

**Senior secondary English in New South Wales: Linguistic and
epistemic perspectives**

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This thesis examines senior secondary English in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, assessing almost 80,000 students per annum via externally-set examinations, and, at the time of writing, transitioning from an old to new senior English syllabus. Previous research (e.g., Christie 1999, 2016; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2011; Macken-Horarik, 2006; Rosser, 2000) has investigated subject English at various stages of its history by examining the development of curriculum documents, classroom discourse, and assessment practices; however, these three elements have not been considered concurrently. This thesis builds on this prior research by comparing the most recent NSW syllabi, from 2009 and 2018, and examining how syllabus requirements are realised through assessment practices and classroom discourse to provide a mutually informing account of subject English in theory and practice.

Drawing on three data sources – the Rationale of the Stage 6 English syllabus, five student examination responses, and classroom and interview data – the linguistic and epistemic requirements of subject English are explored, using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) as theoretical frameworks. Analysis revealed that subject English values both knowledge (of language and literature) and knowers (as sensitive and appreciative readers), and that students are required to demonstrate both knowledge and dispositions through carefully controlled writing in the essay form. These findings were generally congruent with earlier research into the nature of the discipline (e.g., Davison, 2005), emphasising the importance of the duality of both knowledge and knower structures, rather than one or the other.

Analysis of classroom data suggested that students appear to be cognisant of these requirements but were often resistant to dominant readings of texts, and struggled to demonstrate their knowledge in the required ways. Classroom discussions tended to progress from understanding the text, to exploring thematic concerns, to writing and assessment strategies. Writing needed to demonstrate knowledge of language and literature, but also required clear organisation and flair. This thesis contributes to the scholarly understanding of subject English by noting that the tensions which have existed throughout the subject's history continue to exist in its modern state, highlighting the importance of recognising the subject as both language and literature, and the need to make not just the requirements, but the linguistic means to meet these requirements, more visible to students.

Implications for pedagogy include the need for teachers to ensure adequate modelling and scaffolding for writing in appropriate styles, ensuring students have the necessary literacy skills to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are valued by the subject. Implications for theory include further developing SFL's account of Tenor in order to more systematically examine social controls on writing and considering systematic ways to combine LCT dimensions in order to produce mutually informative accounts of structures and practices in disciplines.

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English examinations in Australia. *Australian Journal of Language and*

Literacy, 40(2), 135-145.

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Chapter 1 Research context

If you don't get it, then don't write about it. There's no use writing about something you don't get, because you won't get the marks for it anyway. So if you don't get it, don't write about it.

– 'Ms White'¹

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter introduces the research context for this thesis. Section 1.2 explores the rationale of the research, introducing some of the key concerns which have influenced its structure. Section 1.3 describes the New South Wales Education Standards Authority, as well as the high-stakes exit examination that they produce, the Higher School Certificate, of which subject English is a critical component. Section 1.4 provides a brief history of the development of subject English in Australia in order to support the analysis and arguments presented in following chapters. With the research context established, three research questions are introduced in Section 1.5. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis structure in Section 1.6, and a summary of the information presented in Section 1.7.

¹ A pseudonym for the classroom teacher who graciously agreed to participate in this research.

1.2 Introduction

The history of subject English has been dominated by debates over its epistemology, structure, and function (e.g., Eagleton, 1985; Hunter, 1996; Macken-Horarik, 2011). With the power of literacy practices to shape the academic success of students (Bernstein, 1990, 1996; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Street, 1984), research investigating the disciplinary requirements of subject English at the senior level in order to make the requirements for success visible to students, especially when the subject is often tied to high-stakes examinations (Anson, 2017; Christie, 2016), is not only warranted, but sorely needed. This thesis aims to investigate some of these critical issues through the curricular, assessment, and classroom practices of the subject in New South Wales (NSW), Australia's most populous state (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018b), serving almost 80, 000 senior students per annum (NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA], 2018a).

This thesis occupies a critical time in the history of education in NSW. It is marked by the transition from one educational authority, the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES), to another, the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA); and from an old syllabus, 2009-2017, to the new, 2018 and beyond (NESA, 2018e). Subject English, the sole mandatory subject for these students, has, for largely historical, political, and ideological reasons, attained a position of prestige and importance above all others (Brock, 1996; Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985; Patterson, 2000; see 1.4, below, for further detail).

Subject English plays a central role in the lives of many young Australian students, as the following sections and chapters will argue. It has been proposed that the subject has the potential to exert powerful effects on the dispositions of students; and that academic writing in secondary English is the means by which schools (and by

extension, the governments that control them) regulate students and enforce specific subject positions² (Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985; Rosser, 2000). Work overviewing the historical development of subject English shows that subject English is uniquely positioned to fulfil the function of inculcating students into accepting particular values and attitudes (Patterson, 2000); and my own work (Anson, 2017) has argued that subject English examinations within Australia assess not only students' writing, but the dispositions held by candidates. Despite this, literacy instruction, and subject English in particular, has also been suggested as an emancipatory practice (Delpit, 1992; Hunter, 1996). The seemingly contradictory powers of English, acting to either oppress or emancipate the consciousness of students, make the discipline ripe for thorough investigation at the senior level, particularly as it transitions into a new syllabus.

Despite this thesis' focus on subject English in NSW, the linguistic and epistemic features explored are not unique to the state. Subject English in NSW shares many features with the subject across Australia, and internationally (Anson, 2017, 2018; Choo, 2015; Christie, 2016; Delpit, 1992, Eagleton, 1985). Therefore, while this thesis aims to provide an account of the subject through the lens of NSW instruction, the implications for theory, pedagogy, and further research lend themselves to exploration across Australia and other countries with English as a dominant language of school instruction.

Work examining the nature of subject English's syllabus and curriculum documents throughout its history has been a common focus of research (e.g., Brock, 1996; Green & Hodgens, 1996; Jogie, 2015; Michaels, 2001; Patterson, 2000; Rosser, 2000); however, at the time of writing there exists no systematic examination of either

² 'Subject positions' refers to manifestations of particular ways of thinking, often influenced through institutional powers. Throughout this thesis, the term is used following Bernstein's (1999) and Christie's (1999) models; that is, schooling aims to inculcate a particular set of values and knowledges that are deemed acceptable by the state. The work of these authors is explored more thoroughly in Chapter 2.

the NSW 2009 or 2018 syllabi. Furthermore, despite extensive investigation into subject English classroom practice (Christie, 1999, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2011; Nicolson-Setz, 2007), there is less research synthesising classroom investigation with student and teacher views about the subject and academic writing instruction. One of the key contributions of this thesis is, therefore, its analysis and comparison of the linguistic and epistemic features of the 2009 and 2018 syllabi; as well as its consolidation of syllabus analysis with student and teacher practice and perceptions via ethnographic tools. The present research aims to build on the historical analysis of Brock (1996) and Patterson (2000), and the classroom and writing analysis of Christie (1999, 2012, 2016) and others, as well as investigations into the epistemic features of subject English (e.g., Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007, 2011). By investigating how the subject positions its knowledge structures (the content of what is learned) and knowers (who is actually learning this content) through the syllabus documents, assessment, and classroom practices, this thesis aims to provide a mutually informing and comprehensive account of English at the senior level. Consequently, this thesis also has implications for curriculum reform and pedagogical practice.

1.3 NESAs and the Higher School Certificate

In NSW, NESAs are responsible for setting, monitoring, and assessing the Kindergarten to Year 12 curriculum in public, Catholic and independent schools³ (NESAs, 2018e). The English curriculum is modelled as a staged and sequenced progression that represents 13 years of mandatory schooling for NSW students,

³ Australian schooling is comprised of two main sectors: government (or public), and non-government. Non-government schools include Catholic and Independent schools (Department of Education and Training, 2018).

beginning in Kindergarten and culminating in a final examination for year 12 students, who are typically 17 or 18 years of age. Students who successfully complete years 11 and 12 are awarded the Higher School Certificate (HSC), the highest qualification available to school leavers (NESA, 2018b).⁴

NESA notes that “every year, we evaluate the HSC thoroughly to ensure it remains successful, inclusive, and flexible” (NESA, 2018b, “About the HSC”, para. 4). Despite this focus on inclusivity, it is important to recognise the high-stakes nature of the assessment. This is largely due to the fact the HSC is tied to the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR), a number which ranks students against one another based on their HSC performance, and used by universities to help select applicants for courses (Universities Admissions Centre, 2019). Since the ATAR is a rank, it represents a zero-sum game for students; it is impossible for every student to achieve a high ATAR as even in an exceptionally high performing cohort, some must be ranked below others. This understandably places considerable pressure on students. In 2012, *The Age*, an Australian newspaper, featured comments from students and parents about the stress of the HSC:

The HSC asks for answers to given questions on a given day. It cannot measure how successfully a student has been prepared for higher education or adulthood. Unfortunately, society uses HSC results to decide students' futures. This creates enormous pressure on students and their parents.

⁴ The HSC is considered equivalent by Australian universities to other international school leaving qualifications, like the GCE Advanced Level, the SAT, or International Baccalaureate Diploma (UAC, n.d.). See <http://www.uac.edu.au/documents/undergraduate/os-secondary-qualifications.pdf> for a more comprehensive list of equivalent qualifications.

The focus society places on the HSC makes academia so competitive and ugly. There are some that say the HSC isn't everything, and it makes me cringe. Not because I know they're right, but because I know that society has created such a stigma for people who attend TAFE⁵ or don't pursue a tertiary education. If you fail to succeed in the HSC, you're branded as the failure who didn't try.

I am on the verge of crying. English is on Monday and I can't absorb information. I feel like sleeping but that is just another form of procrastination that will add to the guilt and, consequently, stress. The difference between getting a 96, and being where I aspire to be, and having to settle for second-best is a mere two or three marks. The pressure to achieve academic excellence is incredible but I prefer this to the alternative, a well-rounded education. If I had to complete geography or history, for the sake of a well-rounded education, I would have given up. Academic excellence is a holy grail at this stage of my life, and yet the fear I might fall short of this goal is crippling. I have to go study English now. (The Age, October 14, 2012, para. 2-4)

This type of view of the HSC is echoed in its *Urban Dictionary* definitions. *Urban Dictionary*, a website started in 1999, allows users to add and define words. Most of its content describes slang usage. These definitions are reviewed by some 20,000 editors each month; the most highly rated definitions appear first in search results (Lloyd, 2011). The website is a useful resource in the current research because it

⁵ Technical and Further Education. A provider of further education, focusing mainly on vocational training, such as apprenticeships and traineeships (TAFE NSW, 2019).

allows users to define common usage of words without fear of redaction, as it is a contributor's peers who decide if their definition is consistent with common usage. For this reason, definitions tend to be obscene and direct, providing a useful counterpoint to more official definitions provided by educational authorities like NESA. The most approved definition (as of 2019) is reproduced below:

HSC

A major cause of youth suicide. Occurs over the final year of school for Australian year 12 students and largely involves remembering a fuckload of useless information that will either make or break your life, depending on your ability to remember it. Its a real prick and often incites hatred of not only oneself, but teachers, the school and just society in general. A major contributor towards manic depression, drug dependency and insomnia. Students often remark that it leaves them scared for life, unable to stop analysing every film they watch or forgot the lines to Felix Skrzynecki poems (a rather useless poet whose only achievement is to manage to write a series of poems, each with the same theme, which feature various complaints about his parents, country and just his life in general). Likewise, the HSC is directly linked to both an increase in youth binge drinking but also a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and thus global warming.

Person 1: "Wtf, why did that guy just shoot himself?"

Person 2: "Mate, he was in the middle of the HSC!"

Person 1: "Fair call!"

#hsc #school# suicide# bullshit# binge# global warming

by JamesI09 September 09, 2009. (JamesI09, 2009)

Other definitions tend to echo these sentiments, describing the HSC as “One of the most gruelling of any type of exam, by any standard” (sergeant turdburglar, 2005), “a reason to kill my-self” (AnNa NgUyEn, 2005), and, perhaps most bluntly, “one cunt of a task” (Mot Ellivlem, 2008).

Based on the opinions and definitions provided above, the profound nature of the pressure of the HSC and the importance of subject English to a NSW student's life appear difficult to understate. The negative language used to describe the HSC and its associated examinations point towards the ways in which it may be perceived by students. Furthermore, as noted in 1.2, subject English has historically occupied a position of prestige and power (see the rest of this chapter for more). An in-depth investigation into not only the syllabus, but also teacher and student perceptions, is necessary in order to more systematically investigate how the subject is viewed and understood in classroom and assessment settings. With this in mind, considered next is the development of subject English leading up to the 2009 and 2018 syllabi that are to be investigated in this thesis (Chapter 5).

1.4 A brief history of subject English in Australia

The following section details the history of subject English in Australia (with a focus on subject English in NSW). The history of the curriculum is characterised by tensions between a focus on literature and personal development versus the explicit teaching of language and objective analysis, with its development also strongly influenced by a multiplicity of factors outside schools. As Chapter 2 argues, there is a need to investigate the epistemic features of subject English in order to make the requirements of the discipline visible to students. A review of the history of the subject will reveal that many of the features present in the 2009 and 2018 syllabus (see Chapter 5 for analysis) have historical precedents, and that although the structure and content of English remains subject for debate, several key elements are deeply embedded within the subject and its history. These key elements are elucidated below.

1.4.1 Subject English from 1885-1944

Patterson (2000) notes that subject English, unlike other subjects, sets itself the task of the ‘moral development’ of students. This is not a recent phenomenon; an emphasis on the personal development of students can be noted in curriculum documents as early as 1885. As Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show, the subject has undergone many revisions, often with each change revealing something about different ideological views towards the subject’s function. In particular, the history reveals tensions between a focus on *literature*, and a focus on *language* (grammar, spelling, rhetoric). These developing tensions are represented below by the progression of secondary English teacher qualification examinations from pre-1885 to 1913. These provide a useful overview of the changing areas of emphasis for subject English by highlighting the to-and-fro between English-as-grammar and English-as-literature.

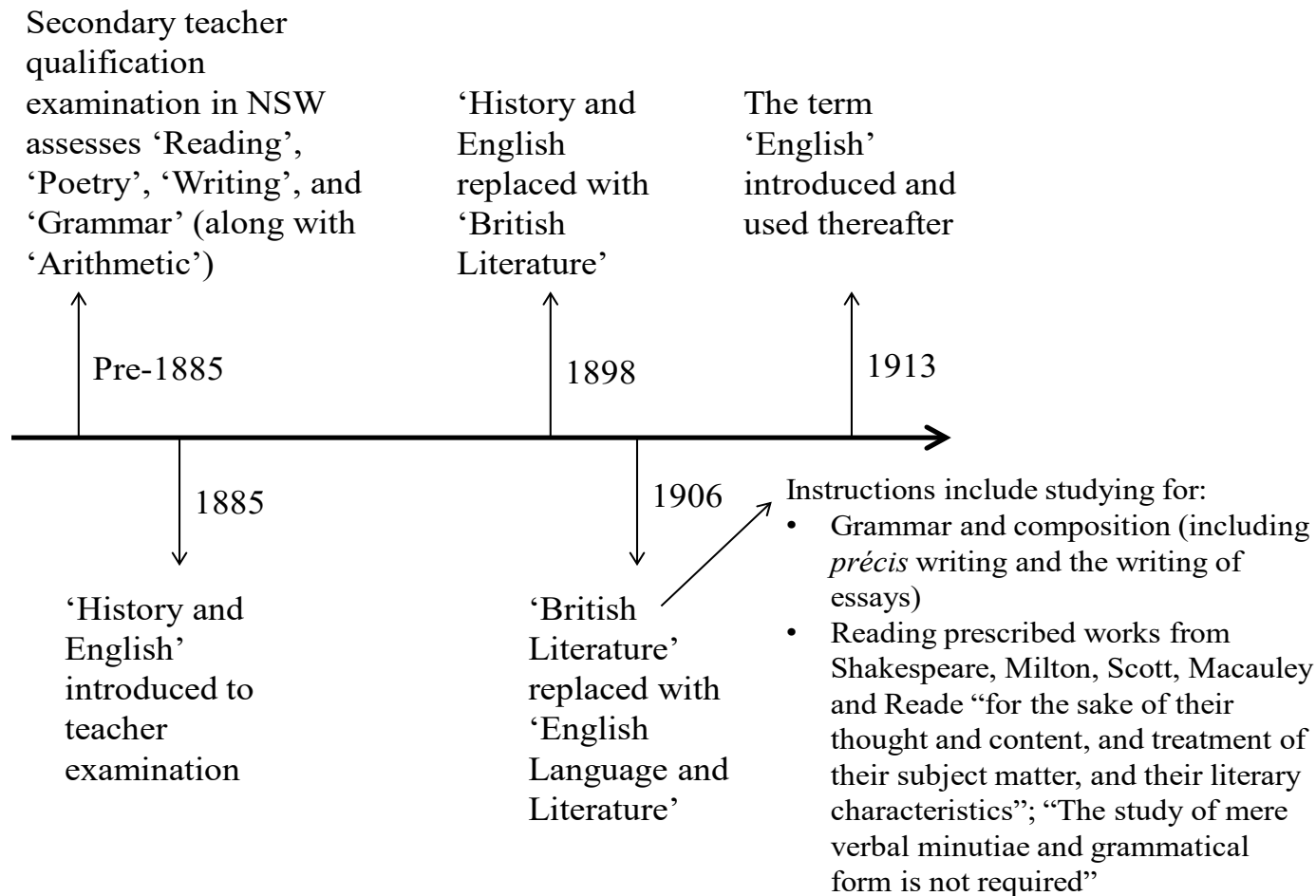


Figure 1.1 History of teacher examinations in NSW from pre-1885 to 1913 (adapted from Patterson, 2000, pp. 241-242)

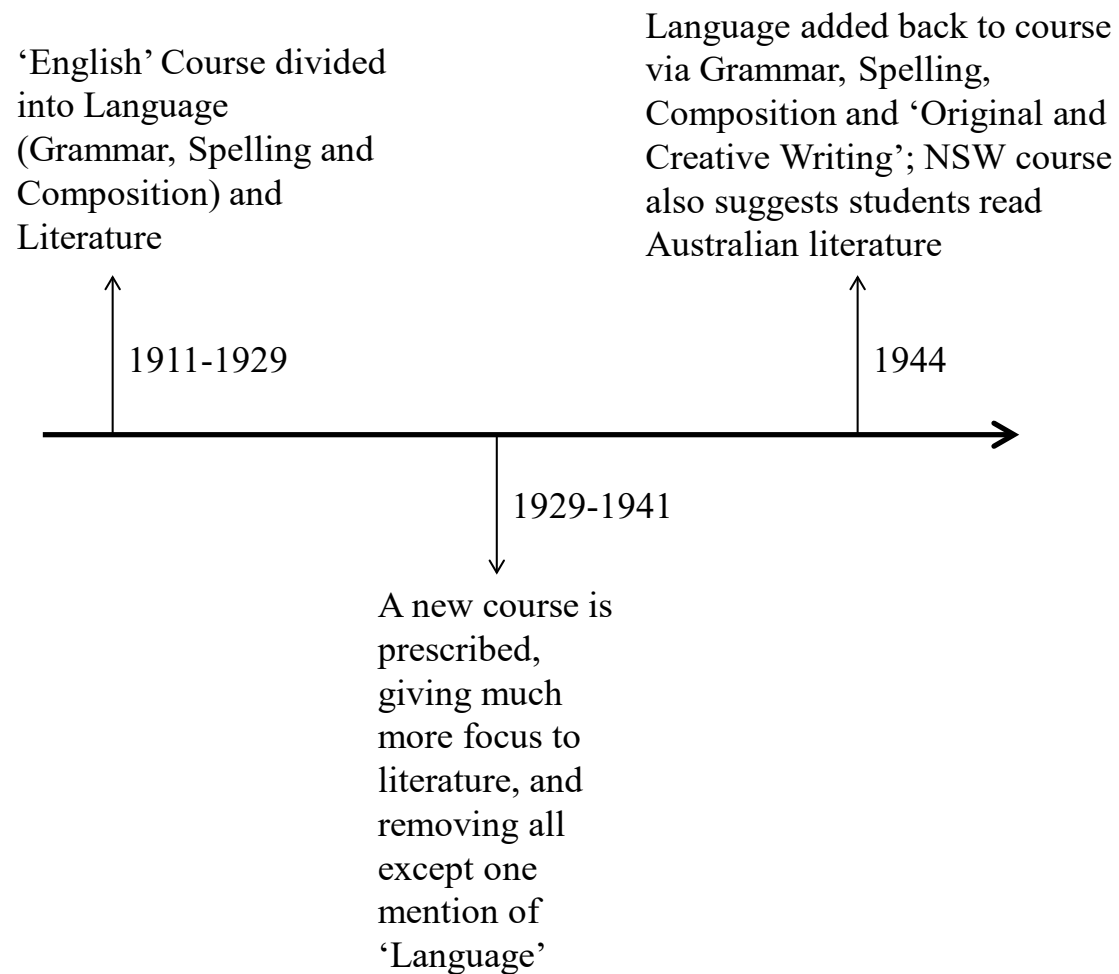


Figure 1.2 English syllabi in Australia, 1911-1941 (adapted from Patterson, 2000, pp. 246-248)

English in Australia, from the 1900s onward, has been characterised by instruction aimed at developing “sensitive, empathic and tolerant citizen[s]” and inculcating “proper conduct” (Patterson, 2000, pp. 236-237). Patterson notes that subject English “has emphasised the attainment of techniques related to ‘person formation’ or development’ – expressed in terms such as ‘sensitivity’, ‘appreciation’, ‘personal growth’ and ‘critical consciousness’” (p. 237); terms which are still deeply embedded in both curriculum and examiner feedback (Anson, 2017; Rosser, 2000). This emphasis on personal development, rather than knowledge acquisition or skill development, is an inheritance from English Protestant schools that assumed a pastoral role in the teaching of children. This style of instruction was adopted in primary schooling in Australia around the beginning of the 19th century; and it therefore was deemed logical to extend it into secondary schooling when it was introduced into Australia (Patterson, 2000). Literature was therefore not the *object* of study, but the *tool* of study; students would learn to be sensitive and aesthetically minded individuals through the study of literature. Eagleton (1985) has argued that literature instruction has the power to act as a disciplinary or moral technology; rather than having teachers forcibly instil morals and values in their students, they are inculcated into their required subject positions by being trained to respond to literature in specific ways. These responses are the kind engendered by words like ‘personal development’, ‘growth’, ‘appreciation’ and ‘sensitive’. For this reason, examination of the assessment practices and student responses is required in order to come to a more comprehensive account of how subject English positions its students (Chapter 6).

1.4.2 Subject English from 1950-1965

In response to what was perceived to be a decline in the academic ability of students, the 1944 syllabus began to be reworked over 1951-1952. Interestingly, the Chief Examiner⁶ at the time noted that even the best student responses “showed that anything that appealed *to the intellect* rather than *senses and emotions* was too much for the majority of students” (Waldock, 1950, p. 150, as cited in Brock, 1996, p. 42, emphasis added). Students were producing exactly the kind of responses that would be expected from a syllabus focused on the development of students’ sensibilities, but Waldock was concerned that students could not identify adjectives and adverbs, and were unable to write a sentence (Brock, 1996). In 1952, Wyndham, a researcher at the Department of Education, would show that marker bias was responsible for the apparent decline in student performance, arguing that the majority of markers were academics, not teachers. However, the development of the new syllabus was already underway, and the findings of this research would not be presented until after the syllabus was completed.

The 1953 syllabus was characterised by a move away from the instruction focused on ‘personal development’ of earlier syllabi, to a “concern with form rather than substance, with ideas rather than feelings, with analysis rather than imaginative response” (Brock, 1996, p. 47). As they had before, students and teachers readily responded to the demands of the new syllabus, and five years later the new Chief Examiner would bemoan the lack of originality and individuality in student responses, despite their careful attention to grammatical and stylistic correctness. Again, the

⁶ “Professor Waldock, who held the Challis Chair of English Literature at the University of Sydney” (Brock, 1996, p. 42).

struggle between a focus on grammar versus a focus on personal experience is evident in the syllabus's development.

In 1965, debates over matriculation into university, with pressure in particular from the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales, led to the development of the HSC. HSC English was designed to separate students into three levels of academic ability, with only the top two levels being allowed admittance into university. Subsequently, each level became more and more demanding on students whilst schools, realising that students may be excluded from university, began to encourage students to attempt the more difficult courses. The HSC had begun to take the form described in 1.3, characterised by: considerable demands on students, a high-stakes exit examination, and the prevalence of subject English as a pedagogical institution aimed at regulating students' values, and perhaps even consciousness (see Chapter 2 for discussion). The texts prescribed in the highest level of school English "could be found in the undergraduate English courses at the University of Sydney between 1964 and 1966" (Brock, 1996, p. 63). The clear influences on the subject, in particular from academia, again point to the need to examine the curriculum, its teaching, and its assessment.

1.4.3 Subject English from 1965-1995

In his examination of HSC syllabi and examinations from 1965-1995, Rosser (2000) noted that subject English had become increasingly more elitist, to the detriment of those without the cultural capital necessary to understand the types of responses required of them. This elitism was due, he argued to the influence of academics, especially those from the English Department at the University of Sydney, on the curriculum. Like Eagleton (1985) and Patterson (1993, 2000), Rosser argued that

literature assumed the role of instilling certain moral and value positions in students as a means for the state to maintain power. His analysis revealed that HSC examinations enforce the separation of the middle class from other classes by privileging certain types of responses and readings over others. Rosser ends by noting his wariness towards the syllabus reviews that were about to be made effective at the time of his writing, suggesting that the failure of previous syllabus reforms to address inequality, and the continuance of the examinations' ability to enforce specific subject positions through the privileging of middle-class values and discourses, is likely to continue.

1.4.4 Subject English from 2002-2008

In 2002, the English Teachers' Association of NSW (ETA), a professional association of English teachers across the state, surveyed practising teachers about the 2001 HSC English examination. Two main themes emerged from their feedback: a frustration over the high proportion of academics at marking centres; and concerns over the difficulty of the Standard course (the course taken by the majority of candidates). These themes are represented in the quotes below:

English teachers have the firm conviction that the Chair of the Examinations Committee should be a practising school teacher. The choice of an academic as Chair of the Committee assumes that teachers are unable to rise above the level of the academic sophistication of their Yr 12 students. This is far from the case.

Deep concerns, however [despite the fact that the examination accurately represented the syllabus], have been expressed about the difficulty of questions for Standard students, parity of questions in the Standard and Advanced paper... Teachers have always had misgivings about the difficulty of the Standard Course for weaker students. While the release of the prescribed text list allayed some concerns, the level of abstraction required by students to answer questions on the Standard papers has confirmed their initial fears. The emphasis on techniques and how meaning is made in the examination papers places many of the questions beyond the capabilities of students undertaking the Standard Course.

Many teachers across the state still feel strongly that the Standard Course is ‘too difficult’ for at least 20% of our candidature...resulting in “many students...[achieving only] Band 2 because the course is too broad and complex for them.”⁷ (English Teachers Association NSW [ETA], 2019b, all ellipses in original)

This feedback from teachers indicates that Rosser’s (2000) wariness was well justified. Despite the introduction of a new syllabus, many teachers felt that the course was too difficult for their students. This difficulty was typically attributed to the complex theoretical nature of the topics, and the level of language analysis required. These are the types of questions Waldock advocated 52 years earlier; that is, questions

⁷ Student performance in the HSC are described in ‘performance bands’. Most courses are divided into 6 bands: Band 6 = 90-100, Band 5 = 80-89, Band 4 = 70-79, Band 3 = 60-69, Band 2 = 50-59, Band 1 = 0-49 marks (NESA, 2019).

that move away from the ‘personal development’ aspect of English and assess language more explicitly. As noted above, in 1952, Wyndham noted that marker bias due to the influence of academics was responsible for a perceived decline in student standards. It appears that tensions between academia and secondary teachers continued well into 2001, with academics exerting their power over the marking procedures. Some teachers were also dissatisfied with the texts prescribed for study, again arguing that these were too difficult for Standard students (Manuel, 2002). In 2006, ETA members were again invited to share their opinions about the HSC. Teachers raised concerns over the Area of Study⁸ suggesting that it restricted personal and genuine engagement with texts, and that it led to student hierarchies as different teachers taught the course differently. Concerns over the difficulty of the Standard course for many students continued. Quoted below are some of the concerns teachers raised:

The need to approach the concept through a focus distracts students from a more genuine personal response in their struggle to comply with a complex framework.

The focuses are not necessarily perceived as equally difficult by teachers who have tended to choose more concrete focuses for their standard students and the

⁸ A common unit of work that was taught and assessed for every candidate in NSW. It explored “a concept [e.g., Change, Journeys, Belonging, Discovery] that affects our perceptions of ourselves and our world” (BOS, 2009b, p. 29). See 5.2 for more detail.

more abstract focuses for their advanced students. This has led to recognisable hierarchies of cohorts at the marking centre.

The interpretation of the syllabuses requirement to evaluate a text's 'reception in a range of contexts' and to 'test these against their own understanding and interpretations' has been severely narrowed by some teachers to the study of such positions as Feminist/ Marxist/ psychoanalytic readings. It has been noted that in some schools, *these readings take precedence over a student's personal engagement with the text*. [emphasis added to mark continuing tensions between personal responses and critical responses]

[W]hen supporters of the syllabus and the work of the Board of Studies in general describe the exam paper as bland and like "cold gravy", the situation bears scrutiny and revision.

The ETA has made representations to the BOS in the past indicating a widespread belief amongst members that the HSC English Standard course is too difficult for many of the weaker students in the State and some of those of non-English-speaking background. Members claim that for these students the current course is too rigorous in its content and scope, the number of texts to be covered and the amount of work to be completed. (ETA, 2019c).

A struggle between personal development/ personal responses and a more analytical approach to language is evident in the feedback. As was the case with the 1953 syllabus, teachers appeared to identify the demands of markers quickly and adjust their instruction accordingly. However, it seems tensions between ideas of personal development, deeply embedded within subject English, and a focus on language analysis, were making the course more difficult for students to grasp. Therefore, it is unsurprising that theoretical readings were preferred over personal interpretations. These two aspects of English, that is, more linguistically focused analysis and more ethically focused textual readings, become key elements in the analysis presented in Chapter 5.

Noun groups like *suitable texts* suggests that only some texts are worthy of serious study; this is unsurprising considering the history of subject English, which valued texts from authors like Shakespeare and Milton. Nicolson-Setz (2007) has argued that teachers enforce certain literary practices in the classroom, and therefore the ETA's comment that teachers "like to ensure that certain texts are included" is also unsurprising (ETA, 2019c). Describing work by NESAs (then BOS) as "cold gravy" suggests a burgeoning bureaucracy motivated increasingly by political pressures, pointing to the powerful position subject English occupies (cf. Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985; Patterson, 2000; Rosser, 2000).

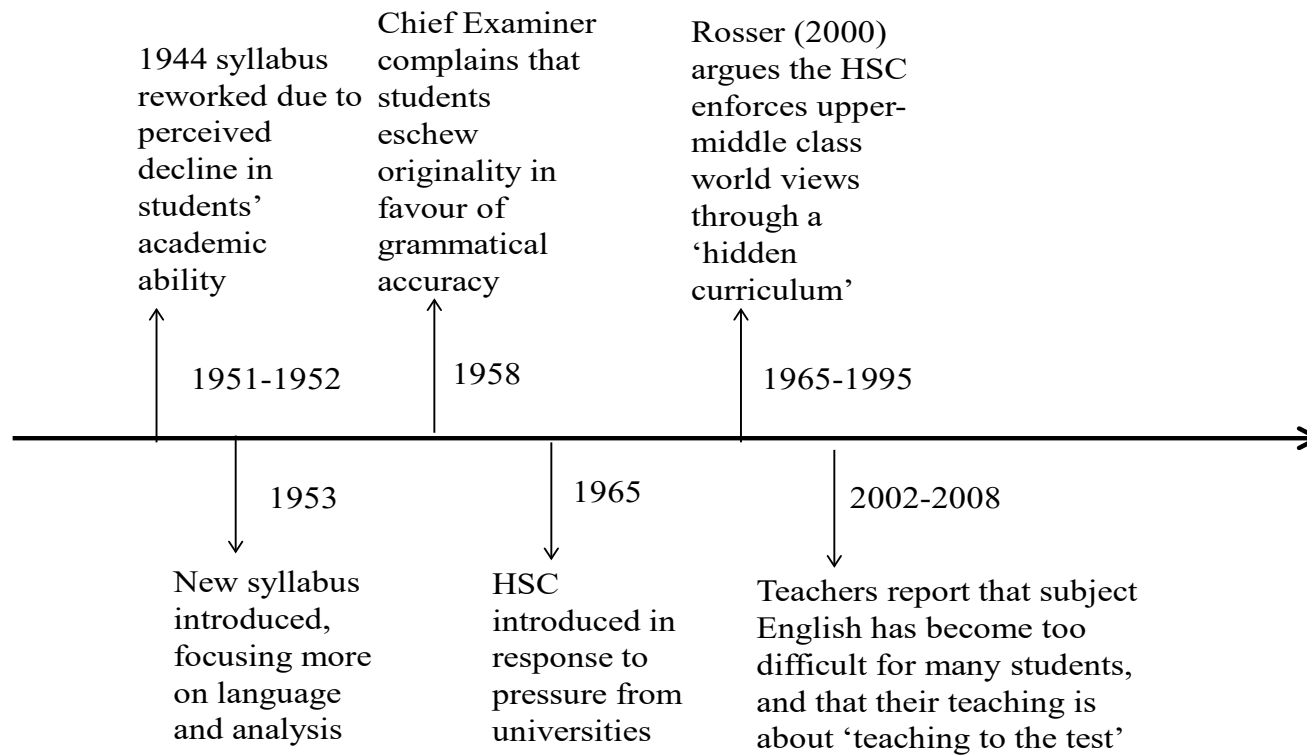


Figure 1.3 The development of the HSC (adapted from Brock 1996; ETA 2019a, 2019b; Manuel, 2002; Rosser, 2000)

1.4.5 Subject English from 2009-2018

In 2009, a new Stage 6 (i.e., senior secondary, or Years 11 and 12) syllabus began to be taught and assessed across NSW. The language of its Rationale section strongly suggested that the subject would focus on *both* language and literature, with a goal of developing students' communicative proficiency, enjoyment of English, and aesthetic and cultural awareness (BOS, 2009b). Despite the substantial body of literature investigating the historical development of the subject and its curriculum, especially in Australia and NSW (e.g., Brock, 1996; Green & Hodgens, 1996; Macken-Horarik, 2006, Michaels, 2001; Patterson, 2000, 2008; Rosser, 2000), the linguistic and epistemic features of the 2009-2017 syllabus remain largely unexplored in the literature. This thesis aims to contribute to scholarly understanding of subject English by focusing on how this more recent syllabus positions the subject and its students.

The most recent development in the subject's history involves the release of the newest Stage 6 English syllabus in 2018. Like the 2009 syllabus before it, this syllabus is relatively unexplored in the literature. Despite this, the English Teachers Association NSW did release their response to the draft syllabus. Overall, teachers were positive about the changes made to the syllabus, particularly for Standard English candidates. In particular, teachers were pleased that there was a decrease in requirements for students in the Standard Course to find and study their own texts alongside prescribed texts, noting that "Students in Standard previously had too many texts to consider and the whole notion of students choosing their own texts is culturally and socially biased towards middle class students" (ETA, 2019a, p. 8). Consequently, analysis and comparison of both the 2009 and 2018 are warranted. The 2018 syllabus came into effect after the collection of students' writing and classroom data, hence only the 2009 syllabus is represented in Chapters 6 and 7. Despite this, analysis of the 2018 syllabus

provides a richer perspective on the subject and allows for speculation about how the implications from Chapters 6 and 7 might be applied in light of the developments suggested by the new syllabus.

1.4.6 Summary of subject English history

The above analysis of the historical development of the NSW HSC English curriculum since the early 19th century shows that subject English has consistently placed a strong emphasis on the personal development of its students. Tensions between a focus on ‘experience and literature’ versus ‘grammar and objective analysis’ have been present in the subject since its origin in Australia. The potential for the subject to favour middle-class discourses and values was noted, along with the political pressures from universities and governments that have shaped the subject’s development. Despite extensive work into earlier syllabi, both the 2009 and 2018 syllabi stand without the detailed analysis into the subject needed to understand how it positions itself and its students. Another common, and important, theme was the need to consider that the subject does not exist within a vacuum as static document and set of prescriptions, but rather as something which is constantly operationalised within classrooms by teachers and students, as revealed through the (often critical) comments from the English Teachers Association NSW. A thorough investigation into the subject should therefore also consider how the subject is taught and assessed, and how teachers and students understand the subject, particularly students outside the middle-class candidature that appear to be advantaged by the subject. Drawing together these concerns, the next section details the research questions and how they will be answered.

1.5 Research questions

Previous work on subject English has explored its historical development, its potential to create and enforce specific subject positions for its candidates, and the varied (and sometimes hostile) views towards the subject. In order to understand the subject's curricular development, assessment practices, and student/ teacher perceptions, this thesis provides an account of subject English through three research questions:

1. How do the 2009 and 2018 Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students?
2. How is this positionality realised through assessment?
3. How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment?

As would be expected from subject English's long and disputed development, what exactly is expected from students in examinations is contentious and difficult to accurately describe. As Patterson (2014, p. 89) argued, "the challenge for the field is to advance this historical work and to examine possible implications for English teaching". These questions hope to advance scholarly understanding of these issues, building on the historical understanding of the subject by exploring how the subject has changed (or perhaps remained unchanged); as well as by considering how the teachers and students working within this complex subject navigate the influences of these various tensions. As noted earlier, the 2018 syllabus came into effect after the collection of data relevant to questions 2 and 3; however it is still included in the analysis presented in Chapter 5 in order to more comprehensively 'advance this historical work' and to ensure that

considerations for pedagogy are actionable under this new syllabus (see Chapter 4 for more on methodological rationale).

1.6 Thesis overview

This thesis aims to draw together three different data sources: curriculum documents, an analysis of student writing, and classroom data (via observations, interviews, and think-aloud protocols). These three data sources will address the research questions outlined in 1.5 and guide the organisation of the thesis. In Chapter 1, the context of the research and subject English's historical development was introduced, and the need for an investigation into the more recent syllabi was noted. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical views of language, literacy, and pedagogy that have influenced the positionality of this thesis, and then explores literature relevant to the three research questions, that is, curriculum research, assessment research, and classroom research. Chapter 3 introduces and details the theoretical frameworks, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Legitimation Code Theory, which are used to examine the linguistic and epistemic features of the subject and its assessment, while Chapter 4 explains the methodology employed, specifically methods for data collection and analysis. Chapter 5 explores the similarity and differences between the 2009 and 2018 syllabi, providing an account of how the subject positions itself and its students. Chapter 6 analyses five student responses to explore how the syllabus requirements are realised in assessment, and how students take up (or fail to take up) the discourses and knowledges valued by the subject. Chapter 7 provides an account of teacher and student perceptions, along with descriptions of classroom interactions, in order to come to a more complete account of the subject and how it functions. Chapter 8 discusses these

findings in light of the literature and considers implications for practice and curriculum development.

1.7 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the research context of the thesis. The rationale of the thesis was discussed in Section 1.2, arguing for the need for an investigation of the more recent curriculum documents, their associated assessment practices, and student and teacher perceptions. Section 1.3 described NESA and the HSC, two key aspects of subject English in NSW. The historical development of subject English, focusing on the tensions between language and literature, was described, along with the development of the HSC to the high-stakes position it currently occupies (Section 1.4). The research questions were introduced in Section 1.5, and Section 1.6 explained the thesis structure. The next chapter, Chapter 2, explores key literature in order to describe the sociological and linguistic orientations of this thesis, and introduce the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted.

Chapter 2 Literature review

English for me is like analysing poems and shit.

– ‘Reza’⁹

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the research presented in this thesis. Section 2.2, introduces key theoretical views in order to help focus the review of research presented in the following sections. Section 2.3 explores debates over the epistemic landscape of subject English, considering the importance of making disciplinary practices visible to students. Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 explore research relating to the three areas of analysis and concern of this thesis, that is, curriculum research, assessment research, and classroom research respectively. The chapter concludes with a summary of the information presented.

2.2 Discourse, pedagogy, and literacy

This section introduces and discusses the broad epistemic views that have shaped the positionality of this thesis, as well as having a great influence on my own views of pedagogy and literacy. Focusing on the work of Street, Bourdieu, Bernstein, and Halliday, as key figures exploring the interface between sociology, language, and pedagogy, the section notes the nature of language and literacy as socially-embedded, as well as the effect this has on schooling practices.

⁹ A pseudonym for one of the students who participated in this research. His writing and views on subject English are analysed further in Chapters 6 and 7.

Street (1984) explores two broad conceptualisations of literacy: an autonomous model, where literacy is viewed as a cognitive ability and linked to the development of human civilisation; and an ideological model, where literacy is viewed as a social institution, affected by social stratification, and embedded with values and ideology. Street (1984) argues that the autonomous model remains unsupported by linguistic knowledge, relies on circular reasoning and biased analysis, and cannot be rigorously tested (see pp. 19-65 of Street, 1984, for detailed criticisms of the autonomous model). Consequently, Street (1984) proposes an ideological model, with his description reproduced below:

1. It assumes that the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded;
2. Literacy can only be known to us in forms which already have political and ideological significance and it cannot, therefore, be helpfully separated from that significance and treated as though it were an 'autonomous' thing;
3. The particular practices of reading and writing that are taught in any context depend up such aspects of social structure as stratification (such as where certain social groups may be taught only to read), and the role of educational institutions;
4. The processes whereby reading and writing are learnt are what construct the meaning of it [reading and writing] for particular practitioners;

5. We would probably more appropriately refer to ‘literacies’ than to any single ‘literacy’;¹⁰
6. Writers who tend towards this model and away from the ‘autonomous’ model recognise as problematic the relationship between the analysis of any ‘autonomous’, isolable qualities of literacy and the analysis of the ideological and political nature of literacy practice. (p. 8)

For Street, literacy is therefore closely tied to social practice and institutions, has the potential to function as a form of social control, and can act to transmit hegemonic values to those who can have access to the valued forms of literacy. More simply, literacy should not be viewed as a neutral technology or skill, but rather as something which is ideologically charged and closely connected to the transmission of certain values.

Consequently, certain types of discourses and literacy practices, that is, “ways of ‘saying-writing-doing-being-valuing-believing’” (Delpit, 1992, p. 297), are valued more than others in different social contexts, with academic contexts being no exception, secondary schooling residing within this domain. However, if literacy is not ‘autonomous’, as Street (1984) convincingly argues, how then are literacy practices, and the ideologies and values embedded within them, transmitted and acquired? Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s seminal work, *The forms of capital* (1986) provides a useful framework to conceptualise how these dispositions and values, as well as their transmission, can be understood.

¹⁰ Street prefers the term ‘literacies’ as he argues that each social environment has a variety of literacies that are valued. Street argues that literacy is more than just knowing how to read and write, it is about knowing how to read and write in particular ways for particular purposes. Literacy, in this context, should be understood to mean more than just a cognitive skill, but also a social practice.

Bourdieu (1986) argued that capital exists in three forms: economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital. Economic capital is the most tangible form, and perhaps the most familiar in meaning: it is “accumulated labor...which is immediately and directly convertible into money” (pp. 15, 16). For Bourdieu, however, reducing the social world to pure economic theory meant that exchanges and interactions which were not explicitly concerned with money or profit would be seen as purposeless, when, as he argued, these cultural and social practices are profoundly important. Subsequently, Bourdieu speculated that capital could also exist in social and cultural forms.

Social capital, according to Bourdieu (1986), “is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p. 21). In other words, the larger an individual’s network and the more connected they are to these groups, the greater their social capital. While social capital is undoubtedly important when exploring broader sociological concerns, its effect is not as explicitly manifested in literacy practices as cultural capital (particularly, as shall be seen, for ways of thinking and being), and for this reason, the following paragraphs deal more exclusively with cultural capital.

For Bourdieu (1986), cultural capital itself existed in a variety of forms: an *embodied* state, that is, dispositions; an *objectified* state, that is, cultural goods; and an *institutionalized* state, that is, academic and institutional qualifications. It is this first type of cultural capital, the embodied state, which is particularly relevant to the research context, and, in fact, was initially developed by Bourdieu as a way to explain the unequal success of school students from different social classes.

Cultural capital, unlike economic capital, cannot be transmitted instantly, and instead must be inculcated or accumulated over time (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital

is characterised by dispositions or ways of being that tend to be transmitted through disguised, or even invisible, means; and this transmission does not need to be deliberate or conscious. Despite this, cultural capital can indeed be transmitted; Bourdieu provides the example of a child socialised from birth by a family with strong cultural capital in order to show that it can be transmitted, but this process is more akin to inculcation or enculturation, rather than an instantaneous transfer (which is possible with economic capital). As a result, individuals from different social classes enter schooling with different orientations and dispositions, some of which may be more valued in academic contexts, with these differences in cultural capital remaining invisible until they are manifested in the literacy and discourse practices of assessment.

Bourdieu's (1986) work therefore provides a useful means for capturing the differences between different social classes and their dispositions, which, as Bourdieu himself noted, may be used to explain differences between student achievement in schooling. The work of sociologist Basil Bernstein has taken up this task, exploring how ideas of access and distribution interface with the transmission of pedagogic knowledge in schooling. As Bernstein (1996) saw it, education is not only central to the transmission of knowledge, but also "a public institution, central to the production and reproduction of distributive injustices" (p. 5). Bernstein argued that different knowledges were tied to different social groups, leading to inequality; schools tend to present differences in student achievement as the result of purely cognitive and affective differences (i.e., the smartest and most conscientious students achieve the most), while in reality, according to Bernstein, "class cultures act to transform micro differences into macro inequalities" (p. 11).

Bernstein (1996) employs the term *pedagogic practices* to signify interactions between participants with unequal power (e.g., teacher and student, doctor and patient,

parent and child, etc.), arguing that these pedagogic practices are the means by which power relations are continued. Drawing on Halliday's (1978; see below for more) conception of language as a socially and ideologically oriented device, Bernstein began to develop series of codes and rules in order to develop a framework for systematically describing pedagogic interactions (Bernstein, 1990).

Pedagogic practices, according to Bernstein (1990), can be classified into two broad groups: *visible* and *invisible*. Visible pedagogies place emphasis on production or *performance* by students, that is, students are evaluated against an external and clearly visible set of criteria. Invisible pedagogies, in contrast, emphasise *acquisition*, that is, how well a student can take up the practices and dispositions of the subject. The importance of this difference, Bernstein (1990) argued, was the different social classes are able to exploit the possibilities of these pedagogic practices. More specifically, Bernstein (1990) argued that middle-class students, with access to not only economic advantages, but also *socialisation* practices (or, in Bourdieu's terms, strong *social capital*) that were oriented towards the practices valued at schooling, were more likely to succeed in schooling than working-class students.

This social orientation towards ways of reading, writing, and thinking, was explored by Atkinson and Ramanathan's (1995) investigation into university writing courses. The authors discovered that the two writing courses offered by a large U.S. university – one for native speakers of English, and the other for non-native speakers – had markedly different “cultures”, each with their own paradigms and success criteria. The University Composition Program (UCP), offered to native speakers, valued critical thinking and flexible structure in order to develop ideas, as well as “a certain implicitness or subtlety” (p. 548) in student writing. In contrast, the English Language Program (ELP) course, offered to non-native speakers, valued what Atkinson and

Ramanathan (1995) termed “workpersonlike prose” (p. 560). In other words, rather than using writing to explore ideas, the focus was on clear and straightforward communication which was easily learned by students and relied on a strict structure; essentially the antithesis of the writing style valued in the UCP course. As a result, many ELP students struggled to transition to the UCP course and were often negatively appraised for overly formulaic writing (the kind that was taught and valued in the ELP course). Like Bourdieu’s cultural capital and Bernstein’s invisible pedagogies, the dispositions and discourses associated with each course were often invisible to students (and perhaps teachers), only becoming apparent in literacy activities like writing.

These invisible pedagogic practices and the dispositions associated with them are not limited, however, to higher education contexts. Bourne (2000), drawing on Bernstein (1990), noted the danger of such approaches to education:

The curriculum is implicit, the criteria for success are implicit, and evaluation and assessment are implicit. In this context, those who recognize the implicit values, mainly those who have been brought up using the same codes at home, have the advantage over those who have not been inducted into the hidden rules of transmission since birth. Put crudely, this means that successful children in the progressivist classroom succeed by using what their parents have taught them in the home, drawing on that cultural capital to infer the underlying ordering principles of the school curriculum. (p. 33)

In contrast, Bourne (2000) praised the UK’s introduction of ‘Literacy Hour’, which provided a structured framework for the daily teaching of literacy skills in primary schools. For Bourne (2000), such clearly structured instruction represented an

example of Bernstein's (1990) visible pedagogy, where the criteria for success are made explicit to students and parents. While not discounting the possible political and ideological agendas that might have been at play, Bourne (2000) advocated for this change, arguing that it was an important step towards social justice and equality in schooling. This raises the question: how then can other pedagogic practices be made visible?

The systematic analysis of language in schooling, advocated for by Schleppegrell (2001, 2004), provides a meaningful way to address this question. Schleppegrell (2001) argues that analysis of the linguistic patterns expected in schooling contexts allows for effective assessment of student writing development; as the literature discussed above suggests, it may also allow for making the requirements of discourses more explicit, leading to the visible pedagogies Bernstein (1990) and Bourne (2000) call for.

Schleppegrell (2001) argues that from students' first experience with academic language in schooling, "the expectation is that they will adopt a stance that presents them as experts who can provide information that is structured in conventional ways" (p. 433). In other words, students need to present themselves as experts in a literate style and understand the decontextualised nature of communication in schooling contexts, as Street (1984) noted. Schleppegrell (2001) points out, like Bernstein (1990, 1996), that middle-class students are more likely to come to school equipped with these orientations towards language use, reflecting unequal cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). More simply, students' social class may lead to differences in student success, outside of factors such as cognitive or affective ability.

One way to address the invisibility of the discourse requirements of language in schooling, argues Schleppegrell (2001, 2004), is through what is termed a 'functional'

perspective (taking its name from Systemic Functional Linguistics, developed by Halliday, discussed below). Through several examples of spoken and written texts in school settings, Schleppegrell (2001) details how the *registers* of schooling (see 3.2.4 for more detail on this term) have specific lexical and grammatical features that allow for clear and effective communication, but only if the student is competent in deploying these linguistic patterns. In 2004, Schleppegrell furthered her work, exploring how Halliday's conception of language as a socially-oriented meaning-making resource could be used to systematically describe uses of language in history and science. With this in mind, the following paragraph describe this view of language in order to introduce one of the key theoretical frameworks for this thesis.

In 1978, linguist Michael Halliday published a series of essays describing language as a social semiotic. Drawing on Bernstein's sociological approach to describing interactions and transmitting knowledge, Halliday (1978) argued that language was a socially-oriented device that could not be detached from its social function. More specifically, Halliday (1978) conceived of language as fulfilling three *functions*: ideational, interpersonal, and textual – expressing ideas and experiences, interacting with others, and organising information respectively (see 3.2 for more on metafunctions). Halliday (and later, his colleagues, notably Christian Matthiessen and James Martin) more thoroughly developed his conception of language as *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL). SFL sees language as a set of choices available to interactants, with these sets of choices organised into systems (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 2010). The rich theoretical framework provided by SFL provides a comprehensive set of tools for describing language use in a variety of contexts, whilst simultaneously being sensitive to the social nature of language use and interactions highlighted by Bourdieu and Bernstein. Chapter 3 more thoroughly

discusses the specific aspects of SFL that are employed to shape the analysis presented in the results chapters.

This section introduced key concepts related to this research and its view of literacy, by exploring the work of literacy theorists, sociologists, linguists, and researchers exploring the intersection of social practices, literacy, and pedagogy. Research taking this sociological and linguistic approach has tended to conclude that making the discourse practices of different disciplines and contexts visible to students is critical to allowing students to access to these subjects. With this in mind, the following section explores the connection between these broad concepts and the focus of this thesis, subject English.

2.3 Discourse, pedagogy, and literacy in subject English

The previous section introduced the sociological orientation towards schooling and language use that has influenced the approach of this thesis. In particular, the work of Street, Bourdieu, Bernstein, and Halliday in describing social interactions and language was described, along with examples of how these concepts can be used to inform research in specific academic settings (e.g., University writing courses, primary school literacy instruction, and secondary science and history). This section focuses specifically on how these concepts have influenced and shaped investigations into subject English.

Explorations into the nature of subject English as a discipline in English-speaking countries (e.g., England, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) have often been framed through a sociological lens, noting the potential for the subject to have profound effects on students' thinking about themselves and their world. Eagleton's (1985) essay, *The subject of literature*, argued that literature in schooling functions as a 'moral

technology’; that is, that literature is a means by which educational institutions could instil particular values and behaviours in their students. The title, a pun on the varied meanings of ‘subject’ (i.e., literature itself a subject, but also individuals as ‘subjects’ of institutions) pointed towards what Eagleton saw as the almost insidious power of literature teaching to create a “prison camp” (p. 99) which would bind its captives to a liberal capitalist society. While Eagleton describes a British context and openly declares his own political agenda, the theme of subject English as a ‘moral technology’ is not unique to England, and has indeed been developed in Australian-based research.

This development was explored extensively in Rosser’s (2000) doctoral work, which investigated the NSW HSC syllabi between 1965 and 1995. Drawing on the sociological work of Foucault (1997), Bourdieu (1986), and Freebody (1990), Rosser, like Eagleton, noted the power of literary instruction to act as a disciplinary technology. Rosser’s work, however, moved beyond broader considerations of ‘institutions’ to specific instances of this disciplinary technology in action. The three instances were: (1) the syllabi and the committee who created them, (2) the set texts for study, and (3) the HSC examinations. Drawing together these three strands, Rosser argued that subject English disadvantaged students without the linguistic and cultural capital necessary to compete with their middle-class peers:

To these students, the education system sent a confusing, and ultimately destructive, message – on the one hand it offered equal opportunity and just reward for hard work, but on the other, it enshrined hidden values of ‘sensibility’, ‘culture’ and sophistication of wordplay. (2000, p. 209)

In other words, subject English “is effectively a power mechanism” (Rosser, 2000, p. 210), with middle-class discourses and values enforced via prescribed texts and examination practices.

Hunter (1996), echoing Bernstein, terms this power mechanism a *pedagogical institution*. As noted above, Bernstein (1990, 1996) argued that pedagogic interactions have the potential to shape the consciousness of students as they are trained to take up appropriate subject positions. Hunter (1996) argues that subject English functions as “a specific pedagogical milieu in which a limited but important range of literate and ethical abilities can be formed” (p. 5). Noting the pastoral orientation of subject English (cf. Patterson, 2000; see Chapter 1 for more detail), Hunter suggests that subject English allows students to undergo a process of “supervised freedom”, in which they are trained to regulate their own dispositions and behaviours through the normative gaze of teachers. Taking a slightly different stance to Eagleton (1985), Hunter argues that seeing subject English as functioning only to inculcate values and create subjects misses some of the complexity of the pastoral orientation of the subject. Instead, Hunter (1996) argues that the subject may also take on an emancipatory role, and that students’ self-regulation may in fact function in a positive way:

In assuming the persona of the pastoral guide in order to get students to question their own conduct, teachers are not repressing their students’ inner capacities; they are forming and augmenting such capacities by requiring their cultivation. It is possible to say therefore that, to the degree that freedom is identified with the capacity to govern one’s own conduct, then English has indeed functioned as an emancipatory discipline. (p. 10)

This optimistic view towards literacy instruction as an emancipatory practice is echoed by Delpit (1992). Like Bernstein and Halliday, Delpit sees language, more specifically *discourse* “as something of an ‘identity kit,’ that is, ways of ‘saying-writing-doing-being-valuing-believing’” (p. 297). As a result, Delpit (1992) argues that teaching students to take up the dominant discourse practices of academic communities (in Bourdieu’s terms, providing them with the necessary cultural capital; in Bernstein’s terms, making pedagogy visible) can allow them to succeed in schooling. Rather than ‘bowing before the master’ (i.e., rejecting their own discourses from the home and replacing them with other discourses), students can learn to take on new patterns of language *in addition*:

Individuals *can* learn the ‘superficial features’ of dominant Discourses, as well as the more subtle aspects, and if placed in proper context, acquiring those linguistic forms and literate styles need not be ‘bowing before the master’. (pp. 301-302, emphasis in original)

In other words, by learning to take up the dispositions and language patterns that are valued in a subject, students are able to acquire the styles necessary for success in a variety of settings, even if they are not enculturated into these practices from birth. As Bernstein notes (1990, 1996), access to these different dispositions and language patterns is vital to allowing students to take up the required approaches to pedagogic interactions. That is, when a student is able to recognise, understand, and employ the right ‘codes’, they are more likely to succeed in academic literacy practices (Delpit, 1992).

