



Language In Education Day: Parallel Papers

William S. ARMOUR

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

How useful are role plays in learning how to mean?

The role play is part of the standard tool kit of Languages Other Than English teachers. The simulated situation offers a chance, in an induced setting at least, for L2 learners to ‘use’ the L2 in some context. The question posed in this presentation is, how useful are role plays in learning how to mean? Data come from one role play taken from a larger project dealing with cross-cultural adaptation. Field, tenor and mode within the designated role play are considered in some detail. It has been found that there are in fact two contexts occurring in tandem: the simulated situation and the ‘real’ situation. Implications of this are discussed in terms of impact on learning an additional language.

Graeme BAKER

PRIVATE CONSULTANT

Hitting it off together: talking to invite solidarity in educational consultancy

Educational consultants assist teachers reach solutions to their specific problems. However, the literature on educational consultancy suggests that the effectiveness of this social interaction depends upon the consultant’s capacity to build positive relationships with teacher-clients. In the research reported here, the tools of systemic functional grammar and appraisal theory were used to analyse how the language choices of the consultant-researcher were implicated in the building of this relationship in contexts that were ostensibly simple exchanges of information. The data, from two different consultancy situations, indicate that the consultant works hard, using a range of interpersonal language choices opportunistically in the negotiation of rapport and solidarity. The significance of the interpersonal resources in such a relationship is easy to underestimate.

Felix BANDA

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

Institutional Discourse Practices, Language Education & Socio-economic Transformation in South Africa

Ten years after apartheid, with its emphasis on the separation of people on race, ethnicity and language, the debate on the role of multilingualism in transformation of South Africa’s

education and society generally still rages. South Africa is one of the few countries in Africa, which has constitutionally designating 11 languages as official. Linguists have lauded such a development (cf. Bamgbose, 2003; Alexander, 2004; Web, 2004). Using survey data from multilingual discourse practices, the paper explores institutional discourse and discursive practices, in relationship to calls for universal mother-tongue education in South Africa. Finally, the paper looks at ways to narrow the gap between discourse and discursive practices, and language planning and policy issues in South Africa as a way to promote multilingual educational practices.

Phil CHAPPELL

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, AUSTRALIA/AUA LANGUAGE CENTRE, BANGKOK, THAILAND

Unpacking social interaction as a form of mediated learning of a "foreign" language: Some preliminary findings

In Vygotsky's well-known theory, cognitive development is seen to be mediated by both cultural tools and social interaction, with semiosis (in the form of signs and symbols) being a special tool inextricably connected to social interactions. While many inquiries in second and foreign language learning have focused on tools, signs and symbols, my present study aims at unpacking the less-understood form of mediation - social interaction. I am doing this through an exploration of the dynamics of social interaction, that is, the social relations that emerge between learners while undertaking the enterprise of learning English as a foreign language in a vocational setting in Thailand. Through investigating the interactions of adult Thai learners of English through the kaleidoscopic lens of activity theory, Vygotsky's mediational theory of mind, and a socio-semiotic theory of language (systemic functional linguistics), I hope to provide some impetus for re-examining the role of constructivist approaches to certain language learning tasks in classrooms devoted to the development of interactional competence in a foreign language. This impetus is partly energised by the realisation that peer scaffolding guided by the teacher in a constructivist manner plays a crucial role in language programs such as the one under investigation.

Frances CHRISTIE and Beverly Derewianka

UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY AND UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

Key indicators of development in adolescent writing: a preliminary report

Important studies of writing development in late childhood and adolescence have been undertaken in the past by Perera (1984), as part of the Write it Right project (e.g. 1994) and most recently by Schleppegrell (2004), among others. However, while the picture that emerges is certainly useful, there is a need for more research into such development, in the interests of identifying key measures of growth in writing development and investigating subject literacies and their challenge across the years of a secondary education. Specifically, this study aims to identify key indicators of writing development across: (i) the years of the secondary school from early to late adolescence, (ii) the major subject disciplines (English, a social science and a natural science), and (iii) different social groupings of students. The study will sample groups of students in school Years 7, 10 and 12, drawn from three high schools, one of which is selective, one a neighbourhood comprehensive high school, and the third of which, while also a comprehensive high school, has significant numbers of students for whom English is a second language. The texts will be analysed using the functional grammar and it is expected that a taxonomy of relevant linguistic features will be developed for use in teacher education.

