

Pragmatics for ESP Purposes

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Abstract

The central claim of the paper is that Pragmatics is inherently constitutive of English for Specific Purposes and that this inextricable affinity should be made explicit and theory-informed. The first part of the paper develops this argument on a number of theoretical grounds. Then, in the applications section, the argument will be tested from the following analytic angles. First, ESP will be shown to be deeply rooted in Speech Acts. Then, its indebtedness to the Gricean Maxims will be illustrated. Third comes the interdependence between ESP and Politeness. The fourth point to be discussed is the connection between ESP and Relevance Theory. This will involve notions from Discourse Analysis and Text Linguistics, such as the Least Effort Hypothesis, Schema Theory and the Stylistics of Orality and Literacy. Finally, some rhetorical tools are employed in the analysis of ESP documents. The paper concludes with a number of recommendations.

Pragmatics for ESP Purposes: Theoretical Overview

This paper is at the crossroads of research in applied linguistics and teaching methodology (particularly, research on ESP), and research in Pragmatics. It investigates the relevance of Pragmatics to ESP methodology. It will primarily show the modalities whereby Pragmatics could be made useful for English for Specific Purposes and, in so doing, it will attempt to make the inextricable affinity between the two disciplines explicit and theory-informed. This argument will first consider evidence from ESP, then it will examine evidence from Pragmatics in order to reach a synthesis wherein it outlines the scope of the paper.

Evidence From ESP and Genre Analysis

Research on ESP started with some early studies on registers of a language (Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens 1964). But it has soon shown the close connections between the intra and extra linguistic levels with research on Genre Analysis (Swales 1980, 1981, 1984 and 1986). Thus, the language used in the professions has moved from being characterized in terms of syntactic or lexical choices to characters of the textual presentation and formulaic requirements of the different contexts. More recently, and as a further development of this trend, Swales (1990:46) called for more attention to the communicative purpose of the communicative event. Bhatia (1997:313) went further by insisting on taking the purpose as the key characteristic feature of genre.

Therefore, genre analysis has become more a matter of extensive text-in-context inquiry than straightforward textual or transcriptal scrutiny (Askehave and Swales 2001).

Instances of this approach to ESP include the analysis of Air Control phraseology which interweaves two systems: one linguistic and structural and one system of referential values common to this domain and to the speech community within it (Philps, 1991). Teaching ESP to Medical school students involves matching rhetorical strategies to social occasion (Rudnai and Ferenczy, 1992). ESP is seen as a functional tool involving interpretation of pragmatic force (Hyde, 1994). Strong calls have been made to gear language teaching to the requirements of Industry (Falter, 1991; Graham and Beardsley, 1986; Leung, 1994; Pinto da Silva, 1993), and to balance the sociocultural requirements of the context of use with the psycholinguistic -cognitive needs of the learners (Johns, 1995).

The term English for Specific Purposes belongs to a system of oppositions where it is contrasted with other Englishes such as English for Academic Purposes, English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language etc. (see the proceedings of the second Magreb ESP conference, forthcoming). This means that it is a goal-oriented type of English specially tailored to customer specifications. The matching between language structure and social function is exactly the domain of Pragmatics. In other words, Pragmatics will be called upon to mediate between the customers needs identified through Needs Analysis and the linguistic structures taught in ESP.

Besides, this term English for Specific Purposes is the most obvious justification for the papers central concern with affinities between ESP and Pragmatics. The preposition for has a constraining function having to do with language use and not simply language competence. This constraint makes the approach essentially functional. Moreover, the zero article in specific purposes, coupled with the plural, conveniently inserts an element of indefiniteness which is so flexible that it can account for a variety of contexts. Thus context-sensitivity and intentionality, which are fundamental to Pragmatics, are constitutive of the very term ESP.

Another important argument for Pragmatics for ESP Purposes is that ESP, perhaps more so than other pedagogical areas, reveals the need to extend Hymes concept of Communicative Competence to encompass:

- a. Parrets (1983) Emotional/Emotive Competence [competence passionnelle], that is, the ability to strategically show or hide subjectivity in the utterance. As will be illustrated below, this competence is strategic in ESP writing (whether in business correspondence or in academic writing).
- b. Pragmatic Competence: the ability to get through to what people mean and how they encode it. This is especially crucial in interpreting incoming data, and should be of great help for reading and listening comprehension.
- c. Rhetorical Competence: the ability to manipulate/persuade people. This competence is perhaps one of the main purposes of ESP and should be particularly useful for writing and speaking skills.

One final argument for Pragmatics for ESP is that ESP requires access to authentic materials. This in turn calls for a reliance on huge computerized corpora. Hence the contribution of corpus linguistics where corpus-based standards or norms provide a credible basis for ESP learners halfway between idealized intuition-based competence on the one hand and unsystematically scattered personal utterances on the other. Both Pragmatics and ESP would thus ascertain, through corpus-based evidence, the typical illocutionary forces associated with typical structures in standardized contexts, and, perhaps, the typical perlocutionary effects that could be safely predicted from the use of such formulae.

Evidence from Pragmatics

Looked at from the angle of Pragmatics, ESP reveals points of common interest, namely that meanings are construed in their social contexts, that they both deal with socially-anchored transactions having performative forces of varying degrees; that both of them involve central interest in standardized formulae and the role of social conventions. They also attempt to canonize contextual appropriateness and reserve pride of place to questions of politeness and face. Furthermore, they both share a central concern with the processes of meaning negotiation.