Hall (1973) proposed three separate ‘codes’ in order to describe different ways semiotic content was received (see also Halliday’s view of language, described in

Section 2.2, above). These three codes are: *dominant*, *negotiated*, and *oppositional*. A dominant code refers to the preferred or intended meaning of a communication, often influenced by ideological factors. When an individual understands and accepts the hegemonic values presented in a text, they are said to be engaging in a *dominant reading*. The opposite, an *oppositional reading*, is where an individual rejects the dominant meaning, instead looking for alternative and contrary meanings in the text. *Negotiated readings* represent an intermediate between the two, where readers accept some aspects of the dominant code, but also offer some resistance and alternative understandings. The influence of dominant readings for student success in subject English has been noted by Mellor and Patterson (1994):

English cannot allow us to acknowledge explicitly that there are readings we do *not* want produced and reading which we *do* want produced despite the fact that particular kinds of reading clearly *are* required. It seems to us to be a denial of the *use* of power in the English classroom. (p. 48; emphasis in original).

In other words, teachers appear to be unwilling (or perhaps unable) to explicitly recognise that certain types of reading, writing, and thinking are valued over others, but the subject also has the power to make the existence and availability of these different readings available to students. As a result, tensions between English as emancipatory and English as oppressive continue to dominate debates over the subject (see 2.4, below, for more on different models of English); however, the research tends to agree that making these practices or ‘rules’ visible to students is vital for success.

This theme of ‘learning the rules’ for success has also been noted by Davison (2005). Like Delpit (1992), Davison (2005) argues that discourses in school settings do

not function to simply transmit knowledge, but that subject English acts “to apprentice students into the ways of thinking-feeling-doing in subject English in particular and an English speaking-educated democratic literature community in general” (p. 235). As Bernstein and Halliday argue, language and instruction cannot be separated from the values embedded within them; however the subject does not function as *solely* transmitting language (and setting up binary oppositions between English as content and English as language may in fact be unproductive; cf. Hunter, 1996). Instead, Davison argues that subject English functions as *both* language and content, with content represented through particular ways of writing (and ultimately, being, cf. Gee, 1990) that are valued within the discipline.

In her exploration of student perspectives in senior secondary English, Davison (2005) developed three broad categories of students: insiders, outsiders, and pretenders. Insiders were students who appeared to legitimately enjoy the subject and internalise the requirements of the subject; outsiders, in contrast, failed to recognise the pedagogic requirements of the subject and often avoided or resisted engaging with it. The third category, pretenders, had seemingly worked out what the teacher’s expectations for success were, and began to base their responses on what they believed the teacher wanted to hear. These students were able to recognise and ‘see’ the invisible pedagogy of subject English, although perhaps lacked the cultural capital (or maybe, even more simply, the willingness) to regulate their own consciousness as is required for successful pedagogic interactions (Bernstein, 1990; Hunter, 1996). Tellingly, these students were more successful than outsiders, but less successful than insiders, with Davison (2005) calling for the need to recognise the dual-sided nature of subject English in order to deal with the invisible pedagogies of the subject. Subsequently, Davison (2007) went on to argue that not only ways of reading, but also ways of *writing* act to enforce particular

approaches, despite assessment questions often inviting a seemingly free scope of ‘personal responses’ (see also Macken-Horarik, 2006, in 2.5).

Christie and Derewianka’s (2008) investigation into the language development trajectory of students in primary and secondary school examined requirements for writing in different disciplines, and provides a useful model for meeting this need to make discourse requirements more visible. Like Schleppegrell (2001, 2004), the authors adopt a systemic functional approach to explore the linguistic features of writing in science and history, and, of particular relevance for this thesis, subject English. Christie and Derewianka (2008) note that abstract material processes (often actions of transformation, see 3.2.2.1 for an explanation of process types) were often employed to allow the writer to make judgements about the text and its function in society. As students progress throughout secondary English “more nuanced value positions emerge, such that appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of texts is often blended with – or alternatively, leads to – judgement about ethics and principles for living” (p. 85).

Alongside this focus on process types, Christie and Derewianka (2008) also explore the textual resources students use (i.e., linguistic resources used to organise information, see 3.2.3 for more detail), as well as the resources used to make judgements and evaluations (see 3.2.1 for more detail). Overall, successful responses are characterised by careful management of structure; as well as increasingly complex evaluations, moving from simple reviews of texts (e.g., ‘I liked the book because...’) in the earliest years, to explorations of themes about society or the human experience in senior years. Subsequently, like Davison (2005), and Hunter (1996), the analysis provided by Christie and Derewianka suggests that rather than seeing subject English as focused on either language competency or values and dispositions, both are required for

success in the subject. These themes were investigated by Frances Christie in her earlier (1999) and later work (2012) respectively, discussed below.

In her earlier work, Christie (1999), along with other contributors, draws on the work of Bernstein to investigate how language and knowledge interact in various schooling contexts. Her chapter is particularly relevant to the current research, as it investigated pedagogic practices in secondary English teaching. Christie revealed that particular patterns emerged as the teacher and students interacted:

In building the shared reader position, there is a progress from shared comprehension of events, to shared interpretation of behaviours of characters, to shared judgements on the significance of events, and finally to shared judgements on the moral significance of the book. (p. 166)

This pattern is represented in Figure 2.1, below; circles show the three broad stages typical of subject English instruction, and the chevrons between show that Stage 1 is followed by 2, and Stage 2 followed by Stage 3. In Stage 1, students are invited to reflect on the issues (e.g., the morality of different characters) with guidance from the teacher, followed by discussion and activities oriented around encouraging students to question and critique these issues. By Stage 3, students need to be able to express these judgements through writing.

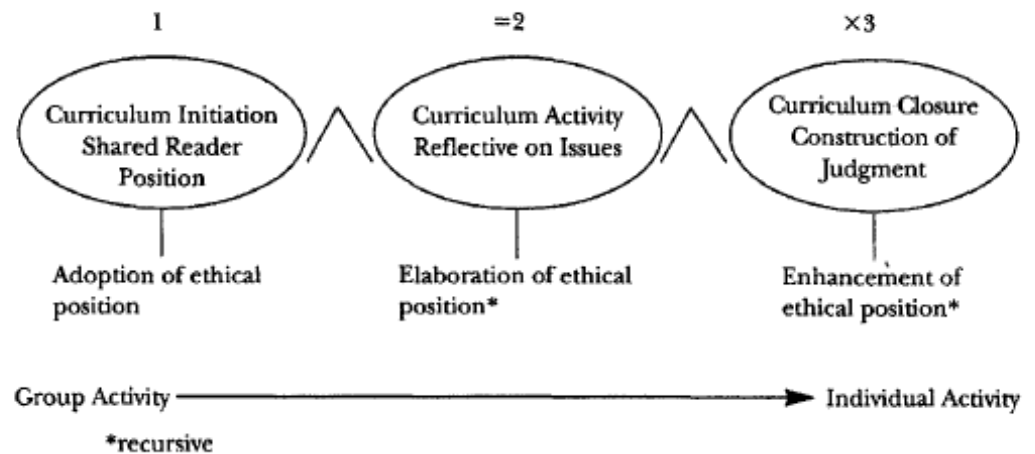


Figure 2.1 Example of a macrogenre, with chevrons indicating “is followed by”, = and x indicating elaboration and enhancement respectively (Christie, 1999, p. 162; see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014 for more on elaboration and enhancement)

This recursive pattern of instruction, which Christie (1999) terms *macrogenre* (see Figure 2.1, above), bears considerable similarity to the four roles model developed by Freebody and Luke (1990), in that there is a progression of ways in which students need to interact with texts and the issues contained within. Freebody and Luke argue that literacy instruction (N.B. *literacy*, as distinct from ‘literary’) requires students to take on four roles:

- a. code breaker, where students need to understand the ‘technology’ of writing (e.g., alphabets, phonetics, etc.);
 - b. text participant, where students must comprehend and understand texts;
 - c. text user, where students must understand the social function of texts;
- and
- d. text analyst, where students must understand the ideologies embedded in texts

Anson (2018)¹¹ applied this framework to secondary English instruction in England, Australia, and the United States, arguing that these roles were present to varying degrees in the syllabi of each country. NSW, in particular, placed particular emphasis on the text user and text analyst roles, suggesting that students were often required to explore the social and ideological functioning of texts (as opposed to just comprehending the texts). The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) framework, the largest educational authority in the United Kingdom, bore strong similarities to this orientation, especially towards the value placed on the text analyst role, possibly a sign of Australia's inheritance of 'English as a means for personal development' from England (see 1.4 for more on the historical development of subject English in Australia). In contrast, the Californian curriculum, which influenced many other US states, focused heavily on the code breaker and text participant roles, reflecting an orientation geared more towards linguistic and communicative competence, rather than reflection on experience. The NSW orientation towards English, focused heavily on exploring experience and developing values, parallels the macrogenre noted by Christie (1999), where students move from comprehension to more complex and subtle engagement with the texts via judgement of characters and ultimately, of the authors themselves.

In her later work, Christie (2012) explored subject English from the other key perspective suggested by the literature, that is, the requirement for increasing complexity in language use and competence as students progress throughout school. Again adopting a systemic functional approach, Christie argues that subject English, particularly literary studies, is perhaps the most focused on evaluation of texts and

¹¹ Acknowledgement and thanks to Mary Macken-Horarik who helped greatly with the framing and structuring of this report.

actors of all senior high school subjects. Like Christie and Derewianka (2008), Christie (2012) noted that student responses to literature tended to feature abstract material processes (e.g., the author *demonstrates* the importance of...) in order to introduce evaluative language. Christie (2012) also notes that “writers of response genres avoid much reference to self, for this is part of building the apparent detachment required in standing back from the text(s) to offer interpretation” (p. 178). Comparing these two features (i.e., a personal evaluation vs. impersonal critical analysis) seems to result in almost contradictory requirements for the subject, as students are expected to be personally developed through their engagement with literature, yet also display their knowledge in impersonal ways. As a result, students must have considerable control over both the cultural capital and linguistic resources required in order to be successful in the subject. This thesis aims to more thoroughly investigate how these requirements are expressed in the syllabus, assessment, and classroom practices.

This section explored literature relating to the overall requirements and characteristics of subject English. The importance of both linguistic competence and values to success in the subject was a frequent theme, as well as tensions between the subject’s ability to either constrain or expand students’ sense of self (cf. Eagleton, 1985; and Hunter, 1996; above, for examples of English as a disciplinary or emancipatory subject respectively). With these broad themes in mind, the literature review now turns to examining research specifically related to the three research questions and foci of analysis in this thesis.

2.4 Realising subject English in curriculum

The section above explored how the broad sociological and linguistic concerns of key theorists like Bourdieu, Bernstein, and Halliday, discussed in 2.2, could be applied

to subject English. Overall, the research has tended to take two broad approaches (although not necessarily concurrently), focusing on either the linguistic or epistemic features of the subject. The following section focuses specifically on research relevant to research question 1 – How do the Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students?

The work of Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007) exemplifies how the ideas of Bernstein and Halliday can be applied to examining the structures of subject English, with a goal of making the requirements more visible to students. Drawing on Bernstein, the authors begin to categorise the development of different ‘models’ of subject English, arguing that over its development, English has evolved six models (cf. the description of the development of subject English in 1.4, where many of those models are valued differently at different times):

- *Basic skills* – focused on developing literacy skills and instilling Christian values, through texts like grammar books or biblical passages;
- *Cultural heritage* – focused on inculcating students with values of ‘sensibility’, through texts like novels or poetry;
- *Personal growth* – focused on allowing students to explore the human experience and their sense of self, through texts like journals or letters;
- *Functional language studies* – focused on developing students’ ability to understand and produce texts in a range of contexts, through a variety of texts and text interpretations;
- *Cultural studies* – focused on developing students’ critical literacy, through critiquing and evaluating a variety of texts; and

- *New literacy studies* – focusing on developing students’ ability to recognise literacy as situated practices (cf. Street’s account of literacy, discussed in 2.2)

Each of these models, Christie and Macken-Horarik argue (2007), has its own set of linguistic practices that students are required to command in order to be successful (see 2.5, below, for more detail on the linguistic requirements of student writing in assessment contexts). The authors suggest that Systemic Functional Linguistics can provide the tools necessary to help illuminate these requirements, making the complex discourse requirements of the subject visible. Consideration of the epistemic requirements of the subject, as engendered by the various models summarised above, may provide a useful way forward in documenting these linguistic practices.

The importance of considering the linguistic and epistemic requirements of subject English is noted in Christie and Macken-Horarik’s (2011) later work. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, Bernstein, and Halliday, editors Christie and Maton (2011) argue for a dialogue between linguistics and sociology, and suggest that a focus on *disciplinarity* may meet this challenge. In their chapter, Christie and Macken-Horarik (2011) further develop their earlier (2007) work, considering disciplinarity and subject English. The authors suggest that the various models of the subject (e.g., basic skills, cultural heritage, etc.) not only increase the complexity and demands of the subject, but also lead to tensions within the discipline, a trend characteristic of the subject’s history, as Chapter 1 argued. In response, Christie and Macken-Horarik (2011) propose what they term the ‘Functional Language Studies model’, that is, a system of instruction focused explicitly on developing students’ linguistic competence through a carefully planned trajectory, whilst at the same time integrating the appreciation of literature and transmission of values that are central to other models. Despite the contribution offered by their proposal, their chapter does not explicitly investigate extant curricula, but rather

envisions a possible future. For this reason, the following paragraphs discuss research into existing curriculum and how this inform the approach of this thesis.

Macken-Horarik (2011) has investigated subject English in the Australian National Curriculum (i.e., Kindergarten to Year 10), along two axes: one being disciplinary – that is, what practices constitute the subject? – and the other epistemological – that is, what knowledge creates the subject? For Macken-Horarik (2011), the key question is “what happens when ‘knowers’ – teachers, teacher educators and academics – cannot agree about ‘what counts’ as valued knowledge in a discipline?” (p. 198). As she had argued earlier, along with Christie (Christie & Macken-Horarik 2007, 2011), subject English is characterised by an unstable epistemic landscape, with tensions over the subject permeating its history. As a result, the expectations for students, and even at times teachers, are left largely invisible. Drawing on Bernstein and Maton (see below for more detail on Maton’s development of Bernstein’s ideas), she notes that there is a need to consider the knowledge structures of English in order to make the curriculum more accessible, and perhaps even more cohesive in future iterations.

Sawyer (2008, 2010) has examined the subject English curriculum at Years 7-10, arguing that NSW in particular has been characterised by a ‘Growth’ model, where the subject was conceptualised as a means to develop students. More specifically, however, Sawyer (2010) argues “that ‘growth’ generally had a more linguistically-oriented drive than it is usually credited with” (p. 294), that is, that the subject was also focused on developing students’ linguistic capabilities and competence. Continuing this focus on the Australian Curriculum, Love, Sandiford, Macken-Horarik, and Unsworth (2014) noted the difficulty teachers face as they are to combine language, literacy, and literature instruction under the new Kindergarten-Year 10 curriculum. They argued that

“The challenge remains to provide appropriate professional learning that will build teachers’ developing knowledge of a coherent knowledge about language” (p. 51). In short, research into subject English has consistently highlighted the epistemic tensions of the subject and the need to make knowledge requirements visible to students, and a need to systematically describe these structures is needed. In the same way Systemic Functional Linguistics provides a useful theoretical framework for exploring the linguistic requirements of subject English, *Legitimation Code Theory* (LCT), discussed below, provides a framework for exploring the epistemic requirements of the subject.

Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) is an exploratory and analytical framework, described by one of its leading theorists, Karl Maton (2014), as “a sociology of legitimacy” (p. 17). Drawing on, among others, the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein (see 2.2 for more on relevant concepts from both authors), LCT has often turned its tools to sociology of education, focusing particular on how knowledges and practices are structured within disciplines (Maton, 2014; Maton, Hood, & Shay, 2016). Owing to the frequent connections between the work of Halliday and Bernstein, LCT, which draws heavily on the concepts introduced by Bernstein, continues this dialogue with SFL, making the two of them complementary frameworks (Maton, Martin, & Matruglio, 2016; Chapter 4 discusses how the two frameworks are used for complementary perspectives in this thesis). LCT aims to make more explicit the types of knowledges and practices that are valued (or devalued) in subjects, as well as track shifts in these relationships across time in different objects of study (whether that be the across the history of a discipline, across a lesson, across an examination response, or any other range of objects of study). Chapter 3 more thoroughly describes the theoretical framework and particular concepts, known as *dimensions*, that are relevant for the analysis presented in following chapters.

Overall, the research landscape suggests that subject English is characterised by an unstable, and often invisible, epistemology. Work by Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007, 2011) has explored subject English through this lens of disciplinarity, commenting on the development of different models of English; along with Sawyer (2008, 2010), and Love et al. (2014), exploring the curriculum in earlier and middle stages of schooling. However, to my knowledge, there exists no systematic exploration of the most recent subject English syllabi in senior years. This thesis aims to complement the work discussed above by examining, and hopefully making visible, the kinds of knowledges and practices which are valued and devalued in senior secondary English. Research Question 1 – How do the Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students? – is focused on addressing this issue. The following section focuses on literature relevant to Research Question 2, that is, research on assessment in subject English.

2.5 Realising subject English in assessment

The section above explored how the linguistic and epistemic features of subject English as a discipline warrant detailed examination, with this thesis taking a sociological perspective on literacy, language, and pedagogy. However, as 2.3 noted, assessment practices function to enforce specific dispositions and discourses. For this reason, a comprehensive account of subject English at the senior level should also consider how disciplinary requirements engendered by syllabus documents are realised in assessment. This section explores literature relevant to this concern; Research Question 2 – How is the positionality of subject English and its students realised in assessment?

As argued above, investigation into literacy practices in schooling greatly benefits from systematic explorations into the linguistic and epistemic features of literacy practices in order to make invisible practices and structures more visible. Schleppegrell (2001, 2004) has called for detailed analysis of linguistic features of schooling contexts, and Bernstein (1990, 1996), and later Maton (2014, 2016), have argued that a sociology of education needs to consider different ways knowledges are structured and valued in different discipline.

Macken-Horarik's (2006) systemic functional linguistic (SFL) investigation of Year 10 student responses to a narrative suggested the notion of a 'hierarchy' of responses, where certain types of examination responses are valued over others. Arguing that responses could be grouped into three broad types – (a) a tactical reading, where the student focuses on isolated elements of the text; (b) a mimetic reading, where the student summarises the text; and (c) a symbolic reading, where the student explores abstractions about the significance of the text – she found that symbolic readings were encouraged by the examination questions and valued by examiners. In other words, dominant readings (cf. Hall's account of dominant readings, described in Section 2.3), where the student explores the significance of the events and appraises the characters' actions, are characteristic of high-scoring responses. Macken-Horarik (2006) developed a typology of responses by considering each response through the lens of metafunction (see 2.2 for a brief introduction to Halliday's conception of metafunctions, and 3.2 for a more detailed description). The highest scoring students were able to: ideationally – understand and expand on the abstract meaning of the narrative; interpersonally – appraise the attitudes presented in the text; and textually – understand the symbolic relations developed across the text. In contrast, the lowest scoring students: ideationally – focused on minor elements of the story; interpersonally – provided subjective personal

responses to the text; and textually – shifted rapidly between Themes rather than developing them (see 3.2.3 for more detail on Themes and SFL’s view of organising information textually). Macken-Horarik's (2006) work reveals the importance, and usefulness, of evaluating student responses from a variety of perspectives in order to provide layers of analysis. Following this model, this thesis also focuses on the three metafunctions through specific systems (APPRAISAL, TRANSITIVITY, and PERIODICITY; described in detail in Chapter 3) as represented in the assessment practices of senior secondary responses.

Continuing a systemic functional orientation, Christie and Derewianka (2008) examined the linguistic and structural features of successful student responses. The authors argued that abstract material processes (often actions of transformation, see 3.2.2.1 for an explanation of process types) were often employed to allow the writer to make judgements about the text and its function in society. As students progress throughout secondary English “more nuanced value positions emerge, such that appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of texts is often blended with – or alternatively, leads to – judgement about ethics and principles for living” (p. 85). Christie’s (2012) later work also adopted a systemic functional approach, arguing that subject English, particularly literary studies, is perhaps the most focused on evaluation of texts and actors of all senior high school subjects. Like Christie and Derewianka (2008), Christie (2012) noted that student responses to literature tended to feature abstract material processes (e.g., the author *demonstrates* the importance of...) in order to introduce evaluative language. Christie (2012) also notes that “writers of response genres avoid much reference to self, for this is part of building the apparent detachment required in standing back from the text(s) to offer interpretation” (p. 178). As noted in Section 2.3 these two features (i.e., a personal evaluation versus impersonal critical analysis) seems

to result in almost contradictory requirements for the subject, as students are expected to be personally developed through their engagement with literature, yet also display their knowledge in impersonal ways (see also 1.4, which noted the epistemic tensions that have characterised the subject's history). Despite the depth and scope of the analysis provided by Christie (2012), and Christie and Derewianka (2008), there is less work considering low and middle-scoring responses in senior English. This thesis aims to complement the extensive work on highly successful English responses by investigating how less successful writers deploy linguistic resources.

Matruglio and Vale (2018), like Macken-Horarik (2006), have investigated assessment through this lens, that is, by comparing differences between high and low-scoring responses. Rather than written responses, which have been strongly featured in SFL work, the authors focused on an assessment requiring students to present a speech where they argued persuasively about a character in their text of study. Despite the task seemingly inviting a more spoken-like approach, the highest scoring responses were those who presented “a spoken-out essay” (p. 6); in other words, students needed to recognise and anticipate the teacher's expectations to use language in highly structured and formal ways, despite the task seemingly requiring a different approach. Matruglio and Value (2018) drew on a variety of SFL's theoretical tools in order to analyse student responses, informed by the work of Martin and Rose (2003, 2008); more specifically, the authors examined how mode affected textual construction, and how these requirements were met through PERIODICITY (see Chapter 3 for more detail on these terms).

While much of the research described above has focused on the importance of English as a means to transmit values and dispositions, the late Annette Patterson (2008) argued that while ethics were still an important element of examinations in NSW

English, aesthetics and rhetoric were more highly valued by examiners. Reports from NSW examiners tended to focus on students' control of structure and knowledge of text, and their ability to present evidence in order to sustain their thesis across their response. I have reached similar conclusions comparing examiner reports for final examinations across Australia (Anson, 2017), using SFL and LCT as frameworks to argue that while dispositions and values are valued, a control of structure and linguistic flair are also vital for student success. Perhaps more importantly, implicit in the language of examiner reports was the construction of hypothetical students, as either insightful and judicious, or lazy and careless. Consequently, detailed analysis of examination practices requires not only an investigation of linguistic features, but also a sociological orientation following the models provided by Bourdieu (1986) and Bernstein (1990, 1996) in order to capture how certain subject positions are enforced via assessment. Following the models provided by Maton, Martin, and Matruglio (2016), this thesis combines SFL and LCT as dual frameworks in order to capture both the linguistic and epistemic requirements of senior responses.

Christie (2016) has taken this approach. Investigating senior secondary English examination papers from New South Wales, South Africa, and New Zealand, she argued that subject English aims to cultivate a *knower code* (see 3.3.1 for more detail on this term). In other words, literature study in subject English is oriented towards “a capacity to express values related to the human experience, established by reference to literary texts” (p. 174). Christie’s analysis drew heavily on a dimension of LCT known as *semantics*, arguing that successful writers are able to introduce Themes that focus on broad abstractions, particularly about the human experience, aiming to cultivate, in LCT terms, a knower code. Subject English emphasises knowledge based on the personal attributes and insights of individuals, whilst simultaneously placing less emphasis on

specialised, technical knowledge; that is, it can be described as SR+. ¹² Despite the compelling arguments offered by Christie (2016), the work, unfortunately limited to a book chapter, could not consider the development of Theme across texts, considering only brief excerpts, and only examining successful responses. The length afforded by this thesis aims to complement Christie's analysis by considering a wider variety of linguistic and epistemic features across a different range of responses, as well as focusing more explicitly on the *specialisation* dimension of LCT.

This section described research relevant to Research Question 2 – How is the positionality of subject English and its students realised through assessment? Much previous work has taken a Systemic Functional Linguistics approach, commenting on how particular language features are required for success. Legitimation Code Theory has also been employed as a complementary framework for SFL analysis in order to investigate how particular knowledges and dispositions are valued. Despite work investigating assessment practices from a variety of perspectives, research into the linguistic and epistemic features of senior secondary English responses, particularly for low and middle-scoring responses, is lacking, which Research Question 2 aims to address. The following section investigates literature relevant to the third and final research question, focusing on how subject English is understood by teachers and students.

2.6 Realising subject English in classrooms

The section above reviewed literature relevant to Research Question 2, which focused on assessment practices in senior secondary subject English. However, a

¹² SR+ is used to represent strong social relations. Social relations, and related concepts, are defined and explained in 3.3.1.

discipline and its practices cannot be reduced to simply curriculum documents and assessments, as disciplinary practices are not only enacted through written texts, but also through the interactions of teachers and students, as Bernstein (1996) notes. With this in mind, this section explores research germane to investigations of classroom practice in order to situate this research presented in this thesis and focus Research Question 3 – How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment?

As Street (1984) argues, literacy is a socially-oriented phenomenon embedded with ideology. In their work on ethnography in language and literacy research, Heath and Street (2008) argue that in formal institutions of education, only certain types of knowledge and literacy are valued. Furthermore, the structures of classroom practices themselves are influenced, if not completely controlled, by “power sources beyond local participants...[that is] core parameters of formal education (e.g., time, space, and role specifications)” (p. 17; see also Bernstein, 1990, 1996 for similar arguments). For this reason, Research Questions 1 and 2 aim to investigate the types of knowledge and literacy practices that are valued in curriculum documents and enforced in assessment practices.

However, as Bourdieu (1986) notes, dispositions and values cannot be transmitted instantly (and often, cannot be explicitly taught), but rather individuals are slowly enculturated into certain ways of thinking and being. As Sections 2.3 and 2.4 argued, along with the historical influences discussed in Section 1.4, subject English has the transmission of values and dispositions deeply embedded in its epistemic landscape. Consequently, a comprehensive account of subject English at the senior secondary level should not only consider the external ‘power sources’ of syllabi and assessment, but also how these are realised in classroom settings.

Analysis of classroom interactions can provide meaningful insights into how students are inculcated into certain literacy practices, as Austin and Freebody (2001) demonstrate. In their work examining classroom talk in primary school settings, the authors argue that classroom talk acted to show certain types of knowledge were valued over others; when students took up these kinds of knowledge they were praised, others were reprimanded for deviating from the teacher's expectations. Austin and Freebody (2001) conclude that "in order to be successful participants in the enculturating institution of schooling, students must already enact this institutionalised version of themselves" (p. 546). Importantly, the teacher's conceptions of what counted as appropriate were expressed in their classroom talk, pointing at the usefulness of combining analysis of *both* assessment and classroom interactions in order to more fully understand disciplinary practices.

Alongside a focus on classroom interactions, think-aloud protocols also represent a useful means to investigate the perceptions of teachers. In their analysis of teacher appraisal of student writing, Cooksey, Freebody, and Wyatt-Smith (2007) argue that combining think-aloud data with analysis of student writing allows for a more thorough analysis of teachers' approach to writing. Strategies like these – recording classroom interactions, using think-aloud protocols et cetera – can be described as "ethnographic tools" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 120), and were key to the collection of data throughout this current research (see 4.5 for more detail). Rather than a more extensive, anthropologically oriented approach like a 'true' ethnography, the adoption of ethnographic tools allows for data to be captured in relevant contexts (i.e., classroom interactions), without considering broader concerns like group identity or belonging, which, while certainly important, are outside the scope of this thesis.

Christie's (1999) work represents a key example of such work. Entering a Year 10 classroom, Christie recorded and analysed fifteen 50-minute lessons, using SFL to describe the grammatical features of classroom interactions. Her work revealed the patterns that a teacher used to encourage students to take up the literacy practices valued in the subject. This analysis was complemented by a brief comparison to student writing after this sequence lessons, which, as Christie herself lamented, could not be sufficiently analysed due to the constraint of the chapter length.

Despite Christie's (1999, 2012) considerable contributions to literacy instruction in schooling contexts, concurrent analysis of student perspectives and assessment remains largely unaddressed by prior research. Davidson (2012) argues that *ethnomethodology*, where participants' understandings are used to orient analysis, is an under-utilised approach to literacy research. The analysis of sequences of interactions in order to investigate how meaning is made among participants represents a key example of this kind of approach:

From the ethnomethodological perspective, the painstaking description that ethnomethodology provides is intended to reveal taken-for-granted ways that people accomplish their activity. In this way, researchers can get at what is taken-for-granted – how teachers and students do these things interactionally in order to bring about literacy lessons or events, for example. (p. 35)

Teacher-student interactions, focusing particularly on the co-construction of meaning occurs through these interactions, can be particularly useful for both the instruction and research of literacy, and aligns with the sociological views of language and literacy discussed earlier in this Chapter (Gibbons, 1993, 2018). While not a strictly

ethnomethodological approach, this thesis aims to complement the insights gained from analysis of classroom interactions and teacher think-aloud protocols with analysis of interview data using ethnographic tools (see Chapter 4). Jogie (2015) has used teacher interviews to investigate perceptions of subject English. Focusing on the Area of Study, a section of the 2009-2017 syllabus (see 5.2 for detail), Jogie (2015) revealed that teachers often felt forced to make arbitrary or artificial links between texts and the Area of Study, rather than fostering genuine engagement with texts. Interview data provided an insight into perceptions and understandings that would not be available through analysis focusing solely on assessment or classroom interactions. For this reason, this thesis aims to complement the analysis of syllabus documents, student writing, classroom interactions, and teacher think-aloud protocols, with data collected from a *student* perspective via interviews (see Chapter 4 for more detail on methodology). To the best of my knowledge, while previous work has explored one or more of these data sources extensively, there is a lack of research offering concurrent analysis on curriculum, assessment, and classroom data at the senior secondary English level. This thesis aims to further scholarly understanding by considering how these multiple perspectives can provide a mutually informing account of the disciplinary practices of subject English.

This section explored literacy research based in classrooms, particularly where focused on subject English. Overall, a variety of approaches has been used to capture and analyse data, including the use of ethnographic tools like interviews and observations (focusing particularly on analysis of participant interactions to understand how practices are created in context), think-aloud processes, and Systemic Functional analysis of language features. A gap in research combining analysis of curriculum, assessment, and classroom data at the senior secondary level was noted, with the

research presented in this thesis targeted at addressing this gap. The following section provides a summary of Chapter 2.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to the research presented in this thesis, focusing on the theoretical and methodological approaches that have influenced the analysis presented in later chapters. Section 2.2 introduced the sociological and linguistic focus of this research, noting that literacy and language are intimately bound with their social contexts, and that these social contexts have significant implications for schooling. The following section, 2.3, turned its focus more specifically to subject English, reviewing debates over the purpose and function of the subject and calls for research to make the disciplinary practices of subject English more visible. Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 explored literature relating to subject English in curriculum, assessment, and classrooms respectively. Overall, prior research into subject English has frequently employed SFL and Bernstein's work, and more recently LCT, as explanatory frameworks, along with ethnographic tools like interviews and analysis of classroom interactions. Despite the extensive work along these lines, investigation into the senior secondary English syllabus, assessment, and classroom concurrently remains under-researched, with the Research Questions intended to explore this area. The following chapter, Chapter 3, provides detail on the two theoretical frameworks which guide the analysis presented in following Chapters.

Chapter 3 Theoretical framework

How are you going to prove your point if there's nothing to show it?

– ‘Khalid’¹³

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter develops the theoretical framework that is used to inform the analysis presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. It is divided into two broad sections, 3.2 and 3.3, with each section focusing on one aspect of the framework. The first section introduces Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and then focuses specifically on aspects of the approach that are pertinent to the current research. The second section introduces Legitimation Code Theory, and like 3.2, focuses specifically on relevant areas of the theory. Having established the theoretical foundation on which the analysis relies, Chapter 4 then describes how these two frameworks are operationalised in the current research.

3.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a framework that aims to describe how language functions to produce meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004). The view of language afforded by the theory is represented in its name; in other words, SFL is concerned with *functions* of language, and describes how these functions are achieved through various *systems* of language. Although SFL has its origins as a system for describing English grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), it has been applied to a

¹³ Another student (pseudonym) whose voice is strongly featured in Chapter 7.

variety of other languages, including French, Japanese, Spanish, and Chinese (e.g., Bartlett & O’Grady, 2017).

SFL argues that there are three key functions of language, each acting simultaneously to produce meaning. These three functions, referred to as *metafunctions*, are:

- a) *Ideational* – which is used to represent experience, for example “to organize, understand and express our perceptions of the world and of our own consciousness” (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, p. 10)
- b) *Interpersonal* – which is used to enact social relationships (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), for example “to get or offer information or goods, to direct the behaviour of others, and enact attitudes, evaluations and so on” (Asp, 2017, p. 35)
- c) *Textual* – which is used to organise language and text, for example to “allow information to be organised in terms of speakers’ assessments of focus and newsworthiness, and as related or not to prior discourse, to extra-textual context(s) or as anticipatory or upcoming news” (Asp, 2017, p. 35)

These metafunctions (i.e., ideational, interpersonal, and textual) are achieved through *lexicogrammar*, that is “the resources for construing meanings as wordings – the combination of grammar and lexis (vocabulary)” (Matthiessen, Teruya, & Lam, 2010, p. 131). In other words, in order to express, communicate, and organise meaning, speakers or writers must choose how they will use grammar and lexis. Language users

have a wide variety of lexicogrammatical resources, which SFL organises into *systems*, to draw on in order to achieve these metafunctions. SFL's theoretical architecture is thus oriented around describing the different ways lexicogrammar can be used to create meaning.

Owing to this view of language as a socially-oriented tool for meaning making, SFL considers how context interacts with and influences language use (see Martin, 1992; Bowcher, 2017, for brief overviews of the history of theoretical approaches to this view). Drawing on earlier work, particularly Halliday (1978), Martin (1992) proposed the term *Register* to describe a set of three interacting contextual variables: *Field*, *Tenor*, and *Mode*. These three variables are concerned with the questions 'what is happening?', 'who is taking part?', and 'what part is language playing?' respectively (Bowcher, 2017).

Field refers to context's effect on language in two ways: (1) the activity that language is accompanying or creating, and (2) the domain of experience (Eggins, 2004; Matthiessen, 2010). Activities are "the social and/ or semiotic process that the interactants in the context are engaged in" (Matthiessen et al., 2010, p. 95), in other words, it is what participants are using language for, whether that be buying and selling goods, teaching a subject, discussing business plans, or any other range of activities. The domain of experience describes the subject matter or topic of language use, for example, mathematics, sports, literature, or any other range of domains (Matthiessen et al., 2010). Of the three metafunctions (see 3.2, above), field describes the contextual variables associated with ideation (Martin, 1992), that is, it is considered with construing experience and ideas. Various approaches to developing taxonomies of field have been taken up, with distinctions between everyday or common-sense fields, and

specialised or technical fields, being common ways to classify fields (Eggins, 2004; see Martin, 1992; Matthiessen et al., 2010 for more on taxonomies of fields).

The second contextual variable, *tenor*, refers to role relationships of interactants (Eggins, 2004; Martin, 1992; Matthiessen et al., 2010). While field describes the contextual factors in realising ideation, tenor is realised with the interpersonal metafunction. This means that tenor describes contextual influences on how interactants use language to enact social relationships. At the time of writing, there exists no comprehensive account of tenor (Matthiessen et al., 2010), owing perhaps to the highly varied and complex nature of interpersonal relationships and interactions (see Chapter 8 for discussion of theoretical implications). Poynton (1985), and later Martin (1992), however, have provided three dimensions which mediate tenor: *status*, *contact*, and *affect*. These three dimensions are defined below:

- *Status* – (or sometimes, *power*) refers to “the relative position of interlocutors in a culture’s social hierarchy” (Martin, 1992, p. 525). For example, two peers in a classroom might have equal power in a language situation, while a teacher and student might occupy unequal positions of power.
- *Contact* – refers to the frequency and degree of contact between interactants (Eggins, 2004; Martin, 1992). For example, two peers in a classroom might occupy frequent/ involved roles, while a student and principal might occupy occasional/ distant roles.
- *Affect* – refers to the degree of emotional involvement between interactants (Eggins, 2004; Martin, 1992). As Figure 3.9 shows, affect is not always explicitly manifest in interactions, and therefore its options are either marked

or (unmarked). For example, there may be very little emotional involvement in an interaction between a teacher and student discussing a topic, whereas an argument between the same student and teacher may be much more emotionally involved.

Finally, *mode* refers to the role language is playing in interaction or social action (Eggins, 2004; Martin, 1992). It is realised through the textual metafunction, that is, it describes contextual influences on the role of language use. These roles can be organised along two continua: *interpersonal distance* and *experiential distance* (Eggins, 2004; see Matthiessen et al., 2010, p. 144 for more delicate distinctions and further reading). Interpersonal distance refers to the distinctions between monologue and dialogue, or the range of feedback possibilities. More simply, it refers to how quickly and directly can participants interact with each other (if at all). Experiential distance describes a second implication for mode, that is, “the distance between language and the social process occurring” (Eggins, 2004, p. 91). At one end of the continuum, language is described as *accompanying* social action; at the other, language is described as *constituting* action (see Martin, 1992, pp. 508-516, 522 for more detail on interpersonal and experiential distance).

Together, SFL’s conception of metafunctions and register aim to describe how language is used to make meaning, and how context influences the options available when using language. More specifically, SFL does not aim to just describe structures of language, but also to describe how language is functioning for social purposes. As Chapter 2 argued, literacy practices in schooling, particularly those embedded in subject English, are intimately tied with social institutions, and thus SFL’s orientation to

language readily lends itself to the description of language in syllabus documents, assessment, and classroom.

The three metafunctions are visible at the clause level, which allows for extremely thorough analysis of language (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, for a comprehensive account). However, examination of language and text is not restricted to clause-by-clause examination, and SFL can be used to also examine language at a *discourse* level (Martin & Rose, 2007). In this way, it is possible to examine how patterns of language use emerge through texts (like curriculum documents, as Research Question 1 aims to investigate), and across texts (like various examination responses, as Research Question 2 aims to investigate). As Martin and Rose (2007) suggest, discourse therefore represents an important interface between grammar and social activity. As Figure 3.1, below, represents, grammar and social activity are connected through discourse; with grammar influencing how language is used to achieve social functions, and social context influencing language choice at a grammatical level. This type of investigation is particularly useful since language use in curricula, assessment, and classroom settings are greatly affected by social context (Bernstein, 1990, 1996; Street, 1984).

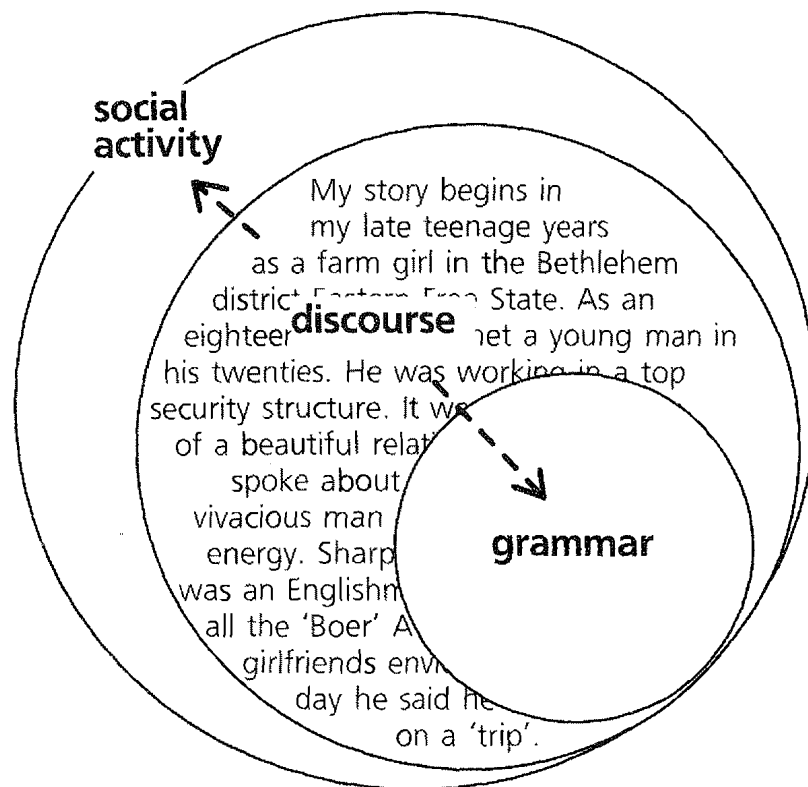


Figure 3.1 Discourse as an interface between grammar and social activity (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 5).

These patterns of language use are realised through sets of grammatical choices, named *systems* (Asp, 2017), which are written in capitals (e.g., APPRAISAL). Systems are often visually represented through *system networks*. System networks are read left to right, as a series of choices. Simultaneous choices (i.e., grammatical conditions that exist at the same time) are represented with curved brackets, while exclusive choices (i.e., when only one option can be selected) are represented with square brackets. Figure 3.2, below, shows an example of a system network with labels for key elements. The following sections, 3.2.1-3.2.3, describe three systems which are relevant to analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6: APPRAISAL, TRANSITIVITY, and PERIODICITY.

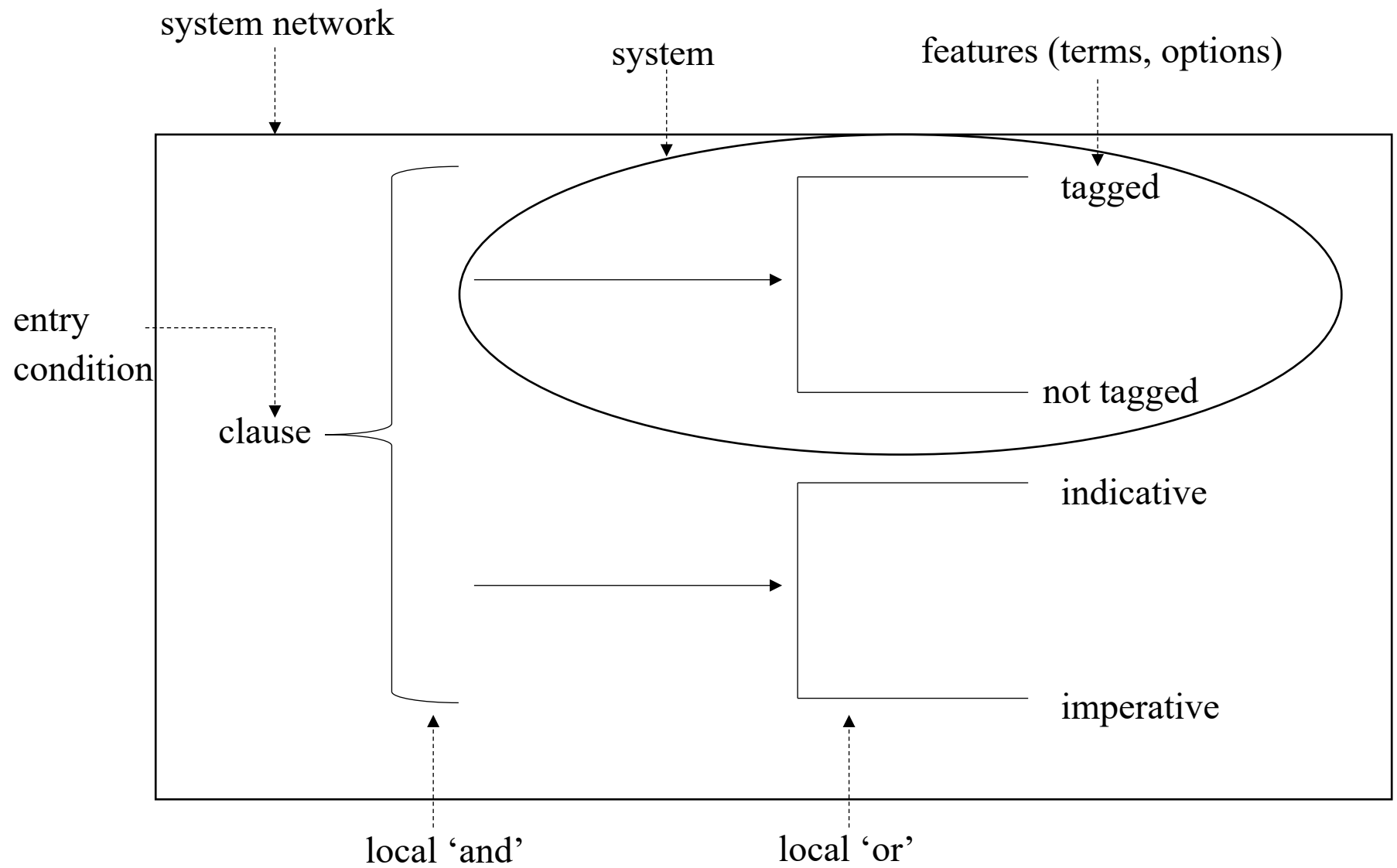


Figure 3.2 Sample system network with labelled elements (Matthiessen, Teruya, & Lam, 2010, p. 213).

As noted above, central to SFL’s account of language are the concepts of metafunction and register. These concerns are captured in the selection of systems described below. Table 3.1, below, summarises the focus of each system, and how they relate to metafunction and register.

Table 3.1 Description of systems used in analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6, showing how each realises a different metafunction and register variable

System	Metafunction	Register variable
APPRAISAL – describes the lexicogrammatical resources used to describe attitudes, qualify the strengths of these attitudes, and position the readers’ and writer’s orientation to these attitudes.	Interpersonal – meanings are created at the discourse level to allow students to explore their opinions, the opinions of authors and characters, and how these opinions connect or contrast	Tenor – language use is influenced by the institutional relationship between the writer and reader (i.e., student writing an examination response, and teacher assessing it)
TRANSITIVITY – describes the lexicogrammatical resources used to represent experience	Ideational – meanings are created at the clause level to allow students to explain how the texts they have studied function, and to express their own	Field – language use is influenced by the topic (i.e., the examination question, and the texts students are required to write about)

	understanding of these texts	
PERIODICITY – describes the lexicogrammatical resources used to control information flow across sentences, paragraphs, and larger texts (i.e., examination responses)	Textual – meaning is created at the discourse level to allow students to control how information is structured and organised in their response	Mode – language use is influenced by interpersonal distance (i.e., students are writing a response to be marked later, as opposed to discussing the topic with their teacher) and experiential distance (i.e., students are using language to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in an assessment context)

3.2.1 APPRAISAL

APPRAISAL refers to the system of grammatical choices used to appraise or evaluate. It is “concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 25). As Table 3.1, above, shows, APPRAISAL provides the theoretical tools to describe how students realise the interpersonal metafunction, and how this realisation is mediated through tenor. More simply, focusing on APPRAISAL resources allows for exploration of how students evaluate texts and manage writer/ reader relationships (see Chapter 6 for analysis).

As Macken-Horarik (2006; see 2.5 for more detail) demonstrated, the different ways students evaluate texts and authors was a key discriminator in their marks. Furthermore, the requirement for students to negotiate different opinions and perspectives in particular ways is critical to the creation of an academic tone and assuming a 'literate' style (Christie, 2012; Schleppegrell, 2001). Aside from literacy practices in student writing, the control of voice in business or institutional documents can also point towards ideological underpinnings which may not be obvious (Iedema, 1997). These ideological underpinnings can be made more prominent by investigating how subject English and its students are evaluated through the language of the curriculum. For these reasons, an explicit focus on systems of evaluation and opinion is needed to adequately address the three research questions.

There are three further systems that realise the sets of grammatical choices for conveying attitudes and feelings: Engagement, which involves introducing voices or positions; Attitude, which involves construing emotions and judgements; and Graduation, which involves grammatical resources to modulate attitude (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005; Matthiessen, et al., 2010). The three systems of APPRAISAL are described below. Figure 3.3 shows a system network displaying the options for APPRAISAL. Each of the three key subsystems are described below.

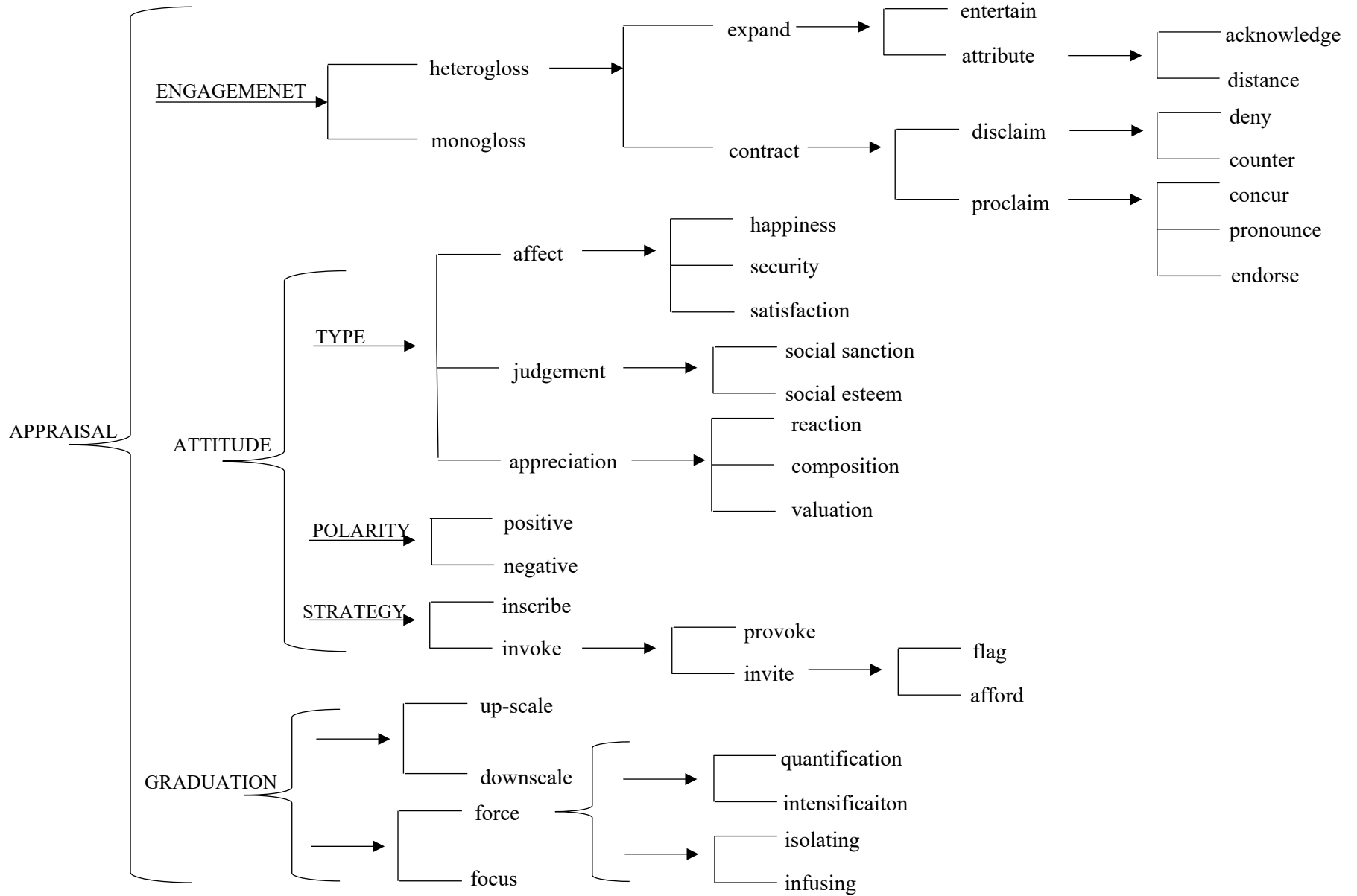


Figure 3.3 Options for APPRAISAL (Matthiessen et al., 2010, p. 57)

3.2.1.1 Engagement

The system of ENGAGEMENT describes the grammatical resources for introducing ‘voices’ or sources of evaluations (Martin & Rose, 2007; Matthiessen et al., 2010). A text featuring a single voice (i.e., the evaluations are presented as those of the writer or speaker) is described as *monoglossic*; whilst *heterogloss* describes texts which introduce different voices (Martin & Rose, 2007).

When a writer or speaker introduces other voices (i.e., heterogloss), they may either *expand* or *contract* the dialogic space (Martin & White, 2005). In other words, a text may suggest that a particular position is one of many, inviting others to be considered and ‘opening’ up the dialogic space; or it may endorse or challenge particular views, inviting the audience to align themselves with this endorsement or challenge, and therefore ‘close’ down the dialogic space.

There are two options for dialogic expansion: *entertain* and *attribute*. Writers/ speakers may draw on a range of modal or projecting resources (e.g., it may be..., possibly..., I think that...) to show that the position presented is one among many. These grammatical resources are captured are described as *entertain*. Alternatively, a writer/ speaker may explicitly present other positions that are sourced from other voices, in other words, they *attribute* these voices. A writer/ speaker may simply present this position as a possibility in neutral terms or may explicitly distance themselves from the voice. These options are described as *acknowledge* and *distance* respectively (Martin & White, 2005).

There are also two options for dialogic contraction: *disclaim* and *proclaim*. Disclaiming resources allow writers/ speakers to reject alternative viewpoints (i.e., *deny*), or replace them with other views (i.e., *counter*). Proclaiming resources allow writers and speakers to explicitly agree with positions (i.e., *concur*), present positions as

true or warranted (i.e., *endorse*), or use their authority to advance certain positions (i.e., *pronounce*) (Martin & White, 2005). A survey of options, with examples, is provided in Figure 3.4, below.

3.2.1.2 Attitude

The system of ATTITUDE, which is simultaneously selected with ENGAGEMENT (i.e., both systems combine to make meaning), allows speakers and writers to communicate emotions, judgements of others, and evaluations of things (Martin & White, 2005; Matthiessen et al., 2010). These three options are termed *affect*, *judgement*, and *appreciation* (see Figure 3.3).

Affect allows writers/ speakers to communicate emotional states or feelings. These may be more delicately described as *happiness*, which covers a variety of feelings from sadness or despondency to euphoria; *security*, which “covers our feelings of peace and anxiety” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 49); and *satisfaction*, which describes “our feelings of achievement and frustration” (p. 50).

Judgement refers to the grammatical resources used to express judgements about the actions of others. Descriptions of judgement can be made more delicate through two further choices: *social esteem* and *social sanction*. Options, probes, and example realisations for judgment are overviewed in Figure 3.5, below.

