Universidad del Salvador
Facultad de Filosofía, Historia y Letras
Doctorado en Lenguas Modernas

GRACIELA M. PESCETTO TRAVERSO de BULLERAICH
(D.N.I. N° 5.612.284)

THESIS

STRATEGIES IN READING COMPREHENSION:
**How to Train Intermediate/Advanced Students
to Achieve Proficiency in the ESP Class**

Thesis Advisor:
Prof. Dr. Héctor Valencia

Buenos Aires – República Argentina
- 2005 -

CONTENTS

PART I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In our classrooms and on our campuses, we should assist students to draw from their past strategies and experiences and to develop new approaches to texts and tasks. Our classrooms should encourage student research into their own literacy and text histories, into current approaches to literate practices, and into strategies that work in a variety of contexts.

(Johns, 1997: 19)[1]

Teachers have frequently experienced and expressed the fact that students lack proficiency in Reading Comprehension, even in their native linguaculture, when they take up foreign language learning or even Teacher/Translator Training Courses at an intermediate or advanced level. Therefore, the purpose of this Thesis is to show that textual skills should be developed in the first phase to ensure that students achieve proficiency in the target language. At a later stage, the acquired knowledge of reading skills can be transferred to the study of contrastive registers followed by the practice of productive/communicative language activities.

This Thesis focuses on the importance of developing a "top down" approach (often referred to as knowledge- or concept-driven approach), proceeding from the macro to the micro level, from text to sign, as one of the ways in which learners analyse and process language when aiming at written discourse comprehension. The model I have developed takes such things as genre and context as starting points for discussing textual problems and strategies instead of dealing with individual words/lexical items, phrases and grammatical structures typical of the "bottom-up" approach, also known as data-driven processing which I consider less effective when analysing texts. Undoubtedly, if readers are acquainted with the subject matter of the text, content and genre, they will find their task much easier than when such preparatory information is not available. After all, a text is a semantic unit not a grammatical one. In other words, texts are meaning units, not form units, and working with words and phrases in isolation or out of context - even when translating them - makes comprehension much more difficult.

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[1]Johns, A. M. (1997). *Text, role and context: Developing academic literacies.*Cambridge: CUP.

Nonetheless, we now see increasing arguments which view both types of processing as complementary and interactive in nature. Furthermore, it has been shown that good readers in EFL[2] have excellent decoding skills and can decode words, collocations, and other structural and semantic cues with sensible, global predictions related to the text as a whole. Indeed, they can do so rapidly and in a bottom-up fashion.

However, more often than not, non-native language users lack the proficiency that enables them to process the written discourse without difficulty. The top-down type of processing facilitates text interpretation by resorting to contextual features and background knowledge, two basic ideas underlying this approach.

I have thus conducted this research on the analysis and exploitation of authentic texts in the ESP[3] class taking into account, first and foremost, the "content schema"[4] which I have provided wherever necessary to make text interpretation possible. Content schema is one of the two types of schematic knowledge. It refers to background or prior knowledge of the topic dealt with. Students learn to differentiate it from "formal schema" which implies knowledge of discourse organization or macrostructure involving different genres, topics or purposes. Later on, the micro features concerning text analysis are also taught: learners become aware of paragraph division; they identify topic sentences, signal the relationship among sentences (unity, coherence, emphasis), study collocations and figures of speech, to name but a few. Writing - a productive language skill - has also been covered, though to a lesser extent, in the last two chapters, thus enabling students to develop both a content-based and skills-based course in ESP.

Even translators are well aware of the fact that it is usually preferable, when dealing with technical or specialized material, to begin by reading the text at least twice to find the message and gist, register and tone, before marking the difficult words and passages as part of the strategies they may resort to. They start translating once they are acquainted with the text as a whole. In this case, they rely on their analytical skills

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[2] An abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language. It refers to the role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a language of internal communication within the country (Argentina, China, Japan). It is often contrasted with ESL (English as a Second Language) which refers to the role of English for immigrant and other minority groups in English-speaking countries such as the US. It also applies to learners in countries in which English plays an important role in education, business and government but is not the first language of the population (Singapore, the Philippines, India).

[3] An abbreviation for English for Specific/Special Purposes.

[4] Carrell, P. L. (1987) Content and formal schemata in ESL reading. *TESOL Quarterly,* 21, 3, pp.461-81.

rather than on their intuition. My basic premise then, is that a holistic approach as this one helps to put EFL students and translators on the right track from the very beginning, offering them the opportunity to gain access to background information, study the macrostructure, get the gist of the text and read between the lines, among other strategies, before attempting written-text processing or microstructure analysis.

At this stage, I wish to quote Dr. Samuel Johnson[5] who wrote *A Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755, which remained for nearly a century a work of reference, consulted as such both by the layman and the learned. In 1765 he published an edition of Shakespeare´s plays which included a preface where he held that "particulars are not to be examined till the whole has been surveyed."

Similarly, Douglas[6] claims that interaction between the reader´s or test taker´s content knowledge and the text task is a necessary condition in LSP[7] texts/tests. He completes his thought by stating that "it has been found, for example, that when test takers have some prior knowledge of the topic of a reading passage, they have an advantage in responding to comprehension questions based on that passage".

Furthermore, in two recent works, the famous American applied linguist Stephen Krashen (2002, 2004)[8] has developed his theory known as the "Comprehension Hypothesis", previously referred to as the "Input Hypothesis", where he emphasized the fact that "our ability to write in an acceptable writing style, our spelling ability, vocabulary knowledge, and our ability to handle complex syntax is the result of reading."He also holds that our competence comes from comprehension of messages rather than from consciously learned grammar rules. All the same, he proposes that the teaching of these rules should not be excluded from the EFL curriculum, only delayed until more advanced levels.

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[5] Johnson, S. Dr. (1987). In T. Hutchinson and A. Waters *English for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 5.
[6] Douglas, D. (2000). *Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. 7.
[7] An abbreviation for Languages for Specific Purposes.
[8] Krashen, S. (2002). The comprehension hypothesis and its rivals. Selected papers from the Eleventh International Symposium on English Teaching/Fourth Pan-Asian Conference. English Teachers Association/ROC. Taipei: Crane Publishing Company, pp. 395-404.
   Krashen, S. (2004). Applying the Comprehension Hypothesis: Some Suggestions. In *Share e-magazine* N° 135 (Oct. 23rd) http://www.ShareEducation.com.ar

For the above-mentioned reasons, I have structured the current research around three basic themes: textual meta-competence, contrastive text competence and text-production competence.Therefore, in order to achieve sound text-analytical mastery of the linguaculture where the source text was produced and/or used for specific communicative purposes (L1)[9], I have stressed the fact that the teacher has to concentrate on what the EFL student needs, namely: a profound knowledge of the way in which textual communication works (textual meta-competence); the ability to identify and compare textual norms and conventions between ESP texts (contrastive text competence), and good text-production skills in the foreign language where the text was written as a means of communication (text-production competence).

As far as textual meta-competence is concerned, the following general aspects of textual communication must be taken into account: text analysis as a meaningful, culture-bound activity; text comprehensibility as a means of communication used for specific purposes and addressees; stages in text analysis: skimming, scanning, reading between the lines etc.; strategies and techniques of information retrieval, which means looking at the ways background information is presented in the foreign culture; arguments for or against the use of particular text strategies; fundamental aspects of ESP and terminology, among others. The main aim of textual meta-competence development is to make students aware of communicative behaviour specificity and provide them with the theoretical and methodological "tools" which they will need for text comprehension.

Contrastive text competence consists of the ability to analyse the culture-specificities of textual and other communicative conventions in the L2, identify (culture-bound) function markers in texts of various types with a particular focus on practice-oriented text-types, such as the written press, advertising and product documentation, legal English, business communication, computer manuals, etc., compare parallel texts and evaluate them, among others.

At a later stage, learners´text-production competence is incorporated in the form of coursework assignments, such as using rhetorical devices in order to achieve specific communicative purposes: essay-writing, re-writing/re-phrasing texts for a variety of

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[9] In language teaching, the "first language", in contrast to "target language" or L2 which a person is learning.

audiences, purposes, media, contexts (legal/plain English), summarizing texts or writing abstracts, turning schematic representations into text or vice versa, producing written texts based on oral information and visual displays, to name but a few.

Alongside the teaching of language topics which have been introduced at the beginning of this Thesis (Language Issues – Aspects of English), including the study of a comprehensive hierarchy of reading strategies in the form of a taxonomy (Chapter VII), students learn to develop a variety of themes which will help them identify the characteristic features of different kinds of specialized discourse (Varieties – English in use). Gradually, they come to the conclusion that this approach can be applied to tackle the various specialized areas of English

With the exception of brief comments on differences between British/American English and spoken/written registers (Chapter XI), this research work has focused mainly on the treatment and application of ESP written varieties (English in Use).

Moreover, special consideration has been given to examples of magazine and newspaper articles, findings from published teaching material, legal documents, business reports and technical texts. Similarly, since there is such a wide variety of English registers, I have only dealt with some of them in depth: the language of the press, the law, business English and technical English, and left others such as literary, scientific, and political registers for future study and analysis.

.The ultimate aim of an ESP course in Reading Comprehension as taught within this framework is to give learners insights into different contexts encouraging their critical thinking and independent achievement for future professional development. As stated, a number of issues come into play that affect students´discourse competence during the process of English language text analysis.

It is my hope that this Thesis will bring to light the importance of those issues and the way they may make the final product meaningful.

PART II

DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT

LANGUAGE ISSUES – ASPECTS OF ENGLISH

CHAPTER I

Language: a living system

The English language is the sea which receives tributaries from every region under heaven.
(Emerson, R. W.)[10]

The English language is constantly changing. It is a living system permanently adapting to an ever-changing world and reflecting the society we live in. Language, in abstract terms, cannot exist on its own since it is a product of the people who speak and write it daily, and therefore it develops to meet their needs. No sooner have new forms been observed, described and recorded than other newer forms have appeared.

Thus, the concept of language change is based on the assumption that language is a dynamic, social, interactive phenomenon (Page and Toledo, 2004)[11]– whether between speaker and listener or writer and reader. This change is inevitable but has always attracted criticism. A study of the English language is often based on the awareness of two crucial attitudes. In linguistic terms, the two views can be summarised as the *prescriptive* and the *descriptive* approaches to language. The former view is supported especially by traditional grammarians and lexicographers who rely on "rules"of grammar that are considered to be correct or appropriate usage. Some usages are "prescribed" or to be learnt and followed accurately; others are "proscribed", simply to be avoided. These linguists believe that in a nation in which many different dialects

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[10] Emerson, R. W. (1803-1882). In R. McCrum, W. Cran and R. MacNeil *The Story of English.* London. Faber and Faber Ltd. and BBC Books. London (1992) p. 1.
[11] Page, F. & Toledo, P. (2004). The living system of language. Interview: Diane Larsen-Freeman. In *Buenos Aires Herald. Education.* Tuesday, January 20 p. 14.

are spoken, a national language may be developed and a normative grammar and dictionary produced.

However, while critics bewail the lost glory of English, others see a flexibility and vitality in the adaptability of the English language based on observation of language in use. This descriptive approach focuses on how a language is actually spoken and/or written and sees current linguistic developments as broadening our world view: new words reflect new experiences, more liberal attitudes and a greater understanding of the world.

Furthermore, linguistic research has shown that language users have a tendency to readjust patterns that have been disturbed. Because the basic function of language is to communicate, its users subconsciously protect its expressive capabilities. Indeed, change is at the heart of a living language and by embracing it rather than fearing it, speakers and writers can benefit from the diversity offered by linguistic flexibility. For many linguists, the national and international dialects of English do not threaten but enrich the British standard.

Additionally, language change has a systematic explanation as well and is not necessarily unpredictable or the result of arbitrary changes in fashion (as in the case of vocabulary) or chance errors in articulation (when we weaken or drop final consonants to make sounds simpler). Indeed, social, historical, cultural or geographical influences can alter the words and structures that we use. These determinants can be described as "triggers" because they stimulate change in distinctive ways:

- *Historical factors*: wars, invasions, industrial and technological changes all provide the context for the creation of new words. Linguists study the ways in which English has evolved from its early form (Old English) to its current form (Late Modern). This is called a *Diachronic Approach* as a result of the distinction introduced by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.[12]

- *Social factors*: education, social class, age, gender, ethnic background, occupation and personal identity will influence the words and grammar that individual speakers

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[12] de Saussure, F. (1857-1913). In his famous dichotomy between diachronic/synchronic approaches to language he states that the former studies how a language changes over a period of time, for example the sound system of English from Early English to Post Modern British English; by contrast, synchronic linguistics focuses on the study of a language system at one particular point in time, for example the sound system of Modern British English.

and writers use. When two people with different social background meet, there is a tendency for their speech to alter, so that they become more alike – a process known as adaptation or convergence. Everyday examples are the slower and simpler speech used in talking to foreigners or young children; the way technical information is presented in a less complex way to those who lack the appropriate background as the lay reader; the rapid development of catch phrases within a social group. Speech divergence may also take place when people wish to emphasize their personal, religious or other identity to gain social prestige.

Similarly, sexist language reinforces stereotypical attitudes and expectations, often implying male-oriented superiority. While men are "masterful", women are "domineering"; while men "discuss", women "chat" and "gossip". In an age of political correctness many workplaces now offer an "equal-opportunity" policy in which anti-sexist alternatives substitute the traditional male-dominant language of the office or shop floor. Thus, the terms "chairman" or "spokesman" which during the feminist movement at the beginning of the 20th.century were changed to "chairwoman" and "spokeswoman", have lately become "chairperson" and "spokesperson".

- *Cultural transmission*: language is usually adapted and altered to suit the personal requirements of the new generation. Equally, a distinctive form of language can give a cultural group a sense of identity, uniting "insiders" and alienating "outsiders". Black American English (BAE), for instance, is the language used by lower-status Black people in urban communities. It tends to be classified as a cultural or social variant from the Standard American English form (SAE).

- *Geographical location*: pronunciation (accent), lexis and grammatical structures used (dialect) vary and change according to the region a speaker comes from. A Cokney accent would indicate that the person comes from the East End of London; Geordie is both a native or inhabitant of Newcastle upon Tyne and the dialect used by people of NE England.

- ***The use of different registers*: the words, grammatical structures and formats chosen vary according to use. Different fields - as studied in an ESP course - like law, advertising and religion each have distinctive characteristic features both in writing and in speech.**

- *The development of English as a world language*: mass media influence, international trade, the blurring of international boundaries and easily accessible travel, all mean that English is affected by change both within the United Kingdom and beyond. An international study of English will focus on worlwide changes to English as it is adapted to meet the needs of first and second-foreign-language speakers and writers.

Different dimensions of the subject can be explored in particular, but they all fall within the domain of **<u>Linguistics,</u>** the science of language as a system of human communication. Linguistics has provided the conceptual framework within which this work has been written. The subject now covers a wide field with different approaches and different areas of investigation, such as: Phonetics, Syntax, Semantics, among others.

<u>Interdisciplinary fields.</u> In recent years, new branches have developed in combination with other disciplines, e.g. Neurolinguistics: the study of the neurological basis of language development and use in human beings, especially the brain control over cognitive processes of speech and understandin); Sociolinguistics: the study of the interaction between language and society structure and functioning; Psycholinguistics: the study of the relationship between linguistic behaviour and psychological processes, such as memory or attention which underlie it; Statistical linguistics: the study of the statistical or quantitative properties of language, among others<u>.</u>

<u>Applied linguistics</u> refers to the application of linguistic theories, methods and findings to the elucidation of language problems that have arisen in other domains. According to the objectives of this research the term makes reference to the <u>applied linguistics of foreign</u> <u>language teaching and learning</u>, rather than to the broader applications of language study in such areas as lexicography, translation or speech pathology.

The study of how language is used in communication has been directly connected with the emergence of **<u>pragmatics</u>**, a branch of linguistics, which deals primarily with the social, cultural and physical aspects of the situations that shape how people communicate with each other, i.e., the study of meaning in context. According to

Yule[13], the area of pragmatics is concerned with <u>speaker meaning</u> and <u>contextual meaning</u> as opposed to linguistic meaning. Speaker meaning focuses on the analysis of what people mean by their <u>utterances</u> rather than what the words and phrases in those utterances might themselves mean. The utterance *I´m thirsty* (semantic meaning), might need to be interpreted pragmatically as *Go and buy me a drink* (child speaking to his mother before lunch)) and should not necessarily be taken at face value as a simple statement. The point is that <u>any utterance, therefore, can take on various meanings depending on who produced it and with what purpose.</u>

The term "pragmatics" is usually attributed to the British philosopher Charles Morris (1938-71), who distinguished between *syntax* – the area of language analysis that describes the ways in which words combine into such units as phrase, clause and sentence; *semantics* – concerned mainly with the meaning of lexical items; and *pragmatics* – concerned not only with the users of the linguistic forms, their intentions, assumptions, beliefs, goals and the kinds of actions they perform while using language but also with contexts, situations and settings within which such language uses occur.

<u>Linguistic analysis</u>: As stated above, because language has always been the mirror to society, being English no exception, it is in a constant state of renewal and thus, we see that new words and new uses are being coined today at a fast pace to describe recent inventions and fresh experiences. When teachers and students involved in textual comprehension tasks focus on the study of language in use, they know that they have to consider those aspects of discourse that extend beyond sentence boundaries.

The term **discourse** refers primarily to the language forms or connected stretches of language that are produced and interpreted as people communicate with each other. When language is used for communication, the coparticipants typically employ one or more skills simultaneously: listening, reading, speaking or writing. They often switch quickly from one role and skill to another (e.g., from listening to speaking and back to listening again), or they are engaged in a task that involves carrying out several skills simultaneously (e.g., listening and note taking/writing). The language produced interactively by such coparticipants is discourse, i.e., <u>language in use</u>.

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[13] Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), "a piece of discourse is an instance of spoken or written language that has describable internal relationships of <u>form</u> and <u>meaning</u> (e.g., words, structures, cohesion) that relate coherently to an external communicative <u>function</u> or <u>purpose</u> and a given <u>audience/interlocutor</u>". The external function takes into account the <u>context</u> in which the piece of discourse occurs: all the relevant situational, social and cultural factors that surround and describe it.

Discourse and text: From an applied linguistic perspective we may distinguish two terms which came to be used in parallel fashion**. Discourse analysis** deals with the structure of naturally occurring spoken language typical of conversations/dialogues, interviews, commentaries and speeches. **<u>Text analysis</u>** focuses on the structure of written language, as found in such texts as essays, chapters, notices, headlines etc. But since this distinction is not clear-cut, <u>"discourse" and "text" are often used interchangeably</u>. Besides, sometimes linguists include the study of written texts within that of discourse analysis and some of them even use the term **text linguistics** to refer to all forms of text - both spoken or written – such as a descriptive passage, a scene in a play or a conversation. These proponents are chiefly concerned, for instance, with the way the parts of a text are organized and related to one another in order to form a meaningful whole. Others, mainly in Europe, simply adopt it when describing the study of written interaction only.

The fact is that the expression "discourse analysis", first used by Zellig Harris in 1952[14], may serve as an "umbrella" term for a variety of approaches to the analysis of language beyond sentence level. The studies concerning language teaching such as: speech analysis, the writing or reading process and genre/register analyses may be lumped together under the heading of **applied discourse analysis** most relevant to the aims of this Thesis. It is also these different types of applied discourse analyses that have led to a general movement within language pedagogy, which started in the 1970´s and which moved their focus from *grammar* to *discourse*, also moving away from

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[14] Harris, Z. (1952). Discourse Analysis, *Language* 28: 1-30 and 474 – 94. American structural linguist who researched the topic at a time when linguistics was largely concerned with the analysis of single sentences. He was interested in the distribution of linguistic elements in extended texts and the relationship between a text and its social situation.

language analysis, as the primary goal of language teaching, to teaching language for communication.

A brief historical overview. It is not the purpose of this work to survey comprehensively the various approaches to discourse analysis; besides, it is currently considered a developing area in Linguistics. However, influential researchers should be mentioned, such as the English linguist and grammarian M. A. Halliday[15] who notes that "a discourse analysis that is not based on grammar is not an analysis at all, but simply a running commentary on a text". He adds that "[although] a text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one, meanings are realized through wordings; and without a theory of wording - that is, a grammar - there is no way of making explicit one´s interpretation of the meaning of the text" (ibid.). Though he has stressed the importance of syntax and lexis relation, his association of wordings with grammar is too narrow. Nonetheless, Halliday´s framework emphasizes the social function of language, an approach which in turn has connections with the Prague School of linguists.

This school of thought was founded in 1926 by a group of linguists including Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) who emphasized the inclusion of extralinguistic factors, such as the social environment, in their linguistic investigations. Also relevant to this question was their interest in showing the link between grammar and discourse.

Research in the US includes the examination of talk forms such as storytelling and greeting in different cultural and social settings (Hymes, 1971/1972).[16] The field often referred to as *conversation analysis* is also included under the heading of discourse analysis. Here the emphasis is not on structure models but on participants´behaviour in talk, turn-taking and other features of spoken interaction.

The work of *text grammarians* is also important, mostly on written language. Text cohesion - the surface ties that bind a text together - is studied alongside the deep logical and rhetorical relations among its elements - coherence. Such linguists as Teun

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[15] Halliday, M. A. K. (1985) (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar.* London: Edward Arnold.
[16] Hymes, D. (1971/1972). On Communicative Competence, in J. Pride and J. Holmes (eds) *Sociolinguistics,* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

van Dijk[17], R. de Beaugrande and W. Dressler[18] and R. Hasan[19] have contributed to this specialized field of study.

To sum up, although discourse analysis is a wide-ranging and heterogeneous discipline, it is unified by the interest to describe language <u>"above the sentence"</u> and the <u>contexts</u> and <u>cultural influences</u> that motivate <u>language in use</u>.

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[17] Van Dijk, T. A. (1985). *Handbook of Discourse Analysis.* London: Academic Press.

[18] de Beaugrande, R. & Dressler, W. (1981). *Introduction to Text Linguistics.* London: Longman.

[19] Hasan, R. (1984). Coherence and cohesive harmony, in J. Flood (ed.) *Understanding reading comprehension.* Newark, DL: International Reading Association, pp.181-219.

CHAPTER II

Reading: a major language skill

Reading, through which we can access worlds of ideas and feelings, as well as the knowledge of the ages and visions of the future, is at once the most extensively researched and the most enigmatic of the so-called language skills.

(Bachman, 2000: X)[20]

In language teaching, language may be sub-divided in many different ways. One of the most obvious and helpful is into the four major skills: listening and speaking, reading and writing. For many years a singularly inappropriate terminology was used, describing listening and reading as passive skills, in contrast to the active skills of speaking and writing. We do know that reading is far from a passive skill. Indeed, careful, accurate and involved reading can be exhausting. Present day terminology is more helpful, dividing these skills into **receptive** - reading and listening - and **productive** - -speaking and writing.

The ability to read is imperative since so much of what one needs to know is conveyed through the written text: application/order/booking forms that must be filled in, instruction manuals of technological appliances, notice boards giving information or simply a warning against smoking. We could not interact in present-day society without reading. Indeed, even in this modern age of multimedia and high-tech environments, it is still the case that we must rely on our ability to process information through reading.

Furthermore, reading and especially **reading comprehension, should not be separated from the other skills.** The fact is that there are few cases in real life when we do not talk or write about what we have read, or when we do not relate what we

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[20] Bachman, L. F. (2000). Series Editor´s Preface. In J. Charles Alderson, *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.X.

have read to something we might have heard. It is therefore important to link the different skills through the reading activities chosen:

- reading and writing, e.g. summarizing, note-taking, dictating, etc.
- reading and listening, e.g. comparing an article and a news bulletin, using recorded information to solve a written problem, matching opinions and texts, etc.
- reading and speaking, e.g. discussions, debates, appreciation, etc.

Francis Bacon, the first major essayist in English (17th.c), defined the reader´s task when he expressed:

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.

In the same essay, he explores the other language skills:

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. (Of Studies)[21]

Since reading is the process of extracting meaning from written or printed language, it constantly involves predicting, checking and asking oneself questions. After all, the well-known British linguist David Crystal summarized this concept when he expressed in 1997 that "reading crucially involves appreciating the sense of what is written: we read for meaning"[22]. This should therefore be taken into consideration when devising <u>reading comprehension</u> <u>exercises.</u> It is possible, for instance, to develop students´inference skills through systematic practice, or introduce questions which encourage them to anticipate the content of a text by making deductions from its title and/or illustrations, or the end of a story from the preceding paragraphs. Similarly, because reading has a communicative function, exercises must be meaningful and correspond as frequently as possible to what one is expected to do with the text. After reading a text, learners may have to:

i- write an answer to a letter ii- use the text to do something, for example, follow directions, make a choice, solve a problem... iii- compare the information given to some previous knowledge.

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[21] Bacon, F. (1965). Of Studies. In W. E. Williams (ed.), *A Book of English Essays.* England: Penguin Books, pp. 17-18.
[22] Crystal, D. (1997). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language.* Cambridge: CUP p.211.

In short, for anyone learning a foreign language, reading opens up a world to general knowledge and culture which, in most circumstances, would not otherwise be possible. In particular, English as a world language, takes on a very significant role when it enables professionals to keep abreast of the developments in their fields and whose success or failure may well depend on their ability to read the latest scientific and technical publications in English. For this reason, courses whose specific objective is the reading of specialized texts are becoming more and more common in universities and technical colleges throughout the world. With this end in view, teachers will have to put special emphasis on solving the difficulties that non-native learners frequently encounter when reading in the second/foreign language.

The interactive nature of the reading process

There was a time when teachers and learners believed that the meaning of texts was in the texts themselves, to be decoded together with the lexical and grammatical structures on the page. Thanks to psycholinguistic-cognitive approaches to reading which are reader-centered (Barnett, 1989)[23], this myth has long since been replaced by the idea that meaning is constructed by the interaction of the reader and the text. Based on the signs on the page, readers construct a mental model or knowledge representation of the text, also called schema or cognitive structure in psycholinguistics, that they then try to match with the ongoing text. Schemata, viewed as prior knowledge (content schema) and macro/rhetorical/discourse structures (formal schemata) in the form of genres, registers or writing conventions are adjusted, revised or rejected and replaced as further reading confirms or invalidates readers´hypotheses.[24]

Linguistic schema is also being studied in the research on reading. It includes the decoding features we need to recognize words and see how they fit together in a

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[23] Barnett, M. (1989).*More than meets the eye: Foreign language learner reading theory and practice.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

[24] "Schema". Term developed in the Introduction, p.2. Outline of a plan or theory. Also, macro-structure, genre-scheme, discourse structure, rhetorical structure. In text linguistics and discourse analysis, the underlying structure which accounts for the organization of a text or discourse. (*Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics*. J. Richards, R. Schmidt. 3rd.ed. Pearson Education Ltd. 2002).

sentence. Readers who have not actively studied a word or a grammar rule in their L1 cannot use that information when they read. They may, through repetition and exercising, be able to generalize a pattern or guess the meaning of a word, but it was not initially a part of their linguistic schema. The conclusion is that the building of this schema in an L2 or foreign language course proceeds in much the same way.

Researchers as Celce-Murcia and Olshtain[25] have stated that there are at least three participants in the reading process: the writer, the text and the reader. The idea behind this notion is that the writer, though distant in space and time, produced the text with the intention of conveying a message to a potential reader and, therefore, there exists dialogue between reader and writer via the text which may take place at any given time.

Other studies have also focused on this process and concluded that reading includes individual <u>readers</u> engaging in various kinds of reading tasks in the real world, the <u>social contexts</u> in which such readers engage and interact with texts, the nature and variety of <u>texts</u> and their role as *participants* in the interaction between reader and <u>writer</u>.

In short, understanding reading means understanding how the reader works, what knowledge the reader brings to the text, which **strategies** the reader uses, what assumptions the reader has about reading and how reading texts can vary due to language and information organization.

1. *The reader.* Each reader is unique – a sum of life experiences: from the family, community, school, society and culture. Readers may differ in how they use their background knowledge due to individual differences. Besides, their comprehension of the text may change as they reread the text, but the text itself does not change.

2. *The text.* Unlike readers, texts are static; once written, they cannot adapt to those who are reading them. Furthermore, most readers have an extraordinary amount of information about different types of texts: where they come from, what features each type of text typically exhibits and how they can differ due to language considerations: organization of information, grammar, cohesion, vocabulary.

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[25] Celce-Murcia, M. & Olshtain, E. (2000). *Discourse and context in language teaching.* Cambridge: CUP.

3. *Interaction between reader and text.* Readers bring to each text areas of knowledge: content, formal and linguistic schemata plus **reading strategies** that are crucial in shaping what happens in the reading process. While the text remains the same during each reading, the information the reader brings to that text fluctuates as comprehension grows; thus, the interaction between reader and text is constantly evolving.

Reading models – Approaches to discourse processing

The reading models that have been recognized and researched so far are:

-**A- Top-down approach: often referred to as the "knowledge-driven or concept-driven" approach is learner-centered and proceeds from predictions about meaning to attention to progressively smaller units. It argues that readers bring a great deal of knowledge, expectations, assumptions and questions to the text and, given a basic understanding of the vocabulary, they continue to read as long as the text confirms their expectations (Goodman 1988)[26], (Smith 1988)[27]. Proponents of this approach are within the theoretical framework of psycholinguistics and view the interpretation process as a continuum of changing hypotheses about the incoming information. They pay minimal attention to letter-sound correspondences and place their emphasis on "higher-order" sources of information such as: prediction, guessing and "going for gist", reader experience, knowledge of text context, familiarity with specific text types and writing conventions, among others.**

-**B- Bottom-up approach:** also known as "data-driven" processing, is text bound and relies heavily on linguistic information, both syntactic and semantic in nature, from the text. It states that the reader constructs the text from the smallest units: letters to sounds to words to phrases to sentences, to comprehension, and that the process of constructing

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[26] Goodman, K. S. (1988). The reading process. In P. L. Carrell, J. Devine and D. E. Eskey (eds.) *Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading,* Cambridge: CUP.

[27] Smith, F. (1988). *Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read,* 4th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

the text from those small units is automatic and unconscious (Gough 1972)[28]. This approach was typically associated with behaviourism in the 1940s and 1950s[29] which argued that children had to learn to recognise letters before they could read words. From this traditional view, readers are considered as **passive** decoders of graphic-phonemic-syntactic-semantic systems.

In the literature on the reading process, both top-down and bottom-up models are represented and both have been influential in the methodological development for the teaching of reading. Since each type of model presents a contrasting view of reading, each has given rise to continued controversy about the methods used to study and teach the major skill of reading.

To illustrate this point, we will refer to the <u>literary appreciation</u> field where the usual procedure is from the macro to the micro level, beginning with general aspects of the author´s life, style or favourite themes to the discussion of the structure of the novel, play... as a whole, reference to plot and sub-plots, characters´relationships and behaviour etc. In due course, readers proceed to look more closely at how particular linguistic features signal the author´s intentions: the way in which a novelist, for example, favours certain adjectives, varies tenses or coins words. Students will then count the frequency with which these features are used in the novel and contrast them with the frequency found in other works, by the same or different authors.

Furthermore, from the point of view of <u>translators</u>, textual analysis – an essential preliminary step to translation – should also proceed from the "top down", from text to sign. The whole text should be read two or three times to find the intention, register and tone. However, some favour a different approach to translating. They claim that the work should start by translating sentence by sentence for the first paragraph or chapter followed shortly by the reading of the rest of the SL (source language) text. There is a general belief among translators that the first method is preferable since they will trust their analytical abilities more than their intuition. Alternatively, we may think the first

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[28] Gough, P. B. (1972). One second of reading. In Kavanagh and Mattingly (eds.) *Language by Ear and by Eye.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

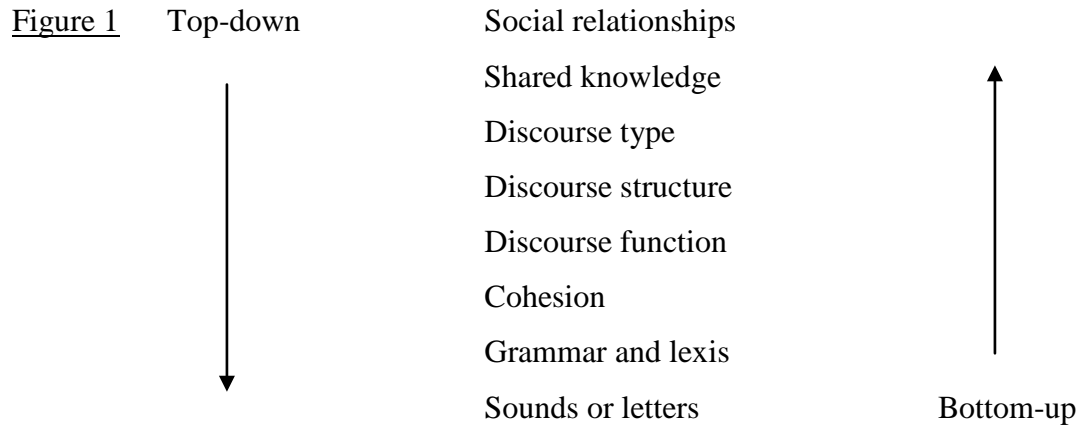[29] "Behaviourism": a theory of psychology which states that human behaviour can and should be studied only in terms of physical processes. It explains how an external event (a stimulus) causes a change in the behaviour of an individual (a response), without using concepts like "mind" or "ideas" or any kind of mental behaviour. *(Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics*. Op. cit.)

method more suitable for a technical or an institutional text and the second for a literary one.

The danger of the latter one is that it may leave us with too much revision to do on the early part and is, therefore, time-wasting.

Of the two theoretical models, it is Goodman´s "unlimited macro" approach which will be followed and examined in this Thesis, since it is the <u>most frequently cited</u> in both L1 and L2 literature and the <u>easiest</u> and <u>most effective</u> in foreign language learning. It is also a very <u>efficient way of building up the students´confidence</u> when faced with authentic texts that often contain difficult vocabulary or structures. If the activity is global enough (e.g., choosing from a list what function a text fulfils) the students will not feel completely lost. They will think that at least they understand what the text is about and will subsequently overcome their diffidence when tackling a new text. Moreover, this treatment is important because it develops <u>readers´awareness</u> of the way most texts are organized (e.g., stating the main information and developing it, or giving the chronological sequence of events). It is this awareness of the general structure of a passage that will allow learners to read more efficiently later on. Besides, by starting with longer units and by considering the layout of the text, the accompanying photographs or diagrams, the number of paragraphs, etc., readers can be encouraged <u>to anticipate</u> what they are to find in the text. This is essential in order to develop their skills of inference, anticipation and deduction. In short, general features help provide a context and an explanation for use of specific forms by letting the reader <u>construct</u> some initial hypotheses about the text and, accordingly, <u>have expectations</u> as to what might come next.

We can gain some insight into the relationship of these two approaches to reading comprehension/discourse processing by considering the following diagram:

Figure 1   Top-down   Social relationships

                                     Shared knowledge

                                     Discourse type

                                     Discourse structure

                                     Discourse function

                                     Cohesion

                                     Grammar and lexis

                                     Sounds or letters   Bottom-up

We may proceed from the so-called higher levels of language or the most general features of discourse to the most detailed ones, or viceversa. We look first of all at the relationship of the people involved in the discourse, move down to background information on the topic, type of discourse, genre, register, move on to language interaction and context which defines language function and then, we consider the extent to which formal cohesive ties operate across sentence boundaries as well as the relationship between grammar and discourse.

Exercise:

Additionally, to aid students´discourse comprehension, they may be told to arrange the following list of possible activities in a top-down sequence:

- identifying the meaning of pronouns
- predicting the contents
- answering factual questions
- practising grammatical structures
- discussing issues raised
- identifying the sender and intended receiver
- scanning for information
- defining words
- giving a title
- taking notes on a given topic

-C- Interactive school of theorists: challenges the dichotomy between top-down and bottom-up theories which describe the reading process. In the past two decades research work has indicated that both processes occur either alternately or at the same time, depending on the reader´s background knowledge, language proficiency level, motivation, **strategy** use and culturally shaped beliefs about reading.

The interactive model proposed by Rumelhart in1977 and subsequent updates (1984, 1986)[30] incorporates the possibility of <u>parallel processing</u>, that is, simultaneous information processing from more than one source. The reader is seen to be able to draw simultaneously, but selectively, upon a range of sources of information: visual, orthographic, lexical, semantic, syntactic and schematic. In contrast to top-down models, this method does pay considerable attention to visual information as expressed in Rumelhart´s words:

[The process of reading] *begins with a flutter of patterns on the retina and ends (when successful) with a definite idea about the author´s intended message. Thus reading is at once a "perceptual" and "cognitive" process. Moreover, a skilled reader must be able to make use of sensory, semantic and pragmatic information to accomplish his task. These various sources of information appear to interact in <u>many complex ways</u> during the process of reading.* (1977, pp. 573-4)

Perhaps the following example will help to make the issues in this interaction between text and reader more concrete:

Exercise:

 Examine the following sentences which illustrate the three models of reading:

This was great! Thank you very much! I want my own copy - next time we go to Borders.

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[30] Rumelhart, D. E. (1977). Toward an interactive model of reading. In S. Dornic (ed.), *Attention and Performance VI.* New York: Academic Press, pp.573-603. (1984) Understanding understanding. In J. Flood (ed.), *Understanding reading comprehension.* Newark, DE.: International Reading Association. Pp.1-20. Rumelhart, D. E. et al. (1986). Schemata and sequential thought processes in PDP models. In J. L. McClelland, D. E. Rumelhart and the PDP Research Group. *Parallel Distributed Processing.* Cambridge. Mass.: MIT Press.

Also – ordering from Penney´s Tall, I finally found a pair of slacks that actually fit! I don´t believe it!

I am eternally grateful to you for these two discoveries.

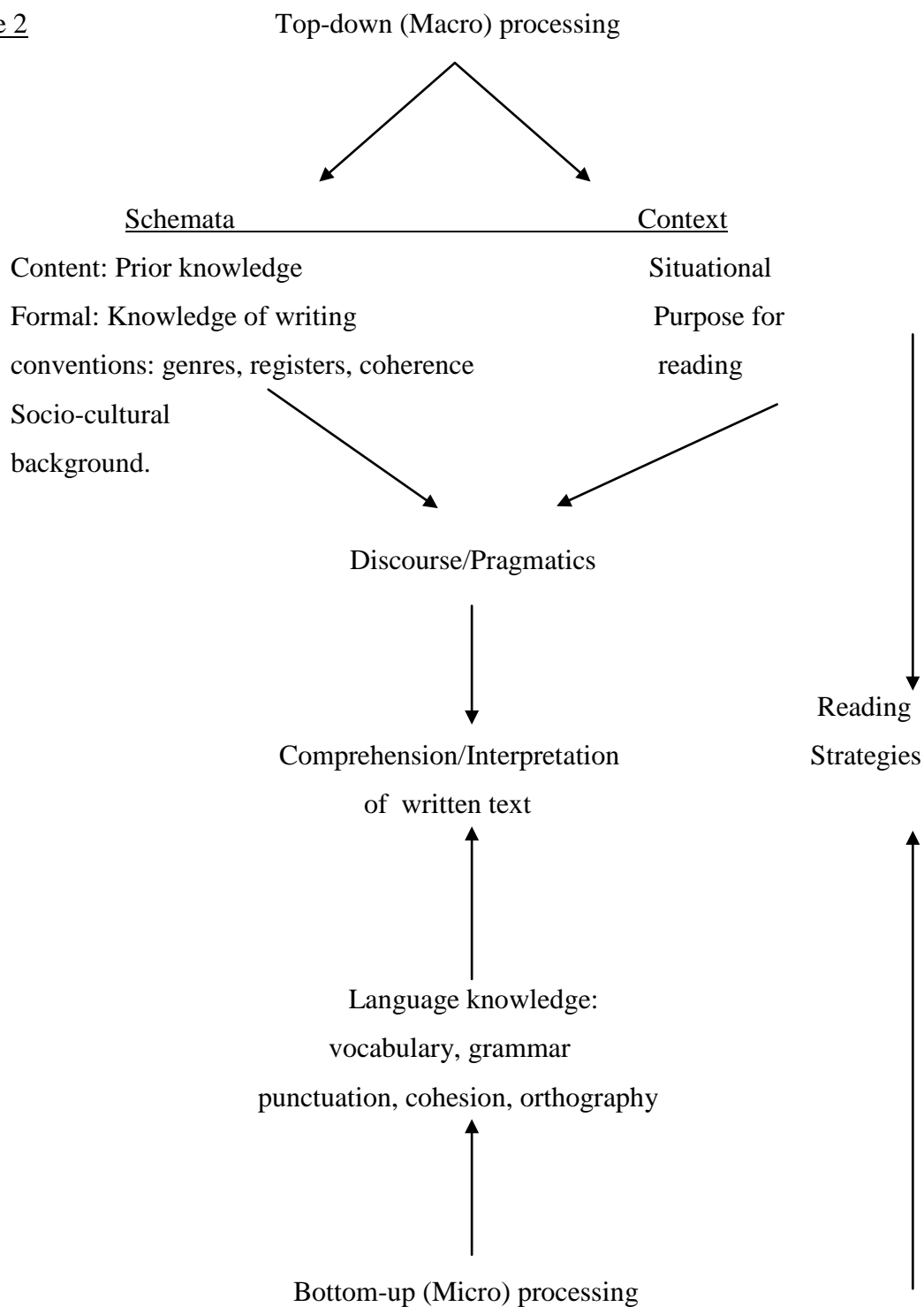P.S. ...We look forward to Sat. – see you soon.

First the reader will use top-down **strategies** to identify the probable source: a personal note or a short informal letter addressed to a friend (P.S.: abbreviation for "postscript"). He will figure out that the item the note refers to as "great" is something that can have copies. That leads the reader to think it is more likely a recording or book than an article of clothing or food.

Using only bottom-up strategies he could conclude that since the word "Borders" is capitalized it probably refers to the name of a place. Putting together these interactions, the reader could safely assume that something was borrowed, is now being returned and the borrower also hopes to get a copy of it at a place called Borders.

The next sentence demands similar interactions. If the writer has "finally" found some slacks that fit from "Penney´s Tall" (bottom-up), the reader may assume that this note-writer is tall (top-down). However, the text does not directly state all that information, and L2/FL readers, indeed even L1 readers, not familiar with J.C. Penney stores or the American bookstore Borders (top-down, background information) will have difficulty comprehending this text even when using all three models of reading.

Figure 2 provides a framework for both processing techniques: the reader needs to recruit prior knowledge and reading experience, apply knowledge of writing conventions and consider the purpose of reading in order to engage in top-down processing. It also includes sociocultural and contextual background knowledge which can be important in facilitating the reading process. At the same time, the reader needs to recruit his linguistic knowledge and various reading **strategies** in order to decode the written text by bottom-up processing.

<u>Figure 2</u>   Top-down (Macro) processing

Schemata   Context

Content: Prior knowledge   Situational

Formal: Knowledge of writing   Purpose for

conventions: genres, registers, coherence   reading

Socio-cultural

background.

Discourse/Pragmatics

Comprehension/Interpretation   Reading

of written text   Strategies

Language knowledge:

vocabulary, grammar

punctuation, cohesion, orthography

Bottom-up (Micro) processing

-D- A model that incorporates affective factors. The model most explicit in its predictions about affective factors is that of Mathewson (1985)[31]. It takes into account

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[31] Mathewson, G. (1985). Towards a comprehensive model of affect in the reading process. In H. Singer and R. B. Ruddell *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading.* Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

the real-world context of reading in ways that other models do not, starting indeed at the level of deciding whether or not to read. And it is the affective factors, attitude, motivation, affect and physical feelings that serve as the input to this initial decision-making process.

<u>Attitude</u> is seen to represent values, beliefs and interests of the reader for the features of the text such as content, format (layout and visuals), form (register, style, dialect). Also, more general attitudes to reading such as liking or disliking it, feeling that it is important or not etc. <u>Motivation</u> includes esteem, self-determination, autonomy etc. <u>Affect</u> is said to involve moods, sentiment and emotion

-**E- A model that views reading as a socio-cultural event.** During the last decade new literacy approaches have evolved within the socioliterate school of thought including Bloome´s (1993)[32] that focuses on author-reader interaction, emphasizes the context of the reading process and describes the meaning of the text within a culture. It also places the learner and his needs in the center but within a social context where communication takes place. It has come to be known as the **whole language approach** since language is presented as a whole and not as isolated pieces. Grammar, vocabulary, word recognition, phonics are taught in a <u>holistic</u> [33]rather than in an <u>atomistic</u> way. Learning activities move from whole to part, rather than from part to whole. For example, students might read a whole article and not part of it or an adapted version of it. Moreover, all four modes of language are used: listening, speaking, reading and writing, rather than a single skill; language is learned through social interaction with others, hence students often work in pairs or groups instead of individually.

<u>Conclusion</u>

A successful intermediate/advanced language student must eventually be able to react to and answer the following questions on a given text:

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[32] Bloome, D. (1993). Necessary indeterminacy and the microethnographic instruction. In M. Singer (ed.), *Competent reader, disabled reader: Research and applications.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, pp.119-140.
[33] From gestalt psychology/theory: an approach to psychology in which behaviour is studied as undivided wholes or "gestalts". In language teaching, it is similar to "global learning" or "cognitive style", whereby the learner tries to remember something as a whole, e.g., a learner may try to memorize complete sentences in a foreign language. It is called "analytic style" or "part learning" when the learner remembers something by separating it into parts.

-**Who** is the writer/sender of the message?

-**What** register was used by the writer?

-**Where** and **When** was the text written?

-**What** is the purpose of the discourse?

-Is this a complete text or an extract?

-**What** type of discourse is this (e.g., letter, recipe, novel, report)?

-**What** is the meaning conveyed by the following words and phrases?

-**What** is the meaning of the following grammatical patterns, figures of speech, idiomatic expressions...?

The fact is that when we set about trying to understand difficult discourse we often **start** with the kind of knowledge elicited by the first <u>six questions</u> – extratextual factors.[34] These factors help us identify some general facts and thus, we can begin to fill in the gaps in order to understand and comprehend the text. Similarly, we should also expect a non-native language user to tackle complex discourse by **starting** with general ideas and filling in details – such as a difficult word or phrase meaning – at a later stage. He will first consider who wrote the text, where the text was published and what the title means, among other things.

> **To ask about details before setting the general context is to approach the text from the wrong direction.**

However, it is true that <u>effective</u> language readers may shift easily from a discourse processing mode to another, depending on the requirements of the interpretation task. For example, the reader encountering an unfamiliar word in a text will not only use the word´s syntactic position and morphological endings (i.e., bottom-up processing) to facilitate interpretation of unfamiliar lexical items but will also use clues in the preceding and subsequent discourse (co-text) and situational context (i.e., top-down processing) to attain an accurate interpretation.

The aims must be then to help students expand their real-world and schematic knowledge, enable them to formulate right hypotheses, provide them with tools to gain

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[34] "Extratextual factors": term developed in Chapter III "Factors that influence L2/FL reading".

access to text purpose and structure, maximise their mental and reading lexicon, enabling them to monitor their reading process and study **strategies** on their own. Equally important will be the need to find ways of encouraging motivation and of recognizing the role of other affective factors.

