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(40´paper)

The Treatment of Register Varieties in an ESP Course.

ESP is an umbrella term embracing a number of sub-divisions aimed at the study of language variation or what has come to be known as register analysis. This paper focuses on the distinctive features that characterise three major areas of the ESP market: Business English, the Legal Register and Newspaper Language. Special consideration will be given to examples of spoken/written discourse, findings from published teaching material, magazine/newspaper articles and excerpts from an authentic audio recording.

There is no denying that, as the saying goes: variety is the very spice of life! In other words, new and exciting experiences make life more interesting. Similarly, there are many different, and why not, peculiar ways of speaking English. So much so, that there is a Babel of varieties of English worldwide. Different areas have their own accents and, to some extent, their own vocabulary, and occasionally, their own differences as far as grammar is concerned. The best-known contrast, perhaps, is between British and American English but important varieties of English are spoken in other countries as well, such as Australia, India, Ireland and South Africa. Here are some examples of language that is more typically American than British from the point of view of grammar:
- Did you hear the news? (AE)
- The President (just) resigned. (AE)
AE tends to use the simple past to give news where BE is more likely to use the present perfect:

*Have you heard the news? (BE)*

*The President has (just) resigned. (BE)*

Notice that with the word "just" (and also with "already", "yet" and "ever"), speakers of BE generally use the present perfect, whereas AE speakers use the simple past.

- AE often uses "like" in sentences like:

  It looks like it’s going to rain all day. (AE) BE does this too but it is perhaps more common to use "as if": It looks as if it’s going to rain all day. The form with "like" is quite common in BE colloquial speech but is not usually used in written or more formal contexts.

- AE often uses “real” as an intensifier where BE uses “really”:

  *This is real easy (AE)*
  *This is really easy (BE)*

- AE will usually mix the pronouns “one” and “his” but BE always sticks to the same pronoun:

  *One should show respect for his elders (AE)*
  *One should show respect for one’s elders (BE)*

In general, grammatical differences are few and the most conspicuous are widely known; by contrast, lexical examples are far more numerous (railroad (AE)/railway (BE); faucet/tap, fall/autumn...(AE examples first in each case). Differences are also more significant from the point of view of spelling: (color/colour, center/centre, program/programme, analyze/analyse...; pronunciation (RP: Received Pronunciation being the most prestigious accent in Britain), punctuation (apples, pears, and bananas/apples, pears and bananas; in words such as cooperation/co-operation, re-entry...the British are far more likely to use a hyphen). And, just as varieties of the spoken language are distinct, so are varieties of the written language. Here it is not a matter of the speaker’s place of origin being identifiable (regional variation/dialect, or educational/social level (Black or Chicano English) or even the style of speaking the language (formal versus informal usage, colloquial versus literary usage), but of where the text came from, i.e. from a novel, an engineering textbook, a newspaper article, etc.

Now, when I use the word register, I mean, of course, those variations in language which are used by lawyers, economists, doctors, journalists, to name just a few – and studied in ESP courses. The term was first given broad currency by the British linguist Michael Halliday back in the 1960s in response to demands for special courses geared to practical and functional rather than educational and cultural ends. Whereas general EFL/ESL teaching offers courses to schoolchildren and adults of mixed ages and backgrounds, ESP addresses learners with a common reason for learning – such as professionals. We know that more than 400 million people in the
world today use English as a second or foreign language. Many of these people are professionals whose success or failure may well depend on their ability to read the latest technical and scientific publications in English. For this reason, courses whose specific objective is the reading of such texts are becoming more and more common in universities, technical colleges and teacher-training schools throughout the world.

And, undoubtedly, all professions have their own jargon. (The word jargon is often used interchangeably with register which is more formal and technical; besides, the former usually has a negative connotation because it implies that the people in a group using it whilst carrying out a trade or profession, want to confuse and complicate the subject matter whilst at the same time impress their audiences by lending an air of importance and sophistication to their messages and themselves). Economists commonly talk about the bull / bear market (in Spanish: mercado alcista / bajista), words which describe upward and downward tendencies in the Stock Market and not a particular kind of cattle or wildlife market; also junk bonds (in Spanish: bonos basura), bonds that pay a high rate of interest because there is a lot of risk involved, often used to raise money quickly in order to buy the shares of another company. Doctors use such words as lacerations (cuts) and contusions (bruises), and teachers talk about metalanguage (the words used to describe or analyse a language) and cloze tests (a technique for measuring reading comprehension by removing words from a reading passage at regular intervals).