At the time of giving this paper, the study will be still in progress, so that not all the data will have been collected, nor will the analyses be complete. However, it is expected that a preliminary report can be given with respect to subject History and English. The work of project team members Shooshi Dreyfus, Sally Humphrey and Helen Lewis is acknowledged as integral to this presentation.

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Catherine DOHERTY

QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Excavating ground rules: genre troubles in transnational education

This paper draws from data collected in a virtual ethnography of an online MBA unit offered by an Australian university to an internationalised group of students. It focuses on a flare of interactive trouble in the regulative register (Christie, 2002) in which international students strived to excavate explicit rules for how to construct the texts required in an innovative assessment item. These queries and the lecturer's attempts to meet their requests by supplying model assignment texts are interpreted using genre theory drawn from Bakhtin (1986) and Martin (1997), whereby control of genre is understood to be the tacit competencies of culture-in-semiosis, derived from intertextual experience. The trouble the international students had in excavating such tacit codes is further illuminated by mapping Bernstein's (1990, 2000) rules of recognition and realisation onto these frames. The paper then draws implications for internationalised education and virtual modes of education in times of globalisation.

Gail FOREY, John POLIAS & Arthur FIRKINS

HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Hopes, Intentions and Reality: Introducing SFL into Hong Kong Secondary Schools

There is constant discussion in Hong Kong of the 'fall in the standard of English in schools' Whether this is an accurate statement or not is not the question. One recent move is to introduce systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to teachers as a theory to support the teaching of literacy across the curriculum in Hong Kong government schools. The Education and

Manpower Bureau (EMB) is trialling a six-day course for a group of 12 teachers from six schools on the educational applications of SFL, followed by two short mentoring sessions over eight months. All the teachers are Cantonese speakers and use English as the medium of instruction. The aim of this paper is to assess and investigate these teachers, reflections on the introduction of SFL in their classrooms. The paper draws on data from interviews, questionnaires and transcripts of the mentoring sessions, outlining the materials, practical applications and teachers, reflections! The findings of this study will illustrate the extent to which SFL was adopted and applied by these teachers and the implications of using an SFL approach in the Hong Kong context.

Magne GJERSTAD

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF VESTFOLD

Scandinavian senior high school social science text books

In my doctoral thesis I am studying what might be called THE Discourse of hope, peace, reconciliation, learning and change, namely Scandinavian senior high school social science text books. My object has been to describe what kind of thinking about oneself and one's relationships with others such texts plausibly could be said to instigate in students. Key words here are freedom, individuality, family, future. When it comes to investigating such topics in depth, I don't believe in strict methods, but in disciplining what is basically a slowed down, carefully organised, and more ardent reading, which nevertheless is still a reading. SFL has however proved valuable in highlighting details of the texts (especially Hasan's work on cohesion, but also Halliday's idea about grammatical metaphor), and this is what I will

concentrate on when illustrating what I have to say about this present day quite influential (at least in Scandinavia) "discourse of hope". In line with the conference' move towards PDA, I have some suggestions when it comes to improving social science text books, involving mainly a (perhaps scaffolded) linguistic/rhetorical focus on widespread accounts (or refractions, to use a term of Volosinov, whose theory I use) of social reality, instead of what is basically a current mere handing over of such refractions (although interspersed with some conventional criticisms).

Mike HART

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Stopping the Revolving Door: The Genre Approach and Scaffolded Reading Strategies in Academic Literacy Development

A rallying cry from the 1995 Freedom Charter called for the 'doors of learning and culture' to be opened for all South Africans. The legacy of Apartheid education, and the current progressivist tendencies in the present South African curriculum, has meant that the majority of learners, particularly African learners, leave school without the literacies to cope effectively with the demands of tertiary education. While the doors to tertiary education have been opened considerably wider, the inadequate academic literacy levels of African working class and rural learners, and the largely inadequate responses of universities to these issues, has meant that the hard won open door is, in effect, a revolving door which ejects learners before they are able to complete their degrees. In this context, this paper will evaluate the use of the genre approach and Rose's (2004) scaffolded reading strategies in a first semester course in an undergraduate Bachelor of Education degree as a means of developing students' academic literacy. More significantly, it will evaluate a new initiative to use these strategies to integrate academic literacy development across all the education modules through the three years of the degree. The paper will analyse the impact of apartheid education, current progressivist trends, and university responses, on students' access to the literacies required for tertiary education and will evaluate the effectiveness of the first six months of the integrated academic literacy initiative across the degree.