CHAPTER III

Factors that influence EFL reading

Each reader brings an individualized package of personal experiences, beliefs, cultural training, and educational practices to the reading process... Reading teachers are responsible for helping their students use every possible strategy and ability available to them during the act of reading.

(Aebersold and Field, 1997: 29)[35]

Research on the reading process in EFL provides us with some hypotheses about the factors that influence this skill and recognizes different categories to describe them. Applied linguists have done so on the basis that the major goal of taking a language course is to enable students to develop **communicative competence** chiefly by negotiating meaning.

The term "communicative competence" was first coined by the American anthropologist Dell Hymes (1972)[36] who argued that language competence consists not only of Chomsky´s (1965)[37] rather narrowly defined linguistic/grammatical competence but also of sociolinguistic or pragmatic competence - meaning in context - which covers situated aspects of language use and related issues: the speaker/author, the addressee(s), the message, the setting or event, the **register** etc.

Chomsky´s generative-transformational grammar drew a distinction (similar to Saussure´s "langue" and "parole")[38] between a person´s knowledge of the rules of a language and the actual use of those rules in real situations. The first he referred to as "competence", the second as "performance".

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[35] Aebersold, J. A. & Field, M. L. (1997). *From Reader to Reading Teacher.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[36] Hymes, D. (1972). Op. cit.

[37] Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[38] de Saussure, F. Op.cit. p.7. In his also famous dichotomy between *langue* and *parole* he describes the former as the totality of a language system or "the sum of word-images stored in the minds of individuals". Language is seen as an abstract, conventional system, whereas in the latter case it is described as the actual, concrete act of speaking of a person (instances of communication)– a dynamic, social activity in a particular time and place, involving motivation and thinking.

He claimed that linguistics should be concerned with the study of linguistic-grammatical competence rather than restrict itself to performance; hence, the most important goal was the description of grammar rules governing the creation of novel sentences and identification of performance errors.The tacit assumption was that once learners had mastered the structures or language system, they could generate any sentence they wished.

Hymes´s term "communicative competence" was taken up by language methodologists such as H. Widdowson (1978)[39] who contributed to the development of Communicative Language Teaching[40] and argued that knowing a language is not only a matter of learning how to form correct sentences, but how to use these sentences in a communicative situation.Chomsky´s model totally ignored this. Emphasis shifted to <u>performance</u> and to language as it is actually used.

> **Such fields as discourse analysis and pragmatics are based on the importance of performance.**

Hymes´s formulation that communicative competence consists of language knowledge and ability for use has become something of a classic in the field of applied linguistics. However, it is important to note that a pedagogical framework based explicitly on the notion of communicative competence was first proposed by Canale and Swain (1980, 1983)[41] and not by Hymes himself.

The former classified the factors that influence communicative competence and reading into four categories:

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[39] Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching language as communication.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. He was the first to make the distinction between "language usage" and "language use". He coined the term usage for language which conformed to the codified paradigms of the language; independent of context. In contrast, use describes the functional and contextual appropriacy of an utterance.

[40] Communicative Language Teaching led to a re-examination of language teaching goals, syllabuses, materials and classroom activities and has had a major impact on changes in language teaching world wide. Some of its principles have been incorporated into other communicative approaches, such as Task-Based Language Teaching or Content-Based Instruction.

[41] Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. In *Applied Linguistics,* 1 (1), pp.1-48.

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. Richards & R. Schmidt (eds.), *Language and communication.* London: Longman, pp.2-27.

- <u>Linguistic/grammatical competence</u> (also formal competence) including the basic elements of communication: sentence patterns, morphological inflections, lexical resources and phonological or orthographic systems.
- <u>Sociolinguistic competence</u> consisting of the ability to use language appropriately in various social and cultural contexts, including formality degree, politeness etc.
- <u>Discourse competence</u> which involves the selection, sequencing and arrangement of words, structures and sentences/utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written whole with reference to a particular message and context.
- **<u>Strategic competence</u> which includes the strategies and procedures relevant to language learning, language processing (Reading) and language production. It activates knowledge of the other competencies and helps students compensate for gaps or deficiencies in knowledge when they communicate.**

Some linguists claim that the core or central competency in this framework is <u>discourse competence</u> since this is where everything else comes together. Indeed, they state that it is in discourse and through discourse that all of the other competencies are realized and can best be observed, researched and assessed.

Factors that influence discourse competence – Coherence and Cohesion

A number of research areas within text linguistics have received particular attention and have become significant investigation fields in their own right. With regards to considerations relevant to language teaching, two areas will be discussed briefly: <u>coherence</u> and <u>cohesion.</u> They are considered inherent (syntactic) features of a well-written text thus facilitating its interpretation during the reading process.

Coherence describes the relationships which link the meanings of utterances in a discourse and of the sentences in a text. It refers to the way a text makes sense to the readers through its content organization by means of the relevance and clarity of concepts/ideas. Generally a paragraph or section of the text attains coherence if a series of sentences <u>develop a main idea</u> – with a topic sentence and supporting sentences which relate to it. Each sentence or utterance is related both to the previous and

following sentences leading the reader toward an easier and <u>more effective</u> <u>interpretation of the text</u>.

Let us consider the following example from Davies (1995)[42]:

<u>Exercise</u>

On Sunday morning, Louis hopped out of his bed at an early hour as usual and dashed into the "big" bedroom where his parents slept. All ready to leap on to them for "wake-ups" and games, he stopped - and looked again. There was someone strange in the bed. In fact two strange people – humped under the bedclothes and faintly snoring.

Coherence contributes to <u>unity</u> in this piece of discourse in that the four individual sentences/utterances hang together and relate to each other as they develop the main idea or unit of thought: Louis waking up and finding someone else in his parents´bedroom. The text has structure because the sentences are ordered according to a recognizable chronological sequence and the clause relation of cause – effect is clear: *he stopped – and looked again* because *there was someone strange.* We also recognize other links such as: *On Sunday morning – In fact.* (Cohesion).

Effective discourse requires coherence, which can be viewed as part of **top-down** planning and organization and is compatible with concept-driven theories of reading. For schema theorists, text coherence is central and cohesion is seen as a linguistic consequence of coherence.

In this approach to reading, as seen in Chapter II of the current Thesis, coherence is also reader/learner-centered. From the reader´s point of view, coherence is the result of the interaction that takes place between text-presented knowledge and text-user´s schemata or stored knowledge regarding information and text structures. In other words, in order to process and understand a text, readers need to match content schemata and form presented by the writer in the text with their own schemata and their own view of the world and of the subject area or content presented in the text.

The notion of coherence applies to all the chapters in Part II – English in use – of this research since it is one of the elements that illustrate students´ability to use top-

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[42] Davies, F. (1995). *Introducing Reading.* England: Penguin Group. p.xi.

down information and **strategies** to interpret discourse (when reading or listening) or to produce discourse (when writing or speaking).

In addition to coherence, cohesion, which is text bound and expressed by means of language resources, can be viewed as part of bottom-up connections within the text. These resources consist of grammatical and lexical items that provide "ties" or links across sentence boundaries in the text or between different parts of a sentence. They refer to the choice of articles, pronouns and tenses and how they affect the discourse structure. Halliday and Hasan (1976,1989)[43] concluded that "texts are characterized by the unity of their structure" and identified the cohesive ties in texts as lexical ties (repetition/ reiteration, synonym, antonym...) and grammatical ties (reference, ellipsis, substitution and conjunction). Another useful source is McCarthy (2001)[44] which brings together a large number of texts offering a Guidance for Reader activities section. It also contains much discussion on coherent/cohesive "factors which contribute to *textuality,* that is, the feeling that a text is not just a random collection of sentences".

In short, text cohesion: the "surface"[45] marking of semantic relations among its elements is studied alongside the "deep" or underlying logical and rhetorical relations of its elements, which account for its overall coherence or unity. The principle on which cohesion studies are founded is a simple one: each sentence after the first is linked to one or more preceding sentences by at least one "tie", as in:

Exercise

In the text by Florence Davies above, she used the following lexical cohesive devices:

Sunday morning/ early hour which function as synonym.

Bed/ bedroom/ bed/ bedclothes which function as repetition/reiteration: same stem and different endings in compound nouns.

Someone strange/ two strange people antonym and repetition.

There are also clear grammatical ties between sentences:

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[43] Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English.* London: Longman.
    _____, (1989). *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a socio-semiotic perspective.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[44] McCarthy, M. (2001). *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 34-71.
[45] "Surface/deep structures": terms developed in Chapter IV "The nature of Reading Comprehension".

<u>Reference ties</u>: (pronouns, possessive forms, demonstratives etc.). We know, for instance, that the possessive adjective *his* refers to Louis´s bed and parents; that the personal pronoun(s) *he* refers to Louis throughout and *them* to his parents again.

Here *Louis* and *he* as well as *his, them* and *parents* are coreferential, they both refer to the same entity. In addition, two types of relationship are recognized:

<u>Anaphoric</u> relations look backwards for their interpretation:

Louis hopped out of ... All ready to ... he stopped – and looked again. Here *he* refers back to Louis (antecedent/referent) in the first sentence.

Many times, backward references can be complicated. Students need practice in identifying the anaphoric expressions and what they refer to. Sentences like the following are difficult to process:

The brothers made three boats, <u>each</u> better than the last. Between <u>them</u>, they made several trips to the island. The antecedent of *each* is *boats* and that of *them* is *brothers.*

<u>Cataphoric </u>relations look forwards:

There was someone strange in the bed. In fact two strange people.

In this text, we are not given the identity of *someone* in the first sentence. We have to read on to find out there were *two strange people.* This is a classic device for engaging the reader´s attention.

<u>Substitution ties:</u> [nominal one(s), verbal *do,*clausal *so*]. In the following examples:

I wanted Sarah to wear her blue dress but she wore the red one. Here *one* replaces *dress* and are co-classificational, they refer to the same class of entities.

Will we get there on time? I think so. Here *so* replaces the previous question.

<u>Ellipsis ties:</u> (or substitution by zero)

If you asked me who the best candidate is, I would say Amy. In this context, a piece of structure is omitted and can be recovered only from the preceding discourse. *Amy* functions elliptically to express the entire proposition *Amy is the best candidate.*

Where did you see the car? ... In the street.(The entire proposition should have been: *I saw it in the street).*

Conjunction ties: What is about to be said is explicitly related to what has been said before, through such notions as contrast, result and time:

I left early. However, Mark stayed till the end. Here *however* signals a tie between the clause that follows and the clause that precedes it. In this case, it means that the two clauses are related by contrast.

Lastly, there´s the question of cost. Here *lastly* signals a tie between the implied clause that precedes it and the following clause that is stated.

In short, coherence is about pragmatic linking or unity; cohesion about grammatical and lexical linking. The two may not be totally perceived by the foreign language user but an awareness of both will enable them to see more clearly how the extended text hangs together. Indeed, this is another distinction which reflects its increasing importance in language teaching and reading comprehension.

Extratextual and intratextual factors

A comprehensive model of textual analysis will also take into account the "extratextual" or external factors and the "intratextual" or internal factors relating to the text itself (Nord, 1991).[46] As anticipated in Chapter II, the inter-relation between these factors can be conveniently expressed in the following set of "WH-questions":

|	
Who transmits	*What* information
To whom	*(what not)*
What for	*In what order*
By which medium	*Using which non-verbal elements*
Where	*In which words*
When	*In what kind of sentences*
Why	*In which tone*
A text	*To what effect?*

With what function?

Extratextual factors are analysed by enquiring about the author or text sender (who?), the addressee or recipient the text is directed to (to whom?), the sender´s

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[46] Nord, C. (1991). *Text Analysis in Translation.* Amsterdam – Atlanta, GA. Editions Rodopi B.V.

intention (what for?), the medium or channel the text is communicated by (by which medium?), the place (where?) and time (when?) of text production and text reception and the reason (why?) for communication. The sum total of information obtained about these seven factors may provide an answer to the last question which concerns the function the text can achieve (with what function?).

Intratextual factors are analysed by enquiring about the information or content presented in the text (what?), the knowledge presuppositions made by the author (what not?), the composition or construction of the text (in what order?), the non-linguistic or paralinguistic elements accompanying the text (using which non-verbal elements?), the lexical characteristics (in which words?), and syntactic structures (in what kind of sentences?) found in the text and the suprasegmental features of intonation and prosody (sound and rhythm) in oral texts or the attitude and atmosphere in a piece of writing (in which tone?).

Figure 3: The interdependence of intratextual factors:

Subject Matter ⟶ Content ⟶ Presuppositions ⟶ Composition

Non-verbal Elements ⟶ Lexis ⟶ Sentence Structure ⟶ Suprasegm. Features
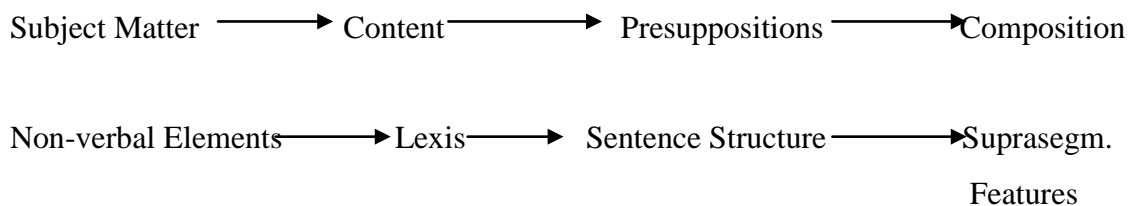
The extratextual factors are analysed before reading the text, by simply observing the "situation" in which the text is used.

The situation or world of a text is always a part of human culture, often called the historical situation. Hence, the culture-specific features of the situation are also a fundamental aspect of analysis. Thus, the reader builds up a certain expectation as to the intratextual characteristics of the text, but it is only when reading that he contrasts this expectation with the actual features of the text, experiencing the particular effect the text has on him. The last question (to what effect?) therefore refers to a global or holistic concept, which comprises the interdependence or inter-relation of extratextual and intratextual factors.

Since the situation normally precedes textual communication and determines the use of intratextual procedures, it seems natural to start with the analysis of the external factors. In written communication, the "situation" is often documented in the "text environment"or outward appearance (i.e., title, bibliographical references such as author´s name, place and year of publication, number of copies, layout, illustrations, typographical features, blurbs, footnotes etc.). If no information on the external factors can be inferred from the text environment, as is the case of old texts whose original situation of production and/or reception is uncertain or unknown, the internal features analysis can yield information from which the reader is able to make fairly reliable conjectures about the situation the text was used in.

Application of a model such as this one will show that normally both procedures have to be combined, demonstrating once more its interdependent character.

CHAPTER IV

<u>The nature of Reading Comprehension</u>

To read is to surrender oneself to an endless displacement of curiosity and desire from one sentence to another, from one action to another, from one level of the text to another. The text unveils itself before us, ...

(Lodge, 1984: 27)[47]

Reading, as has been described in chapter II, is the process of recognition, interpretation and perception of written or printed material. **Comprehension** is the <u>understanding</u> of the meaning of the written material and comprises the **conscious strategies** that lead to understanding. The process of reading deals with language form, while comprehension with the end product and language content.

It has been proved that reading is also a communication process from the writer to the reader via the written text. It involves the recognition of letters, words, phrases and clauses, and to some extent, it may be considered a simpler operation than comprehension. Comprehension, on the other hand, is a process of **negotiating understanding** between the reader and the writer. It is a more complex psychological activity and includes cognitive and emotional factors in addition to linguistic factors, such as phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic elements. The reader receives information from the author through words, sentences, paragraphs...and tries to understand the inner feelings of the writer.

As in grammatical analysis, theorists make distinctions between deep structures and surface structures in <u>semantic analysis</u> and have designed the following model (Figure 3) for language teachers who train learners in reading comprehension.

In deep structure, meaning can be divided into two categories: contextual meaning and pragmatic meaning. Unlike the surface meaning of a single word, contextual meaning is realized at the sentence level and is the meaning expressed by a sentence associated with its context. This type of meaning is not decided by the word
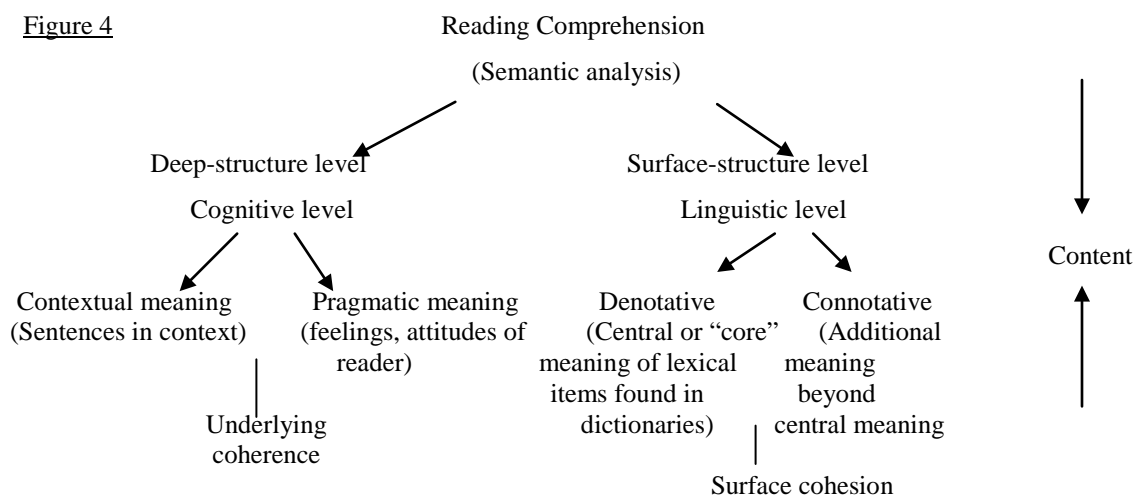
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[47] Lodge, D. (1984). *Small World.* England. Penguin Books. p. 27.

itself but by the context in which the whole sentence functions. The pragmatic meaning is conveyed by the writer´s feelings and attitudes. It is the writer´s intended unspoken or unwritten meaning. In the reading process, the understanding of this type of meaning is implicative because it lies outside the organization of language. It cannot be deduced from the linguistic system itself; it is realized at the functional level. In short, both contextual meaning and pragmatic meaning call for cognitive ability on the part of the reader.

At the surface level, meaning can also be classified into two broad categories: denotative meaning and connotative meaning (linguistic ability). The former is the meaning of words given in the dictionary and is "integral to the essential functioning of language in a way that other types of meaning are not" (Leech, 1981)[48]. Connotative meaning is the communicative value of an expression by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely denotative meaning. It reflects the real-world experience one associates with an expression.

Thus, the distinction between deep structure and surface structure meanings is that the former implies inferential meaning while the latter literal meaning. Unfortunately, teaching reading comprehension at some educational institutions focuses only on the surface structure level of comprehension ignoring comprehension at the deep structure level.

Figure 4

Reading Comprehension
(Semantic analysis)

Deep-structure level
Cognitive level

Surface-structure level
Linguistic level

Content

Contextual meaning
(Sentences in context)

Pragmatic meaning
(feelings, attitudes of reader)

Denotative
(Central or "core" meaning of lexical items found in dictionaries)

Connotative
(Additional meaning beyond central meaning

Underlying
coherence

Surface cohesion

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[48] Leech, G. (1981). *Semantics, the study of meaning.* Penguin Books , 2nd ed.

As illustrated in Figure 3, reading comprehension   includes both cognitive understanding and linguistic recognition of the reading material. To begin with, eliciting the features of coherence represented in a text is usually insufficient for a complete understanding of what a text is really about. Coherence explains the relationship between the elements of a text (Chapter III), but it does not explain the relationship between the text and the extratextual reality it refers to. Comprehension, however, is achieved by coordinating the information verbalized in the text with some form or manifestation that reflect the reader´s general or particular realities or extratextual experiences. If the reader of a text wants to "understand", he has to connect or associate the new information given by the text (rheme) with the knowledge of the world which he has already stored in his memory (theme) (McCarthy, 1991)[49].

In this way, reading comprehension also tends to be affected by the reader´s reactions to content, which is also evaluated and appreciated in the process and without which comprehension would be incomplete. In her model of a translation-oriented text analysis, Nord (1991)[50] explains that "the reader *understands* the content of an utterance by associating the information he has gained from the lexical and syntactical text elements, via his linguistic competence, with the knowledge of the world he has stored and amalgamating these into a new *whole*". He establishes analogies between the new information of the text and the data that are part of his empirical knowledge. He often does so by means of similes and metaphors thus facilitating the whole process.

With advanced language learners, content-based language teaching offers a wealth of opportunities for the integration of skills. Thus, in order to further develop their target language resources and language skills, these students will be reading textbook materials and listening to lectures related to the content areas involved. Similarly, they will participate in small group oral discussions and probably write reports or papers on the specific area of study. At the same time, the teacher will assist with problems in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary etc. to develop students´accuracy while they engage in debates or read the textbook.

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[49] McCarthy, M. (1991). Op. cit.
[50] Nord, C. (1991). Op. cit.

Theme and rheme

The starting point for content analysis has to be the information carried by text elements linked on the surface of the text by linguistic devices such as the theme-rheme relationships. This type of linguistic analysis, under the heading of *Functional sentence perspective,* has been associated with the Prague School[51] which describes how information is distributed in sentences. It deals particularly with the effect of the distribution of known (or theme, topic) information that is not new to the reader or listener and new information (or rheme, focus, comment). Fries (1997)[52] coined the term *N-Rheme* for New-Rheme to provide a convenient way of referring to the last constituent of the clause. FSP differs from the traditional grammatical analysis of sentences because the distinction between subject-predicate is not always the same as the theme-rheme contrast.

For example, in the two sentences below Margaret is the grammatical subject in both sentences, but theme in 1 and rheme in 2:

1 *Margaret   sat in the corner seat.*

   Subject   Predicate

   Theme   Rheme

2 *In the corner seat sat Margaret.*

   Predicate   Subject

   Theme   Rheme

English is what is often called an "SVO"language (Subject-Verb-Object), in that the declarative clause requires a verb at its centre, a subject before it and any object after it. But there are a variety of ways in which the basic clause elements of *subject, verb, complement/object, adverbial* can be rearranged by putting different elements at the <u>beginning</u> of the discourse: *In the corner seat.* The same applies to the use of periodic sentences, for emphasis or to add suspense to the discourse.

3 *Sometimes Peter reads The Guardian.* ASVO Adverbial-fronted.

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[51] "Prague School of linguists": term developed in Chapter I "The living system of language".

[52] Fries, P. H. (1997). Theme and New in Written English. In T. Miller (ed.) *Functional Approaches to Written Text: Classroom Applications.* English Language Programs. U.S. Information Agency. Washington, D.C.

In English, the items we decide to bring to the <u>front</u> of the discourse are called themes – "the point of departure of the message" (Halliday, 1985: 38)[53]. They orient the receiver to what is about to be communicated. *Margaret, In the corner seat, Sometimes,* set up a context in which the remainder of the sentence is to be interpreted. It seems that first position in the clause is important in many of the world´s languages and that creating a theme in the clause is a universal feature.

By contrast, in written language there is a tendency for new information or rheme to be presented at the end of the clause. Not so in spoken narratives and anecdotes where speakers will often front-place key orientational features for their listeners as in the case of time and place markers: *suddenly, one day, not far from here, etc.* or when key participants and information about them are important for the listener, as in:

And the fellow who rang up from Italy last week, he´s a painter too.

On the whole, teachers often experience difficulties explaining to both native English speaking and non-native English speaking students how they should order the information in their sentences and how it should be interpreted and related to its context. Learners can thus be taught to use the descriptions of Theme and Rheme as a source of hypotheses to predict the placement of information in written language.

Types of Reading Comprehension. We can distinguish four different types of reading comprehension according to the reader´s purposes in reading and the type of reading used:

-a- **Literal comprehension:**

Training students in this skill consists of reading in order to understand/recognize and recall information <u>explicitly</u> contained in a passage. Recognition tasks require readers to identify the main points in the reading selection or in exercises that use the text content. Recall tasks, on the other hand, demand that learners produce from memory explicit statements from a selection (Intensive Reading). Such tasks are often in the form of questions that teachers pose to students after having

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[53] Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). Op. cit.

read the text. The degree of complexity of these two tasks depends on various conditions, such as: the learners´linguistic ability or needs and the number of events or incidents to be recalled. In general, it is believed that a recall task is more difficult than a recognition one when the two tasks deal with the same content.

Activities include:

- Recognition or recall of details: identifying or recalling such facts as the author´s and characters´ names, the time when the text was written or the story took place, the setting, an incident described in the text etc.
- Recognition or recall of the topic sentences/main ideas: locating, identifying or producing from memory an explicit statement or main idea from a selection.
- Recognition or recall of sequence or order of incidents or actions explicitly stated in the material.
- Recognition or recall of descriptions: identifying similarities and differences in the text which are explicitly described by the author.
- Recognition or recall of cause-effect relationships: identifying reasons for certain incidents, events or character´actions explicitly mentioned in the selection.

-b- **Inferential comprehension**

Students show their inferential abilities when reading in order to find information which is <u>not</u> explicitly stated in a passage, by inferring and using their personal knowledge, experience and intuition as a basis for conjectures or hypotheses. It involves more logical thinking than literal understanding and is elicited by teachers´questions which demand thinking and imagination.

Some tasks include:

- Inferring supporting details: guessing about additional facts the author might have included in the selection which would have made it more informative, interesting or appealing.
- Inferring the main idea: providing the main idea, theme or moral which is not explicitly stated in the material, such as reading between the lines.

- Inferring consequence: predicting what would happen in cause-effect relationships or hypothesizing about alternative beginnings to a story if the author had not provided one or predicting the ending of the story before reading it.
- Inferring cause-effect relationships: guessing what caused a certain event and explaining the rationale.
- Inferring character traits: hypothesizing about characters´particular personality qualities on the basis of clues presented in the selection.
- Inferring figurative language: deducing literal meaning from the author´s figurative use of language.

-c- **Critical or evaluative comprehension**

This is proved when learners make judgements about the content of a reading selection by <u>comparing</u> it with information provided by the teacher or authorities on the subject or with their own experience, knowledge or values related to the subject. This activity is based on accuracy, acceptability, desirability, suitability, quality, truthfulness and probability of occurrence.

These tasks include:

1. Objective evaluation: judging the soundness of statements or events in the reading material based on external criteria, such as supporting evidence, reasons and logic.
- Subjective evaluation: making judgements about the statements or events presented based on internal criteria, such as one´s biases, beliefs or preferences.
- Judgements of adequacy or validity: judging whether the author´s treatment of a subject is accurate and complete when compared to other sources on that subject.
- Judgements about appropriateness: determining whether certain selections or parts of them are relevant and contribute to solving an issue or a problem.
- Judgement of worth, desirability or acceptability: judging the suitability of a character´s actions in a particular incident based on the reader´s personal values.

-d- **Appreciative comprehension**

Appreciation deals with the <u>psychological</u> and <u>aesthetic </u>impact of the text on the reader. It includes both knowledge of and emotional responses to literary techniques, forms, styles and structures.

Activities include:

- Personal impression: reacting to context, events and characters
- Recognition of rhetorical devices and explanation of their functions.
- Reactions to style: describing and reacting to the writer´s use of language and stylistic devices.
- Evaluation of imagery: assessing the writer´s sensory images.

Finally, though some of the skills developed in this model seem to overlap, they are used for different purposes in comprehension (Extensive/Intensive Reading). These reading strategies can be used to help students comprehend the text from different perspectives and to understand the implications of its content.

Moreover, they enable readers to summarize the text as well as to differentiate arguments from supporting details offering the advantage of enhancing students´memorization and speed-reading, of improving their organizational skills and self-expression and essentially, of developing their critical thinking and synthesizing skills.

On the whole, the model places a high demand on teachers, because good reading comprehension questions always require careful planning and preparation.

Even though these reading strategies have been explicitly stated, they are further explained and developed in the course of specific text comprehension as illustrated in Part II, Varieties - English in use – of this Thesis.

Extensive/Intensive Reading

The purpose of an <u>extensive approach</u> to teaching reading is based on the belief that when students read for <u>general comprehension</u> large quantities of texts of their own choosing, their ability to read will consequently improve. The emphasis in extensive reading courses is to use reading as a <u>means</u> to an end. In other words, reading is used to accomplish something else, such as a written summary or report, a research paper, a group discussion, an oral report or a debate. In this type of course, learners are usually given more freedom to choose reading materials that interest them and more responsibility in finding those materials within their language proficiency range.The

texts that they read may be completely on their own selection or to some extent selected by the teacher.

In these courses almost all of the reading is done outside of class, without peer support or teacher aid. The text is always to be read for comprehension of main ideas, not of every detail and word. Indeed, the quantity of reading required of students each week prevents them from reading every text in depth, or from translating every text into their L1. In fact, they are frequently asked to read more than one text on the same topic or subject other than language as part of a content-based instruction syllabus, while studying material in the content-areas, e.g., texts on history, biology, computers, or literature, among others. In such cases, readers will focus on, for example, literary genres of the type found in thrillers by 20th.c American novelists, collections of short stories, essays... by women writers or on specific informative texts including anthologies published by leading scholars, articles by newspaper columnists, etc. The more texts they read on the same topic, the more they will understand because they will bring more background knowledge to each new text they read.

An intensive approach to reading – which currently reigns in most ESP intermediate and advanced classrooms – reading the text is treated as an end in itself. Each text is read carefully and thoroughly for maximum comprehension.Teachers provide direction and help before, sometimes during and after reading. Learners do many exercises that require them to work in depth with various selected aspects of the text.

In general, intensive readings are used to teach or practise specific reading strategies or skills.

However, it is possible – and common – to use a combination of both approaches in a reading course. For example, teachers who use a mostly intensive approach may ask students to read texts of their own selection and write a report on them or to read an item from an Internet site or from the newspaper each week and report orally on it at the beginning of the class. Conversely, teachers using a mostly extensive approach may have all the students read the same teacher-supplied texts from

time to time so that they can discuss the same topic together or can learn how to write a report or make an outline.

Identifying problems and purposes

The purpose of reading a particular text is the most important determinant of reading strategy. We do not always require the same level of comprehension, detail or recall from our reading; we have to convince our students that it is efficient and profitable to vary their technique and speed according to their purpose in reading.

Despite our best efforts, we find learners struggling word-for-word through a text, plowing on from beginning to end and stumbling at every unfamiliar item. Unfortunately, such slow and wasteful procedures are commonly due to a lack of reading confidence and so, our job as teachers is to help them master the strategies best suited to achieving the different purposes and, in this way, enhance their reading proficiency. (Figure 5).

In addition to the preceding remarks, we can also state that reading a large amount of material has a vital role to play in learning to read <u>fluently</u>. Similarly, by meeting the same patterns of letters, words and combinations of words again and again, students process them more quickly and <u>accurately</u>, thus developing a sight vocabulary – words that are recognized automatically. Consequently, they increase their reading speed and confidence and can give more attention to working out the overall meaning of what they are reading (Day and Bamford (2000)[54].

<u>Figure 5.</u> Table showing some sample reading situations and typical purposes. Adapted from Hyland (1990)[55]

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[54] Day, R.R. & Bamford, J. (2000). Reaching Reluctant Readers. In *English Teaching Forum.* US Department of State for the teacher of English. Volume 38 Number 3 July, p.12.
[55] Hyland, K. (1990). Purpose and Strategy: Teaching Extensive Reading Skills. In *English Teaching Forum.* American embassies. Volume XXVIII Number 2 April, p.14.

Sample Situation	Purpose	Comprehension level	Recall level	Speed
Criticism Reading a contract	Contact Analysis	Complete	High	Slow
Reading a newspaper or magazine	Entertainment or relaxation	Low	Moderate	Moderate to rapid
Researching article or report	a) Find relevant information b) get main ideas / detail	a) Selective b) Mod-High	a) Moderate b) Moderate	a) Rapid b) Moderate
Exam study Summarizing	Find main points	High	High	Slow
Using index, dict, or timetable	Find specific information	Selective	Low	Rapid
Buying a book	Overview of organization and content	Selective	Low	Rapid
Reading movie reviews	Finding specific information	Complete	High	Moderate

CHAPTER V

<u>From text awareness to macrostructure analysis</u>

Making sense of a text is an act of interpretation that depends as much on what readers bring to a text as what the author puts into it. The reader has to activate his knowledge of the world, make inferences and constantly assess his interpretation in the light of the situation, and the aims and goals of the text as the reader perceives them.

(McCarthy, 1991)[56]

Introducing texts

The term**"text"** is derived from a Greek word *"tejne"* and from the Latin word *"textus"* meaning woven or interwoven material as produced like cloth on a loom. In linguistics, a text is "a unit of writing or speech, especially if composed of more than one sentence and forming a cohesive whole"[57].

A somewhat more comprehensive definition[58] describes a text as "a segment of spoken or written language that has the following characteristics:

1 it is usually made up of several sentences which together create a structure or unit, such as a letter, a report or an essay. However, one word-texts also occur, such as DANGER on a warning sign.

2 it has distinctive structural and discourse characteristics

3 it has a particular communicative function or purpose

4 it can often only be fully understood in relation to the context in which it occurs".

One of the most influential definitions of "text" is that provided by Halliday and Hasan (1976/89)[59]:

A text is a unit of language in use...and it is not defined by its size...A text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form but of meaning. A text has texture (structure) *and that is what*

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[56] McCarthy, M. (1991). Op. cit. p.27.
[57] McArthur, T., (ed.) (1992). *The Oxford Companion to the English Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 1037-8.
[58] Richards, J. and Schmidt, R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics.* 3rd ed. London: Pearson Education Limited.
[59] Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1976/1989). Op. cit.

distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment.

In these definitions, the inclusion of criteria such as: meaning – structure – unity – communicative function -   is fundamental. Understanding and analysing these components constitute the underlying bases of any given text or any particular task in reading comprehension.

Text typology

Although for many people reading texts means reading books, people read many different types of texts everyday. We may distinguish between fiction and non-fiction; factual and creative: informative, argumentative, narrative, poetic and drama texts; and a wide variety which enable human communication within different contexts and situations. All these types of texts differ in style, format and message which invite detailed analysis.

The development of the various fields of language and linguistics study: rhetoric, or the study of effective writing and speech, ethnography, or the relation between culture and society, pragmatics and discourse etc., have contributed to and influenced our view of text typology. The knowledge that readers have of text/discourse types allows them to adjust their reading expectations and skills to the text to be decoded. Their comprehension of a text may change as they reread it, but the text itself does not change. Unlike readers, texts are static; once written, they cannot adapt to the readers who are reading them (Aebersold and Field, 1997)[60].

The terms *text* and *discourse*[61] have been related to two different but complementary perspectives on language. In fact, a text may be viewed as the product of a process, whilst discourse refers to a dynamic notion – the process of text production and text comprehension. Seen in this light, it seems rather arbitrary today to maintain a strict boundary between text linguistics and discourse analysis. As a result, these terms may be used interchangeably.

In addition, texts can be classified according to conventional communicative situations. These **categories of texts** are highly effective in conveying information unambiguously as they result from shared social and knowledge relationships between

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[60] Aebersold, J. A. and Field, M. L. (1997). Op.cit.
[61] "Text" and "discourse": terms developed in Chapter I "Language: a living system".

writer and reader. Texts are characaterised further by topic and mode of expression as, for example, in the numerous subcategories of <u>reports</u>, many of which are written according to a variety of guidelines.

When we write a message we first think of the **<u>text type</u>** that is suitable for the occasion and the content, and formulate our text accordingly. Similarly, when we receive a message, we first identify the text type because it permits us to tune in to the appropriate reception and response. For example, we know that <u>grammar books</u> have a prescriptive intention and are meant for repeated reading and reference; <u>application forms</u> are pre-structured and writers only have to fill in slots and readers only have to read selectively. If a writer sends a <u>document </u>directly to a known reader, as e. g. in hand-written correspondence, the original intention of the writer coincides with the expectation of the reader. In industrial environments where documents are frequently the result of multiple authorship, substantial editing and revision, text types are related through alternate uses in a variety of communicative situations and through modifications to make them suitable for different purposes. <u>Shipping and delivery documents</u> are a good example of the various purposes certain complex documents have to adjust to.

Furthermore, while the lay person usually associates text type with content, e. g. medical report, police report, book review, cookery recipe, in many cases the same content allows a variety of text types. There are, for example, a great variety of reports on different topics which have the same overall text structure. Moreover, content knowledge can also be expressed by non-linguistic resources and many messages consist of combinations of such texts and graphics: tables, charts, illustrations etc.(Sager, 1997)[62].

However, it is common to find text-type norms that vary from one culture to another as in the case of <u>instructing texts</u> of the type of operative instructions, directions or recipes which are characterized by a typical syntactic structure. In English and as above-mentioned, it is the imperative mode ("melt butter at medium heat"), in Spanish, an impersonal construction ("se lavan y se cortan las papas") and in German, an infinitive construction. Text-type conventions are also subject to historical change.

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[62] Sager, J. C. (1997). Text Types and Translation. In A. Trosborg (ed.) *Text Typology and Translation.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Some which are very common today did not exist in former times (radio news or commercials), whereas others, which were quite commonplace centuries ago (magic spells or heroic poems), have changed function or become obsolete altogether.

As early as 1971, distinctions were made by German linguists between informative texts (news or scientific articles), expressive texts (works of literature) or appellative / operative texts (advertisements), depending on whether the major focus was on the subject matter, the producer or the receiver. They included in this list the subsidiary or audio-medial texts: e.g. songs or radio plays, whose realization involves media other than print, though this fourth category was abandoned in later works. As we know, texts have a hybrid nature and text purposes may only be viewed in terms of "dominances" of a given purpose or contextual focus. However, a perceptible dominant focus is always present while other purposes remain subsidiary.

One further distinction is that between artistic (or literary) texts, such as novels, essays etc., and functional texts including casual, personal, transactional, reference, pedagogical and academic texts (Lucas, 1990)[63]. According to this classification, casual texts extracted from newspapers, magazines and non-fiction books for the layman are particularly useful with classes in general English. The problem with these texts is that they usually contain journalese, with colloquial expressions and cultural references that may puzzle even fairly advanced language learners. Generally speaking, though, such passages of journalese alternate with passaages of straightforward description or narration and the assertive reader can pass over them. Thus, these texts provide good practice for scanning and focussed or intensive reading.

Personal texts are usually letters and diaries; transactional texts are chosen from business letters, memoranda, legal documents, reports and instructions; reference texts include dictionaries, catalogues, directories and inventories; pedagogical texts comprise textbooks and encyclopaedias. The last two types of texts are suitable for practising study skills; indeed, after questions involving reading tactics, there should be questions requiring the reorganization of the obtained information - asking for the completion of a table or diagram or asking for a summary of part(s) of the text.

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[63] Lucas, M. A. (1990). Four Important Factors in Reading. In *English Teaching Forum.* Vol. XXVIII Number 3, July, pp. 26-30.

Academic texts include research papers, theses, specialist books and journals; they are suitable only with specialists in a particular field, because the information they contain and the terminology they use will be beyond non-specialists, even though the syntax may be simple and there are no colloquialisms.

Texts have also been described through reference to their perceived <u>rhetorical function</u> – scheme or macrostructure – implying the broad social or communicative goals of the writer, such as "descriptive", "narrative", "expository" etc.

In addition to broad rhetorical purposes, there are more <u>specific "lower-level"</u> rhetorical patterns/labels such as "cause-effect", "comparison-contrast", "argument-exemplification", "general-particular" (generalization-example and preview-detail) or "problem-solution" lists which are often used to describe short stretches of text. In contrast to the goal-oriented rhetorical functions above-mentioned, these lower-level patterns appear to identify the "acts", devices or means by which social goals are to be achieved.Theses patterns are well-established in the intermediate/advanced classroom and are developed through intensive reading and writing activities. They are essential knowledge in both EFL / ESP environments and even in translator training courses.

Apart from these categories and as mentioned in Figure 1, the notion of text/discourse type is closely related to the levels of <u>discourse function</u> and <u>topic</u>. Many textbooks, especially those published during the 1970´s, divide material according to function. One such textbook has, among others, the following chapter headings:

- *Talking about yourself(...)*
- *Asking for information(...)*
- *Offering, asking permission, giving reasons*
- *Complaining, apologising*
- *Describing places and describing people...*

The fact is that with functions, as with senders and receivers, there is no simple one-to-one connection to discourse type. In general terms, though the function of a *menu* is to inform, it may also serve to impress, to decorate or to amuse. Similarly, *advertisements* not only inform, they also appeal, persuade, frighten, worry, shock, arouse, interest. Though a *will* has the function of bequeathing, it might also be intended to repudiate or to please. Function and discourse type, then, should not be confused and the complexities of interaction rapidly identified and confronted.

Some textbooks divide their material by discourse topic. These Chapter headings abound:

1 *Crime and Punishment*

2 *The World of Politics*

3 *Teaching*

4 *The Written Press*

5 *The Ecological crisis...*

What discourse types might be relevant to each of these headings?

1 report – argument

2 speech – manifesto

3 lecture – seminar

4 article – newspaper

5 message – report

What is important from a pedagogic point of view is that teachers should, as early as possible, make students aware as to the different discourse types, so that they may sort out and define the interaction style they are involved in, which in turn may lead them to recognition of other macro/global issues and finally, to more specific/micro textual structures.

 Literary and non-literary texts

Any discussion about text types is incomplete without at least some consideration of the distinction popularly made between literary and non-literary texts. Apart from the supposed intrinsic worth of literary over non-literary texts, it is sometimes assumed that the former are somehow harder to process, either because of the multiple layers of meaning and connotation they contain, or because of the wider and more complex range of language displayed. Certainly, many students refuse to read poetry because they find them "hard to understand", although this may simply be because they are less familiar with poetic conventions than they are with those of prose or drama. Clearly, however, not all literary texts have the same degree of complexity.

Some literary critics have found that readers make more personal associations with the literary ones because they seem to arouse suspense, curiosity, awe, interest and more empathy than the non-literary. Nonetheless, they have concluded that there is no

absolute divide between them as far as discourse comprehension is concerned, adding that when processing literary texts the reader is not only reminded of personal, significant life-experience emotions and feelings but also of previous literary texts he may have read.

Besides, in this same field conventional elements are said to be more frequent than in the field of non-literary texts. Designations such as "novel", "short story" or "anecdote" normally indicate that the texts belonging to one of these text types/genres are expected to possess certain common features. Literary genres are often characaterized by special features of subject matter or content (anecdotes, jokes...), extension (novels, short stories...) or by their inclusion in a literary movement (novellas), as well as by certain stylistic features. Nevertheless, a literary text usually has to be regarded as the result of an individual creative process. In general, its (artistic) significance lies precisely in the fact that it does not reproduce existing text models, but represents originality and creativity.

The fact is that while the use of narrative texts is prevalent in early instruction, when considering more advanced FL students, a much greater emphasis is typically placed on expository prose. These learners need to understand the more abstract patterns of text structuring which are possible in expository discourse as well as comprehend the denser and more complex information involved in academic contexts.

Genre

As above-mentioned, in constructing texts, the writer must employ certain features conventionally associated with texts from the genre in which he is writing. In reading a text, the reader similarly anticipates certain features of the text based on genre expectations.

Genre is a type of discourse that occurs in a particular setting, (such as business correspondence, legal writing, staff meetings, etc.) *that has distinctive and recognizable patterns and norms of organization and structure and that has particular and distinctive communicative functions.* (Longman Dictionary of Language & Applied Linguistics).

Genres are texts used in a particular situation for a particular purpose and *may be classified using everyday labels such as a guidebook, a nursery rhyme, a poem, a business letter, a newspaper article, a radio play, an advertisement, etc.* (Trosborg, 1997).[64]

Genre analysis is the study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalized academic or professional settings. (Bhatia, 1997).[65]

Despite variation in wording in these definitions, they all emphasize the process rather than the product of communication. Once again, the genre focus is on procedures, on the combination of language skills and content-based learning.

Throughout the last decade, genre analysis has enjoyed immense popularity and has attracted the attention of literary scholars, rhetoricians, sociologists, discourse analysts, machine translators, ESP specialists, language teachers, business communication experts, neuro-linguists, among others. Genre-based approaches are particularly strong in Australia as a result of the work of functional linguists such as Halliday and Martin. In adult second/foreign language teaching a genre-based approach starts from the recognition of the discourse community in which the learners will be functioning, e. g. a hotel, factory or hospital, and then proceeds to study text types and text roles that characterize discourse within that community.

A comprehensive study of genres by Swales (1990)[66] analyses the development of the concept of genre in the fields of literature, linguistics and rhetoric. Genre analysis has a long-established tradition in literary studies. It dates back to Aristotle, who distinguished genres as text-types, a view which still prevails. Today, the term genre is used to refer to <u>a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations, each with a different goal and employing different patterns of structure and organization.</u>

<u>Further varieties of text.</u> <u>Genre and source:</u>

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[64] Trosborg, A. (1997). Text Typology: Register, Genre and Text Type. In A. Trosborg (ed.) *Text Typology and Translation.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
[65] Bhatia, V. K. (1997). Applied Genre Analysis and ESP. In Tom Miller (ed.) *Functional Approaches to Written Text: Classroom Applications.* English Language Programs. Washington D. C. US Information Agency.
[66] Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings.* Cambridge: CUP.

In addition, it should be noted that within linguistics the notion of genre is not equated with source, although they may coincide. Thus, at one level we can think of newspapers as a broad class of texts, or "genre" with the very broad social purpose of reporting and commenting on current events. However, since newspapers are made up of other texts with a wide range of specific social purposes, newspapers are at the same time sources in which more specific and clearly identifiable genres are represented. For example, editorials, letters to the editor, news stories as constituents of newspapers, meet their criteria of genre membership much more clearly than does the source: the newspaper. By contrast, publicity leaflets pushed through the door, with the social purpose of promoting a product, a service etc., are simultaneously source and genre. Additionally, they can be described as the discourse type "persuasive" or even "descriptive".

Genre and register: Once again, within linguistics, few studies have distinguished genre from register. The latter consists of the lexical and grammatical features of a text (in speech and writing) that reflect the social context in which it is produced. Swales pointed to register as a well-established and central concept in linguistics, while genre was described as "a recent appendage found to be necessary as a result of important studies of text structure". The fact is that only recently has genre become disentangled from register.

With the work during the 1980´s in the fields of Language for Specific Purposes and professional discourse, there was a shift of emphasis to a growing interest in the sociocultural functions of disciplinary genres; for example, legal and scientific communication and a number of surveys on business English have appeared describing "registers" or "genres of specialized language".

The main difference then, is that registers impose constraints at the linguistic level of vocabulary and syntax, whereas genre constraints operate at the level of discourse structure. Moreover, genre specifies conditions for beginning, structuring and ending a text, for which reason genres, unlike registers, can only be realized in completed texts. Asknowledging these points – a description of genre in its own right, independent of a subordination to a particular register – is essential.

In short, there are many ways in which the relationship between genres, text-types and registers may be exploited in the language learning classroom. Essentially, students must remember that:

For a text to function as a sign with its intended pragmatic force, the receptor must be able to identify it as a token of a particular genre and text-type.