To this argument must be added obvious similarities between the two disciplines in labeling areas of interest, as could be seen from the following table:

Typical table of contents of an ESP book	Their counterpart in Pragmatics		
Sample index Websters Guide to Business Correspondence	Searls (1979) five types of utterance	Their meaning	paradigm cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advising that a letter of credit has been opened - Advising of dispatch - Reporting an error - Acknowledging receipt 	Representatives	commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asserting - concluding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replying to Inquiries - Placing orders - Requesting payment or credit - Demanding payment - making inquiries 	Directives	attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - requesting - questioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - granting a discount - refusing credit - final notice of an overdue payment - sending out sales letters - offering a job 	Commissives	commit the speaker to some future course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promising - threatening - offering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thank-you letters - Apologizing for a 	Expressives	express a psychological state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thanking - apologizing

minor/major delay or errors - Acceptance of an invitation - congratulation letter Â			- welcoming - congratulating
- canceling credit Â	Declarations	- effect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs - tend to rely on elaborate extralinguistic institutions	- excommunicating - declaring war - christening - firing from employment

This similarity is genuine and not just superficial. To prove the point, sample ESP texts will be analyzed on the lines of Searles typology. First, the following passage illustrates the category of representatives:

O Level English Practice is a comprehensive language course which thoroughly prepares students for the English Language paper (Syllabus B) of the University of Londons GCE Level Examination.

The eighteen units (Lessons) all contain work on Comprehension, Appreciation and Language practice as well as English usage....

(O Level English Practice 1984, back cover page)

The speakers commitment to the truth of the expressed proposition is realized through indices of epistemic modality, namely the indicative mode, the present tense, the quantifier all which shows categorical orientation and the significant absence of any modalisers (Halliday, 1985). It is important that ESP students be sensitized to the tools realizing epistemic certainty, probability, possibility and doubt. The speech acts of asserting, concluding and the like owe their performative power, to a great extent, to the presence of such tools (but see felicity conditions below).

The next passage illustrates the category of directives:

Warning: Dual Voltage

IMPORTANT: The voltage change must be completed **BEFORE** you connect appliance.

- * Your appliance is delivered ready for use on 220 V.
- * Verify your voltage supply.
- * If you have 220-240 V., your appliance can be used as it is.
- * If you have 110-130 V., it is necessary to adjust the changeover switch to the supply voltage.

1st TYPE: SLIDE VOLTAGE SWITCHES

Insert one of the lugs of the plug into red opening and slide to either side to obtain appearance of required voltage.

2nd TYPE: ROTARY VOLTAGE SWITCHES

By using a coin turn the slot until opposite the line marked 120.

The you-centeredness of the utterance, echoing the speakers attempts to get the addressee to do something since this is obviously an instructional text, is realized through indices of deontic modality, namely the auxiliary must showing obligation which also indicated by the impersonal phrase it is necessary, the auxiliary can used impersonally in the passive voice to express permission, the imperative verify, insert, and slide expressing obligation, together with the nominalized form by using which has the same function as the imperative but in an impersonal style. ESP students should be taught the tools realizing deontic modality as a great deal of their transactions involve speech acts of the directive type.

As to commissives, they could be exemplified in the next excerpt:

Full Warranty for the Life of the Product

Verbatim warrants this product, for its life, to be free from defects in materials and workmanship. If a defect is found, our entire liability and your exclusive remedy shall be, at our option, free repair or replacement or, if you choose, a full refund...

VERBATIM HAS NO LIABILITY FOR ANY INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, SUCH AS DATA LOSS...This warranty does not apply to normal wear or damage from abnormal use, misuse, abuse, neglect or accident.

The speakers commitment to some future course of action (here undertaking to refund defective items subject to a number conditions) is realized through the performative verb warrant and its nominalisation in the title, the deontic modal auxiliary shall, the present tense and the speakers presence as Verbatim, which semantically acts as a first person despite its grammatical behavior as third person (see felicity conditions below). Similarly, the negation expresses in categorical epistemic modal terms the speakers negative commitment (an undertaking not to do something). Studying how texts constitute or do not constitute commitments of different degrees of binding should be one of the top priorities in ESP.

When it comes to expressives, the next passage provides a good example:

Abstract

It is a strange anomaly in education that children with special educational needs are rarely consulted about their views. In our presentation we shall argue that a Special Emphasis on Children must include consulting them as clients in the processes of establishing and providing for their educational needs. Self-esteem and confidence are vital components of learning for all students, but particularly for pupils who are aware that, in some respects, they are at a disadvantage, yet who are also aware that they are able to achieve. We shall argue the importance of showing disabled students that their viewpoints are valid...

Wade, Barrie and Maggie Moore (1992) WE TOO HAVE A VOICE: What Students with Special Educational Needs Can Tell Us paper presented at the First International Conference of the Saudi Benevolent Association for Handicapped Children.

The speakers have expressed their psychological state by means of evaluative modality (see Halliday's 1985 Mood or Comment modals).

These tools include loaded lexical items such as strange, anomaly, vital, valid, importance, argue (used twice as opposed to claim), frustrated assumptions as in rarely, and the understatement in in some respects they are at a disadvantage which euphemistically refers to the children's disability. To these are added the deontic modals must and shall (used twice). Evaluative modality provides perhaps the most important set of tools that ESP students inevitably have to deal with. Virtually no text is free from their traces. It is imperative that ESP students know what sort of speech acts are performed by means of such tools.

Finally, the category of declarations could be illustrated as follows:

Top secret instructions:

This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorized recipient and not passed on.

(Records of Saudi Arabia, 9)

This text bears the seal of the British Foreign Office. The force of the utterance emanates from the elaborate extralinguistic institution behind it (Halliday's tenor of discourse). Its effect is binding and immediately felt as it brings about changes in the institutional state of affairs. Any breach of these instructions will lend the offender in serious legal trouble. ESP students should be made aware of the fact that words alone do not constitute speech acts. It is the institutional setting behind them which lends a given force. This category shows how inseparable ESP and Pragmatics are:

Scope of the Paper

In light of the above arguments, the paper purports to address the following questions:

1. Should we stipulate, albeit tentatively, the existence of some form of an underlying Pragmatic Competence drawn upon in ESP?
2. Do existing ESP practices consciously use Pragmatics? If not, do they have to?
3. Should Pragmatics be taught explicitly or implicitly?
4. What would be the expected benefit from introducing Pragmatics in ESP?