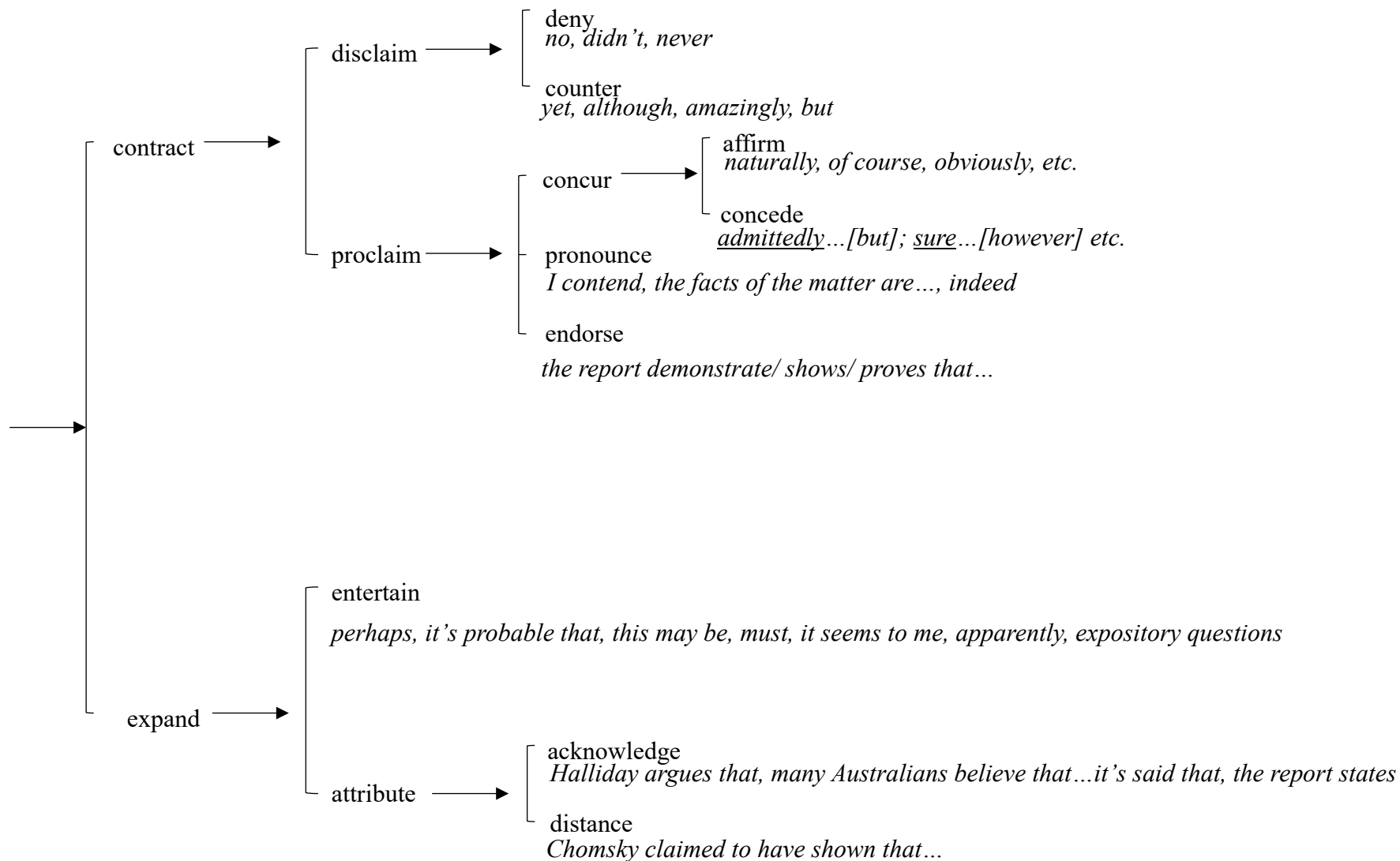


Figure 3.4 Options for ENGAGEMENT (Martin & White, 2005, p. 134)

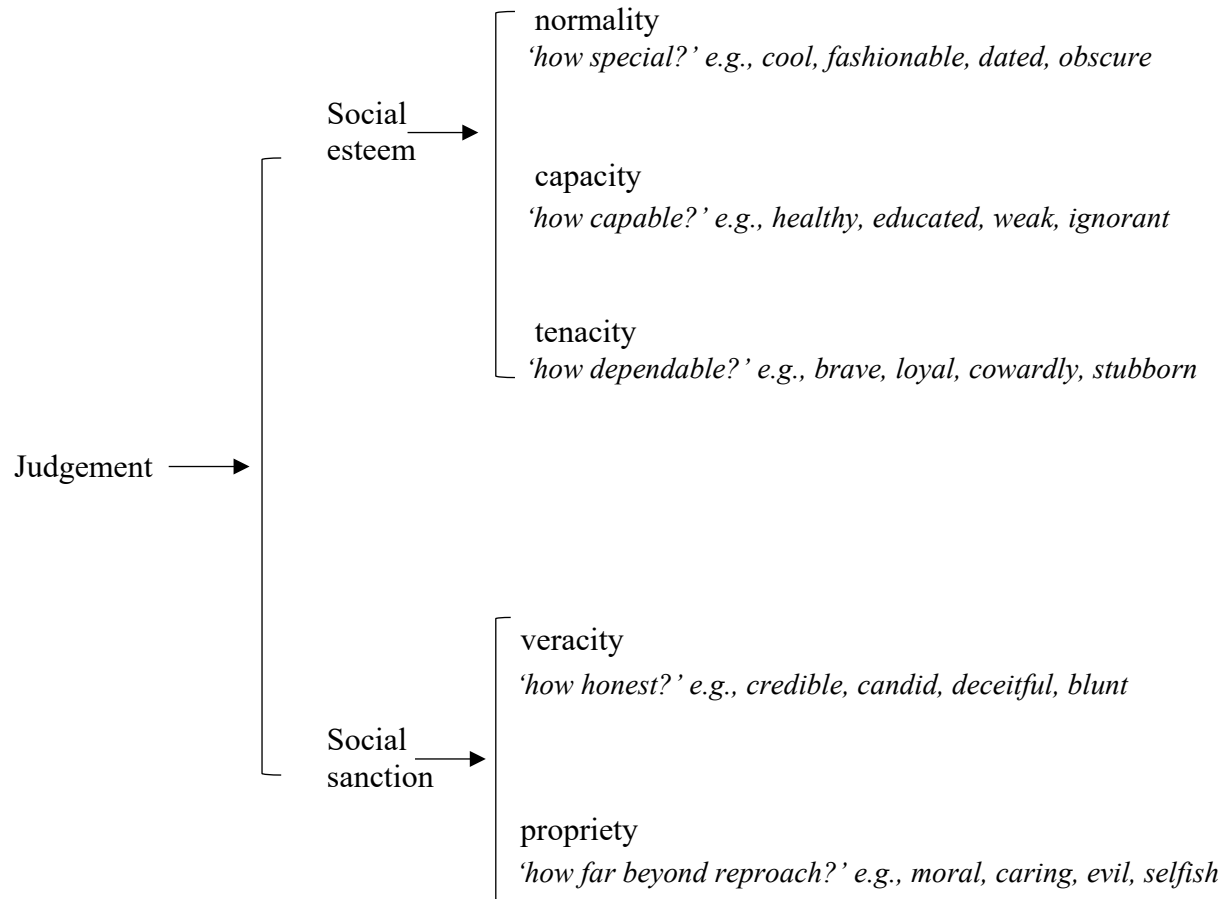


Figure 3.5 Options for judgement (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 53)

Finally, appreciation describes the resources used to evaluate ‘things’. There are three options for types of appreciation: *reaction*, which describes a response to the thing evaluated; *composition*, which describes an assessment of balance and complexity; and *valuation*, which describes the thing’s worth (Martin & White, 2005).

Each of the three ATTITUDE options (i.e., affect, judgement, and appreciation) are simultaneously selected for POLARITY. That is, each time a writer or speaker describes emotions, judges others, or evaluates things, their attitudes are either positive or negative. Examples of positive and negative ATTITUDE are given in Table 3.2, below.

Table 3.2 Examples of positive and negative ATTITUDE (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, pp. 48-51, 53, 56)

	Positive	Negative
Affect	Happy, overjoyed, confident, pleased	Unhappy, distress, nervous, angry
Judgement	Celebrated, insightful, flexible, credible, modest	Unlucky, weak, cowardly, deceptive, snobby
Appreciation	Engaging, beautiful, logical, elegant, priceless	Boring, ugly, contradictory, unclear, insignificant, worthless

The third, and final, simultaneous system, selected along with ATTITUDE and POLARITY is STRATEGY. When writers/ speakers express positive or negative attitudes, they may either do so explicitly (e.g., That movie was fantastic!) or implicitly (e.g., I watched the movie 3 times in a row!). These options are described as *inscribe*

and *invoke* respectively. Options to inscribe and invoke (and invoke's own options; *provoke, flag, and afford*) can be organised as a cline, with inscribed evaluations aiming to most strongly align the reader or listener with the view, and afford allowing the audience relative freedom to take up or reject the position (Martin & White, 2005; Matthiessen et al., 2010; see Figure 3.3, above, for a representation of options for STRATEGY).

3.2.1.3 Graduation

Thus far, two key subsystems of APPRAISAL have been overviewed: ENGAGEMENT, which is used to introduce voices and positions; and ATTITUDE, which is used to express feelings, judge others, and evaluate things. It was noted that these are simultaneous systems, that is, that both options are selected at the same time. As Figure 3.3, above, shows, there is a third simultaneous system: GRADUATION.

GRADUATION resources are used to grade the intensity or amount (*Force*), and define boundaries (*Focus*), of ENGAGEMENT and ATTITUDE resources. Like the POLARITY system for ATTITUDE (i.e., emotions, judgements, and evaluations may be positive or negative), GRADUATION features may be either *up-scaled* (i.e., increasing force or focus) or *down-scaled* (i.e., decreasing force or focus) (Matthiessen et al., 2010).

Focus may be either *sharpened* or *softened*. When terms are sharpened, the writer/ speaker draws distinct boundaries around them, often setting them up as a prototypical example (e.g., a *true* gentleman, a *real* scholar). When terms are softened, a speaker or writer reduces their commitment to the evaluation (e.g., *kind of* funny) (Martin & White, 2005).

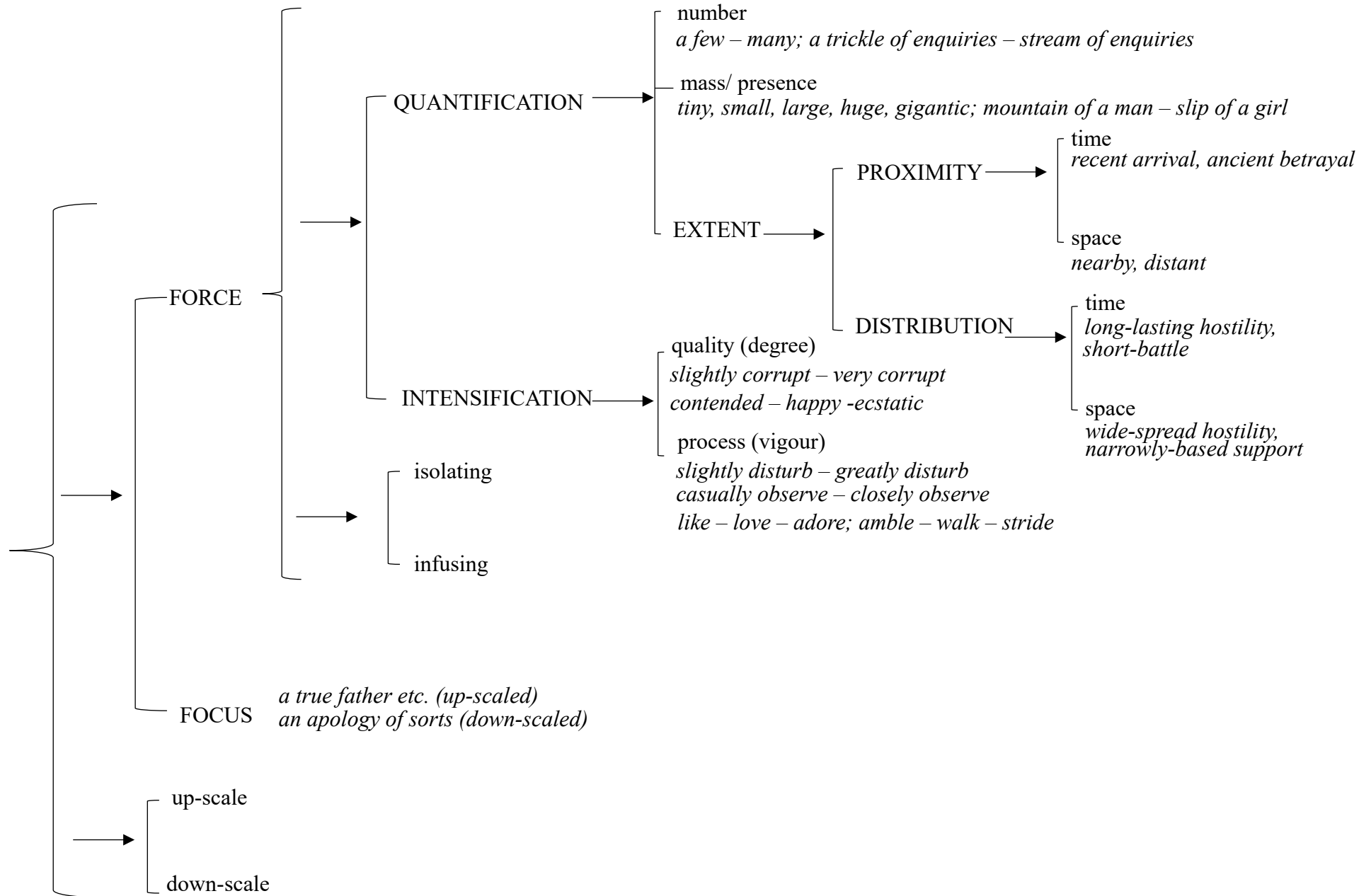


Figure 3.6 System network showing GRADUATION options (Martin & White, 2005, p. 154)

Force, in contrast, is used to grade the intensity or amount of ENGAGEMENT and ATTITUDE resources. Terms may be graded by number, mass/ presence, time and space, quality, and process. These gradings can either be through a separate lexical item (e.g., very, extremely), that is, isolated; or through the term itself (e.g., content, happy, overjoyed etc. convey varying degrees of a similar emotion), that is, *infused*. Figure 3.6, below, shows a system network overviewing options for GRADUATION.

3.2.2 TRANSITIVITY

In 3.2.1 APPRAISAL, the system describing the resources used to evaluate and position these evaluations was overviewed. This section overviews a separate system for meaning-making, TRANSITIVITY, which is particularly important for the analysis presented in Chapter 5. TRANSITIVITY refers to the lexicogrammatical resources that are used to represent experience. In other words, TRANSITIVITY is used to represent the flow of events, construing our experience of the external world (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 213-214; Martin, Matthiessen, & Painter, 2010, pp. 98-100, for discussion on the connection between language and experience).

As described in Table 3.1, above, TRANSITIVITY allows for description of the lexicogrammatical resources used to realise the ideational metafunction, mediated through field. This explicit orientation towards ‘experience’, that is, how language can affect our view of processes, means that TRANSITIVITY is well suited to exploring how the syllabus documents position subject English and its students. Additionally, students’ ability to use process types in different ways is critical to their ability to write successfully in English (Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008), where a focus on abstract ideas of experience are often needed. For these reasons, along with

APPRAISAL, this thesis also draws on TRANSITIVITY as a key system for analysis in order to address the research questions.

Like APPRAISAL, TRANSITIVITY is composed of its own subsystems. These two systems are PROCESS TYPE, which categorise types of experience as well as participants involved; and CIRCUMSTANTIATION, which augments these processes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin et al., 2010). Figure 3.7, below, shows a system network overviewing process types and associated participants. Each process type is discussed below, followed by an overview of circumstances.

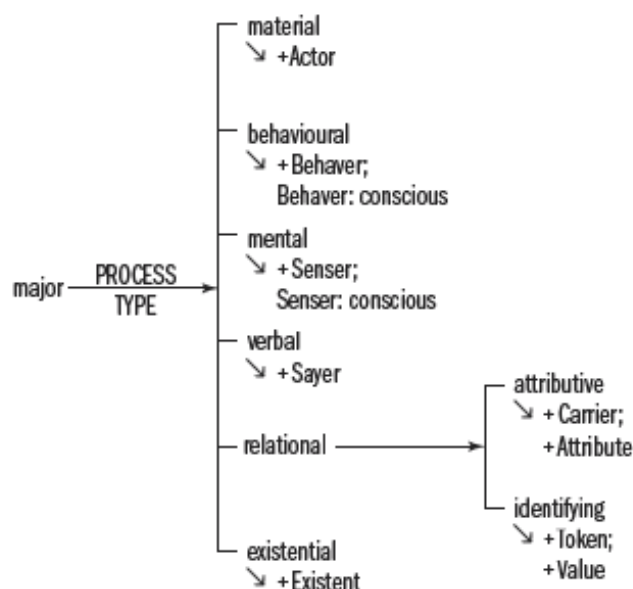


Figure 3.7 System network showing PROCESS TYPE features and realisations (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 219).

3.2.2.1 Process type

As Figure 3.7, above, shows, there are six key process types, each with their own associated participants. *Material* processes represent processes of doing or happening (Martin et al., 2010; Eggins, 2004). These happenings are often concrete processes (e.g., he *devoured* the pizza, he *built* a house), but can also include abstract processes (e.g., he *devoured* the novel, he *built* a sizeable network; cf. the importance of

abstract material processes in student responses for subject English, see 2.5 for detail).

The key participant in material processes is the *Actor*, that is, the person doing the action. Other participants may include the *Goal* (affected by the process), the *Beneficiary* (a *Client* who ‘benefits’ from the Goal, or a *Recipient* who receives the Goal). A less common participant is the *Scope*, which “construes the scope or domain over which the process takes place” (Martin et al., 2010, p. 103). Examples of Material processes and participants are provided in Table 3.3, below.

Table 3.3 Examples of material processes and associated participants (adapted from Martin et al., 2010, p. 103)

Actor	Process	Goal	Client/ Recipient	Scope
she	built	the house	(for the kids): Client	
she	gave	the house	(to the kids): Recipient	
she	moved	the chair		
the chair	moved			
she	climbed			the mountain

Mental processes, as the name suggests, describes processes of thinking or feeling (Eggins, 2004). More specifically, they include cognition, desideration, emotion, and perception (Martin et al., 2010). The key participant in Mental processes is the *Senser*, that is, the entity (not necessarily human) sensing. The other, non-essential, participant is the *Phenomenon*, or the thing which is sensed. Examples of Mental processes and participants are provided in Table 3.4, below.

Verbal processes represent meanings of ‘saying’, including symbolic meanings that do not necessarily include spoken interaction or dialogue. The key participant in verbal processes is the *Sayer*, that is, the entity which is communicating meaning. Additional participants include the *Receiver* (i.e., the entity which receives the communication), and the *Verbiage* (i.e., the communication itself). A further, less common, participant is the *Target*: a participant which functions as the target of the process (similar to the Judgement resources in the APPRAISAL system) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004; Martin et al., 2010). Table 3.5, below, provides examples of participants for verbal processes.

Table 3.4 Examples of mental processes and phenomenon

Senser	Process	Phenomenon
he	wondered	
he	wanted	freedom
he	felt	sad
the camera	saw	the intruder

Table 3.5 Examples of verbal processes and associated participants (adapted from Eggins, 2004; Martin et al., 2010).

Sayer	Process	Receiver	Verbiage	Target
He	told	me	a story	
The sign	warned	us		
The teacher	praised			the student

Behavioural processes represent an intermediate type of process between material processes, and mental/ verbal processes (Eggins, 2004; Martin et al., 2010). They describe actions that are undertaken by conscious beings. The key participant in behavioural processes is the *Behaver*. The behaviour itself may also be included as a participant, where it is simply described as *Behaviour*. Like mental clauses, a *Phenomenon* may also be present. Examples of behavioural processes are given in Table 3.6, below. While behavioural processes are quite similar semantically to mental and verbal processes, the key difference is that they cannot *project*. In other words, both mental and verbal processes may project another clause (e.g., as reported speech), but behavioural clauses cannot. Examples of this difference are given in Table 3.7, with * used to show an ungrammatical formation.

As Eggins (2004) notes, material, mental, verbal, and behavioural processes typically describe actions or events. The final two process types, *Existential* processes and *Relational* processes, in contrast, describe processes of existing or being.

Existential processes construe meanings of existing or being. Frequently, the word *there* is used as a dummy subject, for example “there is...” or “there was...”. For this reason, ‘there’ is left unmarked in TRANSITIVITY analysis (see Table 3.8). The

only participant in Existential processes is the *Existent*, that is, the thing existing or being (Eggins, 2004; Martin et al., 2010). Examples of Existential clauses are provided in Table 3.8, below.

Table 3.6 Examples of behavioural processes and associated participants

Behaver	Process	Phenomenon	Behaviour
He	laughed		
The dog	sniffed	his food	
He	cried		many tears

Table 3.7 Examples of verbal and mental processes projecting clauses, with similar behavioural processes unable to project

Participant	Process	Projected clause
She [Sayer]	said [Verbal]	that she had to go
She [Behaver]	talked [Behavioural]	*that...
He [Senser]	heard [Mental]	that there was a chance
He [Behaver]	listened [Behavioural]	*that...

Table 3.8 Examples of existential processes and existents

	Process	Existent
There	was	a fight
There	will be	an election
There	's	hope!

The final process type, *Relational* processes, describes how things exist in relation to something else. As Figure 3.7, above, shows, there are two options for Relational processes: *Attributive* or *Identifying*. In Attributive clauses, a participant (i.e., the *Carrier*) is given an *Attribute*, often signifying class membership. In Identifying clauses, in contrast, a participant (i.e., the *Token*) is given a *Value*, used to identify or define it. (Eggins, 2004; Martin et al., 2010). Relational clauses may be realised as either *Intensive*, *Possessive*, or *Circumstantial*, however this level of detail is not required for the analysis presented in Chapter 5 (see Eggins, 2004, pp. 239-249; Martin et al., 2010, 105-106 for more on this distinction). Table 3.9, below, illustrates the difference between these two features.

Table 3.9 Examples of relational processes and associated participants

Participant	Process	Participant
He [Carrier]	is [Relational: Attributive]	very quick [Attribute]
The test [Carrier]	was [Relational: Attributive]	impossible! [Attribute]
She [Token]	is [Relational: Identifying]	Queen [Value]
The smartest one [Value]	was [Relational: Identifying]	Gary [Token]

3.2.2.2 Circumstantiation

CIRCUMSTANTIATION refers to the system of optional resources that can be used to augment the configuration of process and participants (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin et al., 2010; Matthiessen et al., 2010). Typically, they function to add some kind of additional information to a clause, normally through adverbial groups or prepositional phrases, occurring with any process type (Eggs, 2004). There are nine key circumstances in English: *Extent*, *Location*, *Manner*, *Cause*, *Contingency*, *Accompaniment*, *Role*, *Matter*, and *Angle*. Examples of each circumstance, along with sub-types, are provided in Table 3.10, below.

Table 3.10 Circumstance types, sub-types, example realisation, and probes (Martin et al., 2010, pp. 101-102).

Circumstance type	Typical probe	Example realisation	Circumstance subcategory	Subcategory probe
Extent	how ___?	<i>for three hours</i>	duration	for how long?
	at what intervals?	<i>every three hours</i>	frequency	how many times?
		<i>for six miles</i>	distance	how far?
Location	at what point?	<i>in September; before tea; recently; during the lesson</i>	time	when?
		<i>in the yard; from Paris; miles away</i>	place	where?
Manner	how?	<i>with a hammer; by trickery</i>	means	by what means?
		<i>quickly</i>	quality	how?
		<i>as fast as possible; like a top</i>	comparison	what like?
		<i>to a great extent; deeply; considerably</i>	degree	how much?
Cause	why?	<i>because of you; thanks to him; for lack of \$5</i>	reason	why?
		<i>for better results; in the hope of a good deal</i>	purpose	for what purpose?
		<i>on behalf of us all</i>	behalf	on whose behalf?
Contingency	in what circumstances?	<i>in the event of rain; without more help (we can't do it)</i>	condition	under what conditions?

		<i>in spite of the rain</i>	concession	despite what?
		<i>in the absence of proof</i>	default	lacking what?
Accompaniment	together with?	<i>with(out) his friends</i>	comitative	who/ what with?
		<i>as well as them; instead of them</i>	additive	and who/ what else?
Role		<i>as a concerned parent</i>	guise	what as?
		<i>(smashed) into pieces</i>	product	what into?
Matter	what about?	<i>about this; with reference to that</i>		
Angle	whose angle?	<i>according to the Shorter Oxford</i>	source	says who?
		<i>in the view of the protestors</i>	viewpoint	from whose perspective?

3.2.3 PERIODICITY

As 3.2 noted, the tools provided by SFL offer extremely delicate description of language down to the clause level. The two systems described above, APPRAISAL and TRANSITIVITY, lend themselves readily to this kind of analysis. However, when considering long sequences of language that need to manage ideas across clauses, paragraphs, and whole texts, it is useful to examine the grammatical resources used to control information. This system is described as *PERIODICITY* (Martin & Rose, 2007).

Students' control of structure has been consistently identified as a key requirement for successful literacy in subject English (Anson, 2017; Matruggio & Vale, 2018; Patterson, 2008). More specifically, *PERIODICITY* allows for investigation of the lexicogrammatical resources students draw on to realise the textual metafunction, as mediated through mode. Together, *PERIODICITY* (textual metafunction and mode), *APPRAISAL* (interpersonal metafunction and tenor), and *TRANSITIVITY* (ideational metafunction and field), allows the analysis of student writing to consider the simultaneous meaning making-strategies students employ to address the examination questions. For these reasons, *PERIODICITY* is included as a key focus in Chapters 6 and 7. The syllabus documents feature considerable and predictable control over structure, as can be expected of professionally produced government publications, and subsequently, *PERIODICITY* analysis is not featured in Chapter 5.

At the clause level, information is divided into parts: the *Theme* and *New* (or *Rheme*). The *Theme* is the element which comes first in the clause; in other words, it is the first bit of ideational meaning expressed (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2007), or *what* the clause is 'about'. The *Theme* is normally the Subject of the clause, however another element may come first. The second half of the message at the clause level is known as the *New*. This is the remainder of the message, the information

which the writer or speaker wishes to convey (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin & Rose, 2007). In the examples below, the Theme is **bolded**, and the New is *italicised*:

He *was a very quiet boy.*

The show *was amazing!*

After reading too much, his eyes *started to hurt.*

This pattern of a message as two elements can be extended beyond the clause level to consider longer sequences of discourse. At the paragraph level, these two elements are named *hyperTheme* and *hyperNew*. HyperThemes, like Themes at the clause level, indicate the point of departure for the upcoming message. In other words, they serve to predict or point to the Themes that are going to be developed, such as a ‘topic sentence’ might do (Martin & Rose, 2007). The hyperNew acts to consolidate the messages contained in a section of discourse; it is a final section of text (like the end of a paragraph) that distils the new information (Martin & Rose, 2007).

Above this level lies a third layer of PERIODICITY: *macroTheme* and *MacroNew*. MacroThemes and macroNews function similarly to hyperThemes and hyperNews, only at a different textual level. While hyperThemes predict patterns of Themes and News, and hyperNews consolidate these patterns; macroThemes predict patterns of hyperThemes and hyperNews, and macroNews consolidate these patterns (Martin & Rose, 2007). These layers of information flow are represented visually in Figure 3.8, below.

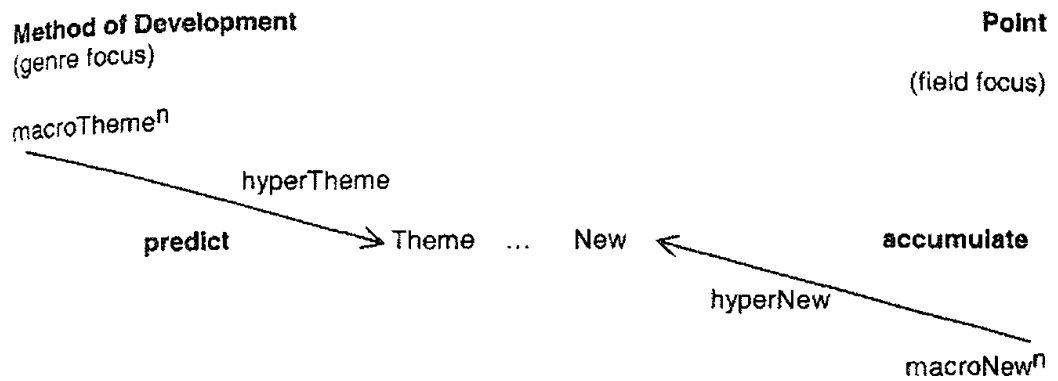


Figure 3.8 Layers of information flow via PERIODICITY, with ⁿ representing that there may be any number of Themes and News (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 199).

Having considered the three key systems required for the SFL analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6, the following section describes the relevant theoretical elements of the complementary framework used with SFL: Legitimation Code Theory.

3.3 Legitimation Code Theory (LCT)

Section 3.2 described the theoretical framework used to guide the analysis of language in the current research. This section explores a complementary framework, *Legitimation Code Theory* (LCT), that is used to inform the analysis of knowledge and practices. Drawing on Bernstein's work on Code Theory, which he used to describe pedagogic interactions, LCT uses codes as a theoretical tool of description. These codes describe the relations between practices, dispositions, and contexts in different social fields; the struggle over which practices and dispositions are valued in different contexts (i.e., what is *legitimate*), are the key focus of analysis for LCT (Maton, 2014; Maton, Hood, & Shay, 2016).

Like SFL's systems, LCT organises related concepts into sets known as *dimensions*. At present, LCT draws on five dimensions: Specialisation, Semantics, Autonomy, Temporality and Density. The remainder of this section details the two dimensions that are relevant for the analysis presented in later chapters: *Specialisation* and *Autonomy*. These dimensions are explored in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 respectively.

Owing to its epistemological roots in Bernstein's work and his dialogues with Halliday and Hasan, LCT represents a complementary framework for SFL analysis (Maton, Martin, & Matrugglio, 2016). As Chapter 2 noted, Bernstein drew on Halliday's conception of language as a social semiotic when describing institutional practices in schooling; whilst Halliday drew on Bernstein's sociological orientation when describing language as a socially-oriented device. LCT aims to develop this sociological orientation by integrating Bernstein's focus on pedagogic interactions, and Bourdieu's focus on dispositions, to investigate how knowledge and practices function in different objects of study, with much work focusing on educational institutions (Maton, Hood, & Shay, 2016).

SFL and LCT can complement each other in three distinct ways: (1), by *zooming* between larger-scale analysis and fine-grained analysis; (2) by *refocusing* analysis, so that one theory may provide more detail or theoretical landscape at specific data points and vice versa; and (3), by *alternating* analysis, providing parallel insights into a data set (Maton, Martin, & Matruglio, 2016). Alternating and refocusing analysis are particularly relevant for the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively; Chapter 5 offers both SFL and LCT perspectives on the syllabus documents, whilst Chapter 6 uses SFL to describe the linguistic patterns that create broader patterns of knowledge and knowers.

LCT is “a multidimensional conceptual toolkit for analysing actors’ dispositions, practices and contexts, within a variegated range of fields” (Maton, 2014, p. 17). The dispositions, practices, and contexts that focus analysis are described via their relation to one another. Each dimension is divided into two continua, which intersect to create four principal modalities (see Figures 3.13 & 3.14, below). Each continuum represents an infinite range of relative strength or weakness, which are represented with plus (+) and minus (–) symbols, respectively. In other words, a disposition (i.e., ways of being and thinking, as Bourdieu argues, accumulated through cultural capital) or practice may be strongly valued in one context (+) while not being valued in another (–). Furthermore, the relative strength of or weakness of a disposition, practice, or context may increase or decrease (e.g., over time, over text). These movements are represented with an up arrow (↑) and down arrow (↓) respectively.

Like SFL’s system networks, LCT draws on diagrammatic representations of dimensions to visualise key structures. These representations often take the form of Cartesian planes, where two axes are used to represent both typology (i.e., four key groupings) and topology (i.e., relationships between points). 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 begin with

a specialisation and autonomy plane respectively, with Figures 3.13 and 3.14 representing the sets of axes.

Analysis is made more focused via the use of a *translation device*. A translation device provides an ‘external language’ to interface with the ‘internal language’ of theory (Maton & Chen, 2016). It therefore enables the concepts identified by the different dimensions to be operationalised with different fields of study. In the following sections, examples of generic translation devices are provided, with specific translation devices provided in Chapter 4, drawing on the data used in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

3.3.1 Specialisation

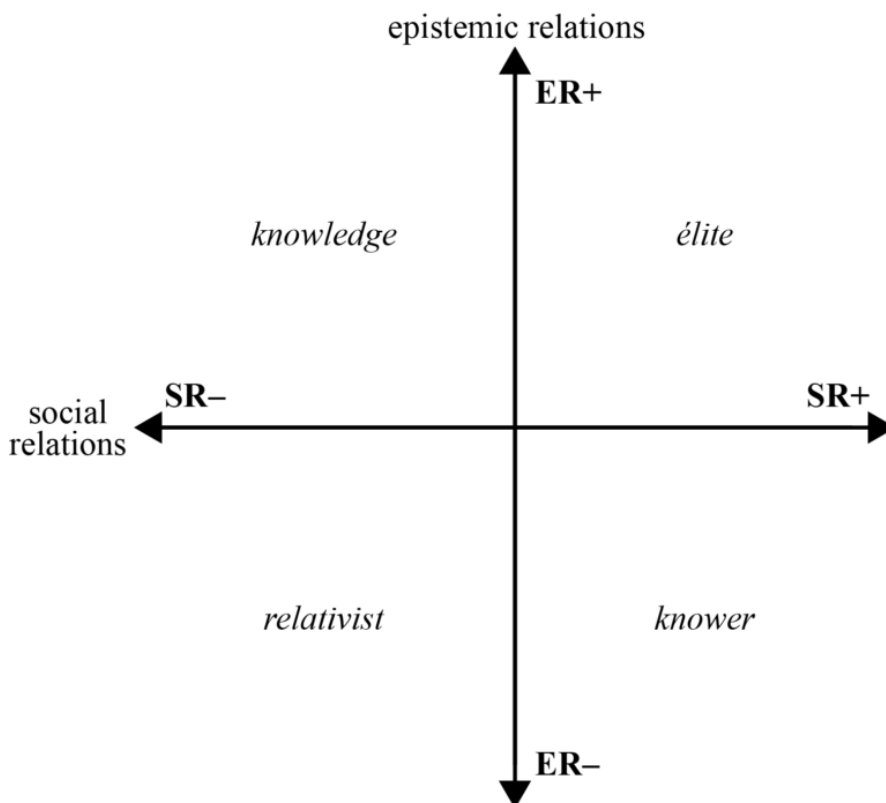


Figure 3.9 Specialisation plane
 (<http://legitimationcodetheory.com/home/theory/specialization/>, n.d., “Specialization”).

Specialisation is a dimension of LCT which focuses on knowledge-knower structures (Maton, 2016). As Figure 3.13 shows, Specialisation focuses on two continua: *Epistemic Relations* (ER) and *Social Relations* (SR). These relationships generate *specialisation codes*, which are a way of representing their relative strengths in a particular object of study (e.g., a discipline may emphasise ER, whilst deemphasising SR). These relationships can then be displayed visually on the *specialisation plane* (see Figure 3.13, above) (Maton, 2016). Different points can be plotted on the plane in order to visually represent the relative strength or weakness of ER and SR. More simply, Specialisation is concerned with how knowledge, or knowers, or both, or neither, are valued by a field, discipline, or context.

Epistemic relations and social relations describe how “practices are about or oriented towards something and by someone” respectively (Maton, 2016, p. 12). Epistemic relations describe how strongly the object of study (i.e., knowledge) is emphasised, while social relations describe how strongly the actor (i.e., knower) enacting the practices is valued.

When the relative strengths of epistemic and social relations are combined, four possible specialisation codes are produced, represented by the four quadrants in Figure 3.13, above. Maton (2016) provides a succinct definition of each code, reproduced below, with added examples:

- *knowledge codes* (ER+, SR–), where possession of specialised knowledge, principles or procedures concerning specific objects of study is emphasised as the basis of achievement, and the attributes of actors are downplayed;
 - for example, legitimacy in physics or carpentry may arise from having expert knowledge

- *knower codes* (ER–, SR+), where specialised knowledge and objects are downplayed and the attributes of actors are emphasised as measures of achievement, whether viewed as born (e.g., ‘natural talent’), cultivated (e.g., ‘taste’) or social (e.g., feminist standpoint theory);
 - for example, legitimacy in music or arts may arise from having a perceived ‘talent’ or ‘gift’
- *élite codes* (ER+, SR+), where legitimacy is based on both possessing specialist knowledge *and* being the right kind of knower;
 - for example, the legitimacy of a teacher or politician may depend on having both expert knowledge of the field they are teaching, as well as personal attributes like charisma
- *relativist codes* (ER–, SR–), where legitimacy is determined by neither specialist knowledge nor knower attributes – ‘anything goes’.
 - for example, legitimacy in a social media post may not depend on expert knowledge or personal attributes (p. 13)¹⁴

These four codes – knowledge, knower, élite, and relativist – provide a means to describe how different objects of study value certain dispositions and practices over others. This is particularly useful for investigating how different disciplines and subjects position themselves, with previous research using these codes to investigate subject English (e.g., Anson, 2017; Christie, 2016; see Chapter 2 for more detail), but also a highly varied range of disciplinary landscapes including ethnographic research methods (Hood, 2016), vocational studies (Shay & Steyn, 2016), physics (Georgiou, 2016), jazz

¹⁴ Level 1 bullets are from Maton, 2016, p. 13; level 2 bullets are my own original examples

(Martin, 2016), and even Freemasonry (Poulet, 2016). These descriptions are made more specific through the use of a translation device. A translation device acts as interface between LCT's concepts and the data, and is created through an iterative process (Maton & Chen, 2016). As each translation device will be specific to each study, the device will be populated with specific examples from the data (represented below with [Examples from data]) acting as reference points. Table 3.11, below, represents a template for a translation device (see Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, Chapter 4 for the specific translation devices used in the current research).

Table 3.11 Example of a generic translation device for specialisation

Epistemic Relations			Social Relations		
ER+	<i>Content knowledge valued</i>	[Example from data]	SR+	<i>Personal attributes valued</i>	[Example from data]
ER–	<i>Content knowledge devalued</i>	[Example from data]	SR–	<i>Personal attributes devalued</i>	[Example from data]

3.3.2 Autonomy

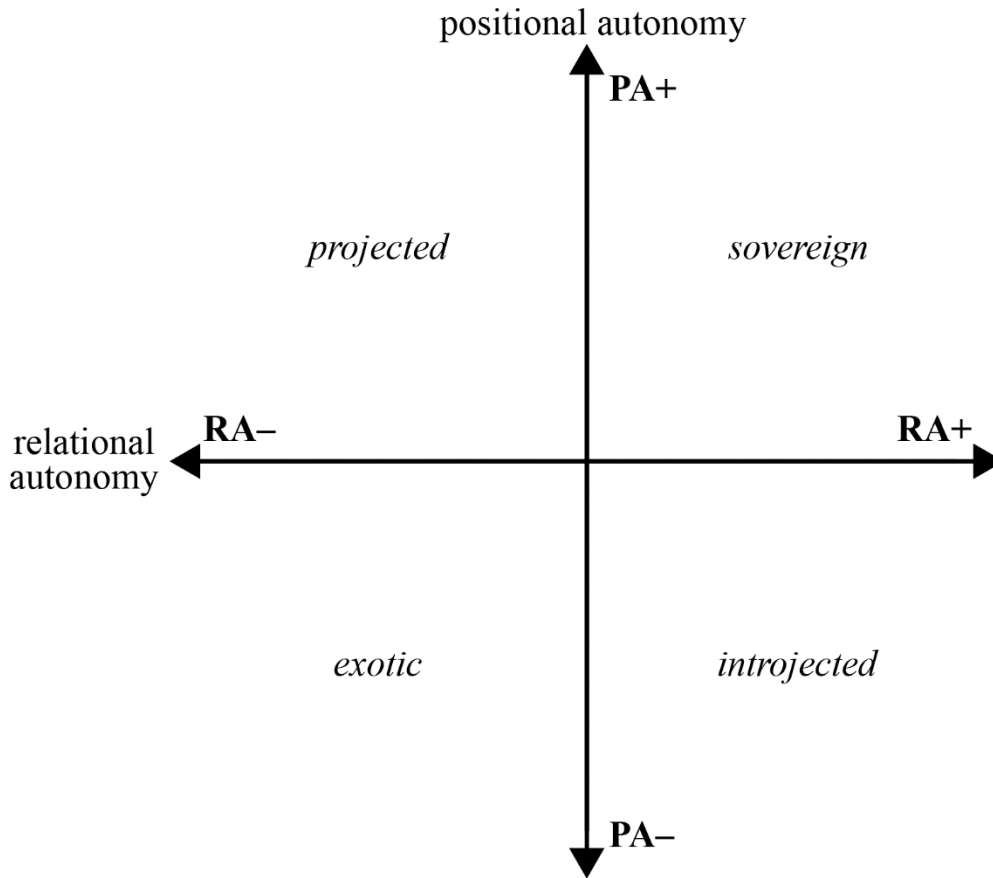


Figure 3.10 Autonomy plane
(<http://legitimationcodetheory.com/home/theory/autonomy/>, “Autonomy”, n.d.)

Autonomy, like Specialisation, is a dimension of LCT that aims to provide a framework for describing how practices and dispositions function in different objects of study. While Specialisation focuses on knowledge and knowers, Autonomy “conceptualises whether and how those knowledge practices are being integrated” (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 5). In other words, Autonomy describes how different practices, ideas, dispositions, or any range of elements in a discipline relate to one another. As Figure 3.14 shows, Autonomy, like Specialisation, is comprised of two separate continua. The relationship of these continua generates autonomy codes, which can be visually represented in a cartesian plane. The two continua are: *positional autonomy* (PA) and *relational autonomy* (RA).

Positional autonomy refers to relations “between constituents positioned within a context or category and those positioned in other contexts or categories” (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 6). More specifically to the present research, PA describes how practices, ideas, values etc. in a certain field or discipline (i.e., subject English) may be more or less strongly insulated from the practices, ideas, values etc. of another field or discipline (e.g., mathematics, history, visual arts, etc.).

Relational autonomy refers to “relations among constituents of a context or category and relations among constituents of other contexts or categories” (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 6). While PA describes how strongly or weakly constituents in one context are insulated from others, RA describes if and how these constituents are used for purposes inside or outside a given context. For example, the practices of subject English may be used within the subject itself, or they may be used in contexts outside the subject.

Like Specialisation, positions on the two continua may be stronger (+) or weaker (–). They are also combined (PA, RA) to generate autonomy codes. Therefore, there are four possible autonomy codes that can be used to describe relations among constituents:

- *sovereign codes* (PA+, RA+), “internal constituents for internal purposes”
 - for example, using skills and practices from mathematics to solve a mathematics problem
- *exotic codes* (PA–, RA–), “external constituents for external purposes”
 - for example, a teacher telling a personal anecdote to build rapport with students, rather than to explain a relevant concept
- *introjected codes* (PA–, RA+), “external constituents turned to internal purposes”

- for example, a teacher telling a personal anecdote to help explain a relevant concept
- *projected codes* (PA+, RA–), “internal constituents turned to external purposes”
 - for example, using skills and ideas from one discipline to solve a problem in another (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 8).¹⁵

Aside from these four codes, it is also possible to trace *movement* across different points on the autonomy plane. These movements are described as *autonomy pathways* (see Figure 3.15 below for examples). Autonomy pathways provide a useful tool for exploring how practices might change across time (such as a lesson or unit of work); Chapter 5 draws on this concept to explain how the skills and practices associated with subject English are varied.

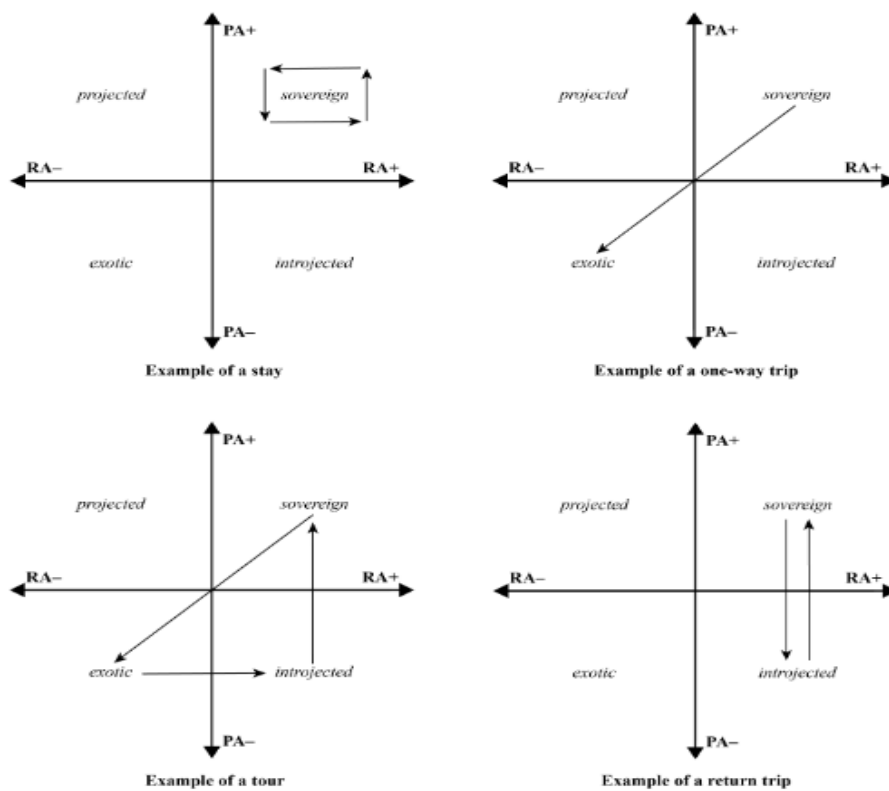


Figure 3.11 Examples of autonomy pathways (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 9).

¹⁵ Level 1 bullets are from Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 8; level 2 bullets are my own original examples.

Like Specialisation, Autonomy provides a useful means to explore how different constituents (e.g., skills, practices, values, etc.) are valued in disciplines. More specifically, Autonomy provides a descriptive language to investigate what kinds of practices and values are positioned as *inside* or *outside* subject English. These descriptions are made more specific through the use of a translation device (see Table 3.12 below; see Tables 4.1 and 4.2, Chapter 4, for the specific translation devices used in the current research).

Table 3.12 Example of a generic translations device for Autonomy (Maton & Howard, 2018, p. 10).

PA/RA	1st level	2nd level	3rd level
+ ↑ ↓ -	<i>target</i>	<i>core</i>	<i>inner</i>
			<i>outer</i>
		<i>ancillary</i>	<i>inner</i>
			<i>outer</i>
	<i>non-target</i>	<i>associated</i>	<i>near</i>
			<i>remote</i>
		<i>unassociated</i>	<i>near</i>
			<i>remote</i>

3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter detailed the two theoretical frameworks that are used to guide the analysis in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The first, Systemic Functional Linguistics, was described as a theoretical language to analyse how grammatical choices are used to make meaning. Three systems – APPRAISAL, TRANSITIVITY, and PERIODICITY – along with a theory of language use in context – register – were explained. The second, Legitimation Code Theory, was described as theoretical language to analyse knowledge and practices. The potential for SFL and LCT to operate as complementary frameworks was discussed. Two dimensions of LCT relevant to the analysis in the following

chapters – Specialisation and Autonomy – were explained. Together, SFL and LCT are used to investigate the linguistic and epistemic features of subject English, providing complementary sets of analyses on the 2009 and 2018 syllabi (Chapter 5), and student examination responses (Chapter 6). Student and teacher perceptions of the subject and its requirements are then related to these linguistic and epistemic features (Chapter 7). The following chapter describes how these concepts are operationalised.

Chapter 4 Methodological approach

You have to back up your bullshit.

– ‘Khalid’

4.1 Chapter overview

This section describes the methodological approach used to inform the data collection and analysis presented in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The following three sections detail the approach used for each chapter and research question respectively, that is: 4.2 describes the syllabus analysis, 4.3 describes assessment analysis, and 4.4 describes interview and observational data analysis. 4.5 describes relevant ethical considerations, and 4.6 summarises the Chapter.

4.2 Methodological rationale

As explained in Chapter 2, this thesis takes a sociological and linguistic approach to the analysis of literacy and pedagogy practices. This orientation is reflected in the choice of the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 3 – SFL and LCT – which are closely aligned to analysis of language and education from social perspectives. Consequently, this orientation is also reflected in the methodological approach described in the following sections.

As Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 revealed, research into subject English has frequently employed functional approaches in order to examine the linguistic features of syllabi, assessment, and classroom practices. Drawing on Halliday’s (1978) view of language as a socially-oriented meaning-making resource, the SFL analysis provided in

Chapters 5 and 6 aims to not only describe the linguistic features of important texts (i.e., the syllabus and examination responses), but also explore how these texts function to create the knowledge and knower structures that are valued by the subject. Alongside this linguistic focus, a sociological exploration of the practices and dispositions that influence these knowledge and knower structures has also been critical in understanding the epistemic features of subject English, leading many to draw on the work of Bernstein, and more recently, Maton (e.g., Anson, 2017; Christie, 2016) from an LCT perspective. For this reason, Chapters 5 and 6 employ LCT's theoretical tools to provide a complementary set of analyses. Finally, Chapter 7 complements these 'outsider' perspectives of the researcher with 'insider' perspectives, drawing on various ethnographic tools (see Section 4.5, below, for detail). By triangulating the data, that is, exploring connections and separations between the syllabus, assessment, and classroom practices, this thesis aims to provide a mutually informing account of subject English at the senior level. Figure 4.1, below, graphically represents how the three data sources interact with each other and the research questions. The specific methods for analysing the three data sources are discussed in the following sections.

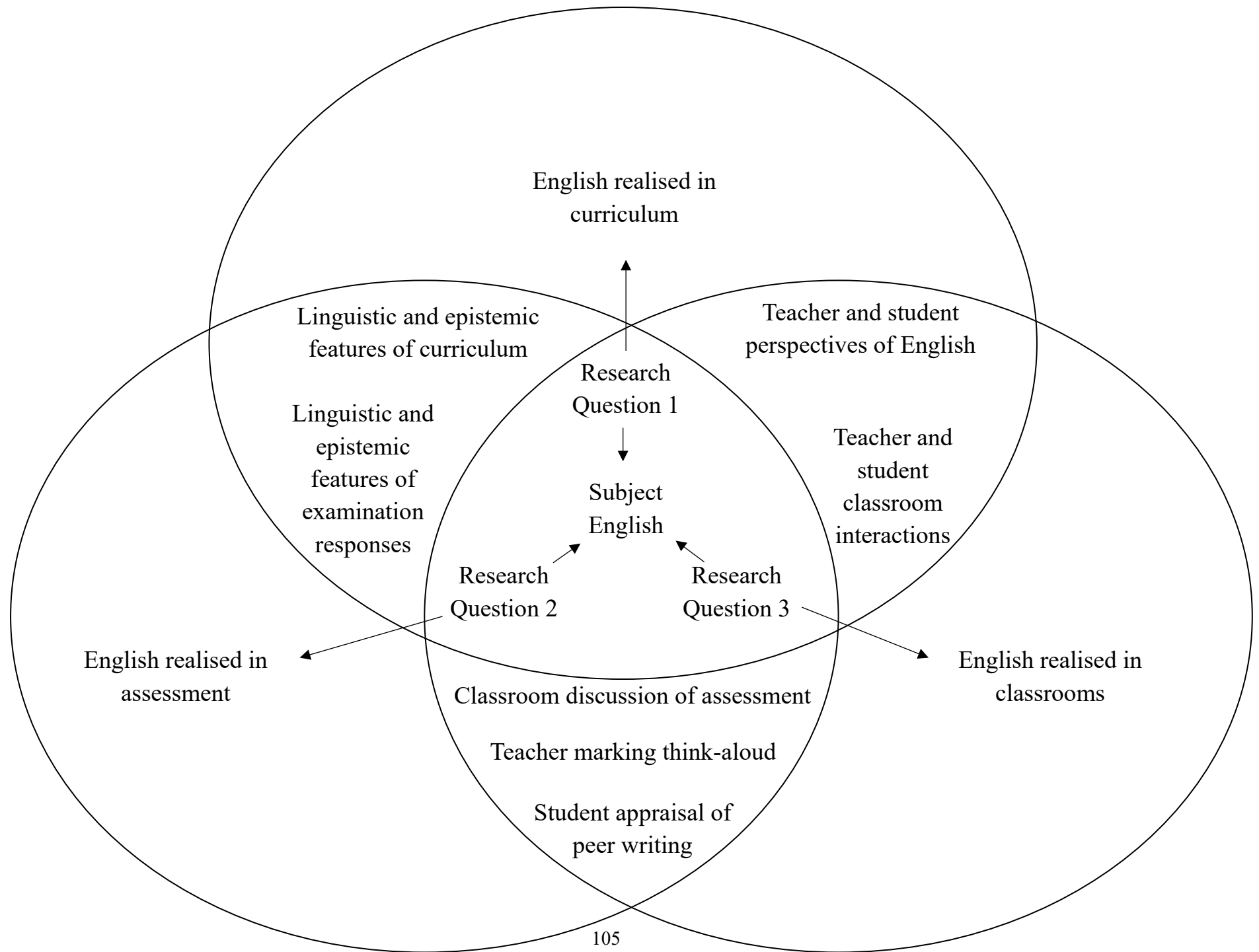


Figure 4.1 Triangulation of data

4.3 Syllabus analysis

This section describes the approach used to analyse the NSW Stage 6 English syllabus documents. This analysis is presented and discussed in Chapter 5, addressing Research Question 1 – ‘How do the Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students?’. The analysis draws on the two theoretical frameworks described in Chapter 3, that is, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Legitimation Code Theory (LCT). These two frameworks are used in order to investigate the linguistic and epistemic structures that interact to position the subject and its students.

4.3.1 Rationale

The analysis investigates both the 2009 (BOS, 2009b) and 2018 (NESA, 2017a) syllabi. The two syllabi were retrieved from the NESA website (retrieved from <http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/a3646a13-6432-4903-b31d-1dcabb0f3f22/english-syllabus-from2010+ENGLISH+Standard+and+Advanced.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID> & <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/1a95d863-394b-4f39-97e2-047a12409f7b/english-standard-stage-6-syllabus-2017.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=> respectively).

As Macken-Horarik (2011) notes, subject English has historically been characterised by its unstable epistemology. Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007, 2011) have previously described the subject through both a linguistic and epistemic lens, focusing on how different models of English engender different linguistic requirements (see Section 2.4 for more detail). However, analysis of the linguistic features of the syllabus itself, as opposed to the writing requirements generated by assessment, is less common. This thesis aims to provide a complementary account of the subject by

considering how both language and knowledge structures affect the positionality of the syllabus.

The 2009 syllabus was chosen as an object of research for two reasons: (1), to my knowledge, at the time of writing there is no extant published SFL or LCT analysis of these syllabus documents (excepting Anson, 2016, an earlier version of the analysis presented in Chapter 5); and (2), the 2009 syllabus was in use for senior secondary English when the student writing, observational, and interview data were collected (presented in Chapters 6 and 7, see Sections 4.2 and 4.3 below). As such, an analysis of the 2009 syllabus document, along with accompanying assessments and teacher/ student perspectives, allows the research to describe the subject at a particular point in time.

The 2018 syllabus is also included in the analysis presented in Chapter 5. The rationale for this decision is also two-fold: (1), as with the 2009 syllabus, there is no current SFL or LCT (to my knowledge) descriptions of the syllabus and (2), comparing and contrasting the two syllabi allows for consideration of developments and speculation about possible developments for the subject, following Patterson's (2000) suggestion to focus on the historical development of the subject. The 2018 syllabus was introduced after the data collection for Chapters 6 and 7, however its analysis is still included in Chapter 5 in order to provide a richer understanding of the subject and its development. Furthermore, the implications for practice arising from Chapters 6 and 7 require an understanding of the new syllabus in order to explore how these might be operationalised by teachers in future classrooms.

Both the SFL and LCT analyses draw on one page from each syllabus, (i.e., BOS, 2009b, p. 6; NESAs, 2017a, p. 10; see Appendices A and B). For both syllabi, this page is headed "Rationale". While analysis of additional pages, or perhaps the entire document, would certainly offer a very thorough description of the subject, any analysis

undertaken and presented would necessarily be more limited in scope, considering that the two syllabi total 206 pages (see Section 8.5.2 for further discussion on limitations). Focusing on one page, in contrast, allows for more thorough description and facilitates the presentation of several ‘waves’ of analysis that offer complementary perspectives on the same text. Focusing on the “Rationale” in particular allows the research to investigate how the subject sees itself and its students, which is critical to answering Research Question 1. Furthermore, as subject English offers a variety of courses (see Section 5.2 for more detail), focusing on this section allows the analysis to capture the scope of the subject. Below, the specific approaches for the SFL and LCT analysis are described. In addition, much of the syllabus is focused with outlining the structure of the subject as it is to be taught, and while these are important elements for teachers who must follow the mandated structure and sequence of the structure, they do not provide a rationale or justification for these choices (with this function being filled by the Rationale section). For example, in the 2009 syllabus, pages one to four pertain to the document’s front matter, page five describes the HSC in general, pages seven to eight define key terms. Pages 9-95 outline the structure of the subject and student outcomes in the various courses, while the final pages describe post-school opportunities for students, provide links to assessment documents, and provide a more detailed glossary. The 2018 syllabus is similarly structured, with much of its length taken up by descriptions of the structure of the different courses available and student learning outcomes, as well as an extensive 31-page glossary. For these reasons, the analysis focuses on this critical section of each document in order to focus specifically on the subject’s description of itself and its students.

4.3.2 Linguistic perspectives

The SFL analysis is divided into three key areas of focus: ENGAGEMENT and ATTITUDE analysis (systems of APPRAISAL), and TRANSITIVITY analysis. Focusing on these three aspects of language use allows the analysis to describe how the text legitimises and positions subject English and its students, and what kinds of activities are associated with the subject. The rationale and method for these three lines of analysis are described below.

Focusing on ENGAGEMENT facilitates an investigation of how the syllabi create an authorial, and authoritative voice (see 3.2.1.1 for a description of ENGAGEMENT resources). An explicit focus on authorial voice in formal institutional documents, where it is often effaced (see Iedema, 1997), can be particularly useful as it points towards the kinds of ideological positions taken up by the governments and governing bodies that create these documents. The analysis presented follows the model set out by Martin and White (2005; see 3.2.1 for detail on these authors' descriptions of APPRAISAL resources). More specifically, instances of the text presenting truth claims as self-evident, without any modal qualifiers or attribution to external sources (e.g., "Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world"), were labelled *Monogloss*. In contrast, instances of the text introducing other voices or sources of opinion (e.g., "They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature") were marked as *Heterogloss*.

Having considered how the syllabus documents create authorial voice, the analysis turns to ATTITUDE analysis, which allows for investigation of what and who are valued by the subject (see 3.2.1.2 for a description of ATTITUDE resources). Again, the analysis follows the model presented by Martin and White (2005). Instances of evaluations of the subject or other phenomenon (e.g., language, literature) were marked

as *Appreciation*, while evaluations of students were marked *Judgement*. Since the text did not describe any personal emotions (unsurprising, given its context and function as an official government document, cf. Iedema, 1997), no instances of *Affect* were noted. Furthermore, as GRADUATION is simultaneously selected with ENGAGEMENT and ATTITUDE, and therefore embedded in the previous analysis, there is no explicit focus on this system.