Jingzi HUANG and Bruce NORMANDIA

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY, NJ

Writing Mathematics: Linguistic Features as a Device to Gain and Demonstrate Desired Levels of Understanding

This paper, drawing on Halliday's (1994) functional view of language, reports on a research study-in-progress to examine how student written discourse is associated with conceptual understanding and procedural knowledge in a secondary mathematics class. It focuses on the relationship between linguistic features and meaning construction in school mathematics. Data presented in this paper are from a much larger study that is an exploratory one conducted in 2003 (Huang et al., 2003; Huang et al., 2005) and 2004 in a high school. This paper focuses on written discourse produced by the students. Field observation was utilized to obtain the general picture of the context in which the writing task was assigned and completed. To provide a principled account of how math content and math language are related, the study utilizes Knowledge Structures Analysis (Mohan and Huang 2002) for text analysis and look into the relations between the language used and semantic relations (Lemke, 1990) constructed as a result. Such an analysis allows the researchers to 1) reveal the linguistic features that are crucial in expressing target meanings; 2) differentiate good and weak math writing from a linguistic perspective so as to provide instructional implications. Findings show a huge discrepancy in the use of linguistic features between good and weak writings, especially at the level of discourse. It is obvious to the researchers that the use of certain linguistic features could make a significant impact on a student's ability to explore, gain, and express mathematical understanding. As a result, the study offers pedagogical implications and directions for classroom actions. It indicates the necessity and a possibility of more explicitly teaching students how to write mathematically from a linguistic perspective.

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Sally HUMPHREY

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

Resourcing students for positive critical literacy

Over the past twenty years much work has been done by Systemic Functional Linguists to describe and make explicit the semiotic resources used to access and critique the discourses of powerful institutions such as schooling. However, in recent years there has been growing awareness of the need to also support students in accessing the 'emancipatory' discourses which are used by social activists to renovate and liberate as well as challenge and subvert (Martin 2000:297). In this presentation, I will describe the semiotic resources deployed by a group of young social activists in their work to raise awareness and change the conditions of asylum seekers and particularly of children in detention centres. I will focus particularly on how these young people show flexibility in addressing different audiences across a range of modes and how they draw on the resources of Appraisal to build solidarity with their readers/listeners and to argue a case for social change.

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Pauline JONES

CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY, BATHURST

Teaching primary English: lessons from the recontextualising arena

This paper reflects upon the implementation of the current NSW English primary syllabus (Board of Studies, NSW 1998); in particular those aspects to do with knowledge about language. The discussion draws on SFL analysis of curriculum text and selected classroom discourse (Halliday 1994, Martin & Rose 2003) together with teacher interviews from two contrasting school settings - one urban and multilingual, the other rural and monolingual. The teachers' different readings of the syllabus suggest that the ideological struggles from which the functionally orientated document emerged in 1998 remain of issue as it is recontextualised for local contexts (Bernstein 1996, 2000). These readings have consequences for socially disadvantaged learners from English speaking backgrounds; particularly in terms of their knowledge about language and ultimately their access to educationally significant discourses. The paper argues that a stronger position on language and knowledge about language (such as that evident in ESL methodology) is necessary in the preparation of teachers to implement primary English in monolingual settings.

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Lorraine MCDONALD

ACU NATIONAL

Exploring ‘how texts teach what readers learn’ through engagement with their grammatical form

It has long been argued that attention to the language of literary texts will support young readers in learning to read (Meek, 1988, Williams 1986). Students, ability to read and enjoy literature can be developed through attention to the patterns of words in the text which may promote deep understanding and offer ‘significance’ for students, reading. This paper presents aspects of a case study which investigated how a teacher might apprentice upper primary school students into a new discourse of reading literature through attention to the grammar of the text and how it constructed characterisation and gender discourses in an extended children’s literature text. The paper shall focus on some of the ways the literary text was analysed using systemic functional linguistics as an exemplar of what is possible when engaging with novels. To develop the case for explicit teaching of language with literary texts, some transcript excerpts of classroom interaction will be examined.