Such ability is dependent upon the receptor and writer sharing the same knowledge of textual features and conventions – a common occurrence when both belong to the same linguistic and cultural community. In translated texts, however, the writer and the receptor of the translated text belong to different cultural and linguistic systems that do not normally share such textual features and conventions. It follows therefore, that the transfer of the source-language text into a target language will involve changes in said features and organization.(Paltridge, 1996; Colina, 1997).[67]

Finally, the persistence of text classification according to aim, mode and style, as suggested by rhetorical tradition, reflect some essential discourse features. However, discourse framework is decisive. The interaction between discourse situation and genre, on the one hand, and text type and communicative function on the other, is a most important goal for future cross-cultural and language research. Moreover, recognizing different categories or code systems can be a powerful facilitator for **reading comprehension tasks**.

These ideas can be explored in greater depth by looking closely at two different textual units from the same source:

Exercise:

1.a

Because Liverpool is a major city, you will probably have heard something about it, even if you have never been here. Perhaps you think of it as "the home of the Beatles", "a major seaport", "where the Grand National is run", or "famous for Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs". Liverpool is all these things, but it is also much more. This selection sets out to show some of the features of Liverpool and the surrounding area which make it an attractive place to spend

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[67] Paltridge, B. (1996). Genre, text type, and the language learning classroom. In *ELT Journal.* Vol.50/3 July. OUP pp. 237-243.

   Colina, S. (1997). Contrastive Rhetoric and Text-typological Conventions in Translation Teaching. In *Target.* Vol. 9:2. Amsterdam. John Benjamins B. V. pp.335-351.

your student days. The next few paragraphs will tell you a little about sport and entertainment, local attractions, enjoyment further afield, shopping, food and drink and the Liverpool people.

1.b

Liverpool is one of the minority of cities distinguished by two cathedrals. The Roman Catholic cathedral is almost on the Precinct. Visit it preferably on a sunny day, when the light streams through the stained-glass lantern into the vast interior...The Anglican cathedral is built in the traditional way using masonry, and in sheer size it is the climax of the neo-Gothic style of building. The style is severe but not heavy...

...Adjacent to the Albert Dock is the Maritime Museum, which makes the history of Liverpool shipping come alive; if you are lucky on the day you visit, you may see how barrels or ropes were made in the old days of sail, and at all times you can see examples of the boats which have served Liverpool down the years.

The Halls of Residence have their own spacious grounds in the leafy suburbs. Nearby is Sefton Park, the largest municipal park in the country where you can walk, cycle, jog or simply sit back and admire the surroundings.(Liverpool University Undergraduate Prospectus 1991).
 Adapted from Davies (1995).

Before undertaking the analysis, the following should be considered:

- What source/genre are the two extracts drawn from? The actual source: an undergraduate prospectus for Liverpool University. Further predictions: a tourist guide or a tourist promotion leaflet.

- What is the overall topic of the text? Liverpool. Sub-topics? Sport and entertainment, local attractions, enjoyment further afield...

- What text-type/rhetorical function do the extracts represent? Description.

- What is the broad social purpose of the genre? To advertise, sell and promote the main features of Liverpool and the surrounding area.

- Who has written the text? Probably, the Prospectus editor.

- What role(s) is he/she adopting towards his/her readers? The writer takes on the role of friendly informant who knows the city but who is also familiar with the audience and is concerned about students´likes and dislikes, tastes and interests. Uses a conversational style.

- What status within the original text has each extract got? 1.a probably occupies front-page position as it introduces the general topic. It is the first section of the text

followed by descriptive paragraphs and details? 1.b occupies secondary position, probably printed at the bottom of or over the page; it describes the city´s major attractions from the most important (Cathedrals, Albert Dock, Maritime Museum, Halls of Residence, Sefton Park) to the minor details (neo-Gothic style, barrels, ropes,boats...).

- What function in the text does each extract serve? 1.a to inform potential Liverpool University students about the main advantages of spending their student days in a city as Liverpool. 1.b to persuade them that it is the best choice they can make.

Students are now ready to undertake the literal comprehension of the extracts:

- What kind of language choices can you find to support your judgement and in particular to distinguish between the two extracts?

1.a **Choice of sentence-initial elements:** Here, we see the writer´s choice of elements in first-position sentences or clauses which is technically referred to as **theme**: there is reference to the reader and his/her potential circumstances and/or interests: *You, You will probably have heard, Perhaps you think,* and reference to the writer/text: *This section, The next few paragraphs.* From these choices it is immediately clear that the writer is not only interacting directly with the reader, but also offering him/her a range of possible optional roles as a prospective "client". By contrast, in text 1.b the writer does not identify discourse "participants": the writer and the reader. Cathedrals and other buildings of architectural interest act as "entities" in the real world.

Choice of verbs: verbs in 1.a also help suggest interaction between reader and writer because they refer to the mental processes of perception and thinking: *hear, think* and to verbal process: *tell* and *show.* In addition, the writer´s goals are revealed through the choice of verbs of intention followed by the infinitive form of the verb, *sets out to show,* or through the choice of a future verb, *will tell.* Such choices clearly reflect the writer´s intention to initiate a dialogue with the reader. Conversely, the verbs in 1.b are predominantly verbs describing actions or states: *is built, is severe, were made, have served.*

Choice of adjectives in text 1.a: these adjectives are typical of descriptions such as: "*major* city" and "*attractive* place" which give learners a general idea of what Liverpool is like. They act as umbrella terms for the specific illustrations that follow.

Comparisons introduced by quotation marks *"the home of the Beatles", "a major seaport"*...help to enhance readers´interest in obtaining more information concerning attractions, sights, sport, entertainment, student accommodation etc. In 1.b suspense is broken when the writer describes the attractions in particular: *two cathedrals, a Dock, a Museum, examples of boats, largest municipal park;* again, use of epithets as in *"spacious" grounds, "leafy" suburbs...*

Macro/Microstructures

By means of the concept of genre we can approach texts from the macro-level as communicative acts within a discursive network or system. From their studies carried out over the past ten years, researchers have consistently found that EFL students have little knowledge of macrostructures to guide them in text reading, and that they have few, if any, strategies for comprehending texts.

The term "macrostructure" has been defined as "*the relationship of high-level units* [and genre, one of them] *within a discourse"* (Cook, 2000)[68]. In other words, it is the underlying structure that accounts for the overall semantic organization of a text as compared with the "microstructure": the details or low-level textual elements found in a piece of discourse. Microstructures are marked by means of syntax structures (main/subordinate clauses, tenses...) or lexical devices (e.g. cohesive ties) and by suprasegmental features (e.g. punctuation). Synonyms for macrostructure abound: scheme, schema, genre-scheme, rhetorical structure, among others[69].

According to van Dijk and Kintsch (1983)[70] "notions used to describe this kind of overall coherence of discourse include topic, theme, gist, upshot or point. All these notions say something about the global <u>content of a discourse</u>". They must be inferred from semantic interpretations of the whole text or content.The major strategy is thus, a form of semantic **inference.** These theorists also introduced the concept of "schematic structure" or "superstructures" to account for the <u>form of the text</u> or specific categories

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[68] Cook, G. (2000). *Discourse.* Language Teaching: A Scheme for Teacher Education. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p.157.
[69] Terms developed in the "Introduction" and Chapter II "Reading: a major language skill".
[70] van Dijk, T. A. & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension.* New York: Academic Press.

defining a text/discourse type such as: narration, description, exposition (also rhetorical function/genre) or summary, advertisement, letter. They concluded that both macro and superstructures were part of an integrated process and were both considered organizational patterns which facilitated understanding.

Macrostructures involving topics and themes typically occur at the beginning or end of a text or paragraph, are expressed in independent sentences – topic sentences – and are even, sometime, signalled by larger print, italics, bold type or are separated from other expressions by pauses or blanks.

Since the days of classical rhetorics, the beginning and the end of a text are considered to be of particular importance for the interpretation of the whole text. Initial position helps the reader predict the topic of the discourse or the episode, so that the following sentences can be interpreted top down relative to that macroproposition. Conversely, final-position, topical expressions serve to check, remind or correct the already established macropropositions of the reader, as well as to repeat what was already known, so that the decoder has not only hierarchically dominant information but also recent information to search for when the topic is needed in subsequent tasks.

Some text-types are marked, either at the beginning or end, by certain conventional verbal or non-verbal features such as the "moral" at the end of a fable or the expression "Once upon a time" at the beginning of a fairy tale. In general, the end tends to be less frequently marked than the beginning.

The example of the fable shows that certain composition features are specific for the text-type. Indeed, some discourse types are characterized by a particular macrostructure and particular structural markers as well as typical means of conjunction between the text parts. A good example is the text-type "letter" with the conventional text segments date, address, salutation, message and complimentary closing. Another example is the simple narrative which is usually analysed into four components: setting, theme, plot and resolution. The setting, in turn, has three components: characters, location and time. The theme consists of an event and a goal. The plot consists of various episodes, each with its own goal and outcome.

Another instance of macrostructures is that found in technical and scientific texts. Wills, patent specifications or the written particulars of the contract of employment have completely rigid macrostructures, which means that the individual

passages always follow each other in the same sequence, whereas conference reports and articles in technical journals seem to have more flexible macrostructures. The reason may be that science and technology are international fields; in fact, technical products are sold all over the world and are normally not influenced by individual cultures.

Non-verbal elements:

These are signs taken from other non-linguistic codes which are used to supplement, illustrate or intensify the message of the text. These elements play a complementary role in verbal communication, excluding of course gesture or sign languages which replace the verbal code. The non-verbal text elements comprise photos, illustrations, special types of print or typographical features, diagrams... and suprasegmental features such as punctuation, capitalisation, italicisation. It may happen that non-verbal elements convey a piece of information that is even more relevant to the reader than the message communicated by the text. A number in small print on the label of a wine bottle may in itself be of little interest, but it tells the expert/connoisseur more about the quality of the wine than the name itself.

Indeed, language teachers know that, more often than not, non-verbal communication (NVC) is a reliable resource, as Hall (1999)[71] pointed out: "when there appears to be a conflict between the verbal message and the non-verbal one, always trust the non-verbal."

Analysis of macrostructure formation   As mentioned in Chapter II of this research work, matters and activities concerning the "top" levels of discourse are inherently holistic and not atomistic in nature. But, it has also been clearly stated in the previous pages that conceptions of discourse function, orientation towards discourse type and part and hypotheses about interlocutors, among others, necessarily subsume the "lower" levels of discourse like cohesion, as well as formal levels of language: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Furthermore, as illustrated in the exercise that follows, many types of discourse have a conventional global schema or superstructure which provides a kind of overall

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[71] Hall, M. (1999). Talking without speaking: nonverbal communication for language teachers. In *ELT News & Views* 6. 1 March p. 31.

functional syntax for the inference of **semantic macrostructures.** News discourse (superstructure), as it appears in news stories in newspapers, television programmes or news weeklies, can also be assigned a conventional superstructure and different categories subsequently analysed. For the purpose of this analysis, the term macrostructure will be used to encompass both structures in the discourse.

The role of macrostructure formation for news discourse is absolutely crucial, more so than for stories which we read for entertainment. The general communicative function of news is to create or update situation models: we want to be informed about new matters or issues or learn about new situations and one of the best ways to do this is to have access to newspaper discourse, namely: headlines, lead or initial thematic sentences, summaries, sub-headings, layout of the text, among others.

Exercise: Financial/legal English. The following extract exhibits some of the features mentioned above:

The Economist June 22nd 2002   Finance and economics

Insider dealing

That Martha moment

Photograph

 New York

Interior information swings into fashion MARTHA STEWART made her name out of making the most unpromising situations seem immaculate. But can the billionaire "diva of domesticity" emerge squeaky clean from an insider-trading scandal that has Manhattan´s wealthy socialites yapping?

Ms Stewart was hurt by the bankruptcy of Kmart (a big retailer of her branded merchandise) and a critical biography. She is now under investigation for selling shares in ImClone, a biotech firm run by her friend Sam Waksal (who also dated her daughter). The sale came just before the news that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had not approved ImClone´s cancer drug, Erbitux.

On December 27th 2001, after prosecutors say Mr Waksal knew of the FDA´s decision, his father and daughter sold millions of dollars worth of ImClone shares. Ms Stewart sold her 4,000-odd shares. She had, she said, told her stockbroker, Peter Bacanovic, to sell them if their price dipped below $60. Also on December 27th his firm, Merrill Lynch, warned investors of ImClone´s possible trouble with the FDA. Its source of information is unclear..........

One of the most obvious initial categories of news is that of <u>headlines.</u> They are typical strategic cues from which macrostructures derive and which usually express a text-fragment. **That Martha moment** is an incomplete phrase presenting only a partial and vague piece of information. The reader constructs his first macroproposition on the basis of her name, and may safely infer that the text will be about a woman. (In fact, the original text has an inset in the top right-hand corner of the page that shows her photograph). Often, there is not just one headline, but also a <u>super-</u> (Insider dealing) and a <u>subheadline</u> (Interior information swings into fashion), above and below the main headline, as in this case. The reader may assume then, that she probably got involved in some financial affair of the type of insider dealing/trading. The reader knows that, in principle, all headline propositions represent macroinformation; he also knows that they attract attention, mainly due to larger and/or bold print, that they summarize the macrostructure of the text and hence, serve as cues for his strategic decision-making process as to whether he will or will not read the text. Headlines also constitute the basis for the process of **skimming** the paper, a major strategy in reading comprehension.

Often the headline category is followed by a <u>lead</u> consisting of one or a few sentences which, along with the headline, typically occur in <u>initial position</u>. Leads not only summarize the text but also serve as an introduction and may even occur in the first paragraph of the main text. Beside, notice that here, MARTHA STEWART is printed in larger type.

In addition to these textual cues, many readers will also have an existing model about the financial and economic situation in the U.S.: it seems domestic information and corporate fraud were the fashion in 2002. Thus, the reader´s opinions, beliefs and ideology are also relevant and constitute the prior knowledge about the situation.

Furthermore, advanced students of such courses as, for instance, Law or Sworn Translators´Training Courses, are also well acquainted with specific content areas related to this branch of Anglo-American law: Criminal law   -   Substantive Criminal law -   Crimes affecting business/White-collar crimes - Securities fraud - Insider Trading/Dealing.

The <u>event</u> category denoting the most important news events normally follows. Fragments of it may be interspersed throughout the text, so that more important events

(in the interpretation of the journalist) come first and less important ones come last. Words such as: scandal, bankruptcy, investigation, shares, millions of dollars... are used in that order. Next, each event is generally placed within a context and described against some background. Thus, the bankruptcy effects of one of her big retailers and a critical biography are set against the background of the ImClone scandal.

In contrast to the daily newspapers and television news, weeklies do not report actual news. Instead, they provide articles with much more context, background, consequences and perhaps evaluations, a category which in the newspaper is often reserved for the editorials and which are expressly separated from the news – in keeping with the ideology that "facts" and "opinion" are two different things.

Because weeklies are read in a different way than newspapers, skimming is less important, so that leads will occur less often, or perhaps as part of special "boxes" or "insets". Although first sentences may function partly as such summarizing thematic sentences, they often just give some striking detail. In The Economist text, the journalist introduces Martha Stewart by reference to her successful career as "the billionaire diva of domesticity", a generalization and a metaphor.

Note: ImClone founder, Samuel D. Waksal, pleaded guilty to securities fraud and other charges and is serving a seven-year prison sentence for insider trading since June 2003. On March 5th 2004, Martha Stewart was found guilty of obstruction of justice, of conspiracy and of lying to prosecutors about the details of her ImClone share sale. The jury proved both Stewart and her broker Bacanovic had lied to cover up the reason Stewart sold the shares. They maintained that they had an oral agreement to sell the shares when they dropped below $ 60. However, the defense´s main argument was left unsubstantiated. It seems that by sticking to a bogus story, she turned a civil case into a criminal one. Bacanovic was found guilty as well of the same charges and almost certainly will see prison time too. On July 17th. 2004 she was sentenced to five months in federal prison, five months of home arrest, two years´supervised release and a $30,000 fine. All the same, Ms Stewart does not have to surrender until an appeal is decided.[72]

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[72] *Buenos Aires Herald,* July 17, 2004 ("Martha Stewart gets 10-month sentence") Reuters. p. 9.
  La Nación, 17 de julio, 2004 ("Condenan a 5 meses de prisión a la gurú del buen gusto de EE.UU.") Agencias AFP, EFE y AP.

<u>Materials selection.</u> Most high-intermediate/advanced students enjoy reading carefully chosen English newspapers and magazines including information found in controversial editorials, theatre or book reviews, foreign news reports and even advertisements, manuals or brochures typically evoking strong responses.

A subscription to a local English language newspaper as the *Buenos Aires Herald* or one published internationally such as *The International Herald Tribune* or *USA Today*, is sure to be appreciated by many students. If Internet can be accessed, it may be a source for extensive reading materials such as the quality British newspaper *The Guardian* or the American *The New York Times.*General interest magazines such as *The New Yorker,* with its personal history notes and celebrity interviews, or specialized magazines according to students´interests such as the American weeklies *Time* or *Newsweek* and the British *The Economist*, are also popular. In short, if reading materials are in the students´fields of interest, comprehension is made easier because readers are familiar with the topic in hand and have previous knowledge of the subject matter.

CHAPTER VI

<u>Engaging EFL learners in strategy use</u>

Learners´awareness of strategies and the choices they make may lower anxiety, increase self-confidence and provide them with ways in which to evaluate their own performance.

(Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000: 175)[73]

Strategy-based instruction

Second or foreign language learners need to develop **strategies** in the new language to improve all four major language skills and one of the ways of doing so is by integrating such strategy training together with the regular explicit language instruction offered by the teacher. In the past decade, researchers and applied linguists have reported on several studies based on an approach called **strategy-based instruction (SBI),** which has paved the way for long discussions concerning the pedagogical implications of the findings.

One of these studies was carried out by Cohen (1998)[74] at the University of Minnesota where fifty-five students of French and Norwegian received such instruction. The results proved that the approach was worthwhile and that language learning could be facilitated by students´becoming aware of an individualized range of strategies, which they may consciously use for comprehending and producing the target language. In other words, students who have increased opportunities for strategic "investment" in their language training will be <u>more successful</u> since they will know how to identify, practise, assess and transfer such techniques to new learning situations, thus promoting <u>learner</u> <u>autonomy.</u> By the student´s own personal investment we mean his use of time, efforts involved and attention devoted to the learning process. Another main advantage is that strategies introduced during the course of study can usually be used long after the course has been completed.

The haves and the have-nots

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[73] Celce-Murcia, M. & Olshtain, E. (2000). Op. cit.

[74] Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language.* London: Longman.

How do we explain the fact that certain students seem to have a special ability to learn a foreign language and progress very rapidly while others struggle and advance very slowly? In the past, we have often tried to explain this phenomenon with statements such as, "He has a good ear" or "He has no flair for languages". These explanations are no longer satisfactory. What seems to be happening in the so-called student with a natural ability may, in fact, be his capacity to focus on language events using conscious or unconscious strategies and storing them for future use. The so-called student who is "no good at languages" may simply not possess these systematic techniques to help him learn more effectively.

Teachers probably know what some typical students do to help them learn English:

- they regularly read international magazines and newspapers in English. They also try to read popular books such as the Harry Potter series and do so fast, do not look up unknown words in the dictionary, but try to infer their meanings.

- they use different colour highlighters to mark important points in their textbooks and notebooks as well as new vocabulary.

- they attend English Conversation courses or club meetings at college regularly in order to have a chance to interact with native English speakers.

- they watch English language programmes and movies on cable television and try to guess the meaning of expressions they are not familiar with.

- they like to scribble notes in the margins of textbooks and to outline grammatical points.

- they keep organized notebooks sorting out vocabulary connected with: transportation, professions, ways of walking...

- they spend hours every week in Internet chat rooms communicating in English with other young people around the world. They frequently write to new E-mail friends they have made on line.

Indeed, these are but a few of the many ways people go about when learning a language. Each one of the above activities is, in fact, a personal strategy for learning. They have been defined as**"specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students (often unintentionally) use to improve their progress in developing L2**

skills."(Oxford, 1990)[75]**.** Oxford states that these strategies not only facilitate the internalization, storage, retrieval and/or use of the new language, but constitute, in fact, necessary self-directed involvement for developing communicative ability.

Good and slow learners

What exactly is it that "good learners" do to contribute to their success in learning a foreign language? According to recent research conducted by different linguists, good language learners:

- find their own way, getting involved in their learning process
- are creative, developing a "feel" for the language and becoming aware of grammatical patterns, vocabulary variety and register
- make errors work for them and not against
- learn to make intelligent textual inferences and predictions
- learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations moving
- use memory strategies, such as expressions, short sentences... that help them remember something important (mnemonics) or recall what has been learned
- learn production techniques to achieve further competence
- vary speech register according to the degree of formality and context
- foster their opportunities for extra practice by using the language not only within the teaching period but also in their daily lives.

If good learners use these strategies, although not necessarily all of them, is it possible that slower students could be encouraged to use them as well? According to a number of surveys conducted in the past years, the answer is "yes". Indeed, explicit instruction in the systematic supply and application of a range of strategies and resources– as part of the foreign language currriculum – has proved most successful, showing, at the same time, that these tools can be learned by **all** students in a conscious or subconscious way. Thus, EFL learners end up **internalizing** a number of strategy training goals which may help them do the following:

- self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning

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[75] Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know.* New York: Newbury House.

- experiment with familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies

- become aware of what helps them learn the target language most efficiently

- develop a broad range of problem solving skills

- make decisions about how to approach a language task

- monitor, orient and assess their performance.

Instructional models

As a result of the recent interest in strategy development, various instructional models are now currently in use. Cohen (2003)[76] describes seven different models:

A <u>General Study Skills Courses.</u> These courses are sometimes intended for students with academic difficulties but successful students can also benefit. Many general academic skills can be transferred to language learning, i.e. using flash cards, overcoming anxiety, learning effective note-taking skills, among others.

B <u>Awareness Training.</u> Lectures and discussions provide students with a general introduction to strategy use and the ways they can be used to accomplish language tasks.

C <u>Strategy Workshops.</u> These often combine lectures, hands-on practice and discussions about the effectiveness of strategy use and are often incorporated into foreign language syllabi. They imply more intensive sessions aimed at focusing students´ attention on specific language skills.

D <u>Peer Tutoring.</u> Here, students with different language backgrounds pair up for mutual tutoring activities. They must spend a similar time period with each language, alternating roles as teacher and learner. At times, they might exchange suggestions about the strategies they use. Similarly, students studying the same language may meet in study groups and provide strategy insights drawn from their exchange.These "tandem" programmes began in Europe in the 1970´s and have now successfully developed in American universities.

E <u>Strategies in Language Textbooks.</u> Many students´ textbooks and teachers´books that accompany the course provide explanations of the various strategies used in the different chapters or units that follow, such as the techniques of brainstorming,

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[76] Cohen, A. (2003) *Strategy Training for Second Language Learners.* ERIC Digest EDO-03-02. Washington D.C. ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics.

paraphrasing or outlining. Learners benefit a lot from this supplementary material since they learn new strategies while involved in a more contextualized learning situation. Once these tools have been mastered in the classroom, students will be able to apply them later on their own and at their own speed.

F   Videotaped Mini-Courses. Video programmes of the type developed by Rubin (1996)[77] show students how to transfer strategies to new tasks and to help them handle their own progress while studying a language.

G   Strategies-Based Instruction. Students use strategies and share their preferred techniques with other students. This is a learner-centred approach that includes both implicit and explicit integration of strategies into the course content.

However, some recent studies such as the one carried out by Oxford et al. (2002)[78] indicate that the most effective strategy training is explicit rather than implicit /subconscious. Students are thus made aware that a particular tool is likely to be helpful and are taught how to use it successfully in order to transfer it to new situations and contexts. Such writers prefer explicit teaching to inferential training, whereby students are led to use certain strategies without realizing it.

Furthermore, Oxford stresses the fact that students´ underlying language learning styles also determine strategy choice. She states that often learners make use of their preferred techniques which directly reflect their motivation in the learning process. Students with a more global style will use strategies oriented to finding the "big picture", such as skimming, inferring or guessing; those with an analytical style will prefer such tools as contrastive analysis, rule learning or sentence deconstruction; those with a visual learning style will choose vocabulary building or word lists and those with auditory preferences will find listening comprehension exercises and dialogue/interview practice more appealing.

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[77] Rubin, J. (1996), Using Multimedia for Learner Strategy Instruction. In R. Oxford (ed.) *Language Learning Strategies around the World: Cross-Cultural Perspectives.* Honolulu. Univ. of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, pp. 151-156.

[78] Oxford, R., Crookall, D., Cohen, A., Lavine, R., Nyikos, M., & Sutter, W. (2002). *Strategy Training for Language Learners: Six Situational Case Studies and a Training Model.* Foreign Language Annals, 22 (3), pp. 197-216.

Brown (2001)[79] gives us a slightly different viewpoint on Oxford´s considerations of Strategies-Based Instruction (SBI). He considers that in an era of communicative, interactive, learner-centered teaching, teachers should not devote their energy to "delivery" of language to students, that is to say: explicit training, but that they should, instead, encourage them to "work" with language and make actual use of it. In other words, students should be given the opportunities to become more **independent** of their teachers and question strategies chosen by them in order to apply their own tools, share their preferred strategies with classmates and finally, emerge as **autonomous learners**. On the whole, teachers are advised to let students introduce strategies of their own choice into the lessons, and do so spontaneously whenever it seems appropriate.

Classifying learning strategies

In 1990, Rebecca Oxford provided us with a very comprehensive classification of learning strategies. She suggested that there are six general types of language learning strategies: three <u>direct strategies</u> – memory, cognitive and compensation strategies, and three <u>indirect strategies</u> – metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

<u>In general, direct strategies include different ways of remembering more effectively, using cognitive processes and compensating for missing knowledge. In other words, a) memory strategies, help learners develop semantic mappings, use imagery and associations and employ various mechanical techniques, among other things. b) cognitive strategies, focus on reasoning and analysis, and c) compensation strategies, enable learners to overcome different limitations such as using paraphrasing when vocabulary items are missing, appealing for help when a concept or notion cannot easily be conveyed or using examples and explanations to clarify discourse intention.</u>

As usual, these activities also include spontaneous conversations that are usually not preplanned or brief preplanned oral presentations that suit learners´ interests, such

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[79] Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy.* Second Edition. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education.

as, coining words or using circumlocutions which are often encountered in the class session and crop up within communicative activities.

Indirect strategies include different ways of organizing and evaluating our learning, managing our emotions and learning with others. a) metacognitive strategies, help learners become aware of their learning strategies so that they can make choices, plan, organize, self-monitor and self-assess by being aware of their learning process. b) affective strategies, enable students to overcome sources of anxiety derived from lack of accuracy or inadequacy to context, and c) social strategies, lead learners to take advantage of social interaction and exchange.

It is obvious that a good language learner makes use of <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> of these strategies as appropriate.

Strategic Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

In the same work previously mentioned, Oxford also provides an exhaustive list of fifty statements known as Strategic Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which learners are to answer on a five-point scale to determine how often they use specific strategies, if any.

The options for each statement are: 1- Never true of me, 2- Usually true of me, 3- Somewhat true of me, 4- Always true of me... The statements which the students answer 1, 2, 3, ... are grouped into Oxford´s six areas described in the previous paragraphs and attempt to describe a set of parameters which may guide teachers and even educational psychologists as they proceed to:

- evaluate students´individual learning styles and production
- reinforce chosen course materials
- elicit examples from students, based on their own learning experiences
- integrate strategies into everyday class materials

Here is the entire list of statements from SILL:

Part A

1- 1 think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.

2- *I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.*

3- *I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.*

4- *Remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.*

5- *I use rhymes to remember new English words.*

6- *I use flashcards to remember new English words.*

7- *I physically act out new English words.*

8- *I review English lessons often.*

9- *I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.*

Part B

10- *I say or write new English words several times.*

11- *I try to talk like native English speakers.*

12- *I practice the sounds of English.*

13- *I use the English words I know in different ways.*

14- *I start conversations in English.*

15- *I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.*

16- *I read for pleasure in English.*

17- *I write notes, messages,letters or reports in English.*

18- *I first skim an English passage, read over the passage quickly, then go back and read carefully.*

19- *I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.*

20- *I try to find patterns in English.*

21- *I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.*

22- *I try not to translate word-for-word.*

23- *I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.*

Part C

24- *To understand unfamiliar words, I make guesses.*

25- *When I can´t think of a word during a conversation, I use gestures.*

26- *I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.*

27- *I read English without looking up every new word.*

28- *I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.*

29- *If I can´t think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.*

Part D

30- *I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.*

31- *I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.*

32- *I pay attention when someone is speaking English.*

33- *I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.*

34- *I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.*

35- *I look for people I can talk to in English.*

36- *I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.*

37- *I have clear goals for improving my English skills.*

38- *I think about my progress in learning English.*

Part E

39- *I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.*

40- *I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistakes.*

41- *I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.*

42- *I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.*

43- *I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.*

44- *I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.*

Part F
45- If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46- I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47- I practice English with other students.
48- I ask for help from English speakers.
49- I ask questions in English.
50- I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.

According to Oxford, this is by no means a complete list of English learning strategies, but all the same, it has become particularly useful whenever teachers encourage EFL students to experiment with a broad range of strategies enabling them to achieve greater proficiency in the target language. Perhaps, its only drawback is that scoring and interpretation are a bit tricky and care must be taken to follow the scoring directions exactly.

Brown (2001) has also proposed a model for strategy building in the classroom entitled **Building Strategic Techniques** whereby he directs teachers to seize every opportunity to:

- increase students´ self-confidence by helping them use their intuition; praise them for making good guesses and have them share their fears in small groups

- promote cooperative learning: play down competition among students, especially if they are part of a mixed-ability group

- lower the degree of inhibition by conducting role-play and a considerable amount of small-group work

- get students to make their mistakes work *for* them: let them catch and correct each other´s mistakes by not always giving them the correct form

- have them read passages rapidly; do oral exercises where the goal is to enhance their fluency avoiding correction

- explicitly encourage students to go beyond the classroom goals by giving them "extra credit" work

- promote learner autonomy, enabling students to keep on learning after they have left the language classroom.

CHAPTER VII

Towards Reading Comprehension strategies: a taxonomy

Different languages have different words in them, and one of the ways in which languages differ from one another is in how their words cluster into (classificatory) *paradigms. In this way, paradigms form an already existing resource which we use when we talk about texts.*

(Durant and Fabb, 1990)
[80]

In the current perspective on Reading Comprehension and as it has been referred to at the beginning of this Thesis, the reading process is an interaction between a reader´s prior knowledge and the information encoded in the text. This theoretical framework emphasizes that the reader/student interprets the text in light of his previous knowledge and then modifies his original schemata as new information is learned.

In practice, effective readers continually adopt a top-down approach to predict the probable theme and then move to bottom-up processing to check their assumption by reading details. This implies that in teaching reading, teachers should instruct students to start their decoding by using a top-down approach and **later** switch between the two approaches, as **each kind of interpretation supports the other.**

Frequently, teachers have reported that learners rely too much on bottom-up processing in recognizing individual words and analyzing sentence structure, but do not apply top-down processing for the overall view of the text. This may be the consequence of lack of appropriate instruction and practice in applying **reading st}rategies.**

As explained in Chapter VI, many teaching techniques have been developed to activate students´**strategic competence**, one of the four aspects/categories of communicative competence[81]. Strategic competence describes the ability of speakers to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdown in communication or to improve the effectiveness of communicative interaction. For example, a learner may lack a particular word or structure and have to use a paraphrase

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[80] Durant, A. and Fabb, N. (1990). *Literary Studies in Action.* London: Routledge. pp. 94-95.
[81] "Communicative competence": term developed in Chapter III "Factors that influence EFL reading".

or circumlocution to compensate (for *handkerchief* a learner could say *a cloth for my nose* and, in this way, use an interlanguage)[82], or a speaker may use a deliberately slow and soft manner of speaking to create a particular effect on a listener.

Douglas (2000)[83] expands on this notion and states that strategic competence serves as a link and mediator between the internal "background and language knowledge components, on the one hand, and the external features of context which the language user responds to, on the other". He sees it as an "interface" between the internal (grammatical/linguistic competence) and external (sociocultural competence).

Researchers also use the term **"metacognitive strategies"** to describe the components of strategic competence. Metacognition is the knowledge of the mental processes which are involved in different kinds of learning (Anderson, 1999)[84]. Expanding further on the subject of strategy-based instruction developed in Chapter VI, researchers in this field have divided metacognition into different components, such as:

a) Selecting the most appropriate learning strategies. When, for example, readers encounter vocabulary that they do not know, one possible strategy is word analysis: the division of a word into its prefix and stem; another strategy is the use of context clues to help guess the meaning of a word. Teachers need to show them how to choose the strategy that has the best chance of success in a given situation; for example, unfamiliar words that include prefixes or suffixes that the student knows (e.g., anti-, -ment) are good candidates for the use of word analysis strategy.

b) Monitoring strategy use. Students may be taught that an effective writing strategy involves thinking about their audience and their purpose in writing (e.g., to explain, to persuade). Learners should be taught that they should pause occasionally while writing to ask themselves questions about what they are doing, such as whether or not they are providing the right amount of background information for their intended audience and whether the examples they are using are effective in supporting their purpose.

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[82] "Interlanguage": the language produced by the learner which is different from both the mother tongue and the foreign language.

[83] Douglas, D. (2000). Op. cit.

[84] Anderson, N. J. (2003). Metacognition in Second Language Teaching and Learning. In *Share, e-magazine*. N° 119 (Dec.7th)http:// www.ShareEducation.com.ar

c) <u>Orchestrating various strategies.</u> Knowing how to orchestrate the use of more than one strategy is an important metacognitive skill. The ability to <u>coordinate, organize</u> and <u>make associations</u> among the various strategies available is a major distinction between strong and weak second language learners. For example, the teacher should show students how to recognize when one strategy isn´t working and how to move on to another as in the case of a student trying to use word analysis to determine the meaning of the word *antimony,* having recognized *anti* as a prefix meaning *against.* But that strategy won´t work in this instance. *Anti* is not a prefix here; antimony is a metallic chemical element that has nothing to do with being *against* or *opposed* to something. When the student finds that word analysis does not help him figure out what this word means, he needs to know how to turn to other strategies, such as context clues, to help him understand the word.

The effect of metacognition on reading Studies have revealed the relationship between metacognition and <u>reading performance</u> have brought to light the fact that poor readers do not possess knowledge of strategies and are often not aware of how or when to apply the knowledge they do have. More importantly, they often <u>cannot infer meaning from surface-level information</u> and <u>find it difficult to evaluate text for clarity, consistency and plausibility.</u> Instead, they often believe that the purpose of reading is errorless word pronunciation and that good reading includes nothing more than *verbatim* recall.

With first-language readers, evidence suggests that comprehension monitoring operates rather automatically and is not readily observable until some failure to comprehend occurs. Older and more proficient readers have more control over this monitoring process than younger and less proficient readers; indeed, good readers are more aware of how they control their reading and more able to verbalise this awareness. Besides, they also appear more sensitive to inconsistencies in text and tend to use <u>meaning.based cues</u> to evaluate whether they have understood what they have read. Conversely, poor readers tend to use or over-rely on <u>word-level cues.</u>

Reader motivation: Motivation is generally considered to be one of the primary causes of success and failure in second/foreign language learning. Studies have consistently

shown that poor readers lack motivation to read or to spend time improving their ability to read. The problem is how to improve reader interest/motivation.

Theorists have concluded that motivation stems from innate drives including stimulation and ego enhancement (Sutherland, 2003)[85]. These drives are innate predispositions that compel us to probe the unknown, to control our environment, to be physically active, to be receptive to mental, emotional or physical stimulation, to yearn for answers to questions and to build our own self-esteem.

A distinction is frequently made between intrinsic motivation – enjoyment of language learning itself - and extrinsic motivation, driven by external factors such as parental pressure, societal expectations, academic requirements or other sources of rewards and punishments. The former, generated internally by the individual, is generally thought to be superior to extrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, motivation applies to teacher as well as student; indeed, it is difficult to teach enthusiastically if it is known that most of the group is going to drop their language at the earliest opportunity or that society places little store by it.

Developing reading efficiency: Reading efficiently means approaching every reading task with the flexibility to adjust reading strategy to the purpose at hand. The burden is therefore on the teacher to provide reading tasks that exploit different techniques. Fig. 6

Purpose	Strategy	Method
Reading for pleasure	*Phrase reading*	*Use of wide eye-span and fewer fixation points. Recognition of sense groups*
To obtain a general outline	*Surveying*	*Use reference and non-text data including typographical and graphical information. Read first and last paragraphs and topic sentences*
To extract key ideas and gist. Review reading	*Skimming*	*Eyes hurry across the page picking out the central information only*
To search for a specific idea, fact or detail	*Scanning*	*Run eyes quickly down the page looking for a clue, then return to normal speed*
Reading for recall or total accuracy	*Various + Intensive Reading*	*Survey structure, phrase read. Close re-reading with note-taking and summary writing*

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[85] Sutherland, K. (2003). Motivation and Second Language Learning. In *Share, e-magazine*.N° 119 (Dec. 7th. http://www.ShareEducation. com.ar

Figure 6 shows a table summarizing the relationship between high-level purposes and reading strategies.

Efficient EFL reading is now being understood more in terms of <u>matching the flexibility of the educated native speaker</u> as he performs all the reading-related tasks presented by his environment. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these include reading and understanding newspapers and popular magazines, personal letters, business correspondence, official documents, stories, academic textbooks and scientific and technical reports, among others. Besides, flexibility, according to applied linguists, includes both <u>speed and comprehension</u>.

Viewed in this light, advanced EFL reading aims to help students <u>discover meaning</u>, interpret different types of discourse in the light of their backgrounds and attain an accurate understanding of information given explicitly or implied.

Following this line of reasoning, we can conclude that the foreign language learner does not merely have to learn the rules of the linguistic system itself – **Aspects of English –** He also has to learn how to perform (Salaberri, 2002)[86] in the new language – **English in use –** in this Thesis.

In other words:

> **Formal language teaching, particularly at the intermediate and advanced levels, is concerned with turning competence into performance: with translating a <u>general</u> capacity for second/foreign language reception and production into the <u>particular</u> set of performance capabilities required.**

Thus, the basic orientation is from general to specific, with the emphasis on comprehensive coverage, on "breadth before depth" and on a global approach to teaching advanced EFL reading.

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[86] Salaberri, M. S. (2003). Main Features of a Learner Centered Approach: Implications for Syllabus Design. In *Share, e-magazine.* N° 100. (March 22nd.) http://www.ShareEducation.com.ar

The taxonomy: There is no denying that many people nowadays are professionals whose success or failure may well depend on their ability to read the latest scientific and technical publications in English; for this reason, courses whose specific objective is the reading of such texts are becoming more and more common in universities and technical colleges throughout the world. This situation created the need to adopt some type of standardized criteria to assure the achievement of effective reading comprehension in the EFL/ESP class.

For this purpose, a **taxonomy** was designed consisting of three parts:I- the reading text II- macroinformation and III- microinformation. Although several taxonomies exist, most describe only the last two – macro and microinformation, making no reference to the nature of the reading text. Another difference between this system and other taxonomies is that the latter frequently refer to literary-text analysis, such as characters´ and incidents identification. The taxonomy that has been designed for the purposes of this Thesis contains no such categories as it takes into account only scientific and technical readings – ESP readings. Moreover, this system presents reading as a <u>dynamic process</u> involving top-down//bottom-up/interactive models - discussed in Chapter II of the current research work – and their interplay to <u>create meaning</u>.

I- <u>Reading Text</u>

I.A. **Source**

I.A.1 Magazine, newspaper, pamphlet

I.A.2 Reference book

I.A.3 Textbook

I.A.4 Journal

I.A.5 Manual

I.A.6 Prospectus

I.A.x Other

I.B. **Form**

I.B.1 Paragraph(s)

I.B.1.1. Extract from article/book

I.B.1.2. Editorial

I.B.1.3. Report

I.B.1.4. Summary

I.B.1.5. Review – book, movie, play, television, etc.

I.B.1.6. Letter

I.B.1.7. Abstract

I.B.1.8. Legal document: contract, will, statute

I.B.1.x. Other

I.B.2. Table

I.B.3. Graph

I.B.4. Dictionary page

I.B.5. Advertisement

I.B.6. Illustration

I.B.x. Other

I .C. **Subject**

I.C.1 Humanities and Social Sciences

I.C.1.1. Education

I.C.1.2. Economics

I.C.1.3. Philosophy

I.C.1.4. Sociology

I.C.1.5. Architecture

I.C.1.6. Anthropology-Paleontology

I.C.1.7. Psychology

I.C.1.8. Linguistics

I.C.1.9. History

I.C.1.10. Fine Arts

I.C.1.11. Geography-Oceanography

I.C.1.x.   Other

I.C.2. Physical Sciences

I.C.2.a. Pure

I.C.2.a.1. Physics

I.C.2.a.2. Chemistry

I.C.2.a.3. Mathematics

I.C.2.a.4. Astronomy

I.C.2.a.5. Geology

I.C.2.a.x. Other

I.C.2.b. Applied

I.C.2.b.1. Engineering

I.C.2.b.1.a. Mechanical

I.C.2.b.1.b. Electrical-Electronic

I.C.2.b.1.c. Civil

I.C.2.b.1.d. Materials

I.C.2.b.1.e. Chemical

I.C.2.b.1.f. Petroleum

I.C.2.b.1.g. Systems (Computers)

I.C.2.b.1.x. Other

I.C.2.b.2. Meteorology

I.C.2.b.x. Other

I.C.3. Biological Sciences

I.C.3.1. Botany-Zoology

I.C.3.2 Ecology-Environment-Climate

I.C.3.3. Medicine-Health-Nutrition

I.C.3.4. Agronomy

I.C.3.x. Other

I.D. **Register**

I.D. 1. Formal/Informal

I.D.2. Technical (manuals, instructions and safety rules, leaflets...)

I.D.3. Scientific (conference proceedings, journals...)

I.D.4. Legal (wills, statutes, decrees, deeds, certificates, contracts...)

I.D.5 Religious (sacred texts, doctrinal statements, sermons, prayers...)

I.D.6. Journalistic (press reports, news items, reviews, editorials, letters to the editor...)

I.D.7. Literary (poems, novels, plays, essays, biographies, autobiographies...)

I.D.x. Other

I.E. **Rhetorical functions/genre**

   I. E.1. Expository

   I.E.2. Argumentative

   I.E.3. Descriptive

   I.E.4. Narrative

   I.E.x. Other

I.F. **Rhetorical patterns**

   I.F.1. Definition

   I.F.2. Classification

   I.F.3. Problem-solution/Cause-effect

   I.F.4. Comparison-contrast

   I.F.5. Exemplification

   I.F.6. Process

   I.F.7. Fact/ hypothesis

   I.F.8. Chronology

   I.F.x. Other

II- <u>Macroinformation</u>

  II.A. **Interpret**

    II.A.1. Preview/predict text content (Lead-in questions)

    II.A.2. Make analogy between background information and new situation

    II.A.3. Survey extra-text material: a) reference data: title, author, copyright date, blurb, table of contents, subheadings, etc.

    II.A.4. b) graphical data: diagrams, illustrations, tables, maps

    II.A.5. c) typographical data: typefaces, spacing, indentation, enumeration, underlining

    II.A.6. Skim the text to recognize main idea or topic sentence

    II.A.7. Scan the text for specific information

    II.A.8. Recognize author´s purpose, tone and opinion

    II.A.9. Identify intended audience

    II.A.10.Draw conclusions and/or inferences from implicit information

    II.A.11.Transcode information from text to graph or diagram

    II.A.12.Verbalize from graph

II.A.x. Other

III- <u>Microinformation</u>

III.A. **Analyze**

III.A.1. Vocabulary: determine meaning from context: multiple choice, true/false...

III.A.2. Restate or paraphrase specific information

III.A.3. Recognize paragraph sequencing/grading and use of connectors.

III.A.4. Recognize coherence

III.A.5. Identify lexical cohesive devices

III.A.6. Identify textual inconsistencies

III.A.7. Distinguish sentence-parts: theme/rheme relationships

III.A.8. Consider word-formation, denotations and connotations

III.A.9. Answer factual questions on: figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, wordplay, coinages

III.A.10. Analyze non-verbal elements: photos, illustrations, special types of print

III.A.11. Examine suprasegmental features: punctuation, capitalisation, italicisation

III.A.12. Grammatical patterns: identify grammatical ties between sentences

III.A.13. Recognize grammatical collocations

III.A.14. Study syntactic structures: main/subordinate clauses, tenses etc.

III.A.15. Draw conclusions and/or deductions from explicit information

III.A.x. Other

What should be emphasized at this stage is the fact that this taxonomy has not been designed to follow a linear programme in which the subject matter to be learned – reading comprehension within the area of applied linguistics – is presented as a rigid, step-by-step sequence of items. On the contrary, teachers should be flexible enough to introduce changes as to the order of some of the general categories (e.g. Subject ---- Form ---- Source, instead of Source ---- Form ---- Subject) and, in this way, develop a more cyclical/spiral approach (Mei-yun, 1991)[87] in which items or strategies recur throughout <u>each</u> of the three main classifications of the taxonomy: I- Reading Text II-

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[87] Mei-yun, Y. (1991). Systemic-Functional Grammar and The Teaching of Advanced EFL Reading. In *English Teaching Forum,* Volume XXIX N° 1- January pp. 6-9.

Macroinformation   III- Microinformation. However, the order of this three-tiered system will surely enable students to develop a holistic approach to textual comprehension by emphasizing a global understanding of the text and, thus, see "trees through the forest".

The Reading Text

Six basic criteria are used to classify the reading text: A- Source, B- Form, C- Subject, D- Register, E- Rhetorical functions, F- Rhetorical patterns.

The first general category (A- Source) is identified according to the style in which the text is written and the type of information which appears. For example, a textbook would be written in an objective style and contain explanations of basic concepts, well-known and generally accepted information, whereas a journal would describe recent investigations or discoveries and be written in technical language for specialists and researchers. The second general category (B- Form) refers to the graphic design of the text. It may be an extract from an article or book, a table or graph, a page from a dictionary, an abstract, etc.

The category "others" exists throughout the system to include texts of questions which exemplify a complex combination of several categories or which illustrate unique areas not frequent enough to deserve a separate category.

The text is also classified according to C- Subject which is further divided into three main groups: (1) Humanities and Social Sciences, (2) Physical Sciences, and (3) Biological Sciences, each of which is broken down into specific disciplines. Due to the growing interdependence of many fields nowadays, which is reflected in many of the reading texts, a reading may be classified as belonging to more than one subject category.

For example, a text describing the use of computers in education would be classified under systems engineering (computers) (I.C.2.b.1.g.) as well as education (I.C.1.1.).

The fourth general category (D- Register) has been included to describe a variety of language and how a particular group of people, usually sharing the same occupation such as doctors (scientific register) or lawyers (legal register) or the same interests, such as baseball fans (informal register), use language for communication. A particular

register[88] often has features of its own, such as a number of distinctive lexical items or phrases with a particular denotation/connotation (e.g. in tennis: *deuce, tramlines),* and sometimes special grammatical constructions (e.g. in tennis: *to serve an ace*; in legal English: *to take under a will; to be enjoined from infringing a copyright,* etc.).