Following the investigation of what and who are valued by subject English, the TRANSITIVITY analysis investigates the processes in the Rationale. More specifically, the processes associated with the subject itself (i.e., what the subject is and does), and the processes associated with the students (i.e., what they do and how they are affected by the subject), and augmenting circumstances (see Section 3.2.2 for an overview of TRANSITIVITY resources) were investigated. TRANSITIVITY analysis was undertaken following the guidelines and probes suggested by Martin et al. (2010), as this provides a systematic approach to distinguishing between process types, identifying relevant participants, and determining circumstance sub-types.

4.3.3 Epistemic perspectives

The SFL analysis is complemented with a parallel LCT analysis, drawing on the two dimensions described in Section 3.3.1 and 3.3.2: Specialisation and Autonomy. Specialisation was chosen as it aims to describe knowledge and knower structures, which is particularly relevant when examining how a subject positions its knowledge and candidates. Furthermore, the Specialisation dimension has been put to great use in investigating other subjects, including English (see 2.3 for detail).

The following translation device (Table 4.1) was used for Specialisation analysis, modelled after the process and examples in Maton and Chen (2016). More specifically, the translation device (i.e., a tool used as an interface between LCT's concepts and the data) was developed in response to the questions they pose:

1. What form do epistemic relations and social relations take here?;
2. What form do stronger or weaker epistemic relations and stronger or weaker social relations take here?; and
3. Does this theme indicate stronger or weaker epistemic relations and/ or social relations? (Maton & Chen, 2016, p. 41)

More specifically, epistemic relations were considered to be based on references to language and/ or literature. This decision was based on themes which emerged most strongly during the literature review (e.g., Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007, 2011; Love et al., 2010; Sawyer, 2008, 2010) and the concurrent analysis presented in Chapter 7, which revealed that both the participating teacher and her students consistently identified language and literature as central to subject English. Consequently, epistemic relations were considered weaker when the syllabus document ascribed sources of legitimacy to outside factors, such as English's position as a national language.

The analysis of strengthened and weakened social relations were likewise based on literature arguing that subject has historically functioned to value students who are sensitive and appreciative readers (e.g., Patterson, 2000; Rosser, 2000), and the findings of the APPRAISAL analysis presented in 5.3 and 5.4, namely the frequent positive appreciation of items like "higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy" and "appreciation of aesthetic values". As with epistemic relations, social relations were

considered weakened when the importance of sensitive and appreciative readings were downplayed.

The development of the Autonomy translation device followed a similar protocol. Based on the TRANSITIVITY and Specialisation analyses, and themes central to the literature review in Chapter 2, learning about language and literature were considered practices central to subject English. The boundaries of subject English were considered to be contexts where these two practices were undertaken for their own sake – in other words, when students learn about language to help analyse literature, or learn about literature to help develop their aesthetic sensibilities, this learning is contained within subject English instruction; if they are learning about language to participate in Australian society, these practices move beyond the English classroom. Consequently, practices that were outside instruction in language and literature for the sake of linguistic development or the development of certain values (such as learning about technology, or drawing on other knowledges to help instruction in English), were considered to be outside the scope of English's practices and contexts.

Table 4.1 Specialisation translation device used in 5.7

Relation	Indicators	Example from data
ER+	Knowledge of language and literature is emphasised as key aspects of subject English	This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop effective English communication skills. The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values.
ER–	Legitimacy is not based on subject knowledge, but rather outside factors	The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication.
SR+	Personal attributes of appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners valued	Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia’s cultural diversity.
SR–	Personal attributes of appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners downplayed as basis of legitimacy	They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society.

Table 4.2 Autonomy translation device used in 5.8

Relation	Indicators	Example from data	Code	Indicators	Example from data
PA+	Practices from inside English strongly insulated from outside practices	In Stage 6, students come to understand the complexity of meaning, to compose and respond to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to appreciate the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them.	Sovereign (PA+, RA+)	Practices from within English, used inside the English classroom context	In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms.

PA–	Practices from inside English weakly insulated from outside practices	They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society.	Projected (PA+, RA–)	Practices from within English, used outside the English classroom context	Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants in Australian society.
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RA+	Practices from inside English strongly related to English classroom context	They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.	Introjected (PA-, RA+)	Practices from outside English, used within the English classroom context	The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.
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RA–	Practices from inside English weakly related to English classroom context	These skills and understandings allow them to develop their control of language for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world.	Exotic (PA–, RA–)	Practices from outside English, used outside the English classroom context	They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society.
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The analysis was presented by marking up the text with **bold text with a solid underline**, and *italic text with a broken underline* to show ER+ and SR+ respectively.

This decision was based on two reasons: (1) a visual representation of the relative ‘blending’ or ‘mixing’ of both ER+ and SR+ throughout the texts, and (2) to capture the diverse scopes of sections which point towards the various relations – in other words at times only a few words may be relevant, at others sentences or paragraphs may be pertinent; this distinction could not be easily captured by simply notating text on a clause-by-clause basis. Excepting the examples provided above, ER– and SR– were quite infrequent, however they were included, marked with double underline and dotted underline, respectively, where appropriate.

The second dimension, Autonomy, was chosen in order to focus on how different practices, skills, and dispositions are used both inside and outside subject English. As the Autonomy dimension is much newer than Specialisation, only formalised in 2018 (see Maton & Howard, 2018), there is much less prior research to draw on to inform the methodological approach. Subsequently, the Autonomy analysis required a more delicate translation device, presented above in Table 4.2. Positional and relational autonomy were based on the SFL analysis following Maton, Martin, and Matruglio’s (2016) model of ‘refocusing’ analysis (see 3.3 for more). More specifically, since the SFL analysis suggested that subject English involved particular practices both inside and outside the classroom (e.g., composing texts, understanding and appreciating literature, etc.), these processes were used to inform the translation device. Autonomy codes were also included in the translation device in order to show the interaction between positional and relational autonomy; rather than just pointing out where practices originate or where they are used, the analysis aims to show *both* simultaneously. As with the Specialisation analysis, the text was marked up with **bold**

text with a solid underline (projected), *italic text with a broken underline* (sovereign), plain text with a double underline (introjected), and plain text with a dotted underline (exotic) to signify the different autonomy codes. Again, rather than annotating the text clause-by-clause, the analysis aims to show broad patterns across the text.

4.4 Assessment analysis

This section describes the approach used to analyse student assessment. This analysis is presented and discussed in Chapter 6, addressing Research Question 2 – ‘How is this positionality [created in syllabus documents] realised through assessment?’. Like the syllabus analysis, the exploration of student writing draws on both SFL and LCT. The analysis uses these two frameworks in order to investigate the linguistic and epistemic structures that are valued by the subject, and how students mobilise language, knowledge, and knower structures in order to realise these demands.

4.4.1 Rationale

As Chapter 2 argued, literacy practices, and their associated assessments, are strongly influenced by social institutions and ideology (Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985; Rosser, 2000; Street, 1984). Drawing on the sociological orientation of previous researchers in the field of language and literacy (e.g., Bernstein, 1990; 1996; Christie & Maton, 2011; Halliday, 1978; Heath & Street, 2008; etc.), I argue that an investigation of assessment practices is necessary in order to understand how ideology and language affect disciplinary requirements, as well as allow for a complementary perspective on the discipline that is not available through syllabus analysis alone.

Five samples of student writing are included in the analysis, from 18 total samples collected. Samples were collected from the participating class (see 4.5 for further

detail). These five were chosen in order to represent a spread of marks (i.e., 1/15 to 7/15, the highest scoring response available), and because they were representative of the responses as a whole. Other responses not included in Chapter 6 were either too short for any meaningful analysis (e.g., only two or three sentences in length) or were similar to the other responses included (see Appendix E for other responses). Responses 2 and 5 were short enough to be reproduced in full, while responses 1, 3, and 4 include approximately the first half of the response. Responses 1, 3, and 4 were only reproduced in part as the second half of the writing followed the same broad epistemic and linguistic patterns as the first half.

4.4.2 Epistemic perspectives

As with Chapter 5, Specialisation was again used as a key LCT dimension for the analysis of student writing. Following Maton, Martin, and Matruglio's (2016) model of alternating analysis, the LCT analysis provides an overview of the broad patterns of knowledge and knower structures that were displayed in examination responses, with the SFL analysis (4.4.3, below) providing more fine-grained analysis of how these structures are realised through different language features.

Similar to the process described in 4.3, a translation device was developed following Maton and Chen's (2016) examples. This translation device is shown in Table 4.3, below. The indicators of different relations were based on the findings of Chapter 5 and 7; in other words, the data were considered from the perspectives of the syllabus and assessment. Following Maton and Chen's (2016) recommendation for the development of the translation device to be an iterative process based on familiarity with the data, the translation device was developed and revised concurrently with the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 7. The texts were annotated with ER/SR +/- or ↑/↓

to show stronger/ weaker or strengthening/ weakening relations. Since these patterns did not occur as frequently as in the syllabus documents, these annotations were simply enclosed in bolded square brackets [] where appropriate.

A similar approach to the development of the translation device presented in 4.3.3 – that is, basing sources of legitimacy on themes from the literature review, SFL analysis, and analysis in other chapters – was adopted when developing the translation device below. More specifically, epistemic relations were considered strengthened when students focused on technical explanations of language and literature (e.g., Macken-Horarik, 2006) and organised the development of themes across texts (e.g., Christie & Derewianka, 2008). These themes were also evident in the LCT analysis presented in Chapter 5, and the think-aloud protocols used by the teacher when marking student papers. Consequently, when students offered non-technical explanations of language and literature, or were not able to effectively control PERIODICITY resources across their responses, epistemic relations were marked as weakening.

Social relations were also based on the themes emerging from the literature review and the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 7. When students offered critiques of social themes or judgements of characters, social relations were considered strengthening (cf. Macken-Horarik, 2007). These patterns were supported by the presence of APPRAISAL resources, analysed in 6.4. If students' development of theme did not consider themes relevant to social or human experience (e.g., Christie, 1999; Christie & Derewianka, 2008), social relations were marked as weakening.

Table 4.3 Specialisation translation device used in 6.3

Relation	Indicators	Example from Chapter 5	Example from Chapter 7
ER+	Knowledge of language and literature is emphasised as key aspects of subject English	This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop effective English communication skills. The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurtures an appreciation of aesthetic values.	“Composes a coherent response that skilfully assesses the way the playwright uses dramatic elements to shape meaning’ [...], so that is they have to talk about techniques. Dramatic, well drama techniques, so they can use anything from dialogue, to stage setting, to sound, lighting, directions, all that sort of stuff, stage directions, to metaphors and other literary techniques, symbolism, they can write themes, and that sort of stuff.”
ER–	Legitimacy is not based on subject knowledge, but rather outside factors	The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication.	“If you fail English you fail your HSC.”

SR+	Personal attributes of appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners valued	Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia’s cultural diversity.	“This book, or this text [<i>The Crucible</i>], is not necessarily just about the religious stuff, ok that’s a part of it, but because that where it’s set. But now we’re talking about how the text <i>is</i> , in terms of relationships between people in the text, how it tells us things about societies, and what we can learn from that sort of thing.”
SR–	Personal attributes of appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners downplayed as basis of legitimacy	They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies...	I: So English gives you the skill to be able to communicate? S[tudent] 1: With others, yeah. S2: Expressing what you need to say. I: What about stuff like ‘Belonging’ then? Does that help you express what you need to say? S3: Uhm... S2: I think it’s irrelevant.

4.4.3 Linguistic perspectives

The SFL analysis is divided into two key areas of focus: PERIODICITY and APPRAISAL. Focusing on these three aspects of language use allows the analysis to describe how students organise their writing, how they position themselves in relation to the texts, and how they understand the contextual variables of essay writing. Examining PERIODICITY and APPRAISAL allowed for description of the linguistic patterns that realised the epistemic features noted in the LCT analysis. The rationale and method for these three lines of analysis are described below.

PERIODICITY analysis was conducted following the examples in Martin and Rose (2007). Themes/ News, hyperThemes/ hyperNews, and macroThemes/ macroNews were identified based on the content of the students' writing. Following Martin and Rose's (2007) focus on discourse at a paragraph and textual level, individual Themes and News are not labelled on a clause-by-clause basis, but rather at a paragraph level, in order to focus on students' rhetorical organisation in their response as a whole. The decision to focus on students' ability to organise their response and lines of argument followed from Anson (2017), who argued that strong rhetorical organisation is highly valued in English examination responses across Australia, and from the LCT analysis which also supported this finding (see 6.3). Christie's (2012) work examining development of theme across student writing provided a model for analysing student control of PERIODICITY.

APPRAISAL analysis was conducted following the examples provided by Martin and White (2005). Examining APPRAISAL resources was particularly useful for two reasons: (1) there were considerable differences in the patterns of student use of these resources, and these differences aligned with differences in marks and epistemic positioning; and (2) it provided more detail to the LCT analysis by describing how

students positioned themselves in response to texts, authors, characters, and events. As noted in Chapter 2, judgements of characters and authors were commonly featured in subject English instruction, and therefore examining the uptake (or failure to do so) of the grammatical resources used for this purpose allows for consideration of how effectively students are able to translate classroom practice into their examination responses, and how highly these judgements are valued.

4.5 Interview and observational data analysis

After considering the syllabus documents that position the subject and its students, as well the assessment practices that realise this positionality, the analysis focuses on data collected from teachers and students. Rather than focusing explicitly on epistemic and linguistic perspectives, the analysis focuses on themes which emerged from the data, in order to allow a more nuanced and flexible set of themes to emerge. However, reference is made to the theoretical concepts of both SFL and LCT where appropriate.

4.5.1 Rationale, approach, and reflexivity

Theoretical and research-based explorations into literacy practices and classroom interactions have revealed that analysis of literacy practices in schools benefits greatly from ethnographic tools (e.g., Austin & Freebody, 2001; Christie, 1999; Davidson, 2012; Gibbons, 2018; Jogie, 2015). These ethnographic tools can allow for insider perspectives that are not available from the analysis of syllabus documents or examination responses, and are vital for investigating how actors enact the practices that create legitimacy within subject English. Drawing on LCT's orientation to contexts as sites where different practices and dispositions relate to create legitimacy (Maton, 2014;

Maton, Hood, & Shay, 2016), and ethnographic approaches to literacy that aim to investigate how disciplinary practices are enacted by participants (Davidson, 2012; Heath & Street, 2008; Smith, 2008), this thesis aims to complement the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6 with the perspective of key participants in the literacy practices of senior English. Drawing on different approaches to language and literacy research, the collection and analysis of classroom and interview data was conducted in two ways.

First, I entered a classroom of 22 students (see the following section for more on the school context and the students), audio-recording lessons while simultaneously taking notes. This approach can be described as the use of ethnographic tools (Heath & Street, 2008); a ‘truer’ style of ethnography, where the researcher followed participants across several contexts (rather than just the classroom) was not required, since my concern was how teachers and students understood and enacted subject English and its disciplinary requirements in the classroom. The analysis focused heavily on sequences of interactions, which are critical in the creation of literacy practices and events (Davidson, 2012; Smith, 2008). As Smith (2008) argues: “It is necessary to examine how teachers and students react to each other, how they build on, reframe, and refract each other’s comments” (p. 145). For this reason, Section 7.2 is structured around the analysis of classroom interactions and the themes they generated.

Following Heath and Street’s (2008) recommendations for language and literacy research using ethnographic tools, “every ethnographer must remain silent and communicate only as appropriate by local norms” (p.57), I remained mostly silent unless addressed directly, and out-of-view by sitting to the side or back of the class. During observation, field notes were taken to note any findings of note, particularly

anything that could not be captured by the audio recording (such as a quiet discussion amongst peers). As Heath and Street (2008) suggest, field notes included:

1. Running account of events in real time
2. Notable short phrases uttered by interlocutors so that audio- or video recordings can more easily be coordinated with field-notes
3. Changes in audience, routines, rituals, and features of context that co-occur with shifts in language and modes. (p.77).

Point 2 from above in particular helped guide the analysis, and many of these notable phrases became the epigraphs heading each chapter. Alongside these field notes, “Conceptual memos” (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 79) helped provide a running commentary on data as patterns emerged. Drawing on LCT’s Specialisation dimension, interactions and sequences of lessons were often complemented with comments on the epistemic and social relations that were expressed over the period of data collection. This approach allowed for an iterative process of data analysis (Heath & Street, 2008; Maton, 2014) and contributed to the development of the translation devices provided earlier in this chapter (Maton & Chen, 2016).

The second method for data collection employed think-aloud protocols and focus-group interviews. While previous work has used SFL and LCT to examine student writing (see Section 2.5 for detail), this analysis ultimately depends on the interpretations and arguments of the researcher. Exploring examiner feedback is another viable method (e.g., Anson, 2017; Rosser, 2000), but examiner comments do not always capture marker rationale when assessing work. Having teachers narrate their rationale

and process when marking student writing can therefore provide a method to allow for investigation of disciplinary practices as they are realised at the point of assessment (Cooksey et al., 2007). Think-aloud protocols offer the potential to investigate the perspectives and cognitive processes of experts (in this case, a teacher assessing the writing of students), and are sensitive to small comments, ideas, or phrases that might go unnoticed or be forgotten by researchers or participants if asked to reflect at a later date (Bowles, 2018). Think-aloud protocols have been applied to investigations of literacy in academic contexts (Bloome, Carvalho, & Ryu, 2018), are typically combined with other ethnographic methods (e.g., observations, interviews, etc.) and contrasted with analysis of written and spoken texts (e.g., written texts, interactions, etc.) (Lew, Yang, & Harklau, 2018). In this way, think-aloud protocols provide a useful complement to the interviews and observations analysed in Chapter 7, and a counterpoint to the analysis of assessment responses and classroom interactions). Subsequently, Section 7.4 is structured around think-aloud protocols, with the classroom teacher from 7.3 describing her rationale for marking.

Finally, Section 7.5 draws on interviews conducted in focus groups with students from Section 7.3. Following O'Reilly's (2012) recommendation, an unstructured interview was used in order to allow participants to comment on the responses as they understood them, and to prevent the researcher from simply looking to confirm his findings from the analysis presented in Chapter 6. The interview adopted an informal approach, with participants being presented with the five responses analysed in Chapter 6 (without any analysis) and then invited to share their thoughts (Prior, 2018). Participants were invited to begin discussing and comparing with questions like "What do you think of this response?" and "How does this response compare to the one you read?". After this initial prompting, participants were allowed to discuss the responses

at length, and only prompted again once the discussion had concluded, where they were invited to read and comment on the next response.

The second theme was developed from two semi-structured interviews, again with two focus groups of students. The questions were as follows:

1. What do you think subject English is really about?
2. What is important to do well in subject English?
3. How do you feel about subject English?
4. Is subject English important? Why/ Why not?
5. Would you still choose the subject if it wasn't compulsory? Why/ Why not?
6. What kind of person/ student can do well in subject English?

Open-ended questions were used in an attempt to prevent my own biases from directing student responses (O'Reilly, 2012), whilst a semi-structured form was used in order to allow new themes or ideas to be developed. As Prior (2018) recommends, the purpose of the interview was not “for the group to reach a consensus or to respond to the moderator one by one, but to generate discussion (even disagreement) among one another” (p. 235).

Aside from consideration of methodological approaches, considering researcher reflexivity is also essential when employing ethnographic tools. As Street (1984) argues, literacy is intimately tied with social and ideological implications; *research* into literacy practices is therefore also a social and ideological process that requires the researcher to consider their own positionality (Bloome et al., 2008). Bloome et al.

(2008) refer to the process of combining and consolidating accounts of classroom events as ‘laminating’, that is, combining different elements to create a stronger and more coherent whole. When laminating research studies, they argue that researchers consider:

- What kind of a relationship is being built among research perspectives?
- By whom?
- With whom?
- For what purposes?
- When?
- Where?
- With what consequences for whom? (p. 206)

In order to address these questions and concerns, recourse has been made to Heath and Street’s (2008) approach to reflexivity in language and literacy practice, namely considering four types of reflexivity: “confessional, theoretical, inter[textual], and deconstructive” (p. 123). From a confessional perspective, that is, exploring how one’s own personal positionality has framed the research, I must note that throughout the research, I was consistently surprised at the discrepancy between students’ ability to articulate disciplinary requirements, and their (in)ability to realise them in writing. As Chapter 6 argues, even the highest-scoring students could only manage to come ‘half-way’ towards meeting the disciplinary requirements of the essay; however, as Section 7.5 reveals, students were able to critique the writing of their peers effectively and

verbalise how they did or did not meet the expectations for an examination response.

The implications of this discrepancy are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

From a theoretical perspective, it is necessary to acknowledge my own views of language, literacy, and pedagogy. As Chapter 2 argued, this thesis is strongly aligned with the sociological and linguistic orientation of Halliday and Bernstein, as well as theorists including Street, Bourdieu, and Maton. Subsequently, the literacy practices described in Chapter 7 take the position that such classroom interactions are strongly affected by social and ideological forces that may be invisible to students, as well as teachers and myself. In attempting to provide a fair analysis of these interactions, the regulatory power of subject English (cf. Bernstein, 1996, 1999; Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985) felt almost impossible to overcome. While every attempt has been made to ensure that my own assumptions and biases about the subject did not influence my analysis or presentation of results, my own theoretical positionality has undoubtedly affected the framing of the research.

Intertextually, that is, the reflective account of the historical and narrative positionality of the research, this thesis aims to build on scholarly understanding of the subject in its most recent years. As Chapters 1 and 2 argued, there is a need to consider the epistemic landscape of subject English, and how such developments are related to the development of the subject across its history. It is hoped that by starting at the subject's origins in Australia with Chapter 1, and considering the most recent iterations of the subject in Chapter 5, that this research is able to make this historical development more explicit in order to construct a more comprehensive 'narrative' of the subject's development.

Finally, from a deconstructive perspective, Heath and Street (2008) argue that it is important to acknowledge the limitations of research. Drawing on Foley (2002), they note:

We still, he concludes, can only speak as mortals from various historical, culture-bound, standpoints. Our claims are inevitably limited and partial. But perhaps by making these limits more apparent and by knowing well what constitutes ethnographic validity, we will make our narrative and analysis more, not less, believable.

Consequently, every attempt has been made to examine the limitations of this research and analysis. These limitations, and possibilities for future research that might address them, are discussed in detail in Chapter 8. Having considered the approach and positionality of the research, the following section describes the school context.

4.5.2 School context

The data presented in Chapter 7 was collected across three school terms, across 2016-2017, from a South West Sydney school, pseudonymously known as ‘Sunny Hill High School’. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) reported ‘Sunny Hill’ as one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas in Australia, scoring 3% and 4% in an index of disadvantage in Australia and NSW respectively (with 1% representing the greatest disadvantage). In other words, individuals living in ‘Sunny Hill’ are more likely

to have lower levels of education, employment, and income when compared to other areas of Australia.

In 2017, the school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value was 922, below the Australian average of 1000. The Australian average for distribution in each ICSEA quartile is 25%; that is, an 'average' Australian school would be expected to have 25% of students in the most socio-economically disadvantaged quartile (the lowest quartile), 25% in the next quartile, 25% in the third quartile, and 25% of students in the top quartile, being the least disadvantaged. Compared to this average of 25%, 62% of students were in the lowest quartile, indicating higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. Furthermore 80% of students came from a language background other than English. In other words, the class was represented by students who would be expected to be disadvantaged by the middle-class discourses of the syllabus, and have less access to the strong social and cultural capital of their more socially-advantaged peers across Australia.

The selection of Sunny Hill High School as a site of focus for the research was motivated by the fact that the majority of students were from language backgrounds other than English, and came from a low-SES area. As Chapter 2 discussed, this research is strongly influenced by sociological theories of discourse, pedagogy, and literacy. More importantly, investigations into earlier curricula, assessment, and classroom practices of subject English have consistently foregrounded the importance of particular ways of reading and writing for success. Consequently, an exploration of how students removed from the English-speaking middle-class discourses valued by the subject (see Sections 2.4, 2.5, & 2.6 for a review of relevant research) navigate these demands is timely and warranted, particularly as the subject transitions to a new curriculum. By focusing the data collection at a single school, I was able to engage

more thoroughly with the classroom practices of the teacher and student participants, as I was able to observe classes over three terms. An extended period of data collection also allowed me to provide a richer account of the student perspectives offered in Chapter 7, which also provide a complementary set of perspectives to the analysis provided in Chapter 6. Consequently, while collecting data from other schools and participants may have provided a broader scope for analysis, the detail and depth of engagement afforded by focusing the data collection at a single school, and with a single set of participants, motivated the decision to stay within this single setting.

One class of 22 students, along with their teacher, graciously allowed me to enter their classroom. Lessons were audio-recorded while I observed. Aside from these classroom recordings, the teacher was also recorded using think-aloud protocols as she marked student examinations; and students were interviewed in groups of 4-6 (see Table 4.4, below, for an overview of key participants for Chapters 6 and 7). Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour, and followed a semi-structured approach in order to allow themes to be explored and developed as they arose. These three sources of recordings (i.e., classroom practices, teacher interviews, and student interviews) are presented in Sections 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5 respectively.

Table 4.4 Overview of key participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Language/ cultural background	Description
Ms White	From an Indigenous background, speaking English at home	At the time of data collection, Ms White had been teaching for three years, having taught many of the students in this class from the year before. Often commenting that many of her students would be more suited to English ESL or English Studies (but did not qualify or would be unable to obtain an ATAR with these respective courses), Ms White was concerned at the low literacy levels of many of her students, particularly at the end of the English Fundamentals course (a Year 11 only course focused explicitly on literacy) and commencement of year 12.
Rajesh	From an Indian background, speaking English at home	Rajesh was a high performing student in class, although he scored slightly lower than Reza and Benjamin. Vocal during discussions and focused during written work, Rajesh was one of the most conscientious students of the class.
Melody	From a Pacific Islander background, speaking	One of the lowest scoring students in class, Melody was frequently distracted by her peers and appeared generally unmotivated for written work. Despite this, she often

	English and Tongan at home	offered answers during class discussion and was particularly engaged when the class read together.
Reza	From an Arabic background, speaking English and Arabic at home.	One of the highest scoring students in class, Reza was typically vocal during discussions, offering his (often negative) views of the texts and the subject in general. Despite his apparent frustration with the subject, Reza was articulate and seemed to grasp the need to engage with ideas about human experience in the subject.
Melissa	From an Australian background, speaking English at home.	One of the lower scoring students in class, falling in-between Melody and Rajesh in terms of performance. Her control of spoken English was one of the strongest in the class, but she struggled to take up the academic requirements of subject English in her writing.
Hamid	From an Arabic background, speaking Arabic at home.	One of the lowest scoring in class, Hamid was convinced he would fail any assessment he attempted. Often frustrated by an inability to understand the work, he was frequently distracted by his peers.

Ella	From a Pacific Islander background, speaking English and Tongan at home.	A close friend of Melody (even able to identify Melody's typed anonymised examination script from the style and expression), Ella was often distracted by Melody. However, like Melody, she was often vocal and willing to participate in class discussions. Her examination response was not included in Chapter 5 due to its similarity with Melissa's response.
Benjamin	From an Arabic background, speaking Arabic at home.	Along with Reza, one of the highest scoring students in class. Benjamin was often willing to offer answers and complete willing work. With strong aspirations to continue on to university, Benjamin valued the power of subject English to improve communication. His examination response was not included in Chapter 5 due to its similarity with Reza's response.

The following conventions were used in the transcriptions presented:

Table 4.5 Transcription conventions used in Chapter 7

Notation	Meaning
I:	Interviewer
T:	Teacher
S1, S2 etc.	Student 1, Student 2 etc.
...	The speaker pauses
-	The speaker stops suddenly
[...]	Irrelevant discussion is omitted
<i>Italic text</i>	The speaker emphasises words

Section 7.3 is divided into three broad sections: discussions about understanding the text, personal responses to texts, and finally discussions about assessment and writing. These three themes were used as a framework for analysing the data, following Christie's (1999) conception of macrogenre (see Figure 2.1, in Chapter 2, for a description of a curriculum macrogenre in subject English). Beginning with 'shared reader position', 'reflective on issues', and 'enhancement of ethical position', Christie's (1999) example was made more specific to the Year 12 classroom and research context, arriving at the three themes represented in Section 7.3.

Section 7.4 is divided into two sections: understanding assessment and understanding subject English. These two themes were developed from two data sources. The first was from the classroom teacher narrating her thoughts and rationale as

she marked examination responses. Think-aloud protocols were used as the teacher marked several examination responses, including one analysed in Chapter 6, Rajesh's response. This allowed Research Question 3 to be addressed (i.e., How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment?), as well as providing a useful point of comparison with Chapter 6 and Research Question 2 (How is subject English's positionality realised through assessment?). The second theme was developed from informal interactions between the teacher and researcher before and after class. Whilst a more structured interview may have been preferable, this was not possible given the participant's schedule (see Section 8.6 for more on limitations of the research).

Finally, Section 7.5 is also divided into 2 sections, following Section 7.4, that is: understanding assessment and understanding subject English. As with Section 7.4, dividing the findings into these two broad categories allows for a useful comparison to Chapters 5 and 6, whilst still addressing Research Question 3. Student understanding of assessment was informed by a focus group discussion with students reading and commenting on the responses analysed in Chapter 6.

4.6 Ethical considerations

This section describes the considerations taken to ensure the research was ethically sound. The two sources of data (i.e., syllabi accessed online, and data from the participating school and students) are considered below.

Both the 2009 and 2017 syllabi are protected by Crown copyright (BOS, 2009b, p. 2; NESA, 2017a, p. 2). However, according to the Copyright ACT 1968, "A fair dealing with a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work, or with an adaptation of a literary, dramatic or musical work, for the purpose of research or study, does not constitute an infringement of the copyright in the work" (Part III, Division 3, Section 40). Part III

applies to Crown copyright works (Part VII, Division 1, Section 182), and therefore reproducing the Rationale section of both the 2009 and 2017 syllabi for the purpose of research are permitted by legislation. Furthermore, owing to NESA's strong orientation towards evidence-based research intended to benefit children and education (see <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/about/who-we-are/research>), analysis of syllabus documents in order to examine how subject English positions itself and its students can be considered ethically sound.

Chapters 6 and 7 include data collected from a South West Sydney high school. Before collecting data, the research protocol was subject to review by the Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel at the University of New South Wales, and the State Education Research Applications Process via the NSW government. The school was contacted via email with an expression of interest, followed by a meeting with the Head of Department. Six teachers were briefed on the research, and invited to participate, with one teacher, Ms White, agreeing to participate. Her class of 22 students was subsequently briefed on the research, with all but one student agreeing to participate. Teachers and students, along with student parents/ guardians, were asked to read through and sign a consent form (Appendix C) and were informed that they were free to discontinue participation at any point. I was present during the audio recordings of lessons and noted any times that the non-participating student spoke so that they were not included in the data. All participants are referred to pseudonymously in Chapter 6, and identified only through numbers in Chapter 7, following the convention for classroom interaction analysis with an ethnomethodological approach (Davidson, 2012).

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter described the methodological approach used to inform the data collection and analysis presented in the results chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7). Section 4.2 provided an overview of the methodological rationale, followed by the specific approaches for analysis of the syllabus documents, student assessment, and classroom data in the subsequent sections. Section 4.3 described the analysis procedure for syllabus documents; SFL for linguistic features and LCT for epistemic perspectives. Section 4.4 described the analysis of student writing, following the same structure as Section 4.3. Following this, the rationale and approach for collecting and analysing classroom data was presented, following Christie (1999), Heath and Street (2008), and O'Reilly (2012). Finally, the ethics of collecting and analysing the data were considered in Section 4.6. The next chapter, Chapter 5, present the findings of the syllabus analysis and addresses Research Question 1.

Chapter 5 Syllabus perspectives

The idea of literature, why people write books, it's not just for fun or to be annoying so we can learn about it, but it is to say something about society.

– 'Ms White'

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter addresses Research Question 1 by examining how the linguistic and epistemic features of the 2009 and 2018 Stage 6 English Syllabus position the subject and its students. As noted earlier, the 2018 syllabus came into effect after the data analysed and presented in Chapters 6 and 7 were collected. However, the more recent syllabus is still included in order to more thoroughly develop a narrative of subject English across its history, and to ensure that the implications for pedagogy discussed in Chapter 8 are feasible under a new curriculum. An overview of the subject and its syllabi are provided, followed by detailed analysis of the Rationale section. Linguistic features are examined using SFL, focusing on two systems: APPRAISAL (both Engagement and Attitude), and TRANSITIVITY. Epistemic features are examined through two LCT dimensions: Specialisation and Autonomy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the results and how they set up for Chapters 6 and 7.

5.2 Introduction

In NSW, subject English is modelled as a staged and sequenced progression, beginning with Early Stage 1 (Kindergarten), and ending with Stage 6 (Year 11 and 12). From Early Stage 1 to Stage 5, students study shared content, and are expected to

achieve the same outcomes (NESA, 2018d). By Stage 6, however, students are able to take a variety of English courses:

- English Standard, the course taken by the majority of candidates (NESA, 2018a; see https://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/bos_stats/media-guides.html for previous years), aimed at developing students' knowledge of language and literature
- English Advanced, which requires students to engage with more complex concepts and texts (including Shakespeare)
- English Extension 1, an additional course for English Advanced students, which requires students to engage with concepts and texts of further complexity
- English Extension 2, an additional course for English Extension 1 students, which requires students to produce a sustained composition during the course of year 12
- English Studies, which is aimed at students “who intend to proceed from school directly into employment or vocational training” (NESA, “Course Entry Guidelines”, 2018c)
- English Life Skills, which is designed for students who are unable to complete English Standard or English Studies, particularly those with intellectual disabilities (NESA, 2017a)

The content studied in each course varies, with some units of work being common across different courses. Summaries of Standard and Advanced English, the two most commonly studied courses, are provided below in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. These overviews foreground the importance of both language and literature to the subject, as well as the

subject’s focus on exploring abstract human experience. These themes are strongly featured in the analysis in the following sections.

Table 5.1 2009 Stage 6 course content (adapted from BOS, 2009b, pp. 29-31, 46-48).

Standard	Advanced
<p><i>Common Content – Area of Study</i></p> <p>An Area of Study is the exploration of a concept that affects our perceptions of ourselves and our world. Students explore, analyse, question and articulate the ways in which perceptions of this concept are shaped in and through a variety of texts.</p>	
<p><i>Module A: Experience Through Language</i></p> <p>This module requires students to explore the uses of a particular aspect of language. It develops students’ awareness of language and helps them to understand how our perceptions of and relationships with others and the world are shaped in written, spoken and visual language.</p>	<p><i>Module A: Comparative Study of Texts and Context</i></p> <p>This module requires students to compare texts in order to explore them in relation to their contexts. It develops students’ understanding of context and questions of value.</p>
<p><i>Module B: Close Study of Text</i></p> <p>This module requires students to engage in detailed analysis of a text. It develops students’ understanding of how the ideas, forms and language of a text interact within</p>	<p><i>Module B: Critical Study of Texts</i></p> <p>This module requires students to explore and evaluate a specific text and its reception in a range of contexts. It develops students’</p>

the text and may affect those responding to it.	understanding of questions of textual integrity.
<p><i>Module C: Texts and Society</i></p> <p>This module requires students to explore and analyse texts used in a specific situation. It assists students' understanding of the ways that texts communicate information, ideas, bodies of knowledge, attitudes and belief systems in ways particular to specific areas of society.</p>	<p><i>Module C: Representation and Text</i></p> <p>This module requires students to explore various representations of events, personalities or situations. They evaluate how medium of production, textual form, perspective and choice of language influence meaning.</p>

Table 5.2 2018 Stage 6 course content (Adapted from NESAs, 2017a, pp. 52, 55, 71-74).

Standard	Advanced
<p><i>Year 12 Common Module – Texts and Human Experiences</i></p> <p>In this common module students deepen their understanding of how texts represent individual and collective human experiences. They examine how texts represent human qualities and emotions associated with, or arising from, these experiences.</p>	
<p><i>Module A: Language, Identity and Culture</i></p> <p>In this module, students consider how their responses to written, spoken, audio</p>	<p><i>Module A: Textual Conversations</i></p> <p>In this module, students explore the ways in which the comparative study of</p>

<p>and visual texts can shape their self-perception. They also consider the impacts texts have on shaping a sense of identity for individuals and/or communities.</p>	<p>texts can reveal resonances and dissonances between and within texts.</p>
<p><i>Module B: Close Study of Literature</i></p> <p>In this module, students develop an informed understanding, knowledge and appreciation of a substantial literary text. Through their development of considered personal responses to the text in its entirety, students explore and analyse the particular ideas and characteristics of the text and understand the ways in which these characteristics establish its distinctive qualities.</p>	<p><i>Module B: Critical Study of Literature</i></p> <p>In this module, students develop detailed analytical and critical knowledge, understanding and appreciation of a substantial literary text. Through increasingly informed and personal responses to the text in its entirety, students understand the distinctive qualities of the text, notions of textual integrity and significance.</p>
<p><i>Module C: The Craft of Writing</i></p> <p>In this module, students strengthen and extend their knowledge, skills and confidence as writers. They write for a range of authentic audiences and purposes to convey ideas with power and increasing precision.</p>	<p><i>Module C: The Craft of Writing</i></p> <p>In this module, students strengthen and extend their knowledge, skills and confidence as accomplished writers. Students write for a range of audiences and purposes using language to convey</p>

	ideas and emotions with power and precision.
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Despite the range of courses available to students, the Rationale section for each is the same, as it describes English in Stage 6 overall, rather than each separate course. Focusing on the Rationale therefore allows for consideration of the subject holistically, as well as facilitating detailed analysis of how the subject sees itself, its aims, and its students. Below, the linguistic and epistemic features of the subject are considered in order to investigate these concerns.

5.3 APPRAISAL: Engagement

APPRAISAL refers to linguistic resources used for evaluation, specifically the set of lexicogrammatical resources that appraise and evaluate, that is, negotiating attitudes and emotions, their strength and quality, as well as their source (see 3.2.1 for more detail). The analysis below explores two subsystems of APPRAISAL, Engagement and Attitude (See Section 4.3 for analysis rationale). Engagement refers to how language can be used to position the audience to take up these evaluations, offering two key options: monogloss, where opinions are presented as the only alternative, or heterogloss, where a view is presented as one possibility among many. In the case of heterogloss, a speaker or writer may choose to associate or disassociate themselves from this view. Attitude refers to linguistic resources used to evaluate emotions, others, or phenomena (Matthiessen, Teruya, & Lam, 2010; see 3.2.1 for more detail on APPRAISAL systems). Each section begins with a brief overview of the findings, followed by a reproduction of the Rationale section with APPRAISAL resources marked, and ends with an explanation of the findings.

5.3.1 2009 syllabus

The following section shows an analysis of APPRAISAL: Engagement resources used in the 2009 Stage 6 English syllabus. Overall, monogloss is featured heavily in order to assert the importance of English as a subject, with heterogloss only appearing once when referring to English's role as a national language.

The study of English is central to the learning and development of students in NSW and is the mandatory subject in the Stage 6 curriculum **[Monogloss]**. The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication **[Heterogloss: expand: attribute: acknowledge]**. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants in society **[Monogloss]**.

**[Mono-
gloss]**

English involves the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

**[Mono-
gloss]**

The study of English enables students to recognise and use a diversity of approaches and texts to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy. This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop effective English communication skills. The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values. Through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing experience, ideas and values, students are encouraged to adopt a critical approach to all texts and to distinguish the qualities of texts. Students

also develop English language skills to support their study at Stage 6 and beyond.

In Stage 6, students come to understand the complexity of meaning, to compose and respond to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to appreciate the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them. Students reflect on their reading and learning and understand that these processes are shaped by the contexts in which they respond to and compose texts.

**[Mono-
gloss]**

The study of English enables students to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives in personal, social and professional situations and to deal effectively with change. Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia's cultural diversity.

The syllabus is designed to develop enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning. (BOS, 2009b, p. 6)

The 2009 syllabus, in contrast to the 2018 one (see below), frequently uses monogloss to close down the dialogic space around subject English. This allows the text to establish the authority of the subject and its place in the curriculum; rather than justifying the subject and its use, the curriculum simply states that it is important and

mandatory. Such categorical statements are described by Martin and White (2005) as “bare assertions” (p. 99), and act to position the information presented as truth not subject to debate. This theme runs throughout the Rationale section, for example: “The study of English is central to the learning and development of students in NSW and is the mandatory subject in the Stage 6 curriculum” and “The study of English enables students to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives in personal, social and professional situations and to deal effectively with change”. As is typical of administrative and business documents (Iedema, 1997), the text does not feature a ‘voice’ but rather establishes its authority by effacing alternative options.

Despite this, there is one prominent example of heterogloss, that is, acknowledging that there are other alternatives in the dialogic space, in “The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication”. This pattern – heterogloss: expand: attribute: acknowledge – acts to establish the importance of the subject and therefore supports the frequent monoglossic position taken up in the text. The Rationale therefore clearly and explicitly states what English *is*, and what English *does*, with little or no room for critical interpretation. This staunchly monoglossic style is contrasted with the more ‘moderate’ 2018 syllabus, analysed below.

5.3.2 2018 syllabus

The following section shows an analysis of APPRAISAL: Engagement resources used in the 2018 Stage 6 English syllabus. While monogloss is heavily featured, as with the 2009 syllabus, there is an increase in the frequency of heterogloss resources.

[Mono-
gloss]

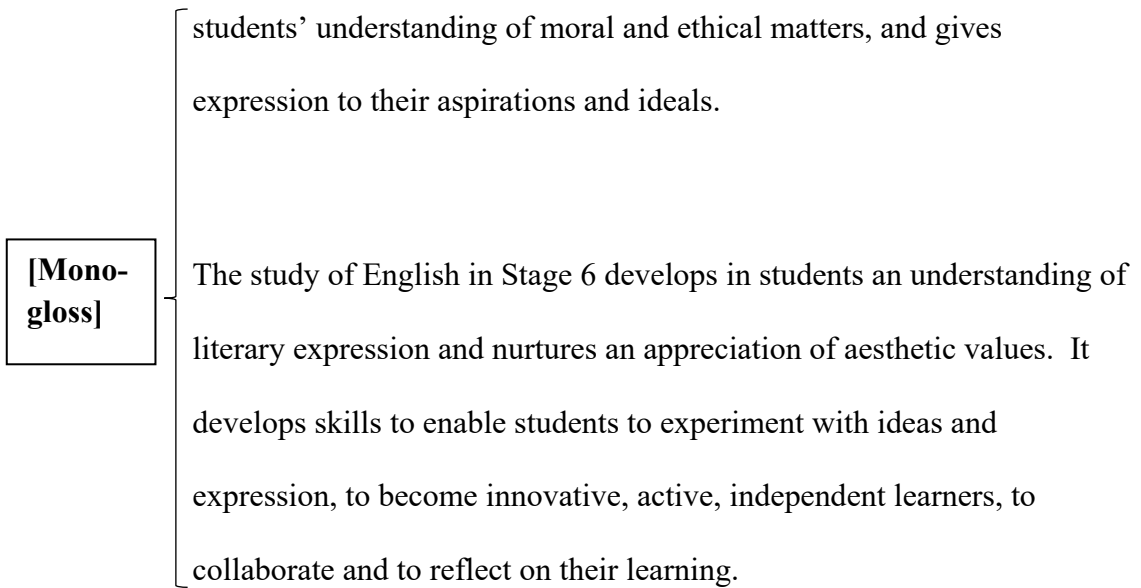
Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students. In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms. These encompass spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language, English is the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum

[Heterogloss: expand: attribute: acknowledge].

[Mono-
gloss]

Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants in Australian society. It supports the development and expression of a system of personal values, based on



Through responding to and composing texts from Kindergarten to Year 12, students learn about the power, value and art of the English language for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency **[Monogloss]**. They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples **[Heterogloss: expand: attribute: acknowledge]**. By composing and responding students develop an understanding of themselves and of diverse human experiences and cultures **[Monogloss]**.

The study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever widening contexts **[Heterogloss: expand: attribute: acknowledge]**.

**[Mono-
gloss]**

Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences. The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.

**[Mono-
gloss]**

In their study of English, students continue to develop their critical and imaginative faculties and broaden their capacity for cultural understanding. They examine various contexts of language usage to understand how making meaning is complex and shaped by a multiplicity of factors. As students' command of English continues to grow, they are provided with opportunities to question, assess, challenge, reformulate information and identify and clarify issues, negotiate and solve problems. They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society. These skills and understandings allow them to develop their control of language for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world. (NESA, 2017a, p. 10)

Like its 2009 counterpart, the 2018 curriculum uses monogloss in the form of bare assertions in order to establish the subject's importance and nature, for example "The study of English in Stage 6 develops in students an understanding of literary expression and nurtures an appreciation of aesthetic values". In doing so, the text

establishes its authority and begins to control the dialogic space. However, in a departure from the strict focus on subject English of the 2009 syllabus, the 2018 syllabus's use of monogloss also describes *language*. "Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world." The text proceeds to open up the dialogic space surrounding language and literature, by acknowledging that it draws on specific views and approaches:

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language, English is the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum.

They [students] engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature of literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

The study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever widening contexts.

Through heterogloss: expand: attribute: acknowledge, the text acknowledges its own positionality and provides a rationale for the importance of subject English. This more reflexive approach, rather than the bare assertions of the earlier syllabus, allows more room for critical interpretation and operationalisation by teachers. By widening the scope of the dialogic space to include *language*, rather than just subject English, the

2018 curriculum revives some of the tensions that are deeply embedded in the subject's history. Despite its long history as a secondary subject in Australia (see 1.4 for more), the tug-of-war between language and literature in the subject still dominates its positionality. As a result, the subject is not just about developing students as competent communicators or appreciative readers, but also focuses on fostering an understanding of how language functions. With these tensions in mind, 5.4 considers how Attitude resources are used by the syllabus to evaluate the subject and its students.

5.4 APPRAISAL: Attitude

As with the APPRAISAL: Engagement analysis presented in the two sections above, the following section compares the lexicogrammatical resources used in the 2009 and 2018 Stage 6 English syllabus. Both 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 analyse APPRAISAL: Attitude resources, which are used to evaluate.

5.4.1 2009 syllabus

The following section shows an analysis of APPRAISAL: Attitude resources used in the 2009 Stage 6 English syllabus. Overall, subject English and its students are both positively evaluated throughout the Rationale. Key lexicogrammatical items are marked in italics.

The study of English is *central* to the learning and development of students in NSW and is the *mandatory* subject in the Stage 6 curriculum [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (inscribed)**]. The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of *its role as the national language* and increasingly as *the*

language of international communication [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (inscribed)**]. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as *confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants* in society [**Judgement: capacity: positive (inscribed)**].

English involves the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

The study of English *enables students to recognise and use* a diversity of approaches and texts to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. This study is designed to promote a *sound* knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop *effective* English communication skills [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (inscribed)**].

The English Stage 6 courses develop in students *an understanding* of literary expression and nurture *an appreciation* of aesthetic values [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. Through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing experience, ideas and values, students are encouraged to adopt a *critical* approach to all texts and to distinguish the qualities of texts [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. Students also develop *English language skills to support their study at Stage 6 and beyond* [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**].

In Stage 6, students come to *understand* the complexity of meaning, to *compose and respond* to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to *appreciate* the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. Students *reflect* on their reading and learning and *understand* that these processes are shaped by the contexts in which they respond to and compose texts [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**].

The study of English *enables* students *to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives* in personal, social and professional situations and *to deal effectively with change* [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. Students develop a strong sense of themselves as *autonomous, reflective and creative* learners [**Judgement: capacity: positive (inscribed)**]. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to *perceive* and *understand* their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to *appreciate* the richness of Australia's cultural diversity [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**].

The syllabus is designed to develop enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning. (BOS, 2009b, p. 6)

Overall, two key elements are evaluated in the Rationale section: subject English itself, and its students. Both are, unsurprisingly, evaluated in positive terms. The centrality of subject English in not only the curriculum, but also in students' academic and personal development, is clearly established from the Rationale's opening line. Appreciation: valuation allows the text to show the importance of subject English.

Inscribed evaluations are used, where English is explicitly positively valued (e.g., “The study of English is *central* to the learning and development of students in NSW”); along with invoked evaluations, where English the value of the subject is implied (e.g., “it *enables them* to appreciate the richness of Australia’s cultural diversity”). Together, appreciation resources combine to show how English sees itself a valuable subject, critical to the development of students not only intellectually, but also personally.

These positive evaluations of the subject are supported by judgement: capacity patterns, which allow the Rationale to focus on how the *students* themselves are transformed by the subject. Positive evaluations are typically inscribed (e.g., “*confident, articulate* communicators, *critical* and *imaginative* thinkers and *active* participants in society”) in order to explicitly position students as expert communicators and creative thinkers. As a result, the scope of the subject is therefore extended past a strict knowledge of just language and literature, students are also developed personally and prepared to enter society. This theme of personal development is clearly marked through the activities the subject engages in, explored in the TRANSITIVITY analysis in 5.5, which follows the final analysis of APPRAISAL resources in the section below.

5.4.2 2018 syllabus

The following section shows an analysis of APPRAISAL: Attitude resources used in the 2018 Stage 6 English syllabus. As with the 2009 syllabus, both subject English and its students are positively evaluated. In contrast to the 2009 syllabus, however, is a new focus on *language*, which is also positively evaluated. Key lexicogrammatical items are marked in italics.

Language *shapes* our understanding of ourselves and our world [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. It is the *primary* means by which we relate to others and is *central* to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (inscribed)**]. In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms. These encompass spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language, English is the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum. Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes acquired in English are *central* to the learning and development of students [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (inscribed)**]. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as *confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants* in Australian society [**Judgement: capacity: positive (inscribed)**]. It *supports the development* and expression of a system of personal values, based on students' understanding of moral and ethical matters, and *gives expression* to their aspirations and ideals [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**].

The study of English in Stage 6 develops in students an *understanding* of literary expression and nurtures an *appreciation* of aesthetic values [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. It develops skills to enable students to experiment with ideas and expression, to become *innovative, active, independent*

learners [**Judgement: capacity: positive (inscribed)**], *to collaborate and to reflect on their learning* [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**].

Through responding to and composing texts from Kindergarten to Year 12, students learn about the *power, value and art* of the English language for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**]. They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged *quality* literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and *literary heritage* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (inscribed)**]. By composing and responding students develop an *understanding* of themselves and of diverse human experiences and cultures [**Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)**].

The study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever widening contexts. Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences. The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.

In their study of English, students continue to *develop their critical and imaginative faculties* and *broaden their capacity for cultural understanding* [**Judgement: capacity: positive (inscribed)**]. They examine various contexts of language usage to understand how making meaning is complex and shaped by a

multiplicity of factors. As students' command of English continues to grow, they are provided with opportunities to question, assess, challenge, reformulate information and identify and clarify issues, negotiate and solve problems. They can become *creative* and *confident* users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society **[Judgement: capacity: positive (inscribed)]**. These skills and understandings allow them to *develop their control of language* for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world **[Appreciation: valuation: positive (invoked)]**. (NESA, 2017a, p. 10)

Like patterns noted in the engagement analysis, the 2018 syllabus deploys similar linguistic resources to its 2009 counterpart, positively evaluating both the subject and its students. As in the 2009 syllabus, the 2018 syllabus clearly explains the benefits of the subject itself, explaining how focuses on 'quality' literature is 'central' to student development, as well as how students benefit from the subject, becoming 'lifelong learners' and 'confident communicators'. Again, the subject explicitly states its importance by focusing on the personal development of students; students are not only learning about English, they are learning how to communicate, think, innovate, collaborate, be independent, and participate in society. The themes of personal growth and critical consciousness that have dominated the subject since the 1900s (Patterson, 2000) are still very much alive in the subject after more than a century of being taught.

However, despite the 2018 syllabus continuing the historical trends of the subject, it does take an important departure from the 2009 syllabus, which was alluded to in the Engagement analysis. This is the positive evaluation of *language* itself, as opposed to a strict focus on just the subject and its students. Like much of the

APPRAISAL throughout the Rationale, this view of language is realised through positive appreciation: valuation, “Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students”. In other words, the syllabus does not just focus on how subject English is important for students, but also how language, as a discrete entity, has significant impacts on students and their world.

This positive evaluation of language represents an important development for the subject’s history. The Rationale adopts a much more Hallidayan approach to language, acknowledging that it shapes our perceptions and interactions (cf. 3.2.2, which noted SFL’s view that TRANSITIVITY resources *construe*, rather than just describe, experience). Rather than just being a discrete body of knowledge to be studied, language is positioned as a dynamic entity existing outside the subject. This view of language much more readily lends itself to interpreting language as a meaning making resource (cf., SFL’s account of language, see Chapters 2 and 3 for more on Halliday’s conception of language). In Chapter 6, below, the varying degrees of success with which students deploy grammatical resources to make meaning are explored, suggesting that a renewed focus on explicit language and literacy skills in senior years may be warranted (see Chapter 8 for further discussion).

Having explored what the subject sees as important (i.e., itself, its students, and, in the 2018 syllabus, language), it is useful to turn attention to what the subject actually *does*. 5.5 examines TRANSITIVITY resources in order to investigate how the subject construes meanings of events and actions, focusing on the types of activities the subjects and students engage in.

5.5 TRANSITIVITY

TRANSITIVITY refers to “the overall grammatical resources for construing our experience of goings on” (Martin et al., 2010, p. 98; see 3.2.2 for more detail). While the APPRAISAL resources describe how the subject includes or excludes different opinions, and evaluates itself, its students, and language, TRANSITIVITY explores how language is used to describe what the subject *is*, what it *does*, and what its *students* do. As in 5.3 and 5.4 above, each section begins with a reproduction of the Rationale, with processes types and circumstances marked with underlining and italics respectively.

5.5.1 2009 syllabus

The study of English is [**Pr: relational**] central to the learning and development of students in NSW and is [**Pr: relational**] the mandatory subject in the Stage 6 curriculum. The importance of English in the curriculum is [**Pr: relational**] a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication. Proficiency in English enables [**Pr: material**] students to take [**Pr: material**] their place *as confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants* [**Circ: role: guise**] in society.

English involves [**Pr: relational**] the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing [**Pr: material**] written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including [**Pr: material**] the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed [**Pr: verbal**], interpreted [**Pr: behavioural**] and reflected [**Pr: material**].

The study of English enables [Pr: material] students to recognise [Pr: mental] and use [Pr: material] a diversity of approaches and texts *to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy* [Circ: cause: purpose]. This study is designed [Pr: relational] to promote [Pr: material] a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop [Pr: material] effective English communication skills. The English Stage 6 courses develop [Pr: material] in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture [Pr: material] an appreciation of aesthetic values. *Through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing experience, ideas and values* [Circ: manner: means], students are encouraged [Pr: material] to adopt [Pr: material] a critical approach to all texts and to distinguish [Pr: behavioural] the qualities of texts. Students also develop [Pr: material] English language skills to support [Pr: material] their study *at Stage 6 and beyond* [Circ: location: time].

In Stage 6 [Circ: location: time], students come to understand [Pr: mental] the complexity of meaning, to compose [Pr: material] and respond [Pr: material] to texts *according to their form, content, purpose and audience* [Pr: manner: quality], and to appreciate [Pr: mental] the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce [Pr: material] and value [Pr: material] them. Students reflect [Pr: behavioural] on their reading and learning and understand [Pr: mental] that these processes are shaped [Pr: material] by the contexts in which they respond to [Pr: behavioural] and compose [Pr: material] texts.

The study of English enables [**Pr: material**] students to make sense of [**Pr: behavioural**], and to enrich [**Pr: material**], their lives *in personal, social and professional situations* [**Circ: manner: quality**] and to deal [**Pr: material**] *effectively* [**Circ: manner: quality**] with change. Students develop [**Pr: material**] a strong sense of themselves *as autonomous, reflective and creative learners* [**Circ: role: guise**]. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed [**Pr: relational**] to develop [**Pr: material**] in students the faculty to perceive [**Pr: behavioural**] and understand [**Pr: mental**] their world *from a variety of perspectives* [**Circ: manner: degree**], and it enables [**Pr: material**] them to appreciate [**Pr: mental**] the richness of Australia's cultural diversity.

The syllabus is designed [**Pr: relational**] to develop [**Pr: material**] enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning. (BOS, 2009b, p. 6)

One of the most frequent types of processes represented in the Rationale section are relational processes. This is unsurprising, given that this section of the syllabus functions to set out what the subject is and involves. The relational processes point to the different dimensions of English: developing a knowledge of language and communication (e.g., “the study and use of language in its various textual forms”) and developing students as sensitive and appreciative learners (e.g., “The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives”). This focus on development, both of knowledge and the individual, is furthered through three other processes, material processes, which

show how students are empowered through the subject, and behavioural and mental processes, which focus specifically on actions of ‘inner experience’. Together, the processes of the Rationale section focus on how students are enabled to understand and reflect on their world. Material, mental, and behavioural processes, in contrast to the relational processes, show not what English is, but what it *does*. English is positioned as an entity with great transformative potential, as it is consistently the thing which is enabling students to achieve. The semantic quality of process types like ‘nurture’, along with more explicit markers like ‘develop’, point towards the pastoral element of the subject that is deeply embedded in the subject’s history. The processes also point to the types of activities students are expected to take up, from concrete and visible (responding, composing), to more personal (understanding, reflecting), to more abstract ones which significantly broaden the scope of the subject, like taking one’s place in society. As a result, the subject explicitly notes its design to have significant effects on students, developing them in very particular ways. Others have argued (e.g., Christie, Eagleton, inter alia; see Chapter 2 for more) that this development is a means to inculcate students into accepting particular values, and the analysis above suggests that the syllabus does not shy away from this. Terms like ‘aesthetic’ suggest that particular ways of thinking and valuing’ (Davison, 2005; Delpit, 1992) are critical for success in subject English, and that students are expected to take up the values and dispositions of the subject (Bourdieu, 1986).