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Sky MCLAUGHLIN

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL, UK

‘I wish peace in Palestine forever’: Children, the Intifada and a ‘Discourse of Hope’

For generations, the solution to the question of Palestine has been framed within discourses of peace: peace talks between peace camps leading to peace agreements. Such discourses, having been produced by a very limited number of political figures, then reproduced by the international media, leave the everyday voices of the conflict unheard. As the second Palestinian uprising for independence continues, the number of untold human stories is countless. With this in mind, my research aim is to search out an alternative discourse, the discourse of those who are often the most voiceless victims of war – the discourse of children. How does a group of school children in the West Bank represent their view of the world? How do these children’s writings exhibit a layering of discourses, including both a discourse of war and discourses of peace and hope? The children’s assignment of grammatical roles to textual participants reflects a world of enormously asymmetrical power relations, but also great hope for the future. These different layers are expressed through different sets of choices within the grammar of transitivity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). I will show how the children appear to believe that the path to peace comes through learning and education, and this belief is, again, expressed through particular sets of transitivity choices.

Ana MARTÍN, María BARRIO, Laura HIDALGO, Susana MURCIA, Karina VIDAL and Rachel WHITTAKER

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID (SPAIN)

Do foreign language learners express ideology through their texts? An analysis of secondary school writing

It is generally believed that learners of foreign languages with low proficiency do not express ideology in their written texts. In this paper we challenge this belief using evidence from a corpus of interlanguage texts collected in secondary schools in the Madrid area. We have found that despite the limitations in their control of the foreign language, many students presented moral or political arguments in support of their theses. The study is part of a larger project in composition writing in English conducted in three Spanish Secondary Schools with pre-university students (Council of Education, Autonomous Region of Madrid 06/0020/2001;

Ministry of Education, National Government: HUM2004-06228). A corpus of 300 compositions written in response to three tasks eliciting three different genres (recount, exposition and report) were collected in five classes. The learning context is that of English as a foreign language, which our subjects take as an obligatory subject. The English language, then, is learnt for communicative purposes, and is not used as a vehicle for learning the disciplines. We have already studied textual features of the genres and grammatical features of registers in a sample from the corpus. Here we present an analysis of the expositions looking at the students, realizations of ideology.

Bernard MOHAN and Tammy SLATER

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, VANCOUVER, CANADA

The development of oral causal explanations in school science

Researchers and educators working from a systemic functional linguistic perspective have provided work on science discourse which offers an excellent starting point for examining the linguistic aspects of causal discourse development in school science. This work has focused on texts written by experts (e.g., Mohan, Slater, Luo, & Jaipal, 2002 ; Veel, 1997). No work has yet described the development of causal language in school science by identifying the features in oral discourse or by comparing the discourse of native and non-native English speakers. What are the causal discourse features used by these students to construct oral causal explanations? This research examines oral science discourse from more than nine hours of interviews with ESL and non-ESL students in primary and high school. The findings suggest that the developmental path which has been identified in the writing of experts appears in the learners' oral texts and when the discourse of high school ESL and non-ESL students is compared. This study is the first systemic functional comparison of the causal oral discourse of primary and secondary learners and of ESL and non-ESL speakers, and as such it helps map the hopeful area of causal discourse development.

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Gillian MOSS

UNIVERSIDAD DE NORTE, BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA

Teachers mediate textbook language: a case study in Barranquilla, Colombia

This paper presents aspects of the results of a long-term research project on the language of school textbooks in Natural and Social Sciences used in Barranquilla, Colombia. The methodology used in the first stages of the project combined systemic functional analysis of texts with ethnographic description and interpretation of text-teacher-learner interaction. Findings identified characteristics of texts which tended to cause difficulty for learners – grammatical metaphor, complex Theme structure and method of development, lexical density, incomplete information, insufficient Textual units, among others – and noted that teachers, in general, seemed unaware of these problems. We then carried out an action research stage comprising workshops for teachers based on the findings of the ethnographic stages of our work

followed by close collaboration with two teachers, one from each of the major subject areas covered. Our intention with this intervention was twofold: (a) to help teachers recognize possible sources of difficulty in the texts they use and (b) to help them design strategies for mediating between text and learner. The results were encouraging though, inevitably, they also pose new problems. This paper will describe some of the results of this intervention while also addressing difficulties for larger-scale application of the same strategies.

