EAP, BUSINESS ENGLISH AND SWALES' APPROACH TO GENRE ANALYSIS

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One of the most influential genre scholars is John Swales. His 1990 book *Genre Analysis* is a point of reference in the field and he is considered one of the most widely respected and cited researchers. The aim of this article is to demonstrate how John Swales' approach to genre analysis, which was originally designed to research English in academic and research settings, can also be used for the textual analysis of occupational genres. The theory he develops in his latest two books (1990, 2004) focussing on discourse community, methodology and genre will be considered and applied to an occupational research corpus.

Key words: Genre analysis, textual analysis, methodology, corpus.

INTRODUCTION

ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES AND BUSINESS ENGLISH

In recent years, as demonstrated by Hewings (2002), most research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) mainly focuses on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at the expense of English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). However, Business English has increasingly become a frequent topic of study within EOP, as supported by the plethora of studies in this area and the courses, quite a few of which are accessible online, that are devised within our borders and beyond in order to meet business executives' language needs.

Spanish universities are also carrying out more and more research into academic English. Indeed the number of graduate and postgraduate courses that are taught on the subject in this country, together with seminars, workshops, conferences and publications, indicate the level of their interest (Bueno Lajusticia, 2003). This growing trend to explore EAP occurs in other geographical areas of the world as diverse as Europe, Latin America, Hong Kong and China (Hewings, 2002). So we have two fields of study, EAP and Business English, both of which have provoked a developing interest among ESP researchers.

It should be pointed out that Academic English and Business English are not monolithic phenomena. They have developed at different speeds in different countries. Many courses and texts on both fields have been eclectic in their approach and teaching methods, and have incorporated findings from research into English usage and methods of teaching English as a foreign language. The aim of this article is to demonstrate how Genre Analysis, one of the most productive approaches in the latest developments of ESP (Revilla, 2003), and one of the leading theories in the scholarly world, specifically John Swales' approach, can be used for the textual analysis of occupational genres, although it exclusively focuses on English in academic and research contexts. Our study will deal with the three concepts that Swales developed in his 1990 book and subsequently refined in his 2004 book: discourse community, task and genre. They will be consequently applied to an occupational corpus of study.

SWALES AND THE GENRE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Swales is considered the father of Genre Analysis and one of the most influential, prolific (1981, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2004…) and cited authors in ESP research (Hewings 2002). In his two latest books *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings* (1990) and *Research genres. Explorations and Applications* (2004) he explores academic discourse and provides a theoretical framework which can be applied to the teaching of English for academic purposes and the development of students' communicative competence in academic settings. As mentioned above, there are three key concepts of his approach to genre analysis, which will consequently be examined: discourse community, task and genre.

Six defining characteristics are needed for a group of individuals to be recognized as a *discourse community*: they must have a broad set of common

public goals, mechanisms of intercommunication among their members and provide information and feedback. This includes correspondence, meetings, newsletters, etc. They must also own genres to communicate its aims and some specific lexis as well as a specialized terminology, abbreviations and acronyms. The sixth characteristic refers to the importance of an adequate threshold level of new and old members in the community as "survival of the community depends on a reasonable ratio between novices and experts" (Swales, 1990:27).

The second key concept for Swales and, it refers to methodology, is *task*. It is of such great importance that it is what lies at the heart of his theoretical framework as he demonstrates the teaching value of genre analysis. Task is "One of a set of differentiated, sequenceable goal-oriented activities drawing upon a range of cognitive and communicative procedures relatable to the acquisition of pre-genres and genres skills appropriate to a foreseen or emerging socio-rhetorical situation" (1990:76). This methodology intends to make the students know the socio-linguistic roles that texts play in particular discourse communities and to carry out effective communication. It focuses on rhetorical analysis and discussions of texts and on a later production of students' own texts following the features of internalised distinctive genre. Widdowson (2004) also points out the importance of making students familiar with different genre conventions so that they can conform to the conventions and understand what they are conforming to.

Swales (1990) interprets *genre* as a class of communicative events which share a set of communicative purposes, well recognized by expert members of the discourse community that produce and use them. The communicative purpose constitutes the rationale for the genre and determines content, positioning and form. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre show evidence of various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, rhetorical organization, style, content, and intended audience, and operate to identify the extent to which an exemplar is prototypical of a particular genre.

Based on the family resemblance approach (Wittgenstein, 1958), Swales points out that texts within a genre may have features in common, similarities, as have members of a family, but do not have to be identical. Wittgentein's approach leads to the theory of the prototype, designed to explain our ability to recognize examples of categories. This approach, based on the psycholinguistic concept of prototypicality, is most often associated to Rosch (1975, 1978) and Armstrong et al. (1983), among others. According to this approach, some texts would be widely regarded as being more typical of a genre than others by members of a discourse community. Expert members of a discourse community, academic or professional, know, as part of their daily work, the structure of the genres they use to communicate its objectives. It is precisely their continued use which makes them experts in the management and

production of the genres used by their community. They themselves give it a conventional internal structure, which is divided into parts or moves and is always determined by the communicative purpose.