The taxonomy also makes reference to E- Rhetorical Functions[89], fifth general category of the Reading Text. Labels such as "expository", "descriptive" etc. refer to the broad social or communicative goals of the writer. Descriptions of text through reference to such goals are also well-established in the field of rhetoric. They constitute a more subjective and much vaguer type of classification than that of register and entails such factors as the nature of the messages involved or the addresser/addressee relationship.

Within the last and sixth category of F- Rhetorical Patterns, this study guide is based on the patterns most commonly found in scientific and technical writing: "process", "classification" etc. Here, the reader may be asked to identify different methods of development which are often used in composing English:

- the Definition Method, where the writer defines a term or object by recognizing it within a general class and then distinguishing it from all other members of the class (I.F.1.)

- the Classification Method, where the writer groups people, things or ideas according to some principle order and, in this way, both classifying and explaining them (I.F.2.)

- the Cause-Effect Method, where the writer describes why things are the way they are or why something happened and by establishing reasons/motives and consequences of a particular action or event (I.F.3.)

- the Comparison and Contrast Method, where the writer explains the similarities or differences between two sets of items (I.F.4.)

- the Process Method, where the writer draws upon something by breaking a complex whole down into its different parts, steps or stages and describing them in order (I.F.6.)

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[88] "Register": term developed in Chapter V: "From text awareness to macrostructure analysis".
[89] "Rhetorical Functions"/"Rhetorical Patterns": terms examined in more detail in Chapter V.

- Hypothesis, where the reader identifies an idea as having been presented in the original text in the form of either fact or hypothesis/speculation concerning either observed or expected relationships among phenomena (I.F.7.)
- finally, Chronology, where the reader recognizes the sequence in time used by the writer (I.F.8.).

Macroinformation

One aspect should be pointed out regarding parts II and III of the taxonomy. The order in which the tasks appear does not necessarily imply degree of complexity of the item. In this sense, we should adhere to the strict definition of the term *taxonomy* as being simply a classification system not a hierarchical listing of skills.

To answer a question classified as Macroinformation, the student must preview, skim and scan the text before reading it all and, thus, integrate information found in different parts of the reading. In order to do this, he must draw upon his content and formal schemata. In these tasks and as mentioned in previous chapters, the importance of top-down processing becomes evident.

The category of Interpret (II.A.) includes twelve possible tasks. Guided classroom activities such as previewing or predicting content, making analogies between background information and knowledge of the world on the one hand and the new situation on the other and, lastly, surveying the reading material, are carried out during warm-up stage and controlled by means of lead-in questions.The aim of previewing is to help readers make some educated guesses about what is in the text and thus activate effective top-down processing for reading comprehension (Chia, 2001)[90]

In II.A.6. the reader is requested to identify the main idea of the reading, i.e., the message which the author wants to convey. The efficient reader does so by using the skimming strategy: method of glancing through a text to extract the gist or main points. Generally speaking, about 75% of the text is disregarded. Indeed, this is a valuable technique for rapidly reviewing material or determining whether it is relevant for more detailed investigation. For example, a reader may skim-read a chapter to find out if the writer approves or disapproves of something.

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[90] Chia, H. (2001). Reading activities for effective top-down processing. In *English Teaching Forum.* Volume 39 Number 1. January pp.22-25.

Above all, skimming requires knowledge of text structure. In particular, efficient readers should be able to learn something of the text topic from the title/headlines and any subheadings; they should know that the first/lead paragraphs often contain valuable background that gives an overall view of the material, whilst the last paragraph provides summarizing or concluding information; they should be aware of the importance of topic sentences and where to find them.

Approaches to skimming a text:

1- Ask students to find the misplaced sentence in a paragraph. This develops awareness of topic sentences and paragraph coherence.

2- Further practice can entail the reconstruction of paragraphs from component sentences.

3- Provide several newspaper or magazine articles on the same subject and ask students which deal with a particular aspect of the topic.

4- Have students match a short text with a headline or picture.

5- Ask students to give titles to short texts.

6- Have students match topic sentences with particular paragraphs.

7- Provide texts with an increasing number of words removed to give confidence in selective reading.

Lucas (1990)[91] defines skimming as "the tactic of running the eye over the text for a general impression of its character and content, and scanning [the tactic of] running the eye through the text in order to find parts of it that one wants or needs to read". Here, the reader does not necessarily have to understand the rest of the text or passage; for example, the reader may read through a chapter of a book as rapidly as possible in order to find out information about a particular date, such as when someone was born. Thus, it is not only a useful skill for data gathering but also for reviewing, using reference books or assessing whether a text contains material deserving further study or not.

Although scanning is considered an easier strategy to master than skimming, many students do not scan efficiently, randomly searching and allowing their attention

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[91] Lucas, M. A. (1990). Op. cit.

to be caught by incidental, unimportant material. The reader must therefore, set the reading purpose clearly, perhaps formulating specific questions before systematically dealing with the text. Having a clearly defined purpose means that the reader can deduce where to find the information and what form it will take, allowing <u>rapid</u> eye movements down the page searching for particular sections or clues, such as digits, citations, discourse markers and various signal words and phrases that assist pattern recognition and anticipation.

In general terms, scanning is a type of reading that probably does not require "practice", since it is a skill that is a fundamental condition for survival in any modern community; from our earliest years, we face objects, noticeboards, timetables, headlines and supermarket shelves in order to locate what we need. It is equally obvious that scanning is the most superficial form or part of reading and is not an activity to be pursued as an end in itself.

Thus, the natural targets for this strategy are not features that reflect writer viewpoint etc., but the more formal directions that are an inherent feature of text-books, academic papers, manuals, brochures, reports etc. And the purposes of scanning are not to get a general impression of the text (skimming), but to construct a "map" or "route" for reflective study reading. In other words, students are "oriented" towards reading comprehension and to find their way into and around different texts.

<u>Approaches to scanning a text:</u> Scanning exercises are familiar to all teachers and are easy to produce. As the essence of scanning is fast retrieval of specific information, exercises can be timed and competitively managed.

1- The student races to locate a single item such as a word: he may be asked to indicate how many times a specific word occurs on a given page, pinpoint a site on a map, find out a name or date in a text, e.g., indexes, dictionaries or pages from telephone directories. Columnar material is iasier to start with, as readers can be taught to move down the middle of columns in one eye movement.

2- The student races to locate specific phrases or facts in a text.

3- The student matches adjoining sentences, using supplied markers expressing relationships and logical patterns.

4- The student fills in missing link words (cloze reading/test) from a text or reconstructs paragraphs from sentences to help rhetorical pattern recognition.

Note: A cloze test is a technique for measuring reading comprehension as well as overall language proficiency. Words are deleted from a reading passage at regular intervals, leaving blanks. The reader/test taker must then read the passage and try to guess either the exact missing words of the original passage or any word that is appropriate or acceptable in the context, depending on the type of exercise asked.

After this somewhat long but clarifying digression, the explanation of the taxonomy proceeds with item II.A.8. where the reader must recognize the objective, goal or purpose of the author in writing the text. In these questions the purpose must be specific to the particular text and simply more than just the recognition of general function words. The tone used by the author should be also identified, e.g., irony, sarcasm, optimism, pessimism, etc. The same applies to his opinion,e.g., whether or not he recommends a particular book or supports a specific theory and whether his opinion is positive or negative.

Category II.A.9. requires the reader to consider the probable audience for whom the text was written. Category II.A.10. is similar to III.A.15., except that here the information on which the reader is asked to base his conclusion is implicit rather than explicit. In these questions the reader may be asked to generalize from specific examples given in the text or to choose an appropriate example of a general category described in the reading.

To evaluate if the reader is able to transcode information from the text to a graph or diagram (II.A.11. and II.A.12) he must show that he can handle the interplay of verbal and non-verbal text elements in order to attain comprehension. Non-verbal means such as pictures: a photo of the author, a cartoon illustrating the subject; charts and tables, among others, are used to supplement or intensify the message of the text. It may also happen that non-verbal elements convey a piece of information that is even more relevant to the reader than the message communicated by the text. A number in small print on the label of a wine bottle may in itself be of little interest, but it tells the

"connoisseur" more about the quality of the wine than the name, as Nord (1991) points out.

Microinformation

The third and last main part of the taxonomy involves questions that can be answered by understanding or recognizing only specific sentences, phrases or key words of the text. For this task the reader depends mainly on his linguistic schemata – vocabulary and grammar. He must be able to group words together to form meaningful phrases and recognize syntactic relationships. To answer these questions classified under Microinformation (III.A. Analyze), bottom-up processing is very important.

The taxonomy includes fifteen tasks which a reader may be asked to perform. Regarding vocabulary, the student may be asked to determine the meaning of a word based on the context in which it appears (III.A.1.). In this type of question, the options contain valid approximations to the word, so the question does not become necessarily a dictionary exercise. Traditional individual exercises are: ticking multiple-choice questions, matching words and definitions, filling in blanks, true-or-false questions and many others.

To determine if the reader has comprehended explicit information which appears in the text, he may be asked to select the most appropriate paraphrase for this information or simply to recognize the answer in specific parts of the text (III.A.2.). This category provides practice in intensive reading by resorting to students´ knowledge of other lexical items, synonyms, antonyms, compound nouns, blends etc.

Paragraph division attained by correct use of connectives, indentation, punctuation and capitalisation (III.A.3.) must be taken into account as well. Learners should also be able to determine whether the text has coherence or not; whether a single unit of thought has been developed, which means that the discourse has unity all throughout (III.A.4.). Lexical cohesive devices of the type of repetition and reiteration, synonym, the same as textual inconsistencies or irrelevant material incorporated into the text must be clearly identified to attain full comprehensibility (III.A.5. III.A.6.).

In category III.A.7., the reader is asked to identify the word or phrase which a particular noun or pronoun refers to, thus establishing how information is distributed in sentences: known information or "theme" and new information or "rheme". Students

should also be trained to recognize figures of speech and wordplay – even in expository passages (III.A.9.). The correct analysis of non-verbal elements: photos, illustrations, and suprasegmental features of the type described in previous chapters of this research work, will also indicate that accuracy in reading comprehension has been achieved (III.A.10. & 11.).

Grammatical ties between sentences: anaphoric/cataphoric, substitution ties, conjunction ties, must also be perceived by the advanced students as part of their training (III.A.12). Links/connectors between sentences such as summarizing expressions, transitional adverbs or reference words must be specially considered in the analyis of the text. For example, by choosing the connector/transitional adverb "nevertheless" in the following blank, the reader is demonstrating his recognition that the relationship between the first and second parts of the sentence is one of contrast:

The results were convincing; -----------, further evidence from research was called for.

Readers should also recognize grammatical collocations with prepositions, such as *admiration for, acceptable to, amazed at,* etc., or with grammatical constructions: *eager to do something, to want someone to do something,* and should notice that in such collocations the noun, the adjective or the verb is the dominant word (III.A.13). Finally, the distinction between main and subordinate clauses, loose and periodic sentences, among others, must also be emphasized by the teacher and identified by the student keeping in mind all the time that the purpose of the analysis and/or questions is to measure comprehension of a written text.

Conclusion

The taxonomy described in this chapter has been used to classify more than 100 items and is sufficiently flexible to allow for changes due to practical and theoretical reasons. The programme is extremely user friendly and presents a wide variety of options designed to carry out exam-related functions and prepare lists and tables useful for decision making.

Moreover, the relatively large, planned collection of categories in this system serves as a rich source of information for reading researchers as it contains a complete

reference corpus of organized information which enables the study and evaluation of different types of language use, e.g., ESP texts.

Lastly, teachers may find in this exhaustive study guide one further approach to foster the evaluation of scientific and technical reading skills in English.

VARIETIES – ENGLISH IN USE

CHAPTER VIII

The study guide in action: scientific/technical English

The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which those forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

(Brown and Yule, 1983)[92]

The checklist and rubric contained in Chapter VI and designed in such a way that they may be reproduced by teachers for classroom use, are now set in motion to meet the needs of intermediate/advanced ESP students involved in effective top-down processing.

To this end, the text "Healing by Wire", from Time magazine, will be interpreted and analyzed because it is short, manageable and exemplifies some of the main categories of the taxonomy studied so far.

Interpretation: Macroinformation, is concerned with the "message" and helps to draw attention to the main aspects of the message the writer seeks to convey. This is, at the most basic level,   "factual" but deals also with relationships, qualifications, arguments, attitudes and illusions.

The analytical part: Microinformation, aims rather at the recognition and appreciation of the "means used" to convey the message and invites consideration of language in accordance with modern methods of analysis, while drawing upon earlier methods of appreciation where these are appropriate. The kind of analysis developed in the taxonomy is one which is comprehensive and flexible enough to deal with such forms of language utterance as found in scientific and technical texts but encompasses also such topics as daily journalism, advertisement copy-writing, legal documents and business matters, among others.

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[92] Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 1.

Photograph

HEALING by WIRE

With videophones and satellite linkups, an examination by the world´s top specialists can be a phone call away

By Andrew Purvis

A NEURORADIOLOGIST IN IOWA STUDIES the swirling contours of his patient´s CAT scan and immediately books the man for surgery. An Atlanta cardiologist, glancing at an untouched bottle of heart pills, looks his patient in the eye and urges him to take his medicine. A psychiatrist notes the pallor on the face of an earthquake survivor in Armenia and counsels her on post-traumatic-stress disorder.

Typical encounters between doctor and patient? Perhaps. But in each case the doctor and the patient are not seated knee to knee in an examining room: they are hundreds – in one case thousands – of miles apart. The physicians are practicing telemedicine, an emerging hybrid of telecommunications and patient care in which people in medically underserved areas use ordinary telephone lines to consult with highly trained specialists whom they could not otherwise afford to see.

In the past two years, two-way video telemedicine projects have been launched in Texas, Georgia and West Virginia, while less sophisticated methods relying on still photography have cropped up in Iowa, North Carolina and Nevada, among other states. U.S. doctors via satellite have diagnosed conditions in patients in Armenia, the Philippines and Belize. "It´s a way of cloning the specialist and sending him out to locations around the world", says Dr. Jay Sanders, a telemedicine pioneer now teaching at the University of Miami.

The future of telemedicine can be glimpsed in an experiment combining satellite transmission and high-definition television (HDTV). Last December doctors in Boston used these technologies to study patients in Belize suffering from cutaneous leishmaniasis, a parasitic skin disease. The quality of the images was "amazing", says Dr. Linda Brinck. Doctors could clearly see the changes in skin texture and coloration that characterize the ailment.

[...] For enthusiasts like Dr. Brinck, the possibilities are limitless. She envisions U.S. specialists teaching the latest diagnostic techniques to isolated medics in Central Africa who, in turn, can inform American colleagues of emerging health crises in their regions. Satellite ties with doctors in Africa in the 1960s, she points out, might have drawn attention to AIDS long

before it exploded in the bathhouses of San Francisco 20 years later. This is one way, at least, in which a smaller world may become a healthier world. (Time, 1994)[93]

Text source:	I.A.2.	Reference book
Text form:	I.B.1.1.	Extract from article/book
Text subject:	I.C.3.3.	Medicine – Health
	I.C.2.b.1.g.	Systems (Computers)
Register:	I.D.3.	Scientific English
	I.D.2.	Technical English
	I.D.1.	Formal/informal American English.
Rhetorical function	I.E.1.	Expository
Rhetorical patterns	I.F.1.	Definition
	I.F.4.	Comparison-Contrast
Macroinformation	II.A.1.	Previewing/predicting: New technologies have revolutionized the world.
	II.A.2.	Analogy between background information and new situation: Advances in modern science and telecommunications (i)
	II.A.3.	a) Survey title of book: *Time. Reaching forTomorrow Authentic Readings for Language Development.* Author: Linda Schinke-Llano. Copyright date: 1994 Table of Contents: Section 5 *Health & Medicine...*
	II.A.4.	b) Photograph and caption.
	II.A.5.	c) Title and subtitle in bold type. Initial words in first paragraph in larger print
	II.A.6.	Skimming. Main idea: a new technology can connect medical specialists with patients far away. Topic sentence: 2nd. Paragraph: *The physicians are practicing telemedicine, an emerging hybrid of tele-communications and patient care in which people...*

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[93] Purvis, A. (1994). Healing by Wire. In L. Schinke-Llano (ed.), *Time. Reaching for Tomorrow.* U.S.A. National Textbook Company. p. 94.

	II.A.7.	Scanning. Specific words: *healing, wire, specialists, satellite linkups, telemedicine, U.S. doctors...*
	II.A.8.	Author´s purpose: inform readers and keep them abreast of the latest developments in the field of telecommunications.Tone: optimistic, positive, constructive, confident of the future of telemedicine. Opinion: forwarding new techniques; supporting their introduction in rural and medically underserved areas, where highly-trained specialists are seldom found.
	II.A.9.	Target reader: specialists and lay readers.
	II.A.10.	Conclusions/inferences from implicit information: the persistent trend of scientific and technical progress proves that it cannot be stopped.
	II.A.12.	Photograph: a radiologist in Miami is seen studying X rays and discussing treatment with a patient in Manila.
Microinformation	III.A.1.	Vocabulary (ii): Matching words and definitions True/false statements. Synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms. Prefixes: *tele-* (over a long distance): *telemedicine* (the use of ordinary telephone lines to consult with doctors far away); *telecommunications* (the sending and receiving of messages by telephone, radio and television); suffixes: *-ologist/-logist* (in nouns): person studying a particular kind of science: *cardiologist, neruroradiologist, radiologist.*
	III.A.2.	Restatement of title (iii) and paraphrasing (iv)
	III.A.3.	Typical printed pages from newspapers/magazines are divided into columns - though not in this sample article – to save space, find main ideas quickly and make them stand out clearly.

Inductive form of reasoning in paragraph 1 (v)

III.A.5.   Lexical cohesive devices: In paragraph 1: repetition of the same structure at the beginning of the three sentences, introduced by the indefinite article "a". Use of synonyms: *methods/techniques/technologies; satellite ties/satellite linkups; specialists/doctors/ physicians...*(vi)

III.A.8.   Abbreviations: HDTV: *high-definition television.* Acronyms: CAT *scan*: computerized axial tomography; AIDS: acquired immune deficiency syndrome (vii)

Derogatory or informal connotations: *medically underserved areas, ordinary telephone lines, isolated medics...*Appreciative connotations: *highly trained specialists...*

Use of long nominal phrases: *post-traumatic-stress disorder; two-way video telemedicine projects...*

III.A.9.   Figures of speech: metaphors: *It´s a way of cloning the specialist and sending him out to locations around the world...; This is one way, at least, in which a smaller world may become a healthier world;* Simile: *For enthusiasts like Dr. Brinck,...*(viii)

Wordplay: *Typical encounters between doctor and patient?* (based on the popular film title: "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" by Stephen Spielberg 1977: meeting creatures from space) (ix)

III.A.11   Punctuation, italicisation... (x)

III.A.13.   Grammatical collocations: *... can be a phone call away; ...books the man for surgery; ...have cropped up in Iowa...*

III.A.15.   Evidence to support the main idea has been provided by the writer by means of: quotes, names

of states and countries; references to years, experiments carried out...

(i) One of the main top-down processing strategies which activates students´accurate background knowledge of a given topic is the <u>semantic map</u>. The map is an organized arrangement of lexical concepts or a graphic representation of key words which reveals what students already know about the topic and provides them with a basis upon which they may build up new information from the text.

The teacher begins by anticipating the topic to be read and asking students to make free associations with it. That is, learners write down whatever words they think of when they hear the topic (<u>Brainstorming</u>). This is a group activity in which students have a free and relatively unstructured discussion on the topic as a way of generating ideas.

After that, students group their associated words into categories (<u>Word bank</u>) and label them with or without the help of the teacher. After having read the selection they revise the original map. The resulting map is thus the integration of students´pre-existing knowledge and their knowledge acquired from the text.

At first, intermediate students may have difficulty in categorizing free-word associations, so the teacher can help them by conducting a short discussion period with the whole group. While students offer their ideas, the teacher can list them on the chalkboard discussing how to sort them out into appropriate categories and how to label them.

The following is a brief sample of a semantic map on the subject of Healing by Wire:

-Healing: to treat successfully, to cure a disease, to soothe / alleviate the pain...

-Therapy: occupational, radiotherapy, physiotherapy, psychotherapy...

-Medication: medicine, drug, tonic, pill, tablet, capsule...

-Wire: fuse, battery, circuit, transformer,cable...

-Linkups: connections, live satellite linkups, business linkups...

-New technologies: advances, developments, breakthroughs, discoveries...

-Telecommunications: links, networks, operators, industry...

(ii) <u>Vocabulary.</u> Reading has been singled out as the primary means and the most reliable way to promote incidental (accompanying, supplementary) vocabulary learning. In fact, applied linguists claim that teachers should encourage reading because it leads to vocabulary improvement bettter than any program of explicit instruction that only teaches word meaning. Research has also proved that "vocabulary learning requires multiple exposures to new lexical items in various discourse contexts" (Eyraud et al, 2002)[94] rather than in decontextualized word lists. According to Coady (1997)"lexical competence is progressively constructed by the repeated occurrence of a word within a variety of new contexts"[95]. In short, claims such as these suggest that teachers should consider the ways in which they systematically recycle important vocabulary in the classroom.

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<u>From beginning-level exercises to intermediate-level activities</u> to advanced-level <u>intensive vocabulary-building.</u> If beginning levels of reading and vocabulary instruction are characterized by *recognition,* intermediate instruction should be looked at through the lens of *refinement* and *expansion,* whilst high-intermediate/advanced levels should concentrate more on both oral and written original *expression* using the target words (Courtright and Wesolek, 2001)[96].

In other words, while the elementary-level student is gasping for a word to convey meaning, the intermediate learner is seeking to expand basic vocabulary and the advanced learner is quite ready to engage in a one-to-one conversation.

For example, while a beginning-level student learns that *elementary* school is the first level of formal education, the intermediate student may learn that *grammar* school, *primary* school and *grade* school are other ways of characterizing this same concept. To give another example, teachers may be satisfied if a beginning student learns the word *thin.* At the intermediate level, however, the student may be ready to go on to learn the

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[94] Eyraud, K., Giles, G., Koenig, S., Stoller, F., (2002). Promoting L2 Vocabulary Learning. In *Share e-magazine* N° 88 (Nov.22nd) http://www.ShareEducation.com.ar
[95] Coady, J. (1997). L2 vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading. In J. Coady and T. Huckin (eds.) *Second language vocabulary acquisition,* New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 225-237.
[96] Courtright, M. & Wesolek, C. (2001). Incorporating interactive vocabulary activities into reading classes. In *English Teaching Forum,* Volume 39 N° 1 January pp. 2-9.

new words *slim* or *skinny* as well as their connotations. In turn, the more appreciative words *underweight* and *slender* could be used by advanced students with the same meaning but in different contexts. In addition, *slender* could also serve to illustrate the register of Business English as in *a man of slender means* or the language of politics as in the phrase *to win by a slender margin.*

Furthermore, there is no denying that developing learners´strategies for handling unknown words has always been one of the main challenges of English reading classes. The usual approach to this challenge is to allow students to consult monolingual/bilingual <u>dictionaries</u> or the teacher for the definition of every new word in the passage. However, the drawback of this approach is obvious. Indeed, too much dictionary work can kill all interest in reading and even interfere with comprehension, because readers become more concerned with individual words and less aware of the context which gives them meaning. In addition, it also results in a very slow and inefficient reading task.

Teachers have thus found that enabling students to derive or infer meaning with the help of <u>context clues</u>, is an effective approach to increase vocabulary and reading comprehension. Researchers have agreed that to learn words <u>in context</u> and not in isolation is an effective vocabulary learning strategy. Besides, good readers also take advantage of their background knowledge in processing the context and in creating expectations about the kind of vocabulary that will occur in the reading.

<u>Types of context clues:</u> There are a number of different context clues that can help a reader infer the meaning of a new word:

Definitions. Sometimes the writer defines the meaning of the word right in the text. Examples from "Healing by Wire".
In paragraph two: *The physicians are practicing telemedicine, <u>an emerging hybrid of lelecommunications and patient care...</u>*
In paragraph four: *...cutaneous leishmaniasis, <u>a parasitic skin disease.</u>*

<u>Class application:</u>
<u>Matching words and definitions</u>

- medic   an X-ray procedure in which results are analyzed by computer

- diagnosis   an exact copy of an animal, plant, from its cells

- leishmaniasis   a doctor or medical student

- scan   discovery or identification of the exact cause of an illness

- cloning   acute cutaneous infection transmitted by various sandfly species

<u>True/False statements</u>

- The writer is implying that doctors in rural areas or in other countries are not knowledgeable. *True*

- Medics in South Africa have no way of informing American colleagues of health crises in their country. *False*

- Symptons of post-traumatic-stress disorders often appear immediately after a disaster such as a war or an earthquake. *False*

- Both doctors and patients take full advantage of telemedicine. *True*

Morphology. Students can derive word meanings by examining internal, morphological features, such as prefixes, suffixes and word roots.

(iii) ***Restatement.*** Often the writer gives enough explanation for the meaning to be clear. Examples:

- *X ray therapy,* that is, treatment by use of X ray, often stops the growth of a tumor.

(The phrase *that is* signals a clarification of a previously used word)

- *The quality of the images was "amazing"...Doctors could clearly see the changes in skin texture and coloration that characterize the ailment.*The second sentence explains the meaning of *"amazing"* in the first sentence.

<u>Class application:</u>

<u>Restatement of title</u>

- "Interactive medical care in cyberspace"

- "Patients are discovering that the big-city medical center is just a mouse-click away"

- "The benefits of virtual medicine"

- "Bringing medicine out of the industrial age and moving it into the information age"

(iv) At intermediate/advanced levels of reading and writing students spend a lot of time working on paraphrasing. Part of good paraphrasing means changing the grammatical structure of a sentence, but students can also benefit from a vocabulary activity that challenges them to use different forms from the new vocabulary. This activity can be conducted with sentences from the reading passage, student-generated sentences, web contexts or even teacher-generated examples as in:

- His body could not *tolerate* such large amounts of radiation; he should have undergone a different type of treatment. (change to *tolerant*). His body was not *tolerant of* such large amounts of radiation;...

Note: Sentences must be chosen with care because this activity will not work with all words.

Class application:

Web contexts: This activity can be carried out by students or the teacher by examining several contexts in which the vocabulary words are used. Students may be asked to find an online magazine or newspaper that is searchable and then, type in the vocabulary word and copy the sentence(s) in which the word is used. These sentences can be copied into a word processor or posted on a web page indicating the source of each of them.

Sentence Completion: Students are given the beginning of a sentence and asked to complete it in a way that clearly shows they know the meaning of the word. They will probably need examples to help them understand the conceptual instruction given.

Examples:

- He was *neurasthenic,* so I gave him some soup.
- He was *neurasthenic,* so I gave him some soup and told him to relax, drink some water, get some rest and see the doctor the next day.

In the first sentence, the meaning of neurasthenic is not clear; in fact, most people would probably guess "hungry". In the second sentence it is clear that

neurasthenic means sick (unable to balance, weak condition of the nerves causing tiredness, worry, dizziness).

- *Hypochondriacs* never choose fast-food restaurants because _____.

- Some countries are examples of *technocracies* in that the government _____.

The teacher will always give feedback on a completion exercise of this type. In addition, grammatical usage problems may also surface here and can be refined.

(v)<u>Inductive reasoning</u> is the process of logical reasoning using known facts to produce general rules or principles. In the first paragraph of "Healing by Wire", Andrew Purvis proceeds in an inductive-deductive way: from specific facts such as *a neuroradiologist in Iowa, an Atlanta cardiologist, a psychiatrist...*he arrives at the topic sentence in the second paragraph *The physicians are practicing telemedicine...*In this case, readers work out the main idea of the text by induction, a more emphatic procedure but more difficult to develop than deductive reasoning and so, not so easily identified and understood in text analysis.

(vi) ***Synonyms and antonyms.*** Many times, the reader can find the meaning of new items in the same sentence.

Examples:

- We had never seen such a large cave: it was simply *enormous.*

  (Obviously, the unknown word is a synonym of large).

- To be pretty and not plain, *affluent* and not poor, represents status in certain social groups.

   (We note that pretty and plain are opposites. When we see the next pair of words in a parallel construction, we can assume that affluent is the opposite of poor and must therefore mean rich).

<u>Note:</u> Advanced students often pose questions related to certain synonyms and the subtle differences between them, such as the adjectives *aggressive/assertive* which the teacher must try to clarify in context

Hyponyms and *Superordinates.* Sometimes the reader can see that the relationship between an unfamiliar word and a familiar word coincides with a general concept (superordinate) accompanied by a specific example (a hyponym).

Examples:

- The museum contained almos every type of *vehicle:* cars, buses, trains and even old carriages and coaches. (*Vehicle* is being used as a superordinate; it encompasses all of the other items (hyponyms) which are listed. Also, all of the listed items are of the same category).

- *A neuroradiologist,...an Atlanta cardiologist,... a psychiatrist* (hyponyms*)* mentioned in the first paragraph of the article, are all *doctors* (superordinate)*:* a word used at the beginning of the second paragraph

(vii)*Acronyms.* Frequently, the writer uses acronyms to show that the text is essentially technical. In contrast with abbreviations, <u>acronyms</u> are those words formed from the initial letters of a group of words and pronounced as single words. There are many examples of acronyms in science simply because scientific discussions are full of long expressions which are shorter if the initials alone are used.

Other factors that have encouraged their spread include: computer use, telex addresses, the naming of technical devices and activities, the often flamboyant labelling of commercial products and the influence of Japanese, whose speech and writing systems favour the usage. International acronyms like *Amoco* and *Texaco* have the same syllabic structure as Japanese names like *Toshiba* and *Tokyo.* As a result, such acronyms fit easily into Japanese.

(viii)*Comparison and contrast.* Quite often, writers can show similarity or difference by using <u>figures of speech,</u> also known as figurative language, rhetorical devices or tropes, which are intentional deviations from the usual spelling, formation, construction or application of some words or phrases and which should not be understood literally. Figures are as old as language; they occur constantly in both prose and poetry. They posses various functions: to clarify, to illustrate, to animate inanimate objects, to raise laughter or to ornament.

Examples:

Metaphors: implied comparisons between two unlike objects that have one point in common.

- *"It´s a way of cloning the specialist and sending him out to locations around the world"*. Here, Dr. Jay Sanders is using a metaphor to describe how top consulting specialists can guide doctors or nurses on site and recommend surgery or tests to patients in other countries.The element in common is the possibility offered by telemedicine of having a specialist in one place diagnosing conditions in patients living in another state or country but without actually meeting them face to face in an examining room. It is like having an exact copy of the specialist – his clone - or reproducing him with the same knowledge, experience and training as the real one, but stationed in another country as he prescribes a patient for treatment via videophones and satellite linkups.

- *This is one way at least, in which a smaller world may become a healthier world.* Metaphor introduced by the verb "to become", comparing a *smaller world* to a *healthier world.* What A. Purvis means is that since our world is smaller on account of globalization and the means of communication availabe, it should also be healthier thanks to recent advances in medical technology.

Simile: comparison that is definitely stated between two unlike objects that have one point in common. Regularly, the words "as" or "like" are used.

- *For enthusiasts like Dr. Brinck...* Simile introduced by the word "like" comparing the enthusiasm of people in general with that of Dr. Brinck who sees in telemedicine an excellent weapon against diseases and/or their prevention. She is very concerned about the benefits of the new system and foresees a great future for it.

Class application:

- Group Activity: In groups of four or five, students may discuss whether they think these comparisons to explain the advantages of telemedicine are effective and then, develop other analogies for the following:

a. Being a teacher is like.............................(*performing on a stage before the audience*)

b. Being a nurse is like...............................(*hearing the confessions of sinners*)

c. Learning a second language is like..........(*learning to walk when you are a child*)

d. Speaking English is like..........................(*being computer-literate these days*)

e. Being a student is like..............................(*learning to fly a plane with the pilot at your shoulder*)

(ix)<u>Wordplay</u>: any adaptation or use of words to achieve a humorous, ironic, satirical, dramatic, critical or other effect. This play on words is also a pun as in *Typical encounters between doctor and patient?,* where A. Purvis humorously recalls the words of Spielberg´s movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind:* between human beings and outer space creatures.

Examples:

-   *Birthing a nation,* for *The Birth of a Nation*.
-   *Live Poets Society,* for *Dead Poets Society*
-   *10 Days of Attitude,* for *100 Years of Solitude/100 Años de Soledad*, by Gabriel García Márquez, in Time 1995, where the journalist made reference to the never-ending discussions of Congressmen in Washington D. C. (almost 100 days), under the leadership of the Republican Gingrich, for the restoration of a balanced budget in the United States (Bulleraich, 2000)[97]
-   *We take no pride in prejudice,* to describe *The Times,* British newspaper famous for its ingenious advertisements meant for highly educated readers. *Pride in prejudice* sounds like *Pride and Prejudice,* Jane Austen´s novel, well-known to English learned speakers. The message implied is that *The Times* is an objective newspaper and by using the name of a classical novel, the newspaper´s owners want to convey the idea that it is directed to learned, intellectual readers.
-   *Oil´s well*

    That ends up in an Audi Car, for *Audi* cars; wordplay has been introduced by the use of the modified title of one of Shakespeare´s plays *All´s well that ends well*[98]

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[97] Bulleraich, G. (2000). The Written Press: a Good Case for Translation in Language Teaching. In *Primer Congreso Latinoamericano de Traducción e Interpretación.* Sept. 26-28 1996. Bs. As. Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. pp. 45-55.

[98] Trainor, P. (2002). Say it with words (Díselo con palabras). In Corpas Pastor, G., Martínez García, A., Amaya Galván, S.C. (coords.) *En torno a la traducción-adaptación del mensaje publicitario.* España. Universidad de Málaga/Debates p. 83.

(x) ***Punctuation.*** Readers can also use punctuation clues to infer meaning, such as quotation marks: *"amazing"* (paragraph four) to show the word has a special meaning, dashes to show apposition, parentheses or brackets to enclose a definition and italics to show the word will be defined.

Note: Suggestions for further reading in the field of medical technology:

- Bar, E. (2000) Médicos a Larga Distancia. En *Revista La Nación,* pp. 40-48.
- Cowley, G., Miller, S. (1995) RoboDocs and Mousecalls. In *Newsweek,* February 27, pp. 22-23.
- Crystal, D. (1987) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. 63- Language for special purposes. The language of medicine.* Cambridge: CUP pp. 382-383.
- Czubaj, F. (2005) Presentaron en Córdoba un programa de telemedicina. En *La Nación,* 20 de septiembre, pág. 11.
- Dimaría, S. (2004) Presentan avances en telemedicina. En *La Nación,* 3 de agosto.
- Greenall, S., Swan, M. (1999) The sword that can heal. In *Effective Reading,* Cambridge University Press, pp.96-99.
- Ríos, S. (2001) Cirugía robótica, una nueva disciplina frente a su primera crisis. En *La Nación,* Nov. 10.
- Spurgeon, D., Burton, T. (2000) ¿Tomografías para los sanos? (Trad.) En *La Nación,* Marzo 26.

CHAPTER IX

<u>Improving students´mistaken reading strategies</u>

Error-making is a natural phenomenon in learning of all kinds... We should consider our students´errors not as signs of inhibition, but as strong evidence of the different strategies they employ in the process of learning the target language.

(Michaelides, 1990: 29)[99]

Need for a unified approach

Anyone who learns a foreign language to attain a reasonable level of proficiency will inevitably make many mistakes on the way. Although correcting every and each one is impossible and, according to some theorists, highly undesirable as it often inhibits elementary and low-intermediate students, it is advisable and justified in the case of advanced students. There is convincing evidence that such correction of language/reading mistakes, though time-consuming, is never counter-productive. Thus, on the whole, ignoring mistakes and/or errors, though sometimes theoretically undesirable, should not be disregarded.

Indeed, many teachers believe that unless students recognize the type of mistake they are making, they will continue to make that mistake. They think it is the understanding of why an error is inappropriate that triggers a click in the brain. They assume that that by giving post-intermediate students an organized list of error types with examples of them in context, they can motivate learners not only to internalize grammatical rules but also involve them in their own improvement.

Over the years there has been a decided shift in the approach to error analysis. During the two decades following the Second World War, the <u>behaviourist</u> theories that were dominant, viewed second language acquisition as the juxtaposition of two language systems which led to the combination of features of both systems. Thus, through <u>Contrative Analysis </u>(CA), which studied the linguistic differences between L1 and the target language, researchers assumed that <u>interference</u> of the mother tongue was

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[99] Michaelides, N. (1990). Error Analysis: An Aid to Teaching. In *English Teaching Forum.* Volume XXVIII Number 4, October, p. 29.

responsible for the errors made during the transitional period (Interlanguage) of learning the target language.

However, by the early 1970´s, the study of learners´ errors helped to refute CA because many predictions turned out to be inaccurate. Errors showed up where they had not been predicted and others, predicted by CA, did not materialize in Interlanguage. It also became evident that the intrusion of features of one language into another language is not the only cause of errors, as a number of other factors interact in determining learners´language acquisition process. Gradually, then, Contrastive Analysis gave way to <u>Error Analysis</u> (EA) studied by the <u>cognitive</u> approach.

In EA there has been a change from focusing on the process (why students make errors) rather than on the <u>product</u> (error). This cognitive approach sees errors as a clue to what is being processed by the brain, as a natural phenomenon that must occur as learning a first or second language takes place, before correct grammar rules are completely internalized. Error analysis also acquired importance as a tool to obtain valuable information about the <u>strategies </u>used by learners. The novelty was that errors could be described in terms of L2 without referring to learners´ mother tongue.

With time, however, linguists admitted that the effects of L1 on the target language cannot be totally denied since they are obvious and thus described and explained the errors resulting from L1 transfer. This study received the name of <u>language transfer</u> or <u>transfer analysis,</u> and it is used in EA to deal with those errors that are assumed to be the result of L1 interference. Above all, as Ellis (1994)[100] pointed out "Error Analysis helped to force recognition that errors were not something to be avoided but were an inevitable feature of the learning process."

Basically, teachers were relieved to find a more realistic attitude towards errors which were no longer regarded as a consequence of their teaching methods, but rather as indicators that the learning process was taking place.

Furthermore, most English language teachers now encourage self-correction and peer correction depending on the lesson objectives. If the objective is to develop accuracy, then of course correction is necessary. In this case, the best approach is to allow the student to self-correct first. If that doesn´t work, the teacher should allow for

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[100] Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press p. 70.

peer correction but if no one seems to know, then the teacher can give the correction/answer. Although this can seem time consuming, it helps to focus students´attention and to reduce reliance on the teacher, thereby **encouraging student autonomy.**

According to many language educators, if the objective of the activity is to develop fluency, then correction may not be totally necessary or desirable on the spot. Constantly interrupting students to correct them can be irritating and disruptive, especially when lack of accuracy does not hinder communication. Thus, if intermediate/advanced students make frequent errors or mistakes, the teacher can make a mental note to provide feedback after the activity.

The nature of mistakes and errors

James (1998)[101] defines a language error as "an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant and is not self-corrigible by its author." The learning of a language being an active and a creative process, not only L2 learners produce errors. Children who are learning their first language are also exposed to making errors, and even adult native speakers produce sentences with errors. Nevertheless, these errors receive different denominations: whereas adult native speakers are considered *mistakes* or *slips of the tongue* or *lapses,* and those of children, *transitional forms,* those made by L2 speakers are judged *errors.*

The distinction between error and mistake was introduced by Corder (1974)[102] who stated that mistakes "are of no significance to the process of language learning" because normally the learner is aware of them and can correct them. They are caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, misinterpretation or some other aspect of performance. As for errors, he declared that first, they are significant because they tell

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[101] James, C. (1998). *Errors in Language Learning and Use-* Exploring Error Analysis. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited p. 78.
[102] Corder, S. P. (1974) . The Significance of Learners´ Errors. In J. C. Richards (ed.), *Error Analysis.* Harlow: Longman.

the teacher how far the learner has progressed; second, they provide evidence of the strategies used by the student, and finally, they are devices the learner uses to test hypotheses about the target language. They result from imcomplete knowledge, ignorance or ineptitude of speakers and writers in using a language. In general, they are more significant than mistakes. Following Chomsky´s distinction, Corder´s errors are qualified as failures in *competence* and mistakes as flaws in *performance.*(Valenti, 2000).[103]

Using comprehensibility as a criterion

Although there are errors in comprehension and production the former have received scant attention, and researchers have concentrated on production errors as they are seen as an inevitable aspect of the learning process.

In speech, meaning is negotiated so that incomprehension or ambiguity often disappear within two or three conversation exchanges. It is not each individual sentence which is evaluated, but short stretches of conversation. In reading, much of the language is also comprehensible within context. However, teachers have an unfortunate tendency to focus on easily identified errors - L1 interference mistakes or those resulting from language transfer - and other surface errors.

On the whole, it is not the correction of such errors which most assists the effective communication of meaning. Good awareness raising techniques and effective corrective feedback are the main solutions and tools teachers have at hand in these circumstances (Lewis, 1993)[104]

At this point of the reading process, we may add that, frequently, teachers come across EFL students who are used to adopting several mistaken strategies to understand text and/or to perform text-based tasks. The usual common denominator of these strategies is that they often seem to signal *lack of confidence*, resulting from *poorly*

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[103] Valenti, V. (2000). 5- A reply to "Looking at Students´ Mistakes." In *Share e-magazine* (June 25, 2000) http://www.ShareEducation.com.ar
[104] Lewis, M. (1993). *The Lexical Approach.* England. Language Teaching Publications, pp. 164 – 179.

developed skills. Additionally, non-native readers´ skills are often not appropriately applied from *fear of the English text.*

In order to better assist students, teachers should make learners aware of the skills they are or should be using, explain the cause or causes of such mistaken approaches and suggest some possible solutions. Only after such awareness will students understand what the author means and, ultimately, enhance their reading proficiency.

Examples of problematic strategies:

a) Ineffective readers often change the context to fit what they mistakenly think the word means.

Some students, fearing they will fail to understand a given text, latch on to words that seem familiar but are actually misunderstood. Indeed, they assume that they know what a particular word means, but are mistaken for a variety of reasons. Since the context does not suit their knowledge of the word, they will change the context to make it suitable.

The following sentences serve to illustrate this misleading strategy:

- *Diagnosis, and therefore therapy, have tended to zero in on the individual, to the exclusion of the contextual components of the anorexia syndrome.*

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner´s Dictionary,* the phrase "to zero in on sb./sth." means "to fix all your attention on the person or thing mentioned", but here, it served as a **miscue** to students, who may have thought its meaning was "nothing." They then reframed the context as stating that the individual is "unimportant" in this approach to anorexia.

- *The psychiatrist intimated that I had hidden masculine drives.*

According to the *OALD,* the verb "to intimate (that)" means "to let somebody know what you think or mean in an indirect way". Here, it also served as a **miscue** to students who erroneously substituted that word for another one. They understood that the psychiatrist, influenced by masculine drives, became "intimate" with the patient.

This unfortunate strategy is surely familiar to experienced EFL reading teachers who often refer to it as "Musical Context" by analogy with the game Musical Chairs, where one attempts to find any available chair whenever the music stops.

Miscue analysis is the study and analysis of errors or unexpected responses which readers make in reading. Among the different types of miscue which occur are:

A Insertion miscue: adding a word which is not present in the text.

e.g. readers may say *Mr Barnaby was a busy old man* instead of reading *Mr Barnaby was a busy man.*

B Reversal miscue: the reader reverses the order of words.

e.g. students read *Mrs Barnaby was a rich kind old lady* instead of *Mrs Barnaby was a kind rich old lady.*

b) Alternate versions or subgroups of "musical context".

Arden-Close (1993)[105] said, "the appearance of the word can be highly misleading" as when the struggling reader misreads the word phonologically. "Strangely" is read as "strongly", or "leave" as "live". Similarly, some learners frequently misunderstand loan words from L1 which have different meanings in L2. For example, in Hebrew, a "report" is a traffic ticket. So, in the following sentence, "Susan was required to write a report for her lecturer,"a reader might think that Susan moonlighted as a policewoman (held a second job in addition to a regular one) and had to issue her lecturer a traffic ticket.

More often than not, EFL students are tempted to dissect a word inappropriately as when they use prefixes, suffixes and the root of a word as an aid to meaning. Indeed, so often is there an extension of the basic meaning of the root or affix that this can frequently be more of a hindrance than a help. Thus, once a word has been analysed according to its parts, this guessing at its meaning is more likely to result in twisting the interpretation of the context to modify the guess of the meaning. For example:

- "millennia" has nothing to do with a "mill" (building/factory/small machine) since it is one of the plural forms of "millennium" (period of 1000 years);

- "indifferent" does not mean "not different";

- "momentous" in the sentence "Pasteur´s work, like Mendel´s, has proved to be of momentous importance", is not related to "momentary" and so, students should not

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[105] Arden-Close, C. (1993). NNS Readers Strategies for inferring the meanings of unknown words. In *Reading a Foreign Language, 9,* 2, pp. 867-893.

misread the context as saying that neither Pasteur´s work nor Mendel´s work had lasting impact.

Of course, one important lesson to be learned from the way students handle these miscues is the importance of the general context to comprehension strategies. Teachers know that the weaker the learner, the more likely he is to go with the look of the word, and the more he is influenced to decide upon the meaning of the unknown word, even when such a meaning flies against the sense of the context. Instructors point to the importance of confirming or correcting a tentative interpretation of the text by checking it against the following context. Obviously, one sentence may not be enough to check such an interpretation. A student reading the previously alluded to Pasteur sentence above might rationalize his or her misinterpretation based on the one sentence, in which case the student would be advised to check the succeeding context and, perhaps, also the preceding one.

At this stage and in this context, teachers are invariably reminded of other mistakes made by famous characters created by English drama and fiction authors who resorted to the literary device of **malapropism** for comic effect[106].

The term derives from Richard Sheridan´s character Mrs. Malaprop in his play *The Rivals* (1775) whose name, taken from the French word "*mal a propos*" ("inappropriate"), is typical of Sheridan´s practice of concocting names to indicate the essence of a character. The device of malapropism defines errors in which similar-sounding words are substituted for the intended ones.

It is well known that no literature in the world abounds as English does in characters made ridiculous to the reader by the manner in which they misapply or distort difficult words. In this sense, Shakespeare´s nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* or the clown Launcelot and his father Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice,* Lewis Carroll´s Alice or the Mock Turtle in *Alice´s Adventures in Wonderland* or Dickens´s Weller senior, to name but a few, are some of the innumerable characters in novels and comedies offering hilarious inconsistencies between language and thought resulting in inevitable textual errors.

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[106] McArthur, T., (ed.) (1992). *The Oxford Companion to the English Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 638-639.

That is the reason why learners should be made aware of the unfortunate reading mistakes they often make by comparing them with these characters´ unintentional verbal blunders or humorous misapplications of words. Genuine errors of word selection show certain recurring characteristics: they usually belong to the same word class or part of speech such as nouns or verbs, they tend to have similar beginnings and endings and similar word rhythm as with "magician" for musician, "competent"for confident, "anecdote" for antidote etc.