In attempting to answer these questions, the paper methodologically proceeds to the identification of key analytic tools in Pragmatics as potentially fruitful for ESP purposes; pointing to procedural ways of benefiting from these tools; and stating the theoretical and didactic implications for both ESP and Pragmatics. The central claim throughout is that Pragmatics, as opposed to structural drilling, is most naturally suited for ESP purposes; that it offers a theoretical framework for ESP curriculum design; and that it provides a didactically useful methodology for ESP teaching.

Applications

The time has come now to test this argument from a number of analytic angles. First, affinities between ESP and Speech Acts will be explored. Then, ESP's indebtedness to the Gricean Maxims will be discussed. The third point investigates the interdependence between ESP and Politeness. The discussion moves then to the

connection between ESP and Relevance Theory, involving such text linguistic notions as the Least Effort Hypothesis, Schema Theory and the Stylistics of orality and literacy. Finally, some rhetorical tools will be employed in the analysis of ESP documents.

ESP and Speech Act Theory

Speech Act theory explores the distinction between Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary Acts, the Felicity Conditions necessary for any speech event to count as a speech act, and the distinction within speech acts between direct and indirect acts. The paper will attempt to show the relevance of this type of analysis to ESP.

Locutionary, Illocutionary and Perlocutionary Acts This distinction is owed to Searle, (1975; 1979). Schematically, it could be presented as follows:

Utterance act	Its meaning	Relevance for ESP
The Locutionary Act	uttering a sentence with determinate sense and reference	producing the document type (cable, fax, minutes etc.)
The Illocutionary Act	making a statement, offer, promise, etc. in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it (or with its explicit performative paraphrase)	the list of functions found in the table of contents of any ESP book.
The Perlocutionary Act	bringing about effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance	desired versus actual effects on intended audience

Important lessons could be drawn for ESP from this distinction. Texts do not simply say but, by saying, they perform social acts. This means that the language used in ESP is a loaded weapon giving speakers power to effect changes in their immediate environment but, at the same time, this weapon can backfire if mishandled. It is vital that ESP students realize this power dimension and be trained to be careful and calculating in its handling. They should be made to realize that what you intend is methodologically distinct from what is actually understood; that discrepancies should be expected between locution (said or literal meaning) and illocution (intended meaning) on the one hand and between these two and perlocution (actual meaning as received by the addressee) on the other; that the connections between these utterance acts are norm- and context-governed.

The distinction could be tested on a typical ESP document, such as the next letter:

M. PINELLI LTD
16 GARIBALDI STREET TURIN ITALY

Green Tools plc Your ref: MD/CT
16 East Street Our ref: LD/MN
Bishops Stortford
Herts, England 9 August 1986

Dear Sirs

Invoice No. YD/633009

Thank you for your letter of 14 September and the enclosed cheque for \$ 722.20.

We have checked the invoice carefully but cannot agree with your calculation. We feel that you may have overlooked the carriage charge (\$ 20) for item six, which is entered separately on the invoice.

We hope that you will now feel able to agree with our calculations. We enclose a debit note for \$ 20 and would be grateful if you could let us have a cheque for this amount at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

Luciano Dante

LUCIANO DANTE

Accounts Director

The distribution of the various acts per utterance could be schematically represented as follows:

Utterance	Locutionary Act	Illocutionary Act	Perlocutionary Act
Filing information	representative	representative	point generally taken as such
greeting	expressive	expressive	point generally taken as such
Thank-you clause	expressive	expressive	point generally taken as such
we have checked	representative	anticipatorily commissive (implicit rejection of a counterargument)	may or may not accept
cannot agree	representative (reporting inability)	both expressive and declarative	may or may not accept
we feel that you may have overlooked	representative	expressive	may or may not agree
we hope that you will now feel able to agree	expressive	both expressive and directive	may or may not accept/agree
we enclose a debit note	commissive	both commissive and subtly directive	the directive part may or may not be accepted
[we] would be grateful if you could let us have a check	expressive	both expressive and directive	the directive part may or may not be accepted
[please send the	directive	directive	may or may not

check] at your earliest convenience			accept
closing remarks	expressive	expressive	point generally taken as such

What is noticeable is that there are hardly any expected discrepancies at the levels of filing, greeting and thank-clauses or indeed in the closing remarks. The reason is the observance of the maxims of politeness (see below). The real discrepancies significantly take place in the polemical areas in the body of the letter. This is also natural since ESP writing, as has been argued in the introduction, involves a great deal of social negotiation.

The distinction has been shown to be of great relevance to ESP since it fosters in students most needed awareness of the power of words, and helps them master the appropriateness of certain structures to certain contexts to perform certain speech acts. Once such socially-anchored awareness of language structure is mastered students can be relied upon to avoid improvisations and to be more careful in their writing.