In fact, the use of these specific “Englishes” can be justified because it refers to matters which, as stated, are important to a particular profession, but not important to most people in everyday life. Nonetheless, there are those who say that jargon is a way of creating a mystery about a profession, of distinguishing people on the inside (economists, doctors, teachers) from those on the outside (Powell, 1993).

All the same, there is no theoretical limit to the number of special purposes to which language can be put. As society develops new facets, so language is devised to express them. After all, language is a living thing and we do know that living things grow and change and, so does language. Indeed, as Sara Thorne put it: “change is at the heart of a living language and by embracing it rather than fearing it, ESP users can benefit from the diversity that linguistic flexibility offers”. In recent times, whole new areas of expression have emerged in relation to such domains as computing, commercial advertising, broadcasting and, why not, popular music. The aim of the course is then to provide learners with skills to communicate in the work field; in other words, ESP should be seen as a tool to help them cope with their working environment in the correct register.
At this point, it would be interesting to define register for the purposes of this paper. The best known definition of it in linguistic theory is the one offered by Halliday and Hasan (1985):

*A register is a semantic concept. It can be defined as a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a particular situational configuration of field, mode and tenor. But since it is a configuration of meanings, a register must also, of course, include the expressions, the lexico-grammatical and phonological gestures, that typically accompany or realize these meanings...*

These authors suggest that registers can be distinguished along three dimensions: **field**, **mode** and **tenor** of discourse. Field relates to the subject matter of discourse, for example religion, politics or even mundane topics of conversation; tenor refers to the relationship between the speakers/participants in terms, for example, of their relative status and level of intimacy; and mode refers to the medium in which the speech event is realized, for example whether it is spoken or written. Thus, the **mode is the means by which the tenor is expressed in a given field of experience**. So, we see that the three variables are interconnected in that “a given level of formality (tenor) influences and is influenced by a particular level of technicality (field) in an appropriate channel of communication (mode)” (Hatim and Mason, 1990).

Besides, there are certain inferences people can make about the situation from the text itself. For example, one can infer that the context relates to a race from an utterance such as *on your marks* or to hairdressing from *just a trim please*. It is not the content alone that allows us to make such inferences, but also the syntax and vocabulary used. And not only can we make inferences about the situation, we can also often guess the gender, age and social class of the person making the relevant utterances. The same applies to the identification of formal/informal or high/low registers in the speech of, let’s say, two friends meeting on the street. We infer they will greet each other casually; but, the same two friends attending a board meeting will surely use a more formal style of greeting. When we can intuitively say that two texts, either written or oral, sound alike it is because they belong to the same register.

**Planning an ESP course:** For the ESP teacher, course design is often a substantial and important part of the workload. He must take into account different issues such as a) his own skills, strengths and limitations, b) the learners’ linguistic background as to their level of proficiency in the four major skills c) the principles of teaching and learning, d) the resources available (including an adequate time frame and also materials so as to teach all and only that subset of English), and, of course, what is considered the distinguishing feature of ESP - the **needs analysis** – to establish the limits of...
the language learners’ needs. He must make a useful division of them into **necessities**: what they have to know to function effectively; **lacks**: what they know and do not know already; and **wants**: what they think they need. These are discovered by a variety of means: questioning and interviewing; testing; consulting employers, teachers and others involved; collecting data such as textbooks and manuals that the learners will have to read and then analyze, and so on. Besides, the trainer will have to get information about the particular skills the course should focus on to answer the students’ needs. For instance, writing skills for secretaries or speaking for a marketing manager involved in negotiations. In order to get the most from students, teachers can design tailor-made one-to-one courses, company closed groups and super intensive courses based on job specific vocabulary.