Examples:

- "If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you" (*Romeo and Juliet,* II.iii.118-119). In this tragedy the nurse is a character that continuously tries to imitate the speech of a lady. But as her origins are rather low, she makes several mistakes each time she decides to use some word of Latin origin. Here, the malapropism is produced because of the similarity in the pronunciation of the term "confidence" and that of the word the nurse really intends to pronounce: "conference."[107]

- "He is the very pineapple of politeness!" ("pineapple" for pinnacle. Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals).*

- "I have interceded another letter from the fellow!" ("interceded" for intercepted. Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals).*

- "Of course not, said the Mock Turtle, "why, if a fish came to me, and told me he was going on a journey, I should say, with what porpoise?"

  "Don´t you mean purpose?", said Alice. (*Alice´s Adventures in Wonderland).*

Finally, teachers and researchers have asked themselves the following question:

How can we train students to be more attentive to the context and, therefore, more accurate in their interpretation of the text?

Facing the situations just described, they have proposed using **cloze exercises[108],** where the missing word can only be guessed from context, as a drill to focus learners´ attention on text and context.

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[107] Soto Vázquez, A. L., (2003). Shakespeare´s Use of Malapropisms and their Reflection in Spanish Translation. In *Babel.* Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs (FIT) Vol. 1 pp.1-22-

[108] "Cloze tests": term explained in Chapter VI "Towards Reading Comprehension strategies: a taxonomy". Oller, J. W. (1993). The Impact of Discourse Constraints on Processing and Learning. In J. Oller, T. Chihasa et al. *Methods That Work.* 2nd ed. Boston. Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

<u>What the cloze procedure is:</u> the term "cloze" was coined by Wilson Taylor (1953) for a general kind of reading exercise or test that can be applied to just about any kind of text or discourse. The term comes from Gestalt psychology and stems from the idea that a great deal of our perceptual understanding of sensory information as well as our ability to conceptualize our experience are dependent on the <u>filling in</u> of missing data. Taylor stated that we never see all of a scene, but what we do see suggests a great deal more than it immediately represents to us; it may be linked via other perceptual modalities (such as hearing) with aspects of a scene that we do not perceive directly at all but fill in via what the Gestaltists called "closure". Thus, we have a more complete whole pattern (Gestalt) out of what would otherwise be a disjointed, unconnected series of sensory impressions.Taylor applied that insight to texts and came up with a new name - "cloze procedure"- for the old method of replacing words or phrases in a text with blanks and asking readers to guess the missing elements.

An even more accurate reading of the words, as put forward in the question above, can be attained through a complementary approach. Paran (1996)[109] pointed out that good readers do not rely always on hypothesis formation and prediction (top-down processing) as much as is commonly thought. He reached the conclusion that visual input and bottom-up processing during reading are of great importance and that if automaticity of word recognition is indeed a major attribute of the L1 reader´s reading behaviour, then ways of encouraging automaticity should be found.

He suggested having the student read as extensively as possible, and using "specific exercises" to encourage and develop automatic processes. Such exercises include **timed word-recognition tasks,** where learners match words with precisely identical ones hidden within a group of similar words or nonsense words.

c) <u>Readers sometimes misconstrue the text by employing improper word grouping.</u>

One characteristic of an efficient reader is his ability to chunk a text into sense units, each consisting of several words, and each taken in by one fixation of his eyes. Thus, a successful decoder may chunk:

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[109] Paran, A. (1996). Reading in EFL: Facts and fiction. In *ELT Journal, 50,* 1, pp. 25-34.

- "The good old man / raised his hand / in blessing," but he would certainly not chunk: "The good / old man raised his / hand in / blessing."

Ying (1996)[110] related proper word grouping to the deep structure of the sentence, reflecting semantic meaning. This principle is most obvious in ambiguous sentences. He provided an example of such a sentence, preceded by the context of the paragraph:

- "A fireman was running to the scene of a fire carrying a heavy axe. He had to smash down a door. When he got to the scene of the fire, he found a door which had a rusty lock and a door which was nailed shut. *The fireman smashed down the door with the rusty lock, but smoke overcame him."*

The question, of course, is whether the student understands the rusty lock as describing the door, or as being the instrument with which the fireman smashed down the door. The proper assignment of the phrase can be determined within the context of the previous sentence.

In the following italicized sentence, slashes mark the word grouping the student mistakenly adopted, and his resulting inaccurate interpretation follows each word group in square brackets:

- "*Simply knowing* [It´s easy to know that] *what another person is prepared* [the other guy is better prepared.] */ to do in a given situation* [The solution is] */ prevents much violence in human societies;*[to try to make peace]; */ just as similar mechanisms do for other species.* [other species also try to be peaceful when threatened]."

Some students might need to drill logical relationships within sentences and between them. Our task as teachers is to reassure them that the reasonable connections they encounter in reading recur constantly and are limited in number.Thus, if they learn to identify a definite set of sound related groups with the help of logical devices, they will be able to cope with any relationships found in their readings.

Instructors should also make practical suggestions for teaching them, as in the case of the illustrative sentence above: had the student been in the habit of looking for cause-effect relatioships, he might have noticed that the first part of the sentence up to

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[110] Ying, H. G. (1996). Multiple constraints on processing ambiguous sentences: Evidence from adult L2 learners. In *Language Learning, 46,* 4, pp. 681-711.

the word "situation" is the cause, and the next part, up to the semicolon, is the effect. Then he would have better parsed the words into the two large, related groups.

d) <u>Non-native readers frequently miss the point when they leave out crucial parts of sentences.</u>

In the EFL reading classroom, out of fear of getting too involved with the text, weak students sometimes discard essential segments of the sentence. Possibilities include commencing the reading from the middle of a sentence, often after the subject and verb, or leaving off the end.

For example, a weak learner read only the *italicized* parts of the following sentence:

- "When a circus came into a town, it was common for the local clergymen to forbid their *congregations to attend the circus performance*." He therefore thought that congregations habitually attended such performances and did not pay attention to or omitted altogether the main verb "forbid."

Another student read only the first part of this sentence:

- "*My data supported the conclusion that by the mid-1970´s long-standing ¡Kung[111] values, such as the emphasis on intimacy and interdependence,* were no longer guiding behaviour as effectively as they ever did."

He then understood the sentence as meaning that in the mid-1970´s intimacy and interdependence were strong values among the ¡Kung, which of course is the reverse of the actual meaning.

e) <u>EFL students are also used to reading one sentence exclusively as if it were isolated from the whole context.</u>

This mistaken strategy is a variation on the previous one (d) but on a larger scale. Teachers have shown that only the stronger students make use of a context wider than a paragraph whereas the weakest ones make use only of the immediate sentence, latching desperately onto the words they know.

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[111] "Kung": a member of a people of southern Africa – usually preceded in writing by ¡ (*Merriam Webster´s Collegiate Dictionary.* Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A. Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1993).

We may thus witness the single sentence that a student chose to read from the following paragraph:

"For many years, investigators did not seriously consider the idea that bith-rank differences could be of environmental origin. It was assumed that children of the same parents grew up in the same environment. *Then researchers began to view the family as an organization.* From that perspective, it became apparent that children of the same parents do not necessarily grow up in the same environment."

Reading the sentence in isolation, the student could not see the switch in the investigators´ emphasis from genetic to environmental influences. He missed the entire context and did not realize that the main idea was "birth order".

In the above mistaken approaches, learners should look for logical relationships, as suggested by Ying in (c). Emphasis should be on paragraph textual markers and linking words, such as "for many years", "then," and "from that perspective" in the preceding paragraph.

As in the misleading strategy defined as Musical Context, students should be taught to refer to previous or subsequent context to check tentative text interpretation.

f) <u>Learners often find similar-looking words in the text and try to fashion an answer</u>.

The instructor posed the following question referring to an article on population growth in the United States:

"Why did the author choose California to study?" The appropriate paragraph said:

"To arrive at some estimates of what accounts for the recent rise in fertility in the United States, one must turn to states which possess the appropriate information. These states can then serve as surrogate sources. Such statistics are available from the largest state, California. While California may not be the ideal model for the entire nation...it is often considered the vanguard for social developments that sometimes reach the remaining 49 states..."

One of the students, looking for "California," saw that it was the largest state, and chose the answer which said: "because California is the largest state," which although factually true, did not answer the question. A more accurate answer would have been: "because California had the information needed to test the theory."

The conclusion is that <u>learners</u> need to focus on <u>interpreting</u> what the question asks, <u>locating</u> the answer in the text, <u>understanding</u> the answer from the text, and only then <u>answering</u> the question.

g) <u>Weak readers sometimes show a tendency to use previous knowledge irrelevant to the context.</u>

Here students either have the feeling that the author is a fool or indulge in wishful thinking. In the first case, they may actually know or think they know the subject better or have more recent information than the author; in the second case, they may make assumptions about what the author wants to say.

Indeed, exemplifying such misreadings would require quoting long texts. However, the idea is illustrated by citing a concrete example in the answer to a question on an article about a failed marriage. The question put forward was:

"According to the author, should Barbara have gone to a marriage counselor?"
The author´s thesis was that a marriage counselor would have saved the marriage, which was however not worth saving and Barbara would still have been very unhappy. Sandra, a student with a preconceived notion was thus convinced that the happiest goal for a young woman is marriage and answered that Barbara should have consulted a counselor.

Misunderstandings of this sort are usually of major importance and are the result of learners misreading of the text. Study skills appropriate in the students´native language and in the foreign language can help them find textual information or the author´s viewpoint on a subject.

<u>Suggested study skills to be drilled could be the following</u>:

- **to <u>survey</u>**, using a previewing skimming technique
- **to <u>question</u>**, formulating questions the student believes will be answered by a text section
- **to <u>read</u>**, while inferring answers
- **to <u>recite</u>**, by rephrasing ideas in the student´s mind
- **to <u>review</u>**, while re-reading the text as a whole.

Conclusion

It has often been remarked that the systematic analysis of students´ mistakes and errors can be of great value to all concerned, i.e., the teacher, the non-native language learner and the researcher.

Foreign language <u>teachers</u> have always been worried about the fact that their students´ work reflects the kind and quality of teaching that goes on in their classes. Error analysis thus, can offer teachers a clear and reliable picture of their students´ knowledge of the language in the light of which they can plan and arrange what remains to be taught until the final goal is reached, which is mastery of and fluency in the target language.

The EFL <u>student</u>, in turn, by having his mistakes pointed out to him, will, with diligence and reasonably conscious effort, manage to correct them. In the process of correction he will be trained to use his powers of reasoning, and with his teacher´s guidance he will be able to reformulate new hypotheses and adopt new learning strategies more in accordance with the facts and nature of the target language.

Finally, the <u>researcher</u>, will gain new evidence of how language is learned and acquired on the basis of which he can conduct further research for the formulation and establishment of a sounder theory of foreign-language learning.

CHAPTER X

<u>The world of ESP</u>

Even if most ESP learners already possess a reasonably adequate competence in the use of the language for general every day functions, they will still need to develop an understanding of the specialist code and a proficiency in the manipulation of specialist genres to respond to the exigencies of unfamiliar and novel situations.

(Bhatia, 1997)[112]

The field of Languages for Special/Specific Purposes (LSP) of which ESP is a part, is a lively, productive and at times controversial field. Until the last decade there had been very little as regards research or publications for those who needed to teach or assess language proficiency for specific purposes. Teachers and examiners had to take what had been produced within languages for general purposes and seek to turn it into and adapt it for different specific settings – from the general English classroom to the more technical and professional workplace.

These second or foreign languages used for particular and restricted types of communication - e.g. for medical reports, scientific writing, air-traffic control, to name but a few – contain lexical, grammatical and other linguistic features different from ordinary language. The underlying notion is then that language performance in individuals varies according to the context in which the language **is used** and the psychological schemata engaged in the discourse.

The content and aims of ESP courses are thus fixed by the specific academic, professional or vocational needs of a particular group of learners, such as courses in English for academic purposes, English for science and technology, English for nursing, among others.

Furthermore, what we often refer to as "jargon" or "lingo" and more formally as "register", has a specific communicative function within the different fields mentioned above, namely **precision.** There are semantic, syntactic, lexical and even phonological characteristics of language peculiar to those special areas which enable people to speak

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[112] Bhatia, V. K. (1997). Op. cit.

and write more **accurately** about aspects involved in the field, outsiders frequently finding it incomprehensible. It is this precision which basically defines specific purpose language use.

Indeed, a typical example of the need for precise, specific purpose language is explicit ing the field of law. We frequently deplore what we call "legalese", the arcane lexis, the convoluted syntax, the use of Latin terminology and the interminable cross-references to previous laws and cases in legal texts. Yet, legal language was purposefully developed and is used dynamically by members of the legal profession to communicate accurately within this field.

A good example can be found on the back of any airline ticket:

Conditions of Contract

1   As used in this contract, "ticket" means this passenger ticket and baggage check, of which these conditions and the notices form part, "carriage"is equivalent to "transportation", "carrier" means all air carriers that carry or undertake to carry the passenger or his baggage hereunder or perform any other service incidental to such air carriage, "WARSAW CONVENTION" means the Convention for the Unification of Certain Rules Relating to International Carriage by Air signed at Warsaw, 12th October 1929, or that Convention as amended at The Hague, 28th September 1955, whichever may be applicable.
Ref. 1293 ATB (REV. 6-89)

This statement, quite recognizable as legalese, was written not by the airline public relations official meant for the traveller getting his ticket, but rather by lawyers for their peers, being a suitable example of the legal profession demands of linguistic accuracy.

Emergence and development of ESP

Origins Hutchinson and Waters (1987)[113] clearly stated that "ESP was not a planned and coherent movement, but rather a phenomenon that grew out of a number of converging trends." They identified the most important factors that influenced its design

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[113] Hutchinson, T. and Waters, A. (1987). *English for Specific Purposes.* Cambridge: CUP p.6.

and implementation as a programme or course of studies within ELT (English Language Teaching) and gave a brief overview of its origins.

- **A)The role of English**

After World War II in 1945 there was growing demand for <u>business</u> English courses for foreign learners in response to more practical and functional needs rather than educational and cultural ends. Whereas general EFL/ESL teaching offered courses to schoolchildren and to adults of mixed ages and backgrounds, ESP began to address learners with a common learning objective, such as English for businessmen who expected to sell their products services or mechanics who had to read instruction manuals, and doctors who needed to keep up with developments in their field. For different reasons, most importantly the economic growth of the United States in the 1950´s and 1960´s, this role fell to English with direct consequences upon language learning.

Indeed, the importance of English as an international language continues to increase as more and more people are required to speak English. For example, governments have already introduced mass education programmes with English as the first (and sometimes only) foreign language as in Sweden, Israel (McCrum, Cran and MacNeil, 1992)[114] and Argentina; the growth of business and increased occupational mobility has resulted in a need for English as a common communication tool; and access to much scientific and technical literature is difficult for those with no knowledge of English. Just as French served widely in Europe as the *lingua franca* of diplomacy in the 18th and 19th centuries, English now serves as a lingua franca in most countries with linguistically diverse populations (such as India and Nigeria) and for various purposes (as with the restricted variety of Seaspeak, used by the world´s merchant marine).

- **B)New developments in Linguistics**

Together with the demands for special English courses tailored to specific needs, new ideas began to emerge in the study of linguistics. Attitudes to learning and the acquisition of knowledge shifted from defining the formal features of language <u>usage</u> to discovering the ways in which language was actually <u>used</u> in real life communication.

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[114] McCrum, R., Cran, W., and MacNeil, R. (1992). *The Story of English.* London. Faber and Faber Ltd. and BBC Books, p. 391.

Thus, the underlying notion was simple: if language varied from one situation context to another (from the English of commerce to that of engineering), it should be possible to determine the features of specific contexts and then make these features the basis of the learners´course. It was the early 1970´s which saw the greatest expansion of research into the nature of particular **varieties** of English.

Most of the work at this time was in the area of English for Science and Technology (EST) and for a time ESP and EST were regarded almost as synonymous. However, there was research in other fields too, such as the analysis of doctor-patient communication and the design of specialist courses by Candlin, Bruton and Leather (1976)[115].

- **C)Learners´ central importance**

The growth of ESP was also caused by the new emphasis given to the central role of students which influenced their motivation to learn and, in this way, made learning better and faster. Research in educational psychology contributed to this learner-focused approach which is generally reflected by:

- recognizing students´prior knowledge
- recognizing their needs, goals and expectations
- recognizing their learning styles and preferences
- recognizing their previous learning experience and the nature of classroom tasks.

In an ESP context, the learner influences the process in the sense that he is not only being educated, but <u>he is also being trained to perform well</u> in a clearly defined situation. He is no longer a passive element in a broad educational endeavour but is considered an active participant with particular capacities, interests, preferences. Indeed, the ESP learner is an individual with his own personality and, usually, a more mature person with special ways of thinking and working. His academic and professional potential make him analytical, critical and devoted to his work or subject of study. Thus, if English is presented in such a way that he may see the language as a potential area of improvement and development he will be most cooperative in the teaching-learning operation.

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[115] Candlin, C. N., Bruton, C. J. and Leather, J. H. (1976). Doctors in Casualty: Specialist course design from a data base. In *International Review of Applied Linguistics* 3.

On the whole, in learner-centred approaches, course design and teaching often become negotiated processes whereas in teacher-centred teaching the primary decisions are carried out by the teacher based on his/her priorities.

Finally, as demonstrated, developments in the fields of linguistics and educational psychology have contributed to the rise of ESP leading to an increased specialisation in language learning.

Phases of development

a) The notion of **special language:** register analysis-based syllabus.

At the beginning, in the mid 1960´s, the aim of linguistic analysis was to identify such linguistic features as grammar and lexis and to concentrate on particular forms such as the present simple tense, passive voice and nominal compounds. Although there was an academic interest in the nature of registers of English *per se,* the main motive behind register analysis was to produce a syllabus which gave high priority to the language forms students would meet in their Science studies. The course, therefore, emphasized these linguistic forms at the surface level.

b) The importance of **discourse** or **rhetorical analysis.**

In this phase of development ESP shifted attention from language at the sentence level (register analysis) to the level above the sentence and got closely involved with the emerging field of discourse/rhetorical analysis. ESP programmes viewed language as not only a set of grammatical structures but also a set of functions whereby sentences were combined in discourse to produce meaning. The leading linguists who shared these views were Henry Widdowson in Britain and the members of the so-called Washington School: Larry Selinker and Louis Trimble in the United States.

In addition, at this stage ESP analysis focused on the need to identify the organisational patterns in texts and to specify the linguistic means by which these patterns are signalled. Such patterns would then form the syllabus of the ESP course:

- Level A: presenting objectives and hypotheses or theory
- Level B: presenting general rhetorical functions that develop the objectives of Level A, such as stating purpose, reporting past research, presenting new information...

- Level C: presenting <u>specific rhetorical functions</u> that develop the general rhetorical functions, such as description, definition, classification, instructions...

- Level D: presenting <u>rhetorical techniques</u> that provide relationships within and between rhetorical units of Level C, such as causality and result, order of importance, comparison and contrast, analogy, exemplification, illustration...

   Students were thus able to recognise textual patterns and discourse markers.

c) The concepts of **needs analysis** or **target situtation analysis.**

Learners´ needs were placed at the centre of the course design process. In short, ESP is said to have its basis in an investigation of the learner´s purposes and the set of communicative needs arising from those purposes. These needs then act as a guide for course material design. Further, the kind of English to be taught and the topics and themes through which it will be taught are based on learners´ <u>interests </u>and <u>requirements</u>. At the same time, the skills to be taught may be restricted, as in the case of a needs analysis which may reveal a priority for listening skills. Such is the case of receptionists or international telephonists learning English who will need to concentrate more on listening and speaking skills and will surely make use of specific materials based on oral/aural (simulation, role play, drama techniques...) and listening comprehension exercises (tape listening...)

d) Focus on the underlying interpretive **strategies** and **skills.**

Projects dealing with the skills-centred approach emphasized reading or listening strategies and thus, the exercises devised made learners reflect on and analyse how meaning is produced in and retrieved from written or spoken discourse. Taking these notions from cognitive learning theories[116], studies in this field portray the learner as an active information processor and as a thinking being who can be asked to observe and verbalise the interpretive processes he employs in language use. He is taught how to cope with such strategies as: guessing word meanings from context, using visual layout to determine the type of text, exploiting cognates (i.e. words which are similar in the mother tongue and the target language) etc.

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[116] "Cognitive learning theories": term developed in Chapter II "Reading: a major language skill".

Dominant figures in this movement are Francoise Grellet (1981), Christine Nuttall (1982) and J. Alderson and A. Urquhart (1984, 2000) who provide both an overview of some aspects of ESP and a comprehensive bibliography in this field.[117]

e) A movement towards ESP as an **approach** and not as a particular language product.

Accurately understood, ESP should be regarded as an approach to language teaching/learning based on learners needs; in other words, all decisions as to content and method should be based on learners´reasons for learning.

In addition, we must be careful not to imagine that those aspects of English which are related to a specific subject somehow form a language apart from "general" English. Scientific English, for example, uses the same structures as general English but with a different distribution. Certainly, there may be a tendency for more passives and more complex nominal groups to occur, while there are few occurrences of question-tag forms. What can also offer some difficulty to the learner is the set of semi-technical words which often change their "usual" meaning when used within a specialised context. Examples of such words are: *force, current, interest.* Similarly, much technical vocabulary is typified by many words with "scientific" prefixes or suffixes, such as *ante-, poly-, -gon, -phone.*(antenuptial, polygamy... from legal English; hexagon, earphone... from technical English).

It is also important to realize that grammar may be used in specific ways in scientific texts and that reference to a general or "common core" English grammar may not be helpful. Indeed, we must look beyond the grammatical level to see what function the structure has in the text from which it is taken. For example, the following sentence:

Aluminium is a metal which is light and resistant to corrosion,

could be analysed grammatically as a sentence composed of two clauses: the main statement and a clause. Looking at the sentence from a functional viewpoint, however, it could in fact be performing an act of *definition.* What a scientist is doing as he writes

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[117] Grellet, F. (1981). *Developing Reading Skills.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nuttall, C. (1982). *Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language.* Heinemann.
Alderson, J. C. and Urquhart, A. H. (eds.) (1984). *Reading in a Foreign Language.* London. Longman
Alderson, J. C. (2000). *Assessing Reading.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

or speaks is using a series of acts, such as: defining, classifying, generalising, drawing conclusions, hypothesising.

In short, t:he learner has to be taught:

- how to **approach** the text

- how to **recognize** these functions

- (if he intends to write down these concepts) how to **produce** the appropriate grammatical form to express a particular function

- how different functions are **linked together** in a text to form larger units.

Conclusion

The way we view the field of ESP today is far different from that of the 1960´s. At that time, ESP practitioners believed their main job was to teach the technical vocabulary of a given field or profession. If they were teaching nursing students, their task was to teach them the medical vocabulary of nursing. The fact is that they followed a general English syllabus that was "flavored" with medical and nursing vocabulary.

Later, ESP teachers began to recognize the importance of sub-technical vocabulary, that is, the words and phrases that surround the technical words. At the same time, the movement in ESOL - teaching English to speakers of other languages - which focused on learner-centred teaching, was reflected in ESP, as mentioned above.

In the 1980´s discourse and genre analysis and linguistic corpora began to inform the field (Widdowson 1981; Trimble 1985; Swales 1990; Johns and Dudley-Evans 1993)[118]. Indeed, this history and development of the approach is something that most ESP practitioners have actually experienced.

Researchers finally concluded that new ESP teachers seem to have to go through the same stages of self-development concerning teaching techniques that the field has

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[118] Widdowson, H. G. (1981). Criteria for course design. In L. Selinker, E. Tarone, and V. Hanzeli (eds.) *English for academic and technical purposes.* Rowley. MA: Newbury House.
Trimble, L. (1985). *English for Science and Technology: A discourse approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Swales, J. M. (1990). Op. cit.
Johns, A. M. and Dudley-Evans, T. (1993). English for Specific Purposes: International in scope, specific in purpose. In S. Silverstein (ed.) *State of the Art TESOL. Essays: Celebrating 25 years of the discipline.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

undergone since the 1960´s – beginning with the urge to teach <u>general English</u> together with <u>technical vocabulary</u>, moving to an awareness of the importance of <u>sub-technical vocabulary</u> and <u>needs analysis,</u> and emerging eventually to the recognition of the need to use <u>discourse analysis </u>and <u>linguistic corpora</u> in combination with learning <u>strategies</u> in order to render a meaningful interpretation of pattern and data.

Types of ESP: The question is: how does ESP at the present time relate to the rest of ELT? A number of terms for the various types of ESP have been coined and it is necessary to know their accurate meaning and what sort of ESP programmes they describe. They deal with very wide linguistic fields; however, researchers have set two main groups: English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

EOP is taught within a situation where learners need to use English as part of their work or profession. Such instances of EOP students would be doctors who need to talk and respond to patients and other staff, or technicians servicing equipment who have to read technical manuals. By contrast, EAP is taught generally within educational institutions to students needing English in their studies. An example would be an overseas student taking a higher degree course at an American University. This is, though, not a clear-cut distinction: people can work and study simultaneously.

One further distinction made by linguists is that of the ESP branch of English for Science and Technology (EST), which presupposes a stock of vocabulary items, grammatical forms, functions and science-biased materials. Once again, the notion of EST is too general if the needs of the learner are to be taken fully into account. A scientist may need to operate in English in a number of different situations. He may be required to present a paper at a conference, exchange views informally at social gatherings, read relevant literature on his subject or write a paper.

Similarly, studies conducted by Hutchinson illustrate these classifications by means of a **<u>tree</u>**, starting with its trunk or ELT (English Language Teaching), placed at the bottom. At the next level upwards it is possible to distinguish three large categories represented by the main branches of English as a Mother Tongue (EMT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL).

As we go up the "tree", we can see that EFL courses are in turn divided into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and General English (GE). The branches just above ESP are conveniently divided into English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EBE) and English for Social Sciences (ESS), each of which is in turn followed at the next level by English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), to differentiate those courses attended by learners who require English for academic study or for work/training.

 As stated above, these are not very precise, well-defined categories, since students may do both things at the same time: study and work.

Designing an ESP course

Most ESP teachers know that course design if often a substantial and important part of the workload and that the first step is essentially a matter of asking a series of questions, both general and specific. These questions should provide the "foundation stone" for the development of a comprehensive course in ESP which also includes syllabus design, materials writing, classroom teaching and methodology, and evaluation.

Drawing an analogy with the questions effective readers normally ask themselves and also answer when decoding texts[119], teachers will have to consider the following as a preliminary to designing an ESP course:

- **Why** does the student <u>need</u> to learn? **Why** is the specific language <u>needed</u>? For study, for work, for training, for a combination of these; because it´s optional, compulsory?

- **Who** will be involved in the process: native or non-native speakers, teachers, inspectors, laymen, customers...?

- **Where** will the language be used? In the office, hotel, workshop, library...?

- **When** is the learning to take place? Full-time, part-time, seldom, frequently...?

- **What** does the student <u>need</u> to learn? What level of proficiency must be achieved? What topic areas will <u>need</u> to be covered?

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[119] See Chapter II "Reading: a major language skill".

- **How** will the learning be achieved? As a medium for speaking, reading, as sign language for the deaf...?What kind of methodology will be employed?

Figure 7 explains the factors affecting ESP course design. (Adapted from Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

Figure 7

ESP course

What?

Language   → syllabus

descriptions

How?

methodology ← Learning

theories

Nature of particular target

and learning situation

Who? Why? Where? When?

Needs analysis
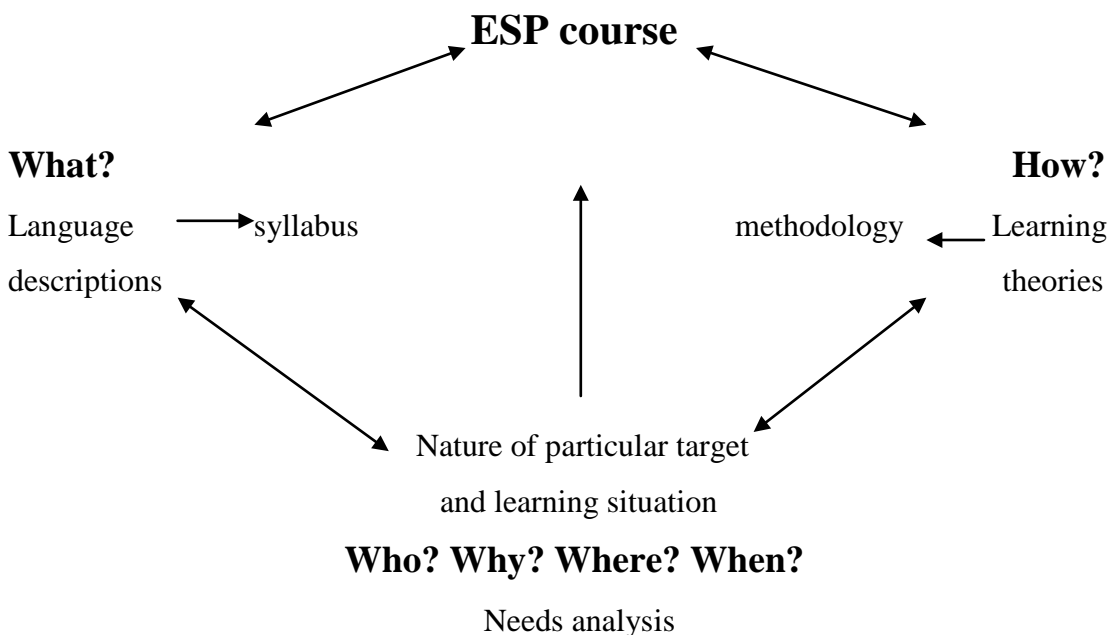
Teachers should also remember that:

- ESP is not teaching lists of technical vocabulary.

- Assumptions and intuition about language use in ESP situations are probably inaccurate. More often than not we come across ESP teachers whose teaching is not done in English. Though medical or business terms may be in English, these words or expressions may be nestled comfortably in sentences of modern standard native language.

- **Needs analysis** is not unique to ESP but it is considered a key stage when designing a language course for specific purposes. A distinction has been made between *learning needs* and *target needs.* The former refer to what the students need to do so as to learn (Why, Who, Where? ... mentioned above and after Rudyard Kipling´s

verses)[120]; the latter are the sort of needs that relate to what the learners need to do in the target situation. The term *target needs* is considered by Hutchinson and Waters as an umbrella term, which includes three further distinctions: *necessities:* what learners have to know to function effectively in the target situation; *lacks:* what they know and do not know already; and *wants:* what they think they need or what they perceive their necessities and lacks are. These are discovered by a variety of means: questioning and interviewing, testing, consulting employers and coordinators, collecting data such as textbooks and manuals that the learners will have to read and then analyze, and so on.

- In order to get the most from students, course designers may plan tailor-made one-to-one courses, company closed groups or super intensive/total immersion courses based on job specific texts.
- Materials should be appropriate and authentic.

As ESP professionals, we must be prepared to find out how language <u>is used in real world situations</u> and teach that language. Knowledge of discourse and genre analysis is crucial for us. We must be ready to develop courses that teach authentic language from many different fields, based on accurate needs analysis and appropriate materials and methodologies. We must acknowledge the fact that much of the language that our students need will not be found in any course books or pre-packaged materials; therefore, we must be willing and able to prepare our own. Naturally, to prepare ourselves to do all of this, we must take advantage of training and professional development opportunities in ESP, and we should rely heavily on the expertise of more experienced colleagues.

At this stage, we may ask ourselves:

- **What is English for Specific Purposes? -**

Our answer may be:

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[120] "I keep six honest serving-men. (They taught me all I knew). Their names are What and Why and When And How and Where and Who". Rudyard Kipling.

ESP is English instruction based on actual and immediate needs of learners who have to successfully perform real-life tasks.

      Teaching ESP is demanding, time consuming and different for every group of students. It is a challenge for all who teach it and it offers virtually unlimited opportunities for professional growth.

How to go about a written ESP text

- Choosing the right text

      There are some principles that are crucial factors when choosing a text. Most of them result from the needs analysis activities ESP students are engaged in during their first classes. Thus, an analysis of the students´ **interests, likes** and **linguistic background** will reveal the sort of passages they will favour. **Familiarity** with the topics passages dealt with is another factor to be taken into account. Next, the selected passages should also contain **clear titles** which will throw some light on their content. **Print styles** such as bold, italics and underlines are good guiding devices that play an important role when dealing with predictive activities. They most certainly help students focus their attention around relevant information. Finally, texts which include **cohesive devices** and clear **coherence relations** are to be favoured by the ESP teacher.

- Incorporating the approach

      The topic dealt with in the passage can be predicted by simply reading its title, graphics and print styles. Familiarity with the topic by both the writer and the reader rovides the ground for approaching the text by what is known as *shared knowledge.* Thus, writer and reader are brought together by the content of the passage.

      Students, at this point, can be asked to discuss the questions mentioned above concerning the status of the writer. Questions such as "Who wrote this article?" should be included here and can be accompanied by alternative answers depending on the level of the students. The general purpose of such questions is to make students speculate about what kind of language the article contains, its vocabulary, register, content and the like. Questions such as "Who is the passage for?" will pave the way for a discussion of the *social relations* involved in the text.

Cohesive devices and coherence relations provide the ground for considering the *discourse type* the text represents. Then, learners can answer questions like "Where would you most likely find this text? A book/magazine/brochure?".

In conclusion, by concentrating on all these factors, students will be able to consider the *discourse function* and then move on to analyze the text from the linguistic point of view. Questions such as "What is the purpose of this text? To inform/suggest/persuade?" should be included at this stage. (Greenall, 1995)[121]

- Evaluating the content of the passage. **<u>Sample Work-Sheet</u>**

The work-sheet that follows aims at exemplifying the principles proposed above and was prepared for a group of students of <u>Marketing</u> (Business English), on their third class after the needs analysis sessions had been completed.

<u>Pre-reading activities</u> 1. *Read the title of the text, its print styles and look at its graphic.*

Distribution Channels

*Distribution channels, also called **multiple channels,** are developed by some companies for three main **reasons.** First, multiple channels are used to increase market coverage. Second, they can also be used to reach new market segments. Finally, distribution channels are frequently used to distribute new products.*

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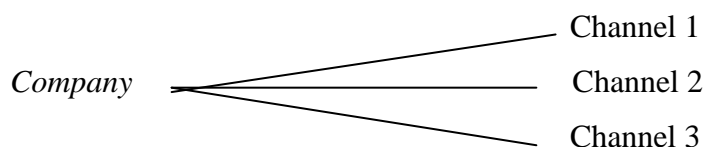
[121] Greenall,S.(1995).Considerations for Teaching Reading. In *ELT News&Views*. Arg.Impresos Victoria.

2. *Answer these questions*

a. What is the text about?

Television channels ☐

Distribution of channels ☐

Channels for distribution ☐

b. Is the language of the text

Informal? ☐

Formal? ☐

c. What vocabulary items will you find?

Words connected to television ☐

Words connected to distribution ☐

d. Who, in your opinion, wrote this text?

A teacher of English ☐

A marketing expert ☐

e. Who is it for?

A marketing expert ☐

A teacher of English ☐

A marketing student ☐

1. *Now read the text quickly*

f. Where would you find this text?

A magazine ☐

A book ☐

g. What is its purpose?

To inform ☐

To persuade ☐

After-reading activities

1. *Answer these questions* (To test text implications)

a. What kind of companies would develop multiple channels?

b. Are multiple channels important for a company? Why/Why not?

2. *Write a summary of this passage*.

On the whole, selecting ESP materials that meet the requirements above mentioned, guiding students to work out text meaning and gist as they would do in real life and, most importantly, evaluating from the very beginning the implication of texts and then identifying the literal information they contain, will prevent students from having to resort only to literal translation and will help them achieve more satisfactory results.

CHAPTER XI

Contrastive text competence

"They don´t seem to be talking the same language." Linguistic features are inevitable when there is interaction between people from different racial, regional, cultural, social or occupational backgrounds.

(Crystal, 1997)[122]

The treatment of English varieties

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 numerous varieties of the English language, and what we ordinarily mean by "English" is a common core or nucleus which is realized only in the different forms of the language that we actually hear or read. By "common core" we mean that English has a set of linguistic and grammatical characteristics common to all varieties. Thus, when designing the ESP language syllabus the teacher should decide how much of the language content would be devoted to the common core course and how much would be directed to the learner´s specific needs.

The basic philosophy underlying the study of varieties of English is entirely consistent with the descriptive[123] approach to language in that English should be observed as it is actually spoken or written in different situations. Descriptivists aim to describe the ways in which language varies according to the user, the use and the context. While prescriptivists oppose to language change, descriptivists see it as inevitable. They recognize that a living language cannot be fixed, but will adapt to meet the demands of its users.

All the same, descriptivist linguists acknowledge the need for a **standard** form of language as a point of reference. Although they believe that some usage is "wrong", they are more interested in describing variations from the standard as "non-standard"

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[122] Crystal, D. (1997). Op. cit.
[123] "Prescriptive/Descriptive approaches to language". Terms developed in Chapter I "Language: a living system".

than as "incorrect". In other words, they do make judgements, but these are based on the knowledge of **audience, purpose and context**.

All speakers and writers make decisions about the kinds of language they use – often subconsciously. They think about who they will be addressing – audience – and the kind of relationship they need to create. They also assess the formality or informality of the occasion – context – and the reason for the speech or writing – purpose – Lexical choices are thus a reflection of their assessment of the linguistic situation.

In addition, by assessing what is expected of us according to these three principles, we regularly make decisions about what is appropriate or suitable. Appropriateness offers linguists an alternative to the right/wrong approach of the prescriptivists. Indeed, it encourages a recognition of the variety and flexibility of language, and concedes that there are different linguistic expectations for different situations.

Furthermore, language can also be assessed according to its acceptability, whether it is considered permissible or normal by ordinary users. Linguists use acceptability tests to assess what is and what is not acceptable and their results show that language users do not always agree. Variations in opinions are caused by geographical, cultural, social and personal factors. Journalists and others such as university teachers, for example, are increasingly asked not to use certain words and expressions because they are politically incorrect and might cause offence, and to use other, politically correct, or PC words. The fact is that political correctness is a new term to describe an alleged type of social behaviour and its accompanying use of language which came into prominence in the late 1980´s.

The rise of PC language and the censorious attitude that goes with it, is now a matter of serious concern to organizations such as the Society of Authors, and has been given extensive coverage in many publications. However, as Mascull (1995)[124] pointed out, "Political correctness and the banning of words does not drive out prejudice: it merely hides it." Examples now abound:

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[124] Mascull, B. (1995). *Key Words in the Media.* Collins Cobuild. London. Harper Collins Publishers. p.29

- The terms "deaf and dumb" and "birth defects" are, apparently, pejorative and are best replaced by "congenital disabilities".

- Because many women do the job, "letter carrier" is preferable to "mailman".

To a linguist, however, any form of language that is regularly in use in speech and writing is acceptable within an **appropriate context**.

Examples:

- Verb forms will often be different from the standard in regional dialects:

Tom forgot to pick me up and I was sat there for more than half an hour.

The verb phrase *was sat* would be replaced in standard English by the progressive *was sitting*.

I never do nothing on a Friday night.

In Late Modern Standard English, the use of *never* and *nothing* together cancel each other out, although in earlier forms of English, listing of negatives was used for emphasis.

- Pronouns are also often non-standard in regional dialects:

I´m going to town now, me.

The object pronoun *me* is semantically redundant, but it is used in some dialects for emphasis.

- Prepositions can be flexible in dialects:

Who did you speak to?

This utterance may not have seemed unusual, but prescriptivists would argue that sentences should not end with a preposition. They would see *To whom did you speak?* as the "correct" form, with the preposition moved to the initial position and an object pronoun form of the relative pronoun *who* following it. This structure is, of course, more common in writing than in speech.

- Some adjectival use is also non-standard:

I was badder than my brother when I was little.

Here, an irregular comparative *worse* is standardized in the form of *badder.*This kind of simplification can be found in child language where a child recognises a language pattern and then overuses it by applying "the rule" to irregular as well as regular words.

- Some nouns may also be different in non-standard forms of English:

The chairperson picked up her brief for the meeting.

In this case, purists may argue that the use of *chairperson* is unnecessary and awkward, but most people - especially those in favour of political correctness – would prefer it since there is no need to distinguish between genres in this role.

In short, the dialectal forms above mentioned though inappropriate in some contexts, may be appropriate in others. If they were used in informal contexts within regional boundaries, where the audience was familiar with such variations, they would not cause misunderstandings. Therefore, modern linguists would not automatically describe them as "wrong", but would assess the appropriateness of each utterance by considering the audience, purpose and context.

Variety classes

Standard variety: this term is used to describe the variety of a language which has the highest status in a community or nation and which is usually based on the speech and writing of educated native speakers of the language. It contrasts with the **Nonstandard/substandard varieties,** terms used by linguists to describe usage thought to be undesirable and not correct. Instead, the standard variety is generally:

  a. used in the news media and in literature

  b. described in dictionaries and grammars (Normative Grammar)

  c. taught in schools and also taught to non-native speakers when they learn the language as a foreign language.

A standard variety may show some variation in pronunciation according to the region of the country where it is spoken, e.g. Standard British English in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland.

Standard English (SE) is the form of English which has been accepted as a norm and with which other forms of English are compared. In general, these national standard varieties have differences in spelling, vocabulary, grammar and, particularly pronunciation, but, as mentioned above, there is a common core language which provides educated native speakers with a unified means of communication.

Even Standard English finds its way into a variety of forms: spoken/written, formal/informal, personal/impersonal. In its written form, Standard English is found in

print and in formal written varieties such as essays and business letters. It is also called **BBC English** because it was until recently the standard variety used by most British Broadcasting Corporation newsreaders, or **The Queen´s English,** and for some people it is the symbol of "good English". Indeed, it is a prestigious language form because it is associated with government, the law, education, the Church and the financial world.

The general acceptance of BBC English for almost half a century is paralleled by a similar designation for general educated idiom in the United States: **Network English/standard.** This American English variety of pronunciation was supposedly favoured by radio and television announcers on US national network broadcasts who have tried to avoid regional language. However, in the past twenty years, there has been an increasing tendency in both the US and the UK to use regional accents on national broadcasts, so the bland pronunciation that inspired the term Network standard is not only misleading but also less important than formerly.

Moreover, just as Standard English provides linguists with a convenient norm for describing variations in vocabulary and grammar, **Received Pronunciation (RP)** provides a standard form of pronunciation and still enjoys considerable prestige in Britain. It is an accent often associated with the South-East where most RP speakers live, but unlike regional accents it is not confined by regional boundaries. In fact, RP tells us more about speakers´social and cultural background than about the region they come from. An important point to stress is that like all other language varieties it has been subject to change over time and no longer holds the unique authority it used to have in the first half of the twentieth century.

Frequently, speakers also modify regional accents by moving towards a spoken form they believe will improve thir social status.The **Estuary English** of the 1990´s, for example, shows the way some regional speakers adapted their accent by using features of RP. The term was coined in the 1980´s and although the variety originated in South-East England or the Thames estuary area in London, young people as far north as Hull have adopted it as a "trendy" accent. It is interesting to point out that the number of Estuary English speakers is on the increase; indeed, this variety has already infiltrated RP and it may in future become the new standard accent of the British Isles.

Words typical of Estuary English (Parini, 2000)

- *Cheers-* This word is used in Britain as a friendly exclamation that people say to each other as they lift up their glasses to drink. Now it is also employed with the meaning of "goodbye" as in "Cheers then. See you later" or that of "thank you".

- *Basically-* This term is very frequent in spoken language and is used as a filler word with the meaning of "what I´m simply saying is …" Discourse markers of this type as *Anyway* or *Still* do appear sometimes in written texts which become more conversational and informal as in personal letters and popular journalism.

- *Absolutely-* Though this term was first used to emphasize that something is completely true, people now employ this expression to mean "certainly", as in "Are you too tired to continue?" "Absolutely not!"

- *Americanisms-* American expressions do occur all the time in British English but have been especially adopted by Estuary English speakers as in the case of "No way!" (meaning "impossible"), the slang "Beat it!" ("go away!") or the informal greeting "Hi!".

National standards of English

Even though there is a Babel of English varieties worldwide, "there are two national standards that are overwhelmingly predominant both in the number of distinctive usages and in the degree to which these distinctions are institutionalized: **American English** and **British English**."(Quirk, 1991)[125]

Indeed, different areas have not only their own pronunciation, spelling and vocabulary but also their own differences as far as grammar is concerned. Here are some examples of language which are more typically American than British from the grammatical point of view:

- *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)

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[125] Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., et al. (1991). *A University Grammar of English.* England. Longman. p. 4.

- AE often uses "like" in sentences such as:

It looks like it´s going to rain all day (AE)

British English does this too but it is perhaps more common to use "as if":

It looks as if it´s going to rain all day.(BE)

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 and adjective where BE uses "really" as an adverb:

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)

- AE tends to use:

This car is different than that one (AE)

This car is different from that one (BE)

In general, grammatical differences are not so numerous as the lexical ones:

- AE: purse   BE: handbag

   suspenders   braces

   jelly   jam

   egg plant   aubergine

   garbage can   dustbin...

Spelling differences are also common:

Many nouns which end in "or" in AE have "our" in BE: misdemeanor/misdemeanour...

- Many nouns which end in "er" in AE have "re" in BE: meter/metre...

- AE prefers "-ense" where BE has "-ence": defense,license/defence, licence...

- A number of words ending in "-og" in AE have "-ogue" in BE: catalog/catalogue...

- In the US, and increasingly in the UK, many sensational (and non-standard) spellings which usually involve simplification of the spelling to reflect more closely

the pronunciation, are used to attract attention, especially in tabloid newspapers and advertising: hi (high), donut (doughnut), nite (night), kool (cool),...

<u>Class application</u> Students may be asked to discuss whether the following general statements are true or false and, where possible, give examples to make their point clear:

a. American spelling is often simpler than British spelling. (True)

b. American English makes much more use of the present perfect tense than British English does. (False)

c. There are words which have one meaning in British English and a completely different one in American English. (True) (Pants: underpants in BrE; trousers in AmE)

d. British English uses the same words as American English to refer to those who teach and those who study at university. (False) (Lecturer, reader, first and second year students, in BrE and instructor, associate professor, freshmen and sophomores in AmE)

e. American English uses a number of words and expressions that were common in British English but are no longer used in the UK. (False)

f. American slang is more lively and varied than British slang. (False)

g. A British accent is highly valued in the USA. (True)

h. Americans are more likely to understand a British person speaking English than viceversa. (False)

Spoken and written varieties: There are significant differences between speech and writing linguistic forms. For instance, the language of a real estate agent discussing prices with a client wishing to sell property differs from a real estate agent´s written selling details in the same way as the language of a live television news interview differs from a tabloid newspaper report.

In general, many people believe that written language is more prestigious than spoken language and that its form is closer to Standard English, the fact being that it dominates education and is used as the language of public administration. Conversely, others see speech not only as a reflection of how language is used in society but also

claim that language is first and foremost a spoken phenomenon with the written form as a by-product. Besides, the scientific study of speech in its own right is now a well-developed subject, including the study of the vocal organs, the nature of sound waves, speech interaction with machines etc.In linguistic terms, however, neither speech nor writing should be seen as superior, only different. Indeed, linguists are more interested in observing and describing all forms of language in use than in making social and cultural judgements with no linguistic basis.

