the case (negative polarity).

But there is more to expressing relationship than simply using the mood and polarity systems, essential though they are. Sometimes, we want to express judgments about the likelihood, usuality or probability that something might occur. Sometimes we want to express judgments about the necessity or obligation that something should occur or should be done. These are called aspects of modality. These are all matters of degree, and thus they express aspects of judgment.

Modality

We draw on the English modality system to express some judgment about things somewhere between the positive and negative poles.

He **possibly** told the truth. He **perhaps** told the truth.	Degrees of probability
He **sometimes** calls at our house. He **often** calls at our house.	Degrees of usuality
You **must** obey the law. You **should** apologise.	Degrees of obligation
You **could** have this piece of cake. She **would** prefer that you don't make a noise.	Degrees of inclination

Modality can be of three types: low, median or high. Modality can be expressed in modal verbs, modal adjectives, modal adverbs and modal nouns. It can also be expressed using certain clauses of modality.

MODALITY IN VERBS

Low	Median	High
He **may** go.	He **would** go.	He **must** go.
He **might** go.	He **was supposed** to go.	He **has got** to go.
He **could** go.	He **was to** go.	He **is obliged** to go.

MODALITY IN ADVERB GROUPS

Low	Median	High
Perhaps he'll go.	He'll **probably** go.	He'll **certainly** go.
He'll **sometimes** go.	He'll **usually** go.	He'll **always** go.
He'll **occasionally** go.	He'll **often** go.	He'll go **at all costs**.

MODAL ADJECTIVES

Low	Median	High
That story is **possible**.	The excuse was a **probable** one. He made his **usual** excuses.	The guilty verdict was **certain**. It was a **definite** refusal.

MODAL NOUNS

Low	Median	High
The **possibility** of a fire was acknowledged.	The **probability** of the event was established.	The **certainty** of the result was known.

MODAL CLAUSES

I think // that is so.
I doubt // that is so.
It is obvious // that this is so.
It is certain // this is true.
Experts believe // this is so.

All such modal clauses placed first like this suggest that the speaker or writer is adopting a judgment of some kind. Modality is expressed differently in English from in other languages, and teachers need to be aware of this when dealing with children for whom English is not the mother tongue. Native speakers too, often experience difficulty with modality, especially in their writing. As children reach the upper years of the primary school, as well as in the secondary school, they need to think about modality in expressing judgments and opinion.

Consider text 5.1, (reproduced from Butt et al. 2000: 119). The child who wrote it had been learning how to write an exposition, in which she knew she must express a point of view. Note the instances of modality in the text with which she sought to persuade her reader.

TEXT 5.1

What makes a good teacher?

A good teacher **needs** to be understanding to all children. He or she **must** be fair and reasonable. The teacher **must** work at a sensible pace and not one thing after another. The teacher also **needs** to speak with a clear voice so the children **can** understand. If the children have worked hard during the week there **should** be some fun activities. That's what I think a good teacher **should** be like.

(Cherie)

Like many other aspects of learning about language in English, the mood and modality systems can be used for play. Children can build up banks of expressions in

which modality is used, and discuss the different kinds of relationships they can express in language by using them. Equally, they can play with the mood system. Notice how Michael Rosen used the English mood system to write the following poem, and think about how this could be used in classroom discussions.

I'm the youngest in our house

I'm the youngest in our house
So it goes like this:

My brother comes in and says:
'Tell him to clear the fluff
out from under his bed'.
Mum says,
'Clear the fluff
out from under your bed'.
Father says,
'You heard what your mother said'.
'What?' I say.
'The fluff', he says.
'Clear the fluff out from under your bed'.
So I say,
'There's fluff under his bed, too,
you know',
So father says,
'But we're talking about the fluff
under your bed'.
'You will clear it up
won't you?' mum says.
So now my brother – all puffed up –
Says,
'Clear the fluff
out from under your bed,
clear the fluff
out from under your bed'.
Now I'm angry. I am angry.
So I say – what shall I say?
I say,
'Shuttup Stinks
YOU CAN'T RULE MY LIFE'.

(Michael Rosen)

Children could enjoy reading such a poem, taking the different roles expressed by the narrator, his brother, his mother and his father. They could also discuss how the switches in the mood choices make the creation of the dialogue here possible, and also build the humour of the poem.

The person system

In chapter 4, when we looked at differences between speech and writing, we noted that as children grow older, they tend to move away from uses of the first person to uses of the third person, though the matter depends in part on the genre or text type written. A recount of personal experience, for example, will typically use the first person, but in this book, for example, the third person is used. The system of person is itself part of the interpersonal meanings expressed in language. We select (though not consciously) from the person choices available in English to build different relationships with other people. All nouns with which we identify persons, entities or phenomena are in the third person; for example, *the boy*, *Mary*, *dinosaurs*. The first and second persons are relevant in English only when we use the personal pronouns (when we also have a third person choice):

First person *I*, *we*, *us*, *our*
Second person *you*, *your*
Third person *he*, *she*, *they*, *him*, *her*, *his*, *their* (and also *it* and *its*)

Person choices are learned early in life, and they are of interest in school learning mainly because the processes of learning to read and write will in time take children towards learning to use the third person to shape much written language. The models available in what children read will be useful, though some children will from time to time need guidance in taking up the third person.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have outlined some important knowledge about language of a kind that teachers will need when working in primary schools. They should use the knowledge to guide and direct their students' learning of language. Such knowledge concerns ranks in English and associated knowledge about word classes and the ways they operate at different ranks. Words are recognised as belonging to different classes and these in turn are deployed to create clauses and sentences in which a variety of meanings – experiential and interpersonal – are expressed. Children learn words and the meanings they express without necessarily being aware of these things. But they

benefit from developing some conscious knowledge about how language works in order to become proficient users of language – written language in particular. We shall now turn to aspects of the teaching of reading and writing in our next chapters.

Further reading

Butt, David, Fahey, Rhondda, Feez, Susan, Spinks, Sue & Yallop, Colin (2000) (2nd edn) *Using Functional Grammar: An Explorer's Guide*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney.

Christie, Frances & Soosai, Anne (2000) *Language and Meaning 1*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne.

—— (2001) *Language and Meaning 2*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne.

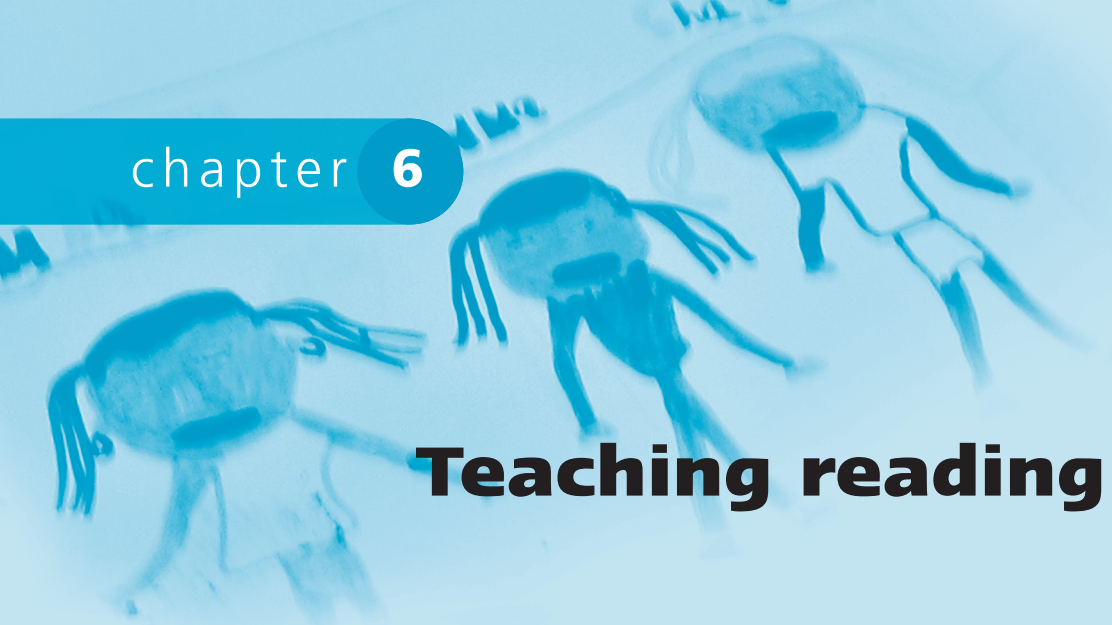
Dare, Brian & Polias, John (2004) *Language and Literacy: Classroom Applications of Functional Grammar, Workshop Participants' Handbook and Tutor Manual*, South Australian Department of Education, Adelaide.

Derewianka, Beverly (1998) *A Grammar Companion for Primary Teachers*, PETA, Sydney.

Droga, Louise & Humphrey, Sally (2003) *Grammar and Meaning: An Introduction for Primary Teachers*, Target Texts, Berry, New South Wales.

Gerot, Linda & Wignell, Peter (1994) *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*, Antipodean Educational Enterprises, Sydney.

chapter 6



Teaching reading

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- outline aspects of the history of teaching reading;
- review debates over the rival claims of 'phonic' and 'whole language' methods for teaching reading, arguing that neither model is adequate;
- outline a functional model for teaching and learning reading;
- demonstrate that this model will teach both (i) meaning in written texts, and (ii) the language structures in which meanings are expressed, including their spelling patterns;
- argue that a functional model develops critical literacy capacities, since reflection on how texts are structured builds interpretive awareness;
- provide an account of strategies for teaching reading.

Models of teaching reading

The teaching of reading in English has had a very long history, going back several centuries. As already noted in chapter 1, a literate person was for a long time held to be 'a person of letters', and this was taken to mean that early programs should teach children to memorise and learn the letters of the alphabet. Much more attention was devoted to teaching the letters and to teaching children to read simple tracts than to teaching them to write. The result, say in the 19th and early 20th centuries, was that many people mastered simple reading skills but they did not become independent writers. In the contemporary world, such simple literacy skills are no longer adequate. Moreover, a great deal of research has demonstrated that there are better and more rewarding methods for teaching both reading and writing than were understood in the 19th century.

When the first programs for teacher education commenced in the 19th century, there were often debates about the most appropriate ways to teach reading, and many of these debates remain to this day. Historically, there were three different approaches to the teaching of reading, referred to in the 19th century as: (i) the alphabetic method; (ii) the phonic method; and (iii) the 'look-and-say' method. The first of these referred to the oldest tradition of all, dating back to the ancient Greeks, by which children committed the letters of the alphabet to memory and then learned to recognise them in simple words, such as *cat* and *mat*, slowly moving from one to two syllable words, and eventually moving on to longer words. The phonic method grouped the letters according to sounds and taught children to recognise the relationship between letters and sounds. The 'look-and-say' method taught children to recognise simple words as whole units (sometimes, but not always, read in meaningful sequences of written language), later on teaching them to recognise the individual letters. Educational justifications were offered for each of these methods, and class readers were produced to exemplify each. Remarkably enough, as we can see at this distance of time, none of the methods expressed much interest in meaning or in what in the modern world has become an interest in developing critical and reflective practices in reading. In the modern world, variants of the older methods reappear, sometimes with different names, though two of them have tended to dominate in language education theory.

The rival claims of phonic and whole language methods

As the 20th century proceeded, the preferred models of teaching reading focused on a combination of the alphabetic and phonic methods, so that children were early taught their letters and their 'sounds'. That is, they were taught that certain sounds – **phonemes**, to use the technical term – were associated with certain letters or combinations of these – the **graphemes**. It was generally held to be the case that an understanding of sounds and letters should determine the order in which reading was taught. The results often led to early reading tasks that were remarkable for their stilted and even absurd uses of English language. The following is an extract from a *Reading Primer Part I*, produced by the New South Wales Minister of Education (1940):

In the hut

1. Mother got us a jug of milk.
2. Tom had his milk in a cup, but Ned and I had a mug.
3. I sat on a tub with my pug dog.
4. 'Do not hug the pup till you have had the bun', said mother.
5. So I put the pug on the tub.
6. But he was a bad dog, and got at my milk.

There are several comments we can make on this passage:

- It is apparent that though several phonemes are involved, the writer sought to have children practise in particular those associated with /*u*/ in *jug*, *cup*, *but*, *mug*, *tub*, *pug*, *pup*. This is characteristic of a great deal of 'phonic' work, with the focus on selecting particular phonemes and associated graphemes and practising recognition of these.
- All the words (apart from *mother*) are of one syllable, for this was thought to make the activity of reading easier than if words of more than one syllable were used.
- The language is very stilted; it is not the kind of language children would hear spoken, nor is it like any regular passages of written language found in children's stories.
- It is in fact the kind of curious language specifically developed by some writers of early reading books for the young, and as such its nature is quite unlike any uses of language that young children could normally be expected to know.

Proponents of phonic approaches to the teaching of reading will tend to stress the teaching of sound–letter correspondence in this way. They will argue that teaching the phonics is essential as a foundation of all reading behaviour. A journalist in *The Age* newspaper (Lipski 1995), reflecting a widespread community view in the matter, wrote a few years ago: 'I am a PHONICS person. For me, C–A–T, sounded out letter by letter, and then read as CAT, is the foundation of all learning, the key to the glories of the English language … and the indispensable tool for a literate public'. Teaching about sound–letter correspondence is important, though it is surprising to read a claim that phonics are 'the key to the glories of the English language'. There are at least two difficulties with Lipski's view. Firstly, it is misleading to suggest that readers rely exclusively on phonics in order to read, because successful reading involves much more than this implies. Secondly, the weaker the students, the more they are likely to be confused by a preoccupation with sounds and letters taught at the expense of any sense or purpose (Clay & Cazden 1992: 130). For many, so profound is the commitment to phonics, they will sacrifice meaning and sense in the reading materials they produce, requiring children to go through laborious steps in trying to make sense of what they are given to read. This is the principal criticism that is made of phonic approaches.

An alternative view of the teaching of reading developed over the last 30 years or so of the 20th century, known as the 'whole language' approach. This is really a descendant of the 'look-and-say' method of the 19th century, just as the phonic method today is a descendant of elements of both the alphabetic and phonic methods of the 19th century. It has been called 'whole language' because it resists the tendency, found in phonic approaches, to start by breaking down words into component letters and sounds; instead, it starts with the 'whole language' of the text, encouraging learners to understand whole passages of writing before thinking about the elements of words.

Those who have argued for the whole language approach (for example, Goodman 1982; Cambourne 1988) have drawn attention to what has been learned of the ways in which young children learn language in the early years of life (some of which we discussed in chapter 2). Children learn language because it serves important human purposes in building relationships with others and in learning about their world. If we pay attention to the ways in which children use language to make sense of their world, it is said, we will develop reading programs that build on their sense of meaning in texts. That will involve starting with meaning, and encouraging children to work with whole texts in integrated ways, and appealing very much to their interests. The principal criticism made of whole language approaches is that in

practice they often neglect to teach the basic elements of spelling, writing and text organisation, leaving these to be acquired in a manner incidental to other classroom activity. There is a need for structured and ordered approaches to planning the language curriculum, and many whole language classrooms have failed to deliver in this respect.

The debate over phonics and whole language is sometimes also referred to as a debate over 'top down' (whole language) approaches and 'bottom up' (phonic) approaches. The truth is that neither approach is enough, though, as we shall see, a more appropriate model has elements of both. It is true that children learning to read and write must master the spelling and writing systems as well as the grammatical organisation of written language. While some children learn at least some of these matters from caregivers before they come to school, all children need formal instruction in literacy. Reading behaviour is not just 'caught' in the processes of handling written language in texts in the integrated whole language classroom, as has sometimes been suggested in the recent past; it is taught. The reading program in the primary school must systematically teach children to read. This will involve, among other matters, developing a range of skills, including phonemic, graphemic and lexical skills. Phonemic skills refer to developing an awareness of the phonemes of the language, so that words are understood to be made up of units of sound. Graphemic skills refer to development of an understanding of the relationship of phonemes and graphemes. Lexical skills refer to developing an awareness of the shape and structure of words as they appear on the printed page. All these matters will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 7, devoted to the teaching of spelling, though they are to be understood as part of the total reading program.

Having noted all these things, it must also be stated that children will respond most positively to learning to read when their interests and their understandings are engaged, for reading must be seen as a purposive activity that involves interpreting and working with written texts that are meaningful. Teaching reading activity should thus start with meaning in texts, while also systematically developing a growing awareness of how the texts work and are constructed.

As students develop such an awareness about how texts work, so too they should develop a **metalanguage** for talking about texts. They should also develop skills in being critical; that is, understanding that meanings are socially constructed in texts, and commenting on the meanings and values involved. A great deal has been written about the need to develop critical literacy skills in reading programs (for example, Fairclough 1992; Luke 1992, 2000; Gee 1996; Muspratt, Luke & Freebody 1997). Such

skills are indeed important, though it should be stressed that students must develop skills in recognition and interpretation of written texts before they can take the step of being critical.

The approach to teaching reading in this chapter involves a functionally based approach whose focus is on both meaning and structure. It argues that students learn to read most successfully where they are taught to read for meaning, paying attention both to purposes in using texts and to the ways in which texts are constructed. It also argues that a necessary part of becoming a successful reader is that the students can demonstrate critical capacities in handling written materials. Only when children have developed strong skills in recognising and using reading materials can they take the subsequent step of reflecting on what they have read in a critical manner. The skill for the teacher will lie in planning curriculum activities in such a way that opportunities for teaching about all aspects of knowledge about written language are built into the activities at key points in classroom work.

Reading for meaning

Successful approaches to the teaching of reading in the primary school will have these characteristics:

- selection of learning activities and texts that appeal to the interest of the age group of learners, allowing opportunity to engage in meaningful ways with written language;
- opportunity for a great deal of shared activity and talk about texts, both because talk provides a basis for moving into written language, and because it allows children to develop familiarity with the topics – or fields – they are to read about;
- shared reading activities with the teacher and other children, so that patterns of written language are rehearsed and practised in supportive ways;
- scaffolded writing about related topics, allowing practice in developing patterns of written language;
- systematic work on spelling as a necessary aspect of both reading and writing tasks, where this involves identifying key words and exploring their spelling patterns;
- frequent display of written language on boards and wall charts, as well as a great deal of other visual reinforcement of key language items encountered in reading and writing;
- opportunity to explore ways language structures meanings, and develop a metalanguage for dealing with these;
- opportunity to develop interpretive and critical skills in text analysis.

Characteristics of a successful reader and writer

Before looking in detail at aspects of the design of reading programs, we should say something of the capacities of a successful reader and writer. Several methods of characterising the practices of successful readers/writers have been proposed, for example, by Green (1988), Freebody and Luke (1990), Hasan (1996), Macken-Horarik (1996) and Unsworth (2001). All such approaches have much in common. Freebody and Luke, for example, identify four roles for a successful reader: code-breaker (one who understands the basic resources of literacy); text participant (one who understands the meaning and structure of a text); text user (one who is able to participate in using and interpreting the text); and text analyst (one who is aware of the crafted nature of texts and is able to analyse and critique them). All such models of the successful user of literacy recognise that students need to:

- develop basic skills in *recognition* of the resources with which meanings are constructed in written texts (that is, its spelling and handwriting systems, and its methods of organising sentences and texts);
- be able to deploy and *reproduce* these in socially relevant practices (that is, be able to write sample texts with understanding); and
- be able to *reflect* upon the practices by which written texts are produced acknowledging the social nature of the meanings made in texts, and being able to critique texts they read and write.

We shall adopt the terms that Unsworth (2001, 14–16) proposes for these three sets of literacy practices: 'recognition practices', 'reproduction practices' and 'reflection practices'. Like Unsworth, Hasan and Macken-Horarik, we argue that in order to develop the critical capacities involved in being reflective in the sense that Unsworth intends, students must first develop skills in recognition and in reproduction. This is because one must understand the nature of a text and how it is constructed before one can criticise it with knowledge. The three areas of literate practices frequently overlap and merge into each other, especially as students become more proficient. However, the accounts of reading strategies given below tend to start with development of recognition and reproduction capacities as a basis for moving on into critical capacities.

Designing a reading program for the first years of schooling

The model for teaching reading developed here draws on research in teaching reading to several age groups and communities of learners, including that of Mackay and Schaub (1970), working with beginning readers, Wallace (1988, 1992), working with adult learners of English as a second language, Cazden (1992), working with primary children, and Wignell (1999), working with Aboriginal adults. However, this account owes most to Gray and his associates, who have worked with Aboriginal children and other disadvantaged groups of learners (for example, Gray 1985; Walker, Rattanovich & Oller 1992; Gray & Cowey 1997; Gray 1999; Rose, Gray & Cowey 1999). Rose (2004; Rose, Lui-Chivizhe, McKnight & Smith 2004) has also been developing the model, especially with Aboriginal adolescent and adult students.

When Gray (1985) and others first developed the principles for teaching reading with very young children, they adapted a term from Cazden (1977, 1983): a 'concentrated language encounter'. The term was intended to suggest development of a concentrated engagement with an activity or task in which children learned to use language about a particular field in purposive ways. Activities such as cooking eggs in the classroom, for example, might be followed by reading about eggs and chickens, keeping fertilised eggs in an incubator to watch the hatching of the chicks and constructing class 'big books' about chickens. Alternatively, class work might start with the teacher reading a selected text (again, perhaps about eggs and chicks), followed by considerable discussion of the text and rereading of it, followed by construction of a 'big book' and further language-related activities. Activities of this kind would be extended over some weeks, allowing children a great deal of opportunity to rehearse relevant language in carefully scaffolded ways in talk, reading and writing. Figure 6.1, taken from Rattanovich (1992: 14), who has developed the model in reading programs in Thailand and elsewhere for disadvantaged children, displays the two possible approaches.

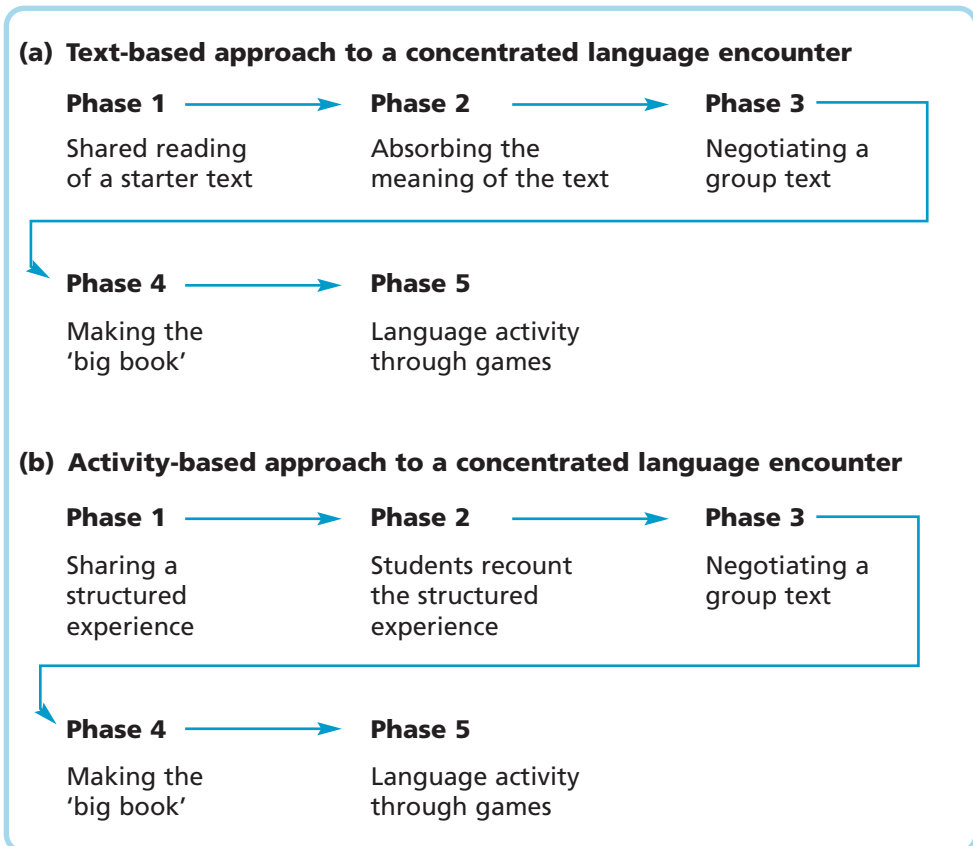


Figure 6.1 Concentrated language encounters for teaching reading to young children

The two approaches are closely related, and some very important principles need to be followed in both, ensuring a strong sense of a shared understanding of the texts, and a confidence in working with printed language.

In the text-based approach, there is a series of phases, each of which will take some time and need to be revisited, often over a period of several weeks of work:

- selection of a good text for reading, called here the 'starter text', which is selected for its potential interest to the children, and because it promises the possibility of opening out talk on a field of interest;
- display of the book to the children;
- preparation of the children for reading, when the teacher introduces some of the language and ideas necessary for an understanding of the book, and invites talk about them;
- teacher reading of the text, when the sound of the teacher's voice is important for building a model of interpretation and comprehension;

- subsequent rereading of the text, stopping for talk about what it means, and drawing the children into interpretation and discussion, so that a strong shared sense is established of the patterns of language and the field written about;
- joint construction of a written text, typically with the teacher writing for the class and involving the children in choosing what is to be written, as well as helping to spell words, though, depending on prior experience, children may be drawn more actively into the writing process;
- creation of a 'big book' using the negotiated text, so that this can be displayed in the classroom and revisited by the children for reading while the teacher also selects and reads other texts;
- selection of particular spelling patterns from the texts read and jointly written, and display of these in the room, as well as scaffolded support in practising how to break them into syllables, and sounding out the letters and playing with aspects of the spelling system.

The 'activity-based' approach works similarly, though it starts differently. It might start with an activity in the classroom, such as making sandwiches, where this involves talk of good foods to eat, selection of items for the sandwiches, buttering the bread and perhaps toasting the sandwiches. Alternatively, it might start with an activity such as preparing a shopping list to buy the items for sandwiches, going to the local shops to purchase foods for sandwich making and so on. Such activity can lead to subsequent reconstruction in talk of what was done, followed by a writing of a shared or negotiated text, and making the 'big book' for subsequent class reading. Once again these activities can lead to language games, including examining and playing with the spelling of key words or lexis, breaking words into syllables and examining how the elements together create the spelling patterns of interest. Subsequent activities may lead to more writing and/or more reading of selected texts.

In curriculum work based on concentrated language encounters, a great deal of carefully planned repetition of activities will occur, including joint reading and joint writing, as well as practising spelling words, and listening to the teacher read selected other texts on related fields of information. At many points in these learning activities, the children will be scaffolded in their learning, so that they can assist in a reading, spelling or writing activity which they could not undertake individually. Thus they work in a 'zone of proximal development', which we discussed in chapter 3, developing literacy skills which depend on the skill of the teacher to foster and support. With consistent support on the one hand and challenge on the other, children are enabled to become independent readers and writers.

The basic model outlined by Gray and Rattanovich and others is, of course, capable of being adapted in many ways, though several principles remain constant:

- selection of a text that is of interest and preparation of the children for an understanding of the text before commencement of reading;
- a good initial reading by the teacher, accompanied by considerable talk of the field of knowledge or content involved;
- opportunity for the children to practise reading with the teacher;
- talk about the overall organisation and purpose of the text and its language;
- opportunity to talk about and learn the spelling of key words;
- associated writing activities.

Having outlined some principles for teaching reading, we will now look closely at an instance of one story book that can be used with young readers. Here the object is to look closely at the language choices with which the story is constructed, and consider how knowledge of these things could guide teaching.

A selected reader for use with young children

Gray and his colleagues (Gray & Cowey 1997) have made considerable use of a children's story by Scott and Cutts (1993) called *The Lion and the Mouse*, and they have developed a possible program for working with young children learning to read the tale. In this discussion, we will look at another little story by the same writers, called *The Mice and the Elephants*. The object of this discussion is to display the text and to offer a commentary, using functional grammar, on ways the story is constructed. A knowledge of such matters should be a first step for the teacher planning to use the book in class work with young children. The story is well illustrated, though no attempt is made here to reproduce any of the illustrations. The tale concerns some mice and some elephants, and the problems that develop when the elephants, trying to reach water, pass through areas where the mice live, hurting and even killing some of them. The elephants are sorry when this is pointed out to them. Later the elephants are caught by hunters and the mice rescue them by gnawing the ropes that tie them. The story reveals that even very small creatures like the mice can help big creatures like the elephants.

Orientation Establishes setting of tale	There was once a place in the forest where a great city had been allowed to fall to ruins. It was an ideal home for mice. They feasted in its halls and gardens. They were at peace with the other forest creatures and they had no enemies.	The opening topic sentence sets the scene: it uses an existential process (*there was …*) and a circumstance of time (*once*), often found at the start of stories. Relational processes build attributes of the mice: *it was an ideal home for mice*; *they were at peace*; *they had no enemies*.
Complication 1 Introduces a problem	But life can change suddenly. A time of drought came to the land. Many lakes and rivers dried up. Near the ruined city was a huge lake fed by springs that never failed. Animals from other places heard about the lake and made their way to it.	A contrastive conjunction (*but*) signals change. Two material processes reveal the change: *a time of drought came to the land*; *lakes and rivers dried up*. Other processes are relational and build description: *near the ruined city was a huge lake [[fed by springs [[that never failed]]]]*. Some are mental: *animals … heard about the lake*. Others are material and to do with building events: *if we stay here we will soon die*; *I will lead you to it*.
	The King of the Elephants, who lived far away, said to his people, 'Our own water has dried up. If we stay here, we will soon die. I have heard of a lake where the water never fails. I will lead you to it'. 'Take us quickly', they all cried. 'Soon we will be too weak to walk far'.	Two verbal processes introduce what is said: *the King of the Elephants said*, but his people *cried.* Dialogue builds interest in the characters.
	Usually the elephants moved carefully so they did not tread on small creatures. This time, because of their great thirst, they forgot to look where they trod. Many mice were trampled to death.	Use of adverb *usually* as a circumstance in theme position starts clause that tells what elephants normally do. This, together with theme in the next sentence *this time*, helps build the contrast in behaviour: the elephants hurried and *many mice were trampled to death*.
	Those who were left met together, full of sorrow.	Emotional response of mice revealed in circumstance of manner: *full of sorrow*.
	'My friends', said one, 'we have lived in peace for so long, we have forgotten how cruel the world can be. We must tell the elephants what	Verbal and mental processes help create sense of response to events: *said one*; *we have forgotten how cruel the world*

	has happened. I am sure they will listen to us.' All the mice agreed. They chose a group to go and speak with the elephants. The elephants were resting in a clearing. The King of the Elephants saw the mice. He said, 'Welcome, my small friends. What can I do for you?' 'Oh mighty one, we are the Mice people from the Ruined City. In your great haste, you and your people have brought death to many of us. We beg you to use another path to the lake'.	*can be*; *we must tell the elephants*; *I am sure they will listen to us*; *all the mice agreed*. One material process (*the elephants were resting*) and one verbal process introduce the next stage of the story: *he said 'welcome, my small friends …'* Manner of addressing the king: *oh mighty one* reveals that the mice are small and not powerful; a verbal process reinforces sense of being not strong: *we beg you to …*
Resolution 1 The problem is solved	The elephants were saddened by what had happened. 'Forgive us', said the King. 'We will surely take greater care. None of us will pass through the Ruined City'.	Mental process reveals elephants' response: they *were saddened*. This is reinforced by what the King says, using another mental process: *forgive us*.
Complication 2 A second problem	A few weeks later, the King of the Elephants and some of his people were caught by hunters. They were tied to great trees that were too big to drag from the ground. The King sent a young elephant to ask the mice if they would help.	Circumstance of time in theme position marks passage of time: *a few weeks later*. Material processes build events: *the elephants were caught by hunters*; *they were tied to great trees …*; *the king sent a young elephant to ask the mice if they would help*.
Resolution 2 The problem is solved	The mice came in their thousands. They gnawed at the ropes, biting through each strand. At last the elephants were free.	Circumstance of manner (*in their thousands*) stresses how the mice came, and other processes also stress action: *they gnawed at the ropes, biting through each strand*. A relational process describes the elephants: *they were free.*
Coda Provides a comment on the significance of the tale	The mice were happy to repay the elephants' kindness.	A final relational process builds an attribute of the mice: they *were happy to repay the elephants' kindness*.

What follows is not a lesson plan. Rather, it suggests possible directions to follow over several lessons, using the knowledge about language gained by the teacher from a close reading of the text.

As already indicated above, a first step would involve the teacher in preparing the children for a reading of the story by displaying the book, revealing some of its pictures. Guided talk can direct children initially to think about the meanings in the story. Questions of the kind listed here would guide comprehension, and they could lead to later closer examination of the language patterns used. Children would be asked to help identify the actual words in the text required to answer the questions.

Who were the main characters in the story at the start?
Where did they live? (Some talk about what *a ruined city* would be like would be useful here; for example, things would be broken and the people would have gone away.)
Were the mice happy? How do you know?
How do you know a problem came to the land where the mice lived?
What did the animals do to overcome the drought?
What problem occurred when the elephants went to the lake?
How do you know this was not the way the elephants usually behaved?
How did the mice feel?
What did they do to solve the problem?
How do you know the mice expected the elephants to listen to them?
How do you know the mice were afraid of the elephants?
How did the elephants feel about what the mice said?
What second problem occurred a few weeks later?
A large number of mice come to help. How do you know?
Why were the mice happy about what they had done? (This could lead into general talk about helping others and why this is important.)

Once the text had been read more than once and familiarity with it established, subsequent questions could look more closely at the patterns of language used. Here are some suggestions:

- A metalanguage for dealing with written language should develop very early, guided by teacher talk, so that children become familiar with terms such as 'word', 'letter', or 'spelling'. Young children could be guided to identify selected words in the text, such as *mice* or *elephants*, and also larger noun group structures, such as *a ruined city* or *an ideal home for mice*. A rereading involving the children in reading along with the teacher will encourage them to sound out phrases and sentences as they are pointed to. Such activities can lead to the building of banks of words for display in the classroom;
- Talk about whole sequences of written language can lead to talk of the stages of the story and their role, as well as language items that build these. Thus, for example, the teacher might tell the children, 'This story has several steps. The first step is the Orientation, which tells us about the people in the story and where they are. Let's read that out …' (read it). Then, 'So, what has the Orientation told us about the

people? Why does it say "There was once a place in the forest …?" Why do we need to know this information?' Then the teacher could go on, 'In the next step there is a problem or a "Complication". Let's read the next step and see what it is. What word tells us a problem is going to come?' (Reads out the Complication, putting emphasis on the use of the conjunction *but* that starts it, and spending time over the details of what happens in the 'Complication 1' stage.) Then the teacher could go on to say, 'The next step tells us how the problem was solved'. (Then reads it out). The teacher could go through all the elements, taking time firstly to introduce the idea of each element, then reading it out and talking about it afterwards. The object overall is to develop a clear understanding of the purpose of each stage in the story. Such questions should require children to take their answers from the text, using the language found there, which the teacher can highlight by pointing to it as they read together;

- Talk could also develop about particular uses of language:
  - Relational or 'being' processes to build description: for example, *it was an ideal home for mice; they were at peace with the other forest creatures and they had no enemies*. And later*: at last the elephants were free*; *the mice were happy to repay the elephants' kindness*
  - Material or action processes to tell what happened; for example, *they feasted in its halls and gardens; a time of drought came.* And later*: they came in their thousands they gnawed at the ropes, biting through each strand*
  - Verbal processes to tell what people said: for example, *the king said to his people; the mice cried; we must tell the elephants what has happened … we beg you to use another path …*
  - A circumstance of manner (expressed in a prepositional phrase) to tell how the mice felt: for example, *full of sorrow*
  - Mental processes to tell how characters felt: for example, *we have forgotten how cruel the world can be; the elephants were saddened by what had happened; forgive us, said the King*
- Use of the verbal processes and the related dialogue to discuss how the different characters talk to each other, and what these things tell of the powers enjoyed by the elephants and the mice, thus building interpretive and critical skills. For example, the King is strong when he says, using the declarative mood, *Our own water has dried up … I will lead you to it,* and the other elephants are grateful when they *cry* using the imperative mood, *Take us quickly*. The mice are weaker and they beg the King, *Oh mighty one, we are the Mice people from the Ruined City … We beg you to use another path …* The King shows generosity when he says, *Forgive us*. Finally, there is a message, already alluded to above, in the fact that the mice prove strong when they free the elephants;

- Talk about spelling. The possibilities for examining the spelling of words from such a story are considerable, and here a selection can be made, taking such words as the following and breaking them into syllables as an aspect of developing **phonemic awareness**. The teacher needs to make a judgment about how many words are selected for teaching spelling. Nouns that create participants in the tale, and their plural forms:

city	cities
elephant	elephants
forest	forests
creature	creatures
animal	animals
mouse	mice

Here there is an interesting point to be made in that most of the nouns use the regular /*s*/ to create the plural, but *mouse* is irregular. The plural *cities* is also worthy of comment because /*y*/ is removed and the plural takes the form /*ies*/.

Adverbs that create circumstances, and their associated adjectives:

suddenly	sudden
quickly	quick
usually	usual
carefully	careful
surely	sure

The text also uses several verbs that create processes, and here the present and past tenses might be displayed for learning about their spelling:

feast	feasted
change	changed
live	lived
move	moved
happen	happened
cry	cried

All the above verbs are said to be regular in the way they form the past tense, because they all use the /*ed*/ ending. However, the following verbs also occur in the text, and might be used to show the irregular ways their past tense forms are created and spelled:

forget	forgot
meet	met
choose	chose
bring	brought
catch	caught
say	said

Considerable exposure to the spelling patterns would need to be developed, involving sounding out of letters to create a sense of phoneme–grapheme correspondence, and playing with words and how they look when written down. Practice in writing the words, or at least in watching the teacher write them, is also a necessary aspect of teaching and learning spelling.