The development of students is further through circumstantial elements. While some circumstances provide detail on how the subject is functioning (e.g., “In stage 6,... Through reading, writing,...”), circumstance: role: guise structures focus on how students act in particular ways. Students become “confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants in society” and “develop a

strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners.” Together with the process types, the circumstantial elements create a sense of the subject as developing the individual holistically, rather than just distilling a body of knowledge. The 2018 syllabus, analysed in the section below, contains many such features; although it also includes some key differences with respect to its orientation to language.

5.5.2 2018 syllabus

Language shapes [**Pr: material**] our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is [**Pr: relational**] the primary means by which we relate to others and is [**Pr: relational**] central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students. *In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12* [**Circ: location: time**], English is [**Pr: relational**] the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms. These encompass [**Pr: material**] spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped [**Pr: material**], conveyed [**Pr: verbal**], interpreted [**Pr: mental**] and reflected [**Pr: mental**].

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language [**Circ: cause: reason**], English is [**Pr: relational**] the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum. Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes acquired in English are [**Pr: relational**] central to the learning and development of students. Proficiency in English enables [**Pr: material**] students to take [**Pr: material**] their place *as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants in Australian*

society [Circ: role: guise]. It supports [Pr: material] the development and expression of a system of personal values, based on students' understanding of moral and ethical matters, and gives [Pr: material] expression to their aspirations and ideals.

The study of English in Stage 6 develops [Pr: material] in students an understanding of literary expression and nurtures [Pr: material] an appreciation of aesthetic values. It develops [Pr: material] skills to enable [Pr: material] students to experiment [Pr: material] with ideas and expression, to become [Pr: relational] innovative, active, independent learners, to collaborate [Pr: material] and to reflect [Pr: mental] on their learning.

Through responding [Pr: verbal] to and composing [Pr: verbal] texts from Kindergarten to Year 12 [Circ: manner: means], students learn [Pr: mental] about the power, value and art of the English language for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency. They engage [Pr: behavioural] with and explore [Pr: material] texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage [Pr: behavioural] with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. By composing [Pr: verbal] and responding [Pr: verbal] students develop [Pr: material] an understanding of themselves and of diverse human experiences and cultures.

The study of English in this syllabus is founded [Pr: relational] on the belief that language learning is [Pr: relational] recursive and develops [Pr: material]

through ever widening contexts. Students learn **[Pr: mental]** English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences. The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable **[Pr: material]** teachers to draw on **[Pr: material]** various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist **[Pr: material]** their students to achieve **[Pr: material]** the syllabus outcomes *at the highest levels* **[Circ: manner: degree]**.

In their study of English **[Circ: location: time]**, students continue to develop **[Pr: material]** their critical and imaginative faculties and broaden **[Pr: material]** their capacity for cultural understanding. They examine **[Pr: behavioural]** various contexts of language usage to understand **[Pr: mental]** how making meaning is **[Pr: relational]** complex and shaped **[Pr: material]** by a multiplicity of factors. As students' command of English continues to grow **[Pr: material]**, they are provided **[Pr: material]** with opportunities to question **[Pr: verbal]**, assess **[Pr: mental]**, challenge **[Pr: verbal]**, reformulate **[Pr: material]** information and identify **[Pr: mental]** and clarify **[Pr: mental]** issues, negotiate **[Pr: material]** and solve **[Pr: mental]** problems. They can become **[Pr: material]** creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand **[Pr: mental]** and reflect **[Pr: mental]** on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society. These skills and understandings allow **[Pr: material]** them to develop **[Pr: material]** their control of language *for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world* **[Circ: cause: purpose]**.

(NESA, 2017a, p. 10)

Continuing the theme noted in the APPRAISAL analysis, the 2018 syllabus features many similar linguistic features to the 2009 one. Relational processes are frequently used to define the subject (e.g., “English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms”); whilst a combination of the relational processes with verbal and mental processes allow the Rationale section to represent the thinking and speaking processes valued expected in the subject and its students, often with lists of processes used to capture the range of skills and activities embedded within the subject, for example:

As students’ command of English continues to grow [**Pr: material**], they are provided [**Pr: material**] with opportunities to question [**Pr: verbal**], assess [**Pr: mental**], challenge [**Pr: verbal**], reformulate [**Pr: material**] information and identify [**Pr: mental**] and clarify [**Pr: mental**] issues, negotiate [**Pr: material**] and solve [**Pr: mental**] problems. They can become [**Pr: material**] creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand [**Pr: mental**] and reflect [**Pr: behavioural**] on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society.

Thus far, the analysis shows that the 2018 syllabus deploys very similar grammatical resources to establish very similar themes to the 2009 syllabus, that is, that English is about the study of language and literature, that English is important, and that English transforms and empowers students. Despite these similarities, the 2018 syllabus includes two key differences when construing meaning in the subject.

The first difference is straightforward, that is, a new participant is added: teachers (see Table 5.3, below). In the 2009 Rationale, the word ‘teachers’ does not appear, instead, it is students who are either doing something (like reading, writing, or appreciating, often realised through mental, verbal, and behavioural processes) or having something done to them (like being enabled or being allowed, often realised through material processes). In contrast, though it is only a single mention, the existence of ‘teachers’ in the Rationale suggests is significant as it points towards the operationalisation of the syllabus. Like the opening up of dialogic space via the APPRAISAL resources (see, 5.3.2, above), the new participant, teachers, suggests that subject English is something that is *enacted* in classrooms by teachers, rather than an ossified set of facts and skills. As Table 5.3 shows, through a series of processes and participants, the Client/ Actor roles are conflated. In other words, teachers are beneficiaries of subject English, who are then able to become actors in a new process (assisting students). Likewise, students are beneficiaries of teachers, who are then able to become actors in a new process (achieving syllabus outcomes). The grammatical features of the text thus act to subtly establish the authority of the subject. While these processes (e.g., enabling, drawing on, assisting etc.) are material processes, the relative frequency and collocation of mental and verbal processes (as marked in the analysis above) show that these material processes are critical in regulating how student think and speak.

The second key difference involves the diversity of participant roles that another word, ‘language’, occupies. In the 2009 syllabus, ‘language’ appears six times, often as an Attribute in a relational process, with subject English as the Carrier, and further as a Goal in an abstract material process embedded in this Attribute (see Table 5.4, below). In other words, ‘language’ is always positioned as a part of subject English, and it is

always something that is used or learned by students. In contrast, in the 2018 syllabus (see Table 5.5, below), ‘language’ occupies a variety of participant roles. Perhaps most notable is the first instance, which also serves as the opening line: “Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world”. Here, ‘language’ occupies the actor role, suggesting that it is no longer just a part of subject English, but rather a discrete entity that exists outside the world and shapes it. This represents an important epistemic shift (see 5.7 and 5.8 for further analysis and discussion from an LCT perspective) in the subject which may allow teachers and students to change their approach to language: rather than just seeing language as a set of skills or knowledge to be learned, language can be understood as a meaning making resource that can (and should) be adapted to suit context. In the following chapter, the different ways students use language to create meaning leads to significant effects on their representation of experience and subsequently their assessment marks, suggesting that this new perspective on language may be an invaluable addition to the syllabus.

Table 5.3 Conflation of Client/ Actor roles and recursion of processes and participants in the 2018 syllabus, with italics showing implied connections to mental and verbal processes.

The English Stage 6 syllabuses	enable	teachers	to draw on	various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English	to assist	their students	to achieve	<i>the syllabus</i> <i>outcomes</i>	at the highest levels.
Actor	Pr: material	Client/ Actor	Pr: material	Goal	Pr: material	Client/ Actor	Pr: material	<i>Goal</i>	Circ: manner: degree

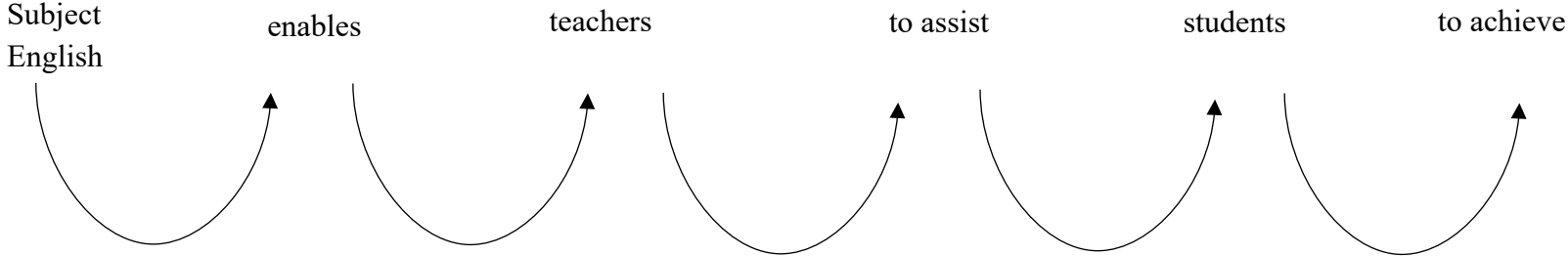


Table 5.4 Instances of ‘language’ in 2009 syllabus. The term ‘language’ occupies either the Attribute or Goal roles, in contrast to the diversity of roles in the 2018 syllabus (Table 5.3). Italics are used to show implied mental and verbal processes.

The importance of English in the curriculum		is	a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication			
Carrier		Pr: relational	Attribute			
English	involves	the study and use of language in its various textual forms,	encompassing	<i>written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity,</i>	including	<i>the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.</i>
			Pr: material	<i>Goal</i>	Pr: material	<i>Goal</i>
Carrier	Pr: relational	Attribute				

This study	is	designed	to promote	<i>a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language</i>	and	to develop	<i>effective English communication skills</i>
			Pr: material	<i>Goal</i>		Pr: material	<i>Goal</i>
Carrier	Pr: relational	Attribute					
Students	also	develop	<i>English language skills</i>	to support	their study	at Stage 6 and beyond	
Actor		Pr: material	<i>Goal</i>	Pr: material	Goal	Circ: location: time	

Table 5.5 Instances of language in 2018 syllabus. The term ‘language’ occupies Attribute, Goal, Token, Circumstance, and Scope roles, in contrast to the lack of diversity of roles in the 2009 syllabus (Table 5.4, above). Italics are used to show implied mental and verbal processes.

Language	shapes	our understanding of ourselves and our world			
Actor	Pr: material	Goal			
It [language]	is	the primary means by which we relate to others	and	is	central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students
Token	Pr: relational	Value ¹	Pr: relational	Pr: relational	Value ²
In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12	English	is	the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms		
Circ: location: time	Carrier	Pr: relational	Attribute		

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language	English	is	the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum					
Circ: cause: reason	Token	Pr: relational	Value					
Through	responding to	and	composing	texts	from Kindergarten to Year 12	students	learn	about the power, value and art of the English language for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency
Circ: manner: means	Pr: verbal		Pr: verbal	Goal	Circ: location: time	Senser	Pr: mental	Phenomenon

The study of English in this syllabus	is	founded on the belief	that	language learning	is	recursive	and	develops	through ever widening contexts
Carrier	Pr: relational	Attribute		Token	Pr: relational	Value		Pr: material	Circ: location: place
Students	learn	English	through explicit teaching of language and literacy and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences						
Senser	Pr: mental	Phenomenon	Circ: manner: means						
They	examine	various contexts of language usage	to understand	how making meaning is complex and shaped by a multiplicity of factors					
Behaver	Pr: behavioural	Scope		Pr: mental	Phenomenon				
These skills and understandings		allow	them	to develop	<i>their control of language</i>	for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world			
Actor		Pr: material	Client/ Actor	Pr: Material	<i>Goal</i>	Circ: cause: purpose/ Circ: location: place			

5.6 Summary of linguistic perspectives

Overall, the APPRAISAL and TRANSITIVITY analyses help establish what subject English is, what it does, and why it is important. In both syllabi, English and its students were positively evaluated, with the centrality of the subject to students' lives being emphasised. There was also a clear focus on personal development, with students often being enabled and transformed in abstract ways; the Rationale often focused on students becoming communicators, learners, and participants of a wider society. The development of an appreciation of language and literature was also evident. As Christie (1999), Eagleton (1985), and Patterson (2000) have argued, subject English appears to concern itself with the development of 'citizens'. What kinds of citizens are created, whether it be individuals who are inculcated into a system of surveillance and internal regulation, or individuals who are emancipated by their control of literacy and self-reflection (cf. Eagleton, 1985; Hunter 1996; see Chapter 2 for more detail on this debate), is more difficult to discern. Christie (1999) argues:

Surely it can be no accident that the national language – that resource in which so much is constructed that is fundamental to the maintenance and transformation of culture – is often so poorly served pedagogically. The interests of the state are involved in pedagogic practices that leave the national language not well understood, for where people are not aware of how language works to construct the various positions available to them, they are less likely to challenge those positions. (p. 181)

While a claim that the state is not only complicit, but also culpable, in controlling language and perhaps even consciousness may seem bold, the linguistic strategies analysed above suggest that, at the very least, the subject is focused on developing students in particular ways. More simply, subject English at the senior level is oriented towards the transmission of values and dispositions (see Chapter 8 for discussion on implications). The TRANSITIVITY analysis pointed towards two broad linguistic strategies: (1) using relational processes to define the subject, and (2) using a combination of material, mental, and behavioural processes to show how the subject and its students think and speak. Again, the subject's importance via its transformative potential was emphasised, while the work of students ranged from everyday tasks like reading and writing, to much more abstract ones like becoming active participants in society. The scope of subject English was therefore positioned rather broadly, with a clear focus on language and literature present, but with larger themes of personal development throughout. The implications of this development of person are discussed more specifically in Chapter 8.

The 2018 syllabus, in contrast to its 2009 counterpart, also introduced a specific focus on language as a social phenomenon, rather than just a body of knowledge to be learned. The potential for language to shape students' understanding and their world was emphasised, representing a key development for the subject. Another minor yet important development was the mention of teachers in a participant role, which again positioned subject English and language as something flexible and dynamic that is operationalised by teachers. In this way, the 2018 syllabus does not represent a complete transformation so much as it does *development*: the major themes from the 2009 syllabus are still strongly represented in the newer curriculum, but now there are some key additions that add a new perspective to the subject. As a result, the potential

for teachers to make literacy practices more visible, as Delpit (1992) calls for, is made more possible. In Chapters 6 and 7, the need for more explicit focus on literacy skills to allow students to be able to demonstrate their knowledge more effectively become apparent, and in Chapter 8 the pedagogical implications of this finding are discussed. More specifically, students appear to be cognisant of the linguistic requirements of examination responses but appear to lack the ability to deploy these features effectively. Subsequently, the changes noted in the 2018 syllabus, while small, may still have significant implications for practice.

With an understanding of the linguistic strategies used to position the subject and its students, the analysis now turns to the epistemic positionality represented in the syllabus in order to explore what *knowledges*, *skills*, and *practices* make up subject English.

5.7 Specialisation

Specialisation is a dimension of LCT which examines whether a discipline's practices are oriented towards *knowledge*, *knowers*, both, or neither. These relationships are realised through *epistemic relations* (ER) and *social relations* (SR) (Maton, 2016; see 3.3.1 for more detail on specialisation). As with the sections above, 5.7 and 5.8 begin with the Rationale and accompanying analysis, followed by an explanation of the results and discussion.

5.7.1 2009 syllabus

The study of English is central to the learning and development of students in NSW and is the mandatory subject in the Stage 6 curriculum. The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as **confident, articulate communicators**, *critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants in society*.

ER-
(legitimacy is not based on subject knowledge or actor attributes, but rather outside factors)

ER+
(knowledge of language and literature valued)

English involves the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

The study of English enables students to recognise and use a diversity of approaches and texts to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy. This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop effective English communication skills*. The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values. Through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing experience, ideas and values, students are encouraged to adopt a critical approach to all texts and to distinguish the qualities of texts. Students also develop English language skills to support their study at Stage 6 and beyond.

SR+
(appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners valued)

In Stage 6, students come to understand the complexity of meaning, to compose and respond to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to appreciate the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them. Students reflect on their reading and learning and understand that these processes are shaped by the contexts in which they respond to and compose texts.

**ER+
(knowledge
of language
and
literature
valued)**

The study of English enables students to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives in personal, social and professional situations and to deal effectively with change. Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia's cultural diversity.

**SR+
(appreciative,
reflective, and
sensitive
learners
valued)**

The syllabus is designed to develop enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning.

As was evident in the SFL analysis, the two key players in the Rationale section are subject English itself, and its students. Focusing on these two elements allows the LCT analysis to probe how the subject and its students are represented, revealing that a focus on *both* knowledge and knowers is evident. Knowledge is clearly valued in the subject, with the Rationale emphasising an understanding of language and literature throughout, often explicitly focusing on *knowledge* and *understanding*:

English involves the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language...and an understanding of literary expression.

In Stage 6, students come to understand the complexity of meaning, to compose and respond to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to appreciate the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them. (BOS, 2009b, p. 6).

The Rationale clearly outlines the scope of knowledge that is valued in the subject. In contrast to the broad and abstract themes of personal development that are

present throughout, the ‘meat’ of the subject is much more specifically, and explicitly, stated. English involves a discrete body of knowledge: knowledge and understanding of the English language, of varying textual forms, of literary expression, and of textual interaction with context. While it is true that every discipline includes knowledge, the APPRAISAL and TRANSITIVITY analysis above suggest that a knowledge of language and literature, as well as communicative proficiency, are highly valued in the subject. Subject English can therefore be described as ER+, or, in other words, as strongly emphasising a discrete body of knowledge as the basis of success (see also Chapters 6 and 7 for more on the importance of ER+ in subject English).

Along with the subject’s epistemic relations, which probe *knowledge*, it is also necessary to consider how *social relations* are positioned, in order to investigate how *knowers* contribute (or do not contribute) to the discipline. Again, building from the SFL analysis above, which highlighted the importance of students and their personal development, a pattern of SR+ is found throughout the Rationale section:

Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants in society.

The English Stage 6 courses...nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values.

Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 is designed to develop in students the

faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia's cultural diversity.

The syllabus is designed to develop enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning. (BOS, 2009b, p. 6)

Overall, the subject strongly emphasises the development of a certain kind of person, that is, a student who is critical, reflective, aesthetically aware, and appreciative of English and cultural diversity. Success in the subject therefore does not just entail disciplinary knowledge, but also disciplinary *dispositions*. In other words, it is not enough just to know the content, you also need to be 'the right kind of person'. This emphasise on the development of a certain kind of individual allows the subject to be described as SR+.

Drawing these two themes together, a focus on knowledge, and a focus on attitudes and dispositions (ER+, SR+) creates an *élite code*, "where legitimacy is based on both possessing specialist knowledge and being the right kind of knower" (Maton, 2016, p. 13). In order to succeed, students must therefore be able to coordinate these two elements; in the next two chapters, students' attempts to take up these disciplinary challenges and their understanding of this interplay are examined. The following section continues the analysis of the epistemic features of subject English by considering the 2018 iteration of the syllabus.

5.7.2 2018 syllabus

Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students. **In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual** forms. These encompass spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

ER-
(legitimacy is not based on subject knowledge or actor attributes, but rather outside factors)

ER+
(knowledge of language and literature valued)

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language, English is the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum. **Knowledge, understanding, skills,** values and attitudes acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students. **Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident communicators, critical** and *imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants in Australian society.* It supports the development and expression of *a system of personal values, based on students' understanding of moral and ethical matters, and gives expression to their aspirations and ideals.*

The study of English in Stage 6 develops in students an understanding of literary expression and *nurtures an appreciation of aesthetic values.* **It develops skills to enable students to experiment with ideas and expression, to become innovative, active, independent learners, to collaborate** and *to reflect on their learning.*

SR+
(appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners valued)

Through responding to and composing texts from Kindergarten to Year 12, *students learn about the power, value and art of the English language* **for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency**. They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. *By composing and responding students develop an understanding of themselves and of diverse human experiences and cultures.*

ER+
(knowledge of language and literature valued)

The study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever widening contexts. **Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences.** The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.

SR+
(appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners valued)

In their study of English, students continue to develop their critical and imaginative faculties and *broaden their capacity for cultural understanding*. **They examine various contexts of language usage to understand how making meaning is complex and shaped by a multiplicity of factors.** As students' command of English continues to grow, they are provided with opportunities to question, assess, challenge, reformulate information and identify and clarify issues, negotiate and solve problems. *They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society.* **These skills and understandings allow them to develop their control of language** for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world.

SR-
appreciative, reflective, and sensitive learners downplayed

Despite the developments that were noted in the SFL analysis, specifically, a more functional view of language, the LCT analysis revealed that the subject remains largely unchanged from an epistemic standpoint. The subject's focus on disciplinary expertise is still clearly present in the new syllabus, continuing the theme of ER+ noted in the 2009 curriculum:

In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of English language in its various textual forms. These encompass spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

Knowledge, understanding, skills...acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students.

Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences.

Likewise, the development of certain attitudes and dispositions (SR+) in students was clearly foregrounded in throughout the Rationale:

...values and attitudes acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students.

[Subject English] supports the development and expression of a system of personal values, based on students' understanding of moral and ethical matters, and gives expression to their aspirations and ideals.

In their study of English, students continue to develop their critical and imaginative faculties and broaden their capacity for cultural understanding.
(NESA, 2017a, p. 10)

Overall, the epistemic orientation of the subject has remained relatively stable from its 2009 iteration; that is, the tensions between developing language and communicative proficiency, and the development of a certain type of individual, that have been present throughout the subject's history, are still very much alive in its current state. As Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007, 2011), and Macken-Horarik (2011), have argued, the epistemic landscape of subject English is highly diverse and requires investigation. Despite this, the similarity between the 2009 and 2018 syllabi strongly suggests the dominance of an *élite* code (see Figure 5.1). In contrast to Christie (2016), who argued that subject English may be characterised as a *knower* code (i.e., dispositions and personal attributes are valued, and knowledge is downplayed as the basis of success), I argue that subject English values both *knowers and knowledge*. These findings are congruent with Davison (2005), who argued that subject English is realised through both language and content. A focus on the development of an explicit knowledge of language and literature appears to be strongly valued by the subject, and,

as Chapters 6 and 7 will argue, demonstrating this knowledge is essential to success in the subject. Having considered how the subject sees knowledge and knowers, the analysis now turns to the subject's positioning of *practices* in order to see how these knowledges and knowers are realised.

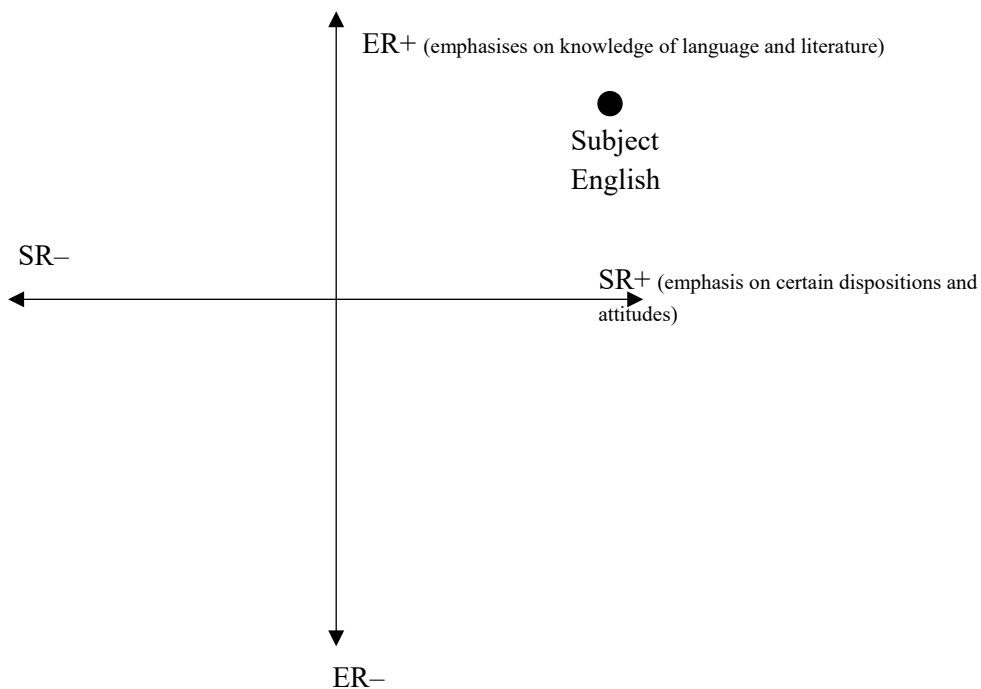


Figure 5.1 Specialisation in subject English

5.8 Autonomy

Autonomy is a dimension of LCT which examines the relationality of practices, examining how closely they are aligned with the discipline or field that is the object of study. The relations are realised through *positional autonomy* (PA) and *relational autonomy* (RA) (Maton & Howard, 2018; see 3.3.2 for an overview of Autonomy). The following two subsections follow the same structure as the Specialisation analysis above, with the 2009 and 2018 Rationale beginning each section, followed by an explanation of the analysis.

5.8.1 2009 syllabus

The study of English is central to the learning and development of students in NSW and is the mandatory subject in the Stage 6 curriculum. The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication. **Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants in society.**

Introjected
(PA-, RA+);
practices
from outside
English, used
within
English

Projected
(PA+, RA-);
practices
from within
English,
used outside
English

English involves the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

*The study of English enables students to recognise and use a diversity of approaches and texts to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy. This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop effective English communication skills. The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values. Through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing experience, ideas and values, students are encouraged to adopt a critical approach to all texts and to distinguish the qualities of texts. **Students also develop English language skills to support their study at Stage 6 and beyond.***

Sovereign
(PA+, RA+);
practices
from within
English, used
in English

In Stage 6, students come to understand the complexity of meaning, to compose and respond to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to appreciate the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them. Students reflect on their reading and learning and understand that these processes are shaped by the contexts in which they respond to and compose texts.

**Projected
(PA+, RA-);
practices
from within
English,
used outside
English**

The study of English enables students to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives in personal, social and professional situations and to deal effectively with change. Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia's cultural diversity.

*Sovereign
(PA+, RA+);
practices
from within
English, used
in English*

The syllabus is designed to develop enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning.

The practices in the 2009 syllabus are overwhelmingly oriented towards two major themes: (1) developing communicative proficiency, and (2) developing knowledge and skills in English as a discipline. Communicative proficiency, a practice which uses skills *within* English but applies them to situations *outside* the subject, can be described as a **projected code** (PA+, RA-); marked in **bold** above. While the field of Stage 6 English is clearly set in the classroom, its practices extend far beyond this setting. The Rationale positions the skills and practices as widely applicable, showing how they enhance students' lives outside of the classroom and beyond the scope of study. This strong positional autonomy (i.e., practices from within the field) but weak relational autonomy (i.e., applying the practices outside the field) corroborates the SFL analysis, suggesting that subject English is intended to have a relatively broad scope that is meant to extend to various aspects of students' lives both inside and outside the classroom. This projected code is very frequently represented in the Rationale and is an important means for the subject to build legitimacy: English is not just about English, it is about developing students so they can apply these skills outside the classroom.

However, the Rationale also features clear examples of a *sovereign* code (PA+, RA+); marked in *italics* above, in which practices from *within* the field are used *inside* the field. As the TRANSITIVITY analysis demonstrated, the 'work' of subject English involves verbal processes like *composing* and *responding*, and mental processes like *understanding* and *appreciating*. These practices are used in the subject to develop the practices themselves, that is, through composing and responding, students become better at composing and responding, and through their study of English, students come to value the study of English, and so on. These practices are then assessed and enforced in high stakes assessment situations, like the HSC exit examinations, which allows

students to demonstrate their proficiency in the subject and their ability to take up the dispositions and practices of the discipline.

Repeating the motif that has run throughout the research thus far, subject English is fluid and unstable, and different concerns (language, literature, personal development, cultural awareness, aesthetics, etc.) are constantly competing. This jostling between concerns, and movement between the concrete (e.g., learning about textual forms and language features) and the abstract (e.g., understanding different perceptions of human experience) places considerable demands on students trying to engage with the subject (see Chapters 6 and 7).

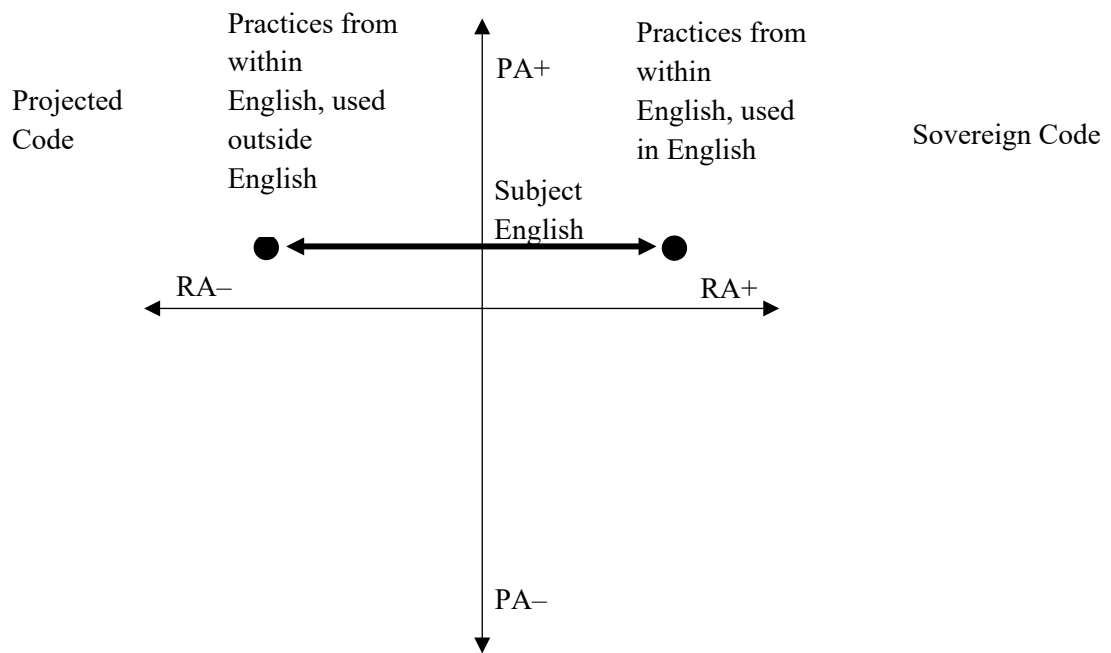


Figure 5.2 Autonomy in the 2009 Stage 6 syllabus

5.8.2 2018 syllabus

Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students. *In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms.* These encompass spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language, English is the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum. **Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and**

attitudes acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students.

Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants in Australian society.

It supports the development and expression of a system of personal values, based on students' understanding of moral and ethical matters, and gives expression to their aspirations and ideals.

The study of English in Stage 6 develops in students an understanding of literary expression and nurtures an appreciation of aesthetic values. **It develops skills to enable students to experiment with ideas and expression, to become innovative, active, independent learners, to collaborate and to reflect on their learning.**

**Projected
(PA+, RA-);
practices
from within
English,
used outside
English**

*Sovereign
(PA+, RA+);
practices
from within
English, used
in English*

Projected
(PA+, RA-);
practices
from within
English,
used outside
English

*Through responding to and composing texts from Kindergarten to Year 12, students learn about the power, value and art of the English language for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency. They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. **By composing and responding students develop an understanding of themselves and of diverse human experiences and cultures.***

Sovereign
(PA+, RA+);
practices
from within
English, used
in English

The study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever widening contexts. *Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences. The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.*

Introjected
(PA-, RA+);
practices
from outside
English, used
within
English

In their study of English, students continue to develop their critical and imaginative faculties and broaden

Exotic code
(PA-, RA-);
practices
from outside
English, used
outside
English

their capacity for cultural understanding. *They examine various contexts of language usage to understand how making meaning is complex and shaped by a multiplicity of factors. **As students' command of English continues to grow, they are provided with opportunities to question, assess, challenge, reformulate information and identify and clarify issues, negotiate and solve problems.** They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society. **These skills and understandings allow them to develop their control of language for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world.***

Like the 2009 syllabus, the 2018 curriculum features both projected and sovereign codes, showing how practices from within English can be used both inside and outside of the subject. PA+, RA– is the most frequently seen code, clearly describing how the practices of English extend beyond the classroom. Again, the subject’s applications outside the study of language and literature are an important legitimising strategy which demonstrate its goal of personal development of students. Compare, for example, the language of the Stage 6 Standard Mathematics syllabus, which foregrounds the practical nature of the subject and applications to contexts outside the classroom, but does not feature the same theme of personal development:

The Mathematics Stage 6 syllabus are designed to offer opportunities for students to think mathematically...The Mathematics Standard courses are focused on enabling students to use mathematics effectively, efficiently and critically to make informed decisions in their daily lives. They provide students with the opportunities to develop an understanding of, and competence in, further aspects of mathematics through a large variety of real-world applications for a range of concurrent HSC subjects. (NESA, 2017b, p. 10)

A sovereign code (PA+, RA+) is also strongly present within the syllabus, emphasising how the practices of English are applied within the English classroom and develop subject English skills. As was seen in the 2009 syllabus, much of the work done in English is targeted towards developing students’ engagement with the subject, specifically through language and literature. The 2018 syllabus therefore continues the

major historical trend of subject English representing two diverse strands of student learning: (1) personal development, and (2) knowledge of language and literature.

However, the 2018 curriculum further widens the scope of practices of the subject by drawing on additional codes. As was noted in the TRANSITIVITY analysis, the mention of teachers in the participant role was a minor but important development for the subject. Viewed through an LCT lens, the attention shifts towards the practice itself (or in SFL terms, the goal), revealing an *introjected code* (PA–, RA+), where practices from *outside* English are used *within* English:

The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels. (p. 10)

This mention of theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models, like the functional view of language noted in the APPRAISAL analysis, suggests that the subject is moving towards a new, more flexible model of teaching and learning. This is furthered with the appearance of an *exotic code* (PA–, RA–), where practices from *outside* English are used to develop skills *outside* the subject:

They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the ongoing impact of these technologies on society.

Here, neither the *practices* of English (understanding, appreciating, responding, and composing to texts) nor the *applications* of English (communicative proficiency, cultural awareness) are present. Considering the subject's introduction into Australia in the late 19th century, the use of digital technology does not hold either the positional or relational autonomy of practices like reading and writing, which have been firmly established in the subject throughout its history. Again, the analysis suggests that the 2018 syllabus is not so much a complete transformation of older syllabi, but rather a *development*, where the historical practices and tensions of the subject are complemented with newer ones.

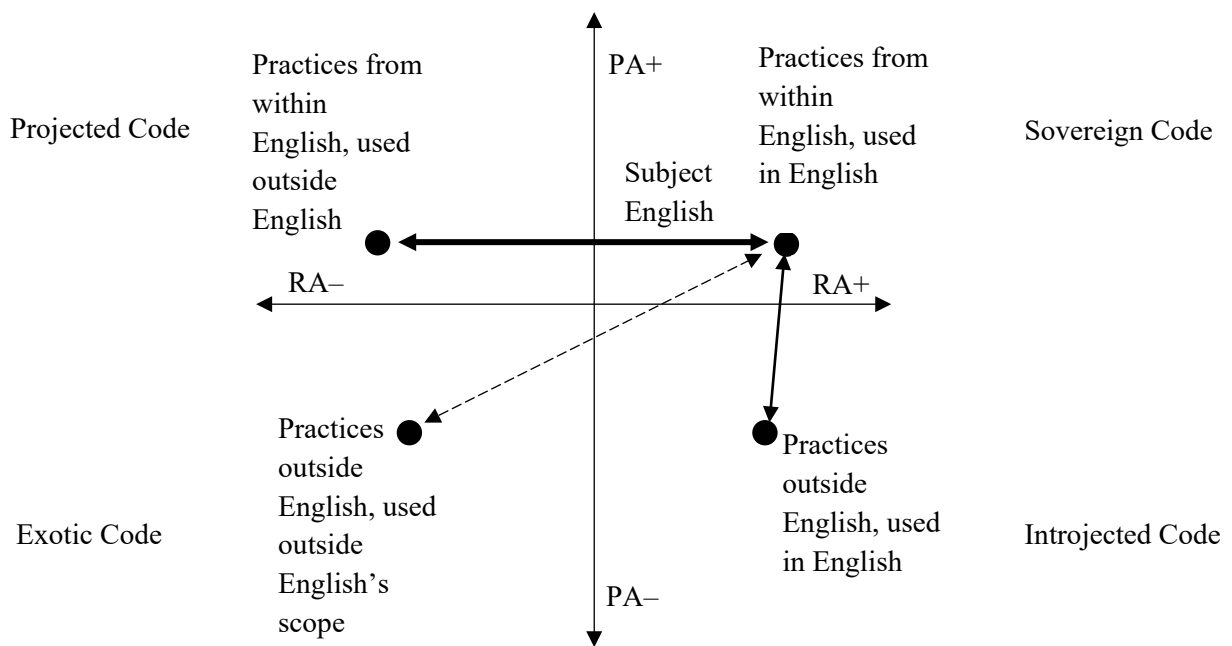


Figure 5.3 Autonomy codes in the 2018 Stage 6 syllabus, with different line weights showing strength of codes' relationship to subject English

5.9 Summary of epistemic perspectives

Overall, the Rationale section of both syllabi clearly marked the knowledge and practices that comprise the subject. Analysis from a specialisation perspective revealed a clear focus on an explicit knowledge of language and literature (ER+), while knowers who were culturally and textually sensitive were positioned as the ideal English student (SR+). This dual focus, with both specific *knowledge* and specific *knowers* both valued in the subject, was described as an élite code. Despite the 2018 syllabus's developments, noted in the SFL analysis, there was no distinct difference between the 2009 and 2018 syllabi, indicating that despite the subject's fluid epistemic positionality, a focus on the development of particular kinds of individuals, and the transmission of particular values, remain central to the subject, continuing from its earliest iteration in Australia (see Chapter 1 for more detail). Subsequently, it is likely that the themes of personal development, along with language development, will continue to be featured in future iterations of the curriculum.

Autonomy analysis revealed that both projected codes (PA+, RA-) and sovereign codes (PA+, RA-) were strongly featured. This suggested that the dual-sided nature of the subject's knowledge was realised through a similarity duality in its practices: subject English develops students both *inside* and *outside* the English classroom. The 2018 syllabus also exhibited introjected (PA-, RA+) and exotic (PA+, RA-) codes, although much less frequently. This suggested that the scope of the subject and its practices seems to be widening, albeit very slowly, as represented in Figure 5.3.

5.10 Discussion

This chapter overviewed the structure of senior secondary English in NSW, and addressed Research Question 1: How do the Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students? The 2009 and 2018 syllabi were investigated through the two theoretical frameworks introduced in Chapter 3, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Legitimation Code Theory. A number of key themes emerged from the analysis: (1) the centrality of subject English, both within the curriculum and the lives of students; (2) the dual focus on language and literature; (3) the range of practices and processes within the subject, moving from more concrete and tangible, to more abstract; and (4) the developments of the 2018 syllabus, especially a more nuanced view of language.

With respect to the first part of Research Question 1, which focused on the subject itself, the positionality of the English is complex and fraught with internal tension. The importance of subject English is clearly communicated in the Rationale section of both syllabi, particularly through the use of APPRAISAL resources, with both frequently employing monogloss to contract the dialogic space and solidify the subject's dominance. The subject is positioned as crucial to the development of students, leaving little space for questioning. Given the historical importance of the subject in Australia, this is not surprising, but it does point towards an important legitimising strategy; subject English does not just *teach* students, but rather it *transforms* them, enabling them to reflect on abstract ideas about human experience and take their place in Australian society. As the TRANSITIVITY and Autonomy analysis showed, the scope of subject English is broad, which facilitates the focus on the personal development of students. The 'pastoral' role of the subject was further emphasised through terms like 'develops' and 'nurtures'; however, as discussed below, students are expected to

develop in very particular ways and take up the appropriate subject positions. Overall, the syllabus documents position subject English as supremely important to the linguistic and personal development of students, as a broad subject with applications extending well beyond the classroom and scope of the discipline, as having a focus on language and literature, and as having a pastoral role in the lives of students.

With respect to the second half of Research Question 1, which focused on how the *students* were positioned, the analysis suggested the considerable cognitive demands placed on candidates. As the Specialisation analysis showed, students are required to navigate the duality of the subject, moving deftly between demonstrating their explicit *knowledge* of language and literature, to taking up the appropriate subject positions of *knowers* who are sensitive and appreciative. The APPRAISAL resources clearly demonstrated the lofty expectations placed on students, who are expected to be ‘confident, articulate, critical, imaginative, autonomous, reflective, creative, informed, innovative, and independent’ citizens ready and willing to participate in Australian society. The TRANSITIVITY analysis, similarly, showed the range of activities associated with the subject. While many material processes were clearly placed within the scope of the subject, such as ‘responding and composing’, others were more abstract (e.g., appreciating, reflecting), and some seemingly impossible to assess, including students ‘taking their place as active participants in society’. Overall, the ideal student is positioned as ready and willing to engage with complex abstractions, a sensitive and appreciative learner, and an effective communicator. These requirements are represented visually in Figure 5.4, below.

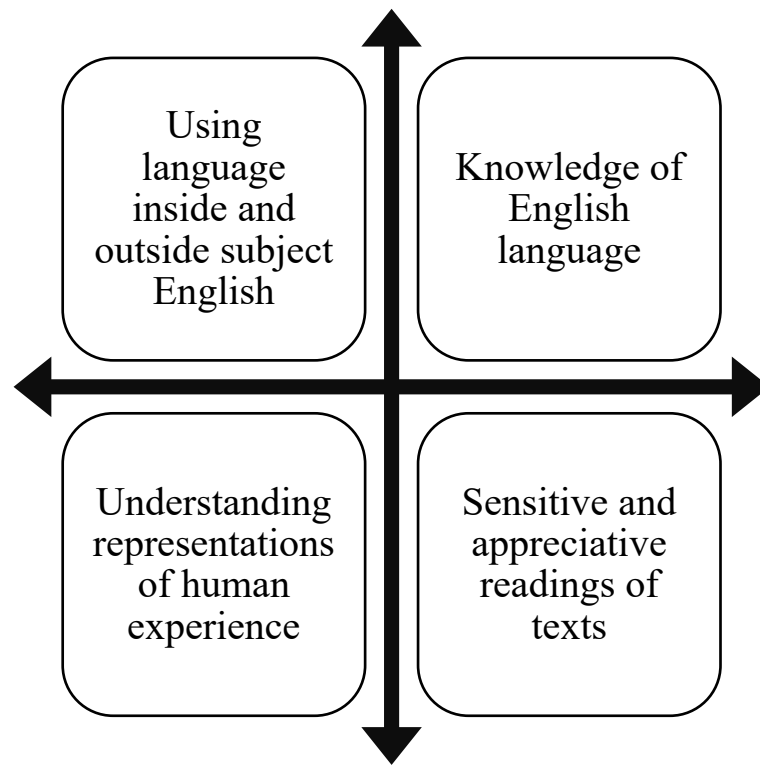


Figure 5.4 Language and knowledge in subject English

In addition to the shared positionality of both syllabi, the 2018 curriculum showed signs of important developments for the subject. In particular, a more flexible and functional view of language is adopted, which represents a significant disciplinary evolution for secondary English in Australia. Throughout its history, an explicit focus on language has been both promoted and opposed, seen as either a tool for allowing effective and ordered writing, or as something which stifles engagement with literature and sentimentality (see Section 1.4 for an overview of subject English’s history in Australia). In both cases, however, language was conceptualised as a discrete body of knowledge which students learned and applied, or which hampered students’ engagement . In contrast, the 2018 syllabus positions language as something dynamic which shapes our world. The effects of this new conceptualisation need further

investigation; however, the results here suggest that rather than remaining stagnant, the subject is continually evolving.

A further, albeit more minor development, was the broadening of the scope of the Rationale, to now include teachers and their practice. Although only a single sentence, it suggests a view of the subject as something which is operationalised within classroom, rather than a monolithic and ossified entity. As with the newer view of language, the effects of this shifting focus (if any) require further research, but, in light of the difficulties encountered by students and teachers working with the 2009 syllabus (see Chapter 7), the development seems promising.

The analysis highlights a number of key implications which are explored in the following chapters. The results of this chapter provide a point of departure for analysis in Chapter 6; having analysed how the syllabus positions the subject and its students, examining how this is realised in assessment practices is critical in order to investigate how the subject is transformed when it is enacted in assessment contexts. The results also set up for the analysis in Chapter 7, which examines how teachers and students understand and navigate the various requirements of, and their position in relation to, the subject. The strong representation of SR+ throughout the Rationale section also requires interrogation, as it is clear that the subject is geared towards the development of a certain kind of individual. As suggested in Chapters 1 and 2, the dispositions that have historically been valued in the subject are associated with middle-class worldviews, which have the potential to exclude students without the cultural capital to take up these discourses and values (see Section 4.5 for more detail on the participants included in the present research). These concerns are explored in the next two chapters and discussed in Chapter 8.

5.11 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed Research Question 1 by exploring the linguistic and epistemic features of the 2009 and 2018 Stage 6 English Syllabus documents. An overview of the subject was provided, followed by an analysis of the Rationale section of the syllabi, using APPRAISAL (both Engagement and Attitude), TRANSITIVITY, Specialisation, and Autonomy as theoretical lenses.

The analysis revealed that the subject emphasises its importance in the curriculum and its potential to develop students. Language and literature were positioned as the means by which students are transformed, with the subject taking up a pastoral role by ‘nurturing’ students. The ideal student is positioned as a sensitive and appreciative learner, who is both an effective communicator and able to reflect on their own experience. The complexity and broad scope of the subject was a key theme throughout the analysis.

The analysis also suggested an evolution in the disciplinary landscape via the 2018 syllabus’s new perspective on language as a functional and dynamic entity, rather than just a body of knowledge. The implications of these findings were discussed, pointing towards the need to investigate how these broad concepts are realised in assessment and classroom scenarios, and the importance of interrogating the values and dispositions that may be enforced through the subject.

In Chapter 6, examples of assessment and student responses are analysed in order to investigate how the syllabus is realised in authentic contexts, and how students successfully (or unsuccessfully) meet the requirements of the subject.

Chapter 6 Assessment perspectives

So ‘skilfully’ means no spelling errors, no grammatical errors, no punctuation errors. If you reference, you are referencing correctly, ok? ‘Skilfully’ means using language and manipulating language well.

– ‘Ms White’

6.1 Chapter overview

This chapter examines samples of student examination responses in order to address Research Question 2 – ‘How is the positionality of subject English and its students realised through assessment?’. It builds on the argument presented in Chapter 5, that subject English is an élite code that requires students to coordinate two important epistemic positionalities: (1) an expert knowledge of language, text and writing; and (2) a subtle and nuanced personal engagement with the broader social issues and thematic concerns of texts. An overview of assessment in subject English assessment is provided, followed by two sets of analyses of student examination responses. Section 6.3 draws on LCT in order to investigate the broader epistemic practices that are taken up by the students, while 6.4 employs SFL in order to show how students use various grammatical resources to achieve the different epistemic and social Relations described. Section 6.5 provides a discussion which consolidates these findings, and 6.6 summarises the chapter.

6.2 Assessment in Stage 6 English

This section overviews the assessment practices for English (Standard) Stage 6 during 2009-2018, as the current data were collected during 2016-2017 from a Standard

English class. From 2019 onwards, the new 2018 syllabus will be assessed. Since the research was conducted before the introduction of the 2018 syllabus, only assessment protocols from 2009-2018 are considered.

A student’s HSC mark represents the combined total of both internal and external assessment during the HSC course. An internal assessment mark is the summation of school-based assessment, divided up across five modes (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing/ representing), and representing 50% of a student’s final HSC mark (BOS, 2009b). The various weightings of different modes of assessment are displayed in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1 Internal assessment protocols for English Standard (BOS, 2009a, p. 6)

Modes to be assessed across the components	Weighting
Listening	15
Speaking	15
Reading	25
Writing	30
Viewing/Representing	15
	100

No more than 30% weighting may be allocated to tests and examinations. Five to six tasks are considered sufficient to assess the components of the course.

Since reading and writing are the two most heavily weighted modes, school-based assessment tends to take the form of paper-based examinations, or take-home assessments where a student is expected to submit an extended written response. These assessment practices, with students producing sustained written compositions, are also reflected in the externally set and marked assessment, which represents the other 50% of a student’s final mark, summarised in table 6.2:

Table 6.2 External examination protocols for English Standard (BOS, 2009a, p. 8)

External examination	Mark
Paper 1 – Area of Study <i>Section I</i> Short-answer questions	15
<i>Section II</i> Candidates compose or adapt a text	15
<i>Section III</i> Candidates answer one sustained response question	15
Paper 2 – Modules <i>Section I</i> <i>Module A: Experience Through Language</i> Candidates answer one sustained response question	20
<i>Section II</i> <i>Module B: Close Study of Text</i> Candidates answer one sustained response question	20
<i>Section III</i> <i>Module C: Texts and Society</i> Candidates answer one sustained response question	20
	105

Overall, as Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show, assessment and examination are clearly focused towards students producing sustained written compositions, in either examination or take-home assessment settings. For this reason, the analysis below considers these extended response type questions and responses. It begins by considering the broader epistemic positions students take up in their responses, followed by investigating how language is used to accomplish this.

6.3 Epistemic Perspectives

As the analysis in Chapter 5 argued, subject English can be described as an élite code, that is, it values both a specific body of *knowledge* (ER+) and a specific kind of *knower* (SR+). Knowledge was represented through the explicit understanding of the English language, literary devices, and the social function of language, while being the right kind of knower meant being able to deploy sensitive and appreciative readings of literature, especially in order to reflect on the human experience.

The two examination prompts from which student responses were drawn clearly demonstrate this duality, inviting students to discuss the function of literature in society (ER+), and how these literary texts explore complex aspects of the human experience (SR+):

Section II – Voices of Oppression: Composers use their texts as a tool to shed light on oppression and to give voice to those who are not always able to share their story.

Section III – Close Study of a Drama: Plays give us an opportunity to explore significant life issues. (Examination Questions 2 and 3)

These two examination questions were taken from a second end-of-year examination for Year 11 students, studying English Standard. The examination was modelled on the final HSC examination, that is, three extended responses to be completed in two hours, allowing approximately 40 minutes for each section. Exams were marked by various teachers, with marking of different sections distributed roughly

equally across the staff; Section 7.4 in the following chapter analyses a teacher's approach to marking her section through think-aloud protocols.

Student responses suggested that students were acutely aware of the need to demonstrate mastery of both of these aspects of English: ER+ through demonstrating textual knowledge and commenting specifically on literary devices, and SR+ positioning themselves as sensitive to these issues of human experience. Despite grammatical errors and issues with expression, students consistently (although not always successfully) took up the Specialisation practices of the subject, demonstrating their knowledge of literary techniques and textual criticism, as well as offering personal responses to the issues explored in the texts. However, students often struggled to coordinate the two in a singular response, or failed to demonstrate these dispositions in appropriate ways. Below, extracts from five responses are reproduced (excepting 2 and 5, which are short enough to be reproduced in full) and analysed. Each section begins with an extract from the student response, with social (SR) and epistemic relations (ER) marked in bold as strengthening (↑), weakening (↓) relatively strong (+), and/ or relatively weak (–). The analysis aims to highlight broader patterns of Specialisation across the responses, while section 6.4, below, focuses the analysis by highlighting linguistic features which create these broader epistemic waves (see Chapters 3 and 4 for more detail on combining SFL and LCT for complementary sets of analyses).

6.3.1 Response 1 – Rajesh (Section III)

The extract below presents a Specialisation analysis, following the Translation Device described in 4.4.3 (see Table 4.3). Overall, Rajesh is able to strengthen epistemic relations throughout, but not social relations.

The Crucible by Arthur is about the witch trial that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1700's. The story is about the main protagonist and his friend who have been accused, while people who did the witchcraft are roaming the street and soon leave once people have found out what they have done (ER↑). The play gives us an opportunity to explore significant life issues: The following issues will be discussing the life issues in the play "The Crucible" which are Cheating commandments and deception (ER↑).

First, to deception, deception can be seen in two ways in the play, in a positive or a negative manner. First with the negative, this is done by the antagonist Abigail. The key scene that shows Abigail deceiving the courts, we see this because of (something) [sic] irony, it is when John Proctor is about to reveal their affair and Mary Warren, Abigail's accomplice before she turned on her, Abigail tells the court as if Mary Warren has turned shape into a bird and she is attacking Abigail (ER↑). The quote which shows us this "No Mary, its gods work I do, this is dark arts Mary to change your shape No I will not, I will not" The use of repetition by Abigail was for people to believe her and that Mary is the real villain. (Extract from Response 1)

Rajesh opens his response by demonstrating his knowledge of the play's events, context, and author, as well as demonstrating knowledge of literary terminology through the term "Protagonist". Rajesh is clearly aware of the need to establish himself as an expert in the field and demonstrate his knowledge not only of the particular text up for discussion, but also literary analysis more broadly. Overall, his introduction is geared towards strengthening the epistemic relations of the field (ER↑).

This upward trend of ER is continued in his first paragraph, where the analysis becomes more specific. By directly quoting the play (albeit with errors) and further drawing on the field of literary analysis (e.g., "we see this because of (something) irony" and "The use of repetition"), Rajesh further demonstrates his knowledge of literature and language use (ER↑).

This strengthening of epistemic relations is, however, disrupted through his failure to note the allegorical meaning behind Miller's play, as well as consistently misspelling a key character's name, quoting the text incorrectly, and omitting the playwright's surname (ER↓). Despite efforts to establish authority and expertise, these errors show Rajesh's struggle to completely take up the Specialisation practices required by the subject.

These issues are compounded by Rajesh's failure to take up the social relations, which, as Chapter 5 argued, are essential to success in the subject (compare with responses 2, 3, & 4, below, which show a stronger SR+ orientation). Rajesh correctly responds to the question's direction to explore "significant life issues" by foregrounding several key themes throughout the play, many of which offer the opportunity to comment on human experience (e.g., social ostracism, deception, infidelity). Unfortunately, however, he is unable to interrogate these significant life issues, missing opportunities to comment on the cruelty of the antagonist's actions or empathise with

the protagonist’s plight. Despite explaining the rationale of the character’s actions, and the linguistic means by which they are dramatised, there is no personal engagement with textual readings afforded by the text. Instead, Rajesh’s style can be described as what Rosser (2000) called “good workmanlike analysis” (p. 199), that is, writing demonstrates literary knowledge, but lack the subtleties of literary *engagement*.

Despite his attempts to take up the Specialisation practices in his response, demonstrating both his literary understanding and attempting to satisfy the question’s directive to explore significant life issues, Rajesh’s response is characterised by an unstable pattern of epistemic relations (ER↑/ER↓), rather than the strict ER+ which was required, and a failure to engage with the social relations of the discipline (SR−). The compounding of these issues is borne out in the response’s final mark, 5/15, which, according to the marking criteria, “Demonstrates a basic understanding” (see Appendix D for marking criteria). The unstable epistemic positioning of his response is visually represented in Figure 6.1, with an ideal response in the top right corner (i.e., ER+, SR+; see Chapter 5 for analysis arguing that subject English values an élite code), contrasted with Rajesh’s strengthening and weakening of Epistemic Relations, and lack of Social Relations.

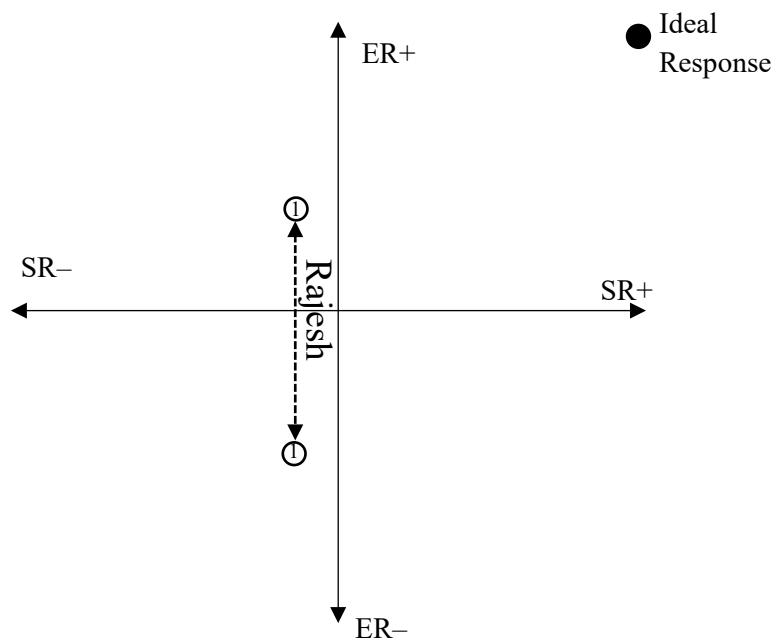


Figure 6.1 Specialisation plane with Response 1 plotted

6.3.2 Response 2 – Melody (Section II)

In contrast to Rajesh's response, above, Melody is able to strengthen social relations, drawing on evaluative language, but shows considerably weakened epistemic relations.