Yet users of a genre, even though they have complete freedom for development, restrain and produce it as they are expected to do so, and make use of the rules and conventions pertaining to the genre. As Bhatia (1993:14) points out "Any mismatch in the use of generis resources is noticed as odd not only by the members of the specialist community, but also by the good user of the language in general".

Nevertheless, in his 2004 book, Swales describes genres as metaphorical constellations of interrelated text types. Genres are not just considered as isolated discourse with a given communicative purpose but "as forming complex networks of various kinds in which switching mode from speech to writing (and vice versa) can –and often does- play a natural and significant part." (2) He therefore focuses on the interrelation of genres together with their institutional conventions and localised settings. He feels less confident about the value of and viability of his 1990 definition because it cannot be proved that it is true in all possible worlds and all possible times. Putting it another way, he argues that a genre may have different and multiple purposes depending on the social group which produces it and he affirms "Social purposes evolve, and they can also expand o shrink…nonprototypical features can occupy more central ground, institutional attitudes can become more or less friendly to outsiders, and even speech acts can give rise to different interpretations" (73). Swales proposes the term "repurposing the genre" and offers two schematic procedures depending on whether a linguistic/ ESP approach or a New Rhetoric approach were taken. The ESP approach looks to the situational context to interpret the linguistic and discourse structures, while the aim of the New Rhetoric is to interpret the situational context of the text. Both procedures can of course be combined.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH CORPUS

Business correspondence is one mechanism of intercommunication used by the business discourse community[1] in order to convey information and carry out

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[1] The business community represents a discourse community because it shares the following characteristics: different mechanisms of intercommunication among its members to transmit and

different business transactions. The fact that business correspondence, letters and e-mails, continues to be relevant for the business discourse community is evidenced by the profusion of websites devoted to the learning of business English. Any search engine will throw up thousands of results offering a variety of courses available, some requiring attendance, others long-distance. There has also been research on the subject in recent decades in Spain (Bueno Lajusticia, 2003) and worldwide (Hewings 2002), allowing us to conclude that the topic continues to incite a huge amount of interest.

Now the focus of this paper is the analysis of six model letters,[2] which place orders for commercial goods, in order to find out whether they share the characteristics of the genre they are supposed to belong to and whether they can be exploited as models by students, who can use them to understand and acquire the intrinsic features of each type text. Following Widdowson's proposals (2004), our interest is to underline and check, at the same time, the teaching value of "pedagogic texts", which have been written for students to learn from. For Widdowson (2004:40), "The professional text is designed to meet communicative purposes within particular discourse communities. The pedagogic text is designed with the purpose of preparing students to communicate as members of these discourse communities". The aim of any business correspondence course is therefore to prepare students to engage with example letters as members of the business discourse community.

Some recommendations of the "text-driven procedure for genre analysis" will be considered and we will consequently adopt a linguistic approach which looks to the situational context to interpret the linguistic and discourse structure. Our analysis will start by considering the overall organization of the text, its different parts and moves (Swales, 1981) and its textual structure. Then the communicative and rhetorical functions of the moves will be examined and we will consider if their selection has been motivated by the communicative purpose of each move, which is simultaneously related to the main communicative purpose of the text. Phraseology, conventions, syntactic, lexical and rhetorical features of the moves will be considered since "different sections will have different rhetorical features" (Swales, 1990:175).

Our last interest is focused on confirming whether Swales' approach to genre analysis, originally designed for the research of scholarly texts, can be used for the analysis of business correspondence texts.

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achieve its goals as well as to provide information and feedback. It also possesses genres, some specific lexis and a threshold level of expert and new members.

[2] These model letters come from the textbook *Longman Commercial Communication*, by A.J. Stanton & L.R. Wood.

MODEL LETTERS PLACING ORDERS

I.- TEXTUAL ORGANIZATION AND CONVENTIONS

1.- The subject of the letter is between the greeting and the introduction in two of six exemplars).

- *Order for the SCROLL 2000 Word Processor*

- *Order for Electronic Programmers*

2.- They are often long letters because of the many issues to deal with. Five of the six analyzed share the structure of a typical business letter. They are divided into three moves: introduction, central and final move. The introduction refers to the letter where the information requested was provided.

- *We thank you for your letter of 29 May quoting prices and delivery terms for the electronic programmers, model EP 300.*

The central move is divided into three steps. The first step refers to the satisfaction and acceptance of the quoted prices, discounts, samples, etc.:

- *We have contacted Mr Nixon, as you suggested, and his demonstration of the Scroll 2000 convinced us that this model will meet our requirements.*

 -*Your offer of a 20% trade discount with a further discount for bulk orders is also quite satisfactory.*

The second step is the most important and fundamental, because part of the rationale occurs: the placing of the order. This is the obligatory step where the main communicative purpose happens.