Using the model for teaching reading to older readers

So far, this discussion has set out strategies for teaching reading to young readers, though the principles involved are capable of being used with any age. Rose and his colleagues (Rose 2004; Rose et al. 2004) have adapted and developed the principles for teaching reading to Aboriginal adolescents and adults, many of whom have limited reading skills. Rose proposes an interactive approach to the teaching of reading, which scaffolds students so that they develop reading independence of their teacher over time. Rose sets out his 'scaffolding interaction cycle' as shown in figure 6.2.

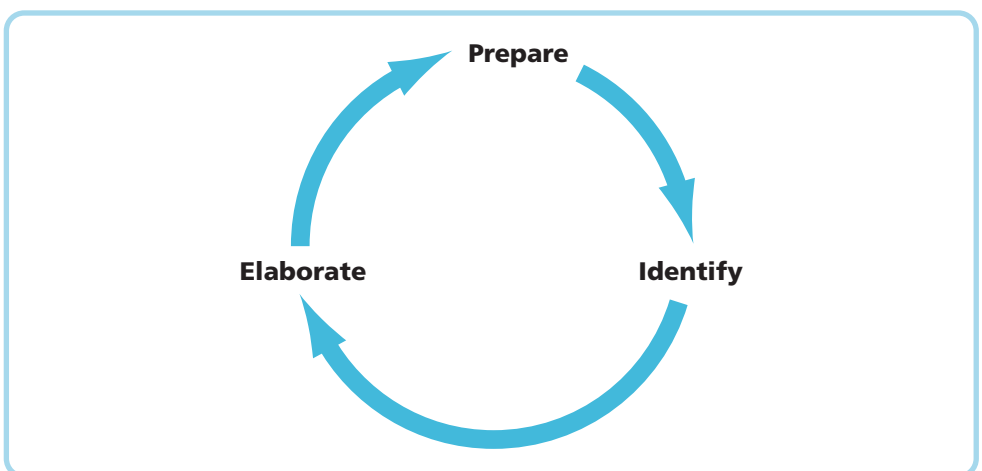


Figure 6.2 The scaffolding interaction cycle (Rose 2004)

The three steps outlined by Rose provide a framework for developing reading lessons. Thus, the teacher firstly **prepares** the students for reading by outlining what the text to be read is about. Copies of the text are given the students and as the teacher then reads through it, he or she reads a sentence or a section, paraphrasing what is read where necessary and asking students to **identify** relevant words or phrases and discuss their meanings. This allows students to develop some shared knowledge and comprehension of the field and of the language in which it is expressed, including its spelling patterns. The third stage involves **elaboration**, where the language and the

ideas involved are elaborated upon in class discussion. At this point in particular, students are encouraged to discuss the ideas expressed in the text, critiquing and challenging what is said, and proposing alternative and/or supplementary ideas. As Rose teaches the cycle he also involves the students in a writing activity, drawing on a related field, and using the model of the text they have read.

In the mid to upper primary years, children continue to read stories and many other forms of literature, while they also begin to read and research, using factual books and other print materials, including the Internet and CD-ROMs. Using ideas taken from both Gray and Rose, we will look briefly at an example of a factual scientific text that could be used in the mid to upper primary school years.

A selected text for reading with older students in the primary school

Text 6.1 is an extract from a science book for the upper primary school, called *Atoms and Elements: An Essential Guide to the Mysteries of Modern Science* (Bradley & Crofton 2002: 12). The object is to look at the extract and consider how teachers might work with children in reading and understanding it. What follows is not a lesson plan. Rather, some commentary is offered on the linguistic organisation of the text, as well as commentary on how a teacher might use a knowledge of such things to guide reading and learning.

TEXT 6.1

Mixed up matter

In the natural world, most things are made of lots of different substances mixed up together. Rocks are mostly mixtures of minerals, usually various kinds of tiny crystals. Sand on the beach is often a mixture of tiny grains of rocks and fragments of seashells. The air we breathe is a mixture of gases, mainly nitrogen and oxygen. The sea is a special kind of mixture called a solution in which substances such as salt are dissolved.

Mixtures are different from chemical compounds. For example, if you mix together iron filings and talcum powder, the mixture behaves in the same way as the two separate substances. The iron filings are still magnetic, and the talcum powder still absorbs water.

But if iron reacts chemically with oxygen in the air, a completely different chemical results – iron oxide (rust). Iron oxide is not magnetic, is reddish in colour and is much weaker than iron.

This text extract is identifiably different from the story of the mice and elephants looked at above. It requires rather different reading skills, for this is factual writing

involving a different register and a different genre. It is in fact an explanation genre. Some important differences include:

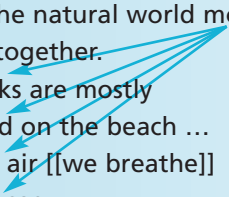
- an opening paragraph that identifies a 'Phenomenon' and two later paragraphs that provide simple 'Explanation Sequences' of the Phenomenon;
- use of generic participants rather than specific ones;
- considerable use of technical language;
- considerable lexical density.

Mixed up matter

Phenomenon Identification States the Phenomenon of interest	In the natural world, most things are made of lots of different substances mixed up together. Rocks are **mostly** mixtures of minerals, **usually** various kinds of tiny crystals. Sand on the beach is **often** a mixture of tiny grains of rocks and fragments of seashells. The air we breathe is a mixture of gases, **mainly** nitrogen and oxygen. The sea is a special kind of mixture called a solution in which substances such as salt are dissolved.	Topic sentence establishes the field and later sentences all use opening topical themes to expand on that field: *rocks, sand on the beach; the air we breathe; the sea*. A large number of relational or being processes help build technical language: *most things are made of*; *rocks are mostly mixtures …*; *the air we breathe is a mixture …* Several modal adverbs build what is 'usually' the case: *mostly, usually, often, mainly*.
Explanation Sequence 1 Provides an account of the sequence of events that create one aspect of the Phenomenon	Mixtures are different from chemical compounds. For example, if you mix together iron filings and talcum powder, the mixture behaves in the same way as the two separate substances. The iron filings are still magnetic, and the talcum powder still absorbs water.	Use of generic referents throughout, for example, *rocks, mixtures*. Opening sentence with relational or being process makes statement about chemical compounds. Textual theme *for example* and conditional clause starting *if you mix together iron filings* introduces steps in sequence that occurs to create a mixture.
Explanation Sequence 2 Provides an account of the events that create a second aspect of the Phenomenon	But if iron reacts chemically with oxygen in the air, a completely different chemical results – iron oxide (rust). Iron oxide is not magnetic, is reddish in colour and is much weaker than iron.	Contrastive conjunction *but* (also a textual theme) and another conditional clause *if iron reacts …* introduces steps that follow to create a chemical compound, using a material process. This element again uses several being or relational processes.

Looking to the opening paragraph, one can see how the series of topical themes helps to build up the Phenomenon.

In the natural world most things are made up of different substances mixed up together.
Rocks are mostly
Sand on the beach …
The air [[we breathe]]
The sea



The pattern changes with the next paragraph, which offers a simple Explanation Sequence of events. Here another simple topical theme starts the opening sentence:

Mixtures are different from chemical compounds.

and after that the idea of 'difference' is expanded on by introducing the next sentence with *for example*, and the conditional clause:

for example, if you mix together iron filings and talcum powder.

This creates the condition that leads to the behaviour described:

the mixture behaves in the same way as the two separate substances.

The third element, the other Explanation Sequence, starts with the contrastive conjunction *but*, and then proceeds to use another conditional clause:

but if iron reacts chemically with oxygen in the air,

and this leads to the behaviour that follows:

a completely different chemical results – iron oxide (rust). Iron oxide is not magnetic, is reddish in colour and is much weaker than iron.

Suggestions for discussion about the text that would guide reading include:

- identification of the elements and discussion of their functions. Here the meanings of the terms 'Phenomenon Identification' and 'Explanation Sequence' would need to be discussed;
- discussion of the relational or being processes that help identify phenomena discussed: *rocks **are** mostly mixtures of minerals, usually various kinds of tiny crystals*; *sand on the beach **is** often a mixture of tiny grains of rocks and fragments of seashells*;

the air we breathe ***is*** *a mixture of gases, mainly oxygen and nitrogen*; *the sea* ***is*** *a special kind of mixture called a solution in which substances such as salt are dissolved*;

- related discussion of the technical terms introduced using these relational processes and forming the participants involved, in which it will be noted there are some embedded clauses that help 'pack in' information: *mostly mixtures of minerals, usually various kinds of tiny crystals*; *a mixture of tiny grains of rocks and fragments of seashells*; *the air [[we breathe]] … a mixture of gases, mainly oxygen and nitrogen*; *a special kind of mixture [[called a solution]]*;
- discussion of material processes in the Explanation Sequences, building events: *if you mix together iron filings and talcum powder*; *the mixture behaves in the same way …*; *if iron reacts chemically with oxygen*;
- discussion of the cluster of modal adverbs in the opening paragraph, which build what is typically the case: *mostly*, *usually*, *often*, *mainly*. These are characteristic of scientific writing, in which judgments are often built about what is typically or often the case, rather than what is always the case. Students might be asked about why scientists write like this, and why they are careful about the ways they express judgments about the natural world. This can lead to talk of the responsibilities of scientists, hence building critical and interpretive capacities;
- related discussion of the absence of human beings in the text, also a feature of scientific writing. Apart from one reference to *you* in *if you mix together iron filings and talcum powder …* the text deals only with participants of the natural world, such as rocks, chemical compounds and so on. Again, this can build some thoughtful sense of how scientists go about building their knowledge. When should scientists be more direct about referring to themselves as the agents responsible for building scientific knowledge?
- discussion of spellings of words, including, for example: *mix*, *mixture*, *gases*, *nitrogen*, *oxygen*, *substances*, *chemical compounds*; *magnetic*;
- subsequent class research could lead to further work on other examples of mixed up matter and writing of similar explanation genres.

Conclusion

Reading is one of the most important skills that are established in the years of a primary education. It is, of course, one aspect of the total literacy program, and important connections between reading and writing need to be made in class work. Teaching reading involves constant attention both to the meanings constructed in texts and to the language structures in which those meanings are expressed. Good class work will involve: opportunity to practise reading, to discuss what is read, to examine overall genres that are read and their purposes, to review spelling patterns,

and to undertake associated writing that extends the literacy skills developed. In the next chapter we shall turn directly to English spelling and its teaching.

Further reading

Department of Education Queensland (2000) *Why Wait: A Way into Teaching Critical Literacies in the Early Years*, Education Services Directorate, Education Queensland, Brisbane.

Freebody, Peter & Luke, Allan (1990) '"Literacies" programs: debates and demands in cultural context'. In *Prospect*, 5, pp. 7–16.

Gibbons, Pauline (2002) *Scaffolding Language Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.

Hood, Susan, Solomon, Nicky & Burns, Anne (1996) (2nd edn) *Focus on Reading*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney.

Walker, Richard, Rattanovich, Saowalak & Oller, John W Jnr (1992) *Teaching all the Children to Read*, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Wallace, Catherine (1988) *The Social Context of Second Language Literacy*, Prentice Hall, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Tokyo. (*Language Teaching Methodology Series*. Series ed. Christopher N Candlin).

Wallace, Catherine (1992) *Reading*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

chapter 7

Teaching spelling

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- consider what research has said of how long it takes to make a good speller;
- outline three main areas of knowledge that successful spellers use – phonemic, graphemic and lexical;
- review a number of spelling patterns used to represent the phonemes of English, suggesting there are regularities in the ways these are used that can be taught and learned;
- outline some simple spelling rules for teaching children;
- provide some possible class activities for building knowledge of spelling.

English spelling

English spelling is sometimes dismissed as illogical and inconsistent, though this is a somewhat exaggerated and unfounded idea. The fact is that the English spelling system reflects the long history of the language, and the different spelling patterns reveal that words have entered the language from many sources – Greek, Latin, French and the many other languages around the world from which English has borrowed. The language has been enriched on the whole by the many borrowings that have been made, and it is possible to learn to become a good speller of English with assistance and with some attention and care. Moreover, if we look closely at the patterns by which English words are spelt, we find evidence of considerable regularity and consistency in spelling, and these can be made the focus of teaching programs, so that children are enabled to master the spelling system.

How long does it take to learn to spell and what constitutes a good speller?

At least one authority who has researched the matter (Snowling 1994: 111) has stated that learning to control 'the basics' of English **orthography** (its spelling system) takes four to five years. The task of learning what Snowling calls 'exceptional spellings' continues into adult life. Bearing this in mind, it is worth stressing that throughout all the years of a primary schooling, teachers will need to be alert to ways to go on teaching spelling. Strategies for its teaching will change, of course, as children move up the school, because they will develop a repertoire of spelling skills to draw on for further work at each stage of their learning. But attention to spelling must remain a regular theme in classroom work.

Good spellers are successful because they are able to use a variety of strategies in learning to spell, but principally they appear to use at least three kinds of knowledge:

- They develop a sense of phonemic awareness, which means they are aware that words have sounds or phonemes and they are able to articulate these, by sounding out words and listening to them. They might, for example, be able to sound out *garden*, listening to the sounds of the two syllables, and develop a consciousness about this.
- They develop a sense of **graphemic awareness**, in that they learn to see the relationship between graphemes and the phonemes they represent, though these relationships are not ever entirely regular. Thus, they might recognise that *garden* starts with the letter *g* because they have observed and read other words that start with this letter, and they may well be able to deduce at least some of the other sounds

and their graphemes. On the other hand, they might be aware that *c* can start a word like *cat*, and they may then try to apply this to another word such as *kite*, writing *cite*. While the latter spelling would be wrong, it would show some developing sense nonetheless of the role that the graphemes play in representing phonemes.

- They develop a sense of *lexical analogies* (Lennox & Siegel 1994; Snowling 1994) by which they recognise that words 'look alike' in some way, and they are able to use this to extend their knowledge of spelling. One child, for example, aged 6 years, advised his teacher with great excitement about his discovery, that 'The word "home" is the same as "come", except you put an "h" where the "c" goes'. He was drawing an analogy between the appearances of the two lexical items, made the more interesting, by the way, in that the two words are pronounced differently. In other words, he did not use phonemic awareness at all to make his observation, but relied entirely on his visual memory of the way the lexical items or words appeared on the page.

We shall consider each of these kinds of knowledge in a little more detail.

Phonemic awareness

When learning to spell, children develop, among other things, a heightened sense of the phonological or sound system of their language. That is, they have already needed to learn the sounds as a necessary aspect of learning to talk. But literacy development places different demands on the learner and it requires conscious reflection on the phonemes in a new way. While this discussion is about learning the sounds of English, by the way, it is important to remember that many children in our schools are more familiar with the sounds of another mother tongue, and this will potentially influence how well they respond to the sounds of English. Regular opportunity to listen to the sound of the teacher's voice in reading texts to the class will help such children in particular.

In order to develop phonemic awareness, learners need to learn something about 'phonemic segmentation'; that is, how to segment or break up words into their component sounds. This normally begins by breaking words into syllables, such as *el*/*e*/*phant*, and this remains a useful means of developing a sense of the spelling patterns of words. Strictly, phonemic awareness takes the learner beyond syllables. Take the word *clean*. This consists of one syllable, but it actually consists of four phonemes, each of which is represented by the graphemes thus: *c*/*l*/*ea*/*n*. Note that the middle sound *ea* is represented by a double vowel, while the other phonemes are represented by consonants.

English syllables are said to be capable of being divided into two primary units, known as an 'onset' and a 'rime' (Treiman 1993: 5). The onset is the initial consonant or consonant blend, as, for example, the blend that starts *clean*: *cl*. The rime consists of a vowel and any other consonants that appear later; for example, *ean* in *clean*. Children have some difficulties at times in accurately representing the onset and/or the rime in some words, and this accounts for some of the errors they make in spelling. Teachers can develop facility in looking for patterns of onsets and rimes in syllables and use these to teach aspects of spelling. In this way, they build a sense of the regularities in spelling. Thus, for example, there are several other familiar words starting with *cl*, apart from *clean* that could be displayed and sounded out to develop practice in seeing and hearing them; for example, *close*, *clear*, *cloud*, *cliff*, *clock*, *clever*, *clap*.

Graphemic awareness

In modern industrialised English-speaking societies, most children arrive at school with some knowledge of the alphabet, sometimes taught them by caregivers but also often absorbed from the variety of environmental print found in modern communities. Exposure to models of the alphabet in the classroom is desirable from the start of schooling, as is talk of letters, learning to identify the spelling of one's name and the teacher's name, and so on. The relationship between phonemes and graphemes is arbitrary, in the sense that there is no reason why the letter *g* on the page should represent the first sound that starts *got* or *garden*. However, this does not mean that there are not patterns of a regular nature in the ways in which graphemes are deployed. These patterns are learned as children also learn the spelling system, and here, writing as well as reading is helpful. Some spelling patterns, according to Treiman (1993: 67–96) reflect English phonological constraints. Thus, English words do not typically start with the sounds that could be represented by *bw*, and this pair is not typically found at the start of written English words. However, some other examples are a feature of English orthography, such as the pair of consonants, *ck*. This occurs in the middle of words such as *packet*, or at the end of words such as *crack*. But this spelling does not ever get used at the start of words, for we use instead *c* as in *cat*, or *k* as in *kite*. In fact, certain combinations of letters become familiar because of the frequency with which they appear, where this sometimes reflects the phonemes and sometimes it does not. Examples include: *ing* as in **participles** (or parts of verbs) like *going*, *coming*, *speaking*, or *tion* as in *nation*, *emotion*, *relation*; or *gh* as in *cough*, *rough*, *tough*, or *ible* as in *sensible*, *intelligible*, *credible*.

Lexical awareness

Bissex (1980), cited by Snowling (1994: 118), observed her young son remarking that *look* could be altered to make *book*. He drew on his awareness of the appearance of the lexis on the page, and thus demonstrated a developing facility to recognise graphemic patterns. Development of such a facility clearly relies partly on visual memory and partly on some sense of the phonemes involved. One researcher, Goswami (1988), also cited by Snowling (1994: 119), taught some young children to spell the word *beak*. The word remained visible while she went on to tell the children that it might help them in spelling unfamiliar words such as *bean* or *peak*. The children performed well in spelling these, and it was held the study showed that children could learn to spell by using analogy.

Using all the above three areas of knowledge, children need to be taught to recognise several spelling patterns, a number of which are displayed below, though the following account does not cover the whole field of knowledge about spelling that could be used. Teachers are well advised to build their own sets of resources for teaching spelling, drawing widely on the various books, dictionaries and spelling books that are available.

Some common spelling patterns to teach

The English alphabet is often said to be made up of vowels and consonants, though this is not strictly correct. The reason is that vowels and consonants are not units of writing at all, as they are really units of sound, or phonemes. We use the letters to represent the phonemes, and for convenience we often say that the alphabet has five vowels and 21 consonants, though this is not strictly the case. The 26 letters are used to represent between 40 and 45 phonemes. The number is variable because speakers of English in different parts of the world speak somewhat differently and the number of phonemes is not fixed. American English, for example, differs from Australian English, and within these two speech communities there are of course variations. The English spelling system is rather conservative in some ways, however, in that both Australians and Americans would spell *disaster*, for example, in the same way, though they would pronounce it differently.

In order to represent the range of phonemes found in English adequately, the various letters are deployed differently, drawing on the letters that represent consonants and the vowels in different ways, and often creating **blends**. Set out below

are some tables to reveal some common blends. Table 7.1 represents some initial consonant blends commonly used in English spelling.

Table 7.1 Some common initial consonant blends

bl-	black	blanket
br-	broad	brood
cr-	crouch	cruel
dr-	dry	drip
fr-	front	from
gl-	glass	gloom
gr-	grape	grass
pl-	place	play
pr-	price	prison
sch-	school	scheme
scr-	scrape	screen
sh-	shine	shoot
sl-	slap	slope
sp-	speed	spark
spl-	splash	splendid
spr-	spray	spread
sn-	snare	snail
st-	steam	stand
sw-	sweet	swim
th-	this	three
tr-	trip	trim
tw-	twelve	twist
wh-	which	where

The words given for each blend are only suggestive, and it would be easy in most cases to add to the list. Depending on the class activity, one possible game to play with children would be one that involved amassing lists of other words that started with the blends that are given.

Table 7.2 sets out some familiar instances of consonant blends found at the ends of words. Again, it is worth thinking about the regularities that are apparent in the ways in which these are used.

Table 7.2 Some common final consonant blends		
-ck	crack	smack
-ld	hold	field
-lk	milk	silk
-lt-	lilt	tilt
-mp	pump	dump
-nd	bend	find
-nk	bank	sank
-nt	disappoint	joint
-sk	whisk	brisk
-st	cost	interest
-pt	abrupt	manuscript

Table 7.3 shows a range of double vowel blends.

Table 7.3 Some common double vowel blends		
au	taught	caught
ea	clean	clear
ai	maid	dairy
ee	feed	speed
ei	receive	receipt
ie	believe	relieve
oa	boat	coat
oi	toil	boil
oo	blood	book
ou	found	ground
oy	loyal	royal
ue	blue	rescue

Table 7.4 shows some common double consonants.

Table 7. 4 Some common double consonants	
bb	robber
dd	fiddle
gg	giggle
ll	silly
mm	tummy
pp	slipper
ss	possible

Table 7.5 shows a number of silent letters used in English spelling, and again the list is not exhaustive. The list is intended simply to suggest possibilities for teaching purposes.

Table 7.5 Some silent letters	
k	knit, knead, knock, knee
w	write, wriggle, wrestle, answer
b	numb, lamb, thumb, doubt
c	disciple, scene, scissors, muscle
t	often, ballet, castle, fasten
e	bake, stroke, fake, bike, cake
l	almond, calf, could, palm
p	cupboard, receipt, psalm
gh	taught, caught, night, bought
g	foreign, gnome, gnaw, design

Looking back over the spelling patterns displayed in the tables above, it should be clear that there are regularities in the ways particular combinations of letters are deployed to represent given phonemes. In order to understand and learn these regularities, children need plenty of opportunity to observe, listen, and practise the spellings. They should be encouraged to commit spellings to memory, developing both their auditory and visual memories.

Words are best encountered in practice when children are reading or writing. Once the need to look at a spelling is identified, teachers can guide the children to look at other words with related spelling patterns, as this builds a sense of the 'families' of patterns that English uses. As for the opportunities to practise spellings, Barwick and Barwick (1999) have written an excellent practical guide for primary children, their teachers and their parents, called *The Spelling Skills Handbook*, in which (page 24) they advocate several steps in learning to spell, which are worth reproducing here:

- Look at a word.
- Say the word.
- Cover the word.
- Write the word next to the original.
- Check the spelling.

Encouraging children to keep personal spelling books on their desks as they work through each day is a good practical idea, allowing them both to add to the items constantly, and to check spellings wherever needed. Writing words on the board before children start to write is also a good method, anticipating the spelling needs so that children are assisted to spell correctly as often as possible.

Playing with words

Very soon after the entry to literacy, children in the primary school can play games with words, their spelling and their origins. In this section, we identify some possible ways to play with words and develop a curiosity about them.

Playing with compound nouns

Once children have developed some familiarity with the appearance and sounds of words, they can be taught to recognise compound nouns, and this is often a source of considerable pleasure. Some examples are displayed in table 7.6. Children can collect lists of compound nouns, displaying these in the classroom. Teachers could hold competitions to see how many words children could find.

Table 7.6 Some common compound nouns		
armchair	arm	chair
birthday	birth	day
grandfather	grand	father
sunrise	sun	rise
breakfast	break	fast
policeman	police	man
raincoat	rain	coat
doorbell	door	bell
frypan	fry	pan
bathroom	bath	room

Playing with homonyms

'Homonyms' are words that either look the same or sound the same, but have different meanings. Words that have the same spelling but have different meanings are found in these examples, and they are called 'homographs' because they have the same sound:

I shall **seal** that parcel.
I saw a **seal** in the zoo.

The more common homonyms are 'homophones', meaning words that sound the same and are often but not always spelt differently, but they mean different things:

I picked a **bean** in my garden.
We have **been** to the show.

I found ten **cents**.
The **scents** in the garden are lovely.

We went to the **fair**.
I paid my **fare**.

I had a **piece** of cake.
The two countries are at **peace**.

I bought plain **flour** to cook.
I picked a **flower** in the garden.

Can you **hear** that bird?
The book is **here**.

I **blew** a whistle.
She wore a **blue** dress.

I will **break** that lock.
He used the **brake** in the car.

The language abounds in examples of homonyms and children can create lists of such pairs, in the process learning a lot about English spelling.

Playing with classes of words

A good way to extend a knowledge of lexis and of spelling is to create word lists that build classes of words; for example, creating adverbs from adjectives or nouns, as in:

beautiful	beautifully
honest	honestly
gradual	gradually
frequent	frequently
sensible	sensibly
honest	honestly
leisure	leisurely

One can also play with the degrees of adjectives:

Adjective	Comparative degree	Superlative degree
good	better	best
quiet	quieter	quietest
sensible	more sensible	most sensible
probable	more probable	most probable
generous	more generous	most generous

One can also create new meanings by use of prefixes, as in:

in-	inaccurate, incorrect, incredible
im-	impatient, impolite, immature, improbable
dis-	dislike, dislocate, discharge, disobey
un-	unlike, unknown, unlace, unkind

One can use suffixes to create new word classes, as in:

-ment	punish, abandon	punishment, abandonment
-ful	help, skill	helpful, skilful
-ly	kind, slow	kindly, slowly
-ous	riot, adventure	riotous, adventurous
-al	refuse, approve	refusal, approval
-able	advise, admire	advisable, admirable
-ible	sense, defend	sensible, defensible
-al	experiment, tropics	experimental, tropical

Some simple spelling rules

i) The letter *i* goes before *e*, except after *c*. So:
believe and *relieve*
but
receive and *receipt*.

ii) To create a plural spelling, put the *s* after a noun, as in:
boys, *girls*, *tricks*
but where the noun ends with *y*, change this to *ies*, as in:
cities, *factories*, *parties*, *ladies*.

iii) Where the noun ends with *ey*, just put an *s*, as in:
donkeys, *monkeys*.

iv) Where some nouns end with *o*, put *es*, as in:
potatoes, *volcanoes*, *tomatoes*.
However, some nouns that end with *o* do not follow this rule, and just take an *s*, as in:
pianos, *videos*, *solos*, *mottos*.

v) Nouns that end with *ch* take an *es*, as in:
churches, *switches*, *lunches*, *matches*.

vi) Nouns that end with *z* or *x* take as *es*, as in:
waltzes, *boxes*, *taxes*.

vii) More irregular forms of plurals (the history of each of which is interesting for children to explore) are found in:
fungus – fungi
child – children
man – men
woman – women
axis – axes
datum – data.

Researching the history of words

This is an activity for the later years of the primary school, in years 5 and 6. It requires access to good dictionaries of a kind that give origins of words. The *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* is useful for this, while the *Macquarie* is useful for Australian words. Word work could be built into activity that students undertook in pairs, jointly exploring dictionaries to find out the languages from which words come, and

anything they can about how the spellings of words have changed, as well as their meanings. Words for research are best arrived at as an aspect of class work, and could be drawn from any area of the curriculum: sport, health, social sciences and natural sciences, music, arts education, as well as English language studies. Children can be encouraged to create lists of words that interest them and use these to undertake research on their origins. In fact, each week it would be possible to identify four or five words for researching their origins. By the end of a school year, a great deal of knowledge about words would have been amassed.

Some 'word families' that might be used to start dictionary activity include:

telephone	telegraph
telecommunication	television
telepathy	telescope
monograph	monogamy
monosyllable	monogram
monotonous	monopoly
monocle	monocycle
contradiction	contradistinction
contrary	contrast
multiply	multifarious
multiple	multiplicity
multitude	multiped
multilingual	multicoloured
audience	auditorium
audible	auditory
audition	audiotape

In chapter 11, we shall discuss the many new words associated with use of computers and the Internet. These could be used to build up histories of many words that have come into the language recently, or old words that have been given new meanings in the age of the Internet.

Conclusion

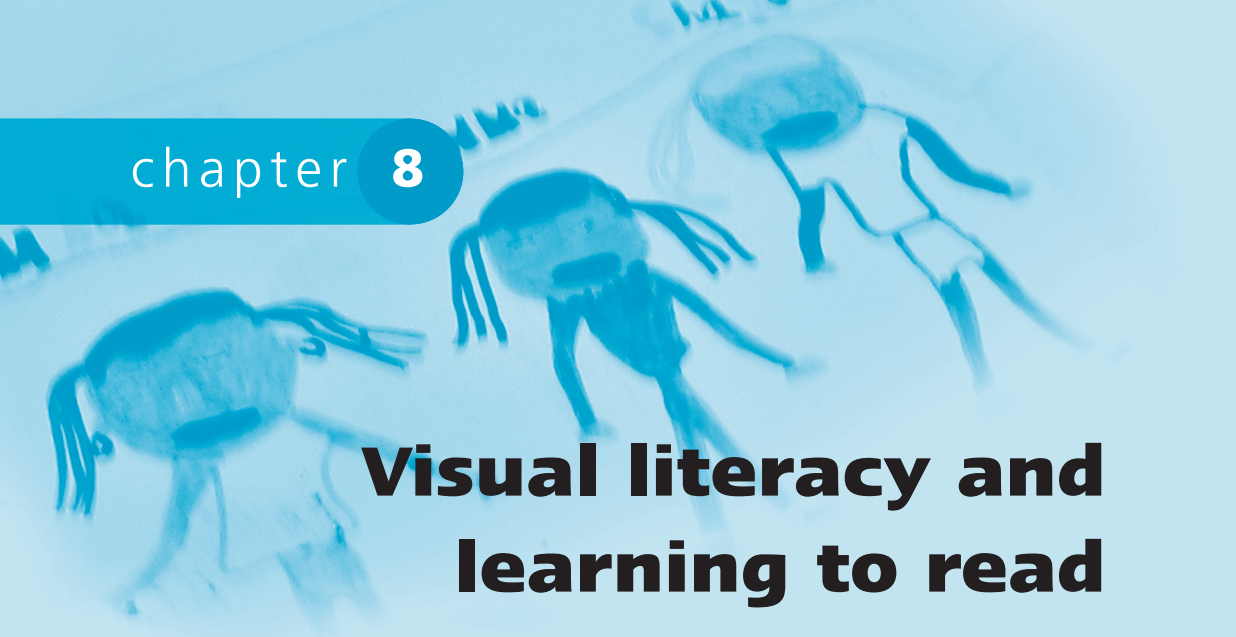
In this chapter we have examined aspects of English spelling and its teaching. Spelling is best taught as part of the total literacy program, drawing on both reading and writing activities. It takes about four or five years for children to become proficient spellers, and they need constant opportunity to practise and to play with words, identifying patterns of spelling that they can commit to memory as they read and write. Good spellers use a range of strategies, relying on phonemic awareness, graphemic awareness, and a developing sense of lexis and the patterns by which lexical items are spelt. Teachers should actively encourage children to develop all the spelling strategies so that they become confident spellers.

Further reading

Barwick, John & Barwick, Jenny (1999) *The Spelling Skills Handbook: Effective Strategies and Useful Rules for Spellers*, Horwitz Martin Education, Sydney and High Wycombe, UK.

Brown, Gordon DA & Ellis, Nick C (eds) (1994) *The Handbook of Spelling: Theory, Process and Intervention*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto and Singapore.

Treiman, Rebecca (1993) *Beginning to Spell: A Study of First Grade Children*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford.



chapter 8

Visual literacy and learning to read

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- introduce the notion of multimodality (referring to the simultaneous presence of more than one mode of communication);
- introduce the related notion of multiliteracies (referring to the potential range of forms of literacies, including those that use more than language);
- discuss the importance of visual images in early reading books that scaffold reading behaviour, among other things supporting the tendency to move from left to right in reading texts;
- argue that images can be read and understood by using a model of analysis that draws on the functional grammar, examining how experiential information, interpersonal information and textual information are used to create images;
- demonstrate some principles of analysis of visual literacy by reference to children's books;
- outline suggestions for teaching research by using the Internet;
- outline teaching strategies to use in preparing children to use visual as well as verbal information in texts.

Introduction

Children born in contemporary Australia will never know a time without the presence of the newer information and communication technologies (ICT) and computer mediation communications (CMC), even though these facilities are not necessarily available in all homes. They are nevertheless a part of the wider cultural milieu, and as such they help shape much of the character of modern Australian life. Many children develop considerable skill in using ICT resources before they come to school and in some cases they are more ICT literate than their teachers. Communication is increasingly 'multimodal', meaning that more than one mode of communication is used in a given text, so that it builds its meanings through verbal texts, through visual images, and sometimes through sounds. Furthermore, while sometimes a modern multimodal text is still, others move, as in CD-ROMs, video games and websites, adding another dimension to the manner of making meaning. The resulting text, whether still or animated, is a composite of all the modes involved. In responding to the range of modes and meanings available today, one group of linguists and educators referred to the presence of **multiliteracies** (Cope & Kalantzis 2000: 3–8). The term, they said, while concerned with traditional literacy pedagogy, also served to focus on 'modes of representation much broader than language alone', for it embraced a wide range of modes of meaning making.

In reality, literacy has always been multimodal, because it has always been visual. The very acts – undertaken in several parts of the world – of taking the phenomenon of oral language, and developing writing systems that would represent it in visual form were ventures into **multimodality**. Furthermore, the first developments in writing systems made it necessary to find media by which to commit the written language to permanent forms – be the surfaces stone, skin, papyrus, parchment or paper, and be the implements sticks, chisels, quills or later pencils or pens. Literacy has necessarily always had a strong visual component, and it is probable that the first writing systems emerged from drawing and wall painting (Halliday 1985; Coulmas 1989). For many centuries, writing was the preserve of the few and the privileged, and it is worth remembering that one feature that makes the modern world remarkable is the emphasis now attached to making literacy available to all. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century eventually opened the way to bringing literacy to all, while the technological developments of the 20th century brought computers and the Internet to an increasingly large number of people. Today, given the sophistication of modern communication systems, multimodal texts have become commonplace.

Despite the recency of many multimodal developments, multimodal reading activity for young children has had quite a long history, for the practices of providing illustrations in children's reading books predated the advent of the computer and of ICT more generally. However, the quality, variety and quantity of interesting children's reading books of the last few years has been remarkable, due to many advances in the publishing industry, and the associated emergence of numbers of writers of books for the young. The influence of television and computer games on styles of visual presentation in books has also been considerable.

Preparing children to deal with visual imagery begins early in life, and the typical early books to which children are introduced make considerable use of pictures. Sometimes such books create their meanings entirely in pictures, while others make some use of verbal texts, nonetheless allowing the pictures to express most of the meanings involved. Others still make very clever use of both images and verbal text, achieving such a successful synthesis of the two modes of meaning that the two must be understood as creating the one unified visual/verbal text. Well-designed early books serve an important role in preparing the young for the entry to literacy, and they also help prepare the young for the complex multimodal practices in text construction that have become so significant today. Thus, the focus in this discussion, while certainly still devoted to reading, is primarily on the resources of visual literacy, as they are revealed particularly in children's books. In this sense, the chapter is intended to supplement what was covered in chapter 6, also devoted to the teaching of reading, and chapter 7, devoted to teaching spelling. It will also complement the discussion in chapter 12, devoted to teaching literature. Among the most important of the first steps that young children take in handling the entry to a world of writing are those in which the visual image supports and facilitates the development of reading skills. We shall thus turn to some consideration of the visual in books for young children.