However, as is bound to happen whenever people deal with other people, possible discrepancies may take place between the standardized illocutionary force and the degree of its appropriateness to a given speech event. The speech acts can misfire, leading to different Perlocutionary effects. The possibility of such mismatch has already been foreshadowed by Halliday (1985). Consider the following table:

Table 4 (1) Speech functions and responses (Halliday, 1985: 69)

		initiation	expected response	discretionary alternative
give	goods-&-services	offer	acceptance	rejection
demand		command	undertaking	refusal
give	information	statement	acknowledgment	contradiction
demand		question	answer	disclaimer

Cast more explicitly in a form adapted to ESP, the table may look like the following:

Type	Field	Standardized illocutionary force	Possible Perlocutionary effects		
			same as intended + conformity	same as intended but adverse effect	- not as intended - misfiring of the act
MemorendumAide Memoire Pro Memoria	Politics Administration	mainly representative	agreement ratification	reservation or rejection	any other utterance type

Decree	Politics	directive	compliance	non compliance	any other utterance type
Edict	Religion	both representative & directive	compliance	non compliance	any other utterance type
Circular	Politics Administration	both representative & directive	compliance	non compliance	any other utterance type
Minutes	Politics Administration Business	both representative and declarative	agreement & compliance	reservation & non compliance	any other utterance type
Report	Politics Administration Business	- representative - directive - commissive - expressive	agreement & compliance	reservation & non compliance	any other utterance type
Statement	Politics Business	representative	agreement ratification	reservation or rejection	any other utterance type
Contract	Business Law	both representative & declarative	agreement & compliance	reservation & non compliance	any other utterance type
Invitation	Business	both commissive & expressive	acceptance	rejection	any other utterance type

Felicity Conditions

Discussions of felicity conditions for speech acts in Pragmatics literature exhibit differences as to whether these conditions are structural and thus linguistic (Levinson, 1983) or philosophical (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) or social (Petrey, 1990). Rather than take sides in such polemics, the paper synthesizes these conditions in the following table:

Type of condition	Its manifestation	Relevance for ESP
structural	1. Present tense 2. First person pronouns 3. Indicative mode 4. performative verb	According to which criteria do we judge a formula to perform or not to perform?
philosophical	1. sincerity 2. mental eligibility	How committal/binding is the speech act?
social	1. social eligibility 2. conformity with social	- What is appropriate for someone in a given social position to perform which

	norms	act? - Who should say/sign what & in which capacity? - What happens in case of disagreement as to the degree and nature of the performativity of a given utterance? How can the matter be settled?
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The above table has highlighted the relevance of felicity conditions for ESP. To illustrate this relevance, the following decree will be analyzed:

DECREE

No. 30/4/1/1047 Date: 25 Rajab 1371
(April 20, 1952)

With the Help of God Almighty

We Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Faisal, King of Saudi Arabia,
Upon seeing the Decree No. 30/4/1/1046 issued 25 Rajab 1371 and the Charter for the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency, which is attached to this Order and which consists of twelve articles, and
In view of what Our Minister of Finance has submitted to Us,
We ordain the following:
The Charter for the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency referred to above and attached to this Order is hereby sanctioned, and We order putting it into effect.
(Records of Saudi Arabia , vol. 9, p. 717)

All the felicity conditions obtain in this passage. Structurally, the first person pronoun is used (the royal we), coupled with the performative verbs ordain, sanction (though used in the passive voice) and order and the present tense. Philosophically, the sincerity of the speaker is not in doubt since this decree is published and will have immediate effect both inside and outside the country. Socially, the speaker is entitled to issue the decree since it is his prerogative as a king.

Direct versus Indirect Speech Acts

Pragmatics literature classifies speech acts according to the degree of their explicitness or directness. Accordingly, direct speech acts are those acts where the utterance explicitly abides by its felicity conditions (especially the structural ones) whereas indirect acts rely more on context in order to reconstruct the underlying speech act performed. Thus speech acts could be placed on a continuum ranging from the most direct down to the least direct act which may even be confused with a normal constative utterance. It is important that ESP students be made aware of this continuum because the degree of explicitness that is appropriate for a given social context is vital to observe. Any failure in this respect can misfire and cause undesirable effects

The impersonal style of scientific research conceals the speech acts performed therein. The writer has resorted to hiding his subjectivity by dropping first person pronouns, opting for the passive voice and relying on deontic modals to neutrally paraphrase the performative utterances. Schematically, the strategy has been as follows:

Utterance	Type of modality	Utterance type
is essential for children	deontic necessity	expressive
Such disabilities can be prevented	- epistemic possibility - subtle deontic request	directive
The definition now must include learning how to learn	deontic necessity	directive

ESP and the Gricean Maxims

Grice is interested in the discrepancy between the said meaning of an utterance (its sense), and its implicated meaning (or pragmatic force). His Cooperative Principle instructs language users to make their conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged. Speakers are required to obey this principle through observance of a number of social maxims (illustrated below) which vary in importance in different social contexts. If they flout one or more of these maxims they can convey various types of meaning in addition to the literal meaning of the utterance, known as conversational implicatures. Such extra meanings can be worked out by measuring the said meaning against the features of context.

These maxims are of special relevance to ESP learners on a number of scores. First such maxims offer standardized principles of appropriateness that must be emulated and observed in speaking or writing and required and expected in reading or listening. In other words, they function as the norm against which deviations should be gauged. Second, students will come to learn methodically the dangers of not observing these principles. Error analysis would consist in systematically showing students which maxim has been flouted, in what manner, and the type of implicature the flouting might lead to.

On the other hand, advanced ESP learners may be trained to consciously manipulate these maxims in order to produce desired implicatures. Their interpretation faculties can also be sharpened by training them to look for underlying implicatures in ESP documents. In so doing, they may become aware of a number of complications to the picture. They may realize that maxims often conflict with one another so that some maxims are observed at the expense of other maxims. Under contextual constraints some maxims will simply override other maxims. In fact, as Leech (1983) has cogently pointed out and will be discussed below, all the Gricean maxims can be overridden by social maxims of politeness.