We could generalize the main features of speech and writing by referring to their nature and function, as well as to the audience and style/register involved.

Nature: Speech is spontaneous and often transient. Most forms of everyday speech are not recorded for repeated listening, although in the age of the mass media much of what we hear on radio and television can be bought on cassette, video, DVD..., or recorded for its repetition in a different environment. Instead, writing is permanent: the same text may be re-read by different readers (e.g. a recipe, a newspaper). The same piece of information may also be downloaded simultaneously from Internet by a variety of readers.

Audience. Conversations usually take place face-to-face with a particular person or persons. A telephone conversation or a video conference are notable exceptions; whereas written language may be intended for a particular reader (a letter), and will often be addressed to an unknown audience. Similarly, speakers can use paralinguistic features as well as words to check that communication is meaningful (gestures, posture, facial expression...); equally, deictic expressions like *this one, over there, just now,* referring to the present situation, are common; but, more often than not, there is no immediate feedback for a piece of written text and, besides, all references need to be embedded in the written text because the reading situation will differ for each reader (a novel, DIY instructions). Interruptions and overlaps allowing the addressee to participate are also common in spoken language, whilst in writing, communication is a one-way process. Although the reader may respond in a written or spoken form, the response is rarely immediate (the reply to a letter, to an e-mail...).

Style: Speech is not usually planned in advance and speakers tend to think ahead as they speak; writing is often pre-planned and ideas can therefore be carefully organized. Speech often has a loose structure, marked by repetitions, rephrasing of ideas and

comment clauses. Besides, errors once uttered are not always withdrawn. Instead, interruptions during the writing process are not visible in a final copy. Drafting also means that errors can be corrected neatly. Lexis is often informal (family conversations) though within more formal contexts vocabulary may be subject-specific (a political speech), but speech is still likely to be marked by contractions and comment clauses. In contrast, in many contexts informal lexical features like contractions will be unacceptable (an essay, a job application...).

Additionally, speech is characterized by intonation and often long pauses, with multiple co-ordination which is used to mark the grammatical boundaries of utterances; conversely, punctuation and layout are used to indicate balanced syntactical structures. Prosodic features in speech like pace, rhythm, tone and stress patterns as well as words convey meaning; whereas writers use paragraphing and page layout for textual organization. Likewise, capitalisation and underlining can be used for stress, while question/exlamation marks can be used to convey attitude.

<u>Function:</u> Speech is a useful social tool which can develop relationships and convey attitudes and opinions whilst written texts are useful for recording facts and ideas, making notes or developing large-scale fiction, among others.

Apart from becoming aware of these differences, students should also realize that there is an <u>overlap</u> between both language forms. Written texts, for instance, can imitate spoken words, so that when read out they sound spontaneous; similarly, spoken texts can be transcribed. We should note in passing what Prof. Crystal pointed out: "The wheel has turned full circle. Nowadays greetings cards are available that speak when you open them". The fact is that an informal conversation and a formal essay can be seen as two extremes and there is no denying that between these, there are <u>varying degrees of</u> <u>difference</u>.

<u>Context-dependent or freestanding discourses?</u> Both spoken and written discourses are dependent on their immediate contexts (audience, style) to a greater or lesser extent. The idea that writing is in some way "freestanding", whereas speech is more closely

tied to its context, has come under attack as an oversimplification by discourse analysts (Tannen, 1982)[126].

The transcript of a piece of natural conversation may well contain references impossible to decode without particular knowledge or without visual information. Similarly, spoken "language in action", where language is used to accompany actions being performed by the speakers, is also typically heavily context-dependent and may show a high frequency of occurrence of deictic words such as *near you, bring that here,* which can only be decoded in relation to the speakers´communicative situation. On the other hand, a broadcast lecture on radio may be quite "freestanding" in that everything is explicit, self-contained and highly structured, which may also be true of an oral anecdote, joke or other kind of narrative.

This same variation in context-dependability is found in written texts. A sign saying "NO BICYCLES" is highly context-dependent: it may mean "it is forbidden to ride/park a bicycle here" or perhaps "all available bicycles already hired/sold", depending on where the notice is located. And while it is true that written texts such as essays, reports, instructions and letters do tend to be more freestanding and to contain fewer deictic expressions, written texts may still encode a high degree of shared knowledge between reader and writer and be just as opaque as conversational transcripts, as in this extract from a personal letter:

Dear Simon,

Thanks for your letter and the papers. I too was sorry we didn´t get the chance to continue our conversation on the train. My journey wasn´t so bad, and I got back about nine.

In this case, there is a direct reference to another text shared by the writer and reader: *your letter, I too was sorry,* an anaphoric reference to "*the" train* and the deictic *back,* all of which depend on mutual knowledge to be fully understood. As readers, we can only make intelligent guesses on the text. But even transparent, highly explicit texts are written by someone for someone and with a purpose in mind, being their form determined by these factors. (writer, audience, style, purpose). Implicitness and

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[126] Tannen, D. (1982). Oral and literate strategies in spoken and written discourse. In *Language,* 58, pp.1-20.

explicitness will depend on the message to be conveyed and the relationship between writer and addressee, rather than merely on whether the discourse is written or spoken.

Classroom activities which bring out the differences between context-dependent and relatively freestanding discourses can be devised by the teacher on the basis of a combination of speaking/writing tasks, such as:

Class application

Exercise: Say what features of the following passages are characteristic of British or American English; a particular context; the spoken or the written medium; formal or informal attitude or substandard English:

- *Shut off supply to tap. Open tap fully to make sure water is shut off properly and leave open.*

The word *tap* is typical of British English (AE: *faucet);* the use of imperatives and absence of definite article before nouns and of a pronoun after *leave*, are characteristic of the technical context, written instructions. Formal language.

- *On July 7, 1980, 3.9 millicuries of Cl-labeled DDT on inert granules were applied by helicopter to an enclosed four-acre marsh area at the rate of 0.2 pounds DDT per acre.*

The word *labeled* is spelled with one *l,* typical of American English (BE: *labelled*); words such as *millicuries, Cl:* abbreviation of *centilitres, DDT, inert granules, pounds...* suggest a scientific context; *were applied*: passive voice and written medium. Formal English.

- *We don´t know nothing about it, sir, honest, we was never playing on the railway line, was we Dick?*

The word *railway* is British English (AE: *railroad*); the appeal to *sir* and *Dick* indicates spoken English; *don´t* is informal; *don´t know nothing, we was, was we,* are typical of Substandard language.

- *Did you ever eat chicken?*

  Sure, I guess I´ve eaten chicken six or seven times.

  What are you going to do when you grow up?

  Shucks. I don´t know.

The word *Sure* and the exclamation *Shucks* are informal American expressions used in speech.

In presenting the **table of English varieties**, Prof. Quirk made reference to a meaningful order which he followed, beginning with regional variations (dialects); differences in speech according to education and social standing (BBC English); national standards of English; British and American English; Canadian, Irish, Australian...English; Pronunciation and Standard English (RP), and completed his study with the following varieties according to: subject matter (registers), medium (spoken/written) and attitude (formal/informal). Though this list is not exhaustive, it provides a means for students and researchers to classify the different variety types and their interaction. Moreover, it seems worthwhile to include in this classification varieties such as:

Colloquial speech: also known as casual/informal speech. It makes reference to the type of speech used among friends and others in situations where empathy, rapport or lack of social barriers are important. This type of speech is often marked by the use of slang or idioms and by other linguistic characteristics such as deletion of subject or auxiliaries (e.g. as in "Got the time?" instead of "Do you have the time?"). According to linguists colloquial speech is not necessarily a non-prestige speech category and, thus, should not be considered as substandard. The fact is that educated native language speakers use it in informal situations with fellow workers or members of the family.

Slang words/expressions: slang might be regarded by some as equivalent to colloquial speech and even much too informal or "undesirable speech". Generally, it is used by a particular group of people such as teenagers, army recruits, pop groups, etc. Often, expressions change quite rapidly, for example: "Beat it!" or "Rack off!" for "leave". Essentially, slang allows speakers the freedom to make words up, adopt new expressions indiscriminately and use language for humour, irony, sarcasm and irreverence. **Cant** and **argot,** the specialized and sometimes secret languages of thieves and other groups which operate on the fringes of the law, have contributed many items to the general slang vocabulary of English.

 Register: The study of language variation, or what has come to be known as **register analysis**[127], may be traced back to Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens´definition of

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[127] "Register analysis": term explained in Chapter V: "From text awareness to macrostructure analysis".

register (1964: 87)[128]: "Language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations. The name given to a variety of a language distinguished according to use is *register*". A year later, Catford (1965: 38)[129]set the tone for the variation debate:

*The concept of a "whole language" is so vast and heterogeneous that it is not operationally useful for many linguistic purposes, descriptive, comparative, and pedagogical. It is therefore desirable to have a framework of categories for the classification of **"sub-languages"** or **varieties** within a total language.*

Twenty years later, Halliday and Hasan (1985, 1989)[130] offered the best known definition of register in linguistic theory:

*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.** A register must also, of course, include the expressions, the lexico-grammatical and phonological gestures, that typically accompany or realize these meanings...*

Thus, these linguists suggest that registers are defined in terms of a number of parameters which constrain the communicative transaction and which may be distinguished along three dimensions according to use:

Field relates to the subject matter of discourse, ranging from technical or specialized, such as religion or politics to 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 is linked to the medium in which communication takes place, for example whether it is spoken or written.

In other words, **the mode is the means by which the tenor is expressed in a given field of experience.**

Register analysis and translation: Soon after these studies were evaluated, other proposals followed suit and, among them, those of translation theorists. Indeed, defining the register membership of a text came to be considered a prerequisite to successful

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[128] Halliday, M., McIntosh, A. & Strevens, P. (1964). *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching.* London. Longman. In Mona Baker (ed.) 1998 *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies.* Routledge.
[129] Catford, J. C. (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics.* London: Oxford University Press.
[130] Halliday, M., & Hasan, R. (1985/1989). Op. cit.

translation. For example, an appreciation of register is important in translating and/or interpreting an utterance such as:

She is sectioned [in a hospital] *for 28 days and became one of those called "specialled", which means you have a nurse following you everywhere you go.*

When dealing with a text in its initial stages such as this, translators and interpreters are encouraged to work with a description of the user (in this case, the dialectal variation would be important) and, perhaps more significantly in translation, with an account of the <u>use to which language is put.</u> Thus, the discourse field – for which numerous glossaries and terminologies have been developed – as well as the degree of formality and mode would all ideally need to be identified **prior** to embarking on the translation task (Macrostructure).

In the present example, translators would have to decide on the field to which *sectioned* belongs: medical, biological...; the tenor: semi-formal and the mode of the message: spoken, all three crucial aspects of the meaning of the text. The next decision should be based, above all, on the <u>context</u> of the passage. Does *section* involve:

- a mental patient?, sending a woman with a mental illness to a psychiatric hospital?
- a medical operation like a biopsy?, cutting body tissue in order to examine it under a microscope?
- a medical operation like a Caesarian section?, cutting a woman´s stomach and womb to allow the birth of her baby?

> Above all, the contribution of register analysis in this case, lies in systematizing such contextual variables for the benefit of translators in particular and ESP language users in general.

As mentioned above, there are certain inferences readers and speakers can make about a given situation from the text itself. For example, students 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.* They can also deduce the gender, age and social class of the person making the relevant utterances from the syntax and vocabulary used. The same

applies to the identification of high/low, formal/informal registers in the speech of, for instance, two friends meeting in 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. Finally, when we can intuitively say that two texts, either written or oral, sound alike, it is because they belong to the same register.

One of the difficulties that intermediate students find, once they have grasped the main structures, a reasonable vocabulary and a rough idea of how to pronounce most words encountered, is <u>choosing the right register to speak or write in</u>. Indeed, they can run the risk of offending someone or produce an irrelevant piece of writing if they get the register wrong.

Textbooks (O´Dell, 1998; McCarthy, 2002)[131] for intermediate/advanced level learners often contain units highlighting different styles of authentic written or spoken English and register analysis for use with a teacher or for self-study. Students are encouraged to think about their own strategies and to consider the following situations:

<u>Class application</u>

A. <u>Mistaken spoken registers</u>: Students are asked to study the following sentences, say what they think might be wrong and then rewrite them in the correct register.

- A man calls on his 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.

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 such as contractions characteristic of the spoken language. Instead, he should have said:

   Good morning, I´ve called to see if it is possible to have a personal loan. I should like to buy a new car as my old one is in a rather bad condition.

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[131] O´Dell, F. (1998). *English Panorama 2. A course for advanced learners.* Chapter 22. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, M. & O´Dell, F. (2002). *English Vocabulary in Use. Advanced.* Chapter vii. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Here, the colloquial verb "popped in" has been replaced by "called"; "some money" has been changed to "a personal loan" which is more specific to <u>bank finance</u>; and instead of "falling to bits" he has used the phrase "in a rather bad condition" which is more general and polite.

- 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. Probably, a lawyer or police officer might have said this while addressing a judge, his superior. This time, the register is more typical of <u>legal English</u>. An alternative answer could have been:

    As far as I know, it´s true/it´s the truth.

- 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 some Malpert shares; and do so quickly, without thinking much. The speaker used <u>slang</u> words, socially lower than the standard language: <u>substandard English</u> 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.

- 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 <u>colloquial,</u> impolite and everyday expressions habitually used in informal situations with friends, fellow workers/colleagues or family members. He should have said:

    Goodbye, and thank you very much. I very much enjoyed talking to you/our conversation.

B. <u>Mistaken written registers</u>: Students are told that a short article was needed for a semi-official publication offering information about the work of one of the agents of the Stock Exchange – a Jobber. This was what someone non-acquainted with the English of <u>Public Finance</u> / Stock Exchange register wrote:

A Jobber, or dealer, on the Stock Exchange buys articles from agents´customers at a low price and hopes to sell them at a higher price when the time is right. He always trades through an

agent and each time bargains to get an adequate difference between the price he buys at and the price he gives to a possible buyer. Unfortunately, he has to give the agent both the selling and the buying price before he knows whether the customer wants to buy or sell. The amount of articles he buys or sells is important to him because, naturally, he can make more money by selling a lot at a low price rather than by selling a few at a higher price...

This article would very unlikely be accepted for a semi-official publication, as the writer did not use, or was not acquainted with the register typical of the English of Public Finance. Firstly, none of the specialized vocabulary was included and, secondly, the writer allowed a personal bias to enter the article which is not appropriate at a semi-official level. He used words such as *hopes, unfortunately, naturally.*The article might have been accepted if he had written the following:

A Jobber, who acts as a dealer or trader on the Stock Exchange, buys stocks and shares from Brokers´clients and resells them at a profit when the market climate is favourable.The Jobber always deals through a Broker and every transaction is bargained for, with the Jobber attempting to get an adequate margin between the price at which he buys the shares and the price he quotes a prospective buyer. Stock Exchange procedure requires the Jobber to quote both a buying and a selling price before he knows whether the Broker´s client wishes to buy or sell. The quantity of shares involved in a transaction is important to the Jobber; a small margin on a large number of shares can yield a better profit than a larger margin on a relatively small number of shares. (Archer, 1984) [132]

The writer´s style has become more impersonal and more appropriate to the register. Repetitions are common in these contexts: *Jobber* (5 times), *Broker* (3 times), *shares* (5 times)... Besides, much of the language has been changed from general English to the more specific vocabulary of the Stock Market register: *articles* became *stocks and shares, agents´customers* became *brokers´clients, when the time is right* became *when the market climate is favourable, the price he gives to a possible buyer* became *the price he quotes a prospective buyer...*

In all these cases and in order to get the register right, learners need to know some of the **vocabulary** identified with the specific register as well as the distinctive **grammatical patterns** such as are found in the English of newspaper headlines, the Abbreviations of advertisements in newspaper columns, the English of banking and

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[132] Archer, M. & Nolan-Woods, E. (1984). *English for Cambridge Proficiency.* UK. Nelson.

Insurance and other specific "Englishes typical of the various professions or trades, also known as jargon.

The word **jargon** 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 and, at the same time, impress their audiences by lending an air of importance and sophistication to their messages and themselves.

Such is the case of economists who commonly talk about the *bull / bear market* to describe upward and downward tendencies in the Stock Market and not a particular kind of cattle or wildlife market; they also use the expression *junk bonds* to refer to those bonds that pay a high rate of interest because there is a lot of risk involved and that are often used to raise money quickly in order to buy the shares of another company. Similarly, doctors use words such as *lacerations* for cuts and *contusions* for bruises; teachers talk about *metalanguage* meaning those words used to describe or analyse a language, and *cloze tests* for a strategy/technique to assess reading comprehension by removing words from a reading passage at regular intervals.

On the whole, the use of these specific varieties can be justified because it involves matters which, as stated, are important to a particular profession though 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.

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.

This chapter has presented a few examples of English language varieties that intermediate and advanced ESP students should have access to, but obviously, the list is not complete. It will ultimately depend on the language teacher´s competence, interest creativity and course time constraints, to ensure that learners are exposed to discourse-sensitive activities focusing on language varieties and negotiation of meaning.

CHAPTER XII

The Written Press (Part I)

Newspapers: headlines and reporting styles

The modern world is filled with material for reading. Newspapers, magazines, and books all come immediately to one´s mind. There are also the advertisements ..., the labels on products we buy, and the signs everywhere. We learn through reading.

(Dubin and Olshtain, 1990)[133]

Integrating the written press to the curriculum

There is no denying that using suitable authentic material, such as the newspaper and/or magazine articles, is a rich teaching resource and an excellent way to get students involved in current events discussion. News presented in an unbiased manner will draw their attention to the real world beyond their classroom boundaries, thus encouraging them to form opinions and draw conclusions related to everyday life.

The written press, also known as the *print media[134],* is also an exceptional tool for teaching specific subject areas spanning a multiple range of learning levels. Whether we are teachers dealing with remedial intermediate students or educators committed to instilling greater knowledge into the minds of gifted or more advanced students, newspapers and magazines can help us enhance our goals.

Indeed, as David Crystal put it, "the world of modern newspaper and magazine publishing presents a wider range of linguistically distinctive varieties than any other domain of language study."

To approach newspaper reading for the first time, students may be asked to find a news article that is of specific interest to them (self-directed study). Then, they may be supplied with the following higher order thinking skills **questions** to answer:

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[133] Dubin, F. & Olshtain, E. (1990). *Reading By All Means. USA.* Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, p. 35.

[134] The media include *print media* such as mewspapers and magazines, and *electronic media* such as radio, television and the Internet. The *press* usually refers just to newspapers, but the term can be extended to include magazines. *Multimedia* is the combining of TV, computers and telecommunications to provide information and entertainment services that will be interactive. Mascull, B. (1995). Op. cit.

- Is the story/report factual; timely; important to many people; likely to change over time?; Will it lead to an event or chain of events?

- Are there specific criteria that can be used to judge the fairness and accuracy of the story´s main points?

- Is there more than one point of view provided? What is the reader´s opinion? Are there several views perceived within the group?

- Are there ethical issues at stake?

- Might new trends be inferred or deduced from the facts rendered in the story? If so, will they have a positive or negative consequence for the community or society?

These are some of the many questions that teachers can use to provide meaningful newspaper lessons to post-intermediate students. In this way, the latter may expand their world perspective, learn to think critically and exercise interpretive skills.

The following are offered as additional newspaper reading **activities** that **foster autonomy** and **creativity**:

- Students compare the treatment editors/reporters give to the news: <u>what</u> they assign importance to, what they say, what they do not say intentionally, what the headlines state and imply, which pictures/photos are included to accompany the article, the special vocabulary chosen, the use of figures and statistics.

- They can reflect on <u>who</u> provides the information: Is it a witness?, a politician?, a reporter? <u>How</u> would it have differed if another person had reported the news?

- Students analyze different perspectives in relation to the target audience.They focus on those interested in reading the article being discussed. The idea is to consider the topic from the point of view of a psychologist, a parent, a sociologist, a student...

- Students draw a list of issues related with the topic and provide tentative solutions. Solving problems helps develop creativity and critical thinking.

- Students can even compare how the news is dealt with in other mass media, such as television. What is more and proves appealing to them, is checking whether the question being discussed has been dealt with in songs, video clips and movies.

- Students make hypotheses wondering, for example, what would happen if those problems were not relevant to our society, how our lives would be affected if economic interests weren´t involved. Indeed, by including different perspectives we

enrich the given material and, as a consequence, the teaching-learning process is also enriched.

- Students choose a topic and think about the different sections of the newspaper the news might appear in; how the same piece of news would change taking into account other sections in the newspaper (Politics, Economy, Entertainment, Sports, General Information).

- Students think of alternative headlines by paraphrasing them and by establishing if they are subjective / objective, more/less detailed, more/less sensationalist. At this stage, and even before, they can discuss the differences between the two main categories of newspapers: *broadsheet / serious / quality press* and *tabloid / popular /"gutter" press.* This will lead them to draw the conclusion that, in general terms, the broadsheets provide information, while tabloids provide sensation; the former aim for factual representation of the "truth", while the latter package stories for their popularity or entertainment value.

- Students choose different articles which at first sight may have nothing in common. They should find a common thread. As follow up, they can make up a piece of news of their own (Opinion pieces, Project work), considering all the articles discussed.

- Students analyze and contrast two apparently opposed articles by filling in a chart or graph.(Pair or group work). From this activity, amazing discoveries often result since they become aware of the enrichment provided by detailed analysis and thorough work.

- As further extensive and more comprehensive work, they may analyze the structure of argumentative essays, discuss main ideas, themes, topic sentences, paragraph sequencing/grading, use of connectors, opinion phrases, word choice...

Applying the approach just described should be one of the main aims of teachers involved in post-intermediate reading course design. Indeed, students will be able to go through the whole learning process, such as conducting research in the graphic media, selecting information, summarizing ideas, producing their own piece of work, negotiating with their peers, taking decisions, describing, classifying and verifying information, criticizing and evaluating advantages and disadvantages... among many

other activities. In short, the purpose will thus be to enhance and boost reading strategies so as to cope with media material.

Furthermore, the objective should be to increase students´awareness when reading or listening to ESP texts or messages they are exposed to. Ultimately, teachers should be interested in the specialized texts the press offers as long as they are conscious of the need to develop and consolidate learners´ communicative literacy, which the latter must already possess to survive in the current world.

Insights into newspaper style

Newspapers convey information about everyday events in an inexpensive, accessible, authentic, holistic and inherently interesting way; they are also light and portable, cuttable and photocopiable, referential and invariably influential. More often than not, they can influence the way we think about local, national and international events and politics by presenting issues in a straightforward way or not. The choice of words, the decisions about which facts to include and which to exclude and the ranking of events on the front page, all influence the reader.

Generally speaking, students find difficulty in processing newspaper information even though they are seduced, every day, by the media. They need to be helped to think about the world they live in and understand the specific language used by the various means of communication, so that they can find their own place and develop their own identity. In order to do this, students have to comprehend the dynamics of the newspaper: the way it was put together, its layout and design, its appeal to the audience, the editorial bias, the style of the discourse, the register and lexis of headlines and reports, its metaphorical language, sources, typographical features etc.

Although each paper has its distinctive "house style" and follows a set of general norms and conventions laid down by the editorial staff, there are certain similarities between newspaper styles that give rise to a typical method of writing used by many journalists but not followed by the lay reader: **"journalese".** The word is used as a general, non-technical term, often pejoratively, to describe a stereotyped, vulgar style inclined to debase the English language. Texts containing journalese often present colloquial expressions and cultural references alternating with passages of straightforward description or narration.

The Random House Dictionary (1987) defines journalese as: "a manner of writing or speaking characterized by clichés, occasional neologism, archness, sensationalizing adjectives, unusual or faulty syntax, etc. used by some journalists, especially certain columnists, and regarded as typical journalistic style."This may be explained for the simple reason that journalists usually work to a deadline and also have space constraints that limit their work. They have to render complex issues into reports of the right length, often in columns and without loss of legibility.

The following paragraphs that have been extracted from *Time´s "Essay"* (Leo, 1985)[135] clearly describe the style the inexperienced reader has to cope with:

ESSAY

Journalese for the Lay Reader

Journalese, the native tongue of newsgatherers and pundits, retains a faint similarity to English but is actually closer to Latin. Like Latin, it is primarily a written language, prized for its **incantatory** powers, and is best learned early, while the mind is still supple. Every cub reporter, for instance, knows that fires **rage out of control,** minor mischief is perpetrated by **Vandals** (never Visigoths, Franks or a single Vandal working alone) and key labor accords are hammered out by **weary** negotiators in **marathon, round-the-clock bargaining** sessions, thus narrowly averting **threatened** walkouts**.**

[...] Another rule of the language is that euphemisms for "fat" are underscored too quickly by the public and are therefore in constant need of replacement. **"Jolly", "Rubenesque"** and the like have long been abandoned. A Washington writer scored by praising a woman´s **"Wagnerian good looks,"** which is far more polite than saying she is not bad looking for a massive Brünnhilde. The disinfecting compliment is particularly deft. As all practitioners know, a corrective lurch toward balance is the hallmark of good journalese. After all, journalism is a **crucially** important field that attracts **high-minded, multitalented professionals, arguably** the finest in the land.

Students of the English language know that adjectives do most of the work and that the intended audience dictates the lexical choices that journalists make. Since this

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[135] Leo, J. (1985). Journalese for the Lay Reader. In *Time.* March 18 p. 88.

text is part of the "Essay" published in *Time,* it is designed to attract readers by informing them of the facts in a more formal way and by creating a different relationship with them than if it were one more news item in the magazine or a trivial piece of news.The tone adopted by the reporter is more ironic than informal: *incantatory* powers, *weary* negotiators, *threatened* walkouts...

Journalese is also rich in euphemisms, especially those for the adjectives *fat, jolly* or even *rubenesque* as in this case, when referring to one of Wagner´s leading opera singers. Similarly, certain English words often mean exactly the opposite in journalese: the adjective *high-minded,* means inept; *multitalented,* means untalented; the adverbs *crucially,* not extremely important , and *arguably,* the most useful adverb of all, because it introduces an idea of generality and lack of conciseness that no one, least of all students, will be able to follow or understand. Once again, the journalist ends the article on an ironical note just to leave the clever reader pondering on the implications of the words used.

Pedagogic implications of news English

It is a truism of journalistic practice that the news journalist´s role as author is primarily that of compiler of already existing texts. We should add that such texts can be said to originate in "language events"(Thompson, 1994)[136], the original acts of speaking or writing by newsmakers, in this case. Consequently, the manner in which this material is subsequently reworked into news copy is a key issue in the discourse practive of news journalism. The ESP teacher should thus encourage students to develop a critical, reflective, top-down processing approach to media texts within a syllabus which aims to foster sensitivity, both to <u>genre</u> distinctions within journalism, in the first place, and to questions of <u>discourse practice</u>, in the second.

In this respect, and after establishing the fact that news reporting is concerned primarily with representing events and reactions to events in the external world, the teacher´s aim should be to determine ESP students´ target needs, sharpen their awareness of the registers encountered, proceed with specific text decoding and end up with follow-up assignments.

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[136]Thompson, G. (1994). *Reporting: Collins Cobuild English Guides 5.* London, Harper Collins Publishers.

A mixture of genres

Many scholars have argued that current discourse is characterized by an intense mixture of discursive practices. Indeed, distinctions between different types of information and communication are increasingly being blurred. We find more and more mixtures of formal and informal styles, technical and non-technical vocabularies, markers of authority and familiarity, more typically written and more typically spoken syntactic forms placed together in the same context. Characteristics of very different modes of communication are being combined as van Dijk (1999)[137] claims:

We already know this phenomenon from allocution on TV. News, current affairs, entertainment, information programmes and advertising increasingly resemble one another. They are combined in overall programs or presented in a similar manner. Advertisements are presented in and between programmes as commercials or as hidden and clandestine advertising. In the future forms of allocution and consultation, sources of information, propaganda and advertising will be hard to tell apart.

Researchers in the field of critical discourse analysis have described this phenomenon in the following terms: there is no denying that the public domain appropriates practices of the private domain (the use of first and second person pronouns). This process is related to the increasing use of linguistic engineering on the part of those with power and influence and also to the fact that contemporary culture is characterized as a "promotional" or "consumer" culture, the discourse of marketing is colonising other domains, the academic, the private etc.

The newspaper is also full of different genres, different styles all appealing to different audiences; besides, the very same texts often mix specialized terms taken from specific fields with lexical items belonging to the domain of domestic life or everyday communicative exchanges. The fact is that the distance in terms of "degree of technicality" between two fields that get mixed in a text may make the mixing the more striking and unexpected and even more dynamic.

As an example, the subject or field of a given text, such as "musical terms", might include such items as *chord, orchestra, instruments, piano, tenor, bass ,off-key, contralto...;* on the other hand, some of these terms collocate with lexical items of an everyday domestic order, such as *singing, vocalizing, scraping, bleating, missing, gargling...*

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[137] van Dijk, T. A. (1999). *The Networked Society.* London, Sage Publications. p. 189.

Likewise, we may also examine how the titles of articles in a semi-specialist magazine devoted to computer science assume a hybrid form: they often display features that are typical of chapter titles in an academic textbook or a scholarly journal as well as features that are more usually associated with newspaper headlines and advertisements. The hybrid nature of these titles is partly explained by the very nature of a semi-specialist monthly magazine: on the one hand, it contains in-depth, state-of-the-art articles and, on the other, presents the latest news. However, once we analyse the stylistic features of the titles, it becomes clear that they display the characteristics of headlines and advertisements. The result is language used not so much to convey information, but language used in a more attractive way to please the reader or, to put it simply, to sell the article.

> *In short, texts are said to be multi-registerial; they often contain more than just one register.*

When this is the case, the reader, and especially the translator, has to be particularly attentive to register shifts, or what Verdonk (1993)[138] refers to as "mixed languages". Shifts take place along one or more register variables and often pass unnoticed in a casual reading. The translator, as a language specialist, is no casual reader and cannot afford to ignore them: he has to be aware of them and relay them explicitly in the target text.

Features of newspaper language

Analysis of newspaper articles involves a consideration of key features such as **headlines** and **reporting styles** which may also reveal much about the ideology and aims of an individual paper.

Headlines: both titles and headlines usually display some features of what Quirk (1985)[139] calls "block language", also referred to as "minor sentences" by Crystal

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[138] Verdonk, P. (1993). *Twentieth-Century Poetry: From Text to Context.* London: Routledge. pp.xvi +194

[139] Quirk, R., S. et al. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language.*London, Longman. p.846.

(1995)[140]. According to Quirk "simple block language messages are most often non-sentences consisting of a noun or noun phrase or nominal clause in isolation." Of, course, titles are not necessarily just noun phrases; they may be prepositional phrases, other clause elements, *wh*-clauses, sentences etc.

Newspaper headlines are rather more complex, as they have developed a special syntax and vocabulary and normally display certain distinctive stylistic features, all of which is usually referred to as **"headlinese".** Headlines typically summarize the focus of an article in a few words; they help readers predict the subject of an article and its main idea or viewpoint. Because they have a persuasive function, headlines are often written to influence readers´ opinions; they act as "opinion manipulators".

There are three kinds of headlines:

- the main headline is larger than the others and may occasionally be in colour to draw attention

- the strapline or overline is the secondary headline that appears above the main one and is used to provide extra information or to clarify the main headline

- the sub-headline follows the main headline, and qualifies or elaborates it.

Headline syntax is often epigrammatic and elliptical; it usually consists of the omission of certain closed class words and the verb *be,* a simplified tense system, non-standard word order, heavy premodification, a special use of punctuation, reliance on abbreviations, etc. Dense headlinese often demands a second or third reading because of strange combinations and unintended sense relations; indeed, some headlines are ambiguous until the text has been read.

Examples:

A) ´BANDIT´CAR CHASE POLICE INSTRUCTOR FINED $750 AFTER DEATH OF NURSE

Here, the highlighted section is a noun phrase formed by strings of nouns, acting as adjectives and modifying the last noun or "headword", instructor.The story covered by this headline is about a police driving instructor involved in a fatal car crash when he was chasing another car as part of a training exercise. This fairly complex piece of

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[140] Crystal, D. (1995). *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language.* Cambridge. CUP p. 216.

information is caused by a non-standard order of words and is encapsulated in a long noun phrase: the phrase "police instructor" gives information about the person responsible for the accident. The phrase "car chase", used to modify police instructor, gives the event, and the word ´bandit´, graphologically marked with inverted commas to indicate that this was not a real police chase, gives the context in which the event took place.

B) JOIN THE KEW FOR THE BLOOM WITH A PHEW

Here, the headline is difficult to understand without the accompanying story which probably appeared on the inside page and not on the front page of the newspaper. It describes a tropical plant that is beginning to bloom, apparently releasing a powerful and unpleasant smell. In this case, both vivid, emotional vocabulary, phonological devices and wordplay were used to catch the reader´s attention.

Though the headline was written to be read, not spoken, the writer made it more memorable by using the reader´s awareness of sound. There is rhyme in "Kew" and "phew"(an exclamation of tiredness or a sign of relief after queuing up) and also a homophone to make a pun on "Kew", the place where the event is taking place (Kew Gardens, is the park in west London, which contains a large collection of plants and trees from all over the world) and the "queue" that will form to see this flower with the unpleasant smell.

Once again, devices of intertextuality are often used by journalists when they make reference to familiar phrases or sayings that come from popular songs or book titles, as that from E. M. Forster´s novel *A Room **With a View.*** Headlines such as this require background knowledge. Often, they are meaningless to readers who have never heard of the English writer Forster, for example. Even though journalists frequently assume that readers have a basic knowledge of well-known people, places and events, this assumed information may not be there, especially when readers are dealing with a foreign language and culture and may inevitably miss some cultural references or idiomatic expressions.

C) CHEAP CHANNEL CHARTERS CHANGE CHARGES

Another hurdle for the press newcomer to overcome is the fatal attraction that alliteration (head or initial rhyme) seems to have for headline composers. A particularly puzzling tabloid newspaper headline as this one turns out to be something about reduced fares for charter flights across the Channel. All five words repeat the same initial consonant for the purpose of achieving emphasis and catching the reader´s attention.

C) Writers use a variety of other devices to make their headings eye-catching:

- *TODAY IS CANCELLED!*   Dramatic statement

- *Your Mind: Do you make the best use of it?*

   You are caught in a fire - then what?   Challenging questions

- *Lucky kids: $7 a week and no chores*   Interesting comment

- *Give us a break – from holidays*   Paradox

D) The following headlines all appeared on 8 February 1994 and relate to the same story about the strange death of Conservative MP Stephen Milligan (Thorne, 1997).[141]

Thus, different British newspapers reported the same event in different ways:

Fears of fresh scandal after senior party sources
Talk of "murder"
MP´s death shocks Tories

The Guardian

Nightmare for Major in tragedy of Tory high flier
MP´S MACABRE DEATH SCANDAL

The Daily Mail

TORY MP FOUND DEAD IN
STOCKINGS AND SUSPENDERS

The Sun

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[141] Thorne, S. (1997). *Mastering Advanced English Language.* London. Macmillan Press Ltd. p. 235.

The *Guardian,* a broadsheet newspaper, uses a headline and strapline that are not sensational; they inform the reader that the death "shocks" the Conservative Party and, though the words "scandal" and "murder" are used, they have a general connotation and remain unspecific. The focus is more political than in the tabloid *Sun,* which is more interested in describing the peculiar circumstances surrounding the death. The words "stockings" and "suspenders" have sexual connotations and create a sensational tone in order to appeal to typical readers. Typographically, the *Sun* uses capitalisation and colour to draw attention to a front-page headline and report, the same as the *Daily Mail,* but since the latter is a middle-range tabloid it provides its readers with both sensation and political information. The word "macabre" suggests something unpleasant and sordid but "scandal" is more neutral. The strapline is underscored so that attention is drawn to the Prime Minister´s reaction and the tragic consequences for the well-known Milligan as part of the background information to the main text.

Such a variation in approach for the same story as seen above, is typical of the differences between headlines of broadsheets and tabloids. Whereas the quality press tends to be relatively sober and restrained, using "high" register and less immediately emotive words, the tabloids prefer "low", colloquial, often pejorative usage, as well as slang and punning references.

In short, headlines are important in their own right. They are the first text that a newspaper reader sees when buying and reading the paper. They employ a range of creative language devices to produce short, attention-getting, highly memorable texts, and have the capacity to encapsulate an entire story in a few words.

Reporting styles: Analysis of newspaper articles involves not only headline consideration but also reporting styles comprehension which usually help to reveal much about the ideology and aims of an individual paper as a whole. The way in which the media reports are put together or how they give a particular view of events, the lexical choices, grammatical patterns, the style and type-sizes used for various purposes and levels of emphasis, are some of the features that reflect whether the paper is a popular or quality one. Both types of newspaper, however, use common jargon words to save space, such as: *blast* (explosion), *quit* (leave or resign), *bid* (attempt), etc.

Articles/Stories: (The term "story" is newspaper terminology for "article" or "selection"). An article, in general, is a piece of writing for publication in a magazine, newspaper, brochure, leaflet, etc. which may be formal or semi-formal in style, depending on its intended readership (the general public or a specific group of readers) and the subject matter. A light-hearted or humorous topic might be given a fairly personal treatment, for example, while a more serious topic would be treated much more impersonally and analytically. Often, specific examples and quotations are included in order to make any dry facts appear more interesting. Articles cover a wide range of possible subjects, such as:

- presenting an opinion or balanced argument concerning social, environmental ...issues
- providing information
- describing a place, event, experience...(brochure)
- offering practical advice or suggestions (leaflet)
- advertising a company, product, service...

Hard News Articles: Typically, the "hard"news stories are on newspapers front pages. Hard or pure news stories report basic facts about an event or situation, sharing the following essential characteristics:

a) They report the facts, usually without giving the writer´s viewpoint
b) They are usually short and to the point
c) They are organized to give all the important information in the first few paragraphs.

Most hard news articles follow a standard format. The *lead* (opening) paragraph(s) provide the most important information; the reader can usually answer the four key "W" questions – *who, what, where, when* that give the most important facts - and sometimes, *why* or *how* that interpret facts – very quickly by reading the first few paragraphs. Feature stories and human interest stories deal primarily with *how* and *why,* the background to the news of the day. Thus, by skimming the lead, the reader can get the main idea of the article and decide whether or not to read on. Objective details about the content follow the lead, in descending order of importance and, finally, the article ends with the least important information: the historical background about the people

involved, places or events in the story. Of course, these concluding paragraphs can always be omitted for space reasons.

Reports: the term "report" usually means a formal document which is prepared by one person or a group of people who has been studying a particular subject (e.g. *The committee published its final report, recommending legislation against racism).* Articles and reports deal with the same subject matter but the treatment is different. An article is designed to make a topic interesting for the general reader while a report is usually written for a more informed reader who already knows something about the subject. Besides, they are generally longer and more detailed than articles. On the whole, reports are said to be the most impersonal kind of writing and this is reflected in the language used. The best thing is to avoid expressing personal opinions or feelings except, perhaps, in a conclusion.

Words and phrases typically used: *It is recommended that..., It was found that..., As might have been expected..., It appears that..., It is interesting that..., Strangely, Predictably, Curiously...*

Feature Stories: these are different in both purpose and style from hard news articles. Some feature stories explain, interpret and/or provide background. Others, tell of interesting, unusual occurrences that may have no great significance to the reader. They sometimes have emotional, personal and/or humorous slants and some are spin-offs of major news events of the day, inspired by them and even end with a "punch" (humorous political or social comment).

There are, of course, other types of articles which are specialized and reserved for presenting subjective material including: *reviews, business reports, narratives, profiles, opinion pages* (*editorials, columns, letters to the editor*), which take a clear position on different issues. On the whole, these articles should avoid extremely vivid description, over-emotional or over-personal writing and simplistic vocabulary.

Examples: Here are two extracts from reports that appeared in different sections of different newspapers, on the subject of Family Law, more specifically, on divorce and premarital agreements:

Report 1

Government drops plan for no-fault divorce

Clare Dyer, legal correspondent

Saturday September 2, 2000

Guardian

The government has no plans to implement legislation for no-fault divorce in England and Wales which was passed by parliament in 1996, the Guardian has learned.

The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, will resist pressure from his advisory board on family law to bring into force part two of the Family Law Act 1996 and end the use of the fault-based grounds of adultery and unreasonable behaviour, which now account for more than two in three divorces.

he board told Lord Irvine in its annual report that it was surprised and disappointed when he announced in June 1999 that the reforms would not be brought into force this year, and that no decision would be taken until after the final results of a pilot study of compulsory "information meetings" for those contemplating divorce.

The government is not opposed to no-fault divorce but has no great attachment to the act, pushed through by the last government in the face of substantial opposition by "moral majority" peers and MPs. Substantial amendments made the divorce process longer and more complicated than originally planned and the resulting compromise has been described as a "dog´s breakfast", by a leading divorce researcher, Professor Gwynn Davis of Bristol university.

Even the advisory board conceds that a backlash could be provoked by the length of time a divorce would take under the planned law – up to 21 months for couples with children, compared to three or four months for a "quickie" divorce under the current law.

Ministers are reluctant to categorically rule out implementation because the reform was passed by parliament. Under the reforms a divorce would be granted at the request of one party without the need to prove fault, after a period for "reflection and consideration". But the couple would have to reach a financial settlement and resolve issues over any children before the divorce could be finalised.

While most family lawyers favour no-fault divorce in principle, many feel the act is too complicated, drawing out an already painful process. The government could introduce a bill of its own but has no plans to do so in the foreseeable future, because it would inevitably meet the same opposition in the House of Lords...

Report 2

Prenuptial Accords:Walking down the Aisle and Reading Fine Print

Judith Rehak

International Herald Tribune 1997

A prospective husband wanted to be sure that if his marriage didn´t work out, he could keep his treasured snowball collection, safely stored away in a freezer. A fiancée insisted on stipulating who would walk the dog. One man wanted the right to sue for divorce if his bride-to-be gained more than 15 pounds once she became his wife.

These are some of the wackier terms of prenuptial agreements. But make no mistake about it, what most of them are about is money – and how financial assets will be divided up if a couple divorces. And divorce with its attendant money problems is common in the United States and other economically developed countries, as the accompanying graphic illustrates.

Prenuptial agreements – or "prenups", as they are known in the American legal profession are designed to address these problems as they arise. Prenups are negotiated by lawyers for the prospective spouses, and signed before they walk down the aisle. They have been gaining in popularity in the United States since the early 1980s, when more states began passing laws that affected who gets what financial assets in a divorce. The laws are based either on "community property" (split evenly) or on "equitable distribution" (in New York state, whatever a judge thinks is "fair").

The celebrity prenups make the headlines: When Ivana and Donald Trump, the real estate mogul, parted ways, there were postnups to the prenup, forbidding Mrs. Trump to speak publicly about the marriage; lawyers for Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis contested the prenuptial agreement between her and Aristotle Onassis after his death, reportedly winning $26 million in an out-of-court settlement...

The News in Depth – General Comments

Many points can be raised from these two reports both about technical/legal/semi-formal registers and the distinctive features of British and American broadsheets. Though the following analysis will address only the main issues, there are, however, many other valuable points which might be discussed.

A **_Schemata_** – *Content schema :* Report 1 - Interaction between teacher and students will provide background information on British Family Law. In this way, students come

to know about the controversial, deeply unpopular, strongly debated Family Law Act 1996, and are told that Part II of the Act, though passed by Parliament, did not receive Royal assent.

Report 2 - Similarly, they learn about US marriage settlements or prenuptial agreements (prenups) signed by both parties, as well as the systems of "separate property"/"community property" existing in different countries concerning each spouse´s earnings .

Formal schema/Macrostructure: Text-types: newspaper reports. *Topics:* marriage – no-fault-divorce / prenuptial agreements – property distribution

Audience: Newspaper groups are well aware of their readers´ profiles.There are certain assumptions that people tend to make about newspaper readerships as in the case of the two broadsheets mentioned above. From a political point of view, the Guardian readers are expected to be left-wing, middle-class British citizens as well as Labour supporters; the International Herald Tribune, a US newspaper, is not aligned to any political party but appeals primarily to a pan-European readership[142], mainly business and middle-class people.

Register: Legal/business English

       Manner: Report 1 - formal

             Report 2 -   semi-formal

      Function: Report 1 – to inform

           Report 2 - to inform, persuade and entertain

Skimming: Who wrote the report? In what country did it originate? Does it answer the six "W" questions in the first few paragraphs? Does it include all the information we expect to find about the topic? If not, what is missing? Does a photo or illustration accompany the report? If so, what information does it provide? Does it help the reader understand the main point of the report?

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[142] The *Guardian* is a British national newspaper founded in 1821 in Manchester and regarded as one of the "quality papers".The *International Herald Tribune* is an international daily newspaper with an American background and house style, based in Paris and published by *The New York Times* in 180 countries. It was founded in 1887 and is known for its serious and thorough news items. (*Oxford Guide to British and American Culture.* J. Crowther (ed.) OUP 1999).

Scanning: Can we detect any slant or bias in the report; for example, in word choice or selection of facts? Does the information in the report differ in any way from what we heard on the radio, saw on television or read in another newspaper about the same event? If so, what do we think is the reason for the difference? Does the report deal with a controversial issue? If, so are the opposing points of view given equal space and objective presentation? Can we tell which side the journalist favors?

B **Microstructure:**

Style and techniques:

The formal tone of the Guardian´s headline helps to create a relationship with readers different from that of the other broadsheet. While, in structure, Report 1 uses for its headline a simple sentence to inform readers about the facts in a straightforward style, Report 2 indulges in a more conversational one by using two stock expressions to add colour to the headline and provide more impact on its readers: *Walking down the Aisle*(Getting married) – *Reading Fine Print* (The important details of an agreement which are usually printed in small type and are therefore easy to miss; here, the phrase *fine print* has been used by American reporters as it is typically American English, whilst *small print* would be considered British English). Despite this, it is important to recognize that Report 1 is not exclusively marked by the formality typically associated with broadsheets. Although using terms like *no-fault divorce,* it also uses verbs such as the more informal *drop.*

On the whole, the Guardian´s headline is less dominant than the other one and, in line with the paper´s house style, it does not use capitalisation.

Because of the need to get to the main points quickly to the browsing reader, Report 1 begins by packing these points into the first paragraph. Since the text is unaccompanied by a picture, it stands (or falls) by its opening statement: the introduction or *intr,* also known as the *news lead.*[143] The first sentence is the most difficult to write; it should focus exactly on what has happened, summing it up in no more than twenty words. The rest of the report will provide the necessary extra detail.

There is a technique known as the *dropped intro,* used by the International Herald Tribune, in which the key statement is delayed for the second paragraph and comes as a

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[143] "News Lead": term developed in Chapter v "From text awareness to macrostructure analysis".

punch line: *These are some of the wackier terms of prenuptial agreements.* However, the danger of delay is that many readers will not persevere far enough to ejoy it. Indeed, more time can be spent on the intro than on any other part of the report/article.