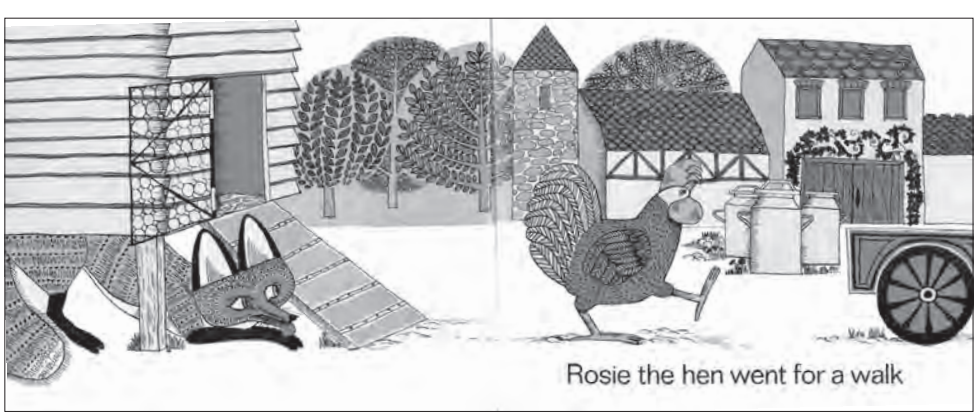
A first reading book

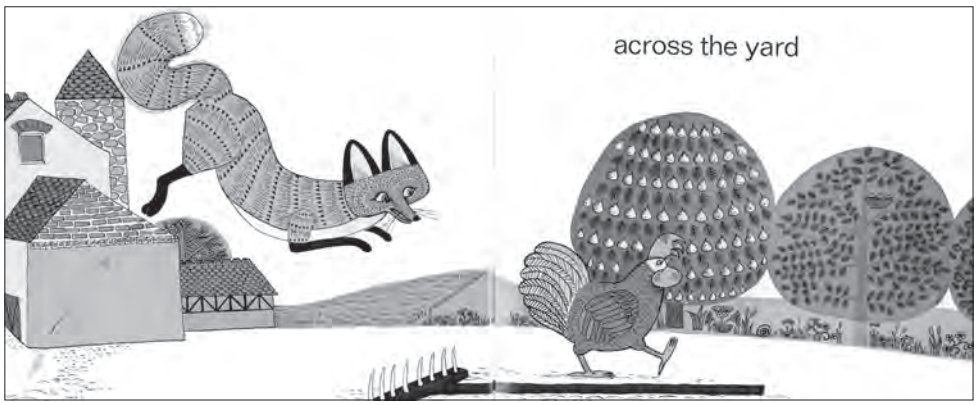
Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), Williams (1998), Unsworth (2001) and Callow (1999) have all variously examined reading visual imagery using a framework taken from the functional grammar used in this book. The following discussion will draw on all their work. We have seen in other chapters how it is argued, using the functional grammar, that certain fundamental metafunctions operate to build the meanings of texts: experiential, interpersonal and textual. So too, Kress and van Leeuwen and Unsworth have argued, we can suggest that the images found in sites of many kinds,

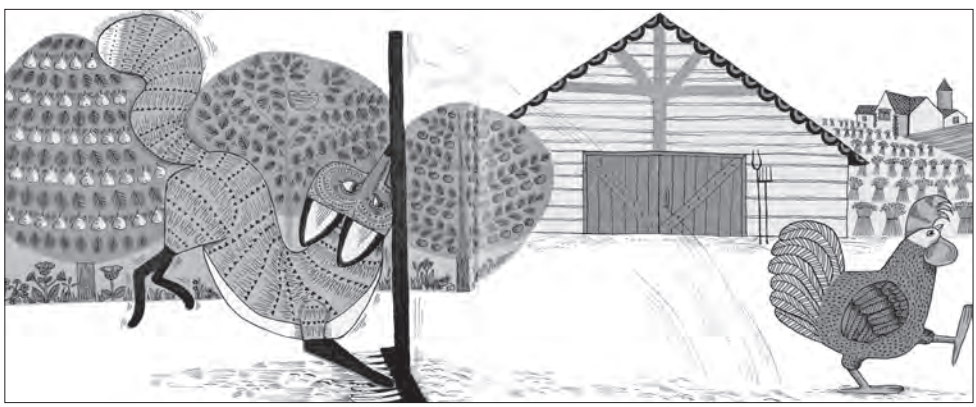
including school texts, have features that realise these meanings. Using terms taken from Kress and van Leeuwen, we shall suggest that:

- Meanings to do with information or experience in image, or in image and verbal text, are termed *representational*. Here the term suggests the nature of the 'content' found in the images – the participants, their circumstances and the events that occur.
- Meanings of an interpersonal kind are termed *interactive*. Here the term may suggest either the relationships of participants in a text or the relationships of participants in the text with the reader/viewer.
- Meanings of a textual kind are called *compositional*. The term concerns the manner in which information is displayed and distributed, as well as what is made prominent or otherwise.

One of the most enduring of the early books for young children is *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins 1968), which over the years has been reprinted many times. It has been selected here partly because of its status as a familiar and much loved children's book. An analysis, using the above framework, will reveal how the images unfold in it, building its meanings and supporting the young child who is learning to read. In summary, the text tells a story about Rosie the hen, who takes a walk across various parts of a farm, leaving her house and eventually returning to it quite safely. She is pursued throughout the story by a fox, who is remarkable for his ineptitude in that, despite his evident interest in catching Rosie, he manages to fail at every attempt. The humour of the tale depends on a successful interpretation of the pictures, since the efforts of the fox are expressed entirely in the pictures. The sequences of written language, short though they are, realise aspects of the hen's behaviour, but they have nothing to say of the fox. When we look closely at the book, it is clear that the sequencing of images, their placement on the pages, and the limited written language displayed, all contribute to scaffolding early reading behaviour.







The opening pages only of the book are reproduced here, and since it is readily available, readers should be able to borrow it from libraries, if they wish to view it in its entirety.

Some general observations about the book can be made. First, the images present a very idealised and non-natural view of a farm. It is of course a farm in England rather than Australia, but even allowing for that, the various items represented – trees, farm buildings and implements, even the fox and the hen – are not depicted naturalistically. Even the act of understanding these images for what they represent on the pages is thus one of interpretation, requiring that considerable cultural knowledge be drawn on, but also that some such new knowledge be acquired, to do with the manner of representation. The adult who guides the reading involved may not even be fully aware of how much the interpretation of the images depends on her/his input in considering the non-naturalistic way in which farms are suggested. A second matter worth drawing attention to is the very bold use of colours – mainly oranges and yellows – so that all the images appear strong and vigorous. A third matter is the manner in which images

and written text fill the pages. The result is that the pages are seen as replete with a great deal of lively information calculated to provoke talk.

Looking firstly to the manner in which the representational and compositional information is constructed in the pages of the book, we can note that there are two principal participants – the fox and the hen. They are always depicted in the same positions relative to each other: the fox is to the left and the hen is to the right. A strong though invisible line of action links them, for the fox is regularly depicted looking directly at the hen as it takes up its hopeless pursuit. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 40–47) refer to this invisible line as a **vector**. Vectors are not necessarily horizontal, as here, for they can function in vertical and other ways to help structure images. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 186–92) have also pointed out that the tendency of a great many presentations of information in English language publications involves movements from left to right, as is true in *Rosie's Walk*. This is true, for example, of many magazines and newspapers, but it is also found in students' textbooks and other sources. The movement is one that accords with the practice of English readers to read and write from left to right. But as Kress and van Leeuwen argue, it also accords with the tendency of the construction of the English clause. In earlier chapters we have identified what is theme as coming first in a clause. Using related terms that Kress and van Leeuwen take from linguistics, they suggest that what is first is the 'Given information' and what is 'New information' comes to the right. Thus, as the text in *Rosie's Walk* unfolds, it is the fox who appears to the left as a 'Given' in the tale, while it is the hen who moves to the 'New' as it takes its walk. The sheer regularity of the left to right movement across the pages scaffolds the eye movement of a young reader through its pages, facilitating the development of appropriate reading behaviours.

As for the interactive information in the book, a notable feature of the pictures throughout is that the hen regularly looks out to the right, neither achieving eye contact with the fox nor with the reader. The fox also does not achieve eye contact with the reader, but it looks intensely at the hen throughout the pages. Neither participant thus has any interaction with the reader, while the tendency of the fox to pursue the hen is reinforced by the repetitive manner in which it looks directly at the hen. The sense of the fox's pursuit, and of the hen's apparent indifference to it, is emphasised.

Since, as we have noted, the written language is very minimal, telling only what the hen does, a reading of the book requires that the actions of the fox be talked about, and this no doubt leads to other talk of the features of the farm. Talk about texts for reading is itself an important aspect of developing reading behaviours, leading to clarification and expansion of what is said. Thus, the overall purpose of the book *Rosie's Walk* is to encourage reading in the young, and as we can see, even

from a brief examination of a few pages, the function of the illustrations – their content and their disposition on the pages – is to develop important behaviours of a kind that will remain throughout life.

Rosie's Walk depends primarily for its meaning making on the series of pictures. In their reading programs, teachers can use their sense of the manner in which such a text is constructed to guide and support children as they learn to read. Young children enjoy repetition in using books, and they can return to books such as *Rosie's Walk* with their teachers, being able to anticipate what is to come, and developing facility in looking for sources of information as they are distributed across the pages. There are of course many other suitable early books that can be used with young children, including, for example, Jeannie Baker's *Window*, and *Belonging*, and her *The Story of Rosy Dock*, which has a little verbal text. Other books include Pat Hutchins' *Changes Changes*, which has no verbal text, Jan Ormerod's *Sunshine* and *Moonlight*, Jackie French and Bruce Whatley's delightful *Diary of a Wombat*, which has a limited verbal text, and Mem Fox and Judy Horacek's *The Green Sheep*, which also has minimal text. Finally, mention should be made of the famous *Mr Gumpy's Outing*, by John Burningham.

Combining visual and verbal elements

Anthony Browne is a well-known writer for young readers, who often writes the verbal text while also doing the illustrations, as is the case in the book discussed here. *Piggybook* (Browne 1986), while published some years ago, appears never to have gone out of print.

The story concerns Mr Piggott, his two sons and their mother. They are very selfish, demanding that Mrs Piggott wait on them hand and foot, doing all the cleaning, cooking, and washing. One day, she grows tired of this and leaves home, causing great consternation. Mr Piggott and the two boys become more and more neglectful, failing to clean the house and cooking horrible meals. They become in appearance and lifestyle increasingly like pigs. Mrs Piggott reappears after a time and they apologise to her, pleased to see her back. But the family does not return to its old ways, for it is Mr Piggott and the boys who learn to clean, cook and do other household jobs, while Mrs Piggott spends time working with the car. It is said, by the way, that Anthony Browne wrote the book to pay tribute to his own wife.

The book is very skilled. Both verbal text and images are cleverly developed, so that a series of changes take place in the participants and their circumstances in the story as it unfolds. These changes are captured both in the written language and in the images. Thus in the opening page Mr Piggott and his two boys are represented standing in front of their house, their bodies dwarfing the house in the background.

Mr Piggott lived with his two sons, Simon and Patrick,
in a nice house with a nice garden, and a nice car in the
nice garage.
Inside the house was his wife.

The three characters are represented in the middle of the page, their arms crossed. From an interactional point of view, they look directly at the reader, both their eye contact with the reader and their physical demeanour suggesting a degree of self-importance. In a compositional sense, the demeanour of the three looks a little like a family photo, in that the three appear to be carefully posed and framed as for a camera. The written text consists of only two sentences, the first of which places *Mr Piggott* in the opening theme position, while the rest of the sentence makes considerable use of repetition, in a series of circumstances (shown in bold):

> Mr Piggott lived **with his two sons, Simon and Patrick, in a nice house with a nice garden and a nice car in a nice garage**.

The next sentence, notable for its brevity compared with the first, uses a marked theme to open, expressed in a circumstance:

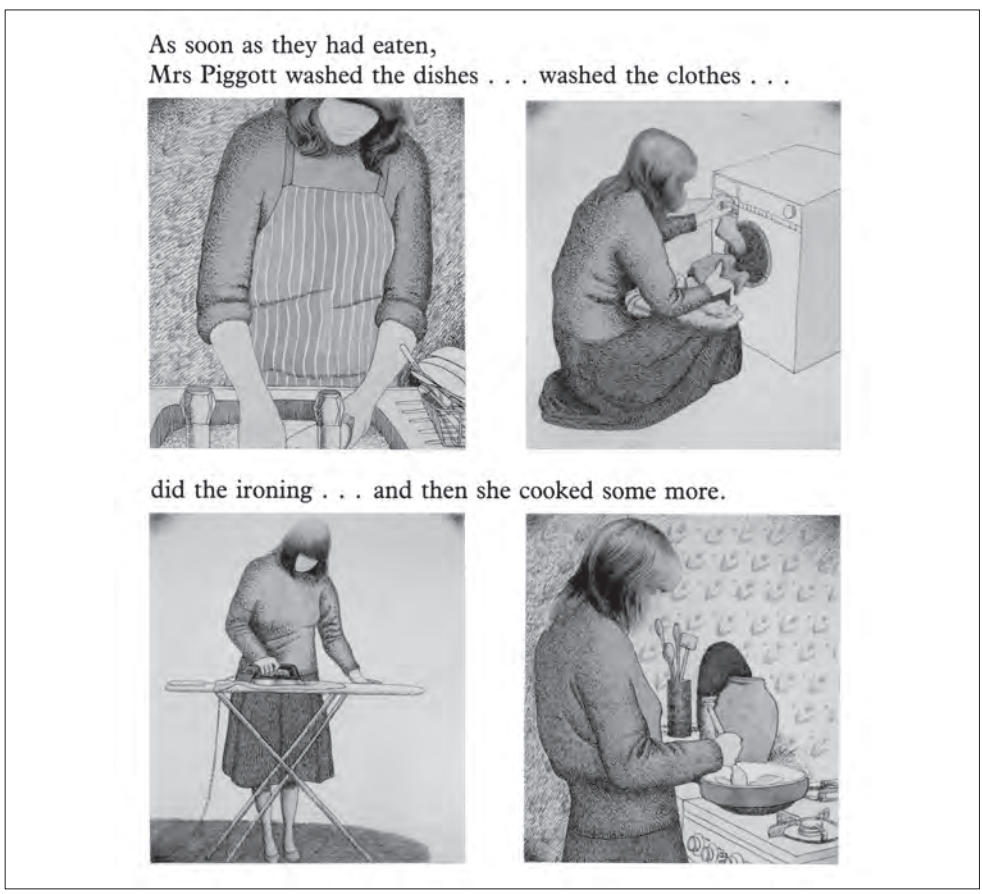
> **Inside the house** was his wife.

The unmarked or usual way to write this sentence would be:

> His wife was inside the house.

If we compare the two versions, we can see why Browne arranges the sentence as he does. It serves to suggest the secondary status given to Mrs Piggott, whose fate is to remain in the house. This meaning is of course reinforced by the physical absence of Mrs Piggott from the picture.

Thus, with the opening page, a great deal of the major themes and messages of the story are set, and as the pages unfold, we see the two boys and Mr Piggott sitting at the breakfast table, where they *call* every morning to Mrs Piggott to *hurry up with the breakfast*. There is a sense of dynamic movement and colour about the pages that depict the two boys and their father, while the information devoted to them tends to move from left to right, so that a vector moves horizontally across the pages. By contrast, some subsequent pictures depict Mrs Piggott.



Four such pictures appear, clearly framed, across a double page spread, where the four appear to act as a kind of grid, suggesting something of the drudgery of Mrs Piggott's work in the house. She is shown in subdued colours, unlike Mr Piggott, and

her body appears bent over some domestic task, suggesting she does repetitive, dull work. She never achieves eye contact with the reader. On the contrary, her head is turned away while she focuses on her work. A series of clauses tell us all the actions in which she engages, where these are also expressed in the pictures:

> After they left the house, Mrs Piggott **washed** all the breakfast things … **made** all the beds … **vacuumed** all the carpets … and then she **went** to work.

Mr Piggott and the boys are represented in the evenings after they come home in strong colours, all three of them with wide open mouths calling to Mrs Piggott. The circumstances of the house appear prosperous: Mr Piggott relaxes in a comfortable bright armchair, while the wallpaper behind him has a pattern of pink tulips. Significantly, he and the boys do nothing but relax. The time comes when Mrs Piggott has left, and after that, the circumstances begin to change: the pink tulips become pigs, and even the boys and Mr Piggott develop pig heads. Mrs Piggott has left a note that reads:

> You are pigs.

Mr Piggott's hand when he picks up the note has turned into a pig's paw. The process of their physical decline has begun. More and more items in the house develop pig-like qualities, as the house becomes more squalid.

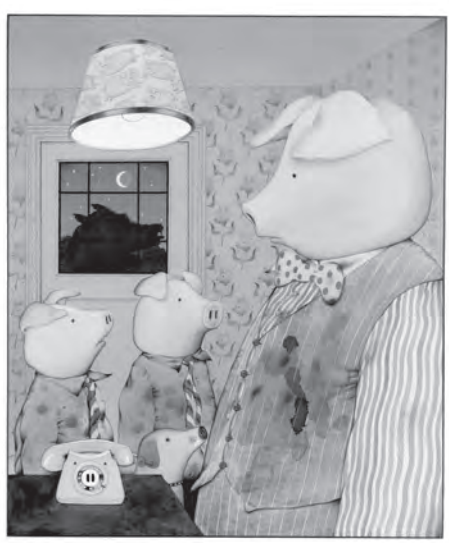
Several matters are of interest in the ways the language is used. Marked theme choices are frequently used to signal changes or movements forward in the tale:

> **One evening when the boys got home from school** there was no-one to greet them.
> **On the mantelpiece** was an envelope.
> **Inside** was a piece of paper.
> **Next morning** they had to make their own breakfasts.
> **The next day and the next night and the day after that,** Mrs Piggott was still not there.
> **One night** there was nothing in the house for them to cook.

Another matter of interest is the manner in which the verbal processes change, to do with how the boys and their father talk as the story moves along. Initially they *call* to their mother. When Mr Piggott comes home and finds his wife missing, he *demands* to know where she is. As the household gets dirtier, the boys start to *squeal*, while their father *grunts*.

The next day and the next night and the day after that, Mrs Piggott was still not there. Mr Piggott, Simon and Patrick tried to look after themselves.
They never washed the dishes. They never washed their clothes. Soon the house was like a pigsty.

"When is Mum coming home?" the boys squealed after another horrible meal.
"How should I know?" Mr Piggott grunted.
They all became more and more grumpy.



Later Mr Piggott, more and more pig-like in appearance, is said to *snort*, while he and the boys *snuffle* when Mrs Piggott comes in the door. Mrs Piggott, still not achieving eye contact with the reader, looks down at the three members of the family kneeling at her feet. She is in the middle of the page as she stands above them, one arm raised to suggest her newly strong position, and though the picture is framed, her head sticks up above the frame, for she now enjoys power. At the end of the book – just once only – Mrs Piggott achieves eye contact with the reader, when we are told :

> Mum was happy too.

and the reason:

> She mended the car.

Williams (1998) has demonstrated how much pleasure children gain from this story, and he also shows how they are diverted at talking about how the language works, noting the kinds of verbal processes that emerge, and developing a consciousness of how these work, along with the pictures, to develop the story. A considerable consciousness about both pictures and verbal texts can be developed, while the story also repays talk of the values of helping others, and of not being selfish. Classroom teaching should focus on developing understandings of both the images and the verbal text in such a book, developing some sense of discrimination and judgment about how images and text work together to create the meanings of the story. Teachers can, for example:

- guide discussion about the opening page of the book, asking children why the three are depicted as they are;
- focus on the written text on the opening page, asking why the reader is told *Inside the house was his wife*;
- direct attention to the placement and disposition of the boys and their father in the first pictures, contrasting these with the later pictures of Mrs Piggott, trapped in her domestic chores;
- ask what the various material or action processes associated with Mrs Piggott tell of her activities, and how they contrast with the actions (or lack of them) of the boys and their father;
- examine the changing circumstantial information as the tale unfolds, looking at the details of the wallpaper as the tulips become pigs, and other sources of information;
- discuss the kinds of information found in the pictures and the written text, and consider the function of each mode of meaning making;

- discuss the ways the various verbal processes associated with Mr Piggott and the boys change as the book unfolds;
- discuss why Mrs Piggott is represented standing while she looks down at the boys and their father as they kneel at her feet;
- review what would happen if the verbal text were removed, or alternatively, if the images were removed. How do the two contribute to the overall story?

Anthony Browne has written a number of other books in which he makes similar use of verbal/visual texts, including *Zoo*, which we shall examine in chapter 12.

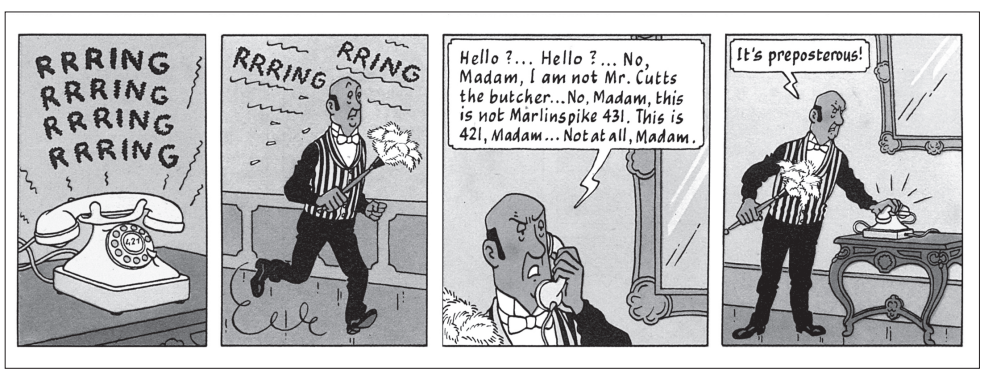
The impact of cinema on visual literacy

Written language is often said to function in linear fashion, and as we have seen, it is true that sequences of written language run from left to right across a page, following the strong disposition of English speakers to read and write in such a way. Visual images are also, but not always, read from left to right. Their disposition on a page, or on a website or CD-ROM, often varies the pattern of linearity in interesting ways. In this sense, learning to read in the visual age, where this has included developments in cinema, video, CD-ROM and the Internet, represents a different kind of reading from the reading of the past.

In the early years of the 20th century, the first movie makers set up their cameras in a fixed position and they filmed the actors moving about in front of them. The actors were shown to move but, from the point of view of the audience, they were seen always in the same positions relative to each other, and at the same distance and angle. Fundamental changes were made with two new developments that occurred in the first two decades of the 20th century. The first was the use of cameras that could be turned from side to side, so that actors could be shown moving into different positions relative to each other. The second was the use of 'close-ups' and editing techniques, so that a variety of shots of the same person(s) might be shown intercut, giving, in the space of a few minutes, a variety of perspectives on the same actors and their activities. Editing also allowed shifts in time, so that sequences in an imagined future might be interspersed with images from the present or the past. With these developments, cinema came of age as an art form, offering audiences a series of images of an essentially 'non-linear' nature. The techniques were soon taken over by various artists, and in particular those who developed cartoon strips, and later animated films. Similar techniques, zooming in on different characters, or shifting rapidly from one setting to another are now extensively used on the Internet, video games and in CD-ROMs.

Children of the 21st century really do learn to interpret visually in ways that are different from their counterparts, say at the start of the 20th century.

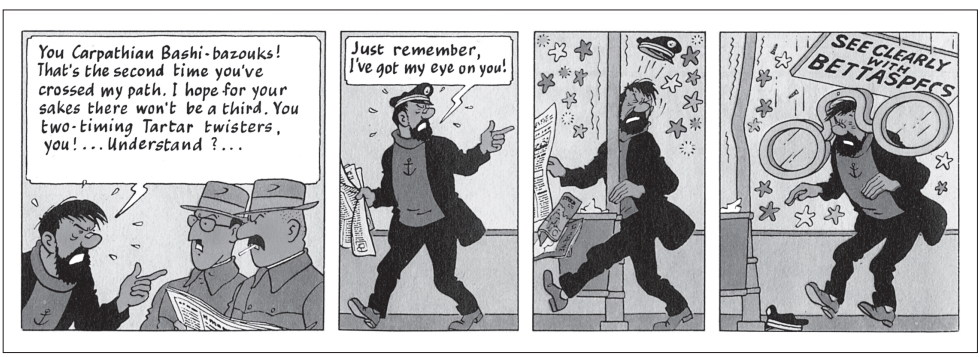
Despite the undoubted appeal of the Internet, many primary school children still enjoy reading comic strips in either papers or books, and these are worth using as a resource for exploring visual literacy, because they are readily available and inexpensive to use. Consider the example of the series of comic books written by Hergé, under the title, *The Adventures of Tintin*. These were originally written in French in the 1950s and English language versions appeared soon after. One of the several books in the series was called *The Calculus Affair* (Hergé 1956), in which the boy Tintin, his friend Captain Haddock, and his dog Snowy, are all involved in foiling the kidnapping of the absent-minded Professor Calculus. Some evil men capture the professor to get his mysterious invention, and a journey is undertaken across Europe to save him. Our object in introducing this book here is to illustrate the manner in which the story unfolds.



As the story opens, we see a close-up of the telephone, while the label *RRRING* is repeated four times above it. The telephone has a horizontal vector. The second picture shows Nestor, the butler, running from left to right to answer the telephone. His whole body is seen running and it represents a vertical vector, while the vector created by the duster in his hand operates diagonally, and the ringing of the telephone is again suggested in the printed language above his head. The third picture shows Nestor in close-up speaking on the telephone, his expression rather cross. The speech bubble above his head encloses the written language indicating what he says. The fourth picture shows Nestor's full body again, at much the same distance and angle as that displayed in the second picture, the vector again vertical. Another vector runs down his arm as he slams down the telephone in irritation. The sequence of four pictures displays many of the techniques used in cartooning, and

ultimately taken from cinema. The sequence is of course read in linear fashion from left to right, and the details of each picture, framed as they are with clear boxes around them, offer a series of perspectives, so that the information – representational, interactional and textual – changes from picture to picture.

As the tale unfolds, for the most part the pattern remains the same. Sequences of three or four pictures are displayed on each line, each of them clearly enclosed in a frame that itself shapes the reading practice. The information framed in the pictures is normally displayed in such a way that the eye moves from left to right, and a variety of perspectives on the participants in the tale are offered, using mainly vertical vectors, though sometimes they functional horizontally. Speech bubbles appear frequently, almost always above the head of the participants in each frame. At certain points in the tale, the movement from left to right is reversed, as in the following sequence in which Captain Haddock threateningly tells the probable kidnappers that he is watching them.



After one opening frame, in which the captain threatens the kidnappers, he looks to the right out of the frame, and he moves off towards the left, shouting, *Just remember, I've got my eye on you!* The next two images show him crashing into a post in the street, and with a street awning advertising better spectacles crashing down on his head. The humour depends partly on the language used, but also of course on the physical dispositions of the captain in the latter two pictures. He is displayed in vertical fashion in the second last picture, and a horizontal vector is evident through the enormous pair of glasses that fall on his head in the last picture.

Children can be encouraged to develop considerable skill in looking at and discussing how cartoon stories of this kind work, and as noted earlier, they are a readily available cheap tool for use in teaching about visual literacy. Children can, for example, be encouraged to:

- collect and discuss cartoon strips, using family newspapers and/or magazines;

- consider the relationship of image and verbal text in comics;
- consider what would happen if the verbal elements found in speech bubbles were placed differently;
- consider the significance of the ways pictures function in linear fashion, while also building information in non-linear fashion with a series of pictures;
- develop their own cartoon strips, exploring ways to make them communicate effectively.

Reading the visual in factual texts

In chapter 7 we discussed use of factual books for reading and researching information. Very often, factual textbooks use both verbal and visual information, and there are skills in learning to read these just as there are in reading other texts. While the pages in factual textbooks differ, a review of books read in preparing this chapter showed certain similarities frequently appeared. The tendency in many scientific textbooks, for example, is to offer a double page devoted to some topic, as is the case in the double page here, which is a 'mock-up', created from a reading of several books. Thus, looking to the top left hand page, we typically find a heading in the 'Given' position.

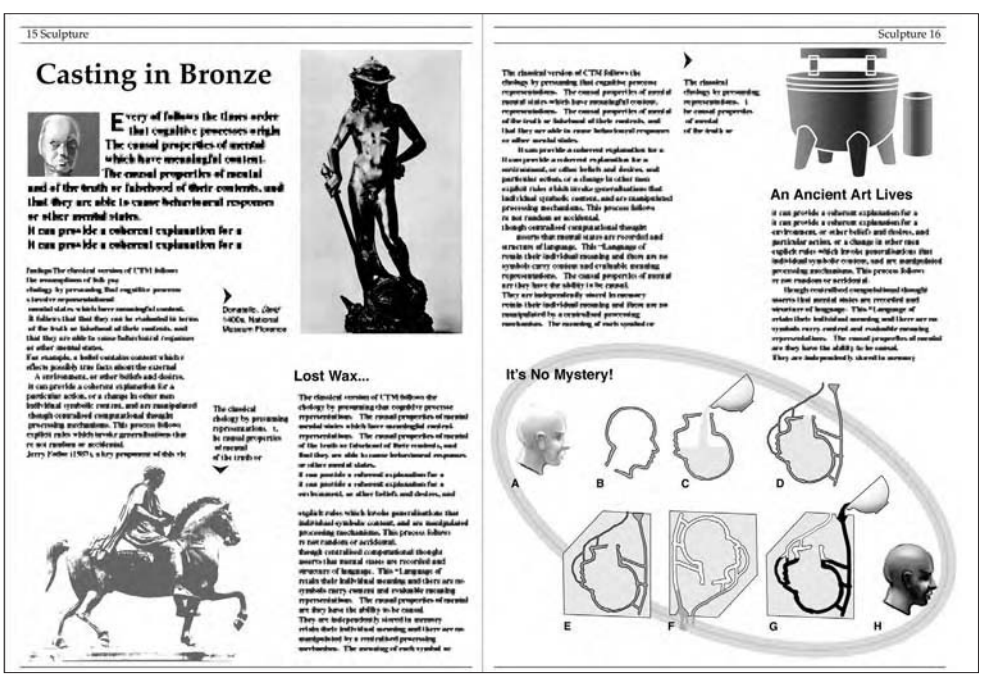


Figure 8.10 A mock-up of a page in a factual text

More than one vector works in such a double-page spread, for the eye moves diagonally from the top left to the bottom right, where the 'New' information appears, expressed in a series of images. Lying in the bottom left-hand corner and the top right, as well as in the top centre, are other images. While these are all important, they do not seem to be as centrally important as the other images that appear, and in particular the 'Given' and 'New' positions on the double page seem to frame and give focus to the total double page.

As for the written passages, apart from the major heading in large black font that appears in the 'Given' position to the top left, there are three other smaller headings, also in black, each helping to break up the text into separate sections. Each of these headings uses a different font from the major heading. The design requires that each passage of written text be read in linear fashion from left to right, and that the diagonal left-to-right eye movement from 'Given' to 'New' be grasped. But apart from that, the eye moves in non-linear fashion across the other features of the double page, bringing the various elements of information into a shared focus. Without a sense of a shared focus the double page would not be fully understood.

When teaching the reading of texts of this kind, teachers need a sense of the overall design and its significance. Teachers could, for example:

- prepare children by displaying the book and referring to its contents or experiential information, using some of the technical terms that are employed;
- direct attention to the headings, and their significance in constructing or designing the overall composition of the double-page text;
- direct attention to the details of the verbal text, discussing it in ways that bring out the nature of its meanings as outlined in chapter 7;
- guide reading of the other sections, seeking to simplify the meanings by using spoken language to clarify;
- examine closely each of the images, also reviewing what is said of each of these in the sections that use different fonts. Discuss the significance of the images;
- depending on planned subsequent activities, guide the students to make notes from the text, going on to research the issues more fully by reference to other books, and eventually writing a text themselves, making use of appropriate images. Here children would need to be scaffolded in their note-taking, with the teacher assisting to identify important points to use for later writing.

Reading Internet websites

Enough has been said by now about ways in which literacy is not always linear. Clearly, much of the literacy available on the Internet is not linear, for the uses of verbal text and image are such that readers are often disposed to read in non-linear fashion as they explore websites of various kinds. Children learn to play with the various children's websites and they thus develop considerable facility with using the Internet and with navigating their way around different websites. Even though they develop considerable skills, they often need assistance in using the Internet to research information for their school learning. Sharpe and Dieter (1999) with respect to the Internet, and Zammitt (1999) with respect to CD-ROMs, have suggested that classroom practices reveal that many children experience some difficulty in accessing information, for methods of using these can be time-consuming and frustrating, and children need assistance in learning how to exploit the resources to research information and to prepare subsequent written reports or other text types. They also need to be assisted to make good use of what information they do find, rather than simply cutting and pasting sections of information selected with no great discrimination.

Where children are asked to access information for class work, about any subject, they will need clear guidelines about:

- questions to be researched;
- making notes from what they read;
- the kind of text type they are to prepare in writing up their report;
- possible websites or CD-ROMs to use for information;
- guidelines for navigating websites with understanding.

An important point for teachers to bear in mind when preparing children to use the Internet for research purposes is that the website is designed using a hierarchy of areas of information, and children often need advice about how to navigate their way through the hierarchy.

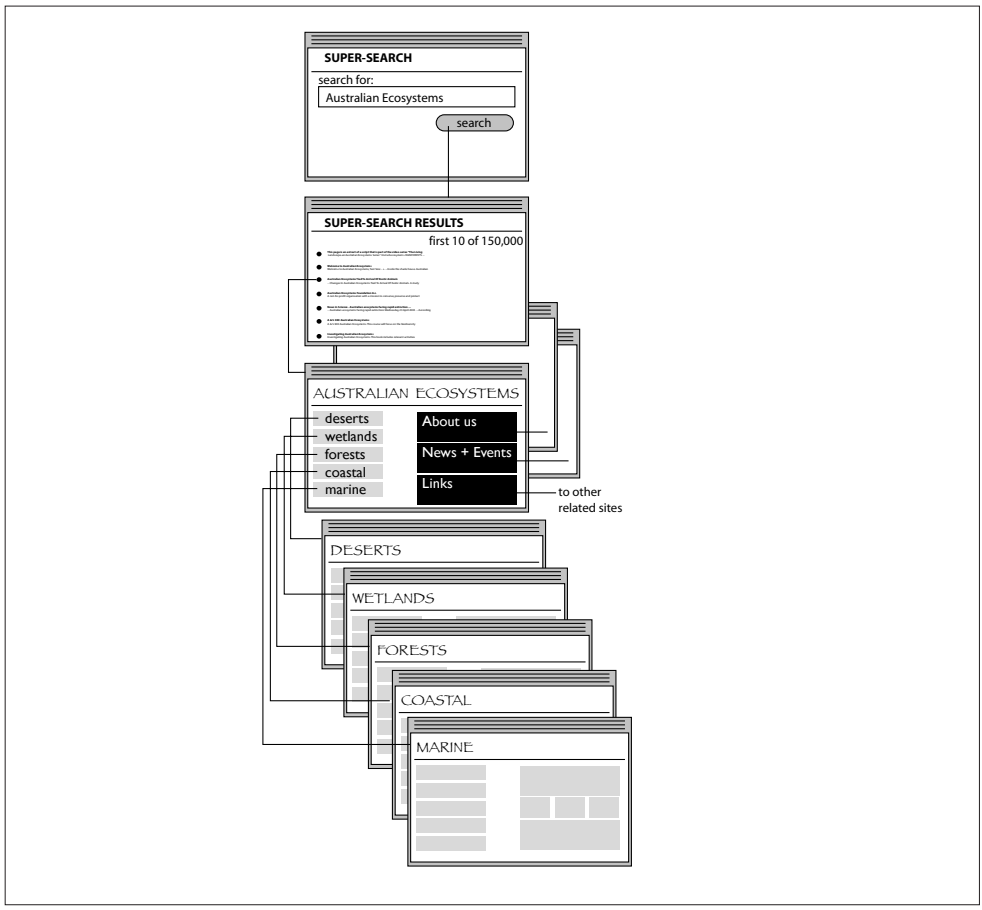


Figure 8.11 The hierarchical structure of a website

Figure 8.11 indicates the hierarchical structure that is involved in a website, showing how the imagined website for Australian Ecosystems reveals an initial set of ten of a potential set of 150 000 results. There is an immediate need to decide which result to follow. The one suggested opens up a webpage, where, to the left, is a list showing: deserts, wetlands, forest, coastal and marine. To the right is a very common list of items at this point: 'About us', 'News and Events' and 'Links'. Assuming one opts for one of the items listed to the left, a further series of pages is revealed. The structure is hierarchical, the sections functioning on descending levels, which are revealed, graphically at least, as nested within the others, and there is a particular logic involved in the structure. Some websites are much better designed than others and teachers need to look ahead, reviewing those their students are likely to use so that they can anticipate the likely challenges in using them. According to Emilia Djonov (in preparation), who has been researching children's use of the Internet in schools,

children sometimes have difficulty in identifying and using relevant information on the Internet. The hierarchical structure of a website needs to be explained fully, while children also need well-focused questions to help them sort through the information, much of which is irrelevant to their purposes. Websites are necessarily designed to suit many users for a variety of purposes, and as a result there will always be a need to sift through what is provided, shedding what is not useful, and retrieving what is useful.

In summary, websites and CD-ROMs are important sources of information for children, though there are significant skills to be mastered if they are to learn to use them for educationally rewarding purposes. As in all other areas of the language program, there are important responsibilities for teachers in preparing children to use them effectively.

Conclusion

Literacy has always been visual, though in the modern world the impact of multiliteracies is such that children grow up learning to access a variety of information by visual/verbal means. Early reading texts make little or no use of verbal texts, and they scaffold the young in working with visuals, learning to move the eye from left to right as information is deployed across a page in largely linear fashion. The effect is that they learn to recognise 'Given' and 'New' information, and the kinds of vectors that make their expression possible. Later books make successful use of an interplay of visual and verbal elements and considerable skill is needed to process and understand such texts. The impact of modern technologies is such that many textbooks, as well as Internet resources, create texts for reading that bring together verbal and visual elements in new ways, many of them now non-linear. All these matters require that teachers understand the challenges of reading visual/verbal texts, and guide their students in developing an intelligent and thoughtful grasp of how they work to build their meanings.

Further reading

Callow, John (ed.) (1999) *Image Matters: Visual Texts in the Classroom*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney.

Department of Education Queensland (2000) *Why Wait: A Way into Teaching Critical Literacies in the Early Years*, Brisbane, Education Services Directorate, Education Queensland.

McCloud, S (1994) *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, HarperCollins, New York.

Saraceni, M (2003) *The Language of Comics*, Routledge, London and New York.

Unsworth, Len (2001) *Teaching Multiliteracies across the Curriculum: Changing Contexts of Text and Image in Classroom Practice*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK and Philadelphia, USA.

chapter 9

Teaching writing: the early years of primary school

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- outline aspects of the history of teaching writing;
- review debates over the rival claims of 'process' and 'product' in teaching writing;
- recommend a functional model of teaching writing, using a genre-based pedagogy concerned with (i) identifying target texts for writing, and (ii) processes of teaching and learning them;
- introduce terms used in accounts of genre-based pedagogies: deconstruction (breaking texts into their component elements), joint construction (writing texts as a collective activity) and independent construction;
- examine the early years of primary school writing, focusing on genres to be taught and learned in these years, while writing in the later years will be examined in the next chapter;
- argue that text types or genres are prototypes, and as such they can be modified and adapted to suit different purposes;
- trace emergent control in these years of a number of language features, including reference, themes and lexical density, as well as person, modality and other resources in which relationship with readers is expressed.