In turn, the ESP learner is seen as an active participant with particular capacities, interests and preferences. He is an individual with his own personality. This is derived from the **learning-centred approach** mentioned by Hutchinson & Waters(1987), and which is very well suited to ESP teaching. The learner usually has academic and professional potential which make him analytical, critical and devoted to his work or subject of study. Besides, there is also the notion of **learner-autonomy** that must be borne in mind and which originated as a reaction to excessive teacher control over the teaching-learning process with the result that motivation decreased and learners became discouraged by tasks that were either too remote or difficult for them, or conversely, too easy and, therefore, there was no real challenge in doing the assigned exercises. In this approach, the teacher is seen as a facilitator and should encourage gradual movement within the unit or set studied, from guided to more open-ended work.

In order to achieve this, the course designer will have to know the answers to the six basic universal questions that follow:

* **WHY** is the specific language needed? (for study, for work, for training, for a combination of these; because it’s optional, compulsory...)

* **HOW** will the language be used? and think about the **mode** or manner (as a medium for speaking, writing, reading, as sign language for the deaf... and the types of text or discourse: academic texts, lectures, informal conversations, technical manuals...)

* **WHAT** will the content areas be? and think about the **field** or subject matter (medicine, biology, commerce, engineering...), and the level (postgraduate, secondary school...)and the resources available (materials, mechanical aids...)

* **WHO** will the learner use the language with? (native or non-native speakers); this refers to the **tenor** and will need to cover all the people involved in the process (teachers, fellow students, experts in the field, laymen, customer, his superior...)

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**WHERE** will the language be used? meaning the physical setting (office, hotel, workshop, library...) and the linguistic context (in the country, abroad...)

**WHEN** will the language be used? (frequently, seldom, full-time, part-time...)

After these considerations, the course designer will be able to draw conclusions about the role and form of language in the various professional contexts and present students with subject-specific texts involving varieties of English “in use” and characterised by distinctive features. **Spoken and Written registers** seem a logical starting point for analysis.

There are significant differences between speech and writing. As mentioned before, they constitute varieties according to mode or medium and how the language is used. We know that, once intermediate or advanced ESP students have a grasp of the main structures, a reasonable vocabulary and know how to pronounce most words that they come across, they often have difficulties choosing the right register to speak or write in. Indeed, they can run the risk of offending someone, or else, produce an irrelevant piece of writing if they get the register wrong. Examples abound: 1. in the English of newspaper headlines and the advertisements on commercial television and radio; 2. in the language of a live television news interview and a tabloid newspaper report; or 3. in the English used in a legal document like a will and the spoken legal language of the courts; or 4. in the language used by friends chatting in a nightclub and that of a man writing a letter to a bank manager asking for a personal loan. Just as we can write in a variety of ways, so we vary our speech according to our audience, purpose and context.

In the last example (4. “friends chatting in a nightclub”), the context is informal, the participants are familiar (they know each other) and the purpose is social.

5. A man calls on a bank manager to ask for a personal loan. They have never met before, but, still, he says: **Hello, I’ve just popped in to see if you could let me have some money. My car’s falling to bits and I’d like to get a new one.** (Archer and Nolan-Woods, 1984). In this case, the man has chosen the wrong register; this is not a friendly conversation but an interview, so, he should have used a more formal, impersonal style of speaking, though still retaining lexical features like contractions as it is the spoken language. Instead, he should have said: **Good morning, I’ve called to see if it’s possible to have a personal loan. I should like to buy a new car as my old one is in a rather bad condition.** The colloquial verb “popped in” has been replaced by “called”; “some money” has been changed to “a personal loan” which is more specific to bank finance; and, instead of “falling to bits” he has used the phrase “in a rather bad condition” which is more general and polite.
6. A girl tries to convince her boyfriend that what she is saying is true. But, she says:

To the best of my knowledge and belief the particulars I have given you are correct and complete. Again, the wrong register has been used. An alternative answer could have been: As far as I know, it’s true/it’s the truth. Who do you think might have spoken these words? Probably, a lawyer or police officer addressing a judge, his superior. This register is more typical of legal English.