The help is a movie filled with joy, sadness, racism & othe exciteng stuff (**ER-**, **SR+**).

Aibleen was a maid of ski & ski was writing a book about how the maids felt & also the maids story, so they try & get a lot of maid. Mimi was one of the maids for another family & The girl wouldn't let her use the inside toilet because she was colored. she got fired & found another family to work for as a maid & she loves them cause they're so humble & kind.

The root talks about a man called Kunta Kinta & how he was a slave & that was hella sad (**SR+**). (Response 2)

Melody's response represents an interesting counterpoint to Rajesh's, both for its similarities and differences. Like Response 1, Melody's writing is characterised by poor grammatical expression, spelling errors, and difficulty in referencing texts. Unlike Rajesh, however, Melody is unable to demonstrate any specialised knowledge; her response is an incomplete summary of the film *The Help* and the novel *Roots*, without any of the literary analysis offered in Response 1. The lack of analysis and textual understanding position Melody's response as ER-.

Considering social relations, Melody’s response also takes another departure from Rajesh’s. While Response 1 was characterised by detached and impersonal analysis, Response 2 features the writer’s personal response to the text and the human experiences represented within (e.g., “filled with joy, sadness, racism & othe exciteng stuff”, “that was hella sad”). By describing a personal and emotional response to the texts and their themes, Melody tries to take up the subject position of a sensitive and appreciate reader (see 6.4.2 for analysis of the grammatical resources used to accomplish this). Melody’s response can therefore be described as SR+, although only *just*, as it lacks the subtlety and sophistication, as well as the thoroughness of engagement, required to fully demonstrate her sensitivity and appreciation of the text and the issues contained within.

Unlike the movement between specialisation practices seen in Response 1, Melody’s response stays relatively stable as ER–, SR+ (see Figure 6.2). Overall, however, her failure to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the texts or critique them in any way, combined with superficial engagement with the texts, are reflected in her mark, which was only 1/15, placing her in the lowest achievement band.

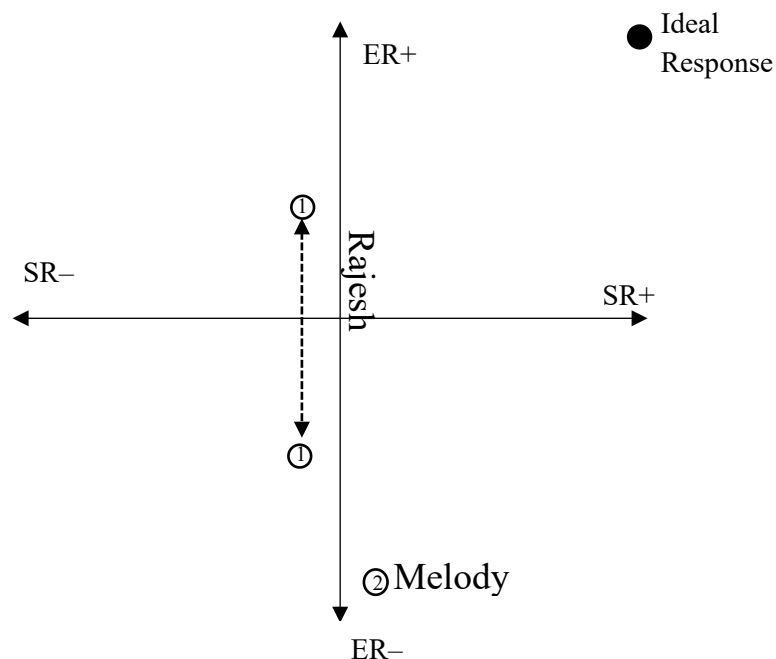


Figure 6.2 Specialisation plane with Responses 1 and 2 plotted

6.3.3 Response 3 – Reza (Section II)

Like Rajesh, Reza is able to strengthen epistemic relations considerably by providing technical discussions of language and literature. Rajesh is also able to skilfully position evaluative positions by aligning himself with the authors and distancing himself from the racist characters described in the texts of study.

Oppression has been a worldwide issue throughout hundreds of years that has shaped the way we live now (**SR+**). “Roots” by Alex Haley and “The Help” directed by Tate Taylor are two very famous texts that have brought light to the issues of oppression but also be the voice for many people who are unable to share their story (**SR+**). Although both texts feature black people being inferior to white people, they both depict it in different ways (**ER+**).

In the film “The Help” the people being oppressed are African Americans who have been forced to work as domestic workers for white people. Throughout the film there has been incidents of extreme abuse from the white people over something so little as using the same bathroom. In a way, the segregation of bathroom use symbolizes everything wrong with society (**SR+**, **ER↓**). It was a prominent belief amongst white people that the black people carried diseases and the way to contract the disease is by using the same bathroom which is why most white families built separate bathrooms for their maids (**ER↓**).

In the film it is shown that the difference in issues that the white people and black people were experiencing at the time was large. An example of this is the quote “Please I want him to think I can do it.” celia is trying to convince her

husband that she is capable of raising a family and requires the assistance of her maid to prove it, whereas the quote from Aibileen, “We got to send out kids away.” Aibileen was explaining to Skeeter that black parents had to give their kids away to be able to take care of white families and their kids. This is ironic because Celia needed the help of her maid Minnie, who has also left her kids, to prove to her husband that she can raise a family (**ER↑**). Throughout the film the maids clearly express their hate for the way that the white people treat them and having to work for white people and raise their kids instead of their own.

(Extract from Response 3)

Reza opens with a relatively strong introduction which strengthens both social and epistemic relations. He is able to comment on the “issue” of oppression, as well as describe the rhetorical function of texts through metaphorically describing the texts as “the voice for many people who are unable to share their story”. These first two sentences strengthen Reza’s social relations (SR+), while the third sentence suggests the rhetorical organisation of the essay to follow (ER+), which is characteristic of strong responses for secondary English in Australia (Anson, 2017).

Reza continues his social focus by highlighting key points in the text, drawing on several linguistic strategies to emphasise the immorality of the treatment of characters. “Oppressed”, “forced” and “extreme abuse” all implicitly suggest the writer’s disposition towards this treatment (see 6.4.3.2 for description of Reza’s use of APPRAISAL resources to accomplish this), and the text continues its SR+ orientation. However, Reza is unable to continue the academic style hinted at in the introduction, instead providing more general comments about the text rather than detailed analysis.

This acts to weaken the text’s epistemic relations (ER–), departing from the stronger introduction.

Despite this shift downwards in epistemic relations, the text does recover in the following paragraph, as Reza introduce textual evidence and provide some basic analysis. In contrast to Rajesh, however, Reza is unable to explicitly describe the linguistic features of the texts, instead introducing evidence to help explain the text. While this type of evidence and argumentation is acceptable in middle years, by senior years students must provide more detailed linguistic and thematic analysis in order to score well (Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008). As a result, despite a relative strengthening of epistemic relations, the text remains relatively ER– (see Figure 6.3). Despite this, this response scored equal first in the class, 7/15, which demonstrates the importance of strong social relations for student responses, especially when achieved through complex linguistic means (see Section 6.4 for detailed analysis).

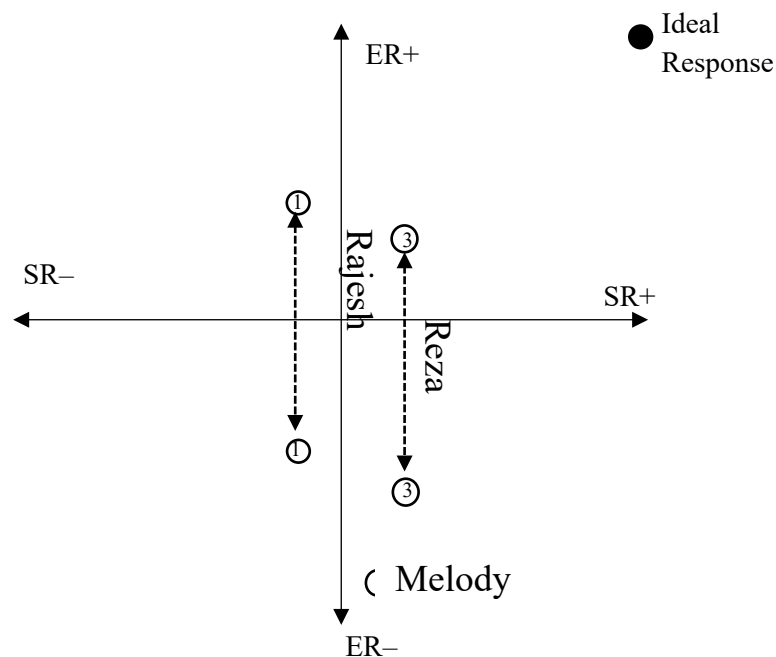


Figure 6.3 Specialisation plane with Responses 1, 2, and 3 plotted

6.3.4 Response 4 – Melissa (Section II)

Despite its length and greater control of the mechanics of language compared to Melody, Melissa's response fails to adequately strengthen epistemic relations. Like Reza, she increases social relations, but these tend to describe her emotional response to the events of the books, rather than evaluations of authors and characters.

Think of oppression as humans being treated like animals. They are oppressed (**ER↓**). Humans who are treated disrespectfully, tortured, beaten up, forced to do and be some they don't want to be. In the novel 'Roots' by Alex Haley and the film 'The Help' by Tate Taylor, both these texts show us a sense of oppression throughout the novel and theme (**ER↑**). As stated above, there's humans who have been called up for slavery, humans tortured and sadly, both these things have happened in the novel and film (**SR+**).

When someone is oppressed you can't really hear them. They're afraid to talk about and say what they need to say. In the novel Roots, Kunta who is the main character of novel had been oppressed. Hung on a cross, both arms and legs pinned to wood not even being able to shew a bug away if he wanted. Kunta would hang there naked, dying of starvation and thirst. Being tortured left right and centre from/ by the white people. Not giving a care in the world. He would be hit with chains, leaving scars on his back, stomach, chest, arms, legs. Name it and it was there. Bleeding and not even be able to clean himself up. His saliva would dribble down his face and still, not once would he be able to help himself. Kunta wasn't the only black African American. People beside him as well going through the same thing screaming inside asking for help. Thoughts running

through their heads just wondering if they would make it to the next day. All this is the signs of someone being oppressed. Helpless. Kunta had a voice of oppression (**ER-**, **SR+**). (Extract from Response 4)

Melissa's response, which only scored 2/15, struggled to take up the epistemic relations required of the assessment. Throughout the response, she takes a conversational tenor often using second person language to refer directly to the reader (e.g., "When someone is oppressed you can't really hear them"), as well as idiom (e.g., "left right and centre"), which acted to weaken the epistemic relations throughout (**ER↓**).

Unlike the more successful Rajesh and Reza, Melissa fails to offer any explicit textual detail or analysis, instead recounting the events of the texts while embedding personal commentary throughout. This personal appraisal of the text does indeed have the effect of strengthening the social relations of her response, but, like Melody, ineffective control of language and a lack of subtlety of expression prevent the response from scoring well.

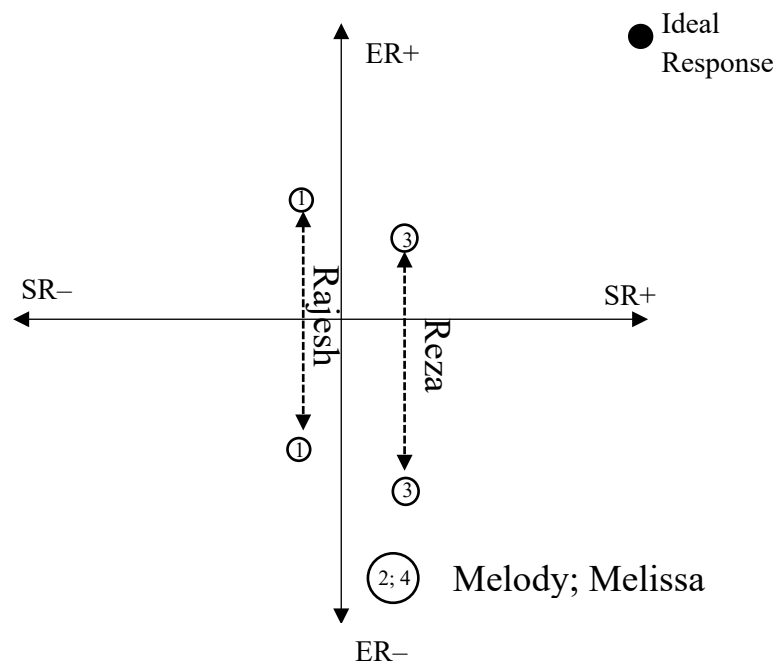


Figure 6.4 Specialisation plane with Responses 1, 2, 3, and 4 plotted

6.3.5 Response 5 – Hamid (Section III)

Hamid is able to strengthen epistemic relations more than Melody and Melissa by offering a comment on the rhetorical purpose of texts, but cannot match the technical analysis offered by Rajesh and Reza.

Plays are one of the most important concept of english. Plays are mostly used for when they are different characters in a scene, movie, or text. It is a dialogue which people are communicating with each other (**ER↓**). In the text, The Crucible by Arthur Miller, there is a play based on witch craft. Different characters gets blaimed for witchcraft. Proctor is one of the people whose wife Elizabeth gets blaimed for witchcraft.

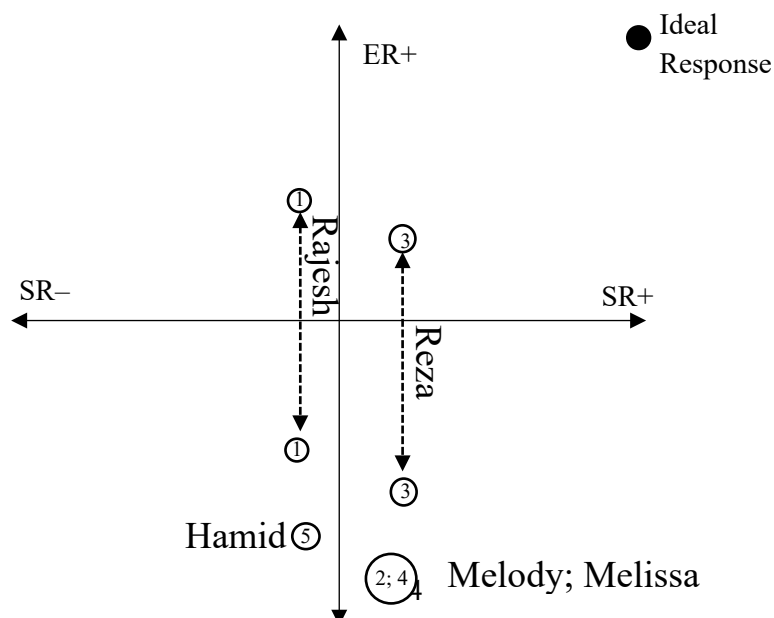
Thes other female who falls in love with proctor tells him to love her back or she would tell everyone know that she is a witch.

The crucible gave us the opportunity to explore significant life issues. The Crucible has many life issues in it. There are people lying. The three girls lie to the Judges and blaim innocent people that they are witches (**SR↑**). Plays use a dialogue of which people communicate to each other which make it easier to identify life issues in it.

In the Crucibles the play by Arthur Miller composes significant life issues in the play and it gives us the opportunity to find out about it. (Response 5)

Overall, Hamid’s response struggles to take up the Specialisation practices required of the subject. In terms of epistemic relations, Hamid’s focus on explaining what a play actually is and recounting the events of the play, rather than focusing on its thematic concerns (like Responses 1 and 3), detracts from his ability to demonstrate an understanding of the question, and ultimately his ability to position himself as an expert reader. ER are further weakened by consistent misspellings and a poor rhetorical organisation, which again position Hamid as someone struggling to take up the discourse practices required for success in subject English, that is, positioning oneself as a competent user of language.

The response does briefly consider “life issues”, mentioning deception and blame placed on innocent people, however the engagement with these issues is cursory, and without any textual evidence (unlike Responses 1 and 3) or personal commentary (unlike responses 2 and 4), Hamid’s response to these issues and the text as a whole remain largely implicit. As a result, despite a slight strengthening of Social Relations, the text overall remains SR–. Despite this, the text scores higher than Melody’s (although, only just, 2/15 vs. 1/15), owing to its stronger rhetorical structure (see 6.4.5.1 for analysis of Hamid’s control of structure).



ER–

Figure 6.5 Specialisation plane with all responses plotted

6.3.6 Summary of epistemic perspectives

Overall, the five responses presented above support conclusions drawn in Chapter 5 about subject English: the subject values an élite code (ER+, SR+). In other words, in order to produce a successful response, students must demonstrate expert knowledge of texts and employ strong rhetorical organisation in their writing (ER+), *and* sophisticated personal engagement with the social issues explored in these texts.

Reza (Response 3) came closest to meeting these requirements (see figure 6.5), coordinating both ER+ and SR+ in his response, and as such, scored the highest in the class. Rajesh followed closely, exhibiting stronger epistemic relations through close textual analysis, but falling slightly behind by lacking Reza's personal engagement with the text. Responses 2 and 4, by Melody and Melissa respectively, both clearly explored the social elements of their texts and their personal responses to them (SR+), but an informal style, poor rhetorical organisation, and lack of detailed analysis (ER-) prevented them from scoring well. Finally, Hamid's response, which had a stronger structure and more academic style, but was lacking personal engagement with the texts, struggled to adequately demonstrate the social relations required of the subject.

Having considered how the above responses attempt to take up the epistemic requirements of the subject, the following section examines the linguistic features of these same responses in order to argue how grammar creates the epistemic movements throughout the texts (see also Section 7.4 for teacher perspectives on examination responses).

6.4 Linguistic perspectives

In 6.3, it was argued that successful responses needed to coordinate both ER+ and SR+, and that the varying degrees to which students were able to take up these practices could account (at least, in part) for their differing marks. This section considers the grammatical resources students use in order to create these varying levels of epistemic and social relations. Like 6.3, each subsection begins with an extract of student response with accompanying analytical markup. Each subsection starts with an analysis of PERIODICITY in order to examine how students organise their texts, followed by APPRAISAL analysis which considers how students introduce opinions and evaluations in text.

6.4.1 Response 1 – Rajesh (Section III)

Rajesh is able to provide a clearly structured response by introducing a macroTheme which is developed in the following paragraph, but does not use APPRAISAL resources as frequently as some of the other responses, resulting in an ER+, SR– response.

6.4.1.1 PERIODICITY

Introduction	The Crucible by Arthur is about the witch trial that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1700's. The story is about the Main protagonist and his friend who have been accused, while people who did the witch craft are roaming the street and soon leave once people have found out what they have done.
MacroTheme: Themes in text	Plays gives us an opportunity to explore significant life issues: The following issues will be discussing the life issues in the play "The crucible" which are Cheating commandments and deception.

HyperTheme: Topic of paragraph (Deception)	First, to deception, deception can be seen in two ways in the play, in a positive or a negative manner. First with the negative, this is done by the antagonist Abigail. The key scene that shows abigail deceiving the courts, we see this because of (something) [sic] irony, it is when John proctor is about to reveal their affair and Mary/ Warren, Abigail's accomplice before she turned on her, Abigail tells the court as if marry/ Warren has turned shape into a bird and she is attacking Abigail. The quote which shows us this "No marry, Its gods work I do, this is dark arts mary to change your shape No I will not, I will not" The use of repetition by agail wats for people to believe her and that marry is the real villan.
Theme and News development: Paragraph (Deception)	

From a textual metafunction perspective, Rajesh's response is clearly structured, with a recursive pattern of a Theme and News represented at the macro- and hyper-levels (as well as at the clause level). In other words, the text very clearly signals what it is going to talk about, and then talks about it. The macroTheme, which introduces the thematic concerns of the play, aligns well with the question's call for "significant life issues", which is then expanded upon in the following paragraph. Likewise, the hyperTheme and subsequent development of Theme and News match well with the concerns of the question and allow Rajesh to clearly present information. The marker feedback provided (i.e., "Your arguments flow from the intro to the conclusion") supports this view and implicitly suggests that macroThemes introduced in the opening paragraphs and developed throughout are valued by examiners. It is this clear rhetorical structure which strengthens the epistemic relations of the text and allows for a more academic style throughout its discussion.

6.4.1.2 APPRAISAL

The Crucible by Arthur Miller is about the witch trial that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1700's. The story is about the main protagonist and his friend who have been accused, while people who did the witchcraft are roaming the street [**Judgement: moral: condemn (invoked)**] and soon leave once people have found out what they have done. Plays give us an opportunity to explore significant life issues: The following issues will be discussed in the play "The Crucible" which are Cheating commandments and deception.

First, to deception, deception can be seen in two ways in the play, in a positive or a negative manner. First with the negative, this is done by the antagonist Abigail [**Judgement: moral: condemn (invoked)**]. The key scene that shows Abigail deceiving the courts, we see this because of (something) irony, it is when John Proctor is about to reveal their affair and Mary/ Warren, Abigail's accomplice before she turned on her, Abigail tells the court as if Mary/ Warren has turned shape into a bird and she is attacking Abigail. The quote which shows us this "No Mary, Its gods work I do, this is dark arts Mary to change your shape No I will not, I will not" The use of repetition by Abigail was for people to believe her and that Mary is the real villain.

Overall, as was argued in 6.3.1, Rajesh's response is relatively devoid of personal engagement with the texts, creating a more impersonal and academic tone (i.e., ER+, but SR-). As a result, the text features very few examples of linguistic resources used to signal emotion and opinion. In the extract above, there are only two clear examples of judgement, and even these are implied rather than explicit. Both judgements relate to characters' lack of empathy and honesty; it is their willingness to deceive and let others be punished that is judged here by Rajesh.

The relative paucity of APPRAISAL resources throughout the response helps explain, in part, why Rajesh only scores in the middle range, despite having a strong organisational approach. In Chapter 5, it was argued that subject English values personal engagement and aesthetic sensitivity when reading texts; consequently, in order to score well, students must demonstrate this engagement in their writing. Rajesh, whose response does not adequately express this engagement owing to a lack of APPRAISAL resources, is only partly successful in taking up the discourse practices of

the subject (cf. Response 3, which is able to take up the SR+ orientation more successfully by managing different voices and opinions throughout the response).

6.4.2 Response 2 – Melody (Section II)

Melody is unable to control PERIODICITY resources as effectively as Rajesh, with her Themes disconnected across the response. APPRAISAL resources are used much more frequently than Response 1, but frequently to describe her emotional response, rather than offer judgements.

6.4.2.1 PERIODICITY

MacroTheme: Text to be discussed	The help is a movie filled with joy, sadness, racism & othe exciteng stuff.
Development of Theme and News: Details of text	Aibleen was a maid of ski & ski was writing a book about how the maids felt & also the maids story, so they try & get a lot of maid. Mimi was one of the maids for another family & The girl wouldn't let her use the inside toilet because she was colored. she got fired & found another family to work for as a maid & she loves them cause they're so humble & kind.
MacroTheme: Text to be discussed	The root talks about a man called Kunta Kinta & how he was a slave & that was hella sad.

Overall, Melody's response lacks the organisational strength of Rajesh's (Response 1). Two macroThemes are present, although they do not clearly signpost the upcoming content. The first macroTheme suggests that the thematic concerns (joy, sadness, racism) of the text are up for discussion, however these are not picked up in the following paragraph, which instead provides a general recount of some of the text's events. The second macroTheme remains completely undeveloped, presumably due to a lack of time or knowledge on the student's part. Without any accompanying hyperThemes, hyperNews, or macroNews, the response seems disjointed, lacking any clear development. The lack of structure of Melody's response detracts from the epistemic relations of her writing, and as a result, her text appears conversational and disordered, rather than the more academic style of the other responses.

6.4.2.2 APPRAISAL

The help is a movie filled with joy, sadness, racism & othe exciteng stuff

[Appreciation: positive (inscribed)].

Aibleen was a maid of ski & ski was writing a book about how the maids felt & also the maids story, so they try & get a lot of maid. Mimi was one of the maids for another family & The girl wouldn't let her use the inside toilet because she was colored

[Judgement: moral: condemn (invoked)]. she got fired & found another family to

work for as a maid & she loves them cause they're so humble & kind **[Judgement:**

moral: praise (inscribed)].

The root talks about a man called Kunta Kinta & how he was a slave & that was

hella sad [**Affect: negative (inscribed)**].
[**Graduation: force: swearing**]

In the subsection above, a contrast between Melody's and Rajesh's approach to PERIODICITY was noted. This contrast in style is also evident in the two responses' approach to APPRAISAL. While Rajesh's response was relatively devoid of APPRAISAL resources, and adopted a more impersonal tenor, Melody's response draws on a variety of linguistic strategies to convey personal experience and opinions throughout.

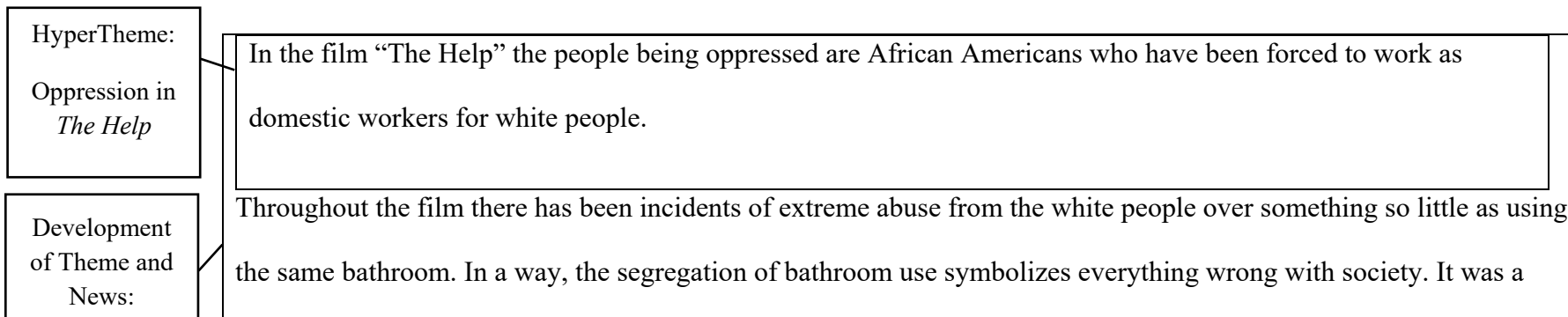
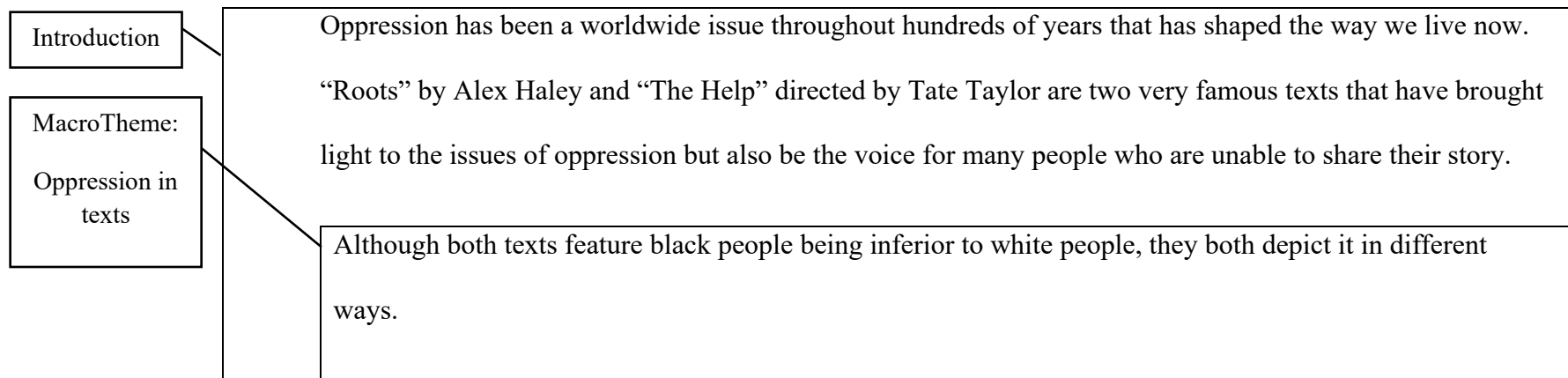
The opening paragraph begins with a positive appreciation of the text of study, *The Help*, clearly signalling the writer's positive view of the text. This personal engagement with texts is seen again in the third paragraph, where Melody comments that a character's slavery is "hella sad". The second paragraph concerns itself with appraisal of characters, with both implicit and direct judgements of characters' actions present.

This personal engagement with the texts and characters' actions shows engagement with the ethical questions raised by the texts (SR+). However, the presence of personal engagement is not enough to score well, as Melody's APPRAISAL patterns tend to describe more visceral and personal emotional responses to the events of the texts, rather than considering broader themes for society.

6.4.3 Response 3 – Reza (Section II)

Reza’s response demonstrated strong control of PERIODICITY resources, with a clear macroTheme that is developed via hyperThemes and Themes throughout the response. The response also offers a nuanced use of APPRAISAL resources to help distance himself from the racist views of the texts’ characters, and align himself with the social commentary of the texts’ authors.

6.4.3.1 PERIODICITY



prominent belief amongst white people that the black people carried diseases and the way to contract the disease is by using the same bathroom which is why most white families built separate bathrooms for their maids.

HyperTheme:

Oppression in
The Help

In the film it is shown that the difference in issues that the white people and black people were experiencing at the time was large.

Development
of Theme and
News:

Oppression in
The Help

An example of this is the quote “Please I want him to think I can do it.” celia is trying to convince her husband that she is capable of raising a family and requires the assistance of her maid to prove it, whereas the quote from aibileen, “We gots to send out kids away.” Aibileen was explaining to Skeeter that black parents had to give their kids away to be able to take care of white families and their kids. This is ironic because celia needed the help of her maid Minnie, who has also left her kids, to prove to her husband that she can raise a family.

HyperNews:

Summary of
oppression in
The Help

Throughout the film the maids clearly express their hate for the way that the white people treat them and having to work for white people and raise their kids instead of their own.

Like Rajesh, Reza's response features a strong rhetorical organisation. The macroTheme introduced in the opening paragraph matches well with the concerns of the question, and is picked up successfully in the following paragraphs. The third paragraph is more clearly structured still, developing the discussion of oppression in texts through a hyperTheme which provides a more general overview, and a subsequent development via Theme and News which provides detail and textual analysis. Finally, a hyperNews acts as an effective closing sentence to the paragraph, solidifying meaning and consolidating the evidence presented. The clear signalling of topics for discussion, followed by their development and in subsequent paragraphs allows Reza to position himself as a more expert writer than the other responses considered, and acts to strengthen the epistemic relations of the text. As a result, when compared to Melody's response, Reza's writing appears significantly more academic and considered.

6.4.3.2 APPRAISAL

Oppression has been a worldwide issue throughout hundreds of years that has shaped the way we live now. "Roots" by Alex Haley and "The Help" directed by Tate Taylor are two very famous texts [**Appreciation: reaction: impact: positive**] that have brought light to the issues of oppression but also be the voice for many people who are unable to share their story. Although both texts [**Heterogloss: attribute: distance**] feature black people being inferior [**Judgement: personal: criticise**] to white people, they both depict it in different ways.

In the film "The Help" the people being oppressed are African Americans who have been forced to work as domestic workers for white people [**Judgement:**

moral: condemn (invoked)]. Throughout the film there has been incidents of extreme [**Graduation: force: intensifier**] abuse from the white people over something so little as using the same bathroom [**Judgment: moral: condemn (invoked)**]. In a way [**Graduation: focus: soften**], the segregation of bathroom use symbolizes everything [**Graduation: focus: sharpen**] wrong with society. It was a prominent belief amongst white people [**Heterogloss: attribute: distance**] that the black people carried diseases and the way to contract the disease is by using the same bathroom which is why most white families built separate bathrooms for their maids.

In the film it is shown that the difference in issues that the white people and black people were experiencing at the time was large. An example of this is the quote “Please I want him to think I can do it.” celia is trying to convince her husband that she is capable of raising a family and requires the assistance of her maid to prove it, whereas the quote from aibileen, “We gots to send out kids away.” Aibileen was explaining to Skeeter that black parents had to give their kids away to be able to take care of white families and their kids. This is ironic because celia needed the help of her maid Minnie, who has also left her kids, to prove to her husband that she can raise a family. Throughout the film the maids clearly express their hate for the way that the white people treat them and having to work for white people and raise their kids instead of their own.

Reza’s response featured a variety of APPRAISAL resources that were used to show his personal engagement with the texts both as pieces of literature, and as social commentaries. The opening paragraph features a positive appreciation of the texts

themselves, noting their fame, while also introducing a negative judgement of “black people”. Reza is careful, however, to distance himself from this position, noting that it is the *texts* that explore this view (not himself), thereby positioning himself in a socially acceptable subject position, which acts to strengthen social relations (SR+).

Reza continues to distance himself from these views in the following paragraph, noting that racism “was a prominent belief amongst white people”. His own judgements of character are reserved for the racist actions of the oppressors in the text, with implied judgements used to condemn their abuse of African Americans. In this way, Reza is able to further his personal engagement and commentary on the text, which acts to further strengthen social relations. More specifically, while Responses 2 and 4 also heavily featured APPRAISAL resources, they are used in these responses to express emotion; Reza in contrast uses APPRAISAL resources to express judgement and manage different voices.

The second paragraph also features a skilled deployment of graduation resources within a single clause simplex: “In a way [**Graduation: focus: soften**], the segregation of bathroom use symbolizes everything [**Graduation: focus: sharpen**] wrong with society.” Reza is careful to hedge his claim with ‘In a way’, but also focus on the significance of the text’s concerns with ‘with everything wrong with society’. Furthermore, the term ‘symbolises’ reveals that Reza understands the value of using abstract processes to comment on the social value of the text (Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2006). Together, the movement between the two levels of graduation allows Reza to discuss the importance of the text without unnecessary exaggeration; while lexically and syntactically, his response is much more sophisticated than that of his peers.

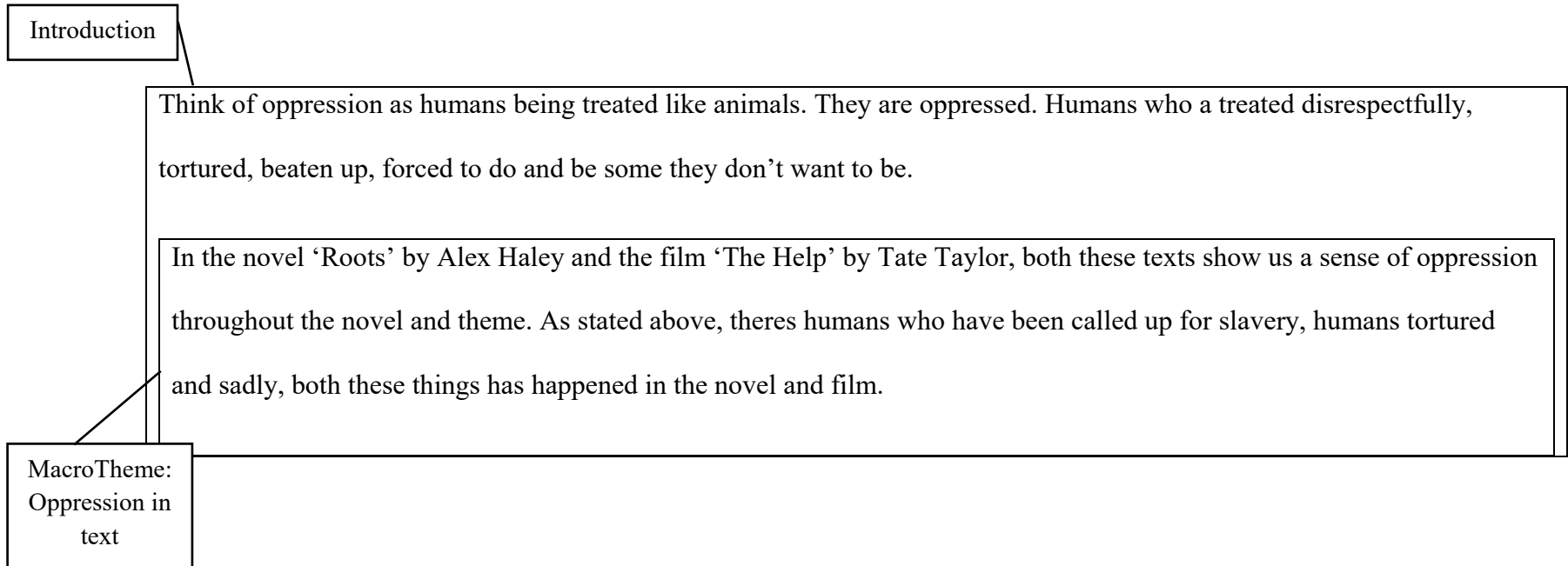
The following paragraph, in contrast to the first two, does not feature any use of APPRAISAL resources. This is unsurprising, given that the content of the paragraph focuses more on impersonal textual analysis. This more academic style, which was not as clearly displayed in the second paragraph, strengthens the epistemic relations (ER+).

Overall, Reza's use of the APPRAISAL resources helps explain his mark and support the emerging picture of subject English. Reza is able to skilfully use various grammatical resources to signal his personal engagement with the texts and the issues contained within, but struggles to maintain this when focusing on more detailed textual analysis. In other words, Reza is able to achieve both SR+ and ER+ throughout the text, but cannot coordinate the two simultaneously; as a result, he only meets half of the subject's requirements at any given point of his response, reflected in his 7/15 mark.

6.4.4 Response 4 – Melissa (Section II)

Despite its length, and frequency of PERIODICTY and APPRAISAL resources, Melissa is unable to develop Themes across her response, nor offer the textual analysis provided by Rajesh and Reza. Instead, the response moves suddenly between ideas, and provides personal responses to the texts' events, rather than judgements of characters and authors.

6.4.4.1 PERIODICTY



HyperTheme ⁱ : Oppression (general)	When someone is oppressed you cant really hear them. They're afraid to talk about and say what they need to say.
HyperTheme ⁱⁱ : Oppression in <i>Roots</i>	In the novel <i>Roots</i> , Kunta who is the main character of novel had been oppressed.
Theme and News Development ⁱⁱ : Oppression in <i>Roots</i>	Hung on a cross, both arms and legs pinned to wood not even being able to shew a bug away if he wanted. Kunta would hang there naked, dying of starvation and thirst. Being tortured left right and centre from/ by the white people. Not giving a care in the world. He would be hit with chains, leaving scars on his back, stomach, chest, arms, legs. Name it and it was there. Bleeding and not even be able to clean himself up. His saliva would dribble down his face and still, not once would he be able to help himself. Kunta wasn't the only black African American. People beside him as well going through the same thing screaming inside asking for help. Thoughts running through their heads just wondering if the would make it to the next day.
HyperNews ⁱ : Oppression (general)	All this is the signs of someone being oppressed. Helpless.
HyperNews ⁱⁱ : Oppression in <i>Roots</i>	Kunta had a voice of oppression.

At first glance, Melissa's response seems to bear some structural similarities to Rajesh's and Reza's responses, with a macroTheme introduced in the opening paragraph, and development of in the second paragraph, itself with its own hyperTheme development and consolidating hyperNews. Despite this, she only scores 2/15, in contrast to Rajesh's 5/15 and Reza's 7/15.

In order to account for this discrepancy, it is necessary to consider two key differences in the structure. The first relates to the content of the macroTheme itself. Response 1 clearly highlighted the themes for discussion, whilst Response 3 drew a comparison between the two texts that setup for discussion. In contrast, the macroTheme in Melissa's response only describes a personal response to the texts' events, "theres humans who have been called up for slavery, humans tortured and sadly, both these things has happened in the novel and film", rather than outlining themes or textual connections for discussion. The hyperTheme established in the first paragraph, likewise does not discuss the texts, but rather the issue of oppression itself: "When someone is oppressed you cant really hear them. They're afraid to talk about and say what they need to say". As a result, there is no development or discussion of the texts under consideration; in other words, successful writing must set up for clear discussion points that are to be developed throughout the response.

The second key difference relates to Melissa's organisation of hyperThemes and hyperNews. Melissa's second paragraph begins with two consecutive hyperThemes (marked HyperThemeⁱ and HyperThemeⁱⁱ, above), yet only hyperThemeⁱⁱ is developed with the discussion of *Roots*. HyperThemeⁱ, in contrast, is left 'hanging', with no clear development and, as a result, the opening sentence seems out of place and detracts from the organisational strength of the response. For similar reasons, the two consecutive hyperNews at the end seem poorly organised, since it is not clear from these two

sentences if the paragraph aimed to describe what oppression is or provide an account of oppression in *Roots*.

Together, Melissa's mismanagement of PERIODICITY suggests that clear organisation of a response is crucial to score well; not only do hyperThemes need to be developed throughout paragraphs, but a writer must also consider the overall discussion points of their response in their introduction.

6.4.4.2 APPRAISAL

Think of oppression as humans being treated like animals [**Affect: negative: metaphor (invoked)**]. They are oppressed. Humans who are treated disrespectfully, tortured, beaten up, forced to do and be some they don't want to be. In the novel 'Roots' by Alex Haley and the film 'The Help' by Tate Taylor, both these texts show us a sense of oppression throughout the novel and theme. As stated above, there are humans who have been called up for slavery, humans tortured and sadly [**Affect: negative (inscribed)**], both these things have happened in the novel and film.

When someone is oppressed you can't really hear them. They're afraid to talk about and say what they need to say. In the novel *Roots*, Kunta who is the main character of novel had been oppressed. Hung on a cross, both arms and legs pinned to wood not even being able to shew a bug away if he wanted [**Affect: negative: physical expression (inscribed)**]. Kunta would hang there naked, dying of starvation and thirst [**Affect: negative: physical expression (inscribed)**]. Being tortured left right and centre from/ by the white people [**Judgement: moral: condemn (invoked)**]. Not giving a care in the world

[Judgement: moral: condemn (invoked)]. He would be hit with chains, leaving scars on his back, stomach, chest, arms, legs **[Affect: negative: physical expression (inscribed)]**. Name it and it was there. Bleeding and not even be able to clean himself up **[Affect: negative: physical expression (inscribed)]**. His saliva would dribble down his face and still, not once would he be able to help himself **[Affect: negative: physical expression (inscribed)]**. Kunta wasn't the only black African American. People beside him as well going through the same thing screaming inside asking for help **[Affect: negative: physical expression (inscribed)]**. Thoughts running through their heads just wondering if they would make it to the next day **[Affect: negative: emotional state (inscribed)]**. All this is the signs of someone being oppressed. Helpless. Kunta had a voice of oppression.

Overall, Melissa draws relatively extensively on APPRAIAL resources throughout her text. Like the other responses, Melissa draws on judgement resources in order to evaluate characters' actions, in this case they are used to negatively appraise the white oppressors in the text. In contrast to the other responses, however, many of the instances of affect are used to communicate the emotions and experiences of characters, rather than expressing her personal response to the texts.

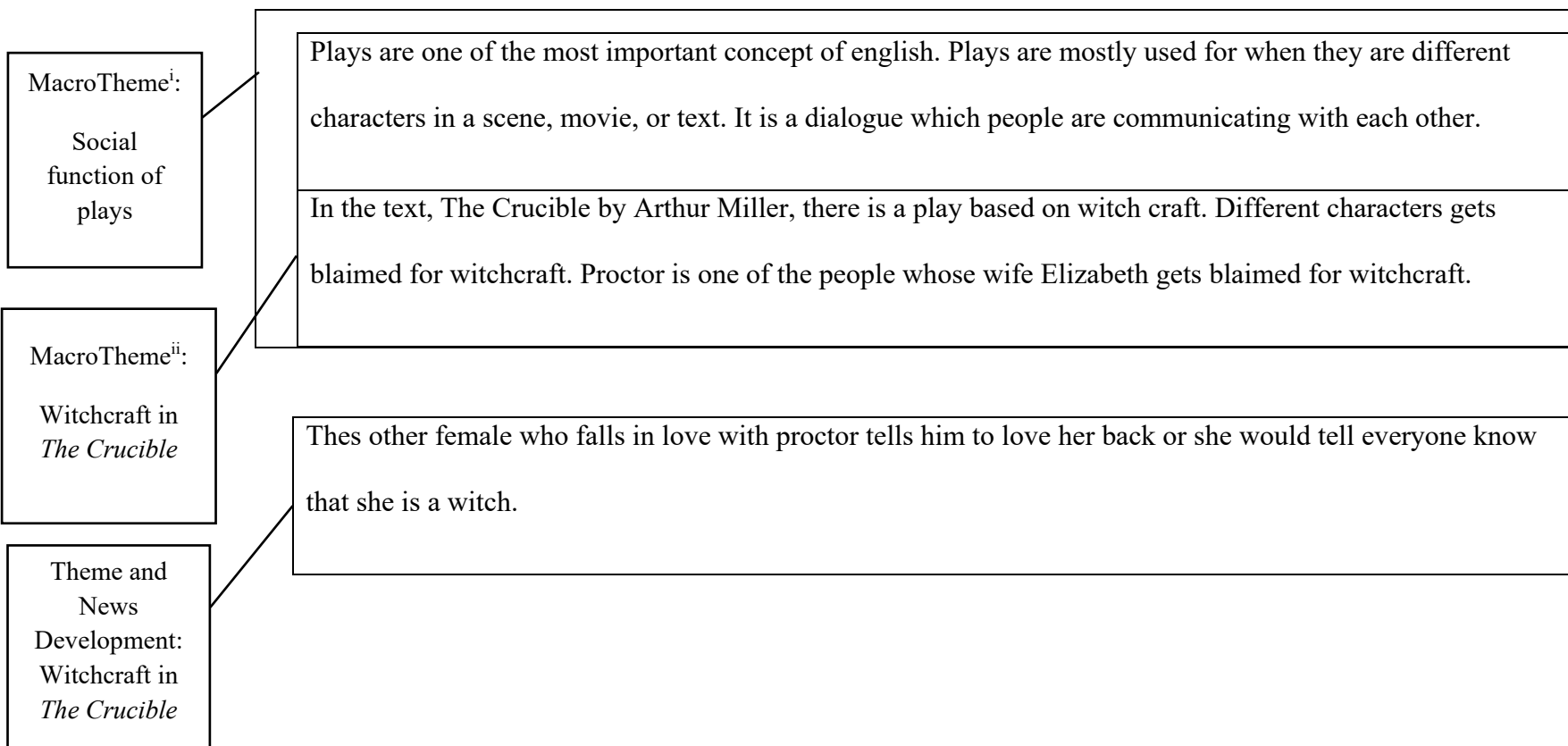
The second paragraph exemplifies the relatively high frequency of affect resources used in this manner. Throughout the paragraph, Melissa describes the central character's experience of oppression in graphic detail. As a result, the response tends to recount the texts' events, rather than offering any critical commentary. While writing about characters and their experiences is an aspect of writing and text evaluation in subject English, particularly in middle years, by senior English, the focus must move on

to analysing broader thematic concerns (Christie & Derewianka, 2008). Consequently, despite employing a variety of APPRAISAL resources throughout her response, Melissa's response does not score well. Therefore, as the PERIODICITY analysis argued, it is not enough to simply write about emotions and experiences, rather, APPRAISAL resources must be deployed in specific ways to provide judgement of texts and authors.

6.4.5 Response 5 – Hamid (Section III)

Hamid’s response features many of the characteristics of the other responses, that is, Themes which are developed across the response, and APPRAISAL resources used to comment on the rhetorical function of texts. However, neither PERIODICITY nor APPRAISAL resources are used as effectively as some of the higher-scoring responses.

6.4.5.1 PERIODICITY



HyperThemesⁱ
& ii:
Social
function of
plays &
Witchcraft in
The Crucible

The crucible gave us the opportunity to explore significant life issues. The Crucible has many life issues in it.

There are people lying. The three girls lie to the Judges and blame innocent people that they are witches. Plays use a dialogue of which people communicate to each other which make it easier to identify life issues in it.

Theme and
News
Development:
Social function
of plays &
Witchcraft in
The Crucible

In the Crucibles the play by Arthur Miller composes significant life issues in the play and it gives us the opportunity to find out about it.

HyperNewsⁱ &
ii: Social
function of
plays &
Witchcraft in
The Crucible

Hamid's response, like Melissa's, struggles to effectively manage its macro- and hyperThemes. The opening paragraph introduces two macroThemes, one setting up a discussion of plays in general, the other focusing more on *The Crucible*, both of which are then dealt with concurrently in the second paragraph. Consequently, two hyperThemes need to be introduced and developed in the same paragraph, restricting the potential for adequate discussion of either point in detail. In other words, Hamid's response has the right structural elements, but lacks sufficient engagement with the topic. This is reflected in the written feedback: "You have mostly recounted aspects of the text, with no analysis of how the text creates meaning. You have attempted to organise your response but it is lacking a sustained argument that is relevant to the question".

Overall, Hamid's response suggests a student who is trying to take up the discourse practices required by the subject (i.e., a clear structure with detailed engagement with the texts for study), but who unfortunately falls short of the marker's expectations.

6.4.5.2 APPRAISAL

Plays are one of the most [**Graduation: force: intensifiers**]
important[**Appreciation: valuation: significance (inscribed)**] concept of
english. Plays are mostly used for when they are different characters in a scene,
movie, or text. It is a dialogue which people are communicating with each other.
In the text, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, there is a play based on witch craft.
Different characters gets blamed for witchcraft. Proctor is one of the people
whose wife Elizabeth gets blamed for witchcraft.

Thes other female who falls in love with proctor tells him to love her back or she would tell everyone know that she is a witch.

The crucible gave us the opportunity to explore significant life issues **[Graduation: force: intensifier]**. The Crucible has many life issues in it. There are people lying **[Judgement: moral: condemn (invoked)]**. The three girls lie to the Judges and blaim innocent people that they are witches. Plays use a dialogue of which people communicate to each other which make it easier to identify life issues in it.

In the Crucibles the play by Arthur Miller composes significant life **[Graduation: force: intensifier]** issues in the play and it gives us the opportunity to find out about it.

Hamid's use of APPRAISAL resources is similar to Melissa's, above. That is, his response does draw on APPRAISAL resources, but they are not used in ways that are valued by the subject. Rather than targeting the APPRAISAL resources at the specific play under consideration, *The Crucible*, Hamid appraises plays as a part of subject English. This detracts from the epistemic relations of the response, since rather than positioning himself as an expert analyst of texts, Hamid positions himself as a student of subject English.

The second and third paragraphs do consider the thematic concerns of the question in a more focused way, using graduation resources to describe "significant life issues", however, the same grammar is used in the question, which detracts from the stylistic variety of Hamid's writing, again weakening epistemic relations. An implied

judgement of character is also provided, but, like Melissa's response, without any detail or analysis of the text provided, this is not enough to significantly raise Hamid's mark.

6.4.6 Summary of linguistic perspectives

Overall, the analysis suggests that a variety of grammatical features were visible across the responses. In terms of PERIODICITY, the strongest responses (viz. 1 – Rajesh, & 3 – Reza) were able to more effectively manage the flows of information via clear macroThemes, logical hyperThemes, and accompanying development. The other responses (Melody, Melissa, and Hamid) were not able to effectively organise their responses, struggling to coordinate macroThemes and hyperThemes, which acted to make responses seem disjointed and weaken epistemic relations.

APPRAISAL resources were also deployed in highly varied fashions. The presence of emotional responses was not enough to score well, instead students needed to carefully manage their judgement of social actors, often by speculating on the values of the texts' authors, while distancing themselves with the actions of the characters within (cf. Response 3, which was able to manage various voices and sources of opinions most effectively, taking a heterglossic approach). APPRAISAL resources often served to strengthen social relations, but if not handled carefully, diminished epistemic relations.

6.5 Discussion

This chapter examined the epistemic and linguistic features of five student examination responses in order to address Research Question 2 – ‘How is the positionality of subject English and its students in the syllabus documents realised through assessment?’. In doing so, it complemented the argument advanced in Chapter 5 that subject English is an élite code and successful students are required to coordinate two key aspects in assessment: (1) a knowledge structure which values well organised writing, careful construction of meaning by commenting on how texts set for study function, and understanding of how authors create meaning in their texts; and (2) a knower structure which values personal engagement via evaluations of author and character actions and careful alignment or distancing from these actions.

The most successful responses were able to use grammatical resources effectively in order to position themselves as skilled and knowledgeable writers who were able to provide social commentary in sophisticated ways. More specifically, they used PERIODICITY effectively and specific mode patterns (i.e., construction: generalisation) to establish strong epistemic relations, and APPRAISAL resources and specific tenor patterns (i.e., not manifest) to establish strong social relations (see Chapter 8 for further discussion on theoretical implications, particularly the need to expand SFL’s account of tenor in written modes). In contrast, weaker responses failed to control the organisation of their writing, provided recounts of the events of the texts rather than commentary, and expressed personal emotion rather than judgement of actors. These findings align strongly with earlier research into academic writing and subject English, particularly at earlier levels (e.g., Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2006). In other words, senior English does not

present a drastically different or new set of requirements for students, but rather expands and increases the requirements from earlier years.

Overall, the findings in this chapter contribute to the findings in Chapter 5 to create an emerging pattern of subject English and its candidates. The subject clearly values literacy and language skills but is also targeted at inculcating particular values in students. Higher scoring students are able to provide social commentary by negatively appraising the actions of oppressive or racist characters in texts, while positively evaluating the authors of these texts.

These findings complement the analysis presented by Christie (1999), and later Christie and Derewianka (2008), who argued that as students move through subject English (i.e. from early years to senior examinations), writing become more abstract and complex (both thematically and grammatically, see Chapter 2 for more detail) as students are expected to focus on social themes within texts. The findings also align with research exploring senior secondary examinations in NSW (Rosser, 2000) and Australia (Anson, 2017) by suggesting that students need to demonstrate nuanced analysis and skilled control of language in order to score well. Perhaps more importantly, they provide an extension of the broader themes noted by Brock (1996), and Patterson (2000); that is, that the tensions between English as developing students' rhetoric and grammar, or English as developing the social and personal in students, appear to be dissolving (or perhaps combining) as now students are expected to coordinate *both* in their writing. More simply, the findings suggest that success English is not just about having the right knowledge and writing well (ER+), nor about having the right dispositions and judgements (SR+), but rather about being able to demonstrate both simultaneously. The following chapter aims to investigate how students and

teachers understand and navigate these multifaceted demands placed on them by the syllabus and its assessment.

6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed Research Question 2 by analysing five student examination responses. 6.2 provided an overview of assessment practices in subject English at the time of data collection, noting the importance of the written mode and extended response examination style assessment for the subject. 6.3 provided an LCT analysis via Specialisation, describing the epistemic and social relations positioning that appeared over the responses. 6.4 then explored the linguistic features of the responses which engendered these ER and SR positionings, focusing on PERIODICITY and APPRAISAL. In 6.5, a brief discussion commenting on the nature of the findings and their connection to Chapter 5 was presented. The following chapter, Chapter 7, considers observational and interview data in order to examine teacher and student perspectives on subject English, providing ‘insider’ perspectives on the objects of analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 – that is, subject English as a discipline, and assessment in the subject.

Chapter 7 Classroom perspectives

I don't know what you just said because I wasn't listening!

– 'Melissa'¹⁶

7.1 Chapter overview

This chapter examines classroom and interview data in order to address Research Question 3 – “How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment?”. It provides a complementary perspective to the SFL and LCT analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6, allowing the voices of a teacher and her students to provide insight into subject English and its assessment practices. The chapter is divided into three main sections: 7.3 presents data collected from audio recording and written observations of a classroom across three terms; 7.4 presents data from a teacher's narration of her marking process, as well as discussions with the researcher before and after class; and 7.5 presents data from students as they read over the responses analysed in Chapter 6, and are interviewed about the nature of subject English. 7.6 synthesises these three sources of discourse in a brief discussion, and 7.7 summarises the chapter.

7.2 Introduction

The data presented and analysed below were collected from a large high school in South West Sydney, 'Sunny Hill High'. With an enrolment of approximately 750 students, 'Sunny Hill High' serves a wide variety of students, with 80% of students

¹⁶ Another classroom student, whose work was analysed as Response 4, here admitting that she hadn't been listening to Ms White.

coming from a language background other than English, and the majority (62%) in the lowest category of socio-economic advantage (compared to an Australian average of 25%). Despite having four English senior English classes in 2017, 'Sunny Hill High' did not have any candidates for English Advanced, consequently all four classes studied English Standard. Although many students were from non-English speaking backgrounds, these participants in this study did not qualify for the English ESL course as they had been living in Australia for more than five years. I was fortunate enough to be invited into one of these classes, where data were collected across three terms via audio-recording and observation of classes. Additionally, think-aloud protocols were used as their classroom teacher, Ms White, marked a section from their examination, as well as group interviews with students who commented on the responses analysed in Chapter 6, and explained their understanding of subject English.