The Maxim of Quantity

This maxim asks speakers to make their contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange. Any deficiency or excess in the contextually-

required amount of information will be construed as a failure to cooperate and will thus lead to implied meanings. For ESP, this principle could be drawn upon to justify the inclusion of some items (such as, type of document, date, topic, filing information etc.) in the documents and the exclusion of some items (such as omitting we look forward to... in some types of letters and a great deal of verbatim in cables and faxes). The maxims could be flouted either in excess as in legal documents where there is a marked need for precision or by default as in certain types of contracts and advertisements for mystification purposes (Triki and Taman, 1994).

FRIATEC AG

Service

It goes without saying that we will be glad to help you in selecting fittings and show you alternatives for better, more economical solutions.

Or we will train your installation personnel.

Or instruct them on site.

Or..., or..., or...

(Gas World International, September 1994: 20)

The text adroitly inflates the process of saying without saying much. The phrase it goes without saying apparently falls into Russels paradox: either the proposition [to go without saying] is true, in which case the text has no legitimacy, or the proposition is false. It is this paradox, coupled with the intermittent dots which imply through punctuation that a great deal has been omitted, which create the exaggerated impression of having too much to say. However, in actual fact nothing of substance has been said. The reader simply has to take the speakers word for granted and be content with the belief that a great deal has been elided because it is deemed too obvious.

The Maxim of Quality

This maxim instructs speakers not to say what they believe to be false or that for which they lack adequate evidence. As such, it is particularly relevant for ESP where precision and accuracy are an exigency. For instance, this maxim explains why in legal documents, there is an obsession with defining terminology. Where legal liability is at stake, the need for precision and documentation is all the more felt:

BARCLAYS CONNECT CONDITIONS OF USE (REVISED JUNE 1987).

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

Definitions.

1. In these conditions: the Account means an account maintained by the Account Holder with the Bank in the United Kingdom from which the Account Holder authorizes payments to be made under Condition 5, Account Holder means the person in whose name the Account is maintained or, in the case of a joint account, any such person and the liability of such persons shall be joint and several...

However, certain types of ESP documents, particularly advertisements, resort to flouting this maxim as part of their slanting strategy to create certain persuasive effects. Consider for instance this passage taken from a leaflet on Extra Banking:

X tra BANKING
ONLY AL BANK AL SAUDI AL FRANSI GIVES YOU ALL THE RECOGNITION YOU DESERVE

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to gauge in precise concrete terms how much recognition one deserves. The quantifier all seems to imply that not only this could be done, but that the bank is the only agent having the competence and will to do so. This is a very difficult claim to verify. The bank has flouted the maxim of quality by issuing a wild claim the validity of which could conveniently not be checked.

The Maxim of Relation

This maxim simply asks speakers to be relevant. However, serious problems arise in ESP when comes to defining relevance. For one reason, what is relevant for a given document type (such as the minutes of meeting) may no be relevant for another document type (such as a cable ensuing from the same meeting). Secondly, the notion of relevance is determined by social norms governing each area (business, administration, academia, medicine etc.). Thus, what may be relevant in a legal contract may not be relevant in an invoice or in a paper abstract (Bhatia 1993; Swales 1990). Thirdly, relevance is potentially open to manipulation, as the next excerpt will hopefully demonstrate:

Access to Ready Cash When Traveling

You'll travel more securely when you purchase Saudi Hollandi bank Travelers Cheques since they are, essentially, the same as cash - giving you the convenience of cash, without the risk of loss or theft. They are the safest and most convenient way of taking money abroad. If lost or stolen, Travelers Cheques can be replaced at no additional cost - giving you added security.

(leaflet advertisement for Saudi Hollandi bank Travelers Cheques)

The text has apparently flouted the maxim of relevance by foregrounding an item of information, namely that of security which is not directly relevant under this rubric as thematised by the subheading. It is interesting that the lexical repertoire of the passage hinges on the theme of security (items such as securely, risk of loss or theft, safest, if lost or stolen, added security). This leads to implied meaning, namely that the flouting was deliberate to activate in the reader latent fears. Thus pathos is the argumentative

technique used here which attempts to persuade potential customers by appealing to their latent fears.

The Maxim of Manner

Cooperation can only be felt if the speaker is perspicuous, avoids obscurity of expression, ambiguity and unnecessary prolixity and presents information in an orderly fashion. All ESP manuals drill students on how to structure information orally or in writing as well as how to perceive and interpret well structured documents. The following are two examples of texts observing this maxim:

Cipher Telegram

This message will not be distributed outside British Government Departments or Headquarters or re-transmitted, even in cipher, without being paraphrased. (Messages marked O.T.P. need not be paraphrased).

This is an unparaphrased version of a secret cipher (typex) message and the text must first be paraphrased if it is essential to communicate it to persons outside British and United States Government Services.

However, other ESP documents may deliberately flout this maxim for various reasons. For instance, some insurance contracts tend to use ambiguous wording (lexical and structural) or even exploit the semiotic dimension (such as the use of illegible script) to mystify readers (Triki and Taman, 1994). In journalistic writing, especially when dealing with sports or matters of common import, journalists deliberately flout the maxim in order to be more sensational and thus appeal to the readers:

In the court of King Michael

As the Chicago Bulls win their fourth NBA title in six years, Ian Katz profiles their star, Michael Jordan

Among the T-shirts and cardboard cutouts and signed golf balls in the souvenir shop of his Chicago restaurant is one item that hints at the dizzying proportions of the industry that is Michael Jordan. It is a cassette entitled I Wanna Be Like Mike. It isn't a compilation of musical tributes to the world's greatest basketball player or even an instructional tape, however. It is the soundtrack of an advert for a high-energy fizzy drink.

(The Guardian Weekly, vol. 154, No 25, week ending June 23, 1996, p.38)

Naturally, the title catches the eye of the reader by means of a metaphor, namely that Michael Jordan is a king and as such he has a court (with a pun on the word court). There is another pun on profiles their star in the context of the reported victories of the Chicago Bulls (is it a look into their signs of the zodiac or a profile of the star player?). Finally, it is difficult to determine the literal meaning of the industry that is Michael Jordan. The definite article assumes that the proposition is taken for granted and is thus beyond questioning. But it remains to be seen in what way a human being is assigned an inanimate predicate. The effect is one of exaggeration typical in such texts.