7. A stockbroker advising a client on investment:

Bung a few quid on Malperts, mate – you can’t go wrong, they’re a dead cert. In British English this means: put your money (a few pounds) on/invest in/buy some Malpert shares; and do so quickly, without thinking much. He used slang words, socially lower than the standard language (substandard English) and not found in business English. The correct version should have been: I suggest you buy some Malpert shares – they’re a very sound investment.

8. A candidate saying goodbye to an examiner at the end of an oral examination:

Cheerio, dear, and thanks a lot; it was great having the chance of a chat with you. Of course, the candidate chose the wrong register; he used colloquial, impolite and everyday expressions normally used in informal situations with friends, fellow workers or members of the family. He should have said: Goodbye, and thank you very much, I very much enjoyed talking to you/ our conversation.

On the whole, we could generalize the differences between the nature, audience and function of speech and writing by saying that:

- **Nature:** Speech is spontaneous and often transient (temporary), though nowadays much of what we hear on radio and television can be bought on cassette or video, or even recorded for repeated home use. By contrast, writing is permanent: the same text may be read repeatedly or by several different readers (e.g. a recipe, a newspaper).

- **Audience:** Spoken encounters (conversations) usually take place face-to-face with a particular person or persons. A telephone conversation or a video conference are notable exceptions. Written language may be intended for a particular reader (a letter), but more often than not it will be addressed to an unknown audience.

- Apart from words, speakers can use paralinguistic features to check that communication is meaningful, (non-verbal communication: using gestures, posture and facial expressions). Instead, there is no immediate feedback for a piece of written text.

- In spoken discourse, deictic expressions like this one, over there and just now, referring to the present situation, are common; but in the written text all references are necessary (DIY instructions).

- Interruptions, overlaps and pauses are frequent in oral discourse; not so during the process of writing because they are not visible in a final copy. Drafting also means that errors can be corrected.
- Speech is not usually planned in advance. It is spontaneous and often has a loose structure marked by repetitions, false starts, rephrasing of ideas and comment clauses. Conversely, writing is often pre-planned and ideas can therefore be carefully organised (an argumentative essay).
- Speech is likely to be marked by contractions, exclamations and prosodic features like uneven rhythm, tone and stress patterns. By contrast, in many written contexts informal lexical features like contractions will be unacceptable (a job application, an essay). Similarly, writers use paragraphing and page layout to organize their text. Capitalisation and underlining can be used for stress.
- Function: Speech is a useful social tool which can develop relationships. Written texts are useful for recording facts and ideas or making notes. Besides, because they are more permanent than speech, they can be longer without causing communication problems.

(After S. Thorne, 1997)

Early linguistics stressed the fact that spoken language was not as prestigious as the written form which is closer to Standard English. But speech is dominant in society – it is at the centre of our daily lives, it develops naturally in children and is the primary medium of communication among all peoples. Besides, the scientific study of speech in its own right is now a well-developed subject. (the study of the vocal organs, the nature of the sound waves, speech interaction with machines etc.) All the same, there is no sense in confronting each other; in linguistic terms, neither one nor the other can be seen as superior, only different. As Prof. Crystal pointed out: “The wheel has turned full circle. Nowadays greetings cards are available that speak when you open them”.

At this point, it would be interesting to illustrate the main features of the spoken legal language of the courts as part of the register of the legal profession.

Background: In a courtroom context, the language is often similar to that of written legal documents; it is also legalese, but because it is spoken rather than written it tends to be less complicated and complex. Its formal manner, nevertheless, is marked by formulaic utterances which are immediately recognisable from the courtroom dramas that appear on television:

You may approach the Bench
If your Lordship pleases
The leading counsel for the defence/prosecution

Indeed, the style of traditional legal discourse is fairly predictable; this means that because the same kinds of legal transactions occur regularly, linguistic formulae have been developed. And again, legalese is not spontaneous: it
draws on structures that have been predefined and pretested and that are familiar only to the experts because they are difficult to decode. The naming of participants also contributes to the formality of the setting: the judge is called My Lord and Your Lordship; lawyers address each other as my learned friend; and witnesses are addressed by their full names and title – for example, Mr Philip White.

