REGISTER ANALYSIS AND NAVAL ARCHITECTURE

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Abstract:This paper is about register analysis and naval architecture. It is the aim of this paper to argue that register characterization plays a relevant part in the translation-oriented analysis of naval architecture texts. Register is defined (e.g., by Michael Halliday) as a semantic configuration that we associate with a particular situation type and characterised on the basis of three variables or components: field, tenor and mode. Contemporary stylistics, insofar as it is a stylistics of discourse and not only of text, emphasises the importance of the study of context in texts.
Even though the notion of register cannot account for all contextual factors (over and above the context of situation there is the wider context of culture), register analysis still emerges as a powerful analytical tool and a necessary one, too, for communicative acts hinge upon the context of situation in which they occur. In translation-oriented textual analysis, register characterisation constitutes a good point of entry, for it offers an initial interpretative hypothesis which then has to be substantiated against the textual evidence provided by linguistic structures.

Keywords: naval architecture, register, shift of regisyter, tenor, field, mode

The type of ESP based on register analysis is associated with the work of M.A.K. Halliday and J. Swales (1990). All of them argued that language varies according to context and brought forward further arguments in favor of the possibility to identify the kind of language associated with a specific context: e.g., scientific English, medical English, business English, etc.

They considered that within the development of ESP, the area of EST has been particularly important. According to J. Swales, with one or two exceptions, English for Science and Technology has always set and continues to set the trend in theoretical discussion, in ways of analyzing language, and in the variety of actual teaching materials. Thus, operating on the basic principle that the English for machine building technology, welding, naval architecture differ from the English of economics, medicine, etc. on the one hand, and each of them differs from general English on the other, they identified the grammatical and lexical features of these registers. Linguists found that some of the language forms commonly used in science texts, such as compound nouns, passives, modals, etc., were neglected by school textbooks. They concluded that the ESP course should give top priority to such forms specific to the first stage of ESP development.

There are many linguists in support of the idea that there is no distinction between general language and special language, but it is the same language employed for similar and different uses employing similar and different usages.

The notion of special language should best be interpreted as restricted repertoire. Unfortunately, the notion has been more widely interpreted in the sense of English for Special Purposes being concerned with the teaching of a special language as a statistically quantifiable register defined in terms of formal linguistic properties, lexical items, collocations and sentence structures. The result of such an interpretation has been the application of conventional structural

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approaches to a more restricted sample of language data. ESP and EST are regarded as different from general ELT only in that the former is associated with samples of language taken from subject-specific sources.

Those trusting register analysis consider that it would be possible to devise a series of register "specifications", in which typical features could be specified for each register. They conclude that ESP courses should be designed locally for specific target audiences with any register analysis confined to the particular set of textbooks for their special subject*.1

This analysis, as J. Swales suggests, undertakes statistical surveys of tense-frequencies, sentence-types, etc., besides vocabulary, and it does provide a framework (in new EAP subject areas) within which pedagogical selection can be made, even if the principles of such a selection are only partly based on the frequency of information. Such a selection, based on greater precision, may prevent such conflicts as that mentioned by Swales in (Writing Scientific English suggests that the main verbs in scientific texts are generally in the simple present tense, whereas R. Close (1969) in The English We Use for Science considers that it is the present continuous that is generally used.

Other linguists, H.G. Widdowson included, characterize the register analysis of lexis and structure as being quantitative and propose a qualitative approach which will consider such aspects as communicative competence. In his opinion, a register analysis of some scientific texts will result in a quantitative account of the frequency of occurrence of certain formal elements selected to be counted. Nonetheless, it will tell us nothing about the communicative acts performed by the use of these elements.

Thus, this analysis is an atomistic one which breaks a piece of language into its constituent linguistic elements. We share Widdowson's idea that the essential shortcoming of the register analysis is that it does not offer any directions as to how teachers might turn from sentence to text. Therefore, it seems to have very little value for the teaching of the text, and none at all, of course, for the teaching of discourse.

Consequently, one of its weakest points is that it concentrated on sentence grammar and it could not clear up the difficulty of establishing when a formal difference was significant or not.

Later on, within the second stage of ESP development, attention shifted to the level above the sentence, to understanding how sentences were combined in discourse to produce meaning.
The interpretive process is taken for granted when all the participants understand the relevant cues. However, when the interpreter does not react to a cue or is not aware of its function, interpretation may differ and misunderstanding may occur leading to misjudgments of the speaker's intention; this is not a mere linguistic error.

For example, if we compare the communicative purpose of lectures (introductions) with that of research articles (introductions), we find significant differences related to the differing character of their audience. That is, the research article writer needs to convince a potentially hostile readership of peers and superiors in the research field that his research is quite interesting

[1]Thus, a number of textbooks for specific target audiences have been published at the University of Galați: e.g. Nicolae Bejan and Eugenia Gavriliu, *English for Students in Ship-Building*, Galați, 1986; Nicolae Bejan and Eugenia Gavriliu, *English for Students in Food Industry*, Galați, 1989; Elena Croitoru, *English for Students in Thermal Machines,* Galați 1980: Elena Croitoru, *English for Students in Machine-Building Technology*, Galați, 1991, Carmen Racoviță, *English for Students in Metallurgy*, Galați 1984.