ESP and Politeness

Politeness and face are among the central concerns of Ethno-methodology and Pragmatics (Bates, 1976; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1973 and 1977; Leech, 1980). Not unnaturally, they are also among the top priorities of ESP teaching. Whenever people engage in social interaction, these two concepts are called into play. It so happens that many of the constraints on appropriate formulae for given contexts are amenable to Politeness maxims that must be observed. It is also significant that learning a foreign language involves exposure to the cultural norms at stake (Adaskou et al, 1990; Alptekin, 1993; Bahloul, 1994; Brown, 1990; Hyde, 1994; Prodromou, 1992). In ESP, this exposure is vital since the success of many important transactions (contracts, business correspondence, advertisements in the foreign language etc.) hinges on mastering the maxims of politeness. Finally, many of the cases of misfiring of speech acts and discrepancies between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary effects are in essence due to flouting politeness maxims.

Leechs Maxims of Politeness

Pragmatic research has shown that the principles governing conversation can be extended beyond Grices Cooperative Principle by the addition of maxims of politeness. For instance, Leech, (1980: 13) labels one of these maxims the Tact Maxim which can be summed up in the injunction Do not cause offense. ESP manuals focus on this aspect in drilling students on a number of formulae such as:

Degree of directness	Degree of politeness	Requesting Formulae
most direct form	least polite form	
		Please + order
		Please tell me...
		I want you to...
		Do you know...
		Can you (tell me)...
		Will you (tell me)...
		Could you (tell me)...
		Id like you to...
		Id like to ask you to...
		Id like to know...
		Do you happen to know...
		Perhaps you could (tell me)...
		Could you possibly (tell me)...
		Do you think you could (tell me)...
		Would you mind (telling me)...

		I wonder if you could (tell me)...
		Do you think I could ask you...
		I wonder if youd mind....
		I wonder if youd mind my asking you...
		I was wondering if you could (tell me)...
least direct form	highest degree of politeness	I was wondering if youd mind telling me....

(adapted from a typical ESP book)

It is argued here that the determining factor in the selection of politeness formulae is evaluative modality (Hallidays 1985 comment and mood modals). The speaker inscribes in the utterance his or her point of view through the smuggling of evaluation by means of these modals. Research following Hallidays legacy has systematically drawn attention to the various modalities whereby speakers market bad or undesirable news (Fowler et al, 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979). For instance, this is how the following company has broken the bad news to one applicant:

ardmore office products
136 John T. Slocum Street
Colquitt, ST 18282
Telephone (104) 999-8115

September 27, 19--
Ms Margaret Allen
Interior Enterprises
Suite 101
1700 Blanford Road
Kings Crossing, ST 18540

Dear Ms. Allen:

Thank you very much for the order you placed with us last week. We appreciate your patronage, and we hope we can continue to serve you in the future.

We have carefully considered your application for 120-day credit terms. We are sorry to say that, on the basis of the financial information we have seen so far, we are not able to approve your request. However, if there is any added financial information that you could send us that would allow us to reconsider this decision, we would be happy to do so.

In the meantime, we will be happy to fill this order on a cash basis, with our customary 3 percent cash discount.

Sincerely,
Thomas Polani
Thomas Polani
Office Manager
TP/mbs

(borrowed from Websters Guide to Business Correspondence, 1988: 309)

By foregrounding the greeting and protocol part the expression of goodwill is amplified. Thus identification (ethos) is achieved between the sender and receiver. At the same time, the bad news section is conveniently delayed and thus diluted (mystification). The letter establishes a distinction between good feelings and business neutrality by placing an anticipatory counterargument: the care taken in considering the application is highlighted and the basis for the rejection is explained, all the goodwill notwithstanding. In addition, the letter is careful not to close all doors. The rejection is diluted by leaving some room for hope in the future and slightly diverted by proffering an alternative offer.

Honorific Systems and Modes of Address

Reference to people (through the choice of pronouns, family or first names, social title, professional status, job affiliation, social status etc.) either directly in the second person or indirectly in the third person is part of a social demarcation strategy to identify ego with respect to others. It involves a great deal of power negotiation and face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). For ESP, this requires mastery of standard formulae of the spelled out in the chart in *Websters Guide to Business Correspondence* (1988: 58-86). It also involves drilling students on typical greetings & typical opening and endings remarks in business correspondence. Of these, the paper wishes to focus on different degrees of formality motivating modes of address.

In the next passage, the writer is very conscious of the power hierarchy governing his relationship with the addressee. He is writing formally. Thus his mode of address is formal:

Confidential

DO/QSD. 4/5933 1st June 1948

A.1 (Q) Reference our recent discussions on Seismic and Gravity Survey work carried out in Qatar.

2. I enclose an outline map of Qatar on which has been outlined the areas surveyed by both means to-date.

The Seismic Survey terminated approximately 15 kilometres north of the concession boundary.

3. Gypsum.....

I am obtaining further copies of the outline map and will forward one to the Political agent.

Yours sincerely

(sgd.) B.H. Lermite

His Excellency Sir Rupert Hay, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf,

Bahrain

(Records of Saudi Arabia, vol. 9, p. 472)

It is significant that the addressee is addressed in the third person His Excellency instead of the expected second person Your Excellency. When this kind of pronominal shift or displacement is uttered by a subordinate to his superior in the strictly coded strata of the British Colonial Office in the mid-twentieth century, the

effect is that of polite self effacement. This power-hierarchy-consciousness is also revealed through the use of Sir and all the social titles earned by the addressee in his political career. The mode of discourse (degree of formality of the style) is a function of the tenor of discourse (who is addressing whom?) and the field of discourse (this is a formal report).