7.3 Classroom discourse

This section presents data collected across three terms at a South West Sydney high school (see Section 4.5 for more detail on the school and participants). Data were collected during students' final term of Year 11, and their first two terms of Year 12. Three main themes emerged from the data, that is, classroom discussions tended to be focused on: (a) understanding the text of study, (b) personal responses from students, and (c) assessment and writing. These three themes are explored below.

7.3.1 Understanding the text

A frequent element of classroom discourse was discussions oriented around understanding the texts of study. Ms White's language was often focused on questioning and prompting, trying to elicit specific information in order to ensure students were understanding the action of the play. In the following excerpt, the teacher and students review the events of the play set for study, *The Crucible*, before continuing reading:

T: Can anyone tell me what happened before Act 4? Ok, so John Proctor was arrested. Who else got arrested?

S1: Giles.

T: Giles. Who else got arrested?

S2: Elizabeth.

T: Elizabeth. Who else was arrested?

S3: Uhm, Herrick!

T: No, not Herrick. Who is Herrick?

S3: Herrick is the uhm, thing!

T: He's a what?

S3: Uhm, marshal!

T: He's a marshal, so he can't be arrested because he's the one doing the arresting. Ok, so who else has been arrested?

However, discussions were not only limited to reviewing and understanding the plot or literal action of the text. Instead, they often developed into more in-depth analysis about human experience, reflecting subject English's strong SR+ orientation and focus on personal development, as argued in Chapter 5:

T: Ok, so what can we learn from John Proctor?

S: To be a good husband, and like lie to your wife.

T: Ok, so basically we would say...to not lie?

S: No but he did lie to protect his wife.

T: To lie, or not lie. And that poses a tough question for John.

Ms White's question to the class suggests that texts are seen as a means for students to engage with broader thematic concerns about the human experience. This view of texts as a means to morally develop the individual (see Section 1.4 and Chapter 2 for more detail on subject English's orientation towards personal development) is reflected in both the syllabi documents (see Chapter 5) and assessment practices (see Chapter 6, specifically the discussion of APPRAISAL resources in 6.4). This theme was repeated across various lessons, with the text's central character forming a focal point for students to reflect on experience, for example: "There can be *internal* conflicts, so like John Proctor is fighting the evil part within himself, that's *inside* of John Proctor". The theme was furthered again through Ms White's discussion of the value of the text, and how it could be framed for students' upcoming assessment:

This book, or this text [*The Crucible*], is not necessarily just about the religious stuff, ok that's a part of it, but because that where it's set. But now we're talking about how the text *is*, in terms of relationships between people in the text, how it tells us things about societies, and what we can learn from that sort of thing.

As the above highlights, subject English is not *just* about understanding language and text on a purely linguistic level (although that is certainly important, see Section 7.3.3, below), but also about being able to draw out the broader thematic concerns about the human experience. At other times, however, students were resistant to more subtle readings (see Chapter 2, specifically Hall's 1973 work on dominant and oppositional readings; and the work of Christie, 1999; Patterson & Mellor, 1994, for arguments that subject English enforces particular readings) and did not take up the sensitive responses required of the subject, instead focusing on more literal interpretations of events:

T: So, in Shakespeare's plays, this is where that tradition started, where the weather will reflect a character or the mood. So, if something is revealed, he might put the sun, ok, the sun is shining on the face. And there's lots of references to "the sun's almost up, the sun's almost up", which could be a reference to John Proctor is about to confess, he's going to confess, the sun's about to come up, and when he does finally confess, the sun goes over Elizabeth's face.

S: Maybe it's just the sun going up and down-

T: Maybe it is! Maybe it is! But see in English we have to analyse texts like this.

S: But that's just spinning. You don't want to be a spinner.

T: No, this is what we do in English. This is how you study English literature.

S: You can just bullshit-

T: You can, but you have to-

S: You have to back up your bullshit!

T: Yes! But it has to be the right one! You have to think about everything! The placement of everything in every text.

In the above interaction, there is a clear sense of ‘apprenticeship’, where a student with an oppositional reading is taught that there are certain ways of thinking and reading which are valued over others, and apprenticed into taking up dominant readings which are sensitive to subtle literary interpretations. More specifically, students needed to understand that these sensitive and aesthetically oriented readings, where “you have to think about everything, the placement of everything in every text” are strongly valued in subject English. This further reflects English’s SR+ orientation, as it the *attributes* of readers that are being trained and determine success.

Instruction, however, was not only limited to fostering the SR+ orientations of English, as Ms White was also careful to ensure that students had a firm understanding of the language specific to subject English. This acted to further the subject’s ER+ orientation and complemented the focus on social relations, in other words, students didn’t just need to read and appreciate literature in the right ways, but they also needed technical knowledge to back it up. Students at times struggled to take up key jargon, but they often understood complex aspects of human experience after skilled elicitation from their teacher:

T: Ok, so before we talk about themes; what's a theme?

S1: It's like uhm...

S2: It's like a genre, miss.

T: It's like a what? Sorry S2?

S3: Act.

S4: Scene.

S2: A genre.

T: It's not a scene, it's not a genre.

S2: Same thing miss!

S4: Sorry, what was the question?

T: A theme, what's a theme?

S5: It's like a moral.

T: Ok, so it can be about the moral, yeah, you're hitting, you're almost there. Ok, so themes can include morals, lessons that you learn. Ok, what else can themes be? Morals are what?

S6: Ideas.

T: Ideas. Excellent S6! Ok, so themes are ideas in texts. Ideas in texts that everybody, wherever they come from, so that means that they're *universal*, no matter where you come from, no matter your background, no matter the language

that you speak, whatever, you're going to understand this idea. Ok, what's a theme someone can understand in a general sense? [...]

S6: Sort of things like, emotion.

T: What's a specific emotion anyone can understand?

S6: Fear.

T: Fear! Fear can be a theme.

S2: Anger!

T: Anger, love, hatred. They're ideas. 'Integrity' can be a theme. 'Good versus evil' can be a theme.

As the above interaction shows, success in the English classroom relied on understanding the text at a literal level; understanding the text at an aesthetic level, where students interrogated elements of the human experience; and understanding the text on a technical level, where specialised knowledge of literature (e.g., theme, genre, act etc.) was required to discuss these human experiences. Overall, these interactions strongly support the ER+, SR+ orientation of English argued for in Chapters 5 and 6.

7.3.2 Personal responses

Another significant element of classroom discourse was students' responses to the different aspects of subject English. At times, these responses provided a personal commentary on the text, assessments, and specialised lexicon, often (humorously) highlighting aspects which surprised, frustrated, or confused them. Often, swearing or bawdy remarks were used to emphasise affect, distracting from the more technical and academic tone Ms White tried to cultivate. In the interaction below, one student comments on the relationship between characters in *The Crucible*:

T: So he had an affair with Abigail.

S1: Miss, I feel it's some paedophilia to be honest! [...]

T: So something else happens in this scene as well, where-

S1: Miss it's like a 16-year-old, with a 90-year-old bro?

T: He's not 90!

S1: Yeah he is!

S2: He's like 30!

T: He's not 90-

S1: It's paedophilia. That's what we get taught. 'What do you learn in English?'
'How to be a paedophile!'

T: That's not the point.

This example demonstrates a student's resistance to the SR+ focus of English; he understands that English explores complex topics and is not just about language knowledge, but rather than, for example taking up the sensitive and aesthetic readings that are valued in the subject (see Chapter 2 for more), the student sarcastically suggests that the subject is about creating paedophiles (an example of an oppositional reading). Students often expressed their frustration through this sarcastic (or perhaps, even cynical) tone. One assessment task required students to engage with the concept of 'human experience', presumably an invitation to explore grander assumptions about society, but students were hesitant to engage with these broader concerns:

T: Well, what is human experience?

S1: Going through this shit.

In another interaction, students were asked to reflect on Robert Frost and his context as an early twentieth-century American poet, with a question aimed at eliciting this contextual detail; again, however, students expressed their frustration at the subject:

T: But think about him [Robert Frost]. Who would be his main audience?

S1: Us now, apparently.

In another example, students resisted the sensitive, SR+ reading of the poem *The Tuft of Flowers*, which describes a sense of fraternity between two workers:

T: He chats to the mower, who joined in this sort of brotherhood, brotherhood of combined interest and work. So this guy, he's resting, he's a bit weary, he's a bit tired, he's daydreaming or imagining that he's having this conversation with another guy.

S1: I think this guy's gay.

T: Ahh, I don't think so.

S1: He's dreaming of another man.

T: Ok, you can think of it that way, but I don't think that he is.

Despite this, students did, at least at times, appear to genuinely appreciate some of the broader abstractions about the human experience, and understood that subject's focus on personal development. This engagement is captured in the example below, which, interestingly, is the same student as the previous two examples:

S1: Fuck that's deep bro. Listen to this, this is deep, [reading the assessment question to another student] "the process of discovery involves uncovering what is hidden and reconsidering what is known". This is like re-evaluating your life bro.

Overall, it appears that students often offered resistant readings and did not genuinely enjoy literature as the syllabus intended, but that they are indeed capable of,

and at times willing to, take up the required subject positions when necessary. In Hall's terms, these students undertake *negotiated* readings, resisting some elements of a dominant reading, but also accepting others. The importance of taking up this subject position, that of a sensitive reader with technical knowledge of language and literature, is explored further in the following theme.

7.3.3 Assessment and writing

Discussions of assessment were particularly revealing in highlighting the ER+, SR+ orientations of English. In particular, there was a clear focus on the need to coordinate explorations of the human experience, as well as demonstrating technical knowledge of language and literature through control of writing, and specialised knowledge of the kinds of linguistic features authors use in their own texts. Students were scaffolded in particular ways of thinking, but some were hesitant to engage with these themes:

T: How does your prescribed text communicate ideas about the human experience? We're not going to cover this exact question in our notes. We're going to talk about themes and ideas, of, we're going to talk about language and techniques. It's now going to be up to you to figure out how to use that sort of stuff, all those notes, to fit those in your assessment tasks. [...] The most important part of that question is 'how does it communicate *ideas about* or *aspects of the human experience*?'. Aspects of human experience. Well, what is human experience?

S1: Living!

T: Living...

S2: Going through this shit.

S3: Suffering.

T: What the characters do. Human experience, what do we do? How do we live?

What do we encounter in everyday lives?

S2: Taking a shit.

T: But it has to be *relevant*!

As the above interaction reveals, subject English strongly values the development of sensitive and reflective individuals. Students are required to think about complex human emotions, rather than the mundane (e.g., “taking a shit”), again pointing towards the subject’s SR+ orientation. However, students must also coordinate this focus on complex emotions with demonstrations of technical knowledge of how language can be used to make meaning, as the interaction below demonstrates:

T: Does anybody else have a key moment in Act III or a key scene in Act III that maybe we can add to that? Does anyone think that maybe we can add to that?

[After a pause]. Ok if you want to add the birds? Why could that be important?

S: A symbol.

T: Symbol for what? They could symbolise the hysteria. They could be a symbol of Abigail's lies.

In other words, students need to be able to combine both specific knowledge of language and literature (i.e., “language and techniques”), as well as explore complex ideas about the human experience (i.e., “themes and ideas”) in order to be successful.

Judgements about characters were also highly valued, with discussion focused around evaluating characters' actions and motivations (see 3.2.1.2 for an overview of judgement resources; see also 6.4.3 for an example of a successful response taking up judgements of characters' morals):

T: So Proctor's in a conflict and his decision to stand by his beliefs and tear up his confession, you can talk about this in your assignment. So why does he tear up his confession? What is this symbolic of? Why does he do this? [...] Ok, “so I do think I see a shred of goodness in John Proctor”, so it's saying that John Proctor is good, it's still there, despite him being seen as bad, and confessing to witchcraft, which is bad, he's still a good person. Ok, can we compare John to Abigail, who is manipulating the whole town pretty much, got it twisted around her finger? Can we say that Abigail has this moment where she is now seen as a good person, or an ok person?

As Chapters 5 and 6 have argued, the dual-sided nature of the subject is reflected in both the syllabus and student writing; the above excerpts reveal Ms White's focus on

making this duality clear to students. She also noted the importance of providing evidence and explaining language in essay writing, which can help account for some of the differences noted in Chapter 6; in other words, the more specific and technical a student could make their analysis of the texts for study, the more the response was valued:

T: You have to tell me *where* in that textual reference is the meaning being made. So if it's a metaphor, and you give me a line, so a whole couple of lines of sentences, that's excellent, ok you've done the reference part, and you just told me there's a metaphor there. There could be a metaphor in that whole- I don't know where it is ... you have to be very very specific and point it out exactly [...]. So if you're talking about technique, say, 'irony', ok *where* is that irony and *why* is it ironic?

S: Because, it's irony.

T: 'Because it's irony' is not an explanation, and you're not going to get the marks for that.

Writing was even more valued when students were able to subtly combine both judgements about character, as well as technical analysis of authorial meaning making strategies. The skilled navigation between these cumulative demands on students (introducing the context of these judgements, then justifying them through detailed textual reference) was difficult for many students (cf. Response 3, in Section 6.4.3, for an example of a student who was able to carefully manipulate the sources of opinions

and judgements in his writing). In the extract below, the teacher explains that their essays on *The Help* should be technical whilst exploring broader themes, like oppression:

T: When people are writing things like “her facial expression shows how much oppression she is carrying”, ok, that’s a technique, that’s facial expression, that’s a technique. But, you have to show me what *kind* of oppression she’s facing, why is she showing me oppression, why is Aibileen showing oppression? Why is Aibileen *being* oppressed? This is all the context stuff that was left out of our assessment tasks.

Aside from students’ ability to demonstrate their knowledge of literature while exploring these complex abstractions about the human experience, students’ control of language was also emphasised as critical to assessment and success in the subject, as Ms White’s feedback to the class revealed:

T: Another thing we didn’t necessarily do well on was our grammar, spelling and our syntax. Paying attention to make sure our sentences are finished. Capital letters. These are mistakes that you need to fix up when you’re reading over it.

Some students were able to notice this focus on language, commenting on each other’s language use. The interaction below shows students taking up nominalisation in

novel ways, reflecting their understanding that subject English values stylish and sophisticated expression (see Chapter 2 for more):

T: So how can we say that? So “creating an atmosphere where...?”

S1: Lack of trust.

S2: Distrust.

S3: An atmosphere of distrust.

T: Distrust, yeah, that would fit in.

S4: Distrust, yeah, that’s a good word, I vote for that, I vote for that word.

T: Create an atmosphere where distrust?

S4: I still vote for it!

T: We can say “of distrust”?

S4: Yeah that’s good, that’s better.

S1: Distrustification happens.

T: But what is the result of this distrust?

S1: Detrustification.

These exchanges emphasise students’ awareness of the need to demonstrate their knowledge of language through vocabulary and nominalisation, suggesting that the ER+

requirements of the subject (i.e., an explicit knowledge of language, not just literature, is valued) are, at least somewhat, understood by students. This theme was articulated heavily by both markers and students, as the section below show.

7.4 Teacher discourse

This section presents data collected as Ms White narrated her marking protocols, as well as informal discussions before and after teaching time. It is divided into two broad subsections, matching with the sources of discussion respectively; that is (a) understanding of assessment, and (b) understanding subject English. These two themes are explored below.

7.4.1 Understanding assessment

One of the most illuminating monologues from the data collection occurred as Ms White sat down to mark some of the examination responses for Section III: “Plays give us an opportunity to explore significant life issues” (See Responses 1 and 5 in Chapter 6 for examples of student responses to this question and accompanying epistemic and linguistic features; see also Appendix D for marking criteria). The monologue is reproduced in full below (with some minor omissions), and then discussed:

T: So, we’ve got [reading from the marking criteria] “demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how the play explores significant life issues with appropriate textual references”. So that’s if they answer the question, and they

have to get it with actual references that make an argument that's related to the question. "Composes a coherent response that skilfully assesses the way the playwright uses dramatic elements to shape meaning" [...], so that is they have to talk about techniques. Dramatic, well drama techniques, so they can use anything from dialogue, to stage setting, to sound, lighting, directions, all that sort of stuff, stage directions, to metaphors and other literary techniques, symbolism, they can write themes, and that sort of stuff. And then "Organises, develops, and presents a skilful response using language appropriate to audience", they have to present it in a coherent way, the argument flows from the end to the beginning. The response we're looking for is an essay, it doesn't say essay, but we all teach it as an essay. And so, most of them should be written as an essay, it should have an introduction, a body, and an ending. The people who don't have a conclusion, in the HSC I know that they don't get a good mark for the structure part, because they need to have a conclusion in the HSC, so I'm going to take that same thing here. Their conclusion can be terrible still, and that's going to affect their mark as well, but if they don't have it they [lose] a lot of marks. Basically, if they want to get an A or B there shouldn't be a lot of errors, but errors are...they're not as closely monitored as an assessment task they take home. But the language wants to be a bit more sophisticated, rather than just "this is the book and here are the themes" [...], and just making sure that in their introductions that they do have that structure of answering the questions, a bit of a text summary, referring to their ideas that are going to be in their essay. And then in their paragraphs having topic sentences and supporting sentences that are actually explained, *specifically* explained, not just "here's a

metaphor” and that’s it. Or “here’s a metaphor and here’s the quote” and that’s it.

As the above reveals, there is a considerable number of elements students must coordinate in their responses. The first criterion suggests that students must be able to develop a clear argument in response to the question, “So that’s if they answer the question, and they have to get it with actual references that make an argument that’s related to the question”. The formulation of a clear line of argument requires students to organise information effectively throughout the response in order to sustain their thesis, as well as making new meaning from the text, rather than just recounting events. In other words, students need to skilfully coordinate PERIODICITY resources (“it should have an introduction, a body, and an ending”) and understand the mode requirements (“The response we’re looking for is an essay, it doesn’t *say* essay, but we all teach it as an essay”) of the task. Ms White then continues to explain the second criterion:

...so that is they have to talk about techniques. Dramatic, well drama techniques, so they can use anything from dialogue, to stage setting, to sound, lighting, directions, all that sort of stuff, stage directions, to metaphors and other literary techniques, symbolism, they can write themes, and that sort of stuff.

Students must therefore be able to demonstrate a specific knowledge of literature and language (in this case, specialised knowledge of drama) in order to be successful, reflecting subject English’s ER+ orientation. Students must also support their analysis,

“their paragraphs having topic sentences and supporting sentences that are actually explained, *specifically* explained, not just “here’s a metaphor” and that’s it. Or “here’s a metaphor and here’s the quote” and that’s it”, further suggesting the value placed on a clear academic style which is supported by explicit demonstrations of knowledge. The importance of clear topic sentences and then supporting sentences, in SFL’s terms hyperThemes and then development of Theme and News, supports the analysis provided in Chapter 6, and points to the requirement for students to adopt particular literate styles as valued by the subject.

The third criterion, which relates to students’ control of language and structure, “they have to present it in a coherent way, the argument flows from the end to the beginning”, again points towards the importance of PERIODICTY resources in the response. Ms White’s comment that “the language wants to be a bit more sophisticated” suggests that stylish writing is highly valued over a more direct but plain approach, Atkinson and Ramanathan’s (1995, p. 560) “workpersonlike prose” or Rosser’s (2000, p. 199) “good workmanlike analysis”.

Overall, Ms White’s approach to marking aligns well with the patterns described in Chapters 5 and 6. More specifically, the syllabi value an explicit body of knowledge represented through an understanding of language and literature (i.e., ER+), and this is manifested in assessments through clear demonstrations of this knowledge and skilled control of PERIODICTY resources. Students’ ability to organise information effectively was highly valued during marking, but it needed to be structured in particular ways. Echoing the findings of Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995, see Section 2.2), a structure that was too rigid, rather than allowing for subtle development of an idea across the essay, was not highly valued. In the extract below, Ms White comments

on the approach taken by Rajesh, whose response was analysed in Sections 6.3.1 and 6.4.1 in the previous chapter:

T: So basically what he's done, he's put his- he's written an introduction, everything's in it, but it's written around the wrong way. So he's put everything in there, it's just some of it's not very well explained. It's just lacking the sophistication of an A or a B, or a high C, or actually really an A or a B.
[Reading from the response] "First to deception" – don't really need that – "deception can be seen in two ways"-

I: This is his way of leading the reader.

T: Yeah.

I: Like saying 'first we'll talk about deception'.

T: Yeah. So my comment would be, you can just say, just have- Because I think is 'Rajesh' a science kid? Some of the science kids write like it's a report [...] or are Business Studies. [...]. So his line of argument is there, he's got a structure, a lot of it just isn't said very well. And the references to the text, so the things that he's tried to analyse [...] well that's an explanation but it's not the greatest explanation. So he's not in the bottom one [lowest scoring band], he's definitely here [pointing towards the D band]. I don't think it's a C. Adequate textual references and his language is still in a D range, but however he does have a form of an essay, and he puts the things in there. So even in his paragraphs, he puts in the obvious indicators, but it's not how an essay should be written, because he's a report guy, he's not an essay guy.

Interestingly, neither the marking criteria nor Ms White's explanation explicitly refer to English's SR+ orientation, that is, there is no clear reference to personal responses or engagement with texts, nor judgements about characters and their actions, even though this aspect of subject English was present in both the data (see 7.3, above) and previous research (see Chapter 2). Despite this lack of explicit reference, however, the social relations are *implicitly* highlighted, particularly in the final lines of the excerpt above: "he's a report guy, he's not an essay guy". Here, it seems that there is a certain kind of personal disposition (whether innate or cultivated) that enables students to succeed, and, unfortunately for those students without this disposition, it can be difficult to display the sophistication required of higher scoring students.

7.4.2 Understanding subject English

One of the key difficulties Ms White highlighted for her students was preparation for assessments, pointing to the importance of skilled control of PERIODICITY resources in essay responses:

T: We have to spend a lot of time going over essay structure, which is something that they already should have a basic understanding of in Year 11. And with the scaffolds it's really hard, because the idea is that you want them to do well, but then you take away the scaffold and they can't do it. There's no scaffold in the exam. The idea is you want to prepare them for the exam, but there's no scaffold in the exam. So how much scaffolding do I do? And how much do I say 'no I'm

not answering any more questions'? Or at least 'have a go before you ask a question'?

While the syllabus places a clear emphasis on engaging with literature and exploring the human experience, and this was critical to many lessons (as revealed in Sections 7.3), it seems that a focus on remedial writing skills may also be warranted (see Chapter 8 for further discussion on pedagogical implications). Ms White noted that a Year 11 subject, English Fundamentals, did provide some teaching time for this, but by the time students reach Year 12, since so much teaching time is taken up with dealing with complex abstractions about experience, there is considerably less time to focus on writing skills. With 80% of students at 'Sunny Hill High' coming from a language background other than English, and 62% of students grouped in the lowest level of socioeconomic advantage, students without the language orientations valued in schooling are much more likely to be disadvantaged. Ms White in particular noted that some of her students would perhaps be better suited to English Studies (see Section 5.2 for a list of English courses offered in NSW), but recognised that many students felt compelled to attempt Standard English in order to earn an ATAR (see 1.3 for detail on the ATAR, and 1.4 for the historical development of English as a subject closely linked to university entrance):

T: It's really hard. A lot of these kids should be in English Studies, should be in English Studies, because they'll really really struggle. And I don't want to see them struggle.

Overall, it appears that the pattern noticed by Brock (1996) that had emerged during the mid-1960s – that is, that subject English had become a key subject for matriculation and students had begun to attempt more difficult courses in order to gain university admission – is still alive and well almost 60 years later. Subject English, as understood by the teacher (and students, see below), is closely tied to academic success and its status as a high-stakes subject remains secure.

Aside from the focus on the academic nature of subject English, Ms White also explained her rationale for teaching certain texts and activities. These brief comments often pointed towards SR+ orientations, suggesting that themes of personal development remained key aspects of teaching English:

T: I really like this text [*The Crucible*]. I think they can learn a lot from it. Which is why one of the questions, what I wanted to talk about next week was, ‘what, sort of, can we learn from this?’

Comments such as the one above are particularly revealing, as they suggest that while a focus on linguistic knowledge and technical analysis is highly valued in writing, themes of personal development are still central to the work of English. Ms White’s perspective therefore supports the arguments presented in both Chapters 5 and 6; subject English is best categorised as an élite code (ER+, SR+) which values both technical knowledge and the development of particular ‘types’ of individuals, and students must demonstrate this in their assessment in order to do well. Below, the voices

and perspectives of students are considered in order to compare and contrast these findings.

7.5 Student discourse

This section reports on student interviews carried out in 2016 and 2017 (see Section 4.5 for methodological approach). It is divided into two sections: 7.5.1 details a discussion where a group of four students (including Rajesh and Melissa) read and commented on the responses analysed in Chapter 6; and 7.5.2 combines the common themes developed from two semi-structured interviews with groups of four and five students, where students were asked about their understanding of the nature of subject English.

7.5.1 Understanding assessment

One of the key weaknesses students identified in the writing of their peers was their control of language, particularly with respect to organisation. Terms like ‘flow’ and ‘linking’ were used to describe notions very similar to the resources offered by PERIODICITY (see 3.2.3 for more). When describing Response 5 – Hamid (see 6.3.5 and 6.4.5 for LCT and SFL analyses of this response, respectively), students commented the following:

[7 April, 2016]

I: So what do you think? Is it good?

S1: It's uhm... it's not good!

I: Why? What's wrong with it?

S2: Grammar!

S3: The grammar mistakes, it doesn't flow.

S1: Like simple things that a high school student should know already.

S4: There's no capitals!

S2: Punctuation

S3: The words don't flow.

I: What do you mean?

S3: Like if you read it out loud, it doesn't really make sense. It's all over the place. The first paragraph is sort of talking about what happens, and then the sentence after that has nothing to do with the paragraph before, they're not linking anything, they're not linking paragraphs together. [...] There's no linking between anything. It's all over the place. They're not really talking about one specific thing.

S1: They're not even sentences!

S3: Yeah, very bad structure altogether.

It was clear that students understood the need for clear structure and organisation, and negative appreciations of the response (e.g., ‘all over the place’, ‘they’re not even sentences!’) show that students are aware of the effects that poor rhetorical organisation can have on student writing. In Chapter 6, the importance of controlling PERIODICITY resources was noted; the data here suggests that students are aware and understand the need for this control in examination responses. The students positively Appreciated response 3 – Reza (which also scored the highest), commenting on the clarity and strength of its organisation as shown below:

I: So why is [Response 3] better than [the others]? What makes it better?

S1: It makes sense.

I: How? What do you mean it makes sense?

S1: Like because this person has, I don’t know-

S2: It seems like they know what they’re talking about, but just struggling to put it in the right way.

I: What makes it seem like that?

S2: It makes sense. And the way they use grammar goes well.

I: So this one is clearer than the others?

S1, S2, S3: Yeah

S3: And structured well.

S2: Yeah structured well.

I: What's good about the structure?

S3: They start off with an introduction and then continue on, whereas like the other ones-

S2: Yeah like one sentence paragraphs.

Despite this, the text was still critiqued, with one participant commenting on Reza's modality (see 3.2.1.1 for an overview of engagement resources, & 6.4.3.2 for analysis of Reza's engagement strategies):

S: Ok, that's a bit much.

I: What's a bit much?

S: "The segregation of bathroom use symbolises *everything* wrong with society". That's a bit of an exaggeration.

Taken together, it appears that students perceive the importance of strong and clear organisation, but also careful and measured claims, supported with evidence, or to quote one participant: "They could've had more evidence, more quotes, more techniques". Overall, student understanding of the requirements for successful responses seems congruent with the literature (see Section 2.5 for more detail, & 8.3 for further discussion).

Aside from control of language, participants identified formality as a key error in responses (cf. SFL's account of tenor in 3.2.4; see 8.6.3 for further discussion on

possible future research directions). Informal writing was negatively appreciated, with participants focusing on the strict genre requirements of the essay:

I: What about the bit at the end [of Response 2 – Melody], where they say “that was hella sad”?

S1: Oh my gosh I think I know who this is! [the participant later correctly identified the peer who wrote it]

I: Are you allowed to comment on the text though? Like put your own opinion?

S2: No, in an essay, no.

S3: No, you’re not meant to.

I: Why not?

S3: Because in an essay...

S2: You’re not supposed to be biased, I guess? You’re supposed to be talking about the text, and the text only, and how the author brings out their ideas. I’m pretty sure you’re not supposed to be biased.

I: What do you [S4] think?

S4: I don’t feel it’s like an essay that you should hand in.

I: Why, what’s wrong with it?

S4: It’s informal, it’s not presented well.

Participants were also wary of Response 4 – Melissa’s direct address to the reader, with terms like “supposed” and “allowed” connoting the strict controls placed on essay writing:

I: What about the beginning? “Think of oppression as humans being treated like animals.”

S1: You don’t start an essay like that.

I: Why?

S1: Because it’s like, it’s-

S2: That doesn’t make sense.

S1: Are you supposed to use ‘you’ in it?

I: Well I want to see what you think. Are you?

S1: No, you’re not allowed to use... I feel like you’re talking to- you’re supposed to explain to someone, but not like *that*.

Overall, the tendency towards control is realised in two ways: students must be able to control language and organisation in order to score effectively; but the essay itself also controls the linguistic scope available to writers, with an informal tenor deemed inappropriate. None of the participants focused on the SR+ orientation of subject English; instead almost all of the remarks on the responses (whether negative or positive) focused on the use of language, organisation, and explanation. As many have

suggested (e.g. Eagleton, 1985; Rosser, 2000; Patterson, 2008; see Chapters 1 and 2 for more on the historical and political pressures on subject English in Australia), subject English and its examinations have the potential to act as a disciplinary technology, in that they enforce particular ways of writing and thinking. From the interviews, it appears that students, at least the participants in the present research, are indeed aware of the institutional power of the essay to enforce particular ways of reading and writing, even if they are unable to meet the considerable demands of this ‘disciplinary technology’ (see Chapter 2 for previous research on English and examinations as disciplinary technologies, particularly Eagleton, 1985; Rosser, 2000).

7.5.2 Understanding subject English

Participant understanding of subject English tended to be remarkably consistent, with many participants focusing on the instrumental purposes of English, particularly in developing writing skills for further study. One student noted “It’s essential for- say if you want to go to university, you need to know how to write essays”, and another remarked, “it’s essential in life. And I want to go to university, and I want to pass university, and I want a good ATAR”. This focus on writing skills was evident in many interactions, as is evidence by the following exchanges, which were separated by almost a year, in order to compare any differences or developments as students progressed through school:

[23 September, 2016]

I: So why do you think we have subject English? What is it all about?

S1: It teaches you essentials in writing.

S2: But like previously [in earlier years], not this now.

S1: Yeah but you're still doing English!

S2: Helps you express what you-

S1: Improves your writing skills

[30 August, 2017]

I: What do you need to succeed in English? How do you do well?

S1: Practice.

I: What do you need to practice?

S1: Essay writing.

S2: Your writing skills.

However, as noted in Chapter 2, and argued in Chapters 5 and 6, subject English is not just about technical writing skills, but also the exploration and appreciation of literature and human experiences. Students recognised this focus, but did not necessarily appreciate it:

[23 September, 2016]

S: I would say English overall is pretty boring. Some of the texts that we learn, is actually like pretty good, so I'd say *The Crucible* is not that bad.

I: Why? What was good about it?

S: Because it had that sort of suspense to it, so actually you want to learn more of it. Unlike, say *My Place*, which is just talking about belonging and experiences, it's pretty boring.

Interestingly, when questioned about this focus on experience, students rationalised its inclusion in the syllabus with reference again to writing skills:

I: So English gives you the skill to be able to communicate?

S1: With others, yeah.

S2: Expressing what you need to say.

I: What about stuff like 'Belonging' then? Does that help you express what you need to say?

S3: Uhm...

S2: I think it's irrelevant.

S3: Depends on...

S4: I'm out of this one!

S2: But why do you- It's like-

S3: In terms of day-to-day life, you're not really going to use it. But it's the understanding of how you take the concept of belonging out of words, turn into-like taking the meaning out of words and linking it to belonging, and putting that into proper words in essays, that's the important part of English.

Overall, it was clear that, at least for the students interviewed, subject English was heavily focused on essay writing and writing skills in general, and explorations of the human experience in literature while present, were seen as annoying detours. Students understood the epistemic requirements of the subject, but the syllabus was struggling to cultivate the enjoyment and appreciation of subject English that was central to its aims (see Chapter 5 for more). As one student humorously put it, "English for me is like analysing poems and shit" – students knew that they had to understand, but did not necessarily *appreciate* literature, in Hall's terms, they frequently offered negotiated readings, accepting the importance of reading in certain ways, but still resisting some aspects of a dominant reading. Despite this, students ultimately understood the subject to be about understanding and controlling language, strongly pointing to English's ER+ orientation:

[30 August, 2017]

I: So what do you think English is really about, now that you're almost finished [Year 12]?

S1: Writing essays.

S2: Recognising the meaning of texts.

I: What do you mean “recognising the meaning of texts”?

S2: Like the purpose of it.

I: Yeah. What else, what else is English about?

S2: It’s language.

Overall, student discourse focused heavily on the importance of essays, and writing in general, to the subject. For the students interviewed, subject English was about understanding texts, and then writing about them in controlled contexts. Students were aware of the subject’s focus on human experience, but at times resisted this focus, finding it boring or irrelevant. When critiquing the writing of their peers, calls for stronger organisation, better control of language, more evidence from the texts, and more detail were frequent, indicating that students understood the essay as an opportunity to demonstrate their academic knowledge. However, they did not often refer to the need to express judgements of characters and authors, even though this was a key discriminator between responses (see 6.4 for more) and strongly present in classroom instruction (see 7.3, above). The implications of this discrepancy are discussed in the following chapter.

7.6 Discussion

This chapter has explored data collected from a classroom, teacher, and group of students in order to address Research Question 3 – How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment? The classroom recordings and observations

led to the development of three key themes: understanding the text, personal responses, and assessment and writing discussions. It was noted that while interactions focusing on literal interpretation of the text were present, oriented around understanding the plot and characters, these discussions tended to evolve into explorations of broader thematic concerns. For example, discussions about themes like ‘integrity’, judgements of character actions, and connections to the human experience were present in many lessons. The focus on human experience and the moral development of students has been present throughout subject English’s history (Christie, 1999; Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007, 2011; Patterson, 2000; Rosser, 2000) and may suggest its intention to develop students in particular ways, inculcating them into particular ways of thinking (Christie, 1999, 2016; Eagleton, 1985; Hunter, 1996). Discussions of assessment, in contrast, tended to focus on more technical aspects of writing, with students being instructed in the importance of control of language in their writing. Overall, this was congruent with the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6; subject English values both explicit knowledge of language and literature, but also the moral and personal development of students, and students need to coordinate both of these elements in assessment. Section 7.3 suggested that while students were aware of these requirements, they tended to offer resistant readings and focus on the more immediate elements of the text, rather than engaging with more abstract ideas about the human experience. This tendency may be related to ‘forced’ or ‘artificial’ kinds of analysis that are engendered by looking at texts through the lens of an Areas of Study (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Jogie, 2015), or may simply represent a lack of interest on the part of students and perhaps a mismatch between the candidates and the course (see Section 7.4.2 for teacher comments on this, 1.4.4 for similar reports from other teachers, and 8.6.1 for implications).

Section 7.4 examined the classroom teacher's approach to marking and instruction. The importance of organisation was strongly foregrounded (cf. PERIODICITY analysis in 6.4), as well as the need for detail in student writing. These themes were also understood by students (see 7.5.1 above), suggesting that the difficulties students face may not be because they are not aware of the requirements, but rather because they lack the linguistic knowledge to fulfil them. As Christie (1999), and later Christie and Derewianka (2008), have argued, senior English requires students to deal with complex abstractions about the human experience through skilled control of Themes, and 6.4 suggested that failure to manage hyper- and macroThemes led to poor organisation. Overall, the importance of developing a strong line of argument through clear control of structure appears critical for student writing. However, as Ms White's comments suggest, clear structure is not enough; writing also needs to be stylish (cf. Rosser, 2000), perhaps requiring the right kind of control of discourse to be successful. More simply, it is difficult to score high marks if you're "not an essay guy". These comments point to the ER+, SR+ orientation of English: students need to have both the right knowledge, but also the right 'feeling' (Anson, 2017; Christie, 2016).

The SR+ orientation of English was also visible in Ms White's comments about using texts to personally develop students, again pointing to the subject focus on the moral and ethical development of students (Patterson, 2000). Furthermore, the difficulty many students face with the course, compounded by the high-stakes nature of assessment linked to the ATAR, suggests that the power of subject English over students' academic careers remains unchanged, if not strengthened (cf. Brock, 1996).

Finally, an examination of student understanding in 7.5 revealed that students often understood the requirements of the subject and held their peers to high standards. Again, the importance of PERIODICITY resources to students was evident, with terms

like ‘flow’ or ‘all over the place’ used to characterise writing. Aside from controlling information at a paragraph and textual level, students also recognised the need for careful control of grammar and punctuation. The strict controls placed on essay writing (e.g., “are you supposed to...”, “you’re not allowed to...”) suggest that students appreciate the essay as a disciplinary technology (Eagleton, 1985; Rosser, 2000), and understand its importance in communicating an individual’s mastery of the subject.

Despite recognising the focus on experience and personal development in instruction, students did not express this as a requirement for essay writing, and when asked about the importance of themes like belonging, the conversation inevitably returned to writing and expression. The power of the essay over students seems difficult to overstate, it dominated much of the discussion and appeared to be the cornerstone, or perhaps capstone, of English. In other words, the essay was seen as the ultimate goal of English, and explorations of text and learning about language were a means to achieve this end. As Ms White notes, “The response we’re looking for is an essay, it doesn’t say essay, but we all teach it as an essay. And so, most of them should be written as an essay”; for teachers and students, the essay has become the categorical enforcer of knowledge and values for the subject, so much so that it assumes the place of an unspoken requirement.

7.7 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed Research Question 3 by exploring data from classrooms, a teacher, and students. Section 7.3 examined classroom discourse, noting the development of discussion from understanding the text to using it to explore experience, and students’ resistance to these readings. 7.4 explored a teacher’s approach to marking

and instruction, highlighting the requirements of the essay and the difficulty of the course. 7.5 complemented these insights with student voices; students examined the responses analysed in Chapter 6 and discussed their understanding of English, focusing heavily on the importance of the essay. In Section 7.6, a brief discussion noting the congruence between teacher and student perspectives with the analysis presented in Chapters 5 and 6 was presented. The following chapter, Chapter 8, draws together the findings from Chapters 5, 6, and 7, and discusses the implications of the study and suggests avenues of further research.

Chapter 8 Discussion and conclusion

If you can expand on a subject, and link it to whatever your topic you're doing, that's pretty much the core of English.

– 'Benjamin'¹⁷

8.1 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the findings of Chapters 5, 6, and 7, and their relation to the literature, and concludes by considering implications and limitations the results in terms of theory and practice. The following three sections deal with each research question in turn, considering explanations for the findings and how they are similar or different to the existing body of research reviewed in Chapter 2, specifically Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6. Section 8.5 provides a summary of the research questions and subsequent findings, addressing the questions posed at the beginning of the thesis. Section 8.6 concludes by discussing implications for pedagogy and theory, as well as limitations to the research and how future research may address these. The chapter concludes with a summary of the information presented throughout Chapter 8.

8.2 Research question 1 – Subject positioning in the syllabus

This section summarises and then discusses the findings in Chapter 5, which addressed Research Question 1: How do the Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students?

¹⁷ Another classroom student whose voice is featured in Chapter 7.

Chapter 5 examined the linguistic features of both the 2009 and 2018 syllabi by analysing their use of APPRAISAL and TRANSITIVITY resources. The APPRAISAL analysis argued that both subject English and its students were positively valued, with the centrality of the subject to the personal development of students emphasised (see 5.3 & 5.4 for further detail). The TRANSITIVITY analysis argued that syllabi employed a variety of process types in order to emphasise the transformative power of English to develop and benefit students both inside and outside the subject (see 5.5 for analysis).

This theme of personal development has consistently featured in subject English's history in Australia from the 19th century (Patterson, 2000, see 1.4 for further detail), and therefore it is perhaps unsurprising that both the 2009 and 2018 syllabi strongly feature it as a focal point. As others have argued (e.g., Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985; Patterson, 2000; Rosser, 2000) subject English has historically and politically functioned as a means to inculcate particular values in students, with assessment acting as a disciplinary technology in order to enforce these values. The analysis presented in Chapter 5 therefore suggests that despite its long history of development in Australia, a focus on the moral and ethical development of students is still central to the subject.

While the development of morally and ethically aware students is certainly a valuable, and perhaps essential, aspect of schooling, it does engender a number of important considerations. As Bernstein (1990, 1996) and Hunter (1996) note, pedagogic interactions have the potential to regulate students' sense of consciousness, even perhaps functioning to restrict certain ways of thinking and being, especially those that might be undesirable for the state (cf. Eagleton, 1985; Christie, 1999). It is critical to consider just what kinds of values and dispositions are being encultured in students as they progress throughout school, a process made even more difficult owing to the unstable epistemic landscape that is characteristic of subject English (Christie &

Macken-Horarik, 2007, 2011; Macken-Horarik, 2011). The analysis in Chapter 5 argued that subject English aims to nurture students' aesthetic appreciation of literature, their understanding of cultural diversity, and their sense of citizenship. Students are required to be able to reflect on their own experience and their sense of self, developing a particular kind of sensitivity that is oriented to both *introspection* and *extrospection*, where they reflect on their own experience, but also critique the actions of authors and characters, considering implications for society (particular through judgement, as argued in Chapter 6). These values – sensitivity, reflection, aesthetic awareness – do not necessarily need to be seen as negative, and in fact may be linked to the emancipatory potential of English, as Hunter (1996) argues. However, axiology aside, another key consideration arises from the embedding of particular values and dispositions in the subject: students' varied access to these ways of thinking, being, and writing.

As Chapter 2 revealed, academic contexts, and subject English, value particular types of discourses and dispositions (e.g., Delpit, 1992; Mellor & Patterson, 1994; Schleppegrell, 2001). Making these requirements visible to students is therefore an essential element of making the subject accessible to students from different backgrounds (Delpit, 1992; Macken-Horarik, 2011). However, as Bourdieu (1986) notes, dispositions cannot be transmitted instantly, but instead must be enculturated over time. Even if students are able to eventually feign they have taken up these subject positions, like Davison's (2005) 'pretenders', some students, particularly those from middle-class backgrounds, are more likely to come to school with orientations to language and pedagogy that are valued in school settings (Bernstein, 1990; 1996; Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004; Street, 1984). As Chapter 5 argued, the focus on inculcating students into particular ways of thinking and being means that inequity appears almost embedded within the subject in Australia. This is perhaps unsurprising, but no less

disconcerting, given the influence from the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales who wished to use the HSC (of which subject English has become one of, if not *the* most prominent subjects) as a means to regulate entry. The oppositional readings offered by many students, the apprenticeship of students into negotiated readings, and the dominant readings that are ultimately enforced by assessment suggests that students are expected to display an appreciation of literature, even if this appreciation is not genuine. Implications for practice, in particular, ways the subject can be made more accessible and equitable for students, are discussed in 8.6 below.

As Sawyer has argued (2008, 2010), this theme of development is not only limited to the personal or ethical, but also *linguistic* development. In other words, while appreciating literature remains critical to subject English, so too does understanding and demonstration of linguistic competence. The TRANSITIVITY analysis strongly supported this theme, particularly through circumstantiation (e.g., “through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing”, BOS, 2009b, p. 6) and relational processes (e.g., “English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms”, NESAs, 2017, p. 10). As a result, subject English strongly values students’ ability to manipulate language in a variety of contexts, with the 2018 syllabus focusing on the importance of language even more than the 2009 syllabus. Such development is in line with the curriculum at other year levels (Love et al., 2014; Sawyer, 2008, 2010), and leads to important considerations for pedagogy (see 8.6.1 for more detail). The adoption of particular ways of writing is critical for students to be able to position themselves as ‘literate’ (Delpit, 1992; Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004). The style of writing which is valued in subject English is explored in Chapter 6, and discussed in the following section. For the purpose of Research Question 1, however, suffice to say that values and dispositions

are not enough for success; knowledge of language and literary analysis is critical, and this knowledge must be demonstrated through control of language in the essay.

From an epistemic perspective, the LCT dimensions of Specialisation and Autonomy were used in order to investigate the subject's view of knowledge, knowers, and practices. Specialisation analysis argued that the subject represented an élite code (ER+, SR+), or, more simply, that it valued *both* knowledge and knowers. This finding departs from Christie (2016) which has argued that subject English is a knower code (ER-, SR+), but is congruent with work noting the linguistic focus of subject English (e.g., Davison, 2005; Love et al., 2014; Sawyer, 2008, 2010). Subsequently, this thesis argues that subject English does indeed value a discrete body of knowledge – knowledge of language and literature – and students must be able to demonstrate this knowledge in order to be successful (implications for pedagogy are discussed in 8.6).

From an Autonomy perspective, the practices associated with subject English were highly varied. More specifically, some practices from within the subject were projected *outside* (e.g., “These skills and understandings allow them to develop their control of language for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world”, NESAs, 2017, p. 10), while others remained strongly within the English classroom (e.g., “The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values”, BOS, 2009b, p. 6). Notably, the 2018 syllabus extended further still the range of practices, mentioning teachers drawing on various pedagogical models, and students developing their competence with digital technologies. Subsequently, while many of the features of the 2018 syllabus are those which are strongly embedded in the subject's historical development, the subject is still developing in new ways. Subsequently, there are again important pedagogic considerations which are discussed further in 8.6.1.

8.3 Research question 2 – Positionality in assessment

This section summarises and discusses the findings in Chapter 6, which addressed Research Question 2: How is the positionality of the subject English syllabus realised in assessment?

Following Maton, Martin, and Matruglio's (2016) model, the analysis began with a broad view of the epistemic features of student responses, complementing this analysis with a more granular analysis of linguistic features. In LCT terms, the analysis strongly suggested that ER+, SR+ was the code valued in responses. Students who were able to successfully coordinate both knowledge of literary devices and rhetorical structure with appropriate judgements of characters and authors were successful, whilst students who only offered personal responses to texts or simply analysed linguistic features but did not relate these to broader concerns about the human experience were not as highly valued. Congruent with prior systemic functional approaches, (Christie, 1999, 2016; Macken-Horarik, 2006) symbolic readings, where students judge characters and explore the human experience are strongly valued by examiners. Alongside this focus on values, students must demonstrate expert control of language (Anson, 2017; Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008). As with Chapter 5, this thesis subsequently departs from findings that subject English is a knower code (Christie, 2016) and argues that it is an élite code, in which students must have both the right dispositions, but also the linguistic competence and writing style to demonstrate this. Technical mastery of the subject's language, and the ability to demonstrate this knowledge, was valued by the teacher (see 7.4.1) and students (see 7.5.1).

In order to support this view, the analysis turned to SFL theoretical resources in order to examine linguistic features of various responses. One of the key differences between responses was their use of APPRAISAL resources. The most successful

response, Response 3 – Reza, was able to deploy a variety of linguistic resources in order to condemn the racist actions of characters in the texts, acknowledge the view that throughout US history African Americans were considered subhuman while simultaneously distancing himself from that view, and positively evaluate the authors who explored these issues. However, despite his careful management of voice and ability to position himself in contrast to, or alignment with, the different views expressed in the texts of study, Reza still only scored 7/15. This suggests that the level of linguistic competence demonstrated by Reza is *still* not sufficient to achieve an A, or even B, level response, and that by the time students reach senior English, language must be used in considerably complex and subtle ways (Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008).

In contrast to Reza, less successful responses, such as Response 2 – Melody and Response 4 – Melissa, used APPRAISAL resources to describe the traumatic events faced by characters. The difference in scoring can be accounted for with recourse to Christie's (1999) work; in other words, more successful students were able to successfully move from understanding the text, to personally responding, to making judgements, whilst less successful students could not move past comprehension or simple personal responses. In Macken-Horarik's (2006) terms, symbolic readings were highly valued, while tactical and mimetic readings were not; Responses 1 and 3 scored the highest as they explored the more thematic concerns of the texts and their significance, rather than just describing the text or the characters, as the other responses did. The differences in scoring point to Street's (1984) conception of literacy as a social and institutional practice; it is not enough to write about the text and its issues, instead students need to judge texts, characters, and authors in particular ways to be literate in subject English. As Schleppegrell (2001, 2004) notes, students need to position

themselves as detached experts providing unbiased analysis in order to take up an academic tone; however this must also be tempered with personal insight and sensitivity (Anson, 2017; Patterson, 2000; Rosser, 2000). Students are therefore required to strike a careful balance in writing in order to position themselves as the ideal English candidate.

It appeared that some students simply lacked the right disposition to be able to do so – “he’s a report guy, he’s not an essay guy” – and therefore the SR+ orientation of English was critical to success in the subject. As others have argued (e.g., Anson, 2017; Christie, 1999, 2016; Rosser, 2000), students are rewarded for their ability to take up certain subject positions, more specifically, to read and write in ways that are subtle and sensitive. Students that lack the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that allows them to come to school with orientations to reading and writing that are valued in schooling contexts (Delpit, 1992) are therefore likely to be disadvantaged. This reality is made apparent when considering the students of ‘Sunny Hill High’; the majority of which lack the middle-class backgrounds that have been part of subject English throughout its history (see 1.4 for the historical development of English in Australia).

From a PERIODICITY perspective, control of structure was critical to success, a view confirmed by both the teacher marking the responses and students appraising the responses in Chapter 7. As Christie and Derewianka (2008), and later Christie (2012), have argued, student ability to control information through Theme is important to allow students to write effectively. This thesis suggests that not only is control important at the clause level, but that ideas must be managed across paragraph and whole-text level through hyper- and macroThemes. In other words, even if a student has the right dispositions and orientations, they are still required to demonstrate this in particular ways. More simply, it is not enough to just say the right thing, nor to just say it in the right way; students must do both to succeed in subject English. As Christie and

Macken-Horarik (2007, 2011) note, the various models of English (see 2.4 for more detail) have led to considerable tensions within the subject, making the requirements for success difficult to articulate. Students are in the middle of a to-and-fro between English as exploring human experience, and English as developing linguistic competence (see 7.5.2 for examples of student perspectives) and as a result must not only recognise, but also demonstrate, this duality.

Together, the APPRAISAL and PERIODICITY suggest that mode and tenor are key variables in determining student marks, not just field. In other words, success does not just rely on students providing the right content, but also skilfully managing the relationship between the writer and reader, and organising the flow of information and themes across the response. Additionally, students needed to present an academic and professional tone in writing, making judgements about characters in subtle ways, and avoiding expressions on emotion or reaction. As Rosser (2000) has argued, the essay acts as a disciplinary technology; the power of the essay and the strict controls placed on the form are of critical importance to success in subject English. This thesis argues that the essay represents a manifestation, or perhaps more accurately a *distillation*, of subject English. As Matruglio and Vale (2018) have argued, the essay, even when not specified, is one of the most valued types of student response in subject English. This view was also noted by Ms White, who stated that the essay is the expected response in examinations, even when not explicitly stated (see 7.4.1 for detail). A successful essay is one which realises the ER+, SR+ requirements of the subject: expressing appropriate views and values by appreciating literature and reflecting on the human experience, but also demonstrating knowledge and control of language through skilled analysis of texts and careful writing. Owing to subject English's prominence in the HSC and its connections to the ATAR, the essay continues to remain a disciplinary technology (a

fact quite visible to teachers and students, see Chapter 7 and Section 8.4, below, for further discussion). Assessment practices in subject English therefore seem to be a logical (although not necessarily fair) realisation of the requirements generated by the syllabus; the essay is not just a test of cognitive ability, linguistic competence, or values and dispositions, but rather a test of a student's ability to take up the discourse practices of the subject. If language, literacy, and pedagogy are socially oriented processes, as Bernstein (1990, 1996); Halliday (1978), and Street (1984) argue, then subject English appears to be functioning to inculcate students into particular ways of being and thinking, as Christie (1999) has suggested. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Chapter 6 has revealed that at senior levels the criteria for success in subject English are extremely diverse and complex.

8.4 Research question 3 – Student and teacher perceptions

This section summarises and discusses the findings in Chapter 7, which addressed Research Question 3: How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment?

One of the key findings in the investigation of classroom discourse (see 7.3 for detail) was the varied focus of discussion. A movement from understanding the text (7.3.1), to personally responding to the text (7.3.2), to writing about the text in formal assessment settings (7.3.3) was noted. Notably, this pattern was also documented some 20 years ago by Christie (1999; see Figure 2.1 for a representation of this macrogenre). In other words, the data strongly suggests that classroom and pedagogic practices have remained relatively stable across at least two decades of curriculum development; with the work of subject English often featuring movements from comprehension, to response, to assessment. This movement is particularly important because it creates

three ‘checkpoints’ which students must successfully navigate in order to be successful in the subject. First, they must understand the text in order to engage with the broader themes, then respond to these themes, and finally translate this classroom discourse in examination settings into judgements about characters and authors. Subsequently, even the most conscientious student may not score well if they lack the dispositions required to successfully appraise texts in ways valued by the subject.

Students’ reticence, or perhaps resistance, to engage with the sensitive and appreciative reader positions that the subject required was also apparent, indicating the power of middle-class values and discourses that dominates the subject (see 1.4 for more on the historical reasons behind this trend), as well as the mismatch it creates in the diversity of students taking the subject. As Chapter 7 revealed, a low-SES classroom, with the majority of students coming from a non-English speaking background, can be at times hostile to subject positions which may be ‘natural’ to others often offering oppositional or negotiated readings.

Teacher comments about assessment and the subject in general confirmed the findings of Chapters 5 and 6. More specifically, writing needed to demonstrate control of structure while relating to broad, abstract themes; and the subject, particularly literature, was seen as a means to allow students to reflect on their own experience and perceptions. These views are congruent with earlier investigations into the subject, notably the work of Christie (1999, 2012, 2016), and Macken-Horarik (2006, 2011). Additionally, the pressure placed on students and the considerable demands imposed by the course were also a significant concern for the classroom teacher, suggesting that the English Teacher Association’s concerns over the difficulty of the course and its assessment (see 1.4 for more) are well justified.

Finally, investigations into student views about the subject and its assessment revealed that many of the epistemic and linguistic features of the subject were known to students. When appraising the writing of their peers, students consistently called for better control of structure, more evidence, and better control of tenor. As others have argued (e.g., Anson, 2017; Christie, 2012; Christie & Derewianka, 2008), structure and style are critical to success in essay writing. The views espoused by participants suggest that these requirements are not invisible to students, so much as they are *inaccessible*. In other words, it seemed that students were not held back by a lack of understanding of the requirements of the essay, so much as by a lack of ability to demonstrate their knowledge in the right ways. Ms White consistently provided examples of writing, attempted to scaffold students into appropriate styles, and gave advice on students' assessments and examinations (see 7.3.3 for examples). Despite this, students often failed to meet these requirements in their writing, even though they were able to confidently articulate the requirements when appraising the writing of their peers (see 7.5.1 for examples).

Subsequently, scaffolding and modelling of writing are critical to student success in writing (see 8.6 for more detail). Even more critical, perhaps, is an emphasis on providing students with opportunities to practice demonstrating their knowledge in appropriate ways. From 2009-2017, offering English Fundamentals as a Year 11 course only removed a means of support that may have provided this opportunity. The structure of the 2018 syllabus, particularly 'Module C: The Craft of Writing', may provide teachers with the much-needed time required for further developing students' confidence in writing. Future research is needed to explore how this new syllabus can affect practice; possible directions for research are discussed at the end of this chapter.

With respect to views about subject English, the importance of writing, specifically essay writing, was foregrounded in student responses. While students were cognisant of the SR+ orientation of English, explorations of human experience were often linked to writing and communicative skills. As Macken-Horarik (2006) notes, the ability of students to take up the right kind of readings is critical to success in the subject. In other words, students need to understand that while language is a key aspect of success in English, appreciating literature, judging characters, and relating these to human experience is vital. This dual-sided requirement must be made visible to students if they are to succeed in taking up the discourse practices of the subject (Delpit, 1992). While Christie and Macken-Horarik (2007, 2011) have, rightfully so, called for the need for researchers to investigate the nature of the discipline, extending this call to teachers and students may also be a worthwhile endeavour. That is, rather than the ‘knowledge-blindness’ and ‘knowledge-aversion’ that Maton (2014) argues is characteristic of sociologies of education; researchers, teachers, and students may all benefit from actively exploring and interrogating the complex and varied epistemology of senior secondary English, as I have done in throughout this thesis.

8.5 Drawing together the three strands

This thesis has collected data from three different sources – syllabus documents, assessment responses, and classroom data – in order to provide a more comprehensive account of subject English. In doing so, the three Research Questions introduced in 1.5 can be addressed:

1. How do the Stage 6 English Syllabus documents position subject English and its students?

Subject English is positioned as a subject with great transformative potential, focusing on the personal development of students. It aims to provide students with linguistic knowledge and competence, an appreciation of literature, and ability to reflect on the human experience. The ideal student is one who is able to communicate effectively and stylishly, and who takes up sensitive and appreciative readings of literature. Students need to demonstrate this knowledge and appreciation through the essay.

2. How is this positionality realised through assessment?

The key genre for assessment, essay writing, has strict controls on how students are to demonstrate their mastery of language and appreciation of literature. The ideal response is one which is clearly structured, demonstrates skilful control of language, reflects on the significance of literature, and explores themes of the human experience.