At the same time, the language of the courts has its own rules: witnesses are not allowed to say what other people have said because it has not been proved (hearsay evidence is not acceptable to the court; it is generally inadmissible); they are not allowed to evaluate other people or events nor to show emotions. Instead, all contributors must do no more than respond directly to the questions.

Lawyers are advised to vary the way in which they ask questions in order to draw more from witnesses and to use different questioning approaches for different kinds of people. For example, a good lawyer will choose different styles for expert witnesses, for the elderly and for the very young. Repetition can be used as a rhetorical device, but overuse can bore the jury. Prosodic features (like those used in poetry): rhythm, pause, pitch and pace, are also important variants if the jury are to be persuaded to agree with the particular interpretation of events put forward.

The proceedings of any trial follow the same pattern. A trial is very similar to a giant narrative, with a beginning (the opening statements), middle (the presentation of evidence), and end (the closing arguments and verdict). In a criminal case (heard in the Crown Court), the clerk of the court will probably begin the hearing by saying:

Members of the Jury, the prisoner at the Bar is charged that on – May 23rd 2000 – he killed two pedestrians while driving under the influence of drink. To this indictment he has pleaded not guilty and it is your charge to say, having heard the evidence, whether he be guilty or not.

Manner: the official tone and the formulaic utterances like Members of the Jury, immediately mark this language as an example of the legal variety and the gravity of the occasion. Since this is a transcript of spoken language, there are no distinctive typographical features as in written legal discourse: layout, changes in typeface (block capitals, italic print), underlining. The language of the courtroom is written down only for official records. Jurors, for instance, do not reach their verdict by reading what has been said in court, but by listening. This means that prosodic features like pitch, pace and rhythm play an essential role.

Lexis: Subject specific words like the nouns Jury, Bar, indictment, evidence, are commonly found. There are no archaisms (hereafter, thereupon, aforesaid) and no doublets (null and void, last will and testament)
because these would sound awkward in speech; legal **collocations** are often familiar because they usually appear in the media: *he pleaded not guilty.* There are also **repetitions:** *guilty,* to give cohesion to the discourse. The **grammar** is still formal and standard, but direct address makes the manner seem more personal. The **sentence structure** is quite different from that of written legal language: simple and compound sentences (*and it is...*) are more frequent though the use of the **subjunctive** *he be* and **passive voice** *is charged* are more common in formal written discourse. The differentiation in intended **audience** is one of the key elements because legal documents are written by one expert for another, whereas the language of the court must be accessible to everybody.

As follow-up, the teacher can exploit this topic by means of different activities:
- paraphrasing and decoding of certain words, phrases and collocations such as:
  - *is charged* – *it is your charge to say* – *to hear the evidence* –
- substitution tables with:
  - *to be charged with (murder, theft...)(killing two pedestrians)*
  - *to be accused of/to be found guilty of/to be convicted of to be found guilty on (two counts)*
  - *to be indicted for murder/ on two counts of murder/on murder charges*
- completion of sentences using opposites (antonyms):
  - *to plead guilty/not guilty/not guilty by reason of insanity*
  - *to bring charges against/to drop the charges*
- cloze tests with fixed phrases and idiomatic expressions:
  - *prisoner at the Bar – prisoner of war – stand trial – trials and errors*

What must be stressed is the fact that phrases and collocations play a central role in ESP learning; indeed, they are used copiously in specialized contexts. Thus, the lexical or vocabulary knowledge of both the speaker/reader has an important effect on how they cope with a given text. The problematic side of vocabulary results from its changing nature which can be due to the changes in language in general, and to the scientific, industrial and technical advances in particular. And again, linguists argue that certain combinations of words and the prepositions which change the meanings of those words constitute a key issue in ESP and that some courses are based exclusively on them.