Models of teaching writing

The teaching of writing has had a different history from that of the teaching of reading, although there have been some parallels in recent times. For a long time, in many schools in Australia and other parts of the English-speaking world, it was reading rather than writing that was held to be of primary importance for all but the most privileged children. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, an educational theory was held that children should not be taught to write for some years after they had been at school. Since many children did not stay at school for long, this often meant they had little opportunity to learn to write, apart from simple things like how to write their own names and perhaps how to write short letters. Students were taught to use the handwriting system, sometimes learning to write different 'hands' (or styles), starting with slates, later moving on to paper and pencil. Where the writing of compositions was introduced, this occurred after children had spent some years learning to recognise the various 'parts of speech', and how to parse them. It was believed it was only after children had learned to recognise these items that they could use them in writing. This belief was misguided, though it was probably based on a limited understanding of the nature of written as opposed to spoken language, and an associated sense that there was a knowledge children should acquire in order to learn to write. Learning to write certainly involves learning new knowledge about language, but it was not clear what form the necessary knowledge should take. This was to become a matter for research in the 20th century, and an important aspect of this – namely knowledge of the differences between speech and writing, discussed in chapter 4 – was developed only in the latter half of that century. In the last years of the century, there was a great deal of debate about what kinds of knowledge should be taught young writers, and how such knowledge should be taught. Such issues remain current to this day.

The rival claims of 'process' and 'product'

A debate emerged over the rival claims of 'process' and 'product' in teaching writing. It was analogous to the 'phonic' versus 'whole language' debate, referred to in chapter 6, concerning teaching reading. Those who developed the 'process approach' (for example, Graves 1981, 1983) focused on allowing children to pursue their own directions, taking up topics that interested them and writing about them as they chose. In the 'process', students were encouraged to write drafts of their texts and to

hold 'conferences' with their teachers to improve what they had done before they produced final versions. The teacher's role was essentially reactive, responding to the decisions the children had made in writing, rather than taking a more proactive role in shaping decisions about writing. Such an approach was sometimes said to be a 'natural' approach, because it was held to be similar to the 'natural' ways that children learned to talk. Talk, it was said, was learned 'naturally' in early life, where the implication was that it involved little intervention or direction, it being a process that occurred much as the body developed. In the 'process' approach it was said that the process of writing was more important than the 'product'. Children would acquire different text types best when they were free to choose what they wrote about and how they wrote.

Those who were said to pursue 'product' approaches (for example, Martin & Rothery 1986; Christie et al. 1990a, 1990b, 1992; Macken-Horarik 1998, 2002) focused more directly on the target text type or genre to be produced, arguing that children should not be left without guidance in learning to recognise and produce written texts. The teacher's role in this sense was proactive, in terms of defining goals for writing and teaching features of the target texts to be learned. Those who proposed this approach argued that the process of learning to talk was effortful and it depended on constant interaction with caregivers who made language learning possible (see chapter 2); any suggestion of a 'natural' way of learning that implied little assistance from others was misguided. If this was true for talk, they argued, it must be even more the case for learning written language, for children are never exposed to the patterns of written language as much as they are to the models of speech. This is so even for the children in whose families books are a familiar part of daily life, while for the children whose households do not have much access to written materials, the challenge is even greater. Learning to write requires teaching and effort on the part of the learner, it was asserted, though it can certainly be a pleasurable experience.

Criticisms sometimes made of overt teaching of knowledge about target texts were (i) that it caused a loss of creativity and independence in young writers (for example, Lee 1996), or (ii) that that there was little evidence that such teaching improved writing (for example, Freedman in Freedman & Medway 1994). To the former criticism the genre theorists responded that genres are a feature of one's culture, and learning them is a part of learning ways of functioning in one's culture. Once a genre is learned, they said, it can be critiqued, played with and changed: it is in these activities that creativity and critical capacities are fostered. As for the suggestion that no evidence exists that

teaching of knowledge about genres makes a difference, it was said, one must point to the many writers who claim such evidence (for example, Derewianka 1990; Gerot 1995; Martin 1999; Macken-Horarik 1998, 2002; Derewianka & Hammond 2001; Feez 2002; Christie & Soosai 2001; Schleppegrell 2004).

A genre-based approach

The approach to the teaching of writing adopted here is genre-based. Text types or genres are said to be ways of making meaning in a culture. In schools students need to learn a range of text types, all relevant for mastering the areas of school knowledge. Text types or genres are as they are, because they are used to organise information, knowledge and ideas in socially important ways. (Table 9.1, later in this chapter, lists a sample of them.) Like other social institutions, genres can change and be adapted, while children learning to write them can enjoy writing spoofs (some of which are discussed in chapter 12). The more confident people are in using genres the more they will adapt and play with them. Learning a metalanguage for talking about the various text types is part of developing important knowledge about language. Developing such a metalanguage is part of developing the critical skills needed to be active users and interpreters of written texts.

The distinction between 'process' and 'product' is in any case a false one, because process and product are part of the same pedagogical phenomenon. Contrary to some criticisms in the past, genre-based approaches attach importance to the processes of teaching and learning genres. To this extent, they share features with the original 'process' approaches. However, where they differ is in their insistence on identifying target texts for overt teaching and learning. In a genre-based pedagogy considerable attention is devoted to fostering processes that scaffold learning, and to teaching a metalanguage for dealing with the genres.

Genre-based pedagogy

Principles for implementing a genre-based pedagogy have been outlined in several places (for example, Derewianka 1990; Christie et al. 1990a, 1990b, 1992; Rothery 1996; Martin 1999), all based on research in classrooms. When introducing students to a genre, the following stages are recommended for teachers to follow:

- Identify the target text type or genre to be taught, selected for its relevance to the area of the curriculum.
- Identify fields of knowledge that are typically constructed using the text type.

- Select a good example of the text type showing its elements of **schematic structure**.
- Introduce the sample text to the children, and involve them in reading and discussing its meanings.
- **Deconstruct** (or take apart) the various stages of the text, discussing the functions of each stage or element of structure.
- Identify fields to be written about with the class, building some knowledge of the lexis associated with that field.
- Involve the children in **joint construction** of the target text.
- Discuss the text produced, critiquing it and improving it where necessary.
- Involve the children in subsequent research in a field or fields for further research and writing.
- Involve the children in **independent construction** of the target text.
- Review and discuss children's texts, amending any if needed, and keeping a permanent record, perhaps written up on class computers and displayed for later referral.
- Encourage the children to play with the different text types, learning that they are resources that can be adapted and changed with growing confidence in their use.

Where children need additional scaffolding and support after the first joint construction stage, it will often prove necessary to undertake more joint research and construction activities before moving on to the stage of independent construction.

In general, we argue here and in chapter 10, in learning to handle the range of genres taught across the years of a primary education, children should show increasing skill in:

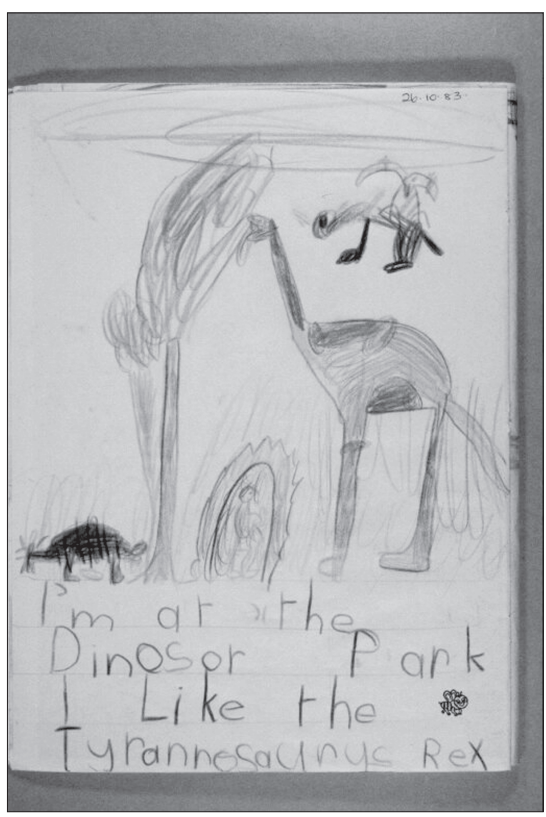
- recognition of different text types or genres and their functions;
- use of reference to build coherent texts;
- use of theme choices suited to the different text types or genres, showing growing facility in using the themes to direct the organisation of written texts;
- development of greater lexical density, expressed in such things as expanded noun group structures that build participants in texts, and in expanded circumstances expressed in prepositional phrases and/or in adverb groups;
- control of the resources of person and other resources that build authoritative texts;
- enhanced control of expression of feelings, attitudes and judgments, where this will include achieving some control of modality (at least in the later years) as well as other resources in which evaluation is expressed;
- capacity to review and critique instances of text types or genres, as well as capacity to satirise them, including writing spoofs.

Learning to write in the early childhood years

Text 9.1 was written by David in his preparatory or kindergarten year. He was a good artist and liked to draw a picture before writing about it. His teacher tended to encourage this, though it did not constitute the only writing activity she developed. Kress (1997) has examined early drawing and its relationship to writing as well as to other meaning-making activities, concluding that it is very important in the development of children. Writing emerged originally in the human species after the emergence of painting and drawing (Halliday 1985). There may be a parallel in early writing development, in that young children shift between drawing and writing, learning from both. Certainly, most children take pleasure in drawing, painting, modelling, singing and so on, and the move to writing extends their repertoire of meaning-making activities.

TEXT 9.1

(original spelling preserved)



David draws on a field of personal experience to draw the pictures, and he offers a written label. The text is very simple, and David was capable of producing more complex language in speech than he could in writing at this stage. He was still mastering the handwriting and spelling systems, and it was quite effortful to write as he did.

Experientially, text 9.1 uses a relational or being process, which builds description:

> I'**m** at the Dinosor Park.

and a mental process, expressing his attitude to what is written about:

> I **like** the Tyrannosaurus Rex. (which his teacher had displayed on the board)

Interpersonally, the mood choice is declarative (a usual feature in writing) to inform readers, while the two clauses use the first person (*I*), indicating that the writer assumes a knowledge in his reader of his identity, and that he sets up a reasonably close relationship.

Textually, the two clauses are very simple, and *I* is the theme in both.

Such a text is characteristic of early writing activities, building action in the world, and, when they express attitude, it will be either through mental processes such as *I like*, or through relational processes that describe feeling or attitude, as in *it was fun*. Action or event and response to event often engage the attention of young writers. As they proceed into learning aspects of the knowledge of schooling, the nature of their writing begins to change, particularly where they are properly taught by their teachers to master other text types.

Some genres of the early years of schooling

A genre is recognised because it has a characteristic set of stages through which its goals are achieved. The technical name for the series of stages or elements of structure is 'schematic structure'. The stages are important in serving the overall goals of the genre or text type. Text 9.1 hardly constitutes an example of an identifiable genre, for it has no distinctive schematic structure. We shall look at a sample of representative genres found in the junior primary school years, covering Years 1 to 4.

Table 9.1 Some common genres of the lower primary school

Genre	Social function	Stages
Procedure	To tell how to complete a task	(Aim) ^ Materials Needed ^ Steps
Recount	To retell a sequence of events, often of personal experience	Orientation ^ Events ^ Reorientation
Procedural recount	To recount accurately the aim, steps and conclusion of a scientific experiment	(Aim) ^ Record of Steps ^ Conclusion
Narrative	To entertain, creating a sequence of events about characters, often offering opportunity to reflect on values	Orientation ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution ^ (Coda)
Report	To classify and describe phenomena	General Classification ^ Description
Explanation	To explain how or why something occurs	Phenomenon Identification ^ Explanation Sequence

Notes:

1 **The symbol ^ indicates sequence.**

2 **The brackets ( ) around a stage or element indicate that it is an optional element. Not all the genres necessarily reveal all the stages, and this is because there is variation depending on the field of school knowledge that is being dealt with. In the case of a recipe, for example, in studies of health and nutrition, there would be no need to state any aims, nor would there be a conclusion. But these would be important in procedures setting out a scientific experiment.**

Table 9.1 summarises some familiar genres of the early primary years, most of which are also found in the upper primary school and secondary school too, though their character tends to change as children mature, and as the demands of the curriculum change. The list is not definitive, and children often write other texts, such as poems, descriptions, expositions, review genres, various kinds of letters, posters and multimodal texts using computers and related facilities. In fact, later in this book, we shall introduce three other genres. In chapter 10 we shall briefly examine an example of a news story genre, as originally described by White (1997). In chapter 12, when discussing the teaching of literature, we shall examine an instance of a review genre.

Finally, in chapter 13, we shall briefly examine an instance of an exposition genre. The list of genres used here provides a representative range that can be used in the primary school work, in all areas of the curriculum. Moreover, an analysis of the examples given of these genres will allow us to identify those features in writing that mark developmental control of written language. Table 9.1 displays the genres, lists the social function of each and gives an overview of the overall schematic structure of each genre.

Genres are resources for organising experience, information and ideas in a culture. The genres of the primary years in particular are 'prototypes'. Like other prototypes, they are fundamental models for use – in this case for organising knowledge and information in language in the various areas of the curriculum. They can be played with and adapted for different purposes as students become proficient. Furthermore, as students grow older, the genres are often also used to create larger bodies of texts, as is certainly the case, for example, in many school textbooks, where several genres will occur in any chapter.

We shall now look at instances of each of the genres identified, commenting on the ways they are organised linguistically. We shall also comment on what the linguistic evidence reveals of the developmental stages of the young writers.

A procedure

Recipes are common procedural genres, often taught in the first years of school. Text 9.2 is a procedure written by Anna, aged 7 years. The class had been making Anzac biscuits and their teacher asked them to 'draw and write about how you made Anzacs. Draw the different stages' (Aidman 1999: 548).

Anna's procedure is very simple, strictly incomplete, for she omits to provide information about the ingredients required, or about removing the biscuits from the oven and cooling them. However, this probably reflects the details of the teacher's directions, which were not particularly well focused, and did not clearly direct student attention to a procedure genre.

TEXT 9.2

Anzac biscuits

(A series of pictures was drawn, accompanied by the following.)

1. wash your hands.
2. collect the ingredients.
3. heat the oven.

4 make the dough.

5 spray the trays.

6 put them in the tray.

7 put it in the oven.

8 eat them!

Experientially the text uses material or action processes, such as *wash your hands*; *make the dough*; *put it in the oven*. Such processes are entirely characteristic of recipes. The participants, all expressed in noun groups, are of the field: *your hands*; *the ingredients*; *the trays*. Anna uses two prepositional phrases to create circumstances of place: *in the tray*; *in the oven*.

Interpersonally, the text makes consistent use of the imperative mood, to direct the behaviour of Anna's readers, and there is no overt attitudinal expression, nor would that be appropriate. The final process, used with an exclamation process (*eat them!*), suggests a degree of humour in communicating with her readers.

Textually, the text is organised partly through the use of the numbers, helping to order the sequence of steps, and partly through the series of topical themes, expressed in the verb choices using the imperative mood. There is a little confusion revealed about the correct uses of referential items. In clause 6, for example, Anna writes *put them in the tray*, where *them* refers to the biscuits, though she has not actually mentioned them at all, having instead in her previous clause referred to *the trays*. Anna, already referred to in chapter 4, was a native speaker of Russian and her native language does not use articles at all. The slight lapse might have been due to this, although she did get the referential connections correct between clauses 6 and 7. Native speakers of English sometimes have similar trouble in their early writing efforts, though for the most part, such matters are corrected over time as children grow more familiar with the task of writing.

A recount

Children are often encouraged in the first years of schooling to write recounts of personal experience. They are for many children the first types of stories they write before they move on to writing narratives. We have already looked at such a recount in chapter 4 (text 4.5). It was written by Tracey when she was 6 years old. The text is reproduced below, set out to show the elements of schematic structure, as Rothery (1991) described them.

TEXT 9.3

A recount of a class visit (spelling corrected)

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Orientation	We went to Werribee Park	Participants (*we*) are introduced, using a material process (*went*) in a setting expressed in a circumstance of place: *to Werribee Park*.
Record of Events	**when** we got off the bus we went in the mansion. I liked the beds and the lounge room and the stairs **after that** we went to the garden and I liked the flowers and the colours. **Then** we went to the bus we got our lunch and ate it all. **Then** we went to see the animals **and** we saw lambs sheep ducks a kangaroo emus goats camels water buffalo pigs guinea pigs zebras rhinoceros **and after that** we played on the swings **and then** we went to the island **and** we climbed the island and Mandy **and** I climbed it **and** the mud was all slippery **and** we had to come down **and** go on to the top **and** we found a cave **and** there was a door in the cave **and** there was steps on the island **and** nearly everyone went into the cave **and** Stephen and I was the monster	Strong sense of temporal sequence created with several temporal and additive conjunctions: *when*, *after that*, *then*, *then*, *and*, etc. The same items function as textual themes, to build textual connectedness, helping to create coherence. Mainly material processes to build actions: *went*, *played*, *climbed*, *found*. Two mental processes to express response to events: *I liked the beds and the lounge room and the stairs*; *I liked the flowers and the colours.* Two relational processes build description: *the mud was slippery*; *Stephen and I was the monster*. Also two existential processes: *there was a door*; *there was steps on the island*. Participants identify class members (*I*, *we*, *Mandy*, *Stephen*), and items from the field: *the animals*, *a cave*, *the monster*, etc.

Reorientation	**and** it started to rain **so** we went home **and** all of us were tired.	Three more conjunctions, two additive, *and*. And the other (*so*) is consequential. This helps to signal Closure of the text. Material processes – *it started to rain* and *we went home* – provide closing actions, while one relational process describes the class members: *all of us were tired*.

The Orientation has the function of introducing persons in a context, where time and place are usually established. Such an element often has a time reference (for example, *Last Thursday*; *one day*), though that is not the case here.

The Record of Events sets out the series of events that are recounted, where temporal and often additive connections are important in creating the sequence. Some expression of attitude or emotional response to events is often introduced in the Record of Events, for this adds interest. There are two mental processes here: *I liked the beds and the lounge room and the stairs*; *I liked the flowers and the colours.*

The 'Reorientation' has the function of closing the recount, often by returning the participants to the point whence they started.

Experientially, the text builds personal experience. The opening element is very short, while the Record of Events is the longest stage. This element sets out the series of events that are recounted, making extensive use of material or action processes that help to build the events (for example, *we went to the garden*; *we played on the swings*; *I climbed it*), while the noun groups identify class members (*I*, *we*, *Mandy*, *Stephen*).

Interpersonally, the text informs the reader, using the declarative mood, while the frequent references to class members assume they are known to the reader. As noted, two mental processes reveal personal response to the events.

Textually, the Record of Events unfolds, using a number of topical themes, most of them expressed in the repetitions of *we*. The textual themes build coherence, while the same items build the strong sense of temporal sequence of events that is the most characteristic feature of such text types: *when*, *after that*, *then*, *and*.

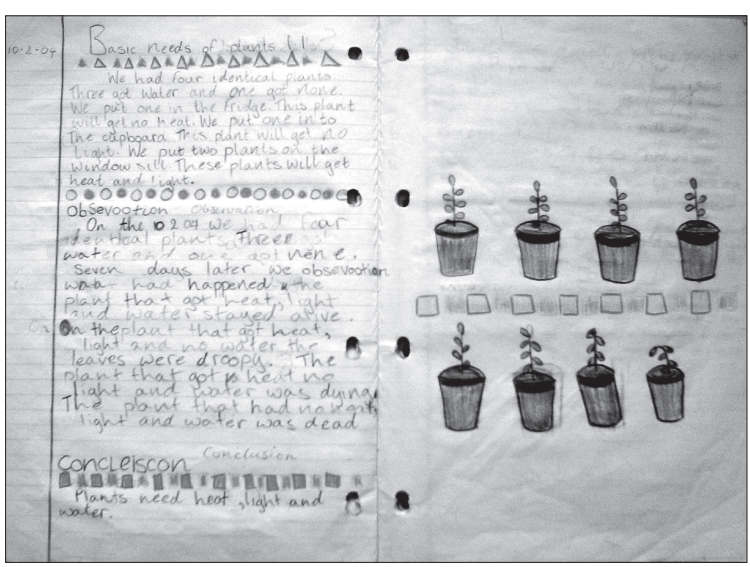
Text 9.3 is a representative recount of personal experience of the early years of schooling, and while the punctuation is somewhat rudimentary, Tracey has a good control of temporal sequence. She reconstructs the events reasonably clearly, though

she assumes the reader knows the identity of the persons identified. She provides two processes to tell her readers how she responded to events, while she brings the text to a satisfactory Closure. Tracey has a better control of the grammar of speech than of writing, and this is reflected in the manner of ordering and sequencing her text and in the regular, even monotonous repetition of her topical themes. She writes well for a child of six, though if she were still to be writing like this later in the primary school, there would be grounds for concern.

A procedural recount

A procedural recount has elements of both a procedure and of a recount. It is often found in school science, though procedural recounts continue to be used throughout adult life. Text 9.4 was written by Maya, aged 9, when her teacher had involved her class in some simple scientific experiments concerning the 'basic needs of plants'. Using a genre-based pedagogy, the teacher had modelled and taught the children about both procedures and recounts. The children could recognise the elements of structure or stages in each genre, and they had a clear understanding of the functions of each. They were also learning some important steps in scientific method in conducting their plant experiment. After observing the plants in the classroom for some days and discussing the results, Maya wrote notes, based on guidance she got from her teacher, then produced a draft, which she later amended in the light of further discussion.

TEXT 9.4



Basic needs of plants

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Aim	Basic needs of plants	Not a conventional statement of aim, but a reasonable alternative.
Record of Steps	We had four identical plants. Three got water and one got none. We put one in the fridge. This plant will get no heat. We put one into the cupboard. This plant will get no light. We put two plants on the window sill. These plants will get heat and light. Obsevootion *(Observation)* On the 10.2.04 we had four identical plants. Three got water and one got none. Seven days later we observootion [observed] what had happened. The plant that got heat, light and water stayed alive. On the plant that got heat, light and no water the leaves were droopy. The plant that got heat no light and water was dying. The plant that had no heat, light and water was dead.	Material processes build actions: *three got water*; *we put one in the fridge*; *this plant will get no light*. Participants are of the class (*we*) and of the field (*this plant*). Use of first person (*we*). Some material processes: *three got water*. Some relational or being processes build description: *the leaves were droopy*; *the plant [[that had no heat, light and water]] was dead*. Several marked topical themes help build directions: *on the 10.2.04*; *seven days later*; *on the plant [[that got heat, light and no water]]*. Other topical themes identify the plant. Third person is used throughout this and the final element.
Conclusion	Concleisoon *(Conclusion)* Plants need heat, light and water.	One material process: *plants need heat …* One topical theme: *plants*.

Maya's teacher had introduced models of the target text type, and she introduced the term 'Observation' as an aspect of the genre and of the building of an understanding

of scientific method. The use of the illustration is important for it is part of the mode of constructing scientific knowledge here.

Each stage is clearly different from the others, and that is apparent from a reading of the language features identified above, as well as some others.

As noted, the first element uses the first person as the writer establishes the role of the class members. This element also uses a mix of the future and past tense choices, where these are not consistently well controlled (tense is very hard in English). But essentially she establishes what will be done in the first element.

The 'Record of Steps', involving the Observation, successfully uses the past tense throughout, while the final element successfully uses the present tense to establish a meaning that is held to be always true: *plants need heat, light and water*. Maya is already becoming skilled at manipulating the English tense system to build scientific genres.

As noted, Maya can make varied and good use of her topical themes to create this scientific genre. Consider the topical themes in the Record of Steps, where I have set out the clauses on separate lines:

On the 10.2.04 we had four identical plants.
Three got water
and one got none.
Seven days later we observed what had happened.
The plant [[that got heat, light and water]] stayed alive.
On the plant [[that got heat, light and no water]] the leaves were droopy.
The plant [[that got heat no light and water]] was dying.
The plant [[that had no heat, light and water]] was dead.

After introducing *four identical plants* towards the end of the first clause, Maya is able to build from this item, creating a series of interconnected topical themes, which help build coherence and drive the discourse forward. Apart from this, three marked topical themes are expressed in prepositional phrases that build circumstances: two of time (*on the 10.2.04*; *seven days later*), and one a circumstance of place, also having an embedded clause within it (*on the plant [[that got heat light and no water]]*). The other matter of interest in Maya's topical themes is her use of noun groups that have been expanded, using embedded clauses. These help to 'pack in' information in a manner characteristic of written language, and they also create lexical density (see chapter 4).

These matters to do with the textual metafunction show evidence of good emergent control of ways to direct written language, and the theme choices are characteristic of the mature ways to handle theme in such a text. The pattern of

theme choices is quite different from that in text 9.3. The difference is partly a condition of a different field of experience and of a different genre. However, it is also partly a developmental matter, for Maya was 9 years old, while Tracey, writer of text 9.3, was 6.5 years old.

A narrative

The narrative genre reproduced here was written by Tim Duloy, aged 6 years.

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Orientation	In the ancient times there was a minotaur that was very nice and kind and lived in a cave	Circumstance of time expressed in a preposition phrase is the opening topical theme, creating the setting: *in the ancient times*. Existential process brings the main character into being: *there was a minotaur*. A relational process describes the main character: *that was very nice and kind*.
Complication	but one day he stepped on a magic spot and turned bad. So he started to kill the dwarfs and people	Two conjunctive relations help introduce the problem: *but one day … so he started to kill*. Material processes create actions: *he stepped on a magic spot*; *he started to kill dwarfs …* One relational process describes the character: *he turned bad*.
Resolution	and one day a witch came along and turned him good again and made everything alive again	An additive conjunction (*and*) helps to introduce the new stage and a new participant in the story: *a witch*. A material process (*came along*) creates an action, while two relational processes (*turned him good* and *made everything alive again*) create what she caused to happen.
Closure	and they lived happily ever after.	A final material process in another clause linked with a causal conjunction (*and*) rounds the text off: *they lived happily ever after*.

The Orientation introduces character(s) (*a minotaur*), normally by reference to time (*in the ancient times*) and to physical setting (it *lived in a cave*). The existential process serves to bring the character into being: *there was a minotaur*.

The Complication introduces a problem that has to be dealt with. It is signalled partly with the contrastive conjunction *but*, and partly with the action (*he stepped on a magic spot*), and its consequence (*so he turned bad*).

The Resolution is introduced with another conjunction, this time additive (*and*) and a marked topical theme in a circumstance of time (*one day*). This serves to carry the story forward. The new participant in the tale is introduced, using an indefinite article and a material or action process: *a witch came along*. Two relational processes tell the change she brought about: *(she) turned him good again and made everything alive again*.

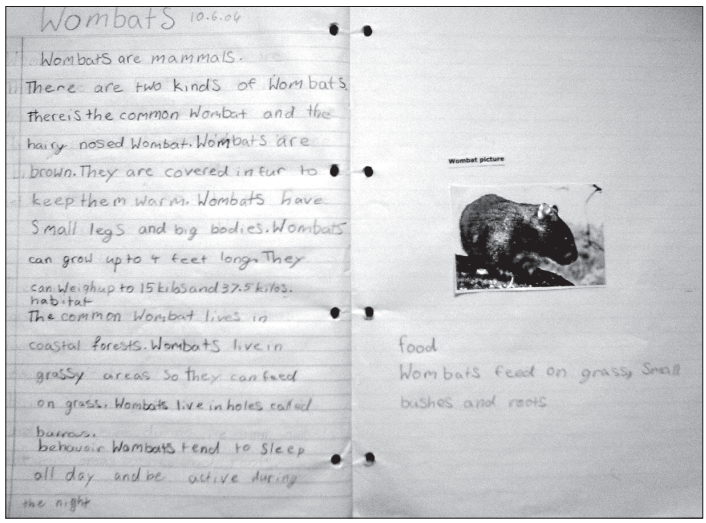
A final element brings the tale to an end, using a familiar cliché: *they lived happily ever after*.

Studies of oral narratives (Labov & Waletzky 1967; Plum 1988) and of children's written stories (Rothery 1991) have shown that an essential element is an Evaluation that occurs after the Complication. This element tells how characters felt about, or responded to, the crisis or problem. Without this element, Rothery has argued, the narrative is incomplete, for it gives point and purpose to the tale. Tim has no Evaluation element, as such, though his final Closure certainly implies some evaluative conclusion. Many children as young as he would not create a separate Evaluation element, for this tends to appear later when children are more skilled at handling the resources with which to express emotions, attitudes and feelings. In general, Tim's was a successful, if simple, narrative genre, and appropriate for a child of his age.

A report

Text 9.6 is a report, written by Marielle, aged 9 years. Reports are found in several areas of the curriculum, in science, natural science and school health. During one school term, the children in her class studied, researched and wrote reports about natural phenomena, especially animals. They were taught to recognise the elements of the genre and their functions, and to deconstruct examples of such genres. They researched information about the animals, and wrote sets of notes before writing drafts. These they discussed with their teacher and later produced final versions. Text 9.6 is the final version.

TEXT 9.6


Wombats 10.6.04

Wombats are mammals.
There are two kinds of Wombats
there is the common Wombat and the
hairy nosed Wombat. Wombats are
brown. They are covered in fur to
keep them warm. Wombats have
small legs and big bodies. Wombats
can grow up to 4 feet long. They
can weighup to 15 kilos and 37.5 kilos.
habitat
The common Wombat lives in
coastal forests. Wombats live in
grassy areas so they can feed
on grass. Wombats live in holes called
burrows.
behaviour Wombats tend to sleep
all day and be active during
the night

Wombat picture

food
Wombats feed on grass, small
bushes and roots

A report about wombats

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
General Classification	Wombats are mammals. There are two kinds of wombats. There is the common wombat and the hairy nosed wombat.	A relational or being process builds definition (*wombats are mammals*), and two existential processes create other relevant information: *there are two kinds …*; *there is the common wombat …*
Description: appearance	Wombats are brown. They are covered in fur to keep them warm. Wombats have small legs and big bodies. Wombats can grow up to 4 feet long. They can weigh up to 15 kilos and 37.5 kilos.	Relational processes build description: *wombats are brown*; *wombats have small legs …*; *wombats can grow up to 4 feet long*. Topical themes throughout identify wombats, using generic referents: *wombats*; *they*; *the common wombat*. Material processes help build description of habitat (*the common wombat lives in coastal forests*), while others build aspects of behaviour (*they tend to sleep …*) as well as feeding habits (*they feed on grass …*).
Description: habitat	The common wombat lives in coastal forests. Wombats live in grassy areas so they can feed on grass. Wombats live in holes called burrows.	
Description: behaviour	Wombats tend to sleep all day and be active during the night.	
Description: food	Wombats feed on grass, small bushes and roots.	

The 'General Classification' (sometimes also called the 'General Statement') creates defining information that classifies the creature or other Phenomenon. Reports of the natural sciences typically start this way, and the teacher had devoted time in her teaching to discussion of the opening element and its function. In the first draft, Marielle had actually written *Wombats are mammals* as a third sentence in the text, and bringing it to the front was the principal change she made after discussion with her teacher. Strictly speaking, the complete classificatory statement on a wombat would have been that it was 'a marsupial mammal', though what Marielle has written is not actually wrong.

The 'Description' element in a report will, of course, describe different things, depending on the field of knowledge. Here, as is not uncommon in a text dealing with an animal, matters to do with appearance, habitat, behaviour and food were discussed. In fact, Marielle's teacher gave a series of questions to scaffold the ordering of the aspects of description:

- What does it look like?
- Where does it live?
- How does it behave?
- What does it eat?

Some comments on the language features can be made.

There is a characteristic use of a relational process to classify wombats in the opening element (*wombats **are** mammals*), as well as two existential processes to provide additional information. The subsequent element makes use mainly of relational processes to build description (for example, *wombats **have** small legs* …) and material processes to build activities (for example, *they **can feed** on grass*).

The most frequently used topical theme is *wombats* or the referential item, *they*, and this is a feature of reports, in which topical themes are consistently repeated, for it is the creature or other Phenomenon that is the principal focus of attention.

There are few textual themes and few conjunctive relationships (as in *wombats live in grassy areas **so** they can feed on grass*). That is because in such a text the object is simply to classify and describe, and few connections between the meanings of clauses need to be made.

In all these matters, the text type is revealed as quite different in function from text 9.4, the procedural recount.

Apart from these things, the third person is chosen throughout the text, helping to give it its authoritative character, and there are no attitudinal expressions, for they would be inappropriate in a piece of scientific writing of this kind.

The text makes use of the simple present tense, and this is again a characteristic of the building of much scientific knowledge.

An explanation

Text 9.7 is an explanation written by a boy whom we shall call 'Stefan', in the junior primary school (Sandiford 1997). He was of second language background, and was in a classroom where a specialist ESL teacher worked along with his regular class teacher. His teachers developed a unit of work in the social science program, in which the children learned to recognise, research and write explanation genres about various phenomena. One such phenomenon concerned the processes of canning fruit. His teacher commented that before Stefan wrote his text, he had worked at deconstructing models with her, and then the class watched a video about the canning process, and they had all written some notes as a group activity, identifying what to say in each of the stages in the projected text. These notes were visibly displayed in the classroom, as was a poster that provided illustrations and written information. Stefan made use of all these sources of information and then wrote text 9.7.

An explanation of how fruit are canned

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Phenomenon Identification	Canned fruit has to go through a lot of processes before it is canned.	Material processes and participants identify the Phenomenon: *canned fruit has to go through … it is canned*. Use of modality *has to go* to suggest what must occur.
Explanation Sequence	**First** the fruit is picked with a cherry picker (a machine that lifts people up). **After the fruit has been picked** it is packed in big wooden crates. **Then at the gate** the fruit is checked and weighed for ripeness and size. **Then** the fruit is washed **and** is cleaned at the cannery. **Then** the fruit is graded according to colour and the shape. **If the fruit is too small** it is made into jam. The good fruit is peeled and stoned. **Then after the fruit is peeled** the fruit is put in cans and weighed. **Then** every can is filled with syrup. **After that** a lid is put on every can. **Then** the cans are heated **and then** cooled so that there is no air. **Finally** the cans are labelled.	Material processes and participants build actions: *the fruit is picked*; *the fruit is graded*; *the fruit is peeled*. One relational process creates description: *if the fruit is too small*. Circumstantial information expressed in prepositional phrases includes: *with a cherry picker*; *in big wooden crates*; *for ripeness and size* etc. Topical themes identify *the fruit*. Sense of sequence is expressed in textual themes and marked topical themes (all shown in bold).

The Phenomenon Identification establishes the Phenomenon to be explained, and it is typically short. The topical theme, as is true here, clearly indicates the Phenomenon. The use of the modal verb suggests there are obligatory things that must occur.

The Explanation Sequence tells how or why something occurs. Here the explanation provides a sense of how the process of fruit canning occurs. Experientially, as noted above, the text uses mainly material processes to construct the actions involved in canning. The experiential information in the circumstances is also of interest in this text, for these help to build important information:

the fruit is packed **with a cherry picker**	Circumstance of manner
it is packed **in big wooden crates**	Circumstance of place
(it is) weighed **for ripeness and size**	Circumstance of purpose
(it) is cleaned **at the cannery**	Circumstance of place
the fruit is graded **according to colour and the shape**	Circumstance of manner
the fruit is put **in cans**	Circumstance of place
every can is filled **with syrup**	Circumstance of accompaniment
a lid is put **on every can**	Circumstance of place

In chapter 4 we noted that circumstantial information expressed in prepositional phrases is reasonably minimal when children are young, like the recount in text 9.4. This young writer makes skilled use of his prepositional phrases to 'pack in' relevant information, along with what is also contained in his process types and noun groups. This adds to the lexical density of his text.

Textually, the sense of temporal sequence to link the steps in the explanation is very important and characteristic of this text type. The teacher had devoted time to modelling and deconstructing the target text type, as well as to encouraging the children to research the field for relevant information to use. The young writer makes skilled use of themes that build the sequence, sometimes with textual themes and associated topical themes, as in:

First **the fruit** is picked

or

Then **the fruit** is washed,

while elsewhere he puts a whole dependent clause first to make it thematic to the next clause, as in:

After the fruit has been picked, it is packed in big wooden crates,

or

Then after the fruit is peeled, the fruit is put in cans.

He also uses another marked theme that is expressed in a prepositional phrase that builds a circumstance:

Then **at the gate**.

One other important matter should be mentioned about the language of this text, and that is its consistent use of the 'passive voice'. This is a term not used before in this book. In English we recognise two voices: **active voice** and **passive voice**. The active voice occurs when the agent involved in some action is expressed as doing it, as in:

He canned some fruit.

The passive voice would be:

The fruit was canned by him.

The passive voice occurs in text 9.7 in such places as: *the fruit* ***is picked***; *the fruit* ***is checked***; *the good fruit* ***is peeled***.

The importance of using the passive voice as here, is that it allows the writer to put the experiential information – in this case *the fruit* – in topical theme position in the series of clauses. The passive voice is a very useful resource in English for putting topics in thematic position, because it makes them prominent. The passive voice is often hard for second language learners to use, because this feature is not found in some other languages spoken by children in Australia. The teacher was aware of this and in modelling and in joint construction of texts with her students, she drew attention to its use by examples. Together with the use of the third person, this use of the passive voice helps to account for the text's authoritative nature. The identity of the writer is completely hidden, and the text stands as a successful instance of an explanation genre. It was a considerable achievement.

Summary of linguistic features

We can now summarise features of the language development of children learning to write in the early years.

The first written texts use very simple noun groups, often consisting of just the noun, as in *the dough* (text 9.2) or *the flowers*, *the animals* (text 9.3). One source of development is that children start to expand the resource of the noun group using embedded clauses, as in text 9.4 (*the plant [[that got heat, light and water]] stayed alive*). Expansion of the noun groups helps 'pack in' more experiential information, helping to build increasing lexical density over time.