-*We are therefore placing an order for 600 SCROLL 2000 word processors. -We enclose our official order form Nº. YT 945.*

Once the order is placed, the third step of the central move focuses on other aspects of the business deal which have not been finalized, such as confirming or suggesting a form of payment, conditions and dates of delivery of goods, and so on. The incoterms appear in four of the six letters analyzed. Incoterms or international commercial terms are a series of international sales terms that are widely used throughout the world. They deal with questions related to the delivery of the products from the seller to the buyer and are devised and published by the International Chamber of Commerce. They are part of the specific lexis of the business discourse community, which can hardly be understood by an outsider to that community. For Swales (1990:26) this would

be one of the main characteristics of a discourse community. "In addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis ...Most commonly, however, the inbuilt dynamic towards an increasingly shared and specialized terminology is realized through the development of community-specific abbreviations and acronyms". The use of these acronyms is required for efficient communication exchange between experts.

Some of the most frequently used (2000 official version) are the following: EXW (Ex Works), FAS (Free Alongside Ship), FOB (Free on Board), CAF (Cost and Freight), CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight)

- We suggest that payment is by Documentary Credit, CIF Toronto, as with our last order for car alarms.

- We would like to confirm that payment is to be made by Documentary Credit. We are therefore instructing Finlays Bank International, Nairobi, to open a Documentary Credit in your favour, CIF Mombasa.

The final move refers to the reception of the goods and subsequent business deals:

- We look forward to receiving our order and doing business with you in future.

II.- RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS, PHRASEOLOGY AND CONVENTIONS

First move: reference to the previously received letter.

1- We thank you for your letter of 17 January, in which you enclosed your catalogue and...

2-We thank you for your letter of 1 March enclosing...

3-We thank you for your letter of 3 April quoting prices and delivery terms...

4- We thank you for your letter of 5 September in which you quoted prices and...

5-We thank you for the samples / price list / catalogue which you sent us.

Central move:

First step: opinions about prices, discounts, samples, payment terms, etc.:

6- We have examined the samples and are satisfied with their quality.

7- We have tested the samples and are satisfied with their performance.

8- We are satisfied that the quoted terms are acceptable.

9- Your offer of a 20% trade discount is satisfactory.

10-The quoted terms are acceptable to us

11- We are pleased to inform / confirm that the quoted terms are satisfactory.

12- We are satisfied with the quoted terms, CIF Santander.

Second step: a) placing the order

13- We are therefore placing an order for...

14- We are therefore placing an order for... fob Dover.

15- We are ordering... fas Lisbon.

16- Please find enclosed our order form No. B 786, for...

17- We therefore enclose our official order form, No. 2401, for...

Second step: b) confirmation and suggestions of payment terms:

18- We would like to confirm that payment is to be made by Documentary Credit.

19- As agreed, payment is to be made by Documentary Credit CIF Aberdeen.

20- We accept / confirm payment by Giro Transfer DDP London.

21- The terms are CIF Hamburg.

22- We suggest that payment should be by Irrevocable Documentary Credit C&F Liverpool.

23- Our usual method of payment is by ... and we trust that this will be acceptable to you.

24- Our bank will issue a Documentary Credit in your favour CIF Southampton.

25- We will instruct our bank to issue a Documentary Credit in your favour.

26- We are instructing Finlays Bank International, Nairobi to open a Documentary Credit in your favour, CIF Mombasa.

Third step: delivery deadline.

27- Delivery by... is essential.

28- Delivery by...is a firm condition of the order.

29- This order is subject to delivery before 31 July.

30- Please note that delivery by 14 August is essential.

31- Please confirm that you can deliver by ...

32- We reserve the right to cancel the order and / or return the shipment at your own risk and expense at any time after that date.

Final move: end of the letter.

33- We look forward to receiving our order and doing further business with you in future.

34- We look forward to receiving our order.

35- We look forward to taking delivery of the vehicles.

36- We look forward to your acknowledgement.

III.- CONCLUSIONS WITH METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

From our research, we reached the following methodological implications:

1.- From a structural point of view, the model letters, placing orders, share the characteristic structure of a business letter. The opening and final moves fulfil their typical communicative purposes. The first move refers to a previous received letter providing background information while the final move is the link with the letter that is expected to follow. Both purposes contribute to the transmission of the fundamental communicative purpose: to place an order under the best possible conditions. The rationale partly occurs in the obligatory central move. Thus the main communicative purpose defines the order and structure of the letter and it is conveyed promptly because it hopes to be well received by the reader of the letter.