The specific type of text that I want to focus on, now, deals with **Business English.**

**Background:** Business English is the biggest and fastest developing branch of English for Specific Purposes. This is so, because English is the accepted medium or lingua franca for international business transactions; thus, the
market for Business English courses and textbooks is booming nowadays. (A good example is the MBA degree, a much sought-after postgraduate course these days). Besides, Business English is an umbrella term that embraces a number of other terms that proliferate in the market; some focus on people, some on purpose and some on jobs. So, we may hear of English for Managers and Executives, Financial English or Secretarial English. At the same time, recent studies have shown that while all four skills are necessary the need for spoken communication is dominant; therefore, strategies such as role plays, case studies, problem solving and simulations may come in handy to develop professional idiomatic fluency. These activities are usually accompanied by audio cassettes and video material but, of course, they need to be backed up by reading comprehension exercises.

How to go about a written text: Business texts may be approached in the same way as any other literary writing. This implies that the trainer will move from warm-up activities to reading to language awareness to a skills focus. I have chosen an excerpt from an article published in Time magazine, (Economy & Business section):

**Raleigh Rallies**  
**Bikemaker on an uphill climb**  

*Ever since it took the world by storm in the 1880s, the bicycle has run a fickle course between boom and bust. Raleigh, the British bikemaking firm that was born in Nottingham in 1887, rode the first wave of enthusiasm for the sport that swept Europe and the U.S. late in the 19th century. The firm survived a slump in the early 1900s and cashed in on the global post-World War II boom. In many countries, “Raleigh” and “bicycle” were virtually synonymous.*

*No longer. “This company has gone through very bad times,” says Clive Franklin, manufacturing manager of the firm, which was renamed TI Raleigh after being bought in 1982 by Tube Investments, a British conglomerate. Low-priced Asian competitors have forced TI Raleigh out of the once lucrative U.S. market. Raleigh still exports 30% of its production, mostly to Western Europe, but both foreign and domestic sales are skidding.*

*...To boost European sales, Raleigh began fielding a team in 1977 in the prestigious Tour de France. In 1980 its squad won the race. That year the company sold 40,000 bikes in France alone...Plans now call for selling off two-thirds of unused factory space in Nottingham, reducing the assembly line for bike frames and rewarding employees for quality performance. (Lloyd Garrison. London)*

The topic dealt with in the passage can be predicted by textual prompts and discussion points as “pre-reading” activities. The aim is to anticipate various aspects of the central theme; in this case, it is the manufacture of bicycles/bikes in England. By means of lead-in questions the teacher can
make students speculate about the kind of language the article contains, its **register** (informal Business English), vocabulary, content and the like. The intended audience for this text are not experts in the field but the general public who buy Time and enjoy reading the business section. Questions such as Who wrote this article? When/where was the article written? should be included here, as well.

**Layout:** What do the typographical features show? After scanning the text learners will realize that this text is not a job interview, a memorandum or an annual report to shareholders, but simply a paragraph from a longer article on present-day production of the British Raleigh bikes. The title is in block capitals and italic print has been used for the subtitle which helps to clarify the topic.

**Lexis:** Is there any subject specific vocabulary? Yes, nouns such as *boom, bust, slump, conglomerate,* phrases such as *lucrative market, assembly line* which are typical of “business-speak”.

Has the reporter played with figurative language in the title and subtitle? Yes, he has done so in order to emphasize his vision of the changing market and the efforts made by the company to find customers for its bikes. Two images reinforce this idea: one with a more informal character: the choice of words in *Raleigh Rallies,* (meaning that Raleigh is recovering from a bad year) and the use of alliteration to attract the readers’attention; the other with a metaphorical gist: *on an uphill climb,* (meaning that the company is making an effort to reach the top and striving to increase demand and production and so, regain its leading position in the business). Indeed, whenever there is a mixed kind of discourse, combining business English with colloquial/literary varieties as in this article from Time magazine, learners must be on the alert and be able to detect double meanings, presuppositions, idiomatic expressions *it took the world by storm,* puns, hidden relevant information and all the other stylistic means which languages possess.