Early texts make little use of circumstantial information, expressed in either prepositional phrases or in adverb groups. Text 9.1 builds description using a circumstance of place, expressed in a prepositional phrase (*I'm* ***at the*** *Dinosor park*). Text 9.2 uses circumstances of place (*put them* ***in the tray***), as do text 9.4 (*we put one* ***in the fridge***) and text 9.6 (*the common wombat lives* ***in coastal forests***). A significant development occurs when, if well taught, as in text 9.7, children build more circumstantial information, using a variety of circumstances expressed in prepositional phrases, including, in that case, manner (*the fruit is picked* ***with a cherry picker***) and purpose (*(the fruit) is weighed* ***for ripeness and size***). Adverb groups are used very little among young children and they do not provide much circumstantial information for some years. Like the expanded noun groups, the expanded circumstances add to the building of field knowledge and they contribute to building lexical density.

Theme choices become more varied and skilled in their deployment, though this also is to some extent a matter of the text type. Text 9.6, a report, requires frequent repetition in theme position of *wombats* or *the wombat*. But text 9.7, an explanation, requires a range of themes, both topical and textual. As we saw, the passive voice was used well in that text to create some of the topical themes.

Process types are varied, depending on the field of knowledge being constructed. Where children move with confidence into writing school knowledge, as in science, they will often make growing use of types of relational processes to build description and definition, as in text 9.6 (*wombats* ***are*** *mammals*).

Again depending on the field and text type or genre, children will move increasingly into use of the third person as they move away from construction of personal experience, as in text 9.1 (*I'm at the Dinosor Park*), to the building of knowledge, as in text 9.7 (*the fruit is picked …*). The steady shift to use of the third person adds to the authority with which children write texts of school knowledge.

Use of tense choices becomes increasingly skilled, as in text 9.4, where the young writer moves from future to past, and thence to the present tense to build scientific knowledge.

Attitudinal expression in the earliest texts is simple, sometimes in mental processes, as in *I* ***liked*** *the beds and the lounge room*, or sometimes in relational processes, such as *it was fun*. Modality as a resource for expression of judgment is used little in the early years, and its appearance is a development of the later years.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined aspects of the writing development of young children in the first years of school. It has sought to demonstrate that a genre-based approach to the teaching of writing, drawing on the functional grammar, can be used both to analyse the texts children write, and to provide a basis for a good pedagogy. It has also sought to indicate some of the developmental features of children's writing in the first years of the primary school, and these will be borne in mind when turning to aspects of writing development in the upper primary school in chapter 10.

Further reading

Christie, Frances, Gray, Pam, Gray, Brian, Macken, Mary, Martin, Jim & Rothery, Joan (1990a, 1990b, 1992) *Language a Resource for Meaning: Procedures*, Books 1–4 and *Teachers' Manual; Reports* Books 1–4 and *Teachers' Manual; Explanations* Books 1–4 and *Teachers' Manual*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney.

Derewianka, Beverly (1990) *Exploring How Texts Work*, PETA, Sydney.

De Silva Joyce, Helen & Feez, Susan (2000) *Creative Writing Skills: Literary and Media Text Types*, Phoenix Education, Melbourne.

Feez, Susan (1998) *Text-based Syllabus Design*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney.

Feez, Susan & Joyce, Helen (1998) *Writing Skills: Narrative and Non-Fiction Text Types*, Phoenix Education, Melbourne.

Foley, Joseph & Lee, Cheryl (2004) 'A framework for tracing the development of children's writing in primary schools'. In Joseph A Foley (9th edn), *Language, Education and Discourse*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 97–119.

Gerot, Linda (1995) *Making Sense of Text: The Context-text Relationship*, Antipodean Educational Enterprises, Sydney.

chapter 10

Teaching writing: the upper primary school

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- explore growing maturity in control of written language by looking at three representative text types of the upper primary years;
- examine emergent control of noun groups and of nominalisation (the process by which actions expressed in verbs are turned into things expressed in noun groups);
- demonstrate that nominalisation extends lexical density in texts and helps build up content knowledge;
- examine more closely the structure of the noun group;
- consider expanding control of resources for attitudinal expression in written texts as students grow older;
- investigate emergent control of modality for the expression of judgment and opinion in writing;
- briefly review aspects of the grammar of traditional standard English sentences.

Some genres of the upper primary years

Table 10.1 Some common genres of the upper primary school

Genre	Social function	Stages
Procedure	To tell how to complete a task	(Aim) ^ Materials needed ^ Steps
Recount	To retell a sequence of events, often of personal experience	Orientation ^ Events ^ Reorientation
Procedural recount	To recount accurately the aim, steps and conclusion of a scientific experiment	Aim ^ Record of Steps ^ Conclusion
Narrative	To entertain, creating a sequence of events about characters, offering opportunity to reflect on values	Orientation ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^Resolution ^ (Coda)
Report	To classify and describe phenomena	General Classification ^ Description
Explanation	To explain how or why something occurs	Phenomenon Identification ^ Explanation Sequence
Discussion	To persuade the reader to adopt a particular position on an issue by identifying the issue and then reviewing arguments for and against before making a Recommendation	Issue ^ Arguments For ^ Arguments Against ^ Recommendation

Notes:

1 **The symbol ^ indicates sequence.**

2 **The brackets ( ) around a stage or element indicate that it is an optional element. Not all the genres necessarily reveal all the stages, and this is because there is variation depending on the field of school knowledge that is being dealt with. In the case of a recipe, for example, in studies of health and nutrition, there would be no need to state any aims, nor would there be a conclusion. But these would be important in procedures setting out a scientific experiment.**

The genres already identified as part of the early years of primary school are also found in the upper primary years. Table 10.1 provides a summary of common genres of these years, though as we noted in chapter 9, these do not exhaust the range of texts students will write. However, they are all important genres for control of school knowledge in many areas of the curriculum. It will not be necessary to review all of the text types or genres again. Instead, we shall examine three texts – an explanation and a narrative – and a new text type – the discussion genre. These are selected because they will provide appropriate evidence of the kinds of linguistic changes that should occur where students are achieving adequate control of written language for the senior years, preparing them for entry to the secondary school.

The explanation, it will be suggested, shows good use of noun groups and of **nominalisation**, building the lexical density that helps ensure its success as an example of its type. The narrative, while also exploiting noun groups successfully, as well as other resources, nonetheless does not use nominalisation. On the other hand, it provides interesting evidence of what a successful writer can achieve in terms of expressing attitudinal and emotional response to events. The discussion genre, an important text type in which children learn to develop and express opinion with a view to persuading their readers, makes use of modality, among other matters, to build opinion and judgments. Control of modality in writing, it would seem, is largely a development of the upper primary years, though it can occasionally appear earlier.

An explanation

The opening paragraph of text 10.1 has been already introduced in chapter 4 (text 4.7), and we now reproduce it in full. It was written by a girl in the last year of primary school, aged 11 years. Her teacher had taught a major unit of work on reports of the factual sciences. The children had deconstructed examples of explanation genres and had jointly written examples before independently researching and writing their own explanations – in this case, of the process by which plants are fertilised. As we observed in chapter 4, this text is notable for its successful use of expanded noun groups that build the participants – and the knowledge – in the text. We will have a little more to say of how these noun groups are constructed below, using 'nominalisation', for they are an important measure of the growing maturity of this young writer.

TEXT 10.1

How do plants fertilise?

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Phenomenon Identification	The reproductive female part of a flower consists of a stigma. The male parts are the stamens and the anthers. These are the parts that make fertilisation possible.	Large noun group (*the reproductive female part of a flower*) opens the topic sentence. The next sentence identifies *the male parts*; both noun groups are used to introduce technical language: *stamens* and *anthers*. Referential item (*these*) builds coherence in theme position in the third sentence. Another large noun group: *the parts [[that make fertilisation possible]]*.
Explanation Sequence	The first step in fertilisation is pollination. **When the pollen sacs that are contained in the anthers are ripe** the anther breaks open and sets the pollen free. Then, birds, insects or wind carry the pollen to another flower of the same species. This is called cross pollination. **When the pollen is carried to the stigma of the same flower** it is called self-pollination. Cross pollinated plants are usually healthier than self pollinated ones. Many plants do not self pollinate because of this. **Once the pollen reaches the stigma of the same species of flower** it begins to grow. It does not stop growing until it reaches the ovary. **When it arrives** it pierces the ovary wall and then it goes through the ovule. This is how plants fertilise. When the plant fertilisation is finished nearly all the lower parts die and fall off because their work is done.	Large noun group (*the first step in fertilisation*) commences this element, and is used to introduce technical language: *pollination*. Dependent clause in theme position progresses the sequence, using an embedded clause: *when the pollen sacs [[that are contained in the anthers]] are ripe*. Textual theme (*then*) carries the element forward; referential item (*this*) refers back to previous clause to build coherence. Dependent clause of time in theme position: *when the pollen is carried to the stigma of the same flower*. Another technical term: *cross pollination*. Modal adverb *usually* introduces judgment. Dependent clause of time commences a new phase: *once the pollen reaches the stigma of the same species of flower*. Another dependent clause of time in theme: *when it arrives*. *This* – referential item – refers back. Dependent clause of time to introduce last phase of sequence: *when the plant fertilisation is finished.* One causal conjunction to introduce a reason at the end: *because*.

Experientially, the Phenomenon Identification builds the Phenomenon of interest using large noun groups and relational processes that identify and build technical language; for example, *the reproductive female part of the flower consists of a stigma*; *the male parts are the anthers*; *the parts [[that make fertilisation possible]]*. (See below for more on the noun groups.)

Interpersonally, this element is in the third person and it is written to inform.

Textually, as befits the opening element of this genre, there are no marked themes of any kind. Instead, the three sentences identify aspects of the Phenomenon in theme position. Reference in the text is largely generic, rather than specific; for example, *the reproductive female part of the flower*.

In the Explanation Sequence, the participants are expressed in large noun groups that include embedded clauses; for example, *the pollen sacs [[that are contained in the anthers]]*.Technical terms are introduced using processes that help define; for example, *this is called cross pollination*; *it is called self-pollination*.

Textually, the Explanation Sequence makes extensive use of marked themes, expressed in dependent clauses of time. They are put first to foreground the steps in the sequence; for example, *when the pollen sacs [[that are contained in the anthers]] are ripe*. The range of themes helps to progress the discourse forward in this element, partly accounting for its success. The element also makes use of the passive voice to put aspects of the Phenomenon in theme position, as in: *the pollen sacs that are contained*; *the pollen is carried*.

Interpersonally, the element makes use of one modal adverb – *usually* – a not uncommon item in building scientific information of this kind, where judgments about probabilities and likelihoods are often expressed.

The large noun groups compress information, and they appear in both elements. For example, as noted in chapter 4, an opening noun group occurs in the sentence: *the reproductive female part of the flower consists of a stigma*. In speech this would be expressed: *a flower reproduces by using a female part [[called the stigma]]*. The spoken version uses a verb (*reproduces*) to create an action process. But in writing the process has become part of a Phenomenon expressed in a noun group. This tendency to turn the actions of life, expressed in verbs, into the phenomena of science, or of knowledge more generally, is known as a process of 'nominalisation'. Nominalisation is an important aspect of written English. Several studies (for example, Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Derewianka 2003; Aidman 1999; Christie 2002) have revealed that its emergence occurs at the earliest in late childhood. However, not all master this equally well, and students who struggle to master written language experience difficulty in controlling nominalisation. When this occurs, they tend to produce written language that has some of the characteristics of the grammar of speech.

There are some other interesting ways that nominalisation is used in this text. Note, for example, the fact that the student writes:

> Then birds, insects or wind carry the pollen to another flower of the same species
>
> This is called cross pollination

Here the action of 'carrying pollen' is transformed to become the Phenomenon that is 'cross pollination'.

And again:

> when the pollen is carried to the stigma of the same flower
>
> it is called self pollination

Overall, the writer plays with the grammar, moving from verb groups to noun groups, subtly changing the meanings in constructing the scientific knowledge here. The uses of nominalisation also allow the introduction of technical language and they help account for the lexical density that marks this text.

Text 10. 1 is a very successful piece of writing, showing evidence of good control of the demands of written language.

A narrative

The narrative examined here comes from the research of Rothery (Disadvantaged Schools Program, 1994). It represents a more mature and complete instance of the genre than the narrative we examined in chapter 9. This we should expect, seeing that this is by an older writer, aged 11 years.

TEXT 10.2

A narrative: The venomous arrival

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Orientation	There was once a farm in the country. This farm had a homestead, which was very old. It had lots of big paddocks, large green hills and plenty of working sheds.	An existential process and a circumstance of time bring the tale into being: *there was once*. Relational processes build description of the setting: *the farm*

	One day, Jackie invited Sally over to her place. Jackie was always wearing the same clothes, gumboots, jeans and an old shirt or maybe a hat. Sally, she always wore clean things. On this farm there was also a dog, its name was Daisy she was a watch dog. One day Sally went over to Jackie's place. When they had said hello to each other, Jackie took Sally around the farm and showed her a few things and they went around to the backyard. The dog, Daisy, was in the corner eating leftover chicken.	*had a homestead*; *it had lots of big paddocks*. Material processes build action and help introduce characters: *Jackie invited Sally over to her place*; *Jackie was always wearing the same clothes*. A relational process describes the dog: *Daisy was a watch dog*.
Complication	A sheep jumped over the fence and was coming towards the backyard. Jackie saw it and started chasing it back to the paddock but she couldn't get it to go. Then, suddenly Sally saw a Brown Snake.	A problem is introduced using a material process (*a sheep jumped over the fence*), and a further problem involves a mental process of perception: *Sally saw a Brown Snake*.
Evaluation	She didn't know what to do. She couldn't scream for help because she was too scared. Then she remembered that Jackie was over the other side of the house chasing after the sheep, and she thought that if Jackie came around the corner she might step on the snake or the snake might bite her. The situation became even more frightening.	Mental processes of cognition reveal how the character felt: *she didn't know what to do*; *then she remembered*. A relational process describes the event: *the situation became even more frightening*.
Resolution	Then the snake saw a three inch gap underneath the garage and slithered in just as Jackie came running around the corner. Sally sighed a sigh of relief and shut the door right down it so wouldn't get out. Jackie said 'I got the sheep back in the paddock' and then after that Sally told her all about the snake and how it was in the garage.	A range of processes builds the Resolution: *the snake saw a three inch gap* (mental process of perception); *Jackie came running* (material); *Jackie said* (verbal); *Jackie's father rang up the snake-catcher*.

	Jackie said 'Hurry and go and tell someone so they can ring the snake-catcher to come and get it out of the garage'. So, Sally went to tell Jackie's father and then Jackie's father rang up the snake-catcher to come over. He did come and caught the snake very quickly.	
Coda	Sally was really happy when he took the snake away and Sally hoped she didn't see any snakes again.	A relational process describes how Sally felt (*Sally was really happy*), and there is also a mental process of affect: *she hoped she didn't see …*

The text does not make use of nominalisation as in text 10.1, though in other ways it makes successful use of the noun groups involved (see below). In terms of the overall control of the narrative genre, the text reveals developing maturity in writing.

The writer has used all the elements of the genre, including, crucially, the Evaluation element. This element gives a sense of the reactions of a character to events, and it thus gives point and purpose to the tale. According to Rothery (1991), narratives allow readers to learn about characters facing adversity and/or adventure, and to reflect on how they respond to these: this gives point or purpose to such as genre. The Evaluation and the Coda both give clear evidence of response to event by a character, and here we can notice the range of choices used. Emotional and attitudinal responses are evident in such process types; for example, *she* ***didn't know*** *what to do* (mental process of cognition); *she* ***couldn't scream*** (behavioural process); *she* ***was*** *too scared* (relational process); *she* ***remembered*** (mental process of cognition); *Sally* ***sighed*** *a sigh of relief* (behavioural process); *Sally* ***was*** *really happy* (relational process); *she* ***hoped*** *she* ***didn't see*** *any snakes again* (mental process of affect and one of perception).

In creating both the setting of the tale and the characters, some detail is given, fleshing out the story in ways a younger writer will not typically provide, using noun groups in particular to form participants and processes; for example, *the farm had* ***a homestead***; *it had* ***lots of paddocks***; *Jackie was always wearing the same clothes* (that is, a country girl); *Sally, she always wore* ***clean things*** (that is, a city girl). *Daisy was* ***a watch dog*** (that is, a working animal); *Daisy was eating leftover chicken*. The writer has assumed the responsibility of a good storyteller to provide the reader with interesting details about setting and characters, using the resources of nouns and verbs that build processes. There are a few circumstances expressed in prepositional phrases; for example, *underneath the garage*; *around the corner*; *all about the snake*.

A discussion

The girl who wrote text 10.3 was in junior secondary school, and aged about 13 years. Such genres are often written in the upper primary years as well. The teacher had the students undertake a unit of work over several lessons in which they researched websites and other sources of information about animal welfare and about the values of keeping animals in captivity. They also read and deconstructed discussion genres, and became familiar with the various elements in such text types, as well as their purposes. Several drafts were written and this was the final version the girl produced.

Should we use animals in the circus?

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Preview of Issue	'Should we use animals for entertainment' is the name of the topic we're taking about in this essay. Below, I have stated the positive and negative points for the issue.	Use of the modal verb *should* indicates matters of judgment are involved. Personal opinion suggested with use of the first person (*I*).
Arguments For	**In the report we read** it **said** that in order to let a particular species survive we need to at least capture a few to show to the public, to let them learn about the animal and then maybe the public would do something to help the endangered animals. It also **said** the animals are never hurt or tortured during training or their performances and they are kept very clean, and in natural yards while not performing. **At one stage** it **said** that animals are the core element of circuses and the statistics proved that people like the animals best at the circus. Therefore human circuses would not meet the pubic demand. Most people judge circuses on the old ways, not on the current, improved ways.	Opening marked theme *in the report [[we read]]* and verbal process *said*, indicate some research. Other uses of verbal processes build sense of using research. Relevant field language expressed in noun groups: *a particular species*; *the endangered animals*. Uses of modality in we *need to at least capture …*; and *maybe the public would do something …*; *human circuses would not meet …* Another marked theme (*at one stage*) helps progress the text forward.
Arguments Against	But then **on the other hand**, animals like the elephants and bears are very prone to stress so	Use of contrastive conjunction (*but then*) signals shift to new element, assisted by the

	they make a habit of standing in one place and rocking or swaying, which is bad for their joints and feet. Things like constant travelling and performing in front of very large audiences nearly every day affect this. They're nearly always in confined spaces and the biggest places they are ever in are the circus arena or tent, which is also really small. The animals are not usually kept in the natural habitat, which stops their basic instincts like fighting for mates, building nests, hunting etc, from being used to the same extent they do in the wild. An alternative is to use humans in circuses because they can't exactly force people to join; they have to be voluntary.	marked topical theme: *on the other hand*. Some large noun groups: *animals like the elephants and bears*; *a habit of standing in one place and rocking or swaying*; *things like constant travelling and performing in front of very large audiences*. Modal adverbs build expressions of judgment; *they're nearly always in confined spaces*; *the animals are not usually kept in the natural habitat*.
Recommendation	**After looking at all these facts**, I believe that it's wrong for us to keep animals in circuses for our entertainment. We should be able to entertain ourselves, not rely on animals. For this reason, and the ones I have mentioned before, I believe it is wrong for us to train and force animals to perform in circuses.	Marked theme in a dependent clause, to shift to a new element of structure: *after looking at all these facts*. Use of mental process of cognition (used twice) and first person *I believe* to stress opinion being stated. Use of modal verb: *we should be able to entertain ourselves*.

The 'Preview of Issue' introduces the issue to be discussed, and as noted, the use of the modal verb (*should*) serves immediately to indicate that personal opinion or judgment is of concern.

The 'Arguments For' element is of interest experientially in that it makes some use of verbal processes (*said*) to indicate that material has been read and researched. This helps to give some authority to the text as it does not, by implication, rest on unresearched belief. Participants are expressed in noun groups that indicate familiarity with the field; for example, *a particular species*; *the endangered animals*; *the statistics*. A relational process is employed to define, using a large noun group: *animals are the core element of circuses*. Tense choice throughout the text is largely present tense, as is appropriate for this text type.

Interpersonally this element offers no direct attitudinal expression, but it reports the opinions of authors researched, using modality: *we need to at least capture a few*; *then maybe the public would do something … human circuses would not meet the public demand*.

Textually, the element uses some marked themes to carry the text forward: *in the report [[we read]]*; *at one stage*. Reference is frequently generic (*the public*; *the endangered animals*). Also, note that general noun groups are sometimes used, as in *most people*, to identify some general class of people rather than any individuals.

Experientially, the 'Arguments Against' element has a number of features like those of the second element. It uses large noun groups; for example, *a habit of standing in one place and rocking or swaying*; *the biggest places [[they are ever in]] are the circus arena …*; *an alternative is [[to use humans in circuses because they can't exactly force people to join]]*. Some circumstantial information expresses negative matters: *they're nearly always in confined spaces*.

Interpersonally, the element uses modal adverbs and some negative polarity to express judgments: *they're nearly always in confined spaces*; *the animals are not usually kept in the natural habitat*.

Textually, the element has one marked topical theme (*on the other hand*), and a series of other unmarked topical themes that identify aspects of the field: *they*; *the animals*; *an alternative*. Generic referents are again used, as in *humans*.

The 'Recommendation' brings the text to a close, making frequent use of matters that indicate personal opinion is being expressed: *I believe* (a mental process of cognition, used twice); *we should be able to entertain*.

Some overall observations

The above review of a sample of three genres of the upper primary to junior secondary years confirms some of the matters summarised in chapter 9, and in other ways extends them. We can see that where students are well taught and understand both schematic structure and the field of knowledge to be written about they will demonstrate changes in many areas, in the later years of childhood, where these include:

- an expanding grasp of the resource of noun group structures, with which to construct content knowledge;
- an expanding grasp of the language of attitudinal and emotional expression where that is appropriate, as in a narrative;
- an expanding grasp of ways to express judgment and opinion, where modality is important.

It will be appropriate now to turn to two matters requiring attention for teachers of writing in the primary school. The first of these provides a little more information

about noun group structures, useful for teachers to know since they can employ it to model ways to expand noun groups with their classes. The other concerns the teaching of aspects of conventional sentence structure. Use of the functional grammar has focused attention on the overall linguistic patterns of texts. But there are matters to do with sentence grammar that need some discussion, and that originally come from other traditions of grammar study.

Noun group structure

The central word in any noun group is the noun itself. Consider the noun group from text 9.4 in chapter 9: *four identical plants*. Using the functional grammar, we can call the noun *plants* here the **Head Word** or just 'Head', because it forms the centre of interest. When we examine the structure of a Head in any noun group, it turns out that it can have items before it or after it, both of which modify the Head in some way because they add to or extend it. The items before the Head we can call the **Pre-modifier** and those after the Head we can call the **Post-modifier**. We can display our noun group thus:

four identical	plants
Pre-modifier	Head

If a Post-modifier were added, it might read thus, where an embedded phrase is put in the Post-modifier position:

four identical	plants	[with green leaves]
Pre-modifier	Head	Post-modifier

The basic resources of Pre-modifier and Post-modifier are very useful in building information and as children grow older, provided they have access to good models of language in their reading and writing, they can be taught to observe these things and the functions they serve.

The Pre-modifier will typically, but not always, have an article (*the* or *a*), though it could be a demonstrative adjective such as *that flower*, or *this flower*. The article or its equivalent will be followed by adjectives. Where there is an adjective of number, it will come next, and this will be followed by other adjectives that either describe or classify. Adjectives that describe come after the article, while adjectives (and sometimes nouns) that classify come closest to the Head. Thus, *four* is a number adjective, while *identical* describes. The child could have written the following, where *eucalypt* classifies the type of plant:

the	four	identical	eucalypt	plants
Definite article	Number adjective	Describing adjective	Classifying adjective	Head noun

We have noted that sometimes a classifier can be another noun, though the texts used here do not have examples. Here is a made-up example to illustrate the point:

A	dirty	steam	train
Indefinite article	Describing adjective	Classifying noun	Head noun

Turning to the uses of Post-modifiers, we can see this example in text 9.4:

the plant	[[that got heat]]
Head	Post-modifier

Here the Post-modifier is expressed in an embedded clause, as is also true in:

The parts	[[that make fertilisation possible]]
Head	Post-modifier

Here is an example of a noun group with both Pre-modifier and Post-modifier:

the reproductive female	part	of a flower
Pre-modifier	Head	Post-modifier

Noun groups are useful resources and easy to teach because children can be encouraged to play with them, adding Pre-modifiers and Post-modifiers to build meanings in various ways.

Finally, let us turn to matters to do with correct standard English sentences, which are important as aspects of the writing program.

Standard English and prescriptive knowledge about language

Linguists make a distinction between 'standard English' and 'non-standard English'. Standard English is spoken by many social groups, and it is the form of the language associated with public life – with schooling, broadcasting, parliamentary debates, commerce and business. It is also the language of print, found in books, magazines, newspapers and so on. Non-standard forms of English are also spoken by many social groups, though they are not commonly found in written language (apart from

cases when novelists use them to create the dialogue of characters). Strictly, standard and non-standard English are **dialects**; that is, versions of the language used by different social groups. Non-standard dialects are recognised by linguists as legitimate forms of self-expression, and used by many people for important social purposes. Standard dialects are, however, often very privileged, because they are the forms of the language associated with education, with written language, and with many areas of public life. They are socially valued, and schools have a responsibility to teach standard forms to children because of the social advantages they potentially enjoy in learning them. However, it is important to be sensitive in responding to children who speak non-standard dialects, for they probably speak as their parents do, and criticisms can be hurtful.

The acceptable patterns of standard English change somewhat over time, and that is normal. All languages change and the only ones that do not are languages like Latin, which is a dead language. However, some patterns of standard English sentence structure are important to teach. Here are some non-standard expressions and the standard rules that are prescribed to deal with them.

DOUBLE NEGATIVES

I never said nothing.
I did not hear nothing.

The rule: Two negatives are said to create an affirmative, so these should be changed thus:

I never said anything.
I did not hear anything.

FAILURE OF VERB AND SUBJECT TO AGREE

They was at our house.
I were sorry.
We was going to the beach.
Mr Brown seen the books last week.

The rule: Verb and subject must agree in terms of person (First, Second or Third) and number (Singular or Plural). Thus:

They were at our house.	Third Person, Plural Number
I was sorry.	First Person, Singular Number
We were going to the beach.	First Person, Plural Number
Mr Brown saw the books last week.	Third Person, Singular Number

TWO SINGULAR SUBJECTS JOINED BY *and*

Mary and Bill was going to the movies.
Susan and I was swimming last week.

The rule: Two singular subjects linked by *and* make a plural number. Thus:

Mary and Bill were going to the movies.
Susan and I were swimming last week.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS AS SINGULAR

The crowd were a large one.
The football team were beaten.

The rule: Collective nouns are treated as singular number: Thus:

The crowd was a large one.
The football team was beaten.

PRONOUNS AND THEIR AGREEMENT WITH NOUNS

The committee passed their decision after a long debate.
The team declared their disappointment after they had lost the match.

The rule: The pronoun should agree with the noun, so that a singular noun requires a singular pronoun: Thus:

The committee passed its decision after a long debate.
The team declared its disappointment after it had lost the match.

IDENTIFYING THE SUBJECT IN A LARGE NOUN GROUP

An understanding of these matters give people confidence.
The development of the new towns cause traffic congestion.

The rule: The Head Word in such noun groups is singular and the verb must agree with that. Thus:

An understanding of these matters gives people confidence.
The development of the new towns causes traffic congestion.

DOUBLE COMPARATIVES OR DOUBLE SUPERLATIVES

You are more quieter than that child.
You are the most noisiest student in the class.
This is a more better book.

The rule: Avoid double comparatives or double superlatives, as they are unnecessary and redundant. Thus:

You are quieter than that child.
You are the noisiest student in the class.
This is a better book.

Neither … nor AND *either … or* AGREEMENTS

Neither he or I was sorry.
Either Mary and Tom might come.

The rule: *Neither … nor* and *either … or* must be used consistently: Thus:

Neither he nor I was sorry.
Either Mary or Tom might come.

PARTICIPLES AND THEIR ATTACHMENTS TO SUBJECTS

Going down the street, it started to rain.
Having worked hard in class, the examination seemed easy.

The rule: Participial expressions should be attached to the subjects to which they are linked. Thus:

Going down the street, I found it started to rain.
Having worked hard in class, the student found the examination easy.

ADVERBS AND ADJECTIVES

He behaved very stupid.
Come quick.
He was easy the first in the race.

The rule: Adjectives should not be confused with adverbs, for adverbs modify or 'add to' verbs, other adverbs or adjectives, while adjectives describe nouns. Thus:

He behaved very stupidly.
Come quickly.
He was easily the first in the race.

Changing social practices about the rules of standard English

The above examples of correct standard English are matters of social practice. That is, these expressions are used because social convention regards them as better than the alternative expressions. There are very good reasons to teach them, and many children learn them very readily. However, just how much they are matters of social conventions can be made clear when we consider other examples of standard usage that appear to be changing. Here are some examples.

USES OF *can* AND *may*

'Can I have this piece of cake?' said Mary.

The rule: *Can* denotes ability, while *may* seeks permission. Thus:

'May I have this piece of cake?' said Mary.

THE PREPOSITIONS *from* AND *to* WITH *different*

She is different to her mother.

The rule: Things can only 'differ from', not 'differ to'. Hence the expression should be *different from*. Thus:

She is different from her mother.

THE WORD *than* USED AS A PREPOSITION

He is different than his brother.

The rule: *Than* is a conjunction and should not be used as a preposition. Thus:

He is different from his brother.

USE OF *like* AS A CONJUNCTION

He fought like you would have fought.

The rule: The word *like* is a preposition and should not be used as a conjunction. Thus:

> He fought as you would have fought.

While these rules still apply in the speech and writing of many people, it seems that they are breaking down under changing social practices, so the expressions immediately above that have been corrected, are now quite commonly used by many people. It can thus be seen that in some cases what constitutes standard English is changing, for language is fluid. It is a good principle to teach what seems acceptable standard English, while acknowledging that in some areas practices are changing.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have completed our overview of some text types of the primary years, identifying ways in which a number of language features should change in children's writing as they mature and as they are taught to recognise, interpret and use the texts involved. We have also reviewed aspects of the structure of the noun group, so useful in controlling written language. Finally, we have considered the importance of some rules of standard English sentence structure. In our next chapter we shall turn to considerations of writing using various multimodal resources.

Further reading

Christie, Frances, Gray, Pam, Gray, Brian, Macken, Mary, Martin, Jim & Rothery, Joan (1990a, 1990b, 1992) *Language a Resource for Meaning: Procedures*, Books 1–4 and *Teachers' Manual; Reports* Books 1–4 and *Teachers' Manual; Explanations* Books 1–4 and *Teachers' Manual*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney.

Derewianka, Beverly (1990) *Exploring How Texts Work*, PETA, Sydney.

De Silva Joyce, Helen & Feez, Susan (2000) *Creative Writing Skills: Literary and Media Text Types*, Phoenix Education, Melbourne.

Feez, Susan (1998) *Text-based Syllabus Design*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney.

Feez, Susan & Joyce, Helen (1998) *Writing Skills: Narrative and Non-Fiction Text Types*, Phoenix Education, Melbourne.

Foley, Joseph & Lee, Cheryl (2004) 'A framework for tracing the development of children's writing in primary schools'. In Joseph A Foley (9th edn), *Language, education and Discourse*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 97–119.

Gerot, Linda (1995) *Making Sense of Text: The Context–text Relationship*, Antipodean Educational Enterprises, Sydney.

chapter 11

Language and design

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- review responses to the impact of information and communication technologies over the centuries;
- consider effects of the new technologies on language and its uses;
- argue that the new technologies have opened up possibilities for creative design of visual/verbal texts;
- consider three texts designed by children, two using computers, one created by hand, all of which reveal the influence of an interest in design.

The changing communicational landscape

Chapter 8 referred to the impact of multimodalities and to the increasing interest today in multiliteracies. The communicational landscape of the 21st century is quite different from that of the past, and while not all children have access to computers in their homes, computers are becoming more commonplace each year, while schools increasingly make them available to children. The new developments in communication technologies, and in particular in use of the Internet, sometimes lead commentators to suggest that these developments are harmful. The prospect of a world in which the English language is transformed – even 'corrupted' – by use of communication technologies is sometimes held to be a very gloomy one. However, more than one commentator has pointed out the irony of this, for there is nothing new in complaints about threats to language from new technologies. For example, the rhetorician, Ong (1982: 79–80) noted that the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, regretted the invention of writing because it was 'inhuman' and he suggested that it destroyed the memory, because, unlike in the days in which people relied on the oral language alone, they did not need to retain information in their heads. Developments of the 20th century, such as the calculator and the computer, according to Ong, wrongly caused similar concern, for such developments actually released humans to do new things in interestingly different ways. The linguist, Crystal (2001: 2) has also noted that developments in technologies have regularly been held up over the centuries as posing a threat to language as it is known, and even sometimes as a threat to the quality of life itself, though there is in fact no evidence that this is so:

> In the fifteenth century, the arrival of printing was widely perceived by the Church as the invention of Satan, the hierarchy fearing that the dissemination of uncensored ideas would lead to a breakdown of social order and put innumerable souls at risk of damnation … (Much later) similar concerns were widespread when society began to cope with the political consequences of the arrival of the telegraph, the telephone, and broadcasting technology. The telegraph would undermine society. Broadcasting would be the voice of propaganda. In each case, the anxiety generated specific linguistic controversy. Printing enabled vernacular translations of the Bible to be placed before thousands, adding fuel to an argument about the use of local languages in religious settings which continues to resonate today.
>
> (David Crystal 2001, *Language and the Internet*, Cambridge University Press, p. 2)

A more constructive response to the advent of the new technologies is to welcome the opportunities they offer in terms of making meanings, in interesting and useful ways. As for the threat to language itself, the history of the human species is such that language proves to be infinitely adaptable, as it is endlessly put to different uses in the pursuit of the many social purposes with which people enrich their lives. Rather than lament the possible risks of the communication technologies, we should consider the opportunities and challenges they afford us. This must indeed be the case in schools, for teachers and students find themselves increasingly operating in a world in which it matters to be computer literate. However, information technologies are like any other technology: they are tools to be mastered, and the implication for teaching is that children should be encouraged to recognise and use their strengths and possibilities. The more children grow up understanding how the resources of communication technologies work, the more skilled they will be in using them in intelligent and critical ways.

There are at least six broad overlapping senses in which the world of computers and the Internet generally has brought about changes, and indeed continues to do so. There are broadly changes in:

- the capacity to access and research information at speed by means of the Internet;
- the capacity to communicate at speed with others, especially by electronic mail (e-mail);
- the development of new lexes or vocabularies, either by creating new words or by giving new meanings to existing terms;
- the development of changing methods of representing aspects of the written code, either by creating various abbreviations, or by using conventional punctuation marks in unconventional ways;
- the ways written sentences are sometimes structured, evident in particular in many e-mail messages, which abbreviate and/or use language that is often closer to the grammar of speech than to that of conventional writing;
- the capacity to organise and arrange texts, making use of all the resources of drawing programs, fonts, photographic images and the like. The result is that children can learn how to design verbal/visual texts in a manner that was not readily available in the past.

The first two of these are self-evident, and we shall have no more to say about them. We shall, however, outline some of the developments in the other four areas. When we turn to the last – to do with design of verbal/visual texts – we shall look at three texts produced by children in schools. They are selected to demonstrate ways in which, given the right opportunities, children can be assisted to learn how to design texts.

Developments in lexis

Among the many entertaining and interesting aspects of the world of communication technologies is the variety of new words these technologies have spawned. In practice, for the most part these are old words given a new significance, though some genuinely new arrivals appear among them. In a world as volatile as the modern one, new words come into use all the time, so that what is said here will no doubt date quite quickly. Several new words associated with the Internet are set out in table 11.1, though this is not an exhaustive list. It is intended to do no more than suggest the possibilities of new words that might become the subject of teaching, for what they reveal of the changing nature of the language. The list has been put together using various sources, including Crystal's study (2001) already referred to and *Fast 'n Easy: Internet Guide* (Susay 1999).

Table 11.1 Internet words and their meanings

Words	Meanings
Bookmark	This term is used both as a noun and as a verb. As a noun it refers to a list of websites stored in one's browser. As a verb it refers to the act of 'bookmarking' a website.
Browser	The browser is the basic tool for surfing on the Internet, and it is a software program that sits on the computer.
Chatgroups	These are continuous discussions on a given topic that are maintained in 'rooms' at Internet sites. They may be *synchronous* (that is, take place in real time) or *asynchronous* (that is, take place in postponed time).
Cyberspace	The online world opened up by the Internet.
Information superhighway	The stream of information that is said to be available in digital form on the Internet, flowing like a highway.
Electronic mail (e-mail)	The use of computer systems to transfer messages between users. It takes up a relatively small 'space' on the Internet, but uses of this exceeds daily uses of webpages on the World Wide Web.
Global village	The world is sometimes said to be a 'village' united globally by the resource of the Internet.
Hypertext	An electronic information medium, consisting of groups of texts that are connected by electronic hyperlinks. Hypertext offers different paths to access information.

Words	Meanings
Icon	A visual symbol or image that represents actions or sometimes ways to access sections within a website or a CD-ROM.
Internet, the Net	This is 'an association of computer networks with common standards that enable messages to be sent from any central computer (or host) on one network to any host on any other' (Crystal 2001: 2–3).
Navigate, navigation	Terms that refer to the act of finding one's way around the Internet.
Netspeak	One of several terms used to refer to the language uses of the Internet.
Surfing	Refers to accessing and searching the Internet and moving from one website to another.
URL	An acronym that stands for 'Universal Resource Locator', which is the address used by any organisation or person on the Internet. It must be used to access the information available from the organisation or person.
Virtual worlds	These are imaginary environments created on the Internet.
Webpage	A document that appears as an individual page in a website.
Website	This is a site located on the Internet and located using its URL.