On the other hand, when writing informally, speakers can ignore power hierarchy and this will be reflected in their mode of address:

FOREIGN OFFICE S.W.1.

E 62;:-/25 [sic: crossed out and corrected in handwriting in the document] 1st June, 1946.

IMMEDIATE

Dear Cribbett

I enclose for convenience of reference a copy of Jedda telegram No. 55 Saving regarding the establishment of a British civil aviation unit in Saudi Arabia.

2. We agree with Grafftey Smith that our purpose should not be to build up Ibn Sauds fleet of personal aircraft, but to train Saudi Arabian pilots.....

3. If you and Gorell Barnes, to whom I am sending a copy of this letter, concur, we could propose to reply to Grafftey Smith on the above lines.

Yours sincerely
(Sgd) R.A. Gallop

Irrespective of the political hierarchy of sender, receiver and people referred to, the speaker refers to all these people by means of their Christen names. In addition, the greeting and the signature are in handwriting. It is the informality of the letter which accounts for such liberties of style. The relevance for ESP learners is that they should be trained to adapt style (mode of discourse) to social occasion (tenor of discourse) and to the nature of the document (field of discourse).

ESP and Relevance Theory

Sperber & Wilsons (1986) Principle of Relevance builds on the perception of a natural propensity in human beings to maximize the informational value of environmental stimuli. People interpret utterances on the assumption that what the speaker said was contextually relevant and polite. For ESP, this involves special care in structuring, labeling and classifying documents.

Filing Information and the Least Effort Hypothesis

There seems to be a natural tendency in language users to do as little processing as possible. Readers and listeners tend to pay attention to those salient features which are constitutive of the type of genre, and expect the peripheral features will be as they have been in the past (Brown and Yule , 1983). In most ESP areas, the filing information is indispensable. There is simply no time to waste nor any justification to invest effort in trying to locate relevant sections of correspondence or contracts or other documents or in trying to ascertain the purpose of any given document. Maximizing the relevance of the information conveyed is one of the main priorities in ESP. Consider for instance the filing information in the next passage:

M. PINELLI LTD
16 GARIBALDI STREET TURIN ITALY

Green Tools plc Your ref: MD/CT
16 East Street Our ref: LD/MN
Bishops Stortford
Herts, England 9 August 1986

Dear Sirs,

Statement - July 1986

Thank you for your letter of 4 August concerning your July statement.

We have investigated the two entries that you referred to and found that there are indeed two discrepancies with our original records. We apologise most sincerely for these unfortunate errors, which were made by a temporary member of our clerical staff.

A suitably amended statement is enclosed. We are sorry that you have been inconvenienced by these errors and assure you that we will take all possible care to ensure that there will be no similar mistakes in the future.

Yours faithfully

Luciano Dante
LUCIANO DANTE
Accounts Director

First, the letter is typed on headed paper bearing the sending companys name and address, the addressees particulars, filing reference number for both companies, date of issue of the letter, topic under question (the invoice), exact reference to previous correspondence, and the social position of sender. It is thanks to this huge amount of information that the relevance of the letter is maximized. It is vital for ESP students to master the various genre-specific modalities of maximizing the relevance of their documents.

ESP and Schema Theory

Riesbeck and Schank (1978) describe how peoples understanding of what they read or hear is expectation-based. In other words, people are expectation-based parsers of texts. Consequently, when they deal with any given document type (such as a fax, an invitation card, a cable etc.), they have certain expectations as to the normal behavior attached to dealing with such a document. Through staging and thematisation, these document types will activate a particular scenario representation for the reader (Brown and Yule, 1983:246). There are strong convention-based constraints determining the appropriateness of given document types to given social contexts. ESP should focus on outlining these conventions and linking the stylistic features of each document type to its respective social function. Consider, for instance, the next passage:

Gas hoses

United Flexible, Abercanaid, Merthyr, Tydfill, South Wales CF48 1UX, Tel: (0685) 385641.

The heat exchanger used in gas fired combination boilers is part of the corrosion

resistant flexible metal hose product range designed and manufactured by United Flexible.

Product variations include their gas connectors to absorb vibration and provide easy alignment from incoming gas mains.

All products are manufactured to customer specifications.

(Gas Engineering & Management, October 1994: 291)

The text is published in the advertisements section of a specialized gas-related magazine. Assuming that the readership are people interested in such matters, the text producers lose no time to thematize reference to the product to be marketed in the very title, together with the particulars of the producing company (both postal and through telephone). The remainder of the text misleadingly reads like an expository text where no serious persuasion is attempted except through rational appeal (logos).

Text-type and Stylistic Constraints

ESP students should be trained to pay special attention to the features of orality and literacy spelled out in Atari and Triki (2000), following the work of Tannen (1980). The issue revolves around the degree of reliance on context. The evaluation is external in literate texts (lexicalisation of meaning) but internal in oral (implying meaning through paralinguistic cues) (Labov, 1972). The written texts are planned whereas the oral ones are unplanned (Ochs 1979). The distinction is in fact amenable to that of writing versus speech (Chafe, 1982).

These considerations are of vital importance in formal correspondence. How much and what kind of information in which degree of explicitness is conveyed depends to a large extent on the degree of formality deemed contextually appropriate. Consider for instance the following cable of condolences for the death of King Abd al-Aziz Al Saud in 1953:

LACF

The new King of
Saudi Arabia

From: The Prime
Minister.

The death of Your Majesty's renowned father has distressed me greatly. His long friendship with the British people, in war and in peace, has been a matter of pride to us, and his statesmanship was a source of strength to the whole world. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy; permit me, at the same time, to offer Your Majesty and your people the warm good wishes of Her Majesty's Government for the future.