Are there any synonyms or opposites or set phrases? Yes, *boom – to boost sales/bust – slump – sales are skidding. To reduce the assembly line. Quality performance.*

**Grammar:** The mood is a mixture of standard and formal since the language of the press (Newspaper language) overlaps with informal business writing. The reporter tries to prove his point by resorting to an instance of direct speech not typical of a formal context but usually found in **“journalese”:** “This company has gone through very bad times,” says Clive Franklin...Direct address makes the manner seem more personal and verbs such as *swept, survived,* the adverb *virtually,* the adjective *prestigious* and the phrase *No longer,* give the discourse a less ceremonious tone. Sentences are not long and complicated and since the language of the press aims at conveying information, it attracts readers’attention by means of simple sentences with the normal word order.
Once the extract has been analyzed, attention may be directed to the completion of the following tasks at the sentence/utterance level:
- vocabulary acquisition by means of business verbs and collocations in context:
  
  The pattern of the business cycle: whenever there is a booming concern, a boost in sales and peak production there follows inevitably a slowdown, turn-down or downturn or period of slower or negative growth when the activity slows down or weakens.

- matching words in a list with the dictionary definitions:
  firm - conglomerate - market – production - assembly line –

- stating advantages and disadvantages between the three methods of production:
  job production – mass production – batch production

Other follow-up sessions may include general business topics such as travel arrangements and management practice or business communication skills topics such as handling meetings. Learners then share and discuss the information and ideas in pairs or groups. The teacher in these cases is an observer of language, noting positive language use, misunderstandings and significant problems.

I can summarize these concepts by saying that a series of parameters meet in business English. They pertain to the linguistic domain (specialized terms, syntactic and semantic patterns) as well as to the discursive level (cultural allusions, implications, metaphors). It will then be necessary to approach these texts from a double perspective bearing in mind all the time the variety of language used.

And now, by way of conclusion, I would like to say a few words about another strategy that teachers sometimes resort to in class, to supplement the reading material used, and that is Listening Comprehension. I always play the tape twice – three times, if necessary, so that students have a chance to listen to another accent (American English this time), expand their vocabulary and practise pronunciation among other things.

There is a second type of contract that we should also address at this point and that is the kind of contract that is conventionally called a prenuptial or antenuptial agreement. Antenuptial, incidentally, is spelled ante, as in “before the nuptials” and not anti: meaning “against the nuptials”. These are contracts between unmarried parties who may or may not be cohabiting but who contemplate entering into a marriage. These are contracts in contemplation of marriage. These contracts are designed to address a whole host of matters relating to the marital relationship between the parties. In effect, it is possible for the parties to customize the rules that will govern their marital relationship. In the absence of contract, the state sets the rules but the
parties may attempt to modify or customize those rules by entering into an antenuptial contract. What are some of the issues that these contracts can deal with? Well, very often they will deal with how property will be disposed of upon the death of either party.

Again, it’s the legal register; the mode is spoken; the manner is also formal, but in this context – a classroom talk given by an American professor to his law students – some informal collocations and speech patterns have been used.

What is the branch of the law? Family law.
What is the subject matter? Antenuptial agreements/prenuptial accords (Marriage settlements)
What is the first thing he pays attention to? The spelling of ante.

After that, he provides the definition of these accords and then goes on to explain some of the issues that these contracts may deal with: upon the death of either party... He does so by using many repetitions of words and phrases such as:

*These contracts* (four times) – *marital relationship* (two times) – *customize* – *to deal with* –

Let us not forget that he is lecturing and putting emphasis on what he is saying, so, every now and then he has to break the normal flow of his speech for everybody to take down notes. As I have mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, speech often has a loose structure and is marked by the speaker’s frequent interruptions and overlaps, rephrasing of ideas and comment clauses.

In short, selecting authentic texts that meet the requirements mentioned above, guiding students to work out the meanings in context and helping them develop some awareness of new concepts by actively participating in tasks, will help them communicate in English with confidence and master the different registers. Above all, trainers will have the pleasure of teaching highly motivated students with a united aim – to get out there into the international world of ESP. And, although designing an ESP course programme is a skill that takes much practice to perfect, no serious teacher can afford to ignore it in today’s quest for ever increasing professionalism.
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