As a reading of table 11.1 reveals, considerable innovation and imagination have been used in creating some new words, but also in giving new meanings to old words. Most are used metaphorically, as is the case, for example, with *bookmark* and *surfing*. Other words – also metaphorically used – are new, in that they have been coined by taking older terms and creating new ones, such as *chatgroup* (a compound noun).

The word *cyberspace* is an interesting one. It is a recently coined word, and according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, it first appeared in 1948, when one of its inventors wrote: 'We have decided to call the entire field of control of communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal, by the name of Cybernetics'. The term *cyber* comes from Greek and it meant 'to steer or to govern'. The item *netics* comes from the notion of a 'net' that captures rather like a fishing net. Putting the two items together, the term *cybernetics* is to do with the study of how communication systems are controlled by interconnected means. Hence the term has been taken and in turn used to create a new word for a new set of circumstances, referring to the interconnected world opened up by the Internet: *cyberspace*.

The word *hypertext* is another new word of the age of the Internet, combining two older terms. The term *text* is quite old, and it has been used for some time to refer to passages of discourse (though today it often has other metaphorical senses as well). The prefix *hyper* is Greek in origin, meaning 'over' or 'above'. Thus, the notion of a *hypertext* carries the sense of being over or above, because it serves to interconnect the many texts available on the Internet. Another of the words listed is a very old one that has been used metaphorically, and hence given a new significance: namely *icon*. This traditionally has religious significance, since it refers to a holy image, or even a statue, often found in Middle Eastern Christian churches. Taken into the world of *Netspeak*, the term has no religious significance and it refers to any symbol or image used to indicate actions or sometimes inactions (as when a clock face appears revealing the need to wait till some process is complete). In all these ways, as this short discussion shows, the language is steadily added to, as new inventions appear.

Uses of the letter *e* for 'electronic' are also numerous. Consider, for example: *e-cash*, *e-money*, *e-management*, *e-newsletter*, *e-shop*, *e-learning*. The list is added to all the time, telling a great deal of the expanding uses of electronic mail, but also showing something of the innovativeness of those who use the terms involved.

The term *URL* is always written this way, to indicate that it is an acronym, or word created by using the initials of several words, found in a noun group. History shows that the practice of creating acronyms often leads in time to new words, and this may happen to *URL*. One famous example of this phenomenon is the name of the major Australian airline, Qantas. This name originally stood for 'Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services', though it is likely that not many Australians realise this today.

There are many, many other words that have been introduced for the Internet and for the related and older technologies to do with use of computers, most of them metaphorical. In the latter cases, there are, for example, uses of: *boot up*, *menu*, *download*, *formatting palette*, *clipboard*, to name just a few. As if to show how flexible English speakers are in using the resources that their language gives them, the evidence now suggests that many items developed for the world of ICT start to appear in everyday conversation, used metaphorically, so that metaphors tend to work both ways: by entry into the world of computers and then by re-entry into the world of casual conversation. Consider, for example, the following, reported by Crystal (2001: 19), all heard in face-to-face conversation, where the expressions were taken from Internet uses:

It's my turn to download now (that is, I've heard all your gossip, now hear mine).
She's multitasking (said of someone doing two things at once).
Let's go offline for a few minutes (that is, let's talk in private).
Are you wired (that is, ready to handle this)?

All this information about the nature of the lexis associated with the Internet and computers generally has important implications for teaching. Encouraging children in the mid to upper primary years in particular to explore and discuss uses of language on computer and Internet is a very useful way to develop a sense of the nature of words and how they are formed, and of what the social needs and pressures are that make their creation possible and necessary. Children could be asked to:

- interview family members about new words they associate with computers and the Internet (here grandparents would be useful, as they can probably remember when such things did not exist);
- research new words created in the new age of the Internet, making class lists for display, and checking meanings and spelling;
- create 'families' of words from computer technology and the Internet;
- find the origins of new words or alternatively, new meanings given to older words, using dictionaries and thesauruses;
- make up their own new words for phenomena associated with the Internet and computers, and try them out on each other;
- find out what a metaphor is and identify examples in the world of Netspeak.

All such activities (which link to some suggested in chapter 8) will serve to develop skills in spelling, curiosity about the nature of words and a strong sense of the social significance of language and of the ways we use it to shape new meanings.

Abbreviations and unconventional uses of punctuation

A considerable amount of play would appear to have gone into the many innovations of the Internet involving abbreviations and punctuation marks, the former to construct experiential information, the latter tending to build interpersonal information. Both are manifestations of Netspeak. Consider the range of abbreviations set out in table 11.2, most of them used in e-mail messages.

Table 11.2 Abbreviations used on the Internet

Abbreviations	Meanings	Abbreviations	Meanings
afaik	as far as I know	eod	end of discussion
asap	as soon as possible	gsoh	good sense of humour
bbfn	bye bye for now	imo	in my opinion
b4	before	j4f	just for fun
btw	by the way	lol	laughing out loud
cu	see you	4yeo	for your eyes only

Many of these abbreviations are by their nature ephemeral, and some will disappear while others are even now being created. They are also these days often used for text messaging on mobile telephones. These abbreviations and others that class members could provide, might well be used for learning activities. Children might:

- discuss reasons people create such abbreviations;
- create possible alternative abbreviations, trying them out in class situations;
- debate the values of using such abbreviations, considering what kinds of meanings could not usefully be constructed by these means.

Above, we noted that the unconventional uses of punctuation marks that have appeared using e-mail messages in particular appear to be associated with communication of the interpersonal – feelings and emotions. Table 11.3, adapted from Crystal (2001: 37), who cites Sanderson 1993, sets out some examples of what he terms *smileys*.

Table 11.3 Examples of smileys, taken from Sanderson 1993 and cited by Crystal 2001, p. 37

Smileys	Meanings
:-)	pleasure, humour
:- (	sadness, dissatisfaction
;-)	winking
%- (%-)	confused
:-]	sarcastic

Smileys are apparently often used in chatgroups and other contexts where people know each other well, or at least want to suggest a degree of intimacy. Like the abbreviations listed above, these could be used for class work, exploring what they mean, reasons for using them and also creating other uses for class members to employ and try out on each other.

Sentence structures

The more that people use e-mail communications, the more, it seems, especially where friendships are involved, that the language becomes casual and very informal. Messages often start:

Hi Sam
Hi Fran
Hi Jim

and so on.

A series of exchanges might look like this:

Hi Jim
See you next week at footy practice?
Sam

Hi Sam
Maybe. Depends on the car. Remember last time?
Jim

Sam
What kind of wreck is that anyway? Get rid of it!
Jim

Jim
Are you kidding? Can't afford it.
Sam

Here it is clear that the language is much like the language of face-to-face informal speech. It is sometimes argued that the influence of the e-mail in particular is such that the grammatical differences between speech and writing are becoming blurred (Kress 2003). There is an implication that the nature of written language might change in consequence. Certainly it seems clear that for many purposes and relationships, the nature of language in the new modes of communication is changing, and this will be an interesting matter for research in the future. It is also clear that many quite formal uses of language appear in e-mail messages, while their grammatical organisation often remains much like that of written prose more generally. The issue of how much the grammatical organisation of the language will change is a social one, involving questions about the kinds of register and text type or genre people wish to produce. If the object is to express a personal relationship, and to communicate shared information about social activities, then the language will reveal this, and this will be apparent both in a growing informality in tenor and in grammatical patterns that are like speech. Equally, since the new technologies are now so extensively used in many areas of public life, in business, government and education, for example, it is also clear that many communications will continue to show some familiar characteristics of conventional written English.

Another of the changes to language created by use of the Internet, discussed by Crystal (2001: 197), is its tendency to create lists, leading to various abbreviated and reduced expressions. This is a feature of the graphic design of the World Wide Web,

so that pieces of information are arranged in sequences for ease of access. It may be that this will have some impact on the nature of written language more generally, though it is doubtful that this characteristic will completely change the forms of writing and communication that are not online. This is because listing would be an unsatisfactory way to handle many types of texts. However, it may have some impact in the future, and it will be interesting to trace future developments, looking among other things, to see if practices of listing written information become more common.

By the upper primary school, children could usefully explore the different uses of language, formal and informal on the Internet, and the nature of the written language used. They might, for example:

- write very informal messages to each other, using language that captures many of the features of speech, and then rewrite the same messages, using the formal language and sentence structures more commonly found in writing;
- compare the two versions, being taught to recognise that each represents a different set of register values and a different text type or genre;
- discuss why we need a language that allows such variety in methods of self-expression.

Designing and organising texts

One of the most significant advantages claimed for the advent of communication technologies has been that they offer people the possibilities of designing and crafting their own texts. This is a matter frequently referred to in the volume on multiliteracies edited by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), referred to in chapter 8. Even in the recent past, it is sometimes said, children used various reading materials in which design was always produced by others. Today, it is said, it is open to all to plan and design their own texts.

That is because computer technologies make it possible to play with fonts, layout, tables, diagrams, photographs and drawing in creating texts, causing some fundamentally new thinking about what it is to design texts, and who has the power to do so. We can, in effect, so it is said, all become text designers. There is some truth in this, though it has always been open to people to design texts using such older resources as paper and pencils. What makes the new context different is the fact that computers allow such a rich variety of visual resources for designing verbal/visual texts, and they are quickly accessible once the young user has mastered the resources involved.

The discussion in this section will look at texts by three children, all of which show some interest in principles of design. First we shall look at a news story designed as for the front page of a newspaper. This was created using computer

technology. Then we shall look at a poster created by a child who produced it entirely in handwritten mode on a large sheet of paper, where her sense of the overall design demonstrated some facility with issues of visual presentation of information. Finally, we shall look at a report designed by another child, which he created using the resources of his computer.

Designing a news story

TEXT 11.1

The Brisbane Herald

24 August 1998

Inside Today:
"Is there really a man living on the moon?"

Dish gets charged for running away with the spoon.

T.V. ratings.

"Why did the black sheep have three bags full of wool?"

Fox gets charged over the kidnapping of the three pigs.

Country Girl- New State Champion

Yesterday at the State Running Championships, an Aboriginal girl, named Gracey Collins came first, with Tanya Paxton coming second.

Fourteen year old Gracey lives with mother Grace, brothers Raymond and Douglas, in a small country town, a hours drive from Cunninghaim.

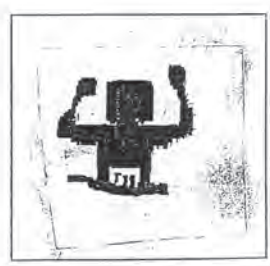
"Your bloody good Gracey. You showed'em how to win, all those white girls."

There were nine girls in the final race. Gracey started off slow but near the final few metres, she speed off like a speeding bullet, beating previous year second place comer, Tanya Paxton by nearly a metre.
This suprised spectators who thought Tanya would come first this year. One spectator quoted, " I thought no one would beat Tanya this year."

Gracey's mother was speechless after the race but was able say, " Your bloody good Gracey. You showed'em how to win, all those white girls."

Tanya was heard saying to Gracey, " Train all year, set the best times then get beaten by a natural from the bush who chases goannas for lunch."

After winning the race Gracey received a scholarship to Hamilton College.



Picture of Gracey winning the race.

1

The front page story reproduced here (text 11.1) was based on a class reading of the Australian novel *Dougie* by James Moloney. The story concerns Dougie and his family, including his sister Gracey, who is a very good runner. At one point in the novel she and her family travel to Brisbane so she can compete in a running event, and she manages to beat the favourite. The text was written after the class had studied new stories with their teacher, and the young writer, aged 12, had a good sense of the overall schematic structure of such a story, as described by White (1997), who did an analysis of what he called 'hard news' stories. Such stories, by the way, tend to deal with rather grim events and disasters, while the story here is essentially a 'good news' story. However, many features of the genre remain similar. Note, for example, the use of the headline (*Country Girl – New State Champion*) and the accompanying first paragraph, which consists of only one sentence, and which captures in summary way what the story is about:

> **Yesterday at the State Running Championships** an Aboriginal girl, named Gracey Collins came first, with Tanya Paxton coming second.

A familiar axiom in the world of journalism is that the headline and/or opening paragraph of an article must summarise what is to be said, thus capturing the reader's attention, otherwise the reader will not proceed to read the rest. Thus, the sentence opens with two circumstances in theme position – one of time (*yesterday*) and one of place (*at the State running Championships*) – and the rest of the sentence unfolds, introducing the two major participants, *Gracey Collins* and *Tanya Paxton*, and what they did.

Beyond the opening sentence, the next paragraph introduces some 'human interest' information about Gracey, which expands upon the opening, telling that she *lives with mother Grace, brothers Raymond and Dougie, in a small country town an hour's drive from Cunningham*. Subsequent paragraphs remain short (no more than two sentences), while further 'human interest' is added to the story, elaborating on the opening details, by referring in direct quotes to what Gracey's mother and Tanya said. The last paragraph, consisting again of one sentence, starts with another marked theme, and brings the text to a Closure:

> **After winning the race** Gracey received a scholarship to Hamilton College.

White suggests that the overall schematic structure consists of an opening element that gives the 'nucleus' of the story, and a series of subsequent elements, all in separate paragraphs, which function rather like 'satellites', such that each elaborates

on the content of the opening nucleus. He thus refers to a schematic structure that has:

Nucleus/Headline ^ Satellite/Elaboration π

where denotes repetition, since several instances of elaboration will generally occur, each elaborating on the information found in the Nucleus/Headline.

Overall (and despite the occasional errors in expression) the text works well linguistically as an instance of a 'good news' story, often found in journalism. But Mary has shown commendable skill as well in designing the text so that it creates the predictable sense of the structure of the opening page of a paper.

Note, for example:

- the use of the columns, breaking the page up into pieces for reading;
- the manner in which Mary employs several different fonts to display: the name of the paper, the date, the headline of the story, the body of the text and the caption under the picture of Gracey (which regrettably does not reproduce here very well);
- the uses of the italicised font to represent the *Inside Today* items displayed down the left-hand side of the page;
- the way Mary highlights, in a separate space, the recorded speech of Gracey's mother: *Your (you're) bloody good Gracey. You showed 'em how to win, all those white girls*;
- the overall design of the page, such that the significant information is introduced at the top and to the left, while it then unfolds to the right-hand bottom corner, where the picture of Gracey appears. The sense of a 'Given' to 'New' pattern is apparent;
- the manner in which the eye turns last to the details of the *Inside Today* news listed down the left-hand side of the page. And note too, the humour in the details of the news!

Classroom discussion could well lead to very useful work in studying and designing newspapers. Children could:

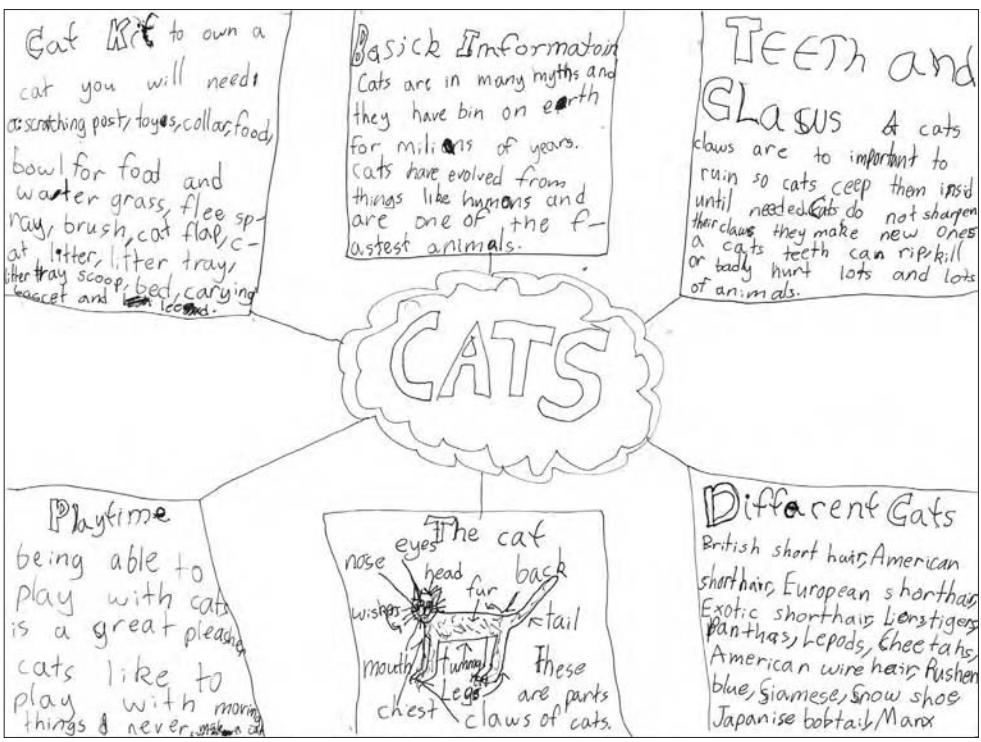
- collect samples of newspapers (the newspapers regularly display their news on websites as well);
- study the various pages, noting different text types found on different pages;
- deconstruct these to see how their schematic structures are built up;
- examine the relationship of the verbal texts to any images (here refer back to chapter 8 for some discussion of related matters to do with reading visual/verbal texts);
- prepare news stories using the structures they have developed;

- use computers to create newspapers on which the stories appear, using digital cameras and/or scanning (where available) to insert appropriate visuals.

Designing a poster about cats

Amy Duloy, aged 7 years, researched and prepared the poster about cats (text 11.2) as part of her school work.

TEXT 11.2



In order to produce the poster, Amy spent time in the school library researching what she could find out about cats and the different breeds. We can note the following features, suggesting that she had given thought to matters of design:

- the fact that Amy employs seven different frames to enclose her information;
- the presence of the central frame shown with wiggly lines to highlight it and make it a focal point, with the word *CATS* visibly displayed;
- the presence of a series of lines creating links, that point to each of the six frames that surround the central one, each providing relevant information;

- the fact that the contents of each frame need to be read in linear fashion, as befits written English, though the eye can move in several directions away from the centre, guided by the various links. There is no necessary order in which to read the contents of the frames, for the information in each is discrete. In this sense, the overall design is reminiscent of the patterns of representation and composition found in many other posters, and also found in websites and CD-ROMs.

The organisation of text 11.2 is sometimes referred to as *a semantic map*, meaning that it maps related meanings, all suggested by the various links coming from the central theme. Amy did not use computer technology in order to create her poster, but it is clear that the activity of creating it gave her practice in pursuing design matters. Posters such as Amy's could be created in the classroom where access to computers is limited. Alternatively, leaflets or brochures intended to address current social issues might be developed (see Ng et al., 1999, for an example of class design of leaflets).

Children could:

- collect posters and/or leaflets of various kinds; for example, from the local council, community groups or sporting clubs;
- study their design, noting uses of fonts, columns, visuals and what is made prominent and how;
- discuss the functions of the different types of posters or leaflets;
- prepare their own posters/leaflets, researching relevant information and discussing ways to display verbal and visual elements to best advantage;
- create templates of the design they intend to use;
- produce draft versions of the posters/leaflets, discussing these in class before going on to complete final versions.

Designing a report on recycling

Tim Duloy, aged 8, and others of his class were asked by their teacher to conduct a study of the environment in their neighbourhoods. Their teacher set out the details of the task on the class website. The children were given three guiding principles to follow:

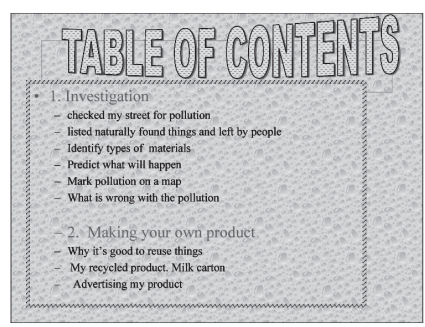
- 'Investigate what happens to materials left in the environment.'
- 'Devise ways of adapting used articles for a different purpose, to make your own product.'
- 'Present your own report of what you have done, in a book or as a computer presentation (for example, using Publisher or PowerPoint).'

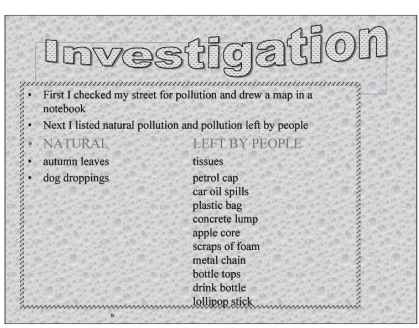
Considerable advice was given the class about ways to go about their study. They should, for example:

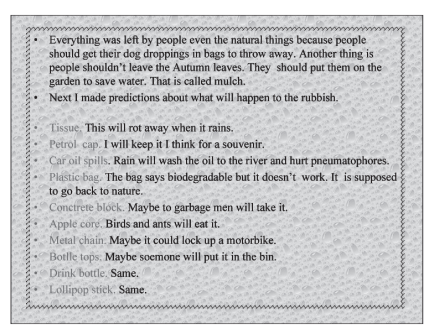
- observe local environments;
- classify items found as 'naturally found' or 'left by people';
- make predictions about what would happen to the items left by people.
- test their predictions;
- keep records;
- explain what had occurred.

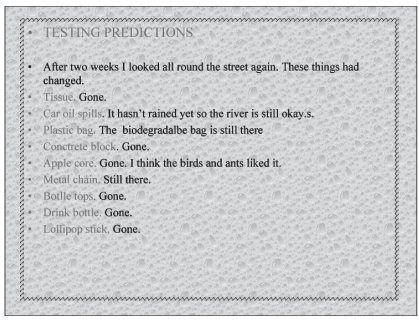
They should remember such points as: use of a 'creative title page' that includes the name of the author; produce a table of contents; 'report clearly and concisely, using subheadings'; 'use labelled diagrams, pictures, photographs or small samples'. They should also evaluate their own work: was it 'colourful and interesting to read and look at?' was it 'simple to read and understand and informative?' In all, the directions to the students (not quoted here in full) were clear and useful in scaffolding students in their task and in focusing attention both on matters to be observed and on methods of storing and writing up observations. Tim went ahead and undertook his study, producing the report (text 11.3), which is displayed here in full. While producing it himself, he did receive some advice from his father about possible fonts.

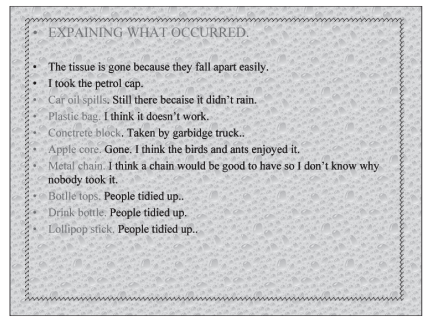
TEXT 11.3

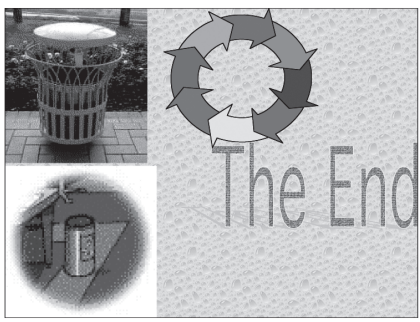












The report consists of seven pages, and it is clear that Tim had followed the advice from his teacher. The whole report was in colour, though that is not reproduced. The title page uses two vigorous symbols and it serves both to name the report (*Kids Care Project* and *Recycling*) and to identify his name (*Tim Duloy*). The second page provides the *Table of Contents*, while the third and fourth set out the *Investigation*. The fifth page sets out *Testing Predictions*, and the sixth sets out *Explaining what occurred*. The final page displays *The End*, enlivened by colourful use of a circular symbol, a picture of a rubbish bin and a soft drink can (presumably some litter left in the street).

The series of pages 2–6 all use the same template, developed using PowerPoint, to structure or frame what is reported. One box is displayed to the top, where the heading is set out, and a further box immediately beneath provides the frame within which the content – the experiential information – is shown. That structure provides a template within which Tim could work, setting out the details in each page. Notably, and following the teacher's advice, Tim has used headings and subheadings creating a structure that is easy to read.

In all, Tim had learned a lot of use about design and presentation, and he enjoyed going about the task. His success depended a great deal on the careful scaffolding he had received from his teacher, and the additional assistance his father was able to offer him. He was learning to master the computer technology because he had useful goals in learning it, and he had explicit and careful directions that scaffolded the manner in which he went about his task.

The implications for teachers are clear. Where the teaching is well directed and focused, children will indeed learn to use the new communicational technologies imaginatively, designing interesting texts.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed some of the effects of the advent of computer technology and the Internet and associated developments in design. We have suggested that the new developments have brought about interesting changes in the nature of language and in the ways verbal/visual texts are created. Classroom work can lead to exploration of new words and how they are created. It can also lead to interesting work in learning about design of visual/verbal texts. The new communication technologies open up new possibilities in the design of texts, and these possibilities need to be carefully considered by teachers, so that they can direct their students in learning how to use them in rewarding ways.

Further reading

Callow, John (ed.) (1999) *Image Matters: Visual Texts in the Classroom*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney.

Unsworth, Len (2001) *Teaching Multiliteracies across the Curriculum: Changing Contexts of Text and Image in Classroom Practice*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK and Philadelphia, USA.

Unsworth, Len, Thomas, Angela, Simpson, Alyson & Asha, Jennifer L (2005) *Children's Literature and Computer Based Learning*, Open University Press, UK.

chapter 12

Teaching literature

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- review reasons to teach literature;
- outline ideas for teaching poetry, including use of nonsense verse and use of poems that are thematically grouped;
- outline ideas for teaching class novels and stories, including use of review genres to discuss literary texts, as well as promoting interactive pedagogy about texts using e-mail;
- discuss the values of reading and writing literary spoofs, as a way to develop heightened interest in how texts are constructed and can be subverted.

Some reasons to teach literature

This chapter is placed here to indicate that the literary program draws on interests in both reading and writing as we have considered them in all earlier chapters. Despite the many other claims on the attention of children, literature remains an important source of pleasure and of cultural knowledge, offering young readers opportunity to explore many areas of life, as well as of language. In fact, there are at least three overlapping reasons to teach literature to students of any age:

- as a source of pleasure and entertainment;
- as a means of exploring social and cultural values of many kinds, allowing reflection on experience as well as opportunity to challenge experience and values;
- as a means of exploring the nature of language as art.

These three reasons effectively provide a framework for designing the steps taken in teaching and learning about literature. The steps may well be undertaken over a period of several lessons, depending on the texts involved, and they allow for a movement from establishing initial interest, to considering the values and experiences involved in the literary texts, to turning to some close consideration of the language used in the texts.

A source of pleasure and entertainment

The word 'literature' covers a multitude of texts, both verbal and verbal/visual, and these days it is even extended to embrace the range of animated texts found in videos, films and various hypertexts, though this discussion will be mainly devoted to verbal/visual texts of the kind found in books. So diverse is the range of literary texts now that it is sometimes difficult to define what makes literature. However, regardless of how we define things literary, what does seem to be clear is the fact that literary texts are written to entertain and give pleasure. The pleasure, sometimes but not always mixed with amusement, comes from any of a number of things: enjoyment of the sounds of words, surprise at the introduction of the unexpected, excitement at incident and adventure, uncertainty over the possible outcomes of a story, sadness at the turn taken by events, delight in the ridiculous, or humour at the apparent unlikely nature of events. If for no other reasons, all these sources of pleasure provide a justification for teaching literature, involving children in talk about the texts they read, and in sharing their enjoyment and their understandings.

As we saw in chapter 8, much of the pleasure in many children's books comes from the visuals, and from the excitements and rewards that come from dwelling on them. This is true, for instance, in reading *Rosie's Walk* or Jackie French and Bruce

Whatley's *Diary of a Wombat*, or Mem Fox and Judy Horacek's *The Green Sheep*. Children's lives are enriched by a reading of such books, and the pleasure they feel is in itself an important end. The same is true of books such as *Piggybook*, where, as we saw, the interplay of image and verbal text is very subtle. All such books evoke responses and by their nature they open up the possibilities of talk and of sharing pleasure. These are important human activities, to be promoted and valued in school, as well, ideally, as at home.

Exploring values and experience

Among the most significant of the opportunities offered children in reading is the chance to explore values and experiences of many kinds. The tale of *The Mice and the Elephants*, discussed in chapter 6, and the story of the Piggotts just alluded to, both allow talk of values. In the former, the values are to do with concern for the welfare of others and the associated recognition that even the small and apparently weak can give help to others. In the latter, as we saw, there are values to do with being unselfish, with respecting the rights of others in the family, and with sharing the domestic tasks.

Sharing the experience of others can take many forms, building empathy with the plight of others, or acknowledging bravery in the face of adversity, as is the case, for example, in the *Delta Quest* series, by Emily Rodda, in which the central characters, Lief, Barda and Jasmine are involved in a dangerous quest to find seven precious gems stolen from the magic *Belt of Deltora*. Set in lands of mystery and fantasy, such books transport young readers away from the immediacy of everyday familiar life, and present them with characters facing hardship and danger. Readers are encouraged to enter into the hardships and dangers, and, by implication, to reflect on the kind of courage needed to deal with them.

A series of stories that offers similar exploration of adventures and hardships faced, though for somewhat younger readers, is that about *Tashi* by Anna and Barbara Fienberg (2001, 2004). Tashi, who becomes a friend of Jack, comes from a curious faraway land and he relates his adventures with wicked barons, giants, ghosts, demons and witches. Yet another projected series is that by Jenny Nimmo, about *Charlie Bone*. The first in the series is *Midnight for Charlie Bone* (2002), about a curious boy who can 'hear' pictures, and who faces some surprising and often frightening experiences, overcoming adversity.

Exploring values can lead readily into exploring the language in which the values are expressed. This is a matter to which we have alluded in earlier discussions of reading in both chapters 7 and 8. We also alluded to this in chapter 5, discussing knowledge about language. There, it will be recalled, we looked at several poems,

each selected because of particular uses of process types realised in verb choices. We discussed the effects of using the process types selected, and referred to other ways in which meanings are constructed in poems. In general, there was an interest in developing a curiosity about uses of words and in playing with possible alternatives as a way to develop intelligent and thoughtful speculation about language.

An interest in language as art

The interest in language as art begins for many children in the early years when they hear their first nursery rhymes and jingles. The pleasure of the sounds and the enjoyment in much repetition of many sounds are developmentally important, because children learn a lot about their language from these things. They also learn that language can be used for play, and the play can lead eventually into enjoyment of language for its aesthetic values. Collections of nursery rhymes, such as *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Opie & Opie 1960), or *The Big Nursery Rhyme Book* (Lacome 2002) or *A Classic Treasury of Nursery Rhymes and Songs* (Moroney 2002), are useful resources in the early years, though there are many other collections. The first stories read to children, like the first poems, make considerable use of repetition. Think, for example, of the traditional children's tales of *The Three Little Pigs*, or *The Little Red Hen* or *The Little Gingerbread Man*, all of which make use of repetition. Children enjoy hearing these read, just as they also enjoy chorusing the lines along with the adult who reads them. Many such traditional tales are now available with audio recordings accompanying the written texts, though it is of course always open to the teacher to produce an audio recording for children to listen to in quiet times in the classroom. Enjoyment of the sounds of early verses and stories can become an important step towards a more sustained interest in the ways language is crafted to shape different effects and impressions.

We shall now turn to some consideration of selection of literary texts for classroom use, as well as suggestions for their teaching.

Selection of texts

Like all other areas of the English language curriculum, the program devoted to teaching literature needs to be developed with care, allowing children opportunity to read a wide variety of literary texts throughout the primary school. Even in classrooms where children are keen readers, able to pursue their own reading activities in reasonably independent ways, there will be a need for the teacher to exercise some leadership in selection of texts and in carefully guided work on them.

As for the reluctant and/or slow readers, they will need assistance to ensure that reading literature becomes rewarding and enjoyable. One good way to attract the interest of students in reading literature is to watch out for any novels that are turned into films. One thinks of the remarkable success of the *Harry Potter* series of novels, and the films that have appeared, all of them, at the author's insistence, closely based on the novels themselves. Teachers generally report that whenever films are made of novels, this tends to increase children's interest in reading them, so that both book and film can be used for classroom work.

A good literature program will allow for a good balance of the following:

- opportunity for children to hear literary texts well read, developing confidence in listening to and interpreting texts;
- opportunity for children to practise reading texts themselves. Here, reading with the teacher and/or following a recorded version of the poem, or story, will be helpful in assisting the beginning reader, or the reluctant or slow reader;
- opportunity for wide reading by the children, allowing them to make independent selections of materials read. This can apply even from the earliest years, using picture books or the 'big books' developed in class work and displayed for independent use (see discussion in chapter 6 on concentrated language encounter methodologies). In fact, where 'big books' have been developed and displayed in the classroom, the evidence is that young children will constantly return to these, such is their pleasure in the written texts they have helped create;
- teacher selection of certain texts for reading and discussion, either as a whole-class activity, or in group work. Here the texts will be selected because of the possibilities they offer for enjoyment, for teacher-directed discussion of values and for exploration of uses of language;
- teacher scaffolding of the reading of the selected texts, and guidance in developing skills of interpretation and judgment about these;
- opportunity for class discussion of the selected texts. Here the discussions can go well beyond the particular classroom, allowing children a chance to 'discuss' or 'rap' with others via the Internet, often communicating at a considerable distance, and permitting all the advantages of bringing different perspectives to a consideration of the texts;
- opportunity to write from, or about, the texts read. For example, children can write poems using the models of poems read in class. They can also produce episodes from novels or stories read and enjoyed, using the models of the prose patterns. Finally, they can write reviews of texts read;
- keeping of records of literary texts read over a school term and over a year, so that the teacher can periodically review and discuss these with the children.

Selecting poetry

As noted above, poems are an important source of pleasure to the young, and they can be used with children of all ages in the primary school. There are many collections of poems available, and teachers will find it useful to collect their own anthologies of poems, developing a repertoire for different ages and interests. Some enjoyable collections include: *One Hundred Australian Poems for Children* (edited by Scott-Mitchell & Griffith 2002), *The Puffin Book of Utterly Brilliant Poetry*, (edited by Patten 1998), *A World of Poetry* (edited by Rosen 1991), *The Usborne Little Book of Children's Poems* (compiled by Heather Amery 2003). Poetry can be used to encourage children to read out loud. In fact, one of the benefits of teaching poetry is that children can be actively encouraged to read out loud, sometimes reading along with their teacher, sometimes reading alone, and sometimes reading in class group. In chapter 5, we have already looked at 'I'm the youngest in our house', by Michael Rosen (see page 83), which allows children to take up different roles in reading the poem, and this could be used as a model for children to develop their own poems about family relationships.

Apart from poems such as Rosen's, early experiences in reading poems can be established using nonsense poems, and here a great deal can be learned about rhyme and rhythm. The poem 'The King's breakfast', by AA Milne, already discussed in chapter 5 (see page 73), is a nonsense poem, enjoyable for its vigorous rhyme and rhythm. Children generally love nonsense verses. Here we shall consider some nonsense verses that were written by children, suggesting ways they might be used for class work. The first such nonsense poems here were inspired by a class reading of poems taken from a classic study of children's verse, *The Lore and Language of School Children*, by Iona and Peter Opie, first published in 1959, though republished many times since that date. The Opies undertook a study of the poems of children all over the United Kingdom, though many of the poems they identified also found their way to Australia. Even today, the book repays study for what it reveals of the inventiveness of children, especially when passing on models to each other in song and verse. Here are some poems written by Australian children using a model taken from the book by the Opies. According to the Opies, such poems with their refrain *stare stare* emerge from children's dislike of being stared at, though they seem to have become sources of games anyway.

Stare stare like a bear
Tie a ribbon in your hair
Chase your brother up the stair.
Toss the baby in the air!

Stare stare, you greedy bear
Don't sit down
You'll break that chair
Greedy greedy big fat bear!

Like all nonsense poems, these have no particular meaning and their enjoyment depends entirely on their sounds, as well as their absurdity. It is thus very important to read them out loud, inviting different children to say them, and talking about the words that are repeated to create the rhymes, as well as the crazy images they seem to conjure up. Such nonsense verses are like other text types discussed in this book, in that once the linguistic pattern has been understood, it can be played with and varied to create different effects. A great deal of early poetry writing can make frequent use of such models as children develop confidence in using them before moving on into other linguistic patterns. Refrains other than *stare stare* could be used of course, and children could be encouraged to think of others with which to create little nonsense verses, as in:

Jog, jog, see a dog
Watch him fall into a bog
Catch him with a wooden log.
Keep him safe, that naughty dog!

Limericks are another source of amusement, and once again they follow very regular patterns, which once picked up, can be adapted in all such ways. Many limericks start with 'There was a …(young man, old man, young girl, little boy …)'. This limerick was written by one Australian child:

There was a young man called Sam
Who went off to sea in a pram.
He took lots of food in a pot
But water to drink he forgot!
That foolish young man called Sam.

Poetry is about more than nonsense, of course, and other poems should be introduced to children. One way to think about selections of poems is to make choices that involve some thematic connections, such as animals and their behaviours. In chapter 5, we looked at Ronald Strahan's poem, 'Red Kangaroo', which is very successful for the manner in which it captures a sense of the kangaroo as it moves gracefully in big bounds across the landscape. The sense of movement is particularly expressed in the series of prepositional phrases (realising circumstantial information), a feeling for which is obtained especially when the poem is read out loud.

Red kangaroo

Through mulga and mallee, with soft, thudding sound,
The red kangaroo moves in bound after bound
On the tips of its toes in a firm, steady pace
That covers the country with effortless grace.