2 .- From a linguistic point of view, an occasional use of *linking signals* has been stated.

-*We are **therefore** placing an order for...*

***As agreed**, payment is to be made by...*

3.- From a rhetorical point of view, one may note the restricted use of *hedges* as if a direct style rather than indirect were considered more relevant since here the addressee of the letter is writing from an advantageous position (the buyer). He shows respect and collaboration but it is the recipient of the letter, the supplier of goods, who must maintain a *reverential* tone during the whole transaction using an indirect polite style. Nevertheless, the writer takes the lead on certain issues and **is** even makes some demands that he hopes the supplier will endorse. The auxiliary *will*, even in the passive voice, as rhetorical strategy, is used to express determination

-*We will instruct our bank to issue a Documentary Credit in your favour...*

-*You will be informed, through your own bank, of the type and number of documents that you must prepare.*

The verb *suggest* is used to propose concrete solutions:

-*We suggest that payment should be by Giro transfer and trust that this will be acceptable to you.*

A direct language including imperatives with *please* are used to demand satisfaction.

-*Delivery by 30 April is essential, and we reserve the right to cancel the order and /or return the shipment at your risk and expense at any time after that date.*

- *Please confirm that you can deliver within fourteen days.*

 Hedges are used casually, with an intensifying value in the first example, and polite in the second:

-*Your offer of a 20% trade discount is also **quite** satisfactory.*

-***We are glad** to be able to inform you...*

Explanations are used to demand collaboration and satisfaction:

-*As our stocks are low and demand is high, we require prompt delivery.*

The acceptance of suggestions is noted:

-*We have contacted Mr Nixon, as you suggested...*

and the confirmation of agreements:

-*As agreed, payment is to be made by...*

-*We would like to confirm that payment is to b ...*

We note the use of words (*a vocabulary lexis is employed*) with positive connotations to indicate acceptance of agreements, bids, prices, discounts, etc…

-*We are satisfied that the quoted terms are acceptable.*

-*Your offer of a 20% trade discount is also quite satisfactory.*

4.- From a grammatical point of view, the following recurrent expressions are noted:

 Passive voice sentences

-*You will be informed, through your own bank, of the type and number of documents...*

-*We suggest that payment should be by Documentary Credit.*

-*We would like to confirm that payment is to be made by Giro Transfer.*

Object + to + infinitive structures

-*We will instruct our bank to issue a Documentary Credit in your favour.*

5.- From a lexical point of view: vocabulary to express satisfaction about the agreed business terms are noted. Difference between the past participle *satisfied* and the adjective *satisfactory*.

-*We are satisfied that the quoted terms are acceptable.*

-*We are satisfied with the quality of the samples.*

-*Your offer is satisfactory*

 Expressions regarding the formulation of an order

place an order for.../ to order..., enclose an order form for...

Vocabulary concerning payment terms and documents: *delivery; payment terms; issue documents; documentary credit...*

Different collocations using "meet": *meet requirements / an order / a delivery date / deadline...*

Incoterms: *fob, cif, c&f, etc*

Finally, it is worth mentioning that distinctive business phraseology is frequently noted in letters placing orders. This also has characteristic translations in the Spanish business correspondence. It would be desirable to see the practice of translation between the two languages seeking an equivalent effect between the two languages:

-*We reserve the right to cancel de order and / or return the shipment at your risk and expense at any time after that date. (Nos reservamos el derecho*

de cancelar o devolver el envío, por su cuenta y riesgo, si éste llegara después de la fecha acordada.)

   -This order is subject to delivery by 31 July.

   -Please note that delivery by 14 August is essential.

   (La mercancía deberá estar en nuestro poder ...)

CONCLUSIONS

   We have ascertained that the genre-centred analysed model letters share distinctive characteristics with the genre of Letters formulating orders. They comprise a class of communicative events with a common communicative purpose, which constitutes the rationale that shapes the textual structure and influences and restrains choice of style and content. The rationale has almost always partly materialised in the obligatory step and in the central move.

   The model letters analysed share the typical textual structure of a business letter. They are divided in three moves and each one has its own distinctive communicative purpose, which contribute to the transmission of the rationale. They also exhibit patterns of similarity in terms of style, content (syntactic and lexical), rhetorical strategies, communicative functions, phraseology, conventions, and intended audience. They confirm the "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein,1956) and they can be used as examples because they can be viewed as prototypical of their genre and are easily recognised by expert members of the business discourse community.

   In conclusion, we can confirm that John Swales' approach to genre analysis, which was originally designed for the research of English in academic and research settings, can also be used for the textual analysis of business correspondence genres as has been shown in this paper, which can be used as reference for similar linguistic analysis.

   More research is necessary to develop the text-driven and New Rhetoric procedures for the genre analysis of occupational texts.

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