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and valuable. In contrast, the lecturer needs to create a framework to support his uncritical audience in comprehending the topic of the lecture.

The lecture can be associated with the textbook genre2. Like the textbook, the lecture represents the culmination of a process within the academic discourse community of reaching a consensus on facts and theories. The textbook differs from the research article. The former is a kind of a framework for the writer's pedagogic aims, while the latter may be perceived as being structured for a more persuasive purpose. The textbooks also provide a survey of established knowledge rather than make new claims, as research articles do. It seems that the lecture displays a set of common communicative purposes which are different from those of other genres; it also has a clear rhetorical structure which moves through a sequence of communicative steps. There is greater freedom of rhetorical movement with lectures or conferences as compared with written genres, due to the variation specific to spoken genres: there may be spontaneous decisions about "what to put where", leading to changes in the planned order.

Consequently, an apparent unpredictability in the rhetorical movement of lectures is something that the EAP practitioner and applied linguist alike must live with. Thus, it would be unwise to try to force them into the "straitjacket" of a generic model which does not allow for the inherent flexibility of design and variability in sequencing to be found in a relatively informal spoken genre such as the lecture.

REGISTER AND TRANSLATION

As far as the impact of the register analysis on the ESP interpreter and translator is concerned, the fundamental problems to be faced here are:

1. comprehension of the ST: grammar and lexis understanding, the intended meaning, specialized knowledge
2. meaning transfer with relaying the grammatical and lexical meaning.
3. adequacy of interpretation and translation for the intended special purpose.

In this respect, we consider the two dimensions of language variation suggested by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens very useful in interpreting and translating. The former is a user - related variation because it has to do with the user of the language, i.e., who or what the speaker/writer is (dialect), whereas the latter is a use-related variation (register). They differ from each other primarily in language form, i.e., grammar and lexis. Within the user-use framework developed by the above-mentioned linguists, what is of paramount importance in establishing the situation-use relationship is the "convention" that a given linguistic utterance is appropriate to a certain use. This is particularly relevant to translators who have to cope with the inappropriateness of texts. That is to say, interpreters and translators have to be aware of the role of such situational factors as source, client and use, because there may be - and frequently there is - the

[2]Genre is defined as a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes; samples of a particular genre share similarities in structure, style, content and intended audience. Genres are characterized by similarities in their rhetorical movement. Genre analysis shows to what extent surface linguistic features are a function of the internal logic characteristic of a given standardized communicative event. One of its main aims is pedagogic in that it makes suggestions about the layout, ordering and language appropriate to a particular writing or speaking task. Therefore, students must be sensitized to rhetorical effects, and to the rhetorical structures recurring in genre-specific texts; in addition consciousness raising about the text-structure turns out to be very important.

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disadvantage of losing not only the intended meaning but also the special effect intended in the ST.

As Halliday et al. (1988:162) maintains, the category of register is postulated to account for what people do with their language. Whenwe observe language activity in the various contexts in which it takes place, we find differences in the type of language selected as appropriate to different types of situations. Consequently, technical translators are very much concerned with situational syllabuses, with concentration on terminology and specific aspects of language use, such as field of discourse, mode and tenor of discourse.

According to some linguists, it is often the collocations not the occurrence of isolated items that determine the identity of a given register. This implies a combination of features of the isolated items taken separately. There are collocational restrictions, i.e. semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word. For example, requirements and demands are met in English, but in Romanian they are observed, fulfilled. Another collocation may be to break the law which is different from the Romanian to contradict, not to observe (a încălca, a nu respecta, a contrazice, a contraveni). Thus, due to their arbitrariness, collocational restrictions show more variation across languages than selectional restrictions do. Differences in collocational patterning among languages are not a question of using a different verb with a certain noun, but they can involve totally different ways of describing something. In technical English, besides the collocations in which the restrictions are not very different from the meanings of the words taken separately, e.g. exploring spot (fiz) - spot explorator, etc., collocational restrictions are very different: e.g. eye nut (ma]) piuliță cu inel, eye plate (nav) ochi de punte cu placă; pig iron (met) - fontă brută / de turnătorie / de furnal / în blocuri; fontă; pig lead (met) lingou de plumb; pig machine (met) mașină de turnat fontă (blocuri de fontă). None of the components can be replaced, and the collocational restrictions do not take into account the meanings of the words taken separately.

The same holds valid in case of a combination of the characteristic features of two levels; grammatical and lexical, i.e., concentration on terminology and aspects of language use. For example,

I am sending all the information you need.

Please, find enclosed the data required.