The *Guardian* also uses the typical inversion of the initial reporting clause: *...the Guardian has learned,* at the end of the first sentence. Having set the scene, the report then fulfils the criteria of a "running" story by providing a brief summary of events to date in paragraphs two and three. Journalists make the most of an ongoing story because they hope that once their readers are interested they will continue to buy the newspaper to keep updated with new findings. Indeed, tabloids will particularly sensationalise and dramatise stories to keep old readers and attract new ones.

Lexis:

In Report 2, the International Herald Tribune chooses the initial inductive structure to highlight the three examples of *a prospective husband, a fiancée* and *one man* and, thus, draw attention to some of the terms and conditions specified by different people in a prenup. The ironical connotations of the words chosen are interesting: by selecting the three people and providing the reasons which moved each one to act accordingly, the newspaper ensures that readers become aware, right from the start, of the humorous and absurd situations created by the signing of a premarital accord. The *Tribune* journalist aimed to create a more narrative, personal and informal style by using words and phrases such as: *to walk the dog, wackier, prenups, walk down the aisle...* and by addressing readers: *...but make no mistake about it,* as the background to a casual, story-like approach to the news. Besides, special mention is made of the *celebrity prenups* of the Trump and Onassis couples which helps further develop a sense of narrative.

Legal terms are used by both styles of paper: Report 2: *prospective spouses, financial assets, contested, out-of-court settlement...*Report 1 provides far more information and legal lexical items are more numerous: *to implement legislation, to bring into force, adultery, unreasonable behaviour, pilot study, amendments, to introduce a bill, House of Lords...*

Both reports make use of *punctuation marks*: Report 2 uses quotation marks *"community property", "equitable distribution", "fair"* and brackets to account for legal terms. The Guardian journalist, in turn, provides precise details concerning legal matters, such as *"information meetings", "moral majority", "quickie" divorces, period*

for" reflection and consideration" but no brackets, since the whole text is complete and self-explanatory. Still, the phrase: *as a "dog´s breakfast"* in Report 1, introduces not only _metaphorical language_ in the form of a simile but also an informal element that makes abstract issues more concrete (the resulting compromise is definitely a mess).

The _grammar_ of newspaper reports is said to vary quite markedly in relation to sentence structure. In order to retain readers´interest, writers favour a mixture of simple, compound and complex sentences. Though paragraphs in a tabloid paper are rarely more than three sentences long and can be no more than one sentence in length, broadsheets develop paragraphs more fully. All the same, reporters are advised to avoid cramming too many ideas into one sentence and not to exceed a maximum of thirty words per sentence.

On the whole, linguistic analysis has shown that the grammatical differences above-mentioned are not always clear-cut and that broadsheets now use features traditionally associated with tabloids. In short, it is a fact that journalists will try to adapt their approach to suit each report they write.

CHAPTER XIII

The Written Press (Part II)

Magazines: coping with "*Time*" and "*Newsweek*"

American magazines have until recently served in lieu of national newspapers, providing a popular culture in which all could participate and a national perspective on issues which might otherwise have been left to merely local interpretations. In a nation the size of the US, in both area and population, such cultural binding served an important role in the history of the people.
(McArthur, 1992)[144]

News discourse schemata

It has been argued in the previous chapters that many types of discourse have a conventional global schema and macrostructure. News discourse, as it appears in newspapers, television programmes or news weeklies, can also be assigned a conventional macrostructure.

As described in Chapter XII, one of the most obvious initial categories of news is that of *headlines*, followed by the *lead* that summarizes the text and serves as an introduction; next comes the *story* or *event* category placed within a *context* and described against some *background* with the overall function of providing the *explanation* with *consequences* and *reactions*. The text may also refer to *previous information* given about the same event (cued by phrases like *As we already reported yesterday / in an earlier edition* ..).Finally, there follows the *comments* category which is often flexibly used by the newspaper to give implicitly its own opinion about the events. Many linguists claim that news discourse is not just a description of some events, but a subjective reconstruction of events, or rather of several discourses (reports, international news agency communications, press conferences, etc.) about such events.

There are, of course, many local, national or international variations based on this schema. Thus, the ordering may be somewhat different; indeed, some categories – such as context and background - may be optional, and further categories may be given. For example, some newspapers will, perhaps as part of context or background, provide

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[144] McArthur, T. (ed.) (1992). Op.cit.

biographical sketches of newly introduced important persons (e.g., in a footnote). There are also variations in format among the different news media. Television news has its own format, as do ***weeklies***.

Weeklies, such as the American ***Time*** and ***Newsweek***, both in magazine format, do indeed, seem to have a slightly different news schema. In contrast to daily newspapers and television news, **weeklies do not report actual news.**

Instead, they provide articles with more context, background, consequences and perhaps *evaluations*, a category which in the newspaper is often reserved for the editorials, which are expressly separated from the news – following the ideology that "facts" and "opinion" are two different perspectives. Furthermore, because weeklies are read in a different way from newspapers, skimming is less important, so that leads will occur less often, or perhaps as part of special "boxes". Although first sentences may function partly as summarizing thematic sentences, they often just offer some striking detail (e.g., a description of an interesting situation, action or event, or the comment of some important politician to give some inside flavour to the article). Similarly, weekly articles have definite length more often than newspaper articles, hence, they usually have important information and draw conclusions at the end.

In addition, strategic comprehension of schematic categories often involves **top-down processing.** At this stage, college students are well acquainted with news schema and are aware of what meaningful magazine and quality newspaper reporting implies.

Another reason that would explain the fact that the categories above-mentioned do have some cognitive relevance and not only abstract structural reality, is the fact that several of them have direct communicative functions, such as the headline and the lead, whereas others have immediate processing function correlates: the previous information category activates situation models; context reminds of or constructs further new details for such a situation model so that the information about actual events may be understood; backgrounds may activate specific semantic memory frames or scripts. In other words, these categories are not arbitrary, but have communicative, social and cognitive relevance.

Accounting for American/British news magazines

Although some American **news and current affairs** magazines have been superseded by the competition of television and the Internet, many continue to have a wide international circulation, such as the popular weeklies *__Time, Newsweek__*, *US News and World Report* or *USA Today.* They all have colourful pictures, short news summaries and longer articles and include information dealing with business and/or economic affairs, the same as news about political, social and cultural matters.They also carry advertisements and some have a page of readers´letters commenting on articles from previous issues or asking for advice. Two leading and intellectually challenging British magazines are *The Economist* and *New Scientist.*The latter contains news and opinions about new developments in science and technology and their effects on society and the environment.

Some other widely read sister publications but with a more general-interest content include the American *National Geographic* (famous for its beautiful photographs and maps of different countries), *Reader´s Digest* (well-known for its collection of articles and popular short stories) and the highly illustrated *Life* which appear on a monthly basis. The American weekly magazine *The New Yorker* founded in 1925, although associated through its title and style with New York City, has a nationwide readership devoted to its cartoons, long essays, biographical studies, reports from abroad and short works of fiction. Although the older British magazine *Punch,* established in 1841 and famous for humorous political and social comment, has declined in prestige in recent years and lost readers to other magazines such as the satirical *Private Eye*, it now publishes an issue every two weeks.

Many Sunday newspapers have also incorporated these publications. When they first came out in the 1960´s, they were known as "colour supplements", but they are now promoted as magazines in their own right. In these cases and with increasingly sophisticated printing technology, the emphasis became pictorial rather than literary. Even some of them now devote more than 30% of their pages to consumer advertisements.

On the whole, for many readers, magazines have been and, to a certain extent still are, the most available and widely used form of continuing education, providing information about history, geography, literature, science and the arts, as well as guidance on child-rearing, financial management or gardening, among others. Besides, they are now increasingly available on the Internet, as well as some academic journals and most newspapers.

Exploring the style of "Time" and "Newsweek"

Some of the most easily-available sources of written English are American news magazines – *Time* and *Newsweek* in particular. Copies are available at newsagents throughout the world; they have an English-language circulation of several millions and have opened new markets with foreign-language editions, including Spanish and Portuguese for Latin America.[145] And they are not the only ones going global: *Reader´s Digest* publishes in many languages; *National Geographic* has not so long ago launched a French edition and translated Web sites for major publications.

The fact is that, more often than not, post-intermediate students of English feel tempted to buy an issue to catch up on world news and practise their English at the same time. On other occasions, they may be asked to use these magazines in the classroom to paraphrase headlines and account for figures of speech, explore the style and choice of specific words or explain unusual grammatical patterns, among others. Frequently, however, teachers realize that students´ original enthusiasm is dampened by a sudden awareness that they can hardly make head or tail of a large part of the magazines, despite being fairly competent, at this advanced stage, with other "real" texts they usually come up against.

Indeed, since articles from *Time* and *Newsweek* rank high in learners´ list of

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[145] Each week and since 1998, editors at *Time/Newsweek* select articles to be translated from the story list of the magazines´Latin-American editions which are then re-edited, due to the different size and format of the foreign publications. Care is taken to preserve the balance of topics characteristic of the magazines and to appeal to a broad range of readers with varied interests, including articles on business, discoveries in science, medicine and trends in culture, together with more traditional news stories.(R. Sprung. Crossing Cultures. In *Language International.* December 1999 pp. 22-25)

especially difficult written texts, teachers should try to anticipate such problems and, so, actively help them to cope with the specific language style. We are well aware that most students and even the general public usually find their style excessively up-to-date and a little bizarre; almost any issue will surely reveal new coinages that are not entered in ordinary dictionaries. Nonetheless, readers should all bear in mind that many of the features used by these American news magazines are also to be found – perhaps more straightforwardly and less unconventionally – in other "modern" texts from all parts of the English-speaking world.

These American news magazines employ teams of in-house writers, usually called senior editors, who re-write reporters´stories in a co-ordinated house style. The former are very likely to have university degrees in English, often from Ivy League universities.[146] The fact that all articles are re-written before publication partly explains how the magazines maintain their distinctive style - usually described as **dynamic** or **racy** (implying that it is lively, whimsical and unusual) **-** and preserve the "look-and-feel" in each issue.

Background to the magazines

Time magazine was founded by Henry R. Luce and Britton Haddon in 1923 and is published by *Time Inc.* which is part of *Time Warner,* a very large US media and entertainment company (headquarters New York) that sells magazines, films, television programmes and videos all over the world. The company also owns such magazines as *Fortune, Life* and *Sports Illustrated* and has created offices for its journalists around the world. People consider it a great honour to have their picture on the cover of the magazine, and as a special feature every year it chooses a man or woman of the year.[147]The format and style of *Time* has led to such rivals as *Newsweek* and many imitative glossy reviews and journals in many languages.

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[146] Ivy League universities have a reputation for high academic standards and social prestige and are connected with a group of eight traditional private universities in the eastern US, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia etc.

[147] *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture.* (1999). Op. cit.

Newsweek was first published in 1933 and is now owned by the American national newspaper *Washington Post.*

The language of these magazines has been variously referred to as ***Timespeak, Timese*** and ***Newspeak*** – simplified artificial languages based on English, as the one invented by George Orwell in 1949 and used in his novel "1984". Newspeak is, in fact, a rather sarcastic pun on the insiduous language of propaganda used by Orwell to meet the ideological needs of English socialism.

Although nowadays no one would seriously suggest that the magazines try to brainwash their readers, they have coined new words and expressions to the extent that, for example, a Newspeak word served as any part of speech. It had the capacity to "class-shift" or operate as more than one word class: the verb "think" did duty for the noun "thought"; affixes were common: "ungood", "goodwise"...; compounds were frequent: "doublethink", "crimethink", "Oldspeak"...

Similarly, the magazines have invented new constructions; for example, they are generally credited with the inversion of the initial reporting clause[148], also used in newspaper writing, as in:

Says one market analyst, "Buy now!"

Indeed, Newspeak has become a term in the language at large for misleading, often pejorative, political jargon, being the source of a large number of words modelled on it, such as:"nukespeak" (the language of nuclear weapons), "teenspeak" (the language of teens), etc.

Vocabulary choice and sentence construction

In their attempt to comprehend journalese, students may consider different areas that should be looked at more closely:

A)Vocabulary choice. A simple way of showing students the vocabulary spread is to ask them to sort out a number of words taken from an article, according to **register.**

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[148] Terms developed in Chapter XII "The Written Press. (Part I) Newspapers: headlines and reporting styles".

In an article about the Chiapas massacre, in Mexico[149], words and expressions such as "perennial reality", "outrageous", "lawlessness" and "microcosm" could easily be classed by students as belonging to a high register, whereas items such as: "to dump the new police chief", "cops"or "complaints have shot through the roof" clearly belong to a much lower, informal register. In fact, slang expressions are not disdained. Some examples that have been seen recently include "wacky"(funny), "churn out"(produce something quickly), "zero in on"(to aim guns at), "glitz(y)"(attractive), or "miffed"(slightly angry). These examples point to three further vocabulary traits: a mix of registers, neologisms and wordplay.

A **mix of registers** can also be seen in headlines as in: "Hell-driving Citizenry"(citizens who drive like mad)or "First-Class Philippic" (strong angry speech).

Neologisms – newly coined words and expressions – are common in *Time* and *Newsweek.* Some time ago, anything that had destructive qualities was described as a "buster" after the successful film *Ghostbusters.* The term "waste busters" was thus used to mean waste incinerators. Similarly, a familiar expression like "hi-tech" was the basis for invented terms such as "lo-tech" or "no-tech". Words such as "Colombianization", though capitalized and in quotes, in the same *Time* article mentioned above, is frequently used to mean international violence as that inspired by Colombia´s drug mafias and paramilitary gangs.

Neologisms also include recherché or borrowed terms like "bravura", "the floor has gone loco", "gringo investors" or "the trading fiesta" with reference to the stock market frenzy in Latin America 1992.[150] We frequently see that when reporting on situations abroad writers use these foreign borrowings to give magazines a touch of local colour. Some other features are also common: blends such as "shopaholic", compounds as "sweetspeak" or the derivative "hippiedom".

Wordplay in headlines offers students a special challenge as well having no transfer option in their native language. Though rarely reaching the levels of British/American tabloids, it still causes problems to the uninitiated. Indeed, many publications have separate headline writers, and for good reason. The best ones are masters of allusion and puns – crossword aficionados with a poetic touch.

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[149] *Time.* January 12, 1998 ("Law and Disorder") p. 14.
[150] *Newsweek.* August 3, 1992 ("Market Mania") pp. 36-37.

Wordplay based on well-known books or popular film titles are particularly common; a recent issue included the headline "Paradise Ignored"[151] informing tourists about the largely neglected coastal beauties of Montenegro in the Balkans, and after John Milton´s famous 17th.c. long poems *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained.* In the same issue, the headline "Of Gods & Games"describing the splendor of the Athens Olympics 2004, makes reference to *Of Mice and Men*, written by John Steinbeck. Similarly, some years ago, the film title *Fatal Attraction* was used in an adapted form and exploited in a feature on European road safety, entitled "A New Summer of Fatal Traction".[152] The headline *War of the rose lands gardener in court for border attack,* concerning an over-keen gardener in dispute with a woman neighbour over his rights to grow a rose, points directly to the film *The War of the Roses* and to extreme competition between sexes.[153]

Alliteration is another typical feature of headlines, as in "Meet Me at the Marktplatz" (in an article about Switzerland´s second city, Basel) or "Trouble at the Trib" (describing the International Herald Tribune´s 2002 handover to a single owner: The New York Times).[154]

It is also worth stressing that other lexical areas are to be found in these magazines, such as **specialised** or **buzz-words** (specialist or technical words or phrases that have become fashionable and popular) which immediately give the reader the impression that the writer is an expert on the topic and, therefore, a reliable source of information. In an article about near misses in the air, we find such technical terms as "in-flight safety", "air-traffic density", "tightly-spaced flight operations", and so on.

Literary borrowings are an unusual feature in journalism and can perhaps be explained by the fact that so many senior editors have English (literature) degrees. We find poetic words, such as "balmy"(warm and pleasant), "eschew"(to deliberately avoid or keep away from something) or "sylvan" (belonging to the forest). Old-fashioned

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[151] *Newsweek.* August 23, 2004. ("The Tip Sheet") p. 50.

[152] *Time.* August 15, 1988. ("A New Summer of Fatal Traction").

[153] The *Wars of the Roses* was the name given to the British wars in the 15th c. between the House of Lancaster, whose symbol was a red rose, and the House of York, whose symbol was a white rose.

[154] *Time.* November 4, 2002. ("Meet Me at the Marktplatz") p. 18.

   Time. Ibid. ("Trouble at the Trib") p.67

vocabulary might also be used: "amid" or "divest", and we may even come across true or invented archaisms, such as "atop", "aflight" or "betwixt".

Shortened or **abbreviated** word forms may also be complex and not fully understood by students, as in:

Cable channel "E" has hit the Web to offer reviews, daily news updates and star bios. Our fave: the " Melrose Place"chart... ("bios": biographies; "fave": favourite).[155]

How can "Time" and "Newsweek" readers cope with problematic vocabulary?

We know that students are likely to be put off reading any more articles when they realize the wealth of vocabulary to be faced, but there are one or two shortcuts to understanding that they are worth pointing out. It should also be stressed that few native readers will fully grasp the meaning of the less common words they come across and some may even be completely new. Writers are probably quite aware of this too and very often, the unusual or "whimsical" vocabulary items are not essential to understand the basic meaning, which may be even inferred from context.

Indeed, intelligent guesswork is an important skill in language learning, in any context. Learners can draw inferences, put forward hypotheses and use their ability to work out and decode unknown lexicon from context. The best strategy is to **brainstorm** aloud similar word/verb collocations or, simply, collect ideas as close as possible to the original word or phrase. This technique[156] involves thinking quickly and without inhibition in order to generate lexical items and grammatical patterns in a kind of guessing game that relies basically on the students´general knowledge. Brainstorming is best conducted in a group; therefore, it both benefits from and contributes to a cooperative approach to learning.

Another particularly important way of assisting with the more problematic vocabulary – especially with words from different registers – is to point out how magazine articles frequently resort to using synonyms for a concept that is repeated throughout a story. For example, in an article about exchange rates, the dollar was referred to a number of times in the first paragraph variously as "superdollar", "greenback", "buck" and "U.S. currency", as well as dollar, of course. Similarly, in a

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[155] *Newsweek.* August 19, 1996. ("Cyberscope-Online") p.4.
[156] "Brainstorming". Term developed in Chapter VIII "The study guide in action: scientific/technical English".

Newsweek article about a group of common American citizens forming special courts of their own to try their cases and settle disputes with the local governments, such courts were subsequently described in different paragraphs as being "do-it-yourself courts", "bogus courts", "rump courts", "Common Law courts" and "kangaroo courts".[157] By making students aware of this process, certain terms which may be new to them can be understood fairly easily – again with a bit of intelligent guesswork.

B) <u>Sentence construction.</u> Whenever there is an **ambiguous or obscure sentence**, the same as with incomprehensible vocabulary, the best thing is to paraphrase the segment involved, thus serving as text amplification or further explanation.

Another interesting feature that students may notice is the way that the **subject** is very often **delayed.** As above-mentioned, in many articles, some of the sentences do not start with the main subject and this is because *Time* and *Newsweek* do seem to inflate this feature, often delaying the subject by a number of lines. Here is a typical example of what is also known as a "periodic sentence" - the not-so-common device but well-constructed sentence used in English writing for the purpose of adding suspense and achieving emphasis:

After a week of making dark threats against the BBC for (the nerve of it) granting Diana an interview without seeking permission from the royal household, and after seeing which way the wind was blowing, the palace [Buckingham] *did a smart 180.[158]*

Checking that students have understood what the main subject is, which verb refers to it and how the rest of the sentence relates to these basic elements, will certainly aid comprehension. Advanced learners can be asked to mimic the style by combining a number of very short sentences – a very useful piece of writing practice indeed.

Connected with this feature we can also mention **word combinations** often leading to strings of adjectives and clusters of attributive nouns which serve as extra information and are used to qualify the main noun or headword in the NP (noun phrase).

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[157] *Newsweek.* September 25, 1995. ("A Law of Their Own") p. 18
[158] *Newsweek.* December 4, 1998. ("I won´t go quietly").

This is a style that began in *Time* as early as the 1920´s with the aim of providing not only impact and colour but also of giving as much information in as short a space as possible.

In fact, Timespeak shares this feature with most newspapers and news magazines though it has taken it to extremes either to <u>pre-</u> or <u>post-modify</u> them, as in:

<u>Pre-modification</u>

The daughter of a well-off Salisbury, N. C., wholesale florist, Elizabeth – nicknamed Liddy...(with reference to Mrs. Dole, wife of the candidate to the American presidency).[159]

<u>Post-modification</u>

*The example of Anne, a 40-year-old loving wife and mother of three, prosperous and well-adjusted, steering her 2 1/2-ton black Chevy Suburban out of her driveway on a leafy street in residential Washington...[160]*This illustration also shows another typical feature: the use of hyphenated compounds used as adjectives ("40-year-old", "well-adjusted", "2 ½-ton") though, sometimes, reasonable limits to such constructions are ignored.

Additionally, *Time* and *Newsweek* in-house writers, particularly the latter, seem to have an enthusiasm for **love of sound** in language. If we were talking about literature, we could use terms such as alliteration or assonance, but here it is more simply a question of using sound for a playful effect:

Now caffeine-free and fit, Dani says it´s fun so far. (about helping a woman – Dani – change her eating habits).[161]

The program is loaded with 3,ooo standardized questions and follow-ups; it also offers diagnoses for such problems as substance abuse, schizophrenia and eating disorders. (about teens who take computerized interviews when they feel depressed).[162]

Another feature that cannot be ignored is the use of emphatic devices such as **parallel construction (parallelism)** to attract readers´attention, as in:

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[159] *Newsweek.* August 19, 1996. ("The Woman behind the Unwavering Smile"9.
[160] *Time.* January 12, 1998. ("Road Rage").p. 32
[161] *Time.* April 19, 1999. Time Digital ("Living healthier on the Net") p. 6
[162] *Time.* Ibid. ("Dialing for Depression") p. 4

Life inside the province continues to be hellish, and the view from the outside suggests it may get worse. (about the Kosovo crisis).[163]

        Finally, we may tell our students to spot and explain different **figures of speech**, such as personification, similes and metaphors, especially very striking figures:

Personification:

Beijing recently issued directives to local authorities, but they were confusing at best.[164]

The microphone soon picked up an argument between Rabei and another man, Mahmoud, who lived in the same place...[165]

Similes:

[British architect Sir Norman Foster] *designed for Bilbao in northern Spain: hoods of glass, like segments of a nautilus shell ribbed with stainless steel that curve downward and carry the eye to the spaces underneath...*[166]

Doing it could be regarded as a valuable experiment, with Mars as a giant lab or university, in which we learn how to steward a plane´s biosphere for long-term sustainability.[167]

Metaphors:

Eclipsing distance – not to mention centuries of history – Eurostar has made Paris a virtual suburb of London.[168]

The sanitized headquarters in Ankara resemble an insurance office more than a den of fundamentalism.[169]

Conclusion A number of techniques to help students cope with the language of American news magazines have already been suggested. "Attacking" an article with different-coloured highlighting pens or various signs and symbols to indicate register, delayed subjects, literary figures and so on is a stimulating and slightly unusual exercise ideal for pairwork or groupwork. More advanced students could also be encouraged to carry out more complex analytical work and even to try to mimic the dynamic style, or

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[163] *Time.* Ibid. ("As Kosovo Burns") p. 20
[164] *Newsweek.* August 23, 2004. ("Voice of the People") p. 22
[165] *Newsweek.* Ibid. ("Racism´s Rising Tide") p. 18
[166] *Time.* April 19, 1999. ("Lifting the Spirit") p. 46
[167] *Newsweek.* September 30, 1996. ("A Colony in the Sky") p. 59
[168] *Newsweek.* August 23, 2004. ("Cross-Chunnel Fusion") p. 19
[169] *Time.* November 4, 2002. ("Turkey on the Spot") p. 54

viceversa, rewrite extracts in a more standard or neutral register. Whatever, an awareness of the stylistic features can lead to a greater confidence with the language, a demystification of the difficulties and, most certainly, to <u>improved comprehension</u>.

Using a checklist to identify key features in newspapers and magazines

The following checklist can be used as a guide and adapted to take account of the specific context, intended audience and purpose in the given discourse:

Register

1   What if the **mode**? – written

2   What is the **manner**? – the relationship between the participants (journalist and reader): formal or informal, ideology, function (to inform, persuade, entertain...)?

3   What is the **field**? – the subject matter and the journalist´s approach to it will govern the particular kind of newspaper or magazine language used.

Lexis

Headlines

1   What is noticeable about the **style**? – simple, easily readable, appropriate, impact created?

2   Are there any **clichés** or **coinages**?

3   What are the **connotations** of words chosen?

4   What kinds of **modifiers** are used?

5   What **point of view** or **ideology** is conveyed?

Reports / Articles

1   Are the words chosen **formal** or **informal**?

2   Are the **modifiers** used to express precise detail or for making the text emotive or sensational?

3   How are the **participants** named? – use of titles, use of Christian names or surnames? use of abbreviated, familiar names?

4   What are the **connotations** of words? - nouns: description of people and things and the associations that will be picked up by readers? verbs: description of actions and processes and the associations that will be picked up by readers?

5   What kind of **adverbials** are used? – time, place, manner?

Grammar

Headlines

1   What is the **structure**? – noun phrase? simple/compound/complex sentence?

2   Do the **straplines, subheadings** or **tag-lines** explain or qualify the main headline?

3   Is the **passive voice** used?

4   Is there **ambiguity**? – intentional, to create humorous tone or unintendedl?

Reports / Articles

1   Is the **sentence structure** varied? – simple/compound/complex? variety?

2   Is the **passive voice** used with or without an agent?

3   Is there **direct speech**? – ordinary or authoritative speaker? formal or informal tone? adding weight to argument or giving ordinary people´s views? variation in pace?

4   Is there **indirect speech**? – summary of formal speech? paraphrase to make speaker´s response more fluent?

Figurative language and **rhetorical devices**

1   Do any **figures of speech/images** help to establish a narrative atmosphere make the text more dramatic? make abstract issues more concrete?

2   Is there **repetition**? – emphasis on key words/phrases/clauses, making headlines and articles more dramatic or notable?

3   Is there **parallelism**? – to contrast or emphasize points?

4   Are there any **puns**? – used to attract readers´ attention? Ironic, clever, colloquial?

Sources

1   Are there **official** sources giving authority to evidence? – police, emergency services, courts, investigating bodies, the government?

2   Are there any **unofficial** sources allowing ordinary people to have a voice?

Typographical features

1   Is there **variation in print size** to draw readers into the text?

2   Does **capitalization** attract readers?

3   Is **colour** used, drawing on wider symbolic associations to enhance meaning?

4   Do **images, insets, charts** or **maps** dramatise or support the main text?

(Adapted from S. Thorne, 1997)[170]

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[170] Thorne, S. (1997). Op. cit.

CHAPTER XIV

The legal register

On the whole it seems that people all over the world are becoming more and more accustomed to using legal means to regulate their relations with each other... And at a time when workers, refugees, commodities and environmental pollution are travelling around the world faster than ever before, there are increasing attempts to internationalize legal standards.

(Powell, 1993: 6)[171]

The nature of legal language

The language of law is the register of the legal profession. The term legal English covers the formulas and styles of both courts of law (Civil and Criminal) in all English-speaking countries and is used to regulate society by establishing obligations that must be fulfilled ensuring that rights are granted. Although legal discourse can be difficult to understand, we all come into contact with it on a regular basis.

In England, from the Norman Conquest in 1066 to the later 14[th]c., the language of the law was not English but French and Latin, and both have left their mark on the English which succeeded them, as in the French terms: "parole" (conditional release of a prisoner from jail before completion of his/her sentence), "in lieu of" (instead/in place of), "lien" (legal claim on someone´s property to secure the payment of debt); or in the Latin expressions: "habeas corpus" (writ requiring that someone be brought before a judge or court), "inter alia" (among other things), "pendente lite" (pending litigation), "bona fide" (acting in good faith), etc.

Functions

The main function of legal language is **referential** and/or **descriptive** – it conveys factual information. Statutes dictate what is and what is not acceptable behaviour in society; contracts are made with insurance companies; wills are drawn up. The spoken language of the courts is portrayed on television in the numerous courtroom dramas and in live trial coverage such as that in 1995 of the O. J. Simpson murder trial

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[171] Powell, R. (1993). *Law Today.* England. Longman Group UK Limited. p. 6

in America, which was broadcast on British television. Its subordinate functions are **conative** (persuasive) and **metalinguistic** (discussing language itself). It is always **formal,** whether it is written or spoken, although a meeting between solicitor[172] and client will be less formal than cross-questioning in court.

Legal discourse is a highly specialized use of language requiring a special set of habits. ESP readers, and above all law students, are required to demonstrate careful understanding of and familiarity with the subject, similar texts and models; that is to say, the same kind of instruments and documents. In other words, the style of traditional legal language is fairly **predictable**; we just have to review some legal writing in a law firm in, for instance, Philadelphia and it will likely resemble that found in a trial brief in Orlando. They share the same grammatical structures and lexical items.

Therefore, because the same kinds of legal transactions occur regularly, linguistic formulas have been developed. This means that legal discourse is **not spontaneous** – it is quite unlike informal speech with its irregular patterns, and also quite different from the language of literature with its personal, often idiosyncratic approach. Instead, it draws on structures that have been pre-defined and pre-tested, uses language that is difficult to decode and familiar only to the experts in the field

This disctinctive style which is essentially formal, conservative, syntactically complex and often archaic, with obscure expressions that hardly occur in the language at large, is also known as **<u>legalese,</u>** a pejorative term for language or jargon that is typical of lawyers or that contains too much legal terminology. In other words, it is a style of writing and speaking that, more often than not, intimidates the reader.

However, when we hear phrases such as:

I swear by Almighty God to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth...(when a witness takes an oath before testifying, as a solemn appeal to God in attestation of the truth of his/her statement(s).

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[172] In the UK, "solicitors" are lawyers who have joined the Law Society after passing its examinations. They brief cases for barristers and take part in other legal activities but, though things are changing in the UK, they can argue cases only in lower courts. "Barristers" must pass the Bar examination and have the privilege to appear and speak in court on behalf of their clients. In the American system, "attorneys" represent people, prepare cases and present and argue them in court.

You may approach the bench (commonly, when counsel stands near the judge in a court of law to discuss questions of evidence out of hearing of jury)

... we can easily recognize the linguistic features even if we are not part of the profession. Nonetheless, most of the times, legalese constitutes a strange and incomprehensible variety of language. Besides, this is not just a feature of English-speaking lawyers; people all over the world complain that they cannot understand court proceedings or legal documents.

Examples of legalese: Lack of clarity in the use of a lengthy sentence containing obscure words, repetitions and awkward constructions/clauses which limit the original statement and render it unnecessarily complex

Although the will itself was silent (did not state, mention...) *as to who would take* (inherit, benefit) *if the son predeceased the mother, she not having at the time of the son´s death remarried, and the son leaving issue* (descendants) *at his death, which event occurred, this omission by itself, in the will only, cannot aid the son and defeat the testator´s clear intention the the son should take only in the event he survived the death or remarriage of his mother...*

The complexity of this specialized style is particularly apparent in the **written language of the law.** Indeed, legal texts have frequently been criticized by the lay public, on the ground that most of the language in them is not straightforward and "could be simplified without loss" (Crystal, 1998)[173]; they claim that it constitutes a barrier, rather than a bridge, to comprehension and communication.

This point is often made by some lawyers who, in recent years, have tried to make their profession less mysterious. After all, they restate that their job is supposed to clarify matters for the public, not to make them more complicated. This is particularly seen in the efforts of campaigners for **plain English** [174] who argue that the style cries

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[173] Crystal, D. (1997). Op. Cit. p. 386
[174] "Plain English Campaign" is a grassroots movement, founded by Liverpool-born Chrissie Maher in the 1970´s, aiming at simplifying the use of English for complex and jargon-filled documents.

out for change so as to make it more comprehensible to ordinary people and more practical for lawyers themselves (Bulleraich, 2001).[175]

Conversely, some others fear that if changes were made, new simplified language structures could create legal loopholes. These professionals cling to traditional ways of expression. Writing simply, they say, is the same as thinking simply and instead, the legal subject matter is complex and abstract. Besides, as legal doctrines are multifaceted, writing about the law must be hard; thus, if the message is tough, so too must be its medium.

However, in the last decades, Plain English campaigners have sought simpler contracts and, in some cases, "translations" of difficult usage (not exactly translations into the foreign language but paraphrasing into English), so that the public can grasp the meaning and intent of documents couched in vague legal terms. In 1983, an English court ordered a law firm to pay 93,000 pounds damages for unintentionally misleading a client by using "obscure" legal language in a letter of advice (Mc Arthur, 1992).[176]The court held that if clients/readers must strain to figure out highly complex sentences, replete with clauses, and clauses within clauses, they will have little mental energy left over to deal with the message itself.

Furthermore, many of the great legal writers of our time have added that their readers should pause only to think about substance, and not fight their way through the fog of legalistic style.They see that certain grammatical constructions actually hinder communication; certain types of words or deep-rooted legalisms get in the way of the message. Linguists, such as H. Morgan (2003)[177], conclude that "If you put plain English principles into practice, you find your work strikes a chord among grateful customers. The law belongs to all of us: we should not have to go to a lawyer to have it explained".

Examples:

A) Breach of contract

[175] Bulleraich, G. (2001). Mastering the Legal Register through Reading Comprehension Exercises. In *Tercer Congreso Latinoamericano de Traducción e Interpretación. "De Babel a Internet"*. Abril 23-25. Tomo I. Buenos Aires. Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. pp. 321-334.
[176] Mc Arthur, T. (ed.) (1992). Op. cit.
[177] Morgan, H. (2003). Plain English is good news. In *ITI Bulletin.(Institute of Translation and Interpreting)* March-April pp. 22-23.

Pursuant to the terms of such contract hereinafter, in the event of a continuation of this breach, my client will hereby effect an immediate termination of said contract.

The long-winded legalese sentence above could change to:

If the breach continues, my client will terminate the contract.

As clients prefer it, in many modern law firms around the English speaking world today, there is an increasing tendency to move away from legalese and apply the principles of Plain English: **precision, conciseness, accuracy, simplicity and clarity** to the lawyers´writing. Likewise, clients/readers propose the following rules:

- avoid long "legalese" sentences

- bring subject to front of sentence and use active voice

- avoid excessive use of compound constructions

- use personal pronouns to appeal to readers

- prefer the present tense and only use "shall" for obligation, never for future action

- avoid negatives, as they force the reader to think twice

- prefer simple words of Anglo-Saxon origin rather than Latin words

- avoid archaic lexis (hereinafter, hereby)

- use punctuation correctly, as even a comma can change the meaning...

(Adapted from Richardson, 2004)[178]

B) The first excerpt below is part of a <u>traditional agreement</u>, the second the same material recast in <u>"plain"language:</u>

The original, duplicate and triplicate copies of the enclosed agreement should be signed and dated, as indicated, with the corporate name, followed by the signature of an authorized corporate officer or an authorized representative. After it has been executed in triplicate, the original and copies of this agreement must be returned to this office within thirty days. If the signed original and copies of the agreement are not received by this office within thirty days, it will be assumed that you no longer desire to enter into a closing agreement and our files with respect to <u>this matter</u> will be closed without further action.

Please sign and date the original and the two copies of the enclosed agreement. You should use the corporate name and follow it with the signature of an authorized corporate officer or authorized representative. After signing the agreement and the copies, please return them to this office within thirty days. If we do not receive them within that time, we will assume that you no longer want to enter into a closing agreement and, accordingly, will close our files on<u> this matter</u> without further action.

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[178] Richardson, J. (2004). Plain English Writing Workshop. In *Share, e-magazine* N° 127 (May 15th) http://www.ShareEducation.com.ar

Advanced ESP students who have had previous contact with legal material related to this branch of the law (Contract Law), know that an "agreement" is essential to any contract. In fact, the word is often used as synonymous with "contract"(Clarkson et al., 2003)[179], but the former is a broader term and does not necessarily have to be in writing. Both parties, however, must manifest their assent to the same bargain. They also know that, once an agreement is reached, if the other elements of a contract are present (consideration, capacity and legality), a valid contract is formed thus creating rights and duties between the parties.

Next, students soon come to realize that the writer referred to "this matter" in both texts and at the very end, and that the term probably describes an agreement between two or more shareholders (there is reference to a "corporate name" and "officer"); or maybe, two companies. They also recognize that the original passage appeared exclusively in the passive voice; in the rewritten text, the writer used the **active voice**. He also wanted to avoid words like "triplicate" and "execute" and to use instead **simpler words** like "two copies" and "sign". He introduced **linking words** such as "please" and "accordingly" making the passage more subjective and condescending towards the reader. He avoided the repetition of "original and copies" (3 times) and "agreement" (4 times) by using, instead, the **pronoun "them".**

Furthermore, he reduced the passage from 104 words to **85 words.** The average **sentence length** dropped from 35 to **21.** (The ideal average, for some unknown reason, is 25 words per sentence). Indeed, study after study has shown that as average sentence length goes up, reader comprehension goes down and that wordiness signifies a host of problems. Learners are also aware that the number of **polyssyllabic words** dropped from 44 to **31**. We know that attorneys must necessarily deal with abstractions, but long words are often highly abstract and hinder precision in legal writing. Instead, **concrete words** create more vivid images.

Finally, the writer trashed the compound preposition "with respect to" and used instead the **simple preposition "on".** The fact is that legal writing ignores simple, powerful prepositions like "on" and "of". It prefers fluffy ones like "with regard to", "in connection with", "for the purposes of", "with respect to"...

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[179] Clarkson, K., LeRoy, R., Jentz, G., Cross, F. (2003). *West´s Business Law*. 9[th]ed. US. South-Western.

In favour of legalese: Many of the great legal writers of our time have concluded that

> *legalese will survive for a long time to come*

Indeed, they claim that using technical terminology is, to a large extent, inevitable in view of the specificity of the subject matter.

One reason for this is that old documents and reports of old cases have great importance in law, particularly in **common law** systems, in which legal decisions are based upon decisions in previous similar cases – doctrine of precedent - and on custom, rather than on detailed written laws. It is sometimes called "case law" and originally developed in England.

Another reason is that rewriting laws is a slow and painstaking process. The words must try to cover every eventuality, because people are always looking for a legal loophole – a way of avoiding a legal duty by making use of an ambiguity or an omission in law. Consequently, if there is an existing law which has worked for a long time, even a law which contains old language inlong and complex sentences, it is easier to retain the old law than write a new one. Even when a government draws up a new law it is often guided by the wording of an older law.

However, the main reason that legalese still survives lies in the **<u>nature</u>** of law itself. As we know, laws are attempts to implement justice, government policy or just plain common sense. In order to be effective they must be as unambiguous as possible. We also know that everyday language is often very ambiguous; indeed, this does not matter if we are dealing with familiar situations or talking to people we know. The law, however, has to regulate relations between people who neither know nor trust each other and who are in unfamiliar situations. Therefore, it is an unfortunate necessity that this sometimes requires complex language which has to be explained by experts.

Legislative discourse. Typical characteristics of legal discourse, especially legislative provisions, have been adequately documented in several studies, particularly those

conducted by Maley (1994)[180] and White (1982)[181]. The latter points out that one of the most problematic features of legal discourse is that it is "invisible". He claims,

the most serious obstacles to comprehensibility are not the vocabulary and sentence structure employed in law, but the unstated conventions by which language operates.

What he means here is that there are expectations about the way in which language operates in legal contexts, though these expectations are never explicitly stated anywhere but in <u>legal culture,</u> and are simply assumed by the linguistic surface in such contexts. When reading, in addition to the use of a high degree of <u>nominalisation</u>, one confronts at the surface level a typical use of qualifications to express <u>complex contingencies.</u> Therefore, in order to make legislative statements not only <u>simple, clear</u> and <u>unambiguous</u> but <u>all-inclusive</u> also, these qualifications are inserted at various points in the syntax of legislative sentences where they introduce <u>syntactic discontinuities</u> which become formidable obstacles to an effective processing of the text. They also tend to introduce excessive <u>information load</u> at various points in the syntax of such statements, thus creating barriers to effective understanding of the given text.

At this stage, learners are introduced to the notions of **easification for the specialist audience** and **simplification for the lay audience**, which serve two different communicative purposes and are meant for two different audiences.

As illustrated in Bhatia (1994)[182], easification is the process of making a professional text more accessible to the learner or intended readership by using a variety of devices to guide the reader, without making drastic changes to the original content of the text. These easification procedures make the text **easier** by reducing the information load at various points in the syntax while preserving the generic integrity of the original. Simplification procedures, on the other hand, create alternative textualizations meant for a lay audience.

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[180] Maley, Y. (1994). The language of the law. In John Gibbons (ed.), *Language and the Law.* London: Longman, pp. 11-50.
[181] White, J. B. (1982). The invisible discourse of law: reflections on legal literacy and general education. In *Michigan Quarterly Review,* 420-38.
[182] Bhatia, V. K. (1994). Generic integrity in professional discourse. In Britt-Louise Gunnarsson et al (eds), *Text and Talk in Professional Contexts,* Uppsala, Sweden. ASLA: 6.

Students may use the following extract from a publisher´s contract to see this better and then complete the tasks given at the end:

Original Version

The author hereby warrants to the Publishers that the author has the right and power to make this Agreement and that the Work is the Author´s own original work, except for material in the public domain and such excerpts from other works as may be included with the written permission of the copyright owners, and will in no way whatever give rise to a violation of any existing Copyright, or a breach of any existing agreement, and that the Work contains nothing defamatory or libelous and that all statements contained therein purporting to be facts are true and that nothing in the Work is liable to give rise to a criminal prosecution or to a civil action for damages or any other remedy and the author will indemnify the Publishers against any loss, injury or expense arising out of any breach or alleged breach of this warranty...

A provision like this one, selected from an agreement between publishers and author, could be relevant to a number of professionals in industrial, management and bureaucratic institutions, who though not legal experts, are nevertheless required to be able to read, understand, interpret and sometimes translate and write legal documents as part of their daily professional activities. To be able to handle such statements, especially legal rules and regulations, legal agreeements and contracts, they may need to be trained in the use of the language in typical legal settings and, frequently, be able to explain ordinances or legislative acts to their superiors or members of the general public.

Assuming that learners are adequately equipped with linguistic competence in everyday use of the English language, they still need to be given enough background information about the contexts in which legislative rules as the preceding one are drafted, interpreted and used. In the example provided above, students should be acquainted with the ESP areas of Contract Law and Intellectual Property Law, particularly Copyright Law.

Tasks

- I- Considering the communicative purpose of this text to be to regulate the future legal relationship between Publishers and Author, write an easier version of the original text meant for the specialist audience and discuss its implications.

Easified Student Version

The author hereby warrants to the Publishers that
a) the author has the right and power to make this Agreement, and

b) *the Work is the Author´s own original work, except for material in the public domain and such excerpts from other works as may be included with the written permission of the copyright owners, and will in no way whatever give rise to a violation of any existing Copyright, or a breach of any existing agreement, and*
c) *the Work contains nothing defamatory or libellous, and*
d) *all statements contained therein purporting to be facts are true and,*
e) *nothing in the Work is liable to give rise to a criminal prosecution or to a civil action for damages or any other remedy, and*
f) *the author will indemnify the Publishers against any loss, injury or expense arising out of any breach or alleged breach of this warranty.*

Here, the simple change in format helps the students find the hierarchy of ideas in the text.

- II- How would you <u>simplify</u> this provision/clause for a <u>non-specialist audience</u> who simply would like to be informed about its content?

Simplified Student Version

- *The author declares that the work is author´s own original work.*
- *Wherever the author has included extracts from other sources with the permission of the copyright owners, they do not violate any existing agreement.*
- *The work does not contain anything defamatory, libellous or factually untrue.*
- *The work will not give rise to any criminal prosecution or civil action for damages.*
- *It it does any of these things, the author will be responsible for making good andy losses to the publisher.*

A quick comparison of the three versions proves the **self-confidence** the learner may gain in handling the complexities of legal discourse and the extent to which he may become sensitive to the specific demands imposed on informed readership of such documents. It also indicates the **internalization and use,** among other things, of the **abilities and strategies** typically used in the construction and interpretation of the legal register/genre and culture. Similar work may also be carried out in the use of legal cases and judgments, an approach that will establish, once again, the importance of **generic integrity in ESP work,** on the one hand, and that of **generic creativity,** on the other.

Finally, the main advantage of an ESP approach of this type is that the learner **does not learn English in isolation from specialist contexts**, but is encouraged to make the relevant connection between the use of language on the one hand, and the purpose of communication on the other.

Features of written legal language. Students attending an ESP course of this type will enhance their comprehension skills by resorting to <u>additional illustrations</u> of the same

characteristics as above quoted. They will thus explore those lexical, structural and stylistic items and devices that normally occur and "recur" in present-day legal English texts.Teachers, in turn, will provide the tools for adequate comprehension of such technical texts and suggest alternatives for a clearer and less complicated expression, while not detracting from accuracy or meaning.

Material chosen for textual analysis as classroom activities will include (apart from contracts), any of the following written instruments: statutes, wills, deeds, decrees, certificates, bonds, leases, among others.

Wills

I, JONATHAN MOORES, of 123 Wood Lane, Newton, HEREBY REVOKE all Wills and testamentary documents heretofore made by me AND DECLARE this to be my LAST WILL and TESTAMENT.

1. I DESIRE my body to be donated to medical science.

2. I APPOINT my wife *Alice Moores* (hereinafter called "my wife") to be my sole executrix of this my will but if the foregoing appointment shall fail for any reason then I appoint my children *Edward Moores* of 456 Smithfield Road, Newton and *Louise Moores* of 789 Church Street, Newton (herinafter together called "my trustees" which expression where the context admits shall include the trustees or trustee hereof for the time being) to be the executors and trustees of this my will.

3. I DEVISE and BEQUEATH to my wife all my real and personal property whatsoever and wheresoever for her own use and benefit absolutely if she shall survive me by thirty days but if she does not survive me by the thirty days then

4. I DEVISE and BEQUEATH all my real and personal property whatsoever and wheresoever unto my trustees UPON TRUST that my trustees shall sell call in and convert into money the same and shall therefore pay my funeral and testamentary expenses and debts and inheritance tax due and shall stand possessed of the residue of such moneys (hereinafter called "my residuary estate") UPON TRUST for my children *Edward Moores* and *Louise Moores* in equal shares absolutely PROVIDED ALWAYS that if any shall have predeceased me leaving a child or children who attain the age of 18 years such child or children shall stand in place of such deceased and shall take by substitution and equally between them if more than one the share of my residuary estate which such a deceased child of mine would have taken if he or she had survived me.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I the said *Jonathan Moores* the Testator have to this my LAST WILL set my hand this twenty-first day of May One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Five.

....
(signature)

SIGNED AND ACKNOWLEDGED by the above-named *Jonathan Moores* the Testator as and for his LAST WILL in the presence of us both present at the same time who at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses:

....
(signature)   (signature)

General Comments

A **_Schemata_** – *Content schema:* Background information: According to *Black´s Law Dictionary* (Black, 1990)[183], a will is "an instrument by which a person makes a disposition of his real and personal property, to be performed or take effect after his death". It must be a written document (exceptions: "nuncupative" wills of soldiers, sailors...) and must be signed at the foot or end. Two or more witnesses must authenticate the signature of the "testator".