Since pasture is scanty and waterholes few
In the harsh, arid home of the red kangaroo
It must travel great distances, never once stopping,
But endlessly, patiently, hopping and hopping.
(Ronald Strahan)

Ronald Strahan has said that the poem employs a 'bounding rhythm', appropriate for the movement of a kangaroo. Note too, the rhyming effect achieved through assonance: *with soft, thudding sound … in bound after bound*, and in, *in a firm, steady pace … with effortless grace.*

The rhythm of the poem contrasts with that in the following poem about another animal by Ronald Strahan.

The marsupial mole

The marsupial mole
Doesn't live in a hole
Or a burrow or funnel
Or underground tunnel.
It swims through the sands
With its shovel-like hands
And the sand, as it's mined,
Simply falls in behind.
So nobody knows
How it comes or it goes
Or where it has been,
Which is why it's not seen.
(Ronald Strahan)

This poem seeks to capture the movements of quite another animal – one that burrows beneath the ground, protecting itself with its capacity to cover its tracks as it goes. Like 'Red Kangaroo', this one needs to be read out loud, and discussion developed about the images it creates in the mind. What does it mean, for example, to use the metaphor that the creature *swims through the sands with shovel-like hands* ? How does the use of the regular short lines, each pair ending in rhymes (*mole*, *hole*; *funnel*, *tunnel*; *sands*, *hands*) help to create the sense of the mole and its behaviour?

These and many other poems about animals available in anthologies of verse could be used to develop interest in the ways poets use language to express and build a sense of their behaviour and their characteristics. Ronald Strahan has even produced a whole book of poems devoted to Australian animals, worth consulting, called *The Incomplete Book of Australian Mammals* (Strahan 1997). Many other themes

apart from animals might be used in identifying poems, including childhood, family relationships, seasons and play, to mention a few.

Selecting stories and novels

Children's tastes in reading vary greatly. A good classroom and a good school library will cater for a wide range of interests in prose reading, including provision of factual texts for those children who are not so attracted to reading fiction as are some others. To demonstrate some ways to use novels for group or whole-class work, we shall look here at two books. The first is *Zoo*, another picture book by Anthony Browne, whose *Piggybook* we have already considered in chapter 8. This is introduced here because it is a book that repays discussion for its values, offering the opportunity for critique of aspects of human behaviour, of a kind that can be usefully reviewed in writing a review genre. The other book we shall briefly consider is *The Lake of Tears* by Emily Rodda, already alluded to above.

ANTHONY BROWNE'S *Zoo*

We shall not include any of the visuals in this discussion, though the interested reader should be able to find a copy to read, as it is still freely in print. Briefly, the tale involves a family of Dad, Mum and two brothers who visit the zoo. The humans are viewed rather ironically, since at times they do not behave as well as the animals, and Dad in particular seems very insensitive. The story is also rather critical of keeping animals in zoos, and the animals often look very miserable, locked away as they are behind bars. Thus, at several levels the book offers criticism of human behaviour, while it expresses sympathy for animals.

The book was introduced to a group of children whose class had recently visited the local zoo. Class discussion, developed over three lessons, looked closely at the series of pictures and the relationship of these to the verbal text, provoking considerable discussion among the children about whether Anthony Browne was right or fair in the manner in which he appeared to be representing zoos. Class members had previously written book reviews, following the model of the review genre to be displayed here. Such a genre (*Write it Right* Project, 1994) is one of several genres identified, involving developing a response to a literary piece. The schematic structure of a review genre may be set out thus:

Context ^ Text Description ^ Judgment

The object of the 'Context' is to establish some sense of the cultural context of the story, its author, title and setting. The 'Text Description' provides information about

the characters and normally some key incidents in the story, while the final 'Judgment' element offers some evaluation of the text overall.

One girl, called Kathryn, aged 12 years, wrote text 12.1, which is set out to reveal the elements of structure.

A review genre about *Zoo*

Elements of schematic structure	Text	Language features
Context	The book 'Zoo' is written and illustrated by Anthony Browne. It is about a family of four who go to the zoo and how they behave at and on the way to the zoo. The graphics show how the animals feel and are treated.	Use of passive voice allows placement of title of book in theme position. Verbal process (*show*) used to introduce visuals as well as verbal text.
Text Description	Anthony Browne has a number of messages that he gets across through the book. One of the messages is that zoos are not always used in an appropriate way and that sometimes they are for human entertainment. Browne gets this message across by graphics and the text. In the text, three humans say that they are bored with some of the animals and that the animals are miserable things because they don't do anything for the humans except sit there. In the graphics, the humans are often seen calling to the animals or banging on the glass to get the animals' attention. Another message is that humans are not superior to animals and that we don't really have the right to treat animals with disrespect for their rights as another living thing on this planet.	*Messages* is picked up to create themes that help tie the text together, and that recur throughout the text. A similar pattern is used with both *text* and *graphics*, being picked up in themes. Successful use of themes throughout the text carries the discourse forward clearly. Several uses of modality introduce aspects of the interpretation of the text: *zoos are not always used; that sometimes they are for human entertainment; we don't really have the right to treat animals.*

Text Description	A way [[that Browne gets this message across]] is by drawing animal parts on some of the humans (like crocodile feet instead of human feet and a beak instead of a nose). I feel this has two messages: one: that we are equal to animals because we are animals ourselves so how can we be superior and two: that at the zoo, we can often act more animal like than the animals.	Modal verbs are also used: *how can we be superior; we can often act more animal like*. Effective use of large noun group with embedded clause to create opening theme in new paragraph.
Judgment	I like the book 'Zoo' because of the way Anthony Browne has written and illustrated it. The only problem [[I have with the book]] is [[that Anthony Browne has made all zoos look bad]]. Maybe zoos are not ideal in all areas, but most of the zoos these days are not as bad as Browne makes out. The book 'Zoo' had a lot of messages [[that I understand [[and agree with]]. The illustrations are beautiful but mainly belong to zoos of the past. I would recommend this book to any age group, but probably to people 11 years or older as young people may not understand the book 'Zoo' and its messages that well.	Use of mental process *I like* to signal move to Judgment, and first person pronoun is used in several later places. Use of good theme with embedded clause to introduce personal opinion: *the only problem [[I have with the book]]* and use of relational process to complete the Judgment here: *is [[that Anthony Browne … bad]]*. Other embeddings used to compress information.

Kathryn demonstrated confidence in writing a review genre. The Context introduces the book, its author, its status as a verbal/visual text, and it provides an indication of the content of the tale. The Text Description provides clear information about the text and its manner of communicating. The Judgment concludes the text by offering opinion and evaluation about the book.

Confident use of theme choices, notable in particular in the Text Description element, where messages, graphics and text are all introduced in the latter parts of clauses (what is termed the 'New' position, referred to in chapter 8) then reintroduced in theme positions in later clauses. This is an aspect of the textual metafunction, for it helps to give a strong sense of coherence to the overall directions the genre takes.

The passive voice is used to place several items in theme positions, giving them status as matters discussed; for example, *the book 'Zoo' is written and illustrated by Anthony Browne*; *the humans are often seen*.

Interpersonally, modal verbs and modal adverbs are used to introduce aspects of the evaluation and judgment of the texts: *we don't really have the right*; *we can often act more animal like*.

Experientially, uses of verbal processes to represent what is said in the book: *the graphics show*; *in the text, three humans say that they are bored*; some relational processes to build description or to define, often involving large noun groups expressed in embedded clauses: *another message is [[that humans are not superior to animals]] and [[that we don't really have the right to treat … planet]]*.

Use of other large noun group structures, especially in the Judgment to compress information in the concluding statement; for example, *The only problem [[I have with the book]] is [[that Anthony Browne has made all zoos look bad]]*.

Overall, this is a successful instance of a book review genre of a kind that children can enjoy learning to write, showing good control of the various language resources needed to give an account of the book and of the reader's response to it.

The Lake of Tears

Each book in the *Delta Quest* series offers a summary of what has happened before, so that it is possible to read them in any order, without losing the sense of what is involved. *The Lake of Tears* is the second in the series, and in it, many forces of evil confront the essentially good and generous trio – Lief, Barda and Jasmine – as they go about their adventures. A reading of the novel reveals that it consists of 16 chapters, and that there is a pattern to the manner in which the tale is structured across those chapters. The structure is such that a crisis or Complication is rapidly followed by Evaluation and then by Resolution, and this is recursive. In all, many crises befall the characters in *The Lake of Tears*, and they somehow manage on every occasion to avert disaster. In chapters 9 and 10 in this book, when discussing narrative genres, we noted that Rothery has suggested that it is of the nature of narrative structures that persons are shown facing adversity or challenges. Evaluative information, she suggests, should be provided by the writer, so that the reader understands and enters with empathy into the challenges faced by the persons involved, while we watch with interest to see how matters are resolved. (The Resolution is not necessarily a happy one, at least in much adult fiction.) English speakers clearly enjoy and are often moved by such a pattern. This is because a value attaches to witnessing individuals who face and overcome crises or problems. One

has only to think of the plots of many films and TV programs that people regularly watch, to be aware of how pervasive in English-speaking cultures is the commitment to the values of individuals successfully overcoming adversity.

The teacher, being aware of all this, can use it to guide a reading and discussion of *The Lake of Tears*, for the pattern determines how the book unfolds. Most of the 16 chapters in the book finish with a crisis, and the subsequent chapter tends to sustain it for some time, as detail is built about how the characters deal with the matter, before achieving some Resolution, thereupon another problem or crisis rapidly befalls the characters. All this makes for a structure that is fast moving and full of interest for young readers, who can follow the bravery of Jasmine, the wild young girl and of Lief, the 16-year-old boy and his companion, the adult Barda.

Whether planning to use the novel for whole-class work or for group work, the teacher could do the following:

- Provide a good reading of the introduction of the novel to establish interest in the tale, and build some background knowledge; for example, about the nature of a *quest*, and about the curious magical land in which the story is set.
- Break the novel into sections (for example, each of two chapters, 1–2, 3–4, 5–6 etc.) and create some questions about the details of the story for each section, to be set out on sheets and/or on the class website.
- When reading of the book is finished, ask the children to think back over the story and to identify the points at which crisis or Complication was introduced, then followed by Evaluation, and then by some Resolution. How did they know these things occurred and how did the characters behave? How did the language reveal these things?
- Select some passages of the language for close study. Here, the teacher could provide at least one passage for discussion, but also ask the children to identify other passages they enjoyed for class discussion. Even the first page of the book, by the way, reveals uses of language worth exploring for the sense of foreboding and fear that are built up. Thus, the three characters *walked through the crisp, bright morning* and we are told that *the dark terrors of the Forests of Silence were far behind them*. But as the page develops, it is clear that danger is about. *It would be foolish to forget … but danger lurked everywhere on the road to the Lake of Tears*. There is also, on the same page, an interesting use of a marked topical theme, helping to build the sense of danger: *Away from the crowded, ruined city of Del, away from the sight of patrolling Grey Guards and the misery of people living in hunger and fear, you could almost forget that the Shadow lord ruled in the land*. A great deal of ominous information is thus compressed into the theme on this occasion. This could be a matter for discussion.
- Ask children to identify any sections in the novel they did not like and to explain why.

- Ask children to write their own episodes for the novel, basing it on the model of Emily Rodda's writing, and reading each other's work to test how successful the writing proves to be.
- Ask children to write review genres about the novel, also reading and discussing each other's work.
- Use many of the ideas above to do with close readings of the text to develop a 'book rap'. According to Simpson (2003: 2707), book raps involve 'talking about' pieces of literature by e-mail, and they 'extend traditional classroom practices such as the reading and discussion of literary texts with discursive practices that go beyond the walls of the classroom to connect with a virtual community on the Internet'. The evidence from book rapping so far, according to Simpson, is that children can interact with many others in engaging with literary texts, including the authors and/or illustrators, as well as children in other schools and other parts of the world. Each rap is created with its own webpage, details of the book(s) to be considered, list serves and e-mail addresses. Class groups sign on to participate in book raps, which typically last about five weeks. The success of such raps depends on the presence of a 'rap coordinator' who ensures that activities remain focused on the texts selected. In one instance in New South Wales, 56 classes from 44 schools took part in a rap devoted to the Picture Book Shortlist created for children in the 10–12 age range, developed by the Children's Book Council in 2001, and the object was that the children critically analyse and assess the texts, being given focus questions with which to develop their activities. Such activities represent exciting new developments, pushing the uses of the Internet into classroom work on reading literary texts in new directions. The whole *Delta Quest* series might well be used to develop a book rap. Alternatively, teachers might choose to develop a version of a book rap for immediate class use, extending the openings and possibilities with other groups and schools as they gained confidence in coordinating rapping activities.

In general, the range of available activities for exploring and reviewing children's stories and novels is enormous, and this discussion has done no more than scratch the surface. Some resources worth following up by teachers for developing materials and ideas for teaching literature will be given at the end of this chapter. For now, to finish the chapter we shall turn to the possibilities in reading and writing spoofs, or parodies of other tales.

SPOOFS

Among the many amusing developments in children's literature has been the range of new publications that provide spoofs of familiar stories. Exploration of these can provide considerable pleasure, but it can also allow children to explore why things

are funny, and how writers use their language to create the effects they do. One well-known book that offers spoofs is *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith (1992). Like many spoofs, this one can be read at various levels, though its greatest rewards come from a knowledge of the traditional tales that this book seeks to satirise or 'send up'. Take as one example the story of *The Little Gingerbread Man*. The original text (there are many versions in print), it will be recalled, involves a little old woman and a little old man living in a little house by the side of a road. The little old woman decides one day to bake a gingerbread man. When the gingerbread man is baked, he leaps from the oven, running as fast as he can to escape from those who want to eat him. The humour of the tale depends on several matters, including its regular repetition, alluded to much earlier in this chapter. A fox eventually offers to carry the gingerbread man across a stream, but he tricks the man because he uses the chance of carrying him to eat him up. Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith have written a spoof by having the little old woman make a man from stinky cheese. In contrast to the original tale, no-one wants to eat the stinky cheese man because he smells. Eventually the stinky cheese man meets the fox, but the fox does not want to eat the man either. In fact, after the fox offers to carry the stinky cheese man over the stream, he smells so badly that the fox coughs and splutters so that the man falls into the stream, where he dissolves.

The revised version of the story depends for its success primarily on setting up an expectation that the original tale will be told, or that it is in any event known, and then subverting it for humorous effect. Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith create similar retellings of other traditional tales, including the story of *The Princess and the Pea* (available in many printings, including a collection prepared and illustrated by Ian Penney, 1995). The success of the recent films *Shrek* and *Shrek 2* depends very considerably on spoofing aspects of fairy tales, taking familiar characters and situations from traditional stories and playing with them for humorous effect. There is a great deal of enjoyable and usefully critical work to be done in class activities, including such things as:

- comparing and contrasting the original tale and the spoof;
- discussing why the spoof is funny;
- considering how the language of the spoof differs from the original;
- writing spoofs of familiar tales either as individuals or in groups, and comparing the results.

Some resources to use in developing literature programs

Two useful accounts of strategies for teaching literature are provided by Unsworth and O'Toole (1993) and by Unsworth (1993), listed in the 'Further reading' section at the end of this chapter. Apart from these, teachers can subscribe to a journal devoted to literature for children and adolescents called *Viewpoint*. This is published through the Department of Language, Literacy and Arts Education at the University of Melbourne, where its webpage is: <http://extranet.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/LLAE/viewpoint/>. (Access: 1 October 2004). The editor of this journal, Pam Macintyre, organises at least one annual conference a year, and she hosts visits from children's writers and illustrators. Apart from these matters, the Children's Book Council of Australia organises the Annual Children's Book Awards <http://www.cbc.org.au/short04.htm> (Access: 1 October 2004) and there is an annual Book Week. All the major children's book publishers (for example, Puffin/Viking, Macmillan Education, Scholastic Press, Random House) have websites where teachers can often glean information about books. In addition, a free service advising of TV programs of many kinds (not only those of a literary nature) is available from *Screenrights*, whose website is: <http//www.enhancetv.com.au> (Access: 1 October 2004). Finally, the Primary English Teachers Association (PETA) <http//www.peta.edu.au> (Access 1 October 2004) provides a great deal of advice in its publications on the teaching of English in primary schools, including the teaching of literature.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have reviewed reasons to teach literature in the primary school, outlining ideas for use of poetry, stories and novels. We have also introduced book review genres, and suggested other writing activities that can be developed around uses of literature in the classroom. We have also indicated sources of additional information about literature that teachers can use in developing resources for literature teaching.

Further reading

De Silva Joyce, Helen & Feez, Susan (2000) *Creative Writing Skills: Literary and Media Text Types*, Phoenix Education, Melbourne.

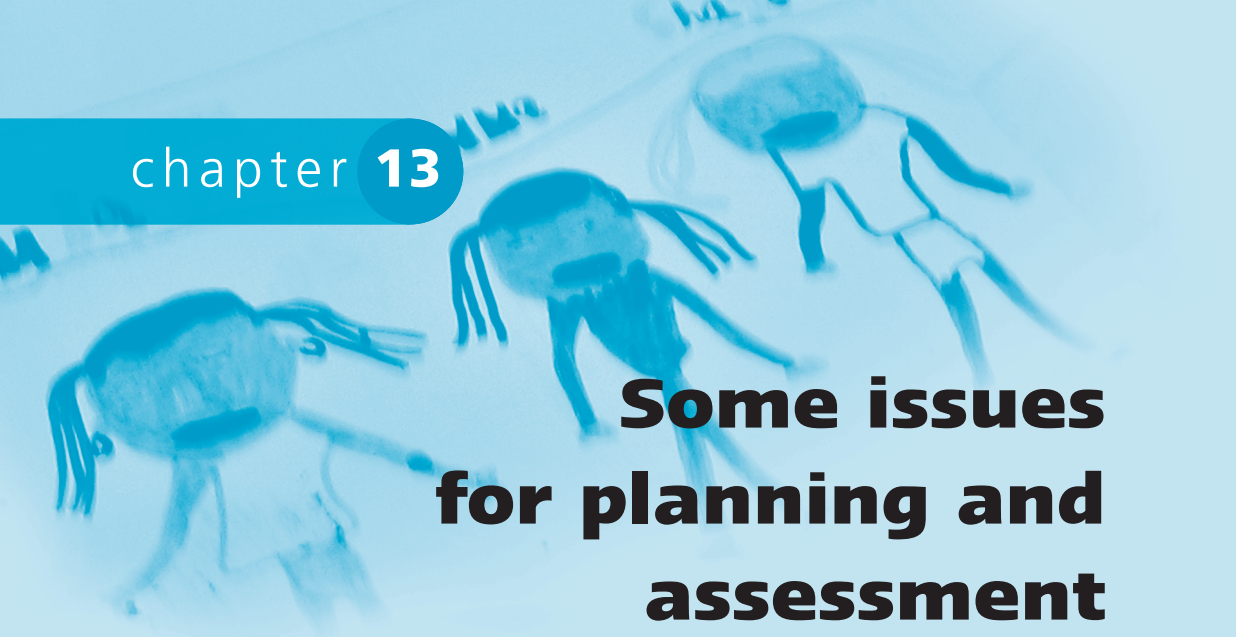
Simpson, Alyson (2003) 'Book raps as online multimodal communication. Towards a model of interactive pedagogy'. In *International Journal of Learning*, 10, 2003, pp. 2705–14.

Tunica, Mandy (1995) *For the Love of Poetry*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney.

Unsworth, Len (1993) 'Managing the language program: Children's literature in the primary classroom'. In Len Unsworth (ed.) *Literacy Learning and Teaching: Language as Social Practice in the Primary School*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne, pp. 145–96.

Unsworth, Len & O'Toole, Mary (1993) 'Beginning reading with children's literature'. In Len Unsworth (ed.) *Literacy Learning and Teaching: Language as Social Practice in the Primary School*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne, pp. 93–144.

Unsworth, Len, Thomas, Angela, Simpson, Alyson & Asha, Jennifer L (2005) *Children's Literature and Computer Based Learning*, Open University Press, UK.



chapter 13

Some issues for planning and assessment

Overview

In this chapter we shall:

- argue that language is both an instrument of teaching and learning and an object of teaching and learning, and that this understanding should frame thinking about the design of the language curriculum;
- outline a model of language development, involving three interrelated elements of learning language, learning through language and learning about language, all of which should play a role in language teaching and learning;
- identify three broad phases across the years of primary schooling, arguing that there are oral and literate language skills and capacities that need to be developed in each of these phases;
- argue that assessment of children's developing language capacities across the years of schooling should take many forms, both formal and informal, since none is entirely adequate on its own;
- argue that at least some of the assessment procedures adopted should be outcomes-based, providing clear evidence to children and their parents of the extent to which, and the ways in which, they have mastered language relevant to school learning;
- argue that an important measure of children's success in teaching and learning language in the primary school should be that they enjoy it, feeling both challenged and excited by their learning.

Introduction

In chapter 1 of this book we noted that language is pervasive in living and learning. This has consequences for the way we see language in planning and evaluating the school curriculum. In all areas of teaching and learning in school, language is centrally involved. Language is both an 'instrument of teaching and learning', and an 'object of teaching and learning'. Across the years of a primary education, very important developmental changes occur in children, both inside and outside the school. As children mature, they enter into an expanding range of relationships with people, in the wider community and within the school itself. They move from early childhood to late childhood, preparing both for the entry to adolescence, and for the challenging step of entering a secondary education, whose curriculum and daily school routines differ from those of the primary school. Overall, the developmental changes are considerable, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the expanded range of capacities in oral language and literacy that children need to develop if they are to make a successful entry to secondary school, and hence to adult life. In this chapter we review a model of language development and discuss aspects of programming and assessment for the primary years.

A model of language development

Some years ago, Halliday (see Hasan & Martin 1989) suggested that language development involves:

- learning language,
- learning through language, and
- learning about language.

The first of these refers to learning the basic resource of language itself – its sounds, it lexis and its grammar; the second refers to the activities of learning about the world and about relationships through language; the third refers to learning about the language – its grammar, its spelling and writing systems, its registers and its genres. A sequence is intended in this model of language development, for it is considered that children must first learn language and learn through it. After these things occur, children can be taught to bring the language to consciousness by reflecting upon it, exploring its ways of making meanings. Such a model of language development is a useful one for teachers to keep in mind in planning and implementing the curriculum in schools.

Thus, in preparing to introduce some element of learning in any area of the curriculum, teachers should look ahead and anticipate the language learning needs of the children, deliberately introducing activities in which children engage with ideas and concepts, learning the necessary language to deal with these in enjoyable ways. Such activities will involve the children in learning through language as they acquire new knowledge and skills. Once some basic knowledge of language, and knowledge of the ideas expressed in the language, have been established, teachers can introduce conscious teaching about language. Such teaching might focus on knowledge about spelling, writing, punctuation, grammar or register and genre, where the latter two should include registers and genres of speech as well as of writing. Of course, the teaching of these things cannot occur all within the same lesson. In fact, they should often be introduced over a teaching cycle lasting for several lessons and perhaps spread out over some weeks. Teachers must make a judgment about how best to phase in the different language learning activities, depending in part on the age of the children and in part on the content to be taught. Over time, teaching sequences will be cyclical, as teachers and students weave in and out of activities, some of which focus primarily on language as an instrument of learning and some on language as an object of study. One way to evaluate the success of the teaching cycle is for teachers to look back over the sequence of lessons and consider whether language learning in all three senses occurred, and if so, whether it was successful; if not, they should undertake additional steps to compensate for any problems.

Broadly, the years of primary schooling fall into three phases, and these can be used as a guide to planning language learning activities. However, it should be stressed that not all children pass with equal speed or proficiency through these phases, and teachers need to monitor children's progress, making appropriate adjustments to teaching activities to assist them.

The first phase: kindergarten to Year 2

The first phase, roughly covering the Preparatory or Kindergarten year to Year 2, involves the early stages when children need to establish a sense of the appropriate behaviours for schooling, including learning patterns of school language. In fact in the first year or two, teachers devote a great deal of time to teaching desirable patterns of interaction, both physical, to do with sitting and moving about in particular ways, and oral, to do with patterns of talk. Once these patterns are established, overt advice about such matters in teacher talk becomes less evident, since the children have understood them, though they remain tacit. Henceforth, teacher advice about acceptable behaviours is brought to the attention of children if

some breakdown in orderly behaviour occurs (Christie 2002). Among other matters, children learn to function in the class group and to follow routines in orderly ways, moving through the day's program and its various tasks.

In terms of oral language, children learn to engage in class talk, to ask and answer questions and to listen to others in attentive ways. They participate in other oral language activities, one of which is quite commonly Morning News, that activity in which individuals are given an opportunity to talk to the class about matters of personal interest, sharing some aspect of news. While Morning News can have a place in the early years of schooling, it should not constitute the only formal oral language learning activity available to the young. That is because such an activity tends to favour those children who already have a degree of oral facility and can enjoy the opportunity to address the group. Research (for example, Christie 2002; Gray 1999) shows that many children fail to benefit from such oral language activities, and the less confident or more reticent they are, the less it assists. One reason for this is that it is the child's responsibility to select the topic for talking about, and while this sounds attractive, it often causes some children difficulties. The teacher has not normally participated in, or shared, the item(s) of news. Thus, as can happen, when the child becomes tongue-tied, the teacher is unable to give him or her appropriate scaffolding, since the teacher was not present at the events. But where an activity has been shared with the teacher and class members, it is possible for the teacher to scaffold and support the child. Gray (1999) has demonstrated the success of programs with young Aboriginal children in which the teacher deliberately selects a shared task or event for recounting. Where this occurs, the appropriate patterns of oral language are modelled and rehearsed several times, with the children gradually gaining confidence to speak on their own. Activities Gray has used with the very young have involved procedures for cooking in the classroom, such as making toast or frying eggs, where the object is to retell how the task is completed. Events selected for retelling have included class visits to various places, where again it is the fact of the shared sequence of actions that enables teacher and students jointly to reconstruct what occurred. Sometimes, the activity can involve the children in retelling a favourite story they have either read or had read to them. In time, children can develop sufficient capacity to speak alone in a sustained way about topics, and all children should have developed some skills in this respect by the end of Year 2.

While desirable patterns of interaction and of talk are established, young children also learn aspects of literacy. They are often read to by their teachers at this early stage, acquiring a sense of the organisation of written language by listening to their teacher's voice. They view the images in various books, discussing their meanings

with the teacher, and relating image to verbal text, developing some understanding of the role of verbal text and visual images. They also often participate in group writing activities, watching their teacher write as they learn to identify the alphabet and the spelling system, while also beginning to master the writing system themselves. They develop some capacity to read simple texts, either in 'big books' shared with the rest of the class, or in well-selected books and/or Internet activities. They demonstrate comprehension of the texts they learn to read as well as some capacity to discuss different kinds of written texts and their purposes.

They begin to master a metalanguage for dealing with the English language, being able to talk about such things as spelling, full stops, commas, capital letters, sentences, and basic word classes or parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. They should also develop some knowledge of the different process types realised in the verb groups, and be able to talk about the different kinds of meanings constructed in these.

The second phase: Years 3 to 4

The second phase covers Years 3 to 4, in which many of the skills and areas of knowledge established in the first phase are consolidated and children move with growing independence into control of talk and of reading and of writing. In their oral language development, children demonstrate greater capacity to talk about topics of interest, engaging in teacher-guided talk, group discussions and individual oral presentations. Children need to be assisted to identify topics of interest for oral presentations, where these might include selections of novels or poems read in class or at home, or films or TV programs. Here it needs to be borne in mind that oral presentations have schematic structures, just as do written text types of the kind discussed in this book. (Such oral genres have not been discussed here because of space.) Thus, an oral explanation of how some Phenomenon works will involve a first stage that identifies the Phenomenon, followed by a subsequent stage in which an account is given of how the Phenomenon works. A review of a book or a film will begin by identifying the book or film, with some detail either about the author in the case of the book, or the actors in the case of the film, and a brief summary of the details of the story involved. This will be followed by some account of character and/or event. And a final stage will offer some Recommendation about the book or film. While oral language genres differ from written ones, because oral and written language differ, there are nonetheless some features of the written genres and their structures that teachers can use in guiding children in preparation of oral texts for formal presentation in the classroom. Teachers can thus guide students to talk about

and plan the structures of oral explanations, reports, reviews or discussions, and so on. Children should be given time to research the information they are to talk about and opportunity to write out their talks so that they can display confidence in standing up to talk at some length.

As for literate language development, the range of text types to be read and written will expand as the curriculum expands, and as the children's control of vocabulary also expands. Children should be able to discuss the elements of structure in selected text types, being familiar with the purposes of such texts and their relevance for the different areas of school learning. They should develop skills in discussion of the design of different texts, looking at issues of presentation in written books and in websites and CD-ROMs, while they should also develop design skills themselves in the creation of verbal/visual texts.

Children should have opportunity to enjoy literary texts, playing with their patterns of language and reflecting on their words and their meanings. They should be able to explore the meanings and the values of the stories and poems they read, as well as being able to discuss the factual texts they use. Children should be able to undertake research on topics using textbooks from the library or selected websites and/or CD-ROMs. They may engage in 'book rapping' of the kind discussed in chapter 12, thereby extending the range of students in schools with whom they interact, and developing and expressing opinions at some length.

Children's metalanguage should develop and they should be able to identify all basic word classes or parts of speech as well as the prepositional phrases, noun groups and verb groups in which circumstances, participants and processes are expressed. They should have some sense of clauses, being aware that a sentence may consist or more than one clause, joined by conjunctions. They should develop some awareness of different theme choices that start sentences, and their role in organising the structures of texts. Spelling capacity should be expanded and children given regular opportunity to practise spelling, and to identify new words and their meanings. They should be familiar with dictionaries, understanding how to use them, and be aware of the various abbreviations found in them.

The third phase: Years 5 to 6

This last phase covers Years 5 and 6, though in some states it also covers year 7, since the primary school can cover seven years. In this phase children further consolidate and expand their knowledge and understandings, preparing for the entry to the secondary curriculum. By now children should be able to operate with confidence in a number of areas of the curriculum. They should be able to talk with confidence

about topics of interest and relevance to their learning, either selected with teacher guidance or independently. They should be able, either individually or in groups, to research topics of interest and to present oral reports to the class. Topics that might be covered include environmental issues and conservation, the Clean Up Australia campaign, the quality of local sporting facilities, Aboriginal welfare, treatment of refugees, to name a few.

In their literate behaviour, children should be able to read and research with independence. They should be familiar with a number of text types or genres, and be able to critique examples of these, as well as to write them themselves. They should show confidence in the computer-assisted design of texts, being able to discuss how they are created and why. They should display a number of the features in their writing identified in chapters 9 and 10. Thus, depending on the text type to be written, they should show some confidence in use of expanded noun groups and in expanded prepositional phrases building circumstantial information; it will be in these that they will construct a great deal of content. They should show evidence of capacity to use nominalisation in their writing, producing texts that are informative. They should have a well-developed metalanguage for talking about language, including having some sense of such things as modal verbs, which help express judgment.

They should display interest in reading various literary texts, discussing these with confidence and writing texts about them, where these might include review genres, though they could also involve writing poems of their own or creating chapters or episodes from novels read. They should also be able to discuss films, being able to talk about ways in which visual images make their impact on the viewer. They should display facility in exploring factual textbooks, Internet websites and/or CD-ROMs for research and in preparing appropriate information from them. They should be able to read and review a number of literary texts, showing critical capacity in discussing them. They should be able to talk with confidence in class, both participating in class discussion and giving prepared talks.

They should also display a curiosity about language, taking pleasure in its different effects, and enjoying finding out about the history of words and their meanings. They should be confident spellers, able to use dictionaries and other sources of information about words, such as thesauruses.

Assessment of students' progress

The terms 'evaluation' and 'assessment' are often used interchangeably in educational discussion, and people differ about the significance accorded to each. However, one common practice has been to use the word 'evaluation' for talk of reviewing the

success of an overall program, while the word 'assessment' is used for reviewing students' actual performance in learning. In the interests of clarity this distinction will be used here, though we shall have most to say of assessment of students. This is because it is the students' welfare and progress that should be overwhelmingly the concern of teachers. Furthermore, where good assessment policies and principles are followed, the principles of program evaluation are normally good and coherent as well. That is because well-established principles for assessment provide good evidence in an evaluative sense of the overall effectiveness of a teaching program. Teachers should use the evidence of their various assessment procedures to help them review the overall success of teaching programs and to plan and implement new ones.

Good teaching practices should involve teachers in regular assessment of their students' performance, for some monitoring of children's progress should be ongoing. Generally speaking, assessment procedures may be thought of in both informal and formal terms. Informal methods involve such things as:

- observing children in the classroom, watching the ways they interact with their peers in group activities and also work alone;
- monitoring the manner in which children participate in discussions;
- identifying points at which particular children initiate desirable educational activity;
- observing ways in which children ask questions about ongoing activities and/or respond to questions;
- observing children as they read, and judging the ease and enthusiasm with which they go about their reading, either in books or on the Internet;
- observing children as they write and noticing the extent to which they seem confident about going about their tasks;
- involving children in self-assessment, working either individually or in groups, and reviewing their own progress and commenting on it.

In undertaking such informal methods of assessment, over the day, and over the weeks, some teachers keep running records in which they note particular aspects of their students' performance and progress, and this is certainly useful in terms of building a profile of any child's development. Whether teachers keep such records or not, they do need to keep mentally reviewing their students' progress. They also need to develop profiles of their children's progress, keeping records of representative work as they progress. Teachers should also make opportunity from time to time to talk to all children individually, discussing some aspects of their work, and providing constructive feedback and advice to them. All learners benefit from a sense that their

teacher is careful and watchful about their progress, giving praise where it is merited, and supporting children whose performance needs to improve.

More formal procedures involve such activities as:

- regular spelling tests;
- regular grammar and word games and tests of various kinds, intended to reveal developing knowledge of a metalanguage;
- discussing and developing understandings of the schematic structures of different text types, where students record notes about these for further work;
- reviewing and discussing drafts of texts the children have written, with a view to the children making editorial improvements;
- reviewing books and other print materials read with a view to identifying words of interest, either because they are new or because their spelling is problematic;
- identifying and discussing the history and meanings of words, based on research in dictionaries, and recorded in children's books;
- development of guidelines for researching topics for class oral presentations, where students keep records of such guidelines for future reference;
- development of similar guidelines for undertaking research using the Internet and other sources, to be used in preparing notes with which to write eventual reports, explanations, discussions and so on.

More formal assessment procedures involve:

- collection and marking of children's final versions of written text types of all kinds – poems, reports, explanations, reviews, and so on, depending on which text types children have been learning;
- collecting advice about the range of novels, poems and stories that children have read, building records of the reading experiences of the children;
- distributing, collecting and marking worksheets that test such things as knowledge of grammar, parts of speech and functional terms, word origins, where those items selected depend on the teaching and learning that have occurred;
- organising oral presentations by children on a range of topics, using the criteria developed and recorded in class preparation in order to assess performance;
- school uses of standardised tests such as reading tests, used to provide evidence of performance against test norms.

All these procedures – both informal and formal – should be used by teachers in providing constructive advice to children and parents about their progress in schools, and a little more will be said about this below. First we should mention the most formal methods of assessment currently used in our schools, at least at the primary and junior secondary levels.

The most formal assessment procedures currently conducted in schools are those in which the various state departments of education conduct periodic tests of language and literacy performance at certain key stages across the years of compulsory schooling. Teachers have some responsibility to assist children in preparing to do such tests, since formal tests administered from the central office of education can appear somewhat intimidating. Such tests, now well-established tools in the educational systems of most English-speaking societies, are held to provide advice to schools and parents about the general standards of performance of children in several identified age groups. While some such advice does emerge, such tests by their nature offer at best 'broad brush' evidence of the education system's success in teaching language and literacy. The tests do not provide detailed information about the performance of individuals, and they tell nothing about the developmental processes in which children have engaged to achieve their levels of performance. These tests also measure a fairly narrow range of language capacities. In all, while great claims are sometimes made for the significance of centrally administered tests of children's language and literacy performance, such tests offer at best a partial measure of progress and growth. Teachers, children and their parents will do well to rely much more on the carefully amassed advice and evidence that good teachers provide using a range of formal and informal assessment procedures in all areas of the language and literacy program.

Outcomes-based assessment

Outcomes-based assessment, as the term implies, offers assessment of children's performance against the measure of clearly stated educational outcomes. In terms of procedures for offering constructive advice to children and their parents about their progress, statements of desired educational outcomes can give clear and explicit advice. In fact, increasingly, educational systems in the Australian states have moved towards models of education in which outcomes for all Key Learning Areas are stated, including subject English. See, for example, the NSW statement on English for K–6, including its statement of outcomes (<http://www.bosnsw-k6.nsw.edu.au/english/pdf_doc/k6eng_syl.pdf>) (Access: 1st October 2004) or the statement for English as part of the Curriculum and Standards Framework for the state of Victoria (<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/csf/klas/index.html#english>) (Access: 1st October 2004).

Schools should use such statements of outcomes to provide general guidance for development of their own curricula goals and assessment, though individual schools and teachers need to develop finer statements of outcomes for each class and child. Such finer statements of outcomes should reflect the pedagogical goals set by the

teachers in all areas of the curriculum and the criteria used in assessment of performance. The more precise and explicit the goals given children in writing a text, in researching a topic, in reading and discussing a poem, in presenting a talk, for example, the clearer the children are enabled to be about what they must do. Clear goals for teaching, like precise directions to children about what they must do, should provide the criteria with which assessment statements are constructed. Good schools use such statements as part of building student profiles.