(Records of Saudi Arabia, vol. 9, p. 761)

The text is rather markedly long and its language rather too elaborate for a normal cable. This is warranted by the fact that it is a form of correspondence between heads of state where diplomatic protocol and decorum take precedence over other considerations. Moreover, the occasion requires the exuberance of feelings (especially considering the expectations of an Arab Monarch in the mid-twentieth century, well known to the British Government). At the level of pronouns, the cable adroitly refers to the addressee by shifting from the third person (the new king of Saudi Arabia) to

(your majesty) (used twice with a capitalization of the Y in Your); and to the speaker by shifting from the third person (the prime minister) to the first person plural us to the first person singular I.

Rhetoric and Argumentation in ESP Documents:

There seems to be a common fallacy about ESP materials, especially those dealing with scientific matters, to the effect that they are straightforward, i.e. free from rhetorical artifice or argumentation. A close look at some typical texts quickly reveals how erroneous this assumption is. What follows is an investigation of instances of deliberate uses of stylistic figures and tropes in ESP materials.

Figures of Style:

Titles of papers or articles are seldom free from figures such as alliteration, assonance or consonance. The following two titles are taken from a specialized petroleum magazine:

Decision making and mature fields
(Petroleum Review, September 1994: 401)

Twelve tips for the top
(Petroleum Review, September 1994: 406)

The function of these alliterations is to attract the attention of the readers. The same is true for the consonance in the next journalistic article:

Group C: Germany 3 Russia 0
Klinsmann inspires kinsmen
(The Guardian Weekly, vol. 154, No 25, week ending June 23, 1996, p.39)

ESP students should not overlook the role of figures of style which are not there for mere embellishment but for persuasive ends.

Slanting through Puns:

Titles also resort to slanting where puns draw on homonyms as in the following text:

Hungary for
Knowledge
By Hilary Buxton, Bsc, Ceng,
MIGas E, MIMechE; Tenth
Dempster Traveling Fellow
Assistant to Managing Director, Gas Business,
British Gas
(Gas Engineering & Management, October 1994: 274)

The pun lies in the fact that the report is on Hungary and yet utilizes an idiomatic structure suggesting hunger.

Tropes:

News reporting makes heavy use of metaphors to impress readers and to create certain desired effects. For instance, the reference to the gnarling teeth of the watchdog in the next passage:

Gas safety watchdog shows teeth again

Every year throughout the world many people are killed or injured by faulty gas installations. Britain already has stringent regulations governing installers of gas appliances, but there is now a bid to improve safety even further.

ALAN BAKALOR reports.

CORGI (The Council for Registered Gas Installers), Britain's national gas safety watchdog, has published a consultative document containing proposals for new qualifications-based installer registration criteria.
(Gas World International , September 1994: 24)

activates the fears of potential law breakers. the rhetorical appeal is that of pathos. The connection between metaphors and persuasion in ESP texts is a matter to be sensitive to. Moreover, ESP texts draw on basic metaphors (Lakoff and Johnstone, 1980) such as the war metaphor in the next advertisement:

McElroy-The Best Ally You

Can have In The Trenches.

(Gas World International , September 1994: ad in the back of the front page)

The war of the trenches was the First World war. Reference to the ally draws on a common cause between the writer and many readers. Thus the writer appeals to readers sympathy through identification (ethos). By simple transfer of the object of this sympathy, the reader will be persuaded to identify with the advertised product. It is highly fruitful in ESP to discuss the power of metaphors in the text.

Understatements are typical of scientific and generally academic discourse. But far from smothering subjectivity in the text, they ironically make it more subtle and thus more powerful. Consider the use of the less than whole-hearted reception in the next passage:

An uphill task in Siberia

By Carol Reader

The European Commission Energy Centre in Tyumen, officially opened recently, sets out to promote energy technology improvements in Western Siberia. Given the less than whole-hearted reception frequently given to representatives of western oil companies and equipment suppliers and their consequent growing disenchantment, how successful is the new centre likely to be?

(Petroleum Review , September 1994: 427)

The definite article, coupled with the frequency adverb usually, enable the writer to pass on a prejudice as a fact. This prejudice is assumed to be taken for granted by the reader; hence the source of definiteness of the article. The euphemism makes for an

ironical turn towards neutrality in an otherwise subjective context. ESP learners should be sensitized to the power of understatements in the texts they encounter.

Finally, authentic materials also make intertextual allusions. For instance, the following title:

Tennis Stella Artois finals
Jewel in the sun crown for Becker
(The Guardian Weekly, vole 154, No 25, week ending June 23, 1996, p.38)

alludes to the bestseller *Jewel in the Crown*. By evoking this referent the journalist hopes to appeal to the readers. In ESP texts, a great deal can be subtly smuggled through intertextual allusion. Evaluations stem from the set of values attached in the culture to a given referent. By indirectly calling that referent to mind, the text producer can hijack those values and, in so doing, achieve a desired effect on the readership.

Conclusion

It has been established that business is socially anchored and highly conventionalized, and that it involves a never-ending process of social negotiation. In so doing, it calls into play a great deal of rhetorical manipulation (cf. insurance companies, advertisements). For the above reasons, ESP books have had de facto pragmatic assumptions. An informed pragmatically trained teacher can make these assumptions explicit (*de jure*).

It is therefore recommended that Pragmatics:

- be behind the choice of teaching materials
- be taken as a guiding methodology in the organization of the materials
- be as a source of linguistic explanation for apparently structural concerns
- be a salient component in teacher-training programs
- deserve greater academic interest in ESP circles (conferences, symposia, specialized journals, theses and dissertations etc.)
- rely on corpus data

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Biodata

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