3. How do teachers and students understand the subject and its assessment?

The importance of demonstrating knowledge of language and expressing appreciative readings of literature are apparent to both teachers and students, although students can be resistant to taking up the dominant readings of texts, and/ or fail to demonstrate the appropriate control of language required by the subject. The essay holds supreme importance in the subject and represents the ultimate realisation of the linguistic and epistemic requirements of subject English.

8.6 Conclusion

8.6.1 Contributions and significance

The following sections discuss the contributions to scholarly understanding of subject English in curriculum, assessment, and pedagogic practice. Implications for practice and future directions are then discussed in 8.6.2.

8.6.1.1 Curricular

From a curricular perspective, this thesis provided an in-depth analysis of subject English at the senior level in its most recent iterations, a previously relatively unexplored area of research. Framing its analysis through the NSW curricula, these results readily lend themselves to comparison across other Australian states, which share many similarities to NSW (see Anson, 2017, for an example of comparing assessment across Australian states; and Patterson, 2000, for discussion on the development of English in Australia). Furthermore, the findings presented in this thesis allow for comparison of senior curricula in other countries, particularly in those countries where English is the medium of instruction (e.g., Anson, 2018). While prior research has explored subject English in Australia through a curricular lens (e.g., Michaels, 2001; Rosser, 2000), there exists (to my knowledge) no research combining curriculum analysis with both assessment and classroom data. Subsequently, this thesis's significance lies not only in its contribution to understanding subject English at the senior level, but also through its unique triangulation of data to provide a mutually informing account of subject English.

More specifically to the Australian context, with the development of a new Australian curriculum and its associated challenges for teachers (see Macken-Horarik,

2011; Love et al., 2014; Sawyer, 2008, 2010; inter alia, for discussion), an understanding of the most recent curriculum documents, and a comparison of their framing of knowledge and students, is critical. Therefore, this thesis's contribution also lies in its detailed exploration of how subject English and its students are positioned by the senior curriculum, allowing for a point of comparison for the Australian curriculum at earlier year levels. Implications for the development of future curriculum are discussed later in the chapter.

8.6.1.2 Assessment

From an assessment perspective, this thesis contributes to the existing work on academic discourse requirements in subject English (e.g., Christie, 2012, 2016; Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Macken-Horarik, 2006; Matruggio & Vale, 2018) by focusing specifically on the senior levels, and complementing this analysis with teacher and student perspectives on assessment. The analysis presented in Chapter 6 confirms the complex linguistic requirements of the essay as described by other researchers from SFL and LCT perspectives (see 2.5 for detail on prior research), and argues that even if students are cognisant of the discursive requirements of examination responses (as revealed in Chapter 7), they may lack the cultural capital or literacy competence necessary to demonstrate this knowledge in appropriate ways. This thesis's significance therefore also lies in its argument that despite the complex and varied epistemic landscape of the subject, the themes of personal development and knowledge of language that have been present since the subject's inception in Australia are still critically important to success in English. Implications for pedagogy are discussed later in the chapter.

8.6.1.3 Classroom

From a classroom perspective, this thesis contributes to previous approaches investigating how classroom interactions are critical to enacting disciplinary practices. More specifically, it highlights how students who may not have the cultural capital necessary to take up the required reading styles of the subject (Mellor & Patterson, 1994) can find the subject frustrating and inaccessible (see Chapter 7 for detail). As Hunter (1996) argues, subject English functions as a pedagogic institution, where students learn to regulate their own consciousness, requiring them to take up particular ways of thinking and being (Christie, 1999; Eagleton, 1985; Davison, 2005). The analysis presented in Chapter 7 argues that rather than being invisible to students, the requirements for success in English are apparent to students. While much previous research has described the varied epistemology and models that characterise English (e.g., Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007, 2011), this thesis's significance lies in its finding that students appear to be cognisant of the requirements for success and able to articulate these requirements, but that they lack the linguistic competence to meet these requirements.

Complementing analysis of classroom interactions with think-aloud protocols and group interviews represents another key contribution of this thesis, revealing that considering a discipline from various perspectives (i.e., curriculum documents, examination responses, classroom interactions, assessment rationales, and participant understandings) can provide a richer account of the practices and discourses that are valued. While prior research has considered classroom and assessment practices (e.g., Christie, 1999), triangulating this data with curriculum analysis is (to the best of my knowledge) a novel approach. For this reason, this thesis's significance also stems from

the combination of a diversity of data sources. Implications for future research are discussed in the following section.

8.6.2 Implications

This section discusses the implications arising from the research presented throughout this thesis. It is divided into two subsections, pedagogic and theoretical. Following this, an examination of the limitations of the research, and possible directions for future research are discussed.

8.6.2.1 Pedagogic

From a curricular perspective, the development of subject English suggests that teachers need both knowledge and confidence in developing students' linguistic competence (Love et al., 2014; Sawyer, 2008, 2010). Teacher training and professional development must account for the focus on language as a central element of subject English, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the metalanguage necessary to construct and deconstruct texts (e.g., teaching students to write essays or analysing language features in a poem), as well as the pedagogic knowledge to identify and address deficits in student writing. As Chapter 7 revealed, students are aware of the importance of control of language in writing and the strict controls on essays, and therefore instruction must provide students with the skills necessary to succeed. More specifically, making the requirements for success visible to students, as many have rightly called for (e.g., Christie & Macken-Horarik, 2007; 2011; Davison, 2005; Delpit, 1992) is a vital step, but this must be followed by explicit instruction on how to meet these requirements. Explicit literacy instruction is therefore not only warranted, but vital, if inequalities in the subject are to be redressed.

As others have noted (e.g., Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Patterson, 2008), control of structure is critical. This feature was revealed in Chapter 6, with students' ability to organise Themes, hyperThemes, and macroThemes a key discriminator in marks; and Chapter 7, with clear and effective organisation and explanation highly valued by the examining teacher. As a result, a focus on response structures and clear scaffolding should be considered by teachers. Demystifying the requirements of subject English, moving past just "analysing poems and shit" and towards "putting that into proper words in essays", is critical for students' success. As revealed in Section 7.5, the requirement for essays to be tightly structured and thoroughly developed is well understood by students. Students often attempted to meet this requirement in their writing (see PERIODICITY analysis in 6.4), but either could not sustain this control of structure, or deployed PERIODICITY elements in ways which were not valued by the subject. Consequently, writing instruction may benefit from metalinguistic approaches which make possible ways of structuring information, and sustaining arguments, more accessible to students.

Another theme which has featured prominently in the literature, findings, and discussion is Christie's (1999) notion of macrogenre. In subject English, a recursive pattern of instruction – comprehension followed by interpretation followed by judgement – was noted. The same pattern was noted in Chapter 6, with some students successfully moving to judgement, and some students less able to do so (see APPRAISAL analysis in 6.4 for detail). This pattern was again noted in Chapter 7 (see 7.3 for examples of these three stages of instruction), with discussion about comprehension, interpretation, and examination all featured in classroom discourse. Such recursive patterns may be critical for enculturating students into the literacy practices that are valued in academic discourses (Delpit, 1992; Street, 1984),

particularly those students whose background does not align with the middle-class orientations to reading and writing that are highly valued in schooling contexts (Bernstein, 1990, 1996; Bourdieu, 1986; Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004). Consequently, both teachers and students alike may benefit from making this recursive pattern more explicit in teaching sequences, clearly scaffolding students from comprehension to more complex engagement with texts. Additionally, making students aware of the linguistic resources available for making judgements, whether couched in SFL terms (e.g., the APPRAISAL resources described in 3.2.1) or not, may allow students to more explicitly express their knowledge in the ways valued by the subject.

A more explicit focus on literacy in the senior years, as well as a more visible articulation of the knowledges and values that are critical to success in subject English, may also have important implications for English as an additional language (EAL) students. While many Australian states currently offer separate courses for EAL students, most are controlled by strict entry requirements (i.e., being educated in an English-speaking country for less than five or seven years, depending on the state). As Cummins (1981) argues, EAL students can take five to seven years to develop age-appropriate academic skills in context-reduced students, meaning that many students are caught in this critical juncture between language development and admission restrictions. As Ms White notes, many of her students would be more suited to these EAL courses, but were excluded owing to their time spent in Australia, with NSW excluding any student from ESL English after five years, despite having the highest proportion of overseas-born people in the country (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018a). Subsequently, more explicit literacy instruction may allow for greater support of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which is particularly relevant considering senior secondary subject English's close connection to high-stakes

exit examination and the ATAR (see Chapter 1 for more discussion on matriculation structures in Australia).

Aside from a focus on more technical aspects of language use, students may also benefit from exposure to the styles of writing that are valued in the subject. More specifically, it is critical that students understand that writing which lacks ‘sophistication’ (see Chapter 2 for the importance of certain ways of writing in subject English) will not be as successful as writing which presents the writer as a the ‘right kind of student’. Eagleton’s (1985) piercing insight into the nature of subject English was its potential for literary instruction to act as a ‘moral technology’ by which subjects are created and enforced. His argument can be (perhaps troublingly) be pushed further yet, for as Christie, Rosser, and others have argued (see Chapter 2 for more detail): students are not just disciplined by literature in their reading, but also via their writing. Providing students with clear examples of what counts as ‘sophisticated’ writing may allow access to middle-class discourses and values which are not always as obvious to students. As Bourdieu (1986) notes, values cannot be instantly transmitted, but rather individuals must be slowly enculturated into particular ways of being and thinking. For this reason, subject English as a discipline would likely benefit from more actively acknowledging its role in enforcing students’ regulation of consciousness (Eagleton, 1985; Hunter, 1996; Mellor & Patterson, 1994). This explicit acknowledgement does not necessarily need to be couched in terms of an oppressive or insidious discipline, forcing students to ‘bow to the master’ as Delpit (1992) terms it, but rather as an invitation for students to think about how the different models of English coalesce to create its modern form. More simply, the dreaded question – ‘why do we have to do this?’ – could represent an opportunity for teachers and students to interrogate the discipline and its requirements.

In terms of curricular development, as the ETA (2019a) have recognised, changes in the 2018 syllabus to make it more flexible to the needs of students not from middle-class backgrounds that have historically been privileged by the subject have the potential to improve the subject's ability to serve its students. Despite this, as Chapters 1 and 5 revealed, the historical and political influences on the subject and its orientations have significant effects on its views of literature and the human experience. In order to more effectively meet the needs of the increasingly diverse population in Australia, future syllabi must be wary of this hegemonic influence. The United Kingdom's Assessment and Qualifications Alliance model may prove a viable alternative, with one course focused more on English from a linguistic perspective, another from a literature perspective, and a third being an intermediate between the two (see <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/as-and-a-level> for further detail).

Finally, as Chapter 7 suggested, students need to be aware of both the ER+ and SR+ orientations of English. It is perhaps telling that research has tended to focus on English as a knower code (e.g., Christie, 2016; Macken-Horarik, 2011), yet students in this study tended to focus on the knowledge and skill aspects of the subject; while research has consistently highlighted the importance, and also the invisibility, of values and dispositions in subject English, students tend to see these as an arbitrary or inconsequential element of the subject. Instruction must therefore ensure that students understand that the subject is specifically concerned with its students engaging with aspects of the human experience and reflecting on ethical matters. While these concerns are often implicit in the structure of teaching (e.g., Christie, 1999; see also 7.3), making these demands explicit may allow students to more actively combine the ER+ and SR+ requirements of the subject.

8.6.2.2 Theoretical

Overall, the theoretical tools provided by SFL and LCT have made the analysis and arguments presented throughout this thesis possible. The power of SFL to offer granular analysis was made apparent in Chapters 5 and 6, where systems like TRANSITIVITY, APPRAISAL, and PERIODICITY provided a descriptive metalanguage for the features of the syllabi and examination responses. Owing to Halliday's (1978) view of language as a socially-oriented meaning making resource, and the dialogue between linguistics and sociology of education through Halliday and Bernstein (Hasan, 1999), SFL remains a key theoretical approach in analysing educational data. LCT, which draws much of theoretical framework from Bernstein, likewise represents an immensely useful tool in analysing educational contexts, especially when combined with SFL. The introduction of a revised Autonomy dimension, formalised in 2018 by Maton and Howard, represents a key development for LCT, opening up possibilities to examine not only knowledge structures and semantic orientations, but also *practices*. Future research could further develop this double-sided focus, with knowledge/ knowers on one side, and practices on the other, in order to examine other educational contexts.

Despite the flexibility and richness of their theoretical architecture, some possible avenues for further development remain. With respect to SFL, as Matthiessen et al. (2010) note, there remains a lack of a development of tenor, with Poynton (1985) and Martin (1992) being perhaps the best accounts to date. Undoubtedly, describing tenor remains a considerable challenge for development of theory, as social relations and their influence on language use are highly variable, and perhaps almost resistant to categorisation or patterning. Despite this, in 7.5.1, students noted the strict controls placed on essays, with terms like "meant to" and "supposed to" pointing towards a clear

sense of regulation in writing. For this reason, a consideration of power *in writing*, in addition to speech (as Martin, 1992; Poynton, 1985 have focused on) would greatly benefit SFL theory. In particular, focusing on the controls placed on writing in institutional settings (e.g., school assessments, business and professional correspondence, legal settings etc.) may provide a means to begin to develop an account of tenor in more written modes.

With respect to LCT, as Chapter 5 showed with Specialisation and Autonomy, different dimensions can be combined to offer complementary explanations of phenomena (see also Christie, 2016, as an example of combining Specialisation and Semantics). Despite this, there exists (to my knowledge), no current description of systematic ways in which to combine dimensions. Considering the connections between dimensions can only serve to consolidate and cohere the current theoretical architecture. A possible means of development may be through the Cartesian planes which are already firmly embedded in LCT practice; combining or overlaying different planes to generate new representations or modalities may provide a way to combine different dimensions.

8.6.3 Limitations and future research

Despite every attempt to ensure that the research presented above was well planned and executed, several limitations are apparent. These limitations may be addressed with future research, providing more comprehensive accounts of subject English.

With respect to the syllabus analysis in Chapter 5, only one section, the Rationale, was examined. This allowed for a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of this section, however, as a result, other sections of the syllabus were excluded. Future

research could progress in three separate, yet mutually supportive ways: (a) analysis of other syllabus pages, particularly the rationale sections for different courses; (b) comparison of Stage 6 English with other Stage 6 subjects; and (c) comparison of Stage 6 English with English at other Stages. Additionally, further research may consider the same data through different theoretical lenses. While APPRAISAL, TRANSITIVITY, Specialisation, and Autonomy provided considerable insights into the linguistic and epistemic features of the subject, both SFL and LCT have a wide array of theoretical tools which may provide further detail. More specifically, considering collocations of particular lexical items (e.g., ‘language’), and then tracing the development of these items across the syllabus document, and across the two different syllabi, may provide more detail on how particular aspects of the discipline are positioned. Complementing this analysis with LCT’s Semantics dimension could further enhance the analysis by allowing patterns to be plotted on semantic waves, allowing for comparison of trends across different instances. Additionally, owing to SFL’s trinocular perspective on language use, and its notion that the three metafunctions are simultaneously realised through language, theoretical tensions arise between creation of meaning at the level of grammar versus the level of discourse. More specifically, future studies might offer a more nuanced integration of the realisation of the ideational metafunction at both a lexicogrammar and discourse by considering how TRANSITIVITY resources construe both experiential meaning and field.

With respect to the assessment analysis in Chapter 6, only a small number and range of responses could be considered. Since the highest scoring response available only scored 7/15, a greater range of responses may have revealed greater variation in the linguistic and epistemic features noted. Additionally, while the higher-scoring responses were congruent with research on writing (see 8.3 for more detail), other responses may

have satisfied the requirements of the essay genre in novel ways. Future research could replicate the analysis presented in Chapter 6 with a greater variety of responses, drawing from a larger range of candidature.

Finally, with respect to the analysis of interview and observational data in Chapter 7, as with Chapter 6, including more participants may have yielded different findings. Notably, the participants were from a low-SES South West Sydney high school, with the majority of students coming from a language background other than English (see 4.5 for more detail). While this thesis was therefore positioned to highlight the importance of cultural capital and particular discourses for success in subject English, and the exclusionary power of the subject when students from different backgrounds attempt to navigate these requirements, explorations of the subject in different contexts may lead to more varied descriptions of subject English. Future research could investigate a wider variety of classrooms and school contexts, as well as including a greater number of participants in order to compare perspectives on assessment and the subject.

Aside from the focused context, my observations across three terms meant that much more data was collected than is represented in this thesis. While every attempt has been to provide a fair and accurate, and comprehensive, account of the classroom interactions, tempered by considerations of my own positionality and reflexivity as a researcher (see 4.5.1 for discussion of methodology and reflexivity), the framing, or ‘laminating’ of accounts (Bloome et al., 2008) is ultimately a subjective process. While the accounts of pedagogic interactions, particularly in subject English, tended to be congruent with prior research (e.g., Bernstein, 1990, 1996; Christie, 1999; Hunter, 1996), it is possible that different researchers may have reached different conclusions and highlighted different interactions for consideration. Future research into subject

English could therefore benefit from analysis of ethnographic data by several individuals who are able to provide varying perspectives on interactions and interviews.

8.7 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the findings and concluded the thesis. 8.2 discussed Research Question 1, arguing that subject English represents an élite code, with both knowledge and knower structures valued, consolidating prior research on subject English at earlier year levels. Section 8.3 discussed Research Question 2, arguing that students needed to demonstrate both of these aspects in their responses, with the findings being largely congruent with prior research into linguistic features of essay writing. 8.4 discussed Research Question 3, arguing that teachers and students appeared aware of these requirements, recognising the essay as a manifestation of subject English. Despite this cognisance of the requirements of the subject, students still struggled to display their knowledge in appropriate ways. 8.5 provided a short summary of thesis findings in order to address the questions outlined in Chapter 1. Finally, Section 8.6 concluded the chapter by considering the contributions, implications, and limitations of the thesis. In particular, the need for more explicit engagement with the nature of English as a subject, and its associated requirements, was noted; along the need to consider the diversity of candidature and how instruction and future curricula may meet the needs of students.

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Appendices

Appendix A – ‘Rationale’ from 2009 Stage 6 English syllabus

Rationale for English in Stage 6 Curriculum

The study of English is central to the learning and development of students in NSW and is the mandatory subject in the Stage 6 curriculum. The importance of English in the curriculum is a recognition of its role as the national language and increasingly as the language of international communication. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident, articulate communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers and active participants in society.

English involves the study and use of language in its various textual forms, encompassing written, spoken and visual texts of varying complexity, including the language systems of English through which meaning is conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

The study of English enables students to recognise and use a diversity of approaches and texts to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy. This study is designed to promote a sound knowledge of the structure and function of the English language and to develop effective English communication skills*. The English Stage 6 courses develop in students an understanding of literary expression and nurture an appreciation of aesthetic values. Through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing experience, ideas and values, students are encouraged to adopt a critical approach to all texts and to distinguish the qualities of texts. Students also develop English language skills to support their study at Stage 6 and beyond.

In Stage 6, students come to understand the complexity of meaning, to compose and respond to texts according to their form, content, purpose and audience, and to appreciate the personal, social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them. Students reflect on their reading and learning and understand that these processes are shaped by the contexts in which they respond to and compose texts.

The study of English enables students to make sense of, and to enrich, their lives in personal, social and professional situations and to deal effectively with change. Students develop a strong sense of themselves as autonomous, reflective and creative learners. The English Stage 6 syllabus is designed to develop in students the faculty to perceive and understand their world from a variety of perspectives, and it enables them to appreciate the richness of Australia’s cultural diversity.

The syllabus is designed to develop enjoyment of English and an appreciation of its value and role in learning.

* Some students with special education needs communicate through a variety of verbal or nonverbal communication systems or techniques. It is important to take account of the individual communication strategies used by students within the context of the *English Stage 6 Syllabus*.

Appendix B – ‘Rationale’ from 2018 Stage 6 English syllabus

Rationale

Rationale for English in Stage 6 Curriculum

Language shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world. It is the primary means by which we relate to others and is central to the intellectual, social and emotional development of all students. In the years of schooling from Kindergarten to Year 12, English is the study and use of the English language in its various textual forms. These encompass spoken, written, visual and multimodal texts of varying complexity through which meaning is shaped, conveyed, interpreted and reflected.

In acknowledgement of its role as the national language, English is the mandatory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12 in the NSW curriculum. Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes acquired in English are central to the learning and development of students. Proficiency in English enables students to take their place as confident communicators, critical and imaginative thinkers, lifelong learners and informed, active participants in Australian society. It supports the development and expression of a system of personal values, based on students’ understanding of moral and ethical matters, and gives expression to their aspirations and ideals.

The study of English in Stage 6 develops in students an understanding of literary expression and nurtures an appreciation of aesthetic values. It develops skills to enable students to experiment with ideas and expression, to become innovative, active, independent learners, to collaborate and to reflect on their learning.

Through responding to and composing texts from Kindergarten to Year 12, students learn about the power, value and art of the English language for communication, knowledge, enjoyment and agency. They engage with and explore texts that include widely acknowledged quality literature of past and contemporary societies and engage with the literature and literary heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. By composing and responding students develop an understanding of themselves and of diverse human experiences and cultures.

The study of English in this syllabus is founded on the belief that language learning is recursive and develops through ever widening contexts. Students learn English through explicit teaching of language and literacy, and through their engagement with a diverse range of purposeful and increasingly demanding textual experiences. The English Stage 6 syllabuses enable teachers to draw on various theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models for teaching English to assist their students to achieve the syllabus outcomes at the highest levels.

In their study of English, students continue to develop their critical and imaginative faculties and broaden their capacity for cultural understanding. They examine various contexts of language usage to understand how making meaning is complex and shaped by a multiplicity of factors. As students’ command of English continues to grow, they are provided with opportunities to question, assess, challenge, reformulate information and identify and clarify issues, negotiate and solve problems. They can become creative and confident users of a range of digital technologies and understand and reflect on the

ongoing impact of these technologies on society. These skills and understandings allow them to develop their control of language for life-long learning, in their careers and lives in a global world.

Appendix C – Participant consent form

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:		
<i>Role</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
<i>Student Investigator/s</i>	<i>Daniel Anson</i> is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of New South Wales. This will take place under the supervision of Professor Sue Starfield and Professor Chris Davison.	<i>UNSW</i>

What is the research study about?

You are invited to take part in this research study. You have been invited because you are a Stage 6 English student.

The research study is aiming to investigate subject English and writing in the subject. In particular it will focus on how students and teachers see the subject, and the differences between high and low scoring assessment tasks.

Do I have to take part in this research study?

Participation in this research study is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. Your decision will not affect your relationship with The University of New South Wales or 'Sunny Hill' High School.

This Participant Information Statement and Consent Form tells you about the research study. It explains the research tasks involved. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about. Before deciding whether or not to take part, you might want to talk about it with a relative or friend.

If you decide you want to take part in the research study, you will be asked to:

- Sign the consent form;
- Keep a copy of this Participant Information Statement;

What does participation in this research require, and are there any risks involved?

If you decide to take part in the research study, you will be asked to allow yourself to be audio recorded in classroom settings, provide samples of your work, and participate in interviews.

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

You will be asked to participate in an interview that would take approximately 30-60 minutes. During the interview a member of the research team will ask you questions about your understanding of subject English, extended response writing, and your own work. With your permission we would like to digitally record the interview using an audio tape. The interviews will take place in the following location:

[Location to be determined by school]

Will I be paid to participate in this project?

There are no costs associated with participating in this research study, nor will you be paid.

What are the possible benefits to participation?

We hope to use information we get from this research study to benefit others who are attempting or teaching the HSC in the future, especially other members of your school.

What will happen to information about me?

By signing the consent form you consent to the research team collecting and using information about you for the research study. We will keep your data for 7 years. We will store information about you at John Goodsell Building, UNSW. Your information will only be used for the purpose of this research study and it will only be disclosed with your permission.

It is anticipated that the results of this research study will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be published, in a way such that you will not be individually identifiable.

You have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information with which you disagree be corrected. You can do this by contacting a member of the research team.

The audio taped digital recordings are for the purposes of the research study. After the interviews, focus groups, and classroom recordings we will transcribe your digital recordings. We will keep your digital recordings in the form of digital recordings and transcriptions for 7 years. We will store information about you at John Goodsell Building, UNSW. Your confidentiality will be ensured by ensuring all names are removed from transcriptions. Only the researcher will have access to the recordings.

How and when will I find out what the results of the research study are?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by emailing the research team contact (s.starfield@unsw.edu.au). This feedback will be in the form of a one page plain English summary of the research findings. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

What if I want to withdraw from the research study?

If you do consent to participate, you may withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw, you will be asked to complete and sign the 'Withdrawal of Consent Form' which is provided at the end of this document. Alternatively you can ring the research team and tell them you no longer want to participate.

If you decide to leave the research study, the researchers will not collect additional information from you. You are free to stop the interview at any time. Unless you say that you want us to keep them, any recordings will be erased and the information you have provided will not be included in the study

results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during the interview. If you take part in a focus group, you are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion. If you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any more information from you. Any information that we have already collected, however, will be kept in our study records and may be included in the study results.

What should I do if I have further questions about my involvement in the research study?

The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query. If you want any further information concerning this project or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the project, you can contact the following member/s of the research team:

Research Team Contact

Name	Sue Starfield
Position	Professor of Education
Telephone	9385 3369
Email	s.starfield@unsw.edu.au

What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the research study?

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted, then you may contact:

Complaints Contact

Position	Human Research Ethics Coordinator
Telephone	+ 61 2 9385 6222
Email	humanethics@unsw.edu.au
HC Reference Number	HC16044

Consent Form – Participant providing own consent

Declaration by the participant

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand;
- I understand the purposes, study tasks and risks of the research described in the project;
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received;
- I freely agree to participate in this research study as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project and withdrawal will not affect my relationship with any of the named organisations and/or research team members;
- I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep;

Participant Signature

Name of Participant (please print)	
Signature of Research Participant	
Date	

Declaration by Researcher*

- I have given a verbal explanation of the research study, its study activities and risks and I believe that the participant has understood that explanation.

Researcher Signature*

Name of Researcher (please print)	
Signature of Researcher	
Date	

*An appropriately qualified member of the research team must provide the explanation of, and information concerning the research study.

Note: All parties signing the consent section must date their own signature.

Form for Withdrawal of Participation

I wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** affect my relationship with The University of New South Wales or 'Sunny Hill' High School.

Participant Signature

Name of Participant (please print)	
Signature of Research Participant	
Date	

The section for Withdrawal of Participation should be forwarded to:

CI Name:	Sue Starfield
Email:	s.starfield@unsw.edu.au
Phone:	9385 3369
Postal Address:	

Appendix D – Marking criteria for responses examined in Chapter 6

Section II – Voices of Oppression

Marking Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively explores the ways oppressed voices are conveyed in two of the prescribed texts • Coherently analyses, explains and assesses the ways in which the oppressed voices are represented in the two prescribed texts • Effectively organises, develops and expresses ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context 	13-15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competently explores the ways the voices of oppression are conveyed in both texts • Analyses, explains and assesses the ways in which the oppressed voices are represented in the two prescribed texts in a sound way • Competently organises, develops and expresses ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context 	10-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately explores the ways voices of oppression are conveyed in both texts • Adequately analyses, explains and assesses the ways in which the oppressed voices are represented in the two prescribed texts • Organises, develops and expresses ideas adequately using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context 	7-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes some ways in which texts convey oppressed voices • Attempts a response based on limited textual knowledge, and limited understanding of the texts' ideas and techniques • Attempts to organise and express ideas with limited appropriateness to audience, purpose and form 	4-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to describe elements of the texts • Demonstrates elementary textual knowledge • Attempts to organise a response in an elementary way 	1-3

Section III – Close Study of a Drama

Marking Criteria	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how the play explores significant life issues with appropriate textual references • Composes a coherent response that skilfully assesses the ways the playwright uses dramatic elements to shape meaning. • Organises, develops and presents a skilful response using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form. 	13-15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of how the play explores significant life issues with appropriate textual references. • Composes a coherent response that efficiently assesses the ways the playwright uses dramatic elements to shape meaning. • Organises, develops and presents a thorough response using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form. 	10-12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a sound understanding of how the play explores significant life issues with adequate textual references. • Composes a response that adequately assesses the ways the playwright uses dramatic elements to shape meaning. • Organises develops and presents a thorough response using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form. 	7-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a basic understanding of how the play explores significant life issues with some textual references. • Composes a response that recounts or describes the ways the playwright uses dramatic elements to shape meaning. • Organises, develops and presents a response using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form. 	4-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited understanding of how the play explores significant life issues with little or no textual reference. • Attempts to compose a response. • Attempts to organise, develop and present a response using language appropriate to audience, purpose and form. 	1-3

Appendix E – Student responses

Response 1

The Crucible by Arthur Miller is about the witch trial that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1700's. The story is about the main protagonist and his friend who have been accused, while people who did the witchcraft are roaming the street and soon leave once people have found out what they have done. Plays give us an opportunity to explore significant life issues: The following issues will be discussed in the play "The Crucible" which are Cheating commandments and deception.

First, to deception, deception can be seen in two ways in the play, in a positive or a negative manner. First with the negative, this is done by the antagonist Abigail. The key scene that shows Abigail deceiving the courts, we see this because of (something) [sic] irony, it is when John Proctor is about to reveal their affair and Mary Warren, Abigail's accomplice before she turned on her, Abigail tells the court as if Mary Warren has turned shape into a bird and she is attacking Abigail. The quote which shows us this "No Mary, It's God's work I do, this is dark arts Mary to change your shape No I will not, I will not" The use of repetition by Abigail was for people to believe her and that Mary is the real villain. The next act of deception we see is John Proctor. The key scene where John is trying to deceive the courts, his wife Goodie Proctor tries to make him stop and let her and the other die but he says "let me be, in no gibber am I a saint. I have already sinned let me fraud the courts" The use of "I am saint" shows simile how he comparing himself to a saint and there is no resemblance.

Next to cheating. The cheating is done by John Proctor and Abigail. John Proctor, who is married to Goodie Proctor, cheated on his wife with Abigail, we can see this in the

quote when John and Abigail are alone in a room together and John says "It must never happen again" the use of tone of voice shows that he is being straight with Abigail and how the cheating must never happen again.

Finally to not remembering the 10 commandments. During the 1700th the church system was their law and everyone who was a Christian obeyed by the commandments so if you didn't know the commandment you were believed to be worshipping the devil. The scene that shows this is when John Proctor cannot remember all 10 of the Commandments. He ends the sentence with "between me and my wife we know all the commandments" this made the courts suspicious of the character John.

To conclude, plays such as *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller give the reader an opportunity to explore the significant life issue for example in *The Crucible* was deception, cheating and the 10 commandments.

Response 2

The Help is a movie filled with joy, sadness, racism & other exciting stuff.

Aibileen was a maid of *Ski & Ski* & she was writing a book about how the maids felt & also the maids story, so they try & get a lot of maid. Mimi was one of the maids for another family & The girl wouldn't let her use the inside toilet because she was colored. She got fired & found another family to work for as a maid & she loves them cause they're so humble & kind.

The root talks about a man called Kunta Kinta & how he was a slave & that was hella sad.

Response 3

Oppression has been a worldwide issue throughout hundreds of years that has shaped the way we live now. “Roots” by Alex Haley and “The Help” directed by Tate Taylor are two very famous texts that have brought light to the issues of oppression but also be the voice for many people who are unable to share their story. Although both texts feature black people being inferior to white people, they both depict it in different ways.

In the film “The Help” the people being oppressed are African Americans who have been forced to work as domestic workers for white people. Throughout the film there has been incidents of extreme abuse from the white people over something so little as using the same bathroom. In a way, the segregation of bathroom use symbolizes everything wrong with society. It was a prominent belief amongst white people that the black people carried diseases and the way to contract the disease is by using the same bathroom which is why most white families built separate bathrooms for their maids.

In the film it is shown that the difference in issues that the white people and black people were experiencing at the time was large. An example of this is the quote “Please I want him to think I can do it.” celia is trying to convince her husband that she is capable of raising a family and requires the assistance of her maid to prove it, whereas the quote from aibileen, “We gots to send out kids away.” Aibileen was explaining to Skeeter that black parents had to give their kids away to be able to take care of white families and their kids. This is ironic because celia needed the help of her maid Minnie,

who has also left her kids, to prove to her husband that she can raise a family.

Throughout the film the maids clearly express their hate for the way that the white people treat them and having to work for white people and raise their kids instead of their own.

In Alex Haley's "Roots, American slaver traders forcefully take the African people by abusing and imprisonment. Roots is full of descriptive language to captivate the reader but also help the reader understand the violence and feel empathy uses personification to add a level of intensity and understanding of the brutality, for example "His muscles were screaming in pain" to help deepen the connection between the reader and the character.

Response 4

Think of oppression as humans being treated like animals. They are oppressed. Humans who are treated disrespectfully, tortured, beaten up, forced to do and be some they don't want to be. In the novel 'Roots' by Alex Haley and the film 'The Help' by Tate Taylor, both these texts show us a sense of oppression throughout the novel and theme. As stated above, there are humans who have been called up for slavery, humans tortured and sadly, both these things have happened in the novel and film.

When someone is oppressed you can't really hear them. They're afraid to talk about and say what they need to say. In the novel Roots, Kunta who is the main character of novel had been oppressed. Hung on a cross, both arms and legs pinned to wood not even being able to shew a bug away if he wanted. Kunta would hang there naked, dying of starvation and thirst. Being tortured left right and centre from/ by the white people. Not

giving a care in the world. He would be hit with chains, leaving scars on his back, stomach, chest, arms, legs. Name it and it was there. Bleeding and not even be able to clean himself up. His saliva would dribble down his face and still, not once would he be able to help himself. Kunta wasn't the only black African American. People beside him as well going through the same thing screaming inside asking for help. Thoughts running through their heads just wondering if they would make it to the next day. All this is the signs of someone being oppressed. Helpless. Kunta had a voice of oppression.

The Help. Directed by Tate Taylor. A film which showed us audience what it looked to be oppressed. To not be able to talk about you want to talk about. To not even be able to go to the bathroom in a white ladies house because the whites don't want to pick up your 'germs.' Minnie and Aibileen, the maids for the white people in the area Misisipsee. In the opening scene of The Help, a song came on that had the words Misisipsee in it. This song clearly represents the name of the suburb and when film had been recorded. Aibileen and Minnie had to do everything that was asked of them. Cook, clean, look after the children, go home and come straight back the next morning. This would be on repeat unless the maids quit their job or get fired. Halfway through the movie, Minnie who is Miss Footes maid was in desperate need to use the bathroom. The only bathroom Minnie was allowed to use was the outside bathroom. It was pouring rain and Miss Footes mother allowed Minnie to just use the inside bathroom. Minnie refused and said it's fine but the mother said just use once. Minnie went into the bathroom, she didn't actually use the toilet because Miss Foote had threatened to fire Minnie if she proceeded. Although Minnie didn't use the bathroom she just flushed the toilet to make out as if she did. Towards the middle of the film, Skeeter organised to interview Aibileen Ask her a few questions so Skeeter could write about it. As the interviewing

went on and Skeeter and Ableen got to know each other, Aibileen got all the black African American women who were maids and told their story. Eventually Skeeter had enough to write about and sent her story in. It turns out that she got offered a contract in another country. Skeeter was the only white friend Aibileen and Minnie had. She and Miss Hilly were the only people who respected the black and thanked them enough. Later on to the movie, Aibileen got fired because she was accused of stealing. Minnie was offered a full time maid job at Hillys household and Skeeter moved on to proceed with her career. The aim of the movie is to show us audience that anyone and everyone can speak. The blacks had a voice of oppression and Skeeter helped them talk. They opened their mouths loud and pride showed who they really are and were no longer oppressed.

Response 5

Plays are one of the most important concept of english. Plays are mostly used for when they are different characters in a scene, movie, or text. It is a dialogue which people are communicating with each other. In the text, The Crucible by Arthur Miller, there is a play based on witch craft. Different characters gets blamed for witchcraft. Proctor is one of the people whose wife Elizabeth gets blamed for witchcraft.

Thes other female who falls in love with proctor tells him to love her back or she would tell everyone know that she is a witch.

The crucible gave us the oppportunity to explore significant life issues. The Crucible has many life issues in it. There are people lying. The three girls lie to the Judges and blaim

innocent people that they are witches. Plays use a dialogue of which people communicate to each other which make it easier to identify life issues in it.

In the Crucibles the play by Arthur Miller composes significant life issues in the play and it gives us the opportunity to find out about it.

Response 6

The novel 'Roots' by Alex Haley was a story about Alex Haleys distang relative Kunta Kinte and how the European settles took these African as slave for and sell them off to the highest bidder. While the Movie "The help which was directed by Tate Taylor shows how African-American were only able to be house servents/ maids and that all they could do with their life. Composers use there texts as a tool to shed light on the oppressed and to give voices to thoes who arn't able to share their story. The composers of Roots and the help represent oppressed voices by telling a the story of how a difficult life the had led.

In the book Roots we start of with Kunta he is being hit across the head this is the first scene where he is already be oppressed physically and mentally the quote shows us this is "I am angry at my self for not seeing that on the floor." This scene show us home it is getting to him as he was inferior then the white people Alex Hale is showing The Oppressed Voice as how the African people were tourted and how his ancestors where brought from Africa to America. They felt as if they were worthless and sufferd from mental, emotional and physical scares the didnt loose until they died.

Next to The Movie the help directed by Tate Taylor. This show oppression in a different way not physical but more emotional. "As we were little girls our mama told us we were going to be house slave" this show how even as a child they were going to be brought up as a house slave and how they were never going to be anything else. Tate Taylor told this story as how the domestic servants were treated in their time and what types of ordeals they had to overcome and how they felt.

Both texts show oppression in different ways but they are still being oppressed like in Kunta's case of a physical oppression "his arms screaming in pain" show how he was being tortured, hit and abused by white folk and in the movie The Help they were told not to do something and how and what to do like Ms. Hillyer said to her friend "You shouldn't let those Niggers use your bathroom they carry disease you know" and Aibileen was listening which made her feel oppressed mentally thinking of what these people say about her

To conclude the composer of the text Roots and The Help use their texts to shed light on how the African and the African-American were being oppressed in America and is helping them tell a story for example Alex Haley it is his ancestors were being oppressed.

Response 7

The effect of oppression is demonstrated through the Era of Slave Trade and Segregation of black people. Forms of oppression can both be physical and mental. The novel, "Roots" by Alex Haley and the film "The Help" by Tate Taylor identify both

forms of oppression; highlighting the out of Slavery represented within “Roots” and the civil rights shown in “the Help”

At the beginning of “Roots”, the main protagonist within the Novel, Kunta is shackled against the wall whilst being ‘beated, whipped and shackled’ in ‘pitch black’ darkness. Oppression is demonstrated as Kunta is placed in harsh conditions whilst being tortured. The white people within the text are referred to as ‘toubobs’ among the slaves.

‘The Help’ highlights the effect of oppression through the segregation between the white and black people portrayed within the film. The women within the society of black people are forced to become a ‘house maid’. The idea is highlighted throughout the lines of Abby ‘My grandmother was a house slave, my mother was a maid’. This line shows the restriction of freedom amongst black people. The camera pan and light projection towards a portrait of Jesus highlights a sense of hope. Segregation is identified and emphasised throughout the film as both the maid and white people use different bathrooms.

The white people as a community is displayed as wealthy within the society, highlighted within their jewelery, fashion and accommodation. The black people as a community wore black and white uniform with poor accommodation. Clothing is bright and vibrant within the white people. Allowing them to contrast.

Through the analysis of voices of oppression outlined by both the film and novel highlighted by Civil Rights movement and Era of Slave trade within Kunta's experiences.

Response 8

The Crucible is a significant play which gives us an opportunity to explore life issues. Arthur Miller the author of The Crucible, say that this is most dreadful play in history. It's about witchcraft, who is going to confess, who will lie and who will tell the truth.

John Proctor, Mrs Proctor's husband of course is a type of character who will lie his way through things if he and his name is protected. In the play he says "I shall not deny my name." This shows that he would prefer to die rather than confessing himself for witchcraft and denying his name. At the end of the play he is hung because he did not confess but his name had never been denied. Marry Warren a character who seems...

Response 9

Plays give us an opportunity to explore significant life issues. The Crucible by Arthur Miller is a play set in Medieval times, when people believed witches existed. It produces 4 different acts that all link together at the end. This play expresses different key scenes and themes throughout.

One main theme is good vs Evil. This theme is mostly introduced in this film, revealing secrets and telling lies to save themselves. One character that is mostly revealed is John Proctor, the husband of Elizabeth and is well known as a good man. In Act 3, Hathorne (the pastor of the church) visits Elizabeth and John Proctor and Hathorne and Elizabeth are not eye to eye with each other creating the theme good vs evil. Throughout the play Hathorne asks John if he knew all commandments this is because one, Proctor stopped coming church, secondly believes that Proctor might be serving the devil. As they listened closely, Proctor had said all commandments except one, which he believes that he said it all. Elizabeth then stops him and says "Your missing one, Thou shall not commit adultery". Which in an instant, Proctor forgot as he had committed adultery but doesn't want to confess it. This scene is one of the key scenes because he lied when his known for a good man.

Another key scene which expresses betrayal and framing is when Abigail frames Proctor's wife as a witch. This is because Abigail is obsessed with Proctor and feels betrayed that he chose Elizabeth over her. One night, the police arrived at Proctor's house, asking to see Elizabeth, Elizabeth was accused of witchery. Abigail accused her to having a puppet and sticking a needle in its stomach to hurt hers. Elizabeth didn't have any evidence that she didn't do it but "I use to play with puppets when I was young" is all she said. At that moment to defend herself. Elizabeth didn't own a puppet but as soon as they noticed one, they immediately jumped to conclusions thinking it was true. But this puppet did not belong to her but her servant. She was then still arrested as they believed Abigail's story. This drama text was so dramatic and unreasonable, they still arrested her even though the puppet did not belong to her.

One last major key scene is the ending, Act 4 in the court room, where lies open up and secrets start to reveal. For John Proctor he was a good man but he told lies. In one moment he told the judge that he was the devil's servant that he did everything. Proctor knew that if they believed him all of this accusing and believing made up tails would go away if he was killed.

Response 10

'The Crucible' written by Arthur Miller portrays a lot of different kind of themes including pride, arrogance and greed.

Firstly, in "The Crucible" there is a lot of people in the play that show a lot of pride including the protagned John Proter who will rather die than tarnish his "good reputation."

Response 11

The American playwright "The Crucible" By Arthur Miller highlights and identifies the significant life issues within the 17th Century due to effect of 'witchery' Resulted in the hanging of the innocent. These life issues are analysed through themes such as moral uncertainty, personal reputation, integrity and hysteria is highlighted throughout the people of Salem. These themes are identified through plot, setting and character.

Hysteria is a theme that causes paranoia within the Victim. The effect of hysteria allows the people of Salem to jump to conclusions in results of fear and anguish. The antagonist within the play, Abigail uses Hysteria as a form of manipulation and deception. Throughout the court trial Abigail advocates Hysteria throughout the lines “Her wings are branching” and “She’s up on the beam!”. The psychological effect of Hysteria allows Marry Warren to be further convicted of being a witch as she is also seen knitting a doll throughout the beginning of the Salem court trials. Through examination of the doll, a needle was pierced through the doll. Abigail reveals the need from her belly, allowing her to be a suspect of witchery. This causes Marry Warren’s reputation to diminish.

Personal Integrity is analysed throughout the characters John Proctor. During the Salem court trials, John Proctor is convicted of being a witch as he tried to defend his wife, Marry Warren. Throughout the play, John Proctor did not visit church very often and was considered “hard worker”. John Proctor failed to remember/ announce all 10 commandments. This effects his reputation through the community of Salem, causing his social interactions with people and social behaviour to take a negative effect. John Proctor is left to sign his name, however was unable to as it is his only form of dignity/ self-ownership. Personal integrity is shown throughout the lines of Proctor, “I will not sign this Because it is my name!”. Proctor delivers this line with powerful emotion and volume, demonstrating the tension applied towards John Proctor.

The playwright identifies the events which took place during the late 17th Century Salem court trials through the analysis of themes such as Personal Integrity, reputation,

Good Vs. Evil, personal integrity, moral uncertainty and hysteria along with the sound development of characters and setting that took place.

Response 12

Plays gives us an opportunity to explore significant life issues by having that one to one conversation with other characters that speak out to one another, building an understanding of how the character feels towards other characters.

In the play “The Crucible” it was able to demonstrate the distress of not going to church and now many characters within the text were judged upon the attendance at Church. Many conflicts had adrupted due to the situation that implied outside of Church. The conflict between John proctor and the church gave us an insight about his problems that could easily relate to any reader. Discussing between John proctor and the church and now john proctor always qouted “for the good of my name I will not sign or do anything” implying he did not want to lose his reputation among people.

Response 13

Plays give us an opportunity to explore significant life issues. Plays are a powerful form of litterature, from Shakespearian drama to comedic acts, plays explore the human experience and are influential (or even the precursor) to film. During the 1950s and 60s, Western society had became incredibly fearful of Communism and the Soviet Union. No one dared to challenge this view in fear of being labeled as a communist. Many had been falsely accused, and the witch hunt for communists had reached absurd heights

until the “Red scare” had finally faltered. In this time, many writers made texts critical of these events, One author, Arthur Miller, wrote a play based on the events of the Salem Witch Trials from the late 1600s, “the Crucible”. It was alegorical and relevent to the Red Scare and “McCarthyism”, named after the significant political figure that had been the accuser and endorsed the “hunt for communists. Miller himself was accused of being Communist for speaking out against the people in control. These life experience can be a lesson for many.

Betrayal, love, loss...These common themes appear in many plays including “the Crucible”. There are exchanges between characters that reveal them, such as in act 2, when John Proctor shows his love for his wife (until they get into an argument about John’s affair. In Act 3, John tries to convince the court that his wife is innocent of being a witch, and with support from one of the girls, Mary Warren, he almost succeeds until Abigail (the possible mastermind) foils his effots by making a hysterical scene and pretends to be possessed by Mary. The other girls backup Abigail and Mary then betrays Proctor by rejoining the side of the girls. They now believe proctor is a wizard and had “possesed” mary to side with him and this he is jailed. In Act 4, it has been months since Proctor’s arrest and he has become slightly deranged, “like some great bird”, “he’s a changed man”. He misses his wife dearly and when given the opportunity he tries his all to keep her from execution. When the court members come to get him to sign the document that “proves” that he is a witch/ wizard/ satanist, he rejects it and tears the document. Proctor has humiliated himself and wants to defend his last shred of dignity, his name. The court decide to execute him regardless if he co-operated or not, and his

wife is stunned by his act of self-sacrifice. The themes of human experiences appear frequently throughout "The Crucible."

Since it is a play, it is written in a way that actors and stage directors can use it. All the characters are listed, every spoken line is prefixed with the character's name and all description and action is provided in italicised or bracketed text; the stage directions. During the hysteria in the court scene in Act 3, John Proctor has a moment when he attacks Abigail in anger after she "calls out to heaven". This movement of frenzy is totally conveyed in the stage directions, "Danforth yelling "what have you!?", Proctor pulling Abigail by the ear". This is the only instance of this occurring throughout the play, as if emphasising the craze and hysteria of the characters. Proctor's previous affair and resentment with Abigail is shown in the first act when Proctor is left in the same room alone with her, when she tries to push or hint about her desire for him.

Response 14

Oppression is a very serious thing it is like robbing people of their voice two books that portray 'Voices of oppression are "Roots" by Alex Haley and "The Help" by Tate Taylor' they both display themes like black rights, freedom and women's oppression.

Firstly, black rights were non-existent when Kunta Kint was alive so he tried to protect his people is similar to what happened in the when the protagonist tried to show people what is still happening in her states when it shouldn't be happening.

Secondly, one of the important factors that they both wanted and both tried very hard to fight for was freedom both protagonist fought in different ways, like in the help when she tells them “i want to help you get your freedom”. She fought for their freedom like

“The Crucible” written by Arthur Miller portrays a lot of different kind of themes including pride, arrogance and greed.

Firstly, in “the crucible” there is a lot of people in the play that show a lot of pride including the protagonist John Procter who will rather die than tarnish his “good reputation”.

Response 15

The Crucible is a drama based upon the belief in witchcraft and the witchhunts that used to occur in the 1600's. Throughout the play, there are various other issues that cause trouble throughout the town.

In an attempt to focus trouble onto someone else, John Proctor decides that he will confess to adultery (an illegal crime) in order to protect his wife Elizabeth from Abigail, the girl he had the affair with.

Response 16

The text I got was *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. *The Crucible* is a drama text about in America during the witch trials. Its about a person named John Proctor who jeopardised his life and career to save a loved one. It also has court trials being held against accused witches and casters black magic. The themes are good vs Evil, Personal integrity, Religion and moral uncertainty.

Firstly. Plays gives us an opportunity to explore significant life issues.

Response 17

The book “*Roots*” by Alex Haley and Film “*The Help*” directed by Tate Taylor both portray black people being treated in the wrong ways, but through different eras. *Roots* tells the story of an African Man named Kunta Kinte as he is being forced from his homeland of Africa and being traded between white men. It was based off the Slave Trade era of the 1600’s – 1700’s. Meanwhile *The Help* is based off the 190’s civil rights movement in Jackson, Mississippi.

Alex Haley wanted to prove just how bad his ancestors were treated during the Slave Trade era, so he wrote *Roots* as intense, gorey and disgusting as it could be. “Whipped” and “Shackled” are two words that symbolise punishment. Black men and women during these times were beaten, killed and treated badly for whatever reason, as Haley was trying to make clear. When the slaves were left to their own, Haley describes the space to be one that “you couldn’t even sit up”. This visual imagery shows the amount

of cruelty that the slaves were forced to live in, otherwise they would have been killed. Similarly in *The Help*, the maids not treated as normal people. When Minny asked her employer Hilly if she could use the bathroom, Minny was told to ‘take her business outside.’ This statement shows how little Hilly cares for her maid, as she was forcing her into a thunderstorm in order to use the restroom located outside. When Minny ends up using the “white” bathroom Hilly becomes emotionally unstable and screams “YOURE FIRED!”. This emotive language tells the audience how little the employers care for the maids, and the little extent they’ll go to, to get them kicked out.

Across *The Help* and *Roots*, anyone who was ‘black’ was considered a lesser class. Alex Haley and Tate Taylor created these texts to show how the black people must’ve felt during these times and how little they were thought of.

Response 18

Voice of oppression, Both of the text are oppressed in many different kinds of ways. *The Roots* by Alex Haley is a text that proves that slave trade was a horrible thing that happened in the Past. Alex Hayley a descendant from from Kinte Kunta the one who was oppressed has revealed a book of how his ancestors were treated during the slave trade.

The help directed by tate taylor explores oppression in a different way. The maids in the film were disadvantaged in lots of different ways. They were treated really badly. The film *the help* is set in Jackson Missipi and shows us how black people are oppressed.

The composer Alex Hayley used the text to shed light on his own people. He gave voice to million of black people around the world. He had enough of his people being slaves and being treated like animals. He wrote the book the “Roots” to tell people of how his people were treated during the slave trade and that his own ancestor Kunta was oppressed. The Roots shows us how the black americans were taken on a ship and fly didn’t get any food or water. Alex says “They chained up Kunta as he was an animal; he was hated for weeler and didn’t recieve any food or water. He was bleeding and vomitting every second due to the darkness and the smell of dead bodies. There were bodies next to him that kept crying and yelling and made him scared.” Alex shed his light on his own people and gave voice to oppressed people, that wasn’t able to share their story. So Alex hayley published the book “The Roots”.

In Jackson mississippi lies a small city where black people are being oppressed and disadvantaged. The main character Skeeter and aibileen both understand that that is not the real way black people should be treated. The maids were housewives to the white people and did everything for theme. Skeeter a white lady goes to university to study about human rights and when she come back she changes and gives voice to oppressed people. Skeeter and aibileen both write a book together so that black people oppression should be stopped. Tate taylor gave voice to oppressed people and used the film “The help” to she light on oppressed maids that cooked for the white people.

Voice of oppression were given to both of the texts. It has helped the black people be more confident in sharing their own stories and letting the world know how badly they were treated.

Response 19

My set text *The Help* directed by Tate Taylor is about the time when the African American down in the south of North America were looked down upon because of their colour of their skin. Racism was very big back then causing multiple arguments and brawls between the African Americans and the white people. The time is 1940-1960 the The oposed voices in this film are the female maids working for nothing in unsatisfactory conditions.

Firstly the oppressed voices are the african Americans. The situations is already nealed but gets worse when an Africna American is shot and killed by a white person tensions rise causing conflict and oppressed people to stand up for themselves so this girl Skeeter starts writing a book about the oppressed people's stories of their life ask eventually she gets enough and puts her own story in it and published it to the community. People at first despite it but after a while they start buying it and reading it. This opens up some people's eyes and lets an insight to the black peoples life.

Secondly, I'd like to talk about the conditions the maids where working in. The conditions where horrible they couldn't use any of the house's toilets because the white people thought the carried diseases. They had no breaks for eating they where segregated from others because of their uniforms verbally abused as well as physically on some occassions These are the working condition they were in.

Thirdly The white people were against the African Americans and in the town they were not allowed to catch a text, bus, walk on the same path as white people separate toilets for the black. The time of 1940 was horrible towards the blacks.

In conclusion The composers use ther text to give oppressed people a voice by telling someone willing what happened to them, gathering a group and standing up towards abuse.

Response 20

Personal Integrity is a big theme in play 'The crucible' narrated by Arthur Miller. It shows how people

Response 21

Tate Taylor shedded light on oppression In his text where the book is set and at what time it was set. There was alot of oppression. Not just towards 'coloured' people but also to women. With the power the author had he released a book about oppression. In the text the girl was a writer who has an open mind she was revised and taken care of throughout her life by an 'black maid'. They had a great relationship she grew up in a place where it is all wrong but she knew it was not right. She travelied north where people were equal. She was writing a book about oppression. She got an experience of how much of a better place the north is. She came back to the south where oppresion was still happening. She was currently writing at the times she needed to get some information from a maid but she did not have a maid. So she had to ask her 'friends' if

she can talk to theirs. With her book completed, it was advertised by a newspaper company in New York, the book changed many peoples mind of how they see coloured people and or women.

Response 22

Composers use their texts as a tool to shed light on oppression and to give voice to those who are not always able to share their story. The two text that represent or is an example of oppressed voice in 'Extract from Roots' by Alex Haley and 'The Help' directed by Tate Taylor.

Roots is a text/ novel written by Alex Haley who based his whole book on a true story. 'Kunta' was Alex Haley's great great grandfather and listening to stories about his past influenced him to express the truth. One technique used is Imagery, as you read his book, you imagine the horrible things that had happened. For example when the Taubob (white Americans) chuck Kunta in the truck and chained him. The part where Kunta tried to escape but oxygen was needed, so he then was weak leaving his wrists hurt. In the years 1800's or early to mid 1900's, black people who treated unffairly due to their skin colour. They were overtaken by white people because these white people had a better advantage with the equipment and resources. Oppression represented in this text is how the Taubob horrifyingly mistreating Kunta and his fellow friends with the use of imagery, thinking all the negative affects, Kunta and others were treated.

The Help is a film directed by Tate Taylor, who expresses oppression based on true events that happened in the past. The help is based on Black people who are slaves to white people, being mis-understood and mis treated. Throughout the film it displays how these slaves are being mistreated because of their skin colour. For example, In a white womens home, if the slave wanted to go toilet, they would need to use a seperate toilet; In this case are of the main characters. 'Minnie', was busting to use a white persons toilet, her owner told her that she has to use the outside toilet or not go at all. Minny wasn't able to go outside due to the harsh weather but her owner couldn't care less, leaving Minny to do the unthinkable getting herself fired. This is a major affect of oppression because, Minny's owner wouldn't care if there was a flood or thunderstorms; she would not allow Minny to use her toilet. An expression of racial and mistreated actions against her because of the colour of her skin.

The two text, Roots and The Help are really relatable because both novel and film are getting treated differently in numerous ways. Women are hugely affected of oppression in both texts, In the book roots, it portrays or says how the women in Kunta's village had to strip naked in front of the Faubob's including the little girls. When it was bathing time, many were forced to take off their clothes immediantly, or else conciquences were applied to them. This was sexess because the Toubob's took advantage of the women and the women couldn't do anything because they had nothing to defend themselves with. Oppression through that is how women are taken advantnage of and then beaten up, the Toubob's do not care as long as they get what they want. In the film Abileen (one of the main characters) is getting blamed for something she didn't do. Her owner, the lady she works for accused Aibileen for stealing one of her silber spoons when

Aibileen is the one who cleaned them. She refused to believe that a toddler could of taken it, going to far extreme torture, she calls the police trying to put Aibileen in jail. Mistreated and no mercy on Aibileen, she was never appreciated for her works. This is how they were treated differently due to their skin colour.

In conclusion, voices of oppression is expressed in various ways, tortured, mistreated, no mercy etc. The two text *The Help* and *Roots* portrays different expressions by explaining different situations that lead to oppression. These stories are based on true history of the making because for one known fact black people were mistreated by the tone of their skin. Tate Taylor and Alex Haley were able to express voices of oppression in many ways.