Dr Alvin Leong PING and Dr Wee Bee GEOK

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, SINGAPORE

Impact of students' knowledge of clause complexity on their writing: An analysis of clause complexing in 20 essays

The writing lesson in Singapore classrooms is generally based on a blend of the genre (or text type) approach and the process approach. Explicit teaching on the organizational structure of each text type is conducted through a range of modeling and joint negotiation activities and the use of scaffolds and structural frameworks. Students are organized into pairs and groups and taken through a variety of activities with focus on the language features relevant for the specific writing task. The end products, i.e., the students' written essays, invariably have similar organisational structures and similar choice words and phrases. How then is one essay judged better than another? In particular, what is distinctive about the better essay that will deem it more valued than another? Using Halliday's framework on clause-complexing (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004), we analysed a corpus of 20 essays written by students from five secondary schools in Singapore. Our analysis shows that the better writers display a greater mastery of clause-complex structures to present and shape their ideas. The weaker writers, on the other hand, rely heavily on simplex constructions, and any attempt by them to construct clause complexes is often compromised by expression and linkage problems.

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Betty SAMRAJ

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The generic structure of discussion sections in master's theses

A number of studies in genre analysis within the traditions of systemic functional linguistics and English for Specific Purposes have focused on published academic genres such as research articles (e.g. Lewin, Fine and Young, 2001; Swales, 2004) in terms of their move or schematic structure and lexico-grammatical features. An interest in the genres produced by postgraduate students, such as the thesis, has recently grown. Although some studies have analyzed the macro-structure of the whole thesis (Paltridge, 2002; Thompson, 2001), there have been fewer studies on the schematic structure of parts of the thesis such as the introduction (Bunton, 2002) or discussion section (Shaw, 2000). This paper reports on an analysis of discussion sections in masters theses from two disciplines, linguistics and biology, produced at a North American university. Eight theses from each discipline were analyzed for the schematic structure of their discussion sections, drawing on previous research on discussions in research articles (Lewin et al., 2001; Yang and Allison, 2003). This paper discusses the influence of register variables on the schematic structure of discussion sections in masters theses. It also considers differences in the schematic structure of discussion sections in two related genres, the master's thesis and research article.

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Mary J. SCHLEPPEGRELL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Describing pathways into second language writing

The heterogeneity of second language writers and their many surface errors makes assessing and teaching second language writing a great challenge. Standards documents that currently drive the curriculum in U.S. educational contexts typically offer little guidance about the language features teachers could focus on in assessing English learners, progress or helping them improve. This often means that teachers' approaches to second language writing focus on error correction. Standards typically do address genre expectations, however, so this talk will explore ways that SFL analysis can reveal developmental pathways as students respond to specific writing tasks. Texts written by recent immigrant upper elementary students illustrate the different approaches they take, and enable us to see in their efforts the evolution of systems of English grammar. With a focus on referent tracking, nominal group expansion, tense marking, and textual themes, I show how analysis of the linguistic choices these writers make can help us identify and support growth in second language writers, meaning potential, contributing to clearer guidance about assessing and scaffolding second language writing in academic subjects.

Tina SHARPE and Michael MICHELL

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY AND MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS UNIT, NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

Instructional scaffolding as pedagogic tool.

Since its introduction by Wood, Bruner and Ross in 1975, "scaffolding" has been a promising metaphor for describing what it is teachers do to assist students' learning. In the last thirty years, research has expanded the social contexts and applications of scaffolding from parent/child interaction in home settings to teacher/student tutoring in classrooms; expert/no vice to peer/peer support in early learning and middle school settings; and support for English-only speakers to second and foreign language learners. Nevertheless, operational definition and identification of scaffolding in everyday classroom interaction remains elusive, while use of the term is widely used by educators and researchers alike to refer generally to any 'supportive teaching'. This paper aims to develop a clearer understanding of the concept by proposing a model of instruction also scaffolding as teacher-provided, task-enabling 'just in time' assistance to students.

Using examples of classroom interaction, the model will outline key social dynamics underpinning teacher scaffolding, such as its social conditions, management, development and activity settings, as well as the possible mediating semiotic modalities that may be employed through scaffolding. Drawing on educational linguistics, socio-cultural and activity theory, the paper argues that instructional scaffolding is a specialised genre of pedagogic discourse that creates a micro-level developmental activity system which fosters self-regulated learning by task novices. When knowingly employed by teachers and publicly modelled as part of the collective class apprenticeship, instructional scaffolding is a powerful pedagogic tool for building academic engagement and agency in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. As such, in instructional scaffolding both reflects and contributes to a 'pedagogy of hope'.