The two sentences above are equivalent from the propositional content point of view. The difference between them consists in the register: the former is informal, (appropriate as a note or letter to a friend), whereas the latter is formal (appropriate as an official letter from / to a company, institution, etc.). Therefore, the user as well as the interpreter or translator have to be aware of the type of situation, which will facilitate effective communication. Thus, they must realize the tenor of the discourse, i.e., if it is official, semi-official, or non-official. He also has to know if it is an authoritative view, or an investigation account and has to interpret and translate it as well.

Tenor is also relevant in interpreting and translating when the two languages are culturally different from each other. An example may be the American colloquialisms and fluctuations as opposed to the formal British English.

The effect will be an undesired one if the Romanian interpreter changes the tenor from polite to colloquial or even farther too intimate, or from casual to deferential. The conference papers interpreter should be very attentive to the subtle changes in tenor as well as in the other two variables of register. For instance, if the conference paper is written to be spoken, the interpreter

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will know that it must be more persuasive; if it is written to be published, the translator will know that it must be neutral, observing all the norms of a written scientific or technical text.
As it can be seen, there is a close interdependence between tenor and mode. Mode is the manifestation of the nature of the language code being used. In Halliday's opinion, mode even includes rhetorical concepts such as expository, didactic, persuasive, descriptive etc. Starting from the fact that the basic distinction here is that between speech and writing and the respective permutations, the mode shift makes the interpreter encounter difficulties in translation.
All the three variables of register are interdependent. The third of them, field, is the kind of language use which reflects what Gregory and Carroll call the "purposive role", or the social function of the text, this emphasizing the occupational, professional and specialized character of fields.
As we have already mentioned, there is a close link between field and subject-matter, which often brings about confusion between them.
English is one of the "marked fields of discourse", as Gregory (1991:48, apud B. Hatim and I. Mason 1990) called it. This is due to the SL having developed a scientific and technical basis just like other languages spoken in the developed countries. For ex. a Romanian interpreter / translator would sometimes find it very difficult and other times even impossible to give an accurate translation of some new expressions in some field, simply because he does not know the apparatus, or technology which is new to him. There are cases when he may use new expressions. This may be the case of words that have already come into usage as they are employed in English, or of half-translation: e.g., glide creep-alunecarea de tip glide; software - partea de soft (for non-specialists), except for the other equivalents the use of which depend on the context, on the audience, etc., i.e., program, modul, proces, aplica_ie, sistem; hardware - partea de hard. They can also be translated by defining the component referred to. The reason may be that the Romanian engineers must have started using them as they first heard them during their first contacts at some international congress, conference, symposium, or when reading literature in the original. They gave no attention to such words simply because they understood and knew very well what these words meant, and didn't care about translating them so much the more they were used like this by all specialists.

SHIFTS OF REGISTER

What may bring about even greater problems in interpreting and translating are the shifts of register within texts, which may lead to the fuzziness of registers. For example, in October 1994, the speech delivered by Prof. dr. C. Gallin on the occasion of being awarded the title Doctor Honoris Causa by the "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați may be described as:

1) Generally speaking, I consider the job of a naval architect is downright fascinating. The beginning is a blank sheet of paper and the final point is a life size ship, a whole at its best just like a race-horse having to be fast, or like a pony having to carry big loads.

The ships built in some country perhaps work in totally different parts of the world others than the place where they built.

Naval Architecture and engineering have an international or even an intercontinental character.

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All modern technologies may be found on a ship: metal construction, mechanical systems, electronic systems, architecture etc. So this was the first piece of luck in my life: I chose the right job and I have been sticking to it for almost fifty years...

2) In the shipyard records I discovered that the transatlantic liner "Europe" had a fore bulb which, as well known today, reduces the wave resistance. I found the same from other publications and I applied it to some refrigerated ships ordered by the Swedish Company Johnson Line.

3) So charming the occurence of a great idea and creativity are as long as try hard to achieve something and to face and overcome the natural obstacles, a struggle which can make you stronger even if you are a loser. But so terrible the struggle with human jealousy and stupidity is, against the secret and plain opposition, with interest conflicts, a martyrdom, aven if you are a winner.

Field: arousing interest in the topic; giving new information in the area

Tenor: emotive, operative; sometimes evaluative; sometimes detached, factual.

Mode: (written to be) spoken.

This kind of fluctuation of the component variables in the same text leads to a fuzziness of registers, and a successful translation will reflect it through the appropriate use of language variation.

CONCLUSIONS

a) There is a close relationship between a given register and the situation in which it is used. The more typical or stereotyped the situation, the more restricted the range of options from which choices in the field, mode and tenor can be made.
b) Those values from the whole range of field, tenor or mode actually selected in any particular instance of communication (text) within a particular discourse or genre constitute the contextual configuration. It is a concrete representation relevant to only one specific instance within a particular genre.
c) Thus register proves very important both from the linguistic point of view and from that of interpretation and translation, because it provides an ideal link between context and text structure.
d) More often, however, the register approach is linked to the interpreting process rather than to the translating one, due to its variables.

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