One primary school in NSW created student learning profiles for all children, in which evidence of children's progress was carefully prepared over each school term and presented to the children and their parents. Here one section will be drawn from a profile prepared for Felix who was in Year 3, and aged 8 years. Among other things, his profile stated that Felix had been reading narratives and studying their structure and purpose. Felix and his classmates were asked to read an independently chosen narrative and to demonstrate knowledge of its structure and purpose by providing written answers to a series of questions. These were included in his profile folio. In addition, the profile statement reported on his success with respect to the outcomes as stated in the NSW English K–6 Syllabus and those of the school itself. Specific indicators were referred to in identifying aspects of Felix's performance.

Indicators	ED	WT	ACH
Identifies the main elements of structure in stories, e.g. Orientation, Complication, Resolution.			✓
Recognises and describes the purpose of a narrative.			✓
Recognises recurring character types and their traits.		✓	
Makes some inferences about ideas implicit in the text.		✓	
Identifies adjectives and how they are used to provide information about nouns, e.g. characters.			✓

ED – Experiencing difficulty. **WT – Working towards.** **ACH – Achieved.**

Such a page in the profile provides clear and unambiguous information about the child's strengths in this aspect of his English program. It also allows him to identify those aspects of his performance in which he needs to make some improvements. The advice from the school to him and his parents was that they should review the portfolio and reflect on and discuss the progress Felix had made. It was perceived as an essentially helpful and constructive statement. Production of such student profiles as that provided to Felix can be quite a task for the teacher. Preparation and

formatting of the report, as well as keeping of careful records by teachers, take time. However, over time, teachers develop greater skills in preparing the reports. Furthermore, the benefits that follow from provision of clear and constructive advice make the effort very worthwhile.

Success in oral language and literacy performance

There are of course many measures of success in oral language and literacy performance in schools. That is partly because, as we noted at the start of this chapter, language is pervasive in all areas of living and learning. Furthermore, it is impossible to define in absolute terms what constitutes success in language learning. Much depends on context and purpose in using language in any case, and in schools much depends in particular on the ages of the children and on the areas of knowledge they are learning. But this does not mean that we cannot be precise about our goals in teaching oral language and literacy across the years of schooling. On the contrary, as this book has sought to demonstrate, it is essential that teachers be clear about their educational goals and precise in the criteria they develop with which to guide and challenge those whom they teach. Above all, learning language and literacy should be rewarding – a source of pleasure and fun, as well as a source of excitement in the learning of new knowledge. One measure of the success of the program should be that children experience a sense of excitement and feel rewarded in their achievements.

As a final example of success in learning English, let us return for the moment to the experience of Felix, who plainly enjoyed school and was excited by the ideas it assisted him to learn to express. The final entry in his portfolio was a copy of an exposition he had written after a class discussion about 'Why school is important'. He had been taught to write simple exposition genres in which a main idea or 'Thesis' is proposed and this is then supported with an 'Argument' element. The text type ends with a element called the 'Reinforcement of Thesis', whose function is to reiterate the basic idea expressed in the opening element and bring the text to a close.

Thesis ^ Argument ^ Reinforcement of Thesis

We shall reproduce the text here, noting only the elements of structure, but not analysing the text in detail.

Why school is important

Thesis

In Australia everybody has to go to school. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor or what country you come from. At school we are all equal and we all do the same things. School is an important part of being Australian.

Argument

We do lots of different things. Of course, we learn things. We learn to read and spell and write. We learn about numbers, space and geometry. We learn about how the world works in science and about our country and ourselves in HSIE. We learn other things too, like Italian and music. We have fun. We play games like handball, tips and cops and robbers. We play sport, like basketball, swimming and tae kwon do. But most of all, we make friends. Whether we are learning in the classroom or having fun in the playground, we are with our friends, old friends and new friends. We are all different but we all have fun together.

Reinforcement of Thesis

That's why school is important. We learn much, much more than maths, English and science. In Australia we are lucky to have people from all over the world living here. Their children go to school with us and we learn from them. We learn about their countries, what food they eat, how they dress and how they speak. We learn new games. We learn to get on and accept each other. We become friends. I think school is important because of all the children who come here and are my friends.

Felix was successful, demonstrating both his growing confidence in controlling written English and his growing capacity in expressing important and exciting ideas.

There are grounds for optimism and pride in a student who produced a text such as this. There are grounds for optimism and pride too, in the school and teachers that fostered Felix's language capacity and his interest in school learning.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have proposed that language is both an instrument of teaching and learning and an object of teaching and learning, and that both aspects of language work need to be borne in mind in developing English language programs. We have outlined a tripartite model of language development, in terms of learning language, learning through language and learning about language, and have suggested that

learning in all three senses should feature in the curriculum. We have argued that assessment of children's performance in oral language and literacy should be conducted in both informal and formal ways. We have also argued that advice to students and their parents about their performance should be outcomes-based, providing children with clear and unambiguous information.

Further reading

Derewianka, Beverly (ed.) (1992) *Language Assessment in Primary Classrooms*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, London and Florida.

Feez, Susan with Helen Joyce (1998) *Text-based Syllabus Design*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Macquarie University, Sydney.

Glossary

autonomous models of literacy: Models of literacy that stress skills in use of literacy in decontextualised or isolated ways, and at the expense of values and ideologies (see **ideological models of literacy**).

blends: A term used to refer to the ways either consonants or vowels are blended, or brought together to spell words.

circumstance: A term in the functional grammar; prepositional phrases and adverb groups provide circumstantial information about the information also expressed in processes and participants. Circumstances are important for building knowledge in a text.

clause: A clause is recognised because it is a group of words that must contain a verb.

conjunctions: Grammatical items that build logical connections between clauses (for example, *when*, *after*, *and*, *so*, *however*). Where these grammatical items occur, they also have a role as textual themes (see **theme**).

context of culture: The particular cultural setting in which language is used. The language choices associated with this context are said to be choices with respect to overall text type or genre.

context of situation: The particular and immediate setting in which language is used. The language choices associated with this context are said to be choices in register.

critical literacy: Refers to developing critical skills in using literate texts.

deconstruct, **deconstruction**: Terms used in this book to refer to the process of taking a target genre and breaking it down into its elements, identifying their functions.

dialect: All languages have dialects or forms of the language associated with certain social groups. Standard English (the language of books and of education) is one dialect, while there are also various non-standard dialects spoken as well.

endophoric reference: Refers to items that create internal reference in a text (see **reference**, **specific reference** and **generic reference**).

exophoric reference: Refers to items that refer out of a text and into the context (see **reference**, **specific reference** and **generic reference**).

functional labels: The names given to language items from the functional grammar. Functional labels are intended to identify functions for which words are used, in contrast to class labels, which identify classes to which words belong (see **word classes**).

genre: A technical term for a particular instance of a text type (see **schematic structure**).

generic reference: Referential items that identify classes of entities; for example, *wombats*, *the tiger*.

grammar: The principled ways in which a language structures and orders information, creating clauses and texts. The word 'grammar' is used in several senses in this book: (i) as the basic resource children learn in learning their mother tongue; (ii) as an object of study, especially when children are learning to read and write; and (iii) when reference is made to the patterns of 'standard English grammar', which prescribe rules for socially approved expressions; for example, *I saw* rather than *I seen*.

grammatical items: The language items that are not lexis. Grammatical items are a closed set of words; that is, we do not keep creating new grammatical items (for example, prepositions, articles, pronouns, some adverbs, auxiliary verbs – see **word classes**).

grapheme, **graphemic awareness**: Graphemes are the letters of the alphabet used to represent phonemes on the page. Graphemic awareness refers to developing some sense of the relationship of graphemes and phonemes.

head word: The noun that is central to any noun group (see **pre-modifier**, **post-modifier**).

ideological models: A term used to contrast with autonomous modes, focusing on values and ideologies associated with literacy uses.

independent construction: A stage in a cycle of work on genre writing when students write independently.

joint construction: A term used in some accounts of genre pedagogy. It refers to a stage when students are encouraged to work with their teachers in writing a text before doing similar writing tasks independently.

lexical analogy: This term refers to recognising ways in which words 'look alike' in writing; for example, *book*, *look* and *cook*. Development of a sense of lexical analogy helps children develop their visual memories in learning to spell.

lexical density: Written language tends to have more lexical or "content' items per clause than does speech. This is called lexical density.

lexicogrammar: A term that combines lexis and grammar. The two function together in any case, and the distinctions between them are at times not clear-cut.

lexis, **lexical items**: Technical terms for the vocabulary of a language. Lexical items contrast with grammatical items, because new words are added to the lexis all the time, and they are said to be an open set (for example, nouns, adjectives, verbs and some adverbs).

macrofunctions: A term used by Halliday to refer to early functions for using language that emerge in young children's language development. He identifies a pragmatic and a mathetic function.

metafunctions: There are three metafunctions identified in the functional grammar, used in this book, and said to cut across language: the **experiential metafunction** refers to the language resources that build experience, knowledge and information. These are found in the lexis (that is, expressed in noun groups, verb groups, prepositional phrases and adverb groups). The **interpersonal metafunction** builds relationships between writers and readers and is expressed

in mood, modality, polarity and person. The **textual metafunction** is expressed in the language resources that build texture and coherence, mainly theme choices and reference.

metalanguage: A term used to refer to a language for talking about language.

modality: The resources in language that express judgment about the probability, usuality or likelihood that something might occur, or about the necessity or obligation that something should occur. Modality may be low, median or high (see **polarity**).

mood: Choices in mood allow us to take up different relationships with others. The choices are for **indicative** (which includes either **declarative** or **interrogative**) and **imperative**.

multiliteracies: The potential range of forms of literacies, including those that use more than language.

multimodality: The simultaneous presence of more than one mode of communication.

nominalisation: The process by which acts expressed in verb groups are re-expressed in noun groups, making them things or phenomena that we can write or talk about.

number: Two numbers are recognised in a grammatical sense: singular and plural.

orthography: A technical term for the spelling system.

participant: A term from the functional grammar. Participants in a text are expressed or realised in nouns or noun groups (or their equivalents). They are not necessarily human, but refer to any entities or things expressed through noun groups. Participants are intimately linked to the processes expressed in verb groups (see **process type**).

participle: There are two types of participles or parts of verbs: present participles (for example, *am going*, *am coming*, *am seeing*) and past participles (*had gone*, *had come*, *had seen*).

person: There are three persons: first (*I*, *me*, *we*, *us*, *our*); second (*you*, *your*); third (*she*, *her*, *he*, *his*, *their*, *them*), but also expressed in all nouns (for example, *the man*, *wombats*)

phoneme, **phonemic awareness**: The phonemes of a language are its sounds. Phonemic awareness refers to developing a conscious sense of phonemes as an aspect of learning to spell and learning to read.

phonic method: A teaching method that stresses the relationship between sounds and the letters used to represent them in the writing system.

polarity: There are two poles for dealing with experience – negative (*don't*) or positive (*do*). Modal expressions suggest judgments about things that may, should or must occur, and they lie between the two poles (see **modality**).

pre-modifier, **post-modifier**: Items found before the head word in a noun group constitute the pre-modifier and those after it are the post-modifier. They both modify the noun in some way because they add information to it.

process type: A term from the functional grammar. Processes are 'goings on' in the world or in the imagination. They are expressed or realised in verb groups (see **participant**).

protoconversation, **protolanguage**: A protoconversation is an interaction between baby and caregiver, shortly after birth. A protolanguage is a primitive or first language.

ranks: The different ranks or levels found in grammatical groupings from clause down to morphemes.

reference: Items that help track the presence of participants in a text; for example, pronouns.

register: Three variables involved in the construction of language in any context of situation: **field** (social activity or topic); **tenor** (the relationship of participants); **mode** (the role of language; for example, is it spoken or written?)

scaffolding: A term invented by Bruner to refer to the ways in which teachers can support students as they develop independence in their learning.

schematic structure: The overall pattern of stages or **elements of schematic structure** found in a genre or text type. A text type is recognised because of its schematic structure.

semiotics: The study of symbolic or meaning systems. Language is a semiotic or meaning-making system.

specific reference: Referential items in a text that specify individual entities; for example, *Mr Brown*, *he*.

system network: The functional grammar views language as offering a series of networks of choices for making meaning; for example, the systems of mood, tense, number all offer different choices or options for constructing meaning. (The choices are not said to be conscious). A system network displays the choices.

tense: The ways English indicates time through verb choices. The primary tenses are: present, future and past, though there are many gradations of tense expressed between these.

text: Any coherent meaningful passage of language is a text. It may be as short as a public notice or as long as a novel.

text type: Texts have their characteristic shape because they are instances of text types or genres.

theme: A term from the functional grammar referring to what is emphasised or made prominent in a clause as the focus of its message. In English (but not in many other languages) theme comes first. Theme is an important part of the textual metafunction, for it is to do with the ways clauses are organised and arranged to build a coherent text. There are three types of themes, and where they all appear they come in the order: textual, interpersonal, topical. The **topical themes** drive the discourse forward, and they are often (but not always) expressed in noun groups that also form the subjects of verbs. **Textual themes** are expressed in various structural items that build connection between clauses (see **conjunctions**). **Interpersonal themes** are to do with relationship. An example of two clauses that have all themes in the second clause is as follows: (*He* (topical) *spoke to me* // *but* (textual) *unfortunately* (interpersonal) *I* (topical) *did not hear*

him. Where such language items occur apart from at the start of a clause, they are not thematic.

vector: A term taken from mathematics referring to a straight line. Used in talking of relationships created using visuals.

visual representation: Kress and van Leeuwen draw on the functional grammar to identify three ways in which meanings are constructed in visuals – representational, interactional and compositional.

voice: Two voices are recognised – **active** and **passive**. Active voice occurs when the agent responsible for some action is the subject; for example, *he kicked the ball*. Passive voice occurs when the subject of the verb is not the agent; for example, *the ball was kicked by him*. Passive voice can be important in building some theme choices.

word classes: Also called 'parts of speech' – nouns, adjectives, adverbs, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, pronouns, verbs.

References

Aidman, Marina (1999) 'Biliteracy development through early and mid-primary years: A longitudinal case study of bilingual writing'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Melbourne.

Amery, Heather (2003) *The Usborne Little Book of Children's Poems* (illustrated by Stephen Cartwright), Usborne Publishing, London.

Barwick, John & Barwick, Jenny (1999) *The Spelling Skills Handbook: Effective Strategies and Useful Rules for Spellers*, Horwitz Martin Education, Sydney and High Wycombe, UK.

Bernstein, Basil (1990) *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse: Class Codes and Control*, vol. IV, Routledge, London and New York.

Bloom, Lois (1970) *Language Development: Form and Function in Emerging Grammars*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London.

Bradley, David & Crofton, Ian (2002) *Atoms and Elements*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brown, Gordon DA & Ellis, Nick C (eds) (1994) *The Handbook of Spelling: Theory, Process and Intervention*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto and Singapore.

Brown, Roger (1973) *A First Language: The Early Stages*, Allen & Unwin, Suffolk, UK.

Browne, Anthony (1986) *Piggybook*, Julia MacRae, London.

—— (1992) *Zoo*, Julia MacRae, London.

Bruner, Jerome (1983) *Children's Talk: Learning to Use Language*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

—— (1986) *Actual Minds: Possible Worlds*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London.

Bullowa, Margaret (1979) *Before Speech: the Beginnings of Interpersonal Communication*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Butt, D (2004) 'How our meanings change: school contexts and semantic evolution', 217–40. In G Williams & A Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, 217–40.

Callow, John (ed.) (1999) *Image Matters: Visual Texts in the Classroom*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney.

Cambourne, Brian (eds Libby Handy & Penny Scown) (1988) *The Whole Story: Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom*, Ashton Scholastic, Auckland.

Carter, Rita (1998) *Mapping the Mind*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London.

Cazden, Courtney (1977) 'Concentrated versus contrived encounters: Suggestions for language assessment in early childhood.' In Alan Davies (ed.) *Language and Learning in Early Childhood*, Heinemann, London.

—— (1983) 'Adult assistance to language development: Scaffolds, models and direct instruction'. In R Parker & F Davis (eds) *Developing Literacy*, International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware.

Cazden, Courtney B (1992) *Whole Language Plus: Essays on Literacy in the United States and New Zealand*, Teachers College Columbia University, New York and London.

Chomsky, Noam (1972) *Language and Mind*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York.

—— (1980) *Rules and Representations*, Columbia University Press, New York.

—— (1988) *Language and Problems of Knowledge: The Managua Lectures*, MIT Press, MA.

—— (2002) (edited by Adriana Belletti & Luigi Rizzi), *On Nature and Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York and Melbourne.

Christie, Frances (2002) *Classroom Discourse Analysis: A Functional Perspective*, Continuum, London and New York.

Christie, Frances & Martin, JR (1997) *Genre and Institutions: Social Processes in the Workplace and School*, Continuum, London and New York.
Christie, Frances & Soosai, Anne (2001) *Language and Meaning 2*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne.
Christie, F, Gray, P, Gray, B, Macken, M, Martin, J & Rothery, J (1990a). *Language A Resource for Meaning: Exploring Reports* (Four Students' Books and Teachers' Book), Harcourt Brace Jovanich, Sydney.
—— (1990b). *Language A Resource for Meaning: Exploring Procedures* (*Four Students' Books and Teachers' Book*), Harcourt Brace Jovanich, Sydney.
—— (1992). *Language A Resource for Meaning: Exploring Explanations* (*Four Students' Books and Teachers' Book*), Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney.
Christie, F & Martin JR (eds) (1997). *Genres and Institutions: Social Processes in the Workplace and the School*, Cassell, London.
Clay, Marie and Cazden, Courtney (1992) 'A Vygotskyan interpretation of Reading Recovery'. In Courtney Cazden (ed.), pp. 114–35.
Coffin, Caroline (1997) 'Constructing and giving value to the past: An investigation into secondary school history'. In Christie & Martin, pp. 196–230.
Cope, Bill & Kalantzis, Mary (eds) (2000) *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, Macmillan, Melbourne.
Coulmas, Florian (1989) *The Writing Systems of the World*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, UK and Cambridge, MA.
Crystal, David (2001) *Language and the Internet*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Deacon, Terrence (1997) *The Symbolic Species*, Penguin Books, London, New York and Melbourne.
Derewianka, Beverly (1990) *Exploring How Texts Work*, PETA, Sydney.
—— (ed.) (1992) *Language Assessment in Primary Classrooms*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, London and Florida.
—— (2003) 'Grammatical metaphor in the transition to adolescence'. In Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenbergen, Miriam Taverniers & Louise Ravelli (eds) *Grammatical Metaphor: Views from Systemic Functional Linguistics*, Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, pp. 185–220.
Derewianka, Beverly & Hammond, Jennifer (2001) 'Genre'. In R Carter & D Nunan (eds) *The Cambridge Guide to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 186–93.
Disadvantaged Schools Program (1994) *Exploring Literacy in School English: Write it Right Literacy and Learning Program*, Department of School Education, Metropolitan East Region, Sydney.
Edelman, Gerald (1992) *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind*, Penguin Books, London.
Edwards, AD & Westgate, DPG (rev. edn) (1994) *Investigating Classroom Talk*, (*Social Research and Educational Studies Series*, 13), Falmer Press, London and Washington.
Fairclough, Norman (1992) (ed.) *Critical Language Awareness*, Longman, London and New York.
Feez, Susan (1998) *Text-based Syllabus Design*, National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research, Sydney.
—— (2002) 'Heritage and innovation in second language education'. In Ann M Johns (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*, Erlbaum, Mahwah, New Jersey and London, pp. 43–72.
Fienberg, Anna & Fienberg, Barbara (2001) *The Big Big Big Book of Tashi*, Allen & Unwin, Crows, New South Wales.
—— (2004) *Tashi Lost in the City*, Allen & Unwin, Crows, New South Wales.
Freebody, Peter & Luke, Allan (1990) '"Literacies" programs: debates and demands in cultural context'. In *Prospect*, 5, pp. 7–16.
Freedman, Aviva & Medway, Peter (eds) (1994) *Genre and the New Rhetoric*. (Series: *Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education*, Series ed. Allan Luke), Taylor & Francis, London.
Gee, James Paul (1996) (2nd edn) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*, Taylor & Francis, London.
Gerot, Linda (1995) *Making Sense of Text*, Antipodean Educational Enterprises, Cammeray, NSW.

Goodman, Kenneth (ed. FV Gollasch) (1982) *Selected Writings of Kenneth S Goodman*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston and London.
Graves, Donald (1981) (ed. RD Walshe) *Donald Graves in Australia: Children Want to Write*, PETA, Sydney.
—— (1983) *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*, Heinemann Educational Books, New Hampshire.
Gray, Brian (1985) 'Helping children to become language learners in the classroom'. In Michael Christie (ed.) *Aboriginal Perspectives on Experience and Learning: The Role of Language in Aboriginal Education*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.
—— (1999) 'Accessing the Discourses of Schooling: English Language and Literacy Development with Aboriginal Children in Mainstream Schools'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Melbourne.
Gray, Brian & Cowey, Wendy (1997) *High Order Book Orientation: The Lion and the Mouse*, Schools and Community Centre, University of Canberra, Canberra.
Green, Bill (1988) 'Subject-specific literacy and school learning: A focus on writing'. In *Australian Journal of Education*, 32, 2, pp. 156–79
Halliday, MAK (1973) *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, Arnold, London.
—— (1975) *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language*, (*Explorations in Language Studies Series*. Eds Peter Doughty & Geoffrey Thornton), Arnold, London.
—— (1985) *Spoken and Written Language*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.
—— (1993) 'Towards a language-based theory of learning'. In *Linguistics and Education*, 5, 2, pp. 93–116.
—— (2004a) 'On grammar as the driving force from primary to higher-order consciousness'. In G Williams & A Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 15–44.
—— (2004b) 'Representing the child as a semiotic being (one who means)'. In Joseph A Foley (ed.) *Language, Education and Discourse*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 19–42.
Halliday, MAK & Hasan, Ruqaiya (1985) *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.
Halliday, MAK, McIntosh, A & Strevens, P (1964), *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, Longman, London.
Halliday, MAK & Matthiessen, Christian (2004) (3rd edn) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Arnold, London and New York.
Hammond, Jennifer (ed.) (2001) *Scaffolding Teaching and Learning in Language and Literacy Education*, Primary English Teaching Association, Newtown, NSW.
Hasan, Ruqaiya (1987) 'Reading Picture Reading: Invisible Instruction at Home and in School'. A paper given at the 13th Australian Reading Association Conference, held 11–14 July 1987, Sydney. Conference Proceedings, pp. 33–82.
—— (1989) 'Semantic variation and sociolinguistics'. In *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 9, pp. 221–75.
—— (1996) 'Literacy, everyday talk and society'. In Ruqaiya Hasan & Geoff Williams (eds) *Literacy in Society*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, UK and New York, pp. 377–424.
—— (2001) 'The ontogenesis of decontextualised language: Some achievements of classification and framing'. In A Morais, I Neves, B Davies & H Daniels (eds) *Towards a Sociology of Pedagogy: The Contribution of Basil Bernstein in Research*. (*History of Schools and Schooling Series*, vol. 23. Series eds AR Sadovnik & SF Semel), Peter Lang, New York and Washington, pp. 47-80.
—— (2004) 'The world in words: Semiotic mediation, tenor and ideology'. In G Williams & A Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 158–81.
Hasan, Ruqaiya & Martin, JR (eds) (1989) *Language Development: Learning Language, Learning Culture. Meaning and Choice in Language: Studies for Michael Halliday*. (*Advances in Discourse*

Processes Series, vol. XXVII, Series ed. Roy O Freedle), Ablex Publishing, Norwood, NJ.
Hergé (1956) *The Adventures of Tintin: The Calculus Affair*. (Translated by Leslie Lonsdale-Cooper & Michael Turner), Methuen & Company, London.
Heath, Shirley Brice (1983) *Ways with Words*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
Hutchins, Pat (1968) *Rosie's Walk*, Bodley Head, London.
Itard, Jean Marc Gaspard (1962) *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*. (Translated by G Humphrey & M Humphrey), Meredith Publishing, New York.
Kress, Gunther (1997) *Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy*, Routledge, London and New York.
—— (2003) *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Routledge, London and New York.
Kress, Gunther & van Leeuwen, Theo (1996) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, Routledge, London & New York.
Labov, W & Waletzky, W (1967) 'Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience'. In J Helm (ed.) *Essays in the Verbal and Visual Arts*. (*American Ethnological Society – Proceedings of Spring Meeting*, *1966*), University of Washington Press, Washington DC, pp. 12–44.
Lacome, Rosemary (2002) *The Big Nursery Rhyme Book*, Methuen, London.
Leakey, Richard (1994) *The Origin of Humankind*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London.
Lee, A (1996) *Gender, Literacy, Curriculum: Re-writing School Geography.* (Series: *Critical Perspectives on Literacy and Education* (Series ed. A Luke), Taylor & Francis, London.
Lennox, Carolyn & Siegel, Linda S (1994) 'The role of phonological and orthographic processes in learning to spell'. In Brown, Gordon DA & Ellis, Nick C (eds) (1994) *The Handbook of Spelling: Theory, Process and Intervention*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto and Singapore, pp. 93–109.
Lipski, Sam (1995) 'The writing is on the wall for whole learning'. In *The Age*, 28 August 1995, p. 12.
Luke, Allan (1992) 'The social construction of literacy in the primary school'. In Len Unsworth (ed.) *Literacy, Learning and Teaching: Language as Social Practice in the Classroom*, Macmillan, Melbourne, pp. 1–54.
Luke, Carmen (2000) 'Cyber-space and technological change: Multiliteracies for new times'. In Bill Cope & Mary Kalantzis (eds) *Multiliteracies, Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, Macmillan, Melbourne, pp. 69–91.
McCloud, S (1994) *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, HarperCollins, New York.
Mackay, D & Schaub, P (1970) *Breakthrough to Literacy*, Longman, London.
Macken-Horarik, M (1998) 'Exploring the requirements of critical school literacy: A view from two classrooms'. In Frances Christie & Ray Misson (eds) *Literacy and Schooling*, Routledge, London and New York, pp. 74–103.
Macken-Horarik, Mary (1996) 'Literacy and learning across the curriculum'. In Ruqaiya Hasan & Geoff Williams (eds) *Literacy in Society*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow, UK and New York, pp. 232–78.
—— (2002) '"Something to shoot for": A systemic functional approach to teaching genre in secondary school science'. In AM Johns (ed.), *Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives*, Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ, pp. 17–42.
Malinowski, Bronislaw (1923) 'The problem of meaning in primitive languages'. Supplement 1. In CK Ogden & IA Richards (eds) *The Meaning of Meaning*, (International Library of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method), Kegan Paul, London.
—— (1935) *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, vol. 2, Allen & Unwin, London. (Reprinted as *The Language of Magic and Gardening*, (Indiana University Studies in the History and Theory of Linguistics), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1967.
Martin, JR (1999) 'Mentoring semogenesis: "Genre-based" literacy pedagogy'. In F Christie (ed.) *Pedagogy and the Shaping of Consciousness: Linguistic and Social Processes*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 123–55.
Martin, JR & Rose, David (2003) *Working with Discourse: Meaning beyond the Clause*, Continuum,

London and New York.
Martin, JR & Rothery, J (1986) 'What a functional approach to the writing task can show teachers about "good writing"'. In B Couture (ed.) *Functional Approaches to Writing: Research Perspectives*, Pinter, London, pp. 241–65.
Matthiessen, Christian MIM (2004) 'The evolution of language: A systemic functional exploration of phylogenetic phases'. In Geoff Williams & Annabelle Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 45–90.
Mehan, H (1979) *Learning Lessons: Social Organization in the Classroom*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
Moroney, Michael (2002) *A Classic Treasury of Nursery Rhymes and Songs*, Penguin, London.
Muspratt, Sandy, Luke, Alan & Freebody, Peter (eds) (1997) *Constructing Critical Literacies*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
National Trust, The (1995) *The National Trust Book of Fairy Tales*. Illustrated by Ian Penney. The National Trust, London.
Ng, Julie, Powditch, Janthia & Abeni, Len with Jon Callow (1999) '"Vote for me!": The art of persuasion'. In Jon Callow (ed.) *Image Matters: Visual Texts in the Classroom*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney, pp. 65–74.
Nimmo, Jenny (2002) *Midnight for Charlie Bone*, Egmont Random House, London.
Ong, Walter J (1982) *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (*New Accent Series*, General ed. Terence Hawkes), Methuen, London and New York.
Opie, Iona & Opie, Peter (1959) *The Lore and Language of School Children*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
—— (eds) (1960) *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
Oppenheimer, Stephen (2003) *Out of Eden: The Peopling of the World*, Constable & Robinson, London.
Painter, Clare (1984) *Into the Mother Tongue*, Pinter, London.
—— (1990) (2nd edn) *Learning the Mother Tongue*, Deakin University Press, Geelong, Victoria.
—— (1991) (2nd edn) *Learning the Mother Tongue*, Deakin University Press, Geelong.
—— (1999) *Learning Language in Early Childhood*, Cassell, London and New York.
—— (2003) 'The use of a metaphorical mode of meaning in early language development'. In Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenbergen, Miriam Taverniers & Louise Ravelli (eds) *Grammatical Metaphor: Views from Systemic Functional Linguistics*, Benjamins, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, pp. 151–68.
—— (2004) 'The "interpersonal first" principle in child language development'. In G Williams & A Lukin (eds) *The Development of Language: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*, Continuum, London and New York, pp. 137–57.
Patten, Brian (ed.) (1998) *The Puffin Book of Utterly Brilliant Poetry*, Puffin, London, New York, Melbourne, Ontario and Auckland.
Perera, Katharine (1984) *Children's Writing and Reading: Analyzing Classroom Language*, Basil Blackwell, London.
Plum, Guenter (1988) 'Text and contextual conditioning in spoken English: A genre-based approach'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney.
Rattonovich, Saowalak (1992) 'Classroom management'. In Richard Walker, Saowalak Rattonovich & John W Oller, Jr. *Teaching all the Children to Read*, Open University Press, Buckingham and Philadelphia, pp. 33–43.
Ridley, Matt (2003) *Nature via Nurture: Genes, Experience and What Makes Us Human*, Fourth Estate, London and New York.
Rodda, Emily (2000) *The Lake of Tears. Delta Quest Series*, Scholastic Press, Lindfield NSW.
Rose, D (2004) 'Sequencing and Pacing of the Hidden Curriculum: How Indigenous Learners Are Left out of the Chain'. In Johan Muller, Andrew Morais & Brian Davies, *Reading Bernstein,*

Researching Bernstein, Routledge Falmer, London, pp. 91–107.
Rose, David, Gray, Brian & Cowey, Wendy (1999) 'Scaffolding reading and writing for indigenous children in school'. In P Wignell (ed.) *Double Power: English Literacy and Indigenous Education*, Language Australia, Melbourne, pp. 23–60.
Rose, D, Lui-Chivizhe, L, McKnight, A & Smith, A (2004) 'Scaffolding Academic Reading and Writing at the Koori Centre'. In *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 30th Anniversary Edition, <http://www.atsis.uq.edu.au/ajie>.
Rosen, Michael (1991) (ed.) *A World of Poetry*, Kingfisher, London.
Rothery, Joan (1991) '"Story" writing in primary school: Assessing narrative type texts'. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney.
—— (1996) 'Making changes: Developing an educational linguistics'. In Riuqaiya Hasan & Geoff Williams (eds) *Literacy in Society*, Addison-Wesley Longman, London, pp. 86–123.
Sandiford, Carmel (1997) 'Teaching explanations to primary school children: The how and the why'. Unpublished M.Ed thesis, University of Melbourne.
Saraceni, M (2003) *The Language of Comics*, Routledge, London and New York.
Schleppegrell, Mary J (2004) *The Language of Schooling: A Functional Linguistic Perspective*, Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ and London.
Scieszka, Jon & Smith, Lane (1992) *The Stinky Cheese Man and other Fairly Stupid Tales*, Viking, New York.
Scott, Patricia & Cutts, Hannah (1993) *Of Mice, Lions and Elephants*, Macmillan Education, Melbourne.
Scott-Mitchell, Clare & Griffith, Kathleen (2002) *100 Australian Poems for Children*, Random House, Sydney, New York, Toronto, London, Auckland and Johannesburg.
Sharpe, Tina & Dieter, Elizabeth (1999) 'Visual literacy and the Internet'. In Jon Callow (ed.) *Image Matters: Visual Texts in the Classroom*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney, pp. 95–108.
Simpson, Alyson (2003) 'Book raps as online multimodal communication. Towards a model of interactive pedagogy'. In *International Journal of Learning*, 10, 2003, pp. 2705–14.
Sinclair, J McH & Coulthard, RM (1975) *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English Used by Teachers and Pupils*, Oxford University Press, London.
Snowling, Margaret J (1994) In Brown, Gordon DA & Ellis, Nick C (eds) (1994) *The Handbook of Spelling: Theory, Process and Intervention*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York, Brisbane, Toronto and Singapore, pp. 111–28.
Strahan, Ronald (1997) *The Incomplete Book of Australian Mammals*, Kangaroo Press, Sydney.
Street, Brian (1984) *Literacy in Theory and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
—— (1993) *Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
—— (1997) 'The implications of the "New Literacy Studies" for literacy education'. *English in Education*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 45–59.
—— (ed.)(2001) *Literacy and Development*, Routledge, London and New York.
Susay, Michelle L (1999) *Fast 'n Easy. Internet Guide.* Pacific Internet, Australia.
Tattersall, Ian (1998) *Becoming Human: Evolution and Human Uniqueness*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, Melbourne and Tokyo.
Tomasello, Michael (1999) *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, England.
Torr, Jane (1998) *From Child Tongue to Mother Tongue: Language Development in the First Two and a Half Years*, Monographs in Systemic Linguistics, Nottingham University, Nottingham.
Treiman, Rebecca (1993) *Beginning to Spell: A Study of First Grade Children*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford.
Trevarthen, Colwyn (1987) 'Sharing Makes Sense: Intersubjectivity and the Making of an Infant's Meaning'. In Ross Steele & Terry Threadgold (eds) *Language Topics: Essays in Honour of Michael Halliday*, vol. I, Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, pp. 177–99.

Unsworth, Len (2000) 'Investigating subject-specific literacies in school learning'. In Len Unsworth (ed.) *Researching Language in Schools and Communities: Functional Linguistic Perspectives*, Cassell, London and Washington, pp. 245–74.

—— (2001) *Teaching Multiliteracies across the Curriculum: Changing Contexts of Text and Image in Classroom Practice*, Open University Press, Buckingham, UK and Philadelphia, USA.

Veel, Robert (1997) 'Learning how to mean – scientifically speaking: Apprenticeship into scientific discourse in the secondary school'. In Frances Christie & JR Martin (eds) *Genre and Institutions: Social Processes in the Workplace and School*, pp. 160–95.

Vygotsky, Lev (1986) *Thought and Language*. (Translated and revised by Alex Kozulin; originally published in Russian in 1934), MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, England.

Walker, Richard, Rattanovich, Saowalak & Oller Jr, John W (1992) *Teaching all the Children to Read*, (*Rethinking Reading Series*. Series ed. L. John Chapman), Open University Press, Buckingham and Philadelphia.

Wallace, Catherine (1988) *The Social Context of Second Language Literacy*, (*Language Teaching Methodology Series*. Series ed. Christopher N Candlin), Prentice Hall, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Tokyo.

Wallace, Catherine (1992) *Reading*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Wells, Gordon (ed.) (1981) *Learning through Interaction: The Study of Language Development*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, Melbourne.

Wells, G (1983) 'Talking with Children: The Complementary Roles of Parents and Teachers'. In M Donaldson, R Grieve & C Pratt (eds) *Early Childhood Development and Education*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Wells, Gordon (1999) *Dialogic Inquiry: Toward a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education*. (Series eds Roy Pea, John Seely Brown & Jan Hawkins, *Learning in Doing: Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives*), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

White, Peter (1997) 'Death, disruption and the moral order: The narrative impulse in mass "hard news" reporting'. In Frances Christie & JR Martin (eds) *Genre and Institutions: Social Processes in the Workplace and School*, Cassell, London and Washington, pp. 101–33.

Wignell, Peter (1999) 'Rough diamonds: A case study of workplace literacy and training for Indigenous workers in the mining industry'. In Peter Wignell (ed.) *Double Power: English Literacy and Indigenous Education*, Melbourne, National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, pp. 95–120.

Williams, Geoff (1995) 'Joint book reading and literacy pedagogy: A socio-semantic examination'. Unpublished PhD thesis, Macquarie University.

Williams, Geoff (1998) 'Children entering literate world: Perspectives from the study of textual practices'. In Frances Christie & Ray Misson (eds) *Literacy and Schooling*, London and New York, Routledge, pp. 18–46.

Zammitt, Katina (1999) 'Click, Click. Reading and viewing CD-ROMs'. In Jon Callow (ed.) *Image Matters: Visual Texts in the Classroom*, Primary English Teaching Association, Sydney, pp. 85–94.

Index

Language Education in the Primary Years gives a coherent and structured account of language and learning and of language pedagogy, using functional grammar.

Frances Christie outlines debates over 'process versus product' and 'phonics versus whole language' in language education theory. She addresses oral language in the classroom, grammatical differences between speech and writing, visual literacy, the impact of technology on language learning, the teaching of spelling, models of sentence grammar, and language planning and assessment.

'This is a text well suited to university students beginning their study of language and literacy education in the primary school. It engages readers in the historical contextualisation of current issues in the field, as well as covering the key theoretical and practical professional issues primary teacher education students need to master. A distinctive strength of this book is its functional sociolinguistic perspective on language and literacy education in the primary years, incorporating systematic, explicit knowledge of language description as a resource for meaning.' *Len Unsworth, Professor in English and Literacies Education, School of Education, University of New England, Armidale*

FRANCES CHRISTIE is Emeritus Professor of Language and Literacy Education, University of Melbourne, and Honorary Professor of Education, University of Sydney.

UNSW PRESS

ISBN 0-86840-583-3

9 780868 405834