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Elena SHELDON

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Thematic Patterns in English and Spanish in Academic Writing at University Level

This paper presents how the discussion genre differs when written in English and Spanish. The Systemic Functional Linguistic approach is applied as this model relates language to social settings in an explicit and systematic way which allows both English and Spanish texts to be explored in terms of how meaning is realised through the grammar. The Theme, which is a key part of the textual system, is explored thoroughly as it is the principal organiser of the clause as a message (Halliday 1994; Martin, J., Matthiessen C. & Painter, C. 1997 & Halliday & Matthiessen 2004). Of the two corpora, 6 Spanish and 6 English texts have been analysed in terms of Theme, especially looking at thematic differences of participants, roles and circumstantial elements. A noticeable difference has been revealed in the nominalised Topical Theme which construes the field differently. The textual analysis showed differences in the usage of conjunctive adjuncts as it was noticeable that the Spanish corpus displayed a larger amount of additive features than the English while the interpersonal analysis showed that the English texts used more impersonal preferences than the Spanish texts. In addition, Danes (1974) method of analysing patterns of thematic progression is used to reveal the unfolding of the Theme in a text. While English texts have patterns of split rheme progression as an organising device, this pattern in Spanish was absent. Overall, results confirmed similarities in lexical content but different Theme choices contributed to the organisation of the texts which highlighted distinct language patterns in Spanish.

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Mark SHUM

FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Exploring a functional approach to teaching subject specific genres in Chinese in post-colonial Hong Kong

In Hong Kong since there was a change of medium of instruction from English to mother tongue Chinese in 1998, more and more students choose to write their secondary completion examination (HKCEE) in Chinese and school teachers who got used to English medium of instruction are exploring effective ways to guide their students to express their subject knowledge in Chinese. This paper reports on an approach to the study of Chinese genres for examination purposes, developed in Hong Kong after the re-unification with China Mainland. Using Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory, the study firstly identifies the subject-specific genres that students have to master in most subjects in secondary schooling and secondly explores an effective approach to help students master those subject specific generic writing skills. Pilot teaching was conducted in various subjects, i.e. Chemistry, Biology, Economics Physics etc. Based on interviews and students' written text analysis, results reported that a genre-based approach is proving useful.

Janet WHITE

ENGLISH ADVISER, QUALIFICATIONS AND CURRICULUM AUTHORITY, LONDON

Language at full stretch: introducing the grammar of talk

This paper will present some recent work done in secondary classrooms in England and invite discussion of its implications for language study and teaching methodologies.

Our aim was to find practical ways of introducing teachers and pupils to the idea that there was such a thing as the grammar of talk, worthy of study in its own right. We wanted to balance the long history of attention to written grammars by encouraging pupils to find out more about the largely unconscious, but systematic ways that spoken language works to shape and communicate meanings.

The idea for the project grew from the many insights into the distinctive and complimentary roles of spoken and written language developed by MAK Halliday. For example, in *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday suggests that 'it is in spontaneous, operational speech that the grammatical system of the language is most fully exploited' (1985: xxiv). Halliday highlights two crucial features of spoken language: its responsiveness to subtle and constant changes in contexts of use, and its 'grammatical agility' in enabling the expression of meaning through intricate clausal texture.

For the purposes of our project we decided to look selectively at some key features of the grammar that enable speakers use language so responsively to signal the shape and structure of their talk, to communicate in real time and space, and to communicate face to face. Teachers were invited to teach, and teach about these features to pupils aged 12-16. Their work showed that there are beneficial spin-offs from the systematic analysis and description of spoken language in the classroom.

Robyn WOODWARD-KRON

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Scaffolding language and learning in graduate research contexts

In the writing support consultation, language advisors and postgraduate students negotiate complex ideational, textual and interpersonal territory when working together to improve the students' draft texts. However, the individual writing consultation is sometimes conceptualised one-dimensionally by faculty and other stakeholders as editing, with writing issues seen as separate from content and able to be addressed independently of content and context. Such a

conceptualisation of writing support neglects the role of discussion in clarifying disciplinary values and expectations and jointly negotiating meaning. This paper examines the role of discussion and joint negotiation for scaffolding students' learning through writing. The research context is faculty based language support for non-English speaking background (NESB) postgraduate students in a medical and health sciences faculty. The data are taped consultations analysed for discourse patterns and clause level features accompanied with analyses of excerpts from the students' written texts. The outcomes for this pilot project should provide a greater understanding of the nature and potential of the writing support consultation, understandings which are needed to inform discussions on postgraduate policies and guidelines for providing language support to NESB students.