Learners are first asked to skim and scan the sample will which, though simple and succinct, is still legally binding.

Formal schema/Macrostructure: *Text-type:* legal document. *Topic:* British Law of Succession. *Audience:* ESP students, translators, teachers, law students, lawyers, legal experts... *Register:* legal English.

B **_Microstructure_**: *Style:* formal; the relationship between writer and addressee is also official despite the fact that the participants are well known to each other. There are no contractions for negatives or auxiliary verbs in written documents as this one. Formulaic utterances like IN WITNESS WHEREOF add to the ceremonial tone.

Typography and *layout:* the typographical features are typical of a modern will: each point is clearly numbered; capitalization is used to highlight key lexical items (DEVISE, BEQUEATH). Certain expressions are often used conventionally in block capitals not only in wills but also in powers of attorney, certifications, contractual agreements and many other documents (HEREBY REVOKE, I DECLARE, DESIRE, APPOINT, PROVIDED ALWAYS); italic print is used to draw attention to the names of the executors and trustees (*Alice Moores, Edward Moores, Louise Moores);* punctuation is used sparingly because it can cause ambiguity. Commas are often omitted in lists (*shall sell call in and convert)* and for clauses in parenthesis (*hereinafter together called "my trustees" which expression...)*; colons and dashes are also often omitted; sentences in legal documents tend to be very long and full stops are only used at the end of key sections or at the very end of the document (clause 4).

The overall page layout is also distinctive. Traditional documents are printed in a solid block with no indentation, but more modern examples tend to be indented and

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[183] Black, H. C. (1990). *Black´s Law Dictionary.* 6[h] ed. USA. St. Paul, Minnesota. West Publishing Co.

subdivided. Indeed, although the traditional style gives an overall visual coherence to legal texts, modern layouts are more acceptable to the non-specialist.

Lexis: subject specific words or jargon like the verbs REVOKE, *have predeceased,* the nouns *trustees, residue* and the prepositional phrase UPON TRUST, reflect the exact nature of the legal language. Because a will deals with the theoretical division of property at a time in the future, there are many abstract nouns like *substitution, presence* and *shares.* Ordinary words like the nouns *appointment* and *estate* take on a specific legal meaning in this context. Archaisms (archaic lexis) like the prepositional words *hereinafter, hereof* and *heretofore,* and the collocation *set my hand* (sign) also make the variety formal.

Collocations like LAST WILL and TESTAMENT, *real and personal property* and DEVISE and BEQUEATH, typical doublets formed by synonyms or near-synonyms, often redundant, are characteristic of wills in particular. There are also many examples of Latin and French loan words that have been assimilated into the English language: *executor/executrix, revoke, residuary* from Latin; *appoint, estate, deceased* from Old French. There is also frequent use of *such* as a determiner, instead of *those* in *such moneys* or *such child or children* rather than *that/those; such deceased...* all of them in clause 4 of the text. The word *this* (deictic term) is emphatic as in ...DECLARE *this to be..., this my will, this twenty-first day...*

Grammar: it is less complicated than that found in older legal documents because the text is broken up into smaller units in numbered sections.The present tense is more appropriate here because the document will be read as a current declaration of intent at the death of the testator. Modal auxiliaries like *shall* (as a substitute for the present tense) denote actions that have to be undertaken in the future and are often separated by sequences of phrases and clauses, making the document difficult to read (*shall fail, shall include* in clause 2).

With respect to sentence structure in legal discourse, most of the times it is complex. Here, the only exception of simple sentence is that in clause 1, and though most sentences have the subject in the initial position, that one in section 4 is very long, with many coordinated phrases (*and shall...*), relative clauses (*who attain, which such...*) and conditional clauses (*if any, if he or she...*).

Finally, although it is an accepted tradition that formal written English makes ample use of the passive voice, while conversational, colloquial language favours the active voice, wills do not construct sentences with the former voice because the subject and object must be clear if the declared intentions are to be carried out appropriately.

In short, as seen, wills have a distinctive format which only varies slightly from example to example. When drafting a will the testator may include further clauses indicating specific or pecuniary legacies and other provisions but, in all cases, strict wording will have to be respected.

Statutes. Here´s the California legislature writing down the instructions to California judges telling them when, where, how and why to bifurcate a jury trial.[184]The statute has 86 words in one sentence and has thus violated many rules of style.

> In a trial by jury, the court <u>may</u>, when the convenience of witnesses or the ends of justice would be promoted thereby, on motion of a party, after notice and hearing, make an order, no later than the close of the pretrial conference in cases in which such pretrial conference is to be held, or, in other cases, no later than ten days before the trial date, that the trial of the issues of liability <u>shall</u> precede the trial of any other issue in the case.

General Comments

A **<u>Schemata</u>** – <u>*Content schema*</u>: Background information: according to *Black´s Law Dictionary,* a statute is "a formal written enactment of a legislative body, whether federal, state, city or county... declaring, commanding or prohibiting something". In other words, it is a set of rules or rules of conduct which have to be observed. The Government makes policies that establish general principles for guidance and then legislation makes them into law. "Trial by jury" is a "trial in which the issues of fact are to be determined by the verdict of a jury, duly selected, impaneled and sworn".

<u>*Formal schema / Macrostructure:*</u> <u>*Text-type:*</u> legal instrument. <u>*Topic:*</u> Criminal Procedure. <u>*Audience:*</u> ESP and law students, specialists...<u>*Register:*</u> legal English.

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[184] "Bifurcated trial": a trial of issues separately, e. g., guilt and punishment, guilt and sanity in criminal trial. It´s the trial of the liability issue separate from and prior to trial of the damages question. If the liability issue is determined in defendant´s favour, there is no need to try the damages question.

B 	*Microstructure: Style:* formal; each word is important because a statute has to convey its meaning precisely so that it can be upheld in law. Modal auxiliaries, for instance, each have a specific meaning which will dictate the way in which a statute is interpreted and enforced: *may* denotes that you can do something, *shall* denotes that you must do something.

Lexis: it is subject specific; it avoids connotations and ambiguities: *trial, jury, court, witnesses, motion, party, notice and hearing....* Abstract nouns like *justice, convenience* and collocations like *trial by jury, ends of justice, issue of liability* indicate that the field is legal. Pre-modifiers make the information more precise, as in *pretrial conference, trial date.* Repetitions abound, as in *in cases/in other cases, no later than, trial, issue.* The archaic term *thereby* is also present in this context.

Grammar: it is complicated as it develops the long-winded sentence syndrome and breaks the not-too-many-thoughts-per-sentence rule.

As explained in Chapters II and X of this thesis, there are six universal questions that may be used to help us organize our thoughts and classify information in a logical sequence: *who, what, where, when, how* and *why.* These, and a few variations, are the only questions in the universe that a person can ask another one. Indeed, it is a well-known, documented, anthropological fact that Thoughts and Language arose around these six universal questions (Good, 1989)[185]

Here´s an inventory of the above statute which uses the tabulation technique (presenting information in a list form):

Words	**Thought**
In a trial by jury	where
the court	who
may make an order that the trial of the issue of	
liability shall precede the trial of any other issue	
in the case	does what
when the convenience of witnesses would be	
promoted thereby	why
when the ends of justice would be promoted thereby	why

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[185] Good, C. E. (1989). *Mightier Than The Sword. Powerful Writing In The Legal Profession.* Charlottesville, VA. US. Blue Jeans Press.

on motion of a party	when
after notice and hearing	when
no later than the close of the pretrial conference in cases in	
which such pretrial conference is to be held	when
or, in other cases, no later than ten days befor the trial date	when

Here there are nine thoughts, of which the *whens* are the most prevalent, and though they are separated by commas, they are simply too many for only one sentence to handle. The Six Universal Question device of classifying information helps us detect the major error of the statute´s structure.: <u>cramming too many messages into one sentence and too many words into one message.</u>
Indeed, the reader does not get a full picture of the *does what* information until the very end. The statute reveals the *does what* a little bit at a time: *the court may make an order that the trial of the issue of liability shall precede the trial of any other issue in the case.*

In the rewritten version of the statute that follows, wordiness has been avoided:

In a jury trial, to promote the convenience of witnesses or the ends of justice, the court may order the issue of liability tried first. The court may so order on motion of a party, after notice and hearing. The order must be made before the close of the pretrial conference if held, or, if not held, at least ten days before the trial date.

In short, the new version of the statute uses only 65 words, instead of 86 words in just one sentence. Three short sentences have replaced the long one. The *who* (the court) and the *what* (the issue of liability tried first) information, the most important in the statute, are both stated clearly in the first sentence. Here, the legal writer used inversion: he put the main object in the first sentence and not at the very end.

Finally, the passive voice *is to be held,* in the first context, has also contributed to the wordiness of the statute.

Informal legal writing: To broaden and enlarge legal discourse, the teacher may select reading material from other types of publications, including newspapers, news magazines and journals which are not designed to be definite works of reference for

lawyers but to provide, as clearly as possible, explanations of the appropriate legislations for the lay person. In this sense, the excerpt that follows, extracted from a well-known British publication – *The Economist*[186]*,*differs substantially from the legal documents analyzed above, which are intended for specialists, law students or ESP readers and, therefore, make full use of the relevant terminology and references.

The Simpson verdict

If at first you don´t succeed . . .

Los Angeles

Two and a half years after they were butchered, Ron Goldman and Nicole Brown Simpson may finally be allowed to rest. On the evening of February 4th, seconds after Bill Clinton finished his state-of-the-union message, the jury in O. J. Simpson´s civil trial pronounced its verdict, ruling that Mr. Simpson was liable for the deaths of both victims, and awarding the Goldman family $8.5 m in compensation. The jury´s verdicts were unanimous throughout; asked, during jury polling, if he agreed with his fellow jurors, one man almost yelled his response, giving a hint of the strength of the jury´s feelings.

The result gripped America to such an extent that the president´s address was downgraded to second place by most news programmes. Some channels split their screens so that you could watch both events at once; others ignored Mr. Clinton to focus on the closing act of the Simpson saga.

The dominant feeling in Los Angeles seemed to be that the verdict was correct, although there were still divisions along racial lines. A *Los Angeles Times* poll conducted between January 29th and February 2nd found that 71% of whites thought that Mr. Simpson was guilty of the killings, whereas only 10% of blacks thought so.

[...] Why was Mr. Simpson subjected to a second trial? And why did the second jury produce such a dramatically different verdict from the first? The "double jeopardy" clause of the American constitution protects people from being tried twice for the same crime; but the civil courts give plaintiffs another avenue of attack, provided they put a new gloss on the charges. The rules of civil courts are more plaintiff-friendly than the rules of criminal courts: the prosecution has to prove its case "on the balance of the evidence" rather than "beyond reasonable doubt", and a conviction requires a two-thirds majority rather than a unanimous verdict...

General Comments

*A **Schemata** – Content schema.* Background information: teacher/student interaction will be based on O. J. Simpson´s previous criminal trial (Oct. 1995), the fact that it involved a famous TV black actor and sportsman, that he was found not guilty of murdering his former wife and friend by a mostly black jury, that, according to him, he

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[186] *The Economist*. February 8th 1997 p. 31.

was the victim of a police conspiracy organized by the Los Angeles Police Department, that the verdict in the criminal trial was not an impartial one, that there was suspicion not only of racism but also of planting evidence, etc.

Formal schema/Macrostructure: Text-type: news magazine report. *Topic:* American Substantive Civil/Criminal Law[187]. *Audience:* the general public who wish to read about a high-profile case in American society and, at the same time, learn a few legal things. *Register:* informal legal English.

B **Microstructure**: *Style:* The archaic and convoluted phraseology which characterizes legal documents has been abandoned in favour of a more accessible language style, better suited to the purpose of the publication and its intended readership.

The *typographical features* and *layout* show that this text was printed for a magazine following the typical division into columns and paragraphs, including an inset with a photograph to illustrate the subject matter. The headline uses an elliptical sentence *If at first you don´t succeed try, try again* based on a common English saying and implying the need to have a second (civil)trial to punish the defendant.

Lexis: though there are many subject specific words, such as: *verdict, jury, compensation, crime, plaintiffs, prosecution, conviction...* everyday vocabulary is also used by the writer: *butchered, fellow jurors, gripped, the Simpson saga, dramatically different...* Collocations like: *to pronounce/produce a verdict, to be liable for, to conduct a poll, to be guilty of, to be subjected to* ...are also usually found in semi-formal texts of newspapers and magazines like this one. Quotations from the American Constitution and Penal Codes have been used as well to give importance to the subject matter dealt with: *"double jeopardy", "on the balance of the evidence", "beyond reasonable doubt"* which may also serve as definitions to clarify the meaning of some technical terms. The ironical element is also present in the second paragraph when both events (Simpson´s trial and Clinton´s inaugural address) are contrasted, thus giving colour to the "saga".

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[187] The English word "law" refers to limits upon various forms of behaviour. Some laws are descriptive (Substantive Law): they define, describe and create individuals´legal rights and obligations. Other laws are prescriptive (Procedural Law): they prescribe how people ought to behave and establish the methods of enforcing such rights.

Finally, students may write a parallel on the board establishing the differences between Civil and Criminal trials, their main features and conditions. Similarly, comparisons may be drawn with other highly publicised American/British trials thus enabling the use of the "case study" approach and the exploitation of critical thinking skills.

Grammar: the mood is a mixture of standard and formal; there are also features that link it to spoken and narrative elements *Why was Mr. Simpson subjected to...? Why did the second jury...?* The manner seems more personal in *yelled his response, downgraded, you could watch, dramatically, avenue of attack* ...giving the discourse a less ceremonious tone. Sentences are short, with few sub-clauses*;* after all, the language of the press aims, first and foremost, at conveying information and attracting readers´ attention by means of simple sentences in the active voice, keeping the usual word order.

Competing discourses.

This is just one further illustration of informal/semi-formal written legal discourse whereby writers address an audience who may not be experts or professionals in the field but who share some subject specific knowledge such as an appropriate vocabulary, some understanding of the processes involved and a personal/impersonal tone. The purpose in these cases, then, is for readers to be open-minded and to avoid approaching texts with a rigid expectation.

Indeed, this is a particularly interesting phenomenon already developed in Chapter XII[188], and one with which readers (and translators) often have to wrestle – that of discourse within discourse, or the notion of competing or overlapping genres/registers. In other words, this is when a given discourse borrows from or effectively "hijacks" another one within and across linguistic, cultural and geographical boundaries in its attempt to achieve language competence and reading expertise.

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[188] "A mixture of genres". Terms explained in Chapter XII "The Written Press: headlines and reporting styles".

CHAPTER XV

<u>Business English</u>

The recognition of the need for businesspeople to be proficient in business communication skills has had a major impact on Business English teaching. Many job-experienced learners now come to the language course to learn to perform in English, tasks that they can already perform in their mother tongue.

(Ellis and Johnson, 1994)[189]

Business English is the biggest and fastest developing branch of ESP. This is so because English has become not only the worldwide language of communication and social interaction, but also the accepted medium or lingua franca for international business transactions. However, although there is increasing demand for BE courses, teachers and materials, there is also increasing concern about what exactly constitutes Business English. To what extent is it a definable area with its own theoretical concepts? Is it just a commercial phenomenon? That BE is an attractive commercial proposition cannot be denied. Books, text-books, catalogues, leaflets, videos, audiocassettes, computer software, examination papers and other business publications have been available to the ESP non-native student in the last decades.

BE is considered an umbrella term that embraces a number of sub-divisions that proliferate in the market – some focus on people, some on purpose and some on jobs. We may thus hear of English for Managers and Executives, Financial English or Secretarial English. The subject is undeniably very comprehensive; its growth outstrips that of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EST (English for Science and Technology). There is further proliferation of terms within BE, such as the choice between using the words commerce, finance, business, management, trade or executive, among others.

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[189] Ellis, M. & Johnson, C. (1994). *Teaching Business English.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Why is there such a proliferation of terms? There is much less of this in EAP, a field that has largely been the domain of state educational institutions with "captive" audiences and customers (not free to choose from). Conversely, BE has chiefly been the concern of private language schools and training organisations. Here, customers are not captive and marketing plays a significant role. Indeed, in a competitive market we aim to distinguish our products and services from those of our competitors in order to find a specialist niche. This may be one significant reason for the range of terms just mentioned: the need to sound as if we had a unique selling point (USP). Moreover, product names matter – companies spend thousands on developing the "right" brand name; after all, high quality products need names that resonate with value: business vs commerce, executive vs manager...

Perhaps the largest growth area in BE today is that of computerized "multi media" packages on CD-ROM which means having access to the latest technology such as sophisticated soft and hardware. One such case is Nelson´s *Generator* project[190] which tries to go beyond previous models of business English course design by providing a direct link from needs analysis to course design and into materials chosen for teaching and the progress made. This means that, as part of the package, information on the students´ needs, wants, deficiencies, motivation and desired learning strategies is entered into the programme; then, charts are drawn that show in graphical form the ability level results, followed by a materials database search and self-evaluation/testing results which are also entered, shown graphically and printed out for each student or group.

Differences between teaching General English and Business English

According to specialists in the field (Power, 2004)[191], there is "hard" BE meant for financial analysts who are quite advanced and need sophisticated vocabulary, and "soft"BE for the communication skills, such as e-mailing, telephoning etc.

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[190] Nelson, M. (1995). *The Complete Business English Course Generator.* Finland. Media-Time Ltd, The *Generator* program works on IBM compatible systems, running under Windows 3.0 or above.
[191] Power, M. (2004). Teaching Business English. In *Herald Education News.* Interview by P. Toledo. September, p. 1.

Another difference is that the business student may be more demanding in some ways. They have targets and objectives and they like the idea that their English progress may be measured.

Additionally, since quite a lot of companies are cash rich and time poor, which means that they have money for training but not much time, they want shortcuts to learning BE; in other words, they want to learn quicker and, to a certain extent, in a more direct way than that followed by a General English teacher.The latter will obviously focus on spending some time with structural patterns whereas BE teachers will prefer to sideline grammar for the sake of practical business purposes. After all, it is common knowledge that General English is **educational** and Business English **operational.**

Historical background to BE teaching

Back in the 1980´s, EFL teachers equipped with some basic knowledge of business terms encountered and developed in the "situational programme" (e.g. *at the bank, in an interview, at the Stock Exchange...)* or the "functional syllabus" (e.g. *negotiating/presenting data, getting the sack, going on strike...).* and the rudiments of commercial correspondence (e.g. *letters of application, of enquiry, of complaint...)* felt confident that they would meet the language learning needs of business organizations.

The notion that BE was only a general term that included different disciplines moved trainers to seek further proficiency in content areas for a better understanding of the specific discourses they would encounter. Indeed, teachers have always been aware that one way of gaining technical and professional expertise is by attending conferences and workshops in the content fields to update their ESP. Nonetheless, they also realized back then that the pace of change in the world of business called for a different kind of teacher, one who could become a professional resource, course designer and evaluator in the various content skills that were needed for working within an increasingly market-driven sector.

Soon, EFL teachers, armed with basic BE lexical items and grammatical patterns, went into the corporate world only to realize that they were very much at a loss. The fact is that they had to learn on the job; at this stage, teachers became researchers capable of handling specific vocabulary/jargon and teaching communication

skills. They had to adapt themselves to a business context and adopt a new role as suppliers, negotiators and facilitators of intercultural communication in order to satisfy both the company and learners´demands.

Traditional courses in BE, as any successful professional ESP language course, cover the language skills needed to function in a business setting. However, recent studies have shown that while all four major language skills are necessary in BE, the need for reading and speaking communication is dominant.Therefore, <u>strategies</u> such as skimming, scanning, inferring, summarizing, reading between the lines, etc., on the one hand, and negotiating, problem solving, role plays, case studies and visual representations, on the other, may come in handy to develop professional idiomatic fluency.

Furthermore, trainers are now focusing on designing more <u>super intensive, learner-centred</u> courses aimed at company <u>closed groups</u>, with more attention given to <u>needs analysis</u> and the formation of <u>tailor-made programmes</u> which use authentic company material and documentation (Mattacott, 1996)[192].

Anyway, the fact is that though there is growing demand for knowledge of business-related matters, there is also **<u>lack of specific training at TTC</u>** (Teacher Training Colleges).

One of the challenges that confronts teachers working in the business market is the many words and expressions common to everyday English which have been "transformed" into **"business-speak"** thus rendering them incomprehensible to those unaware of their technical use. While the linguistic components in both informal day-to-day language and business-language are the same, the latter demands clear, concrete use of terms or buzz words and phrases. The problem for the BE teacher in terms of proficiency in this area lies in deciding how to learn "business-speak", including the key business skills of reading, preparing business documents, socializing, writing letters and articles, negotiating, listening to and giving presentations or interviews, among others, without taking an office job, doing an MBA or secretarial training.

Like the legal register, the language used in business is generally pompous and formal; the passive tenses are used to achieve a distancing effect, as in:

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[192] Mattacott, H. (1996). Designing a Successful Business English Course. In *ELT News & Views.* Feature Supplement 3. 1: English in Business, March 1996 p. 4.

The continued recession in trade has resulted in the Group profit being well below expectations.

Recently, a new jargon/lingo has emerged from American English which has complicated this register more than ever. In fact, an American has coined the informal word "gobbledygook" which expresses the idea of a lot of noise being made about nothing, to describe the business management register. In other words, it is language that sounds important and official but is difficult to understand, as in this Business Management Training Programme context:

The cognitive continuum is concerned with objectives related to the knowledge and the intellectual abilities and skills, arising from comprehension to evaluation.

Another challenge facing BE teachers is the absence of an established **"common-core"** of business language in the way that there is a relatively well agreed core of semi-technical lexis and grammar that is widely used in academic, scientific and technological subjects. All the same, there is general consensus regarding certain concepts such as an understanding of the moves within business texts. For instance, at first-sight, sales-promotion letters and job application letters may seem rather different, but, in fact, there is considerable similarity as both contain the same moves,(St. John, 1996)[193] as when

1- introducing the offer/candidature. 2- detailing the offer/candidature. 3- indicating value of offer/candidature. 4- offering incentives. 5- enclosing documents. 6- soliciting response

Categories in BE teaching: At this stage, it seems appropriate to classify BE teaching in a number of categories as shown below: <u>Figure 8</u>

1-Business Communication —— 2- Business Communication —— 3- Business Studies

Skills   Strategies   Materials

5-Methodology

4- English Language in Business Settings

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[193] St. John, M. J. (1996). Business is Booming: Business English in the 1990´s. In *English for Specific Purposes.* Vol. 15. N° 1. Gt. Britain. The American University. pp.3-18.

The four main features of the business environment determine the linguistic skills required and the fifth category relates how business is studied.

5-Methodology.

The **communicative approach** is obviously the best choice of most BE teachers, focusing on functional/notional descriptions of language and learner-centredness.This has led to quite extensive use of:

1-Business communication skills

Negotiation is the most researched area. In this case, the expected level of learners is high, advanced or pre-advanced, as are their range of experience and general communication skills. Materials are usually accompanied by audio cassettes and videos; courses include such functions as to:

Challenge - defend - emphasize - insist - criticize - reassure - propose - counter propose...

Other tasks to enhance idiomatic fluency cover aspects of **correspondence** and **report writing.** In the first case, the main focus is the commercial aspect and the target market is more for secretarial and clerical assistants than managers. Conversely, writing reports is seen as a manager´s or executive´s responsibility. Materials for **telephoning, taking part in meetings** and **giving presentations** also include audio cassettes and videos to illustrate the business environment.

Sample Business Letter/Circular (Smoak, 2003)[194]

Al-Shamsi Travel
PO Box 1234
Dubai UAE

18 April 2001

All Staff
Dubai Men´s College
PO Box 1234
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Dear Staff Member

May I take this opportunity to introduce our agency Al-Shamsi Travel and Tourism; an IATA Travel Agent since 1978 and experienced in providing a wide range of services.

Our agency specializes in:
* Hotel Bookings - all regions of the United Arab Emirates and around the world * Sight Seeing Tours * Airline Tickets * Group F.I.T. Arrangements * VIP Services * Safaris/Desert Safaris * Transportation * Congress/Seminar Organization

As experienced travel agents, we believe that customer satisfaction depends on quality of service. We offer a team of multilingual professionals to meet the needs of our valued clients, and Al-Shamsi Travel and Tourism will always be at your disposal. Our aim is to give you, as a staff member of Dubai Men´s College, the best service and the most competitive rates possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need assistance or more information; I sincerely look forward to serving you in the near future.

Yours sincerely
Jabib Ahmad
General Manager

The example above shows what a real business letter (giving information) or circular, looks like and what the prevailing or accepted practice is.

A **Schemata** *– Content schema.* Background information: the teacher should stress the fact that in spite of the great advances made in the field of communication, the letter still plays an important role in the business world. In addition, a distinction should be made in class between a letter and a circular *(Formal schema. Text-type)*; the former is

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[194] Smoak, R. (2003). What is English for Specific Purposes? In *English Teaching Forum.* Vol. 41 N° 2 April p.26.

normally addressed to an individual while the latter is sent in the same form to large numbers of potential customers. The distinction is sometimes blurred because circulars these days are often cleverly contrived to look like personalised letters. Indeed, they are almost invariably a form of <u>advertising</u> and as such need to be persuasive. They also need to be checked very carefully because any mistake that is made will be repeated as many times as the number of circulars distributed.

Topic: promoting the service of a travel and tourist agency; *audience:* all staff members of a Men´s College in Dubai; *register:* business English.

B **Microstructure***:* Students should notice that this letter, which has no punctuation in the addresses, salutation and closing, is a common *style* used in business today with its own rules of format and content. In fact, it is common practice to leave out commas and full stops when typewriters and word processors are used. Letters of this type also lack linking words and phrases, such as: *but, in addition* or *moreover* used as cohesive devices (*grammar*).

Indeed, when compared with other languages such as Spanish, which is more elaborate, English stands out as much more direct, with fewer circumlocutions and ornate phrases. When the letter is sent from a large office, a reference is often quoted at the heading of the letter; when a reply is sent that same reference should be included in order to ensure that it gets to the person dealing with the subject matter as soon as possible. Furthermore, the postcode should always be quoted as this speeds up the processing of the letter in the sorting office *(lexis).*

Layout: Most business letters are printed on headed notepaper; if this is not available, the sender´s address is placed at the top of the page and may be centred or aligned with the left margin. In fact, no indentation has been left at the beginning of each paragraph; the whole text is aligned with the left margin, the same as the inside/recipient´s address which is placed below the date and followed by the salutation. American English uses a colon or simply no punctuation mark as in this case; in British English, a comma is occasionally used. Reading teachers should also keep in mind that many companies have their own preferred formatting styles for all types of correspondence and so, try their best to illustrate their classes with some authentic letters, **faxes** or **memos** to enhance reading comprehension.

Survey report (Evans, 1998)[195]

To: R. J. Barnes, Marketing Director, MacRae Cosmetics Ltd

From: Jane Simmons, Excalibur Consumer Research
Subject: Consumer Survey: "Healthy Shine" Products
Date: 14th October 1997

Purpose: The aim of this report is to present the findings of a survey carried out to determine consumer awareness and opinion of the "Healthy Shine" range of hair-care products. The data included in this report was obtained from a random sample of 1,500 men and women, aged 18 – 40, who responded to a questionnaire survey on 16th and 17th September.

Consumer Awareness of Product Range: Of the 1,500 respondents surveyed, forty per cent reported that they knew of one or more of the products in the range. Of these, sixty-five per cent had seen the products advertised on television or in magazines and twenty-five per cent had seen the products displayed in stores. The remaining ten per cent of those surveyed were unaware of the product range. The fact that consumer awareness is less than a half suggests that television and magazine advertising has failed to attract the desired level of consumer attention.

Packaging: A large number of those aware of the products were of the opinion that the packaging is unattractive. This is highlighted by the fact that fifty-eight per cent (almost 3 out of 5 customers) stated that they had not sampled the product line, preferring instead to purchase competitors´products with more attractive packaging.

Quality and Price: Of the forty-two per cent of consumers who had sampled at least one product in the range, only fifteen per cent reported that they had not repurchased the product and/or purchased other products in the range. This indicates that eighty-five per cent of consumers are satisfied with quality and price.

Conclusion: On the basis of the findings above, it would seem that although the quality and retail prices of "Healthy Shine" products are competitive, a large percentage of consumers are not aware of the product range. Furthermore, many of those who are aware of the range do not find the packaging sufficiently attractive to induce them to purchase any of the products. Our recommendation, therefore, is that your company launch a new advertising campaign to increase consumer awareness, in addition to altering the packaging of the entire range so as to make the products more appealing to consumers.

The accompanying diagram below (Figure 9) outlines the results of this survey report. Students are supposed to insert the missing percentages in the ovals drawn:

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[195] Evans, V. (1998). *Successful Writing*. UK. Express Publishing. p.129.

<u>Figure 9</u> **Diagram**

HEALTHY SHINE

Consumer Survey Results

1,500

Do you know any (one or more) products from the "Healthy Shine" range?

No → 60%

Yes → 40%

Where have you seen the product (s) advertised?

Magazine & television   65%

In store   25%

Have you sampled any product(s) in the range?

Yes

PROBLEM: PACKAGING

No → 58%

42%

After sampling, have you made any further purchase(s) of our product(s)?

No → 15%

Yes → 85%
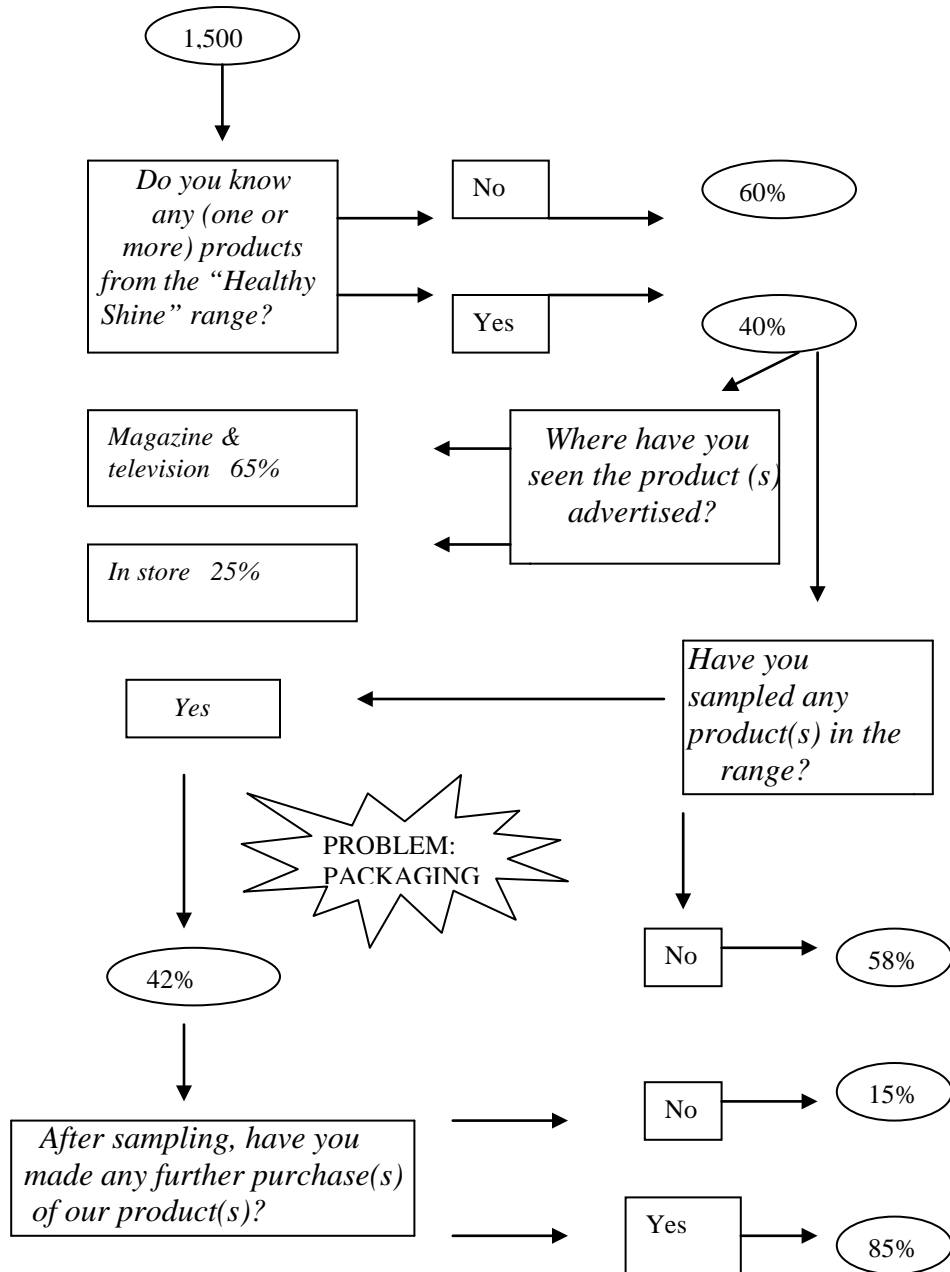
A   **_Schemata_** – *Content schema.* Background information: As usual, the reading comprehension activities are backed up by a reference section. In this case, students should be familiar with the extensive and diverse typology of business reports and they should also be aware that they are defined as written accounts of facts/events transmitted, objectively and orderly, to an audience - generally one´s superiors or colleagues, members of a committee, etc. – in response to a request or instruction. Learners have already been instructed in the various business reports that they may encounter, such as:

Assessment reports: which present and evaluate the positive/negative features of a person, place, plan... They also include the writer´s opinion/recommendation; *informative reports:* which present information concerning a meeting that has taken place, annual reports to shareholders, progress made on a project, etc.; *survey reports:* which present and analyze information gathered from door-to-door surveys or questionnaires, including conclusions drawn, suggestions and recommendations; *proposal reports:* which present plans, decisions or suggestions concerning possible future courses of action for approval by one´s superior at work, a bank manager, etc.

Formal schema/Macrostructure: _Text-type:_ survey report. _Topic:_ consumer survey conducted by staff of a Consumer Research agency to determine consumer awareness and opinion on some of the products manufactured by a company. Consumer survey results have been incorporated in the diagram. _Audience:_ R. J. Barnes, Marketing Director, MacRae Cosmetics Ltd., a manufacturing company. The matter commissioned was complex and the contents aimed at helping management to make rational decisions. _Register:_ business English.

B **_Microstructure:_** The _style_ is formal and concise. Perhaps the most important factor to bear in mind when reporting to people within an organization is that the manager´s time is valuable and that a report is basically a summary of the situation. Providing precise and accurate information is also a must. The art is to steer a path between overburdening the report with detail and omitting data which may turn out to be significant. (Chilver, 1992)[196]

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[196] Chilver, J. (1992). *English for Business.* London. DP Publications Ltd. pp.34-41.

Layout: Heading: the name of the person to whom the report is addressed should be clearly stated, with appropriate courtesy titles (the same applies to the name and status of the author(s) of the report). Indeed, managers are expected to be addressed properly by their subordinates and, in any case, the report will need to pass through the normal internal mailing system. Sub-headings: survey reports are much easier to read if they are broken down into small sections in the form of short paragraphs. In this way, managers may refer back to earlier points raised, thus making the report more palatable. Date of report: this information is essential based on the notion that situations in business are constantly changing and, therefore, recommendations which are valid at one time may become invalid as a new situation develops. Format: as a general guide, a survey report consists of: a) an introduction, briefly setting out the terms of reference (a questionnaire survey) and purpose; b) a main body or middle sections which cover the main contents of the report, be they information, explanations, ideas or arguments; c) the final section which consists of the conclusion(s) based on recommendations/suggestions/proposals. Appendix: in view of the need to keep the main report as brief and concise as possible, it is common to include statistical data (diagram) in the form of an appendix at the end of the main report.

Lexis: it is subject specific: *consumer, product range, packaging, purchase, competitors′products, quality, retail prices, ...*Collocations: *to respond to a questionnaire, to induce them to purchase, to launch a new advertising campaign...*There is order in the presentation of facts and steps taken in the whole process of determining consumer awareness and opinion: *to present the findings* → *to suggest* → *to prefer* → *to indicate* → *to recommend* → *to increase* → *to alter.* *Grammar:* data (figures and percentages) is presented straightforwardly and in short sentences so as to leave no doubt about the accuracy of the facts. Clear grammatical ties have also been used, namely reference ties establishing anaphoric relations: *Of these, sixty-five per cent...; This is highlighted by the fact that...; This indicates that...;* and conjunction ties: *Furthermore, therefore,...*

Comprehension of visual presentations. Information in company reports is often presented graphically, e.g. through a graph, a pie or bar chart, an organigram, a diagram, a table, to name but a few.

The results of the survey/opinion poll presented in the diagram above in the form of <u>questions</u> and <u>facts</u> (percentages), which students should be able to understand when processing texts, reflect the preferences/opinions, etc. of a random sample of men and women, aged 18 – 40, concerning "Healthy Shine" hair-care products. As shown in the diagram, a large percentage of consumers were unaware of the product range and some of them found the packaging unattractive and unappealing.

<u>Class application.</u> <u>Graphic procedures for comprehension of business texts:</u> as follow-up, teachers may also ask students to read, understand, explain and supplement the data given in the following graphical presentations:(O´Dell, 1998)[197]
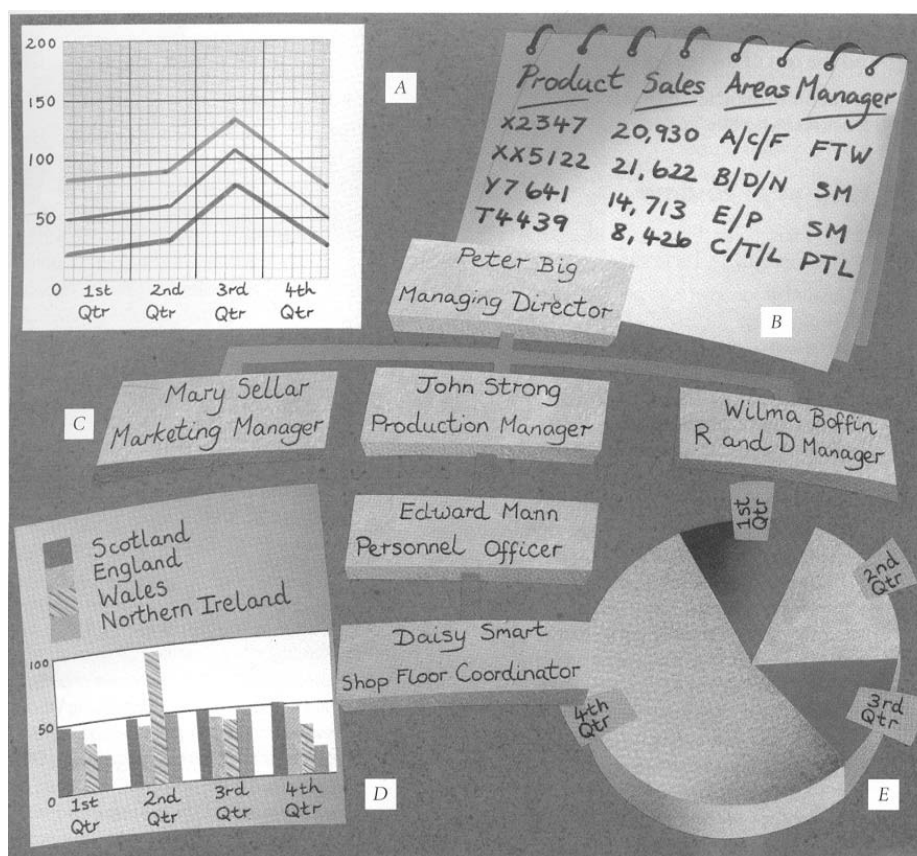
<u>Reading comprehension</u>: What kind of graphic business-text representation is each of the following?   **A graph   B table   C organigram   D bar chart   E pie chart**

Getting students to understand useful visual representations of text structure is not an easy undertaking and requires considerable practice. In fact, many teachers

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[197] O´Dell, F. (1998). Op. cit.

themselves will need extended training in seeing the structure of texts and then translating that structure into effective guides for student learning.

A ***Schemata:*** *Content schema.* Background information: The most common form of visual presentation is the graph. Graphs are two-dimensional: the x-axis (horizontal axis) records one dimension, usually the time dimension; the y-axis (vertical axis) records another range of data which changes in relation to the time (or other) series. The three lines in graph *A* above may show sales, interest rates, prices, unemployment rates etc. over the four quarters of the year. Tables, as in *B,* provide lists of facts or numbers arranged in a special order, usually in rows and columns; organigrams, as in *C,* illustrate company staff organization setting out the lines of communication, chains of command and spans of control for the hierarchy of managers as shown in this case, from the Managing Director/Chairperson downwards and/or between the company´s senior officials (flow charts are similar in that they represent the connections between the different stages of a process or parts of a system); pie charts, as in *E,* are circles divided into sections to show the size of particular amounts in relation to the whole (the four sections in *E* illustrate amounts for the four yearly quarters) Distinctions can also be heightened by shading or colouring the different segments of the pie; bar charts, as in *D,* are drawn to scale and measured from the base line (over a whole year) which may be perpendicular or horizontal.

The benefit of all these diagrammatic representations is that they present data in an easily assimilable form. This is the reason why they appear so often in company´s Annual Reports to their shareholders. Indeed, the latter do not want to go through the tedium of analyzing statistics in detail, but they do want to learn what is happening generally. Those who are more directly involved in the business need to be able to interpret data presented to them in whatever form. They also need to be able to express the ideas that emerge from the analysis.

Students, in turn, need to interpret these graphic designs because they appear all the time in business press articles, text-books and other specific sources.

2- Business Communication Strategies: **Role plays, simulations** and **case studies** offer many possibilities of exploitation to the business practitioner. If the aim of Business English training is that communication skills should be taught by effective

communicative teaching strategies/methods, then teachers know of no better tool than the business case study, which offers all of the following:

- a rich and authentic language environment for students to face the real-world problems that a company usually has to solve. Such problems differ from academic ones in that they are rarely well-defined and have no definite thought-in-advance solutions.

- opportunities for cross-cultural insights

- opportunities for reacting and interacting constantly with other group members

- flexibility for the teacher: a)to select activities appropriate to language level and business knowledge; b) to adjust to suit the timetable. Indeed, the case study method is a form of pedagogy that can be extremely motivating for both teacher and students. Ideally, the group becomes so involved that participants forget that they are not using their mother tongue and instead, concentrate on carrying out the task.

- supplementary material to round-off business units. (It is also thought to be useful in the preparation of professionals in law, industry, teaching and teacher education).

In a BE case study students are asked to work through four phases: input, analysis, exploitation and feedback. They **analyse** a case presented by the instructor **(input)** – individually, in pairs or small groups – which usually involves a company (real or imaginary) facing serious problems (financial, promotional, managerial). Though the nature and seriousness of the problem will be determined by the level of the students, the instructor should keep in mind that it should be as realistic and complex as possible. After the learners have worked out different solutions to the problem **(exploitation)**, they present them to the rest of the class in the form of a **report** (**feedback**) or account of "craft knowledge" as compared to the "theoretical knowledge" that is often the focus of traditional academic courses. They will then discuss which of all the solutions seems most appropriate. The linguistic and functional strategies students have used are to be checked over once the activity has finished.

An advanced business course, such as an MBA (Master of Business Administration) degree makes extensive use of case studies.[198] Students must process and analyze large quantities of data according to a specific brief. On lower level

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[198] The "MBA" degree is probably the world´s best known and most widely recognized post graduate degree based on a 1-2 year programme, intended for those who work in business and management.

business courses the data provided is more limited and the analysis and discussion required by the brief much less complex. Students are expected to identify the key business features and to apply management theories and principles to the existing situation and evaluate and recommend future courses of development and action.

Case studies for business English students are generally <u>aimed at those with at least an upper-intermediate proficiency</u> in the language. They differ in their exploitation from straight business cases as they provide language work, may stage the various activities that need to be undertaken, and may in fact require the learners to role play. Moreover, the input on business courses is generally in print whereas the language-learning case studies may provide some input through conversations and discussions on cassette.

<u>Simulations</u> and <u>role-playing</u> are similar in that they both reproduce or simulate real situations which often involve dramatization. In the latter case, though, participants are asked to "be someone else", to take the role of another and, besides, group discussions are not included. Learners are given tasks or problems to be solved, as well as instructions to follow; for example, an employer-employee discussion may arise over wage increases in a factory (simulation) or a scenario may be suggested in which a customer in a shop returns a faulty article to a salesperson and, in this way, students practise how to express complaints and apologies in a foreign language(role-play). Here, ancillary (supportive) materials such as photos,charts, videos and graphics represent an invaluable visual element.

3- Business Studies Materials: Generally speaking, the BE market is seen as a growth area by publishers. Authors are practising teachers/trainers and the materials stem directly from their teaching needs and experiences; they represent an accepted current practice rather than a particular theoretical construct. They comprise both **coursebooks** and **supplementary materials.**

Coursebooks parallel those in general EFL and there are both one-offs and series catering for students at different language levels. Some of the more recent publications move from warm-up activities to reading to a language focus and then to a skills focus. Sometimes, the information is presented in the form of a loose-leaf booklet or folder neatly designed to fit into a personal organizer. This acts as a stimulus for students to

record the language they use, read and hear, thus building their own bank of resources. Some coursebooks also contain a self-study pack to "revise and practise further ... to catch up on classes missed".

Technologically-driven changes have already made their entrance into the business teaching market: audio cassette material is now appearing on CD cassettes and CD-Rom packages are offering interesting opportunities for students to self-select work on lexis, grammar and functions at several levels of complexity. Above all, they are ideal for learners with a busy schedule; besides, they are compact and easy to use – in the office, at home or while travelling.

The following text was excerpted from the American News section of *Business Week* magazine, International Edition:[199]

The Economy WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ECONOMIC ANXIETY?
Despite some job jitters, a new optimism reigns in this election year

Was it all just a bad dream? A media concoction? Nine months ago, Americans feared for their jobs, for their financial well-being, for the nation´s economy. That´swhat they told the pollsters, anyway. And Republican Presidential candidate Pat Buchanan made a brief star turn in New Hampshire and other primaries by riding the wave of America´s economic anxiety.

Buchanan and his brand of populism have retired to the political periphery. So, abruptly, have many signs of economic doom and gloom. Americans are taking a fresh look at the economy – and they feel considerably better about what they see.

No wonder. Growth in the second quarter hit 4.8%. Interest rates, while up slightly during the past year, are still far below their 1980s levels. Inflation, too, remaing quiescent. Most important, the U.S. labor market has finally – after six long years – regained its pre-recession health. On Sept. 6, the Labor Dept. announced that the August unemployment rate fell to only 5.1%, its lowest level since June, 1990. Real wages and salaries, up by 2% since the start of 1993, are close to an all-time high, despite the ground lost in the early 1990s.

The result: Consumer confidence, as measured by the Conference Board, is up 25% since January. The polls show a similar shift. According to a *New York Times*/CBS News poll of 1,281 people taken on Sept. 2-4, 72% now believe that the condition of the economy is good. "It´s startling how fast people´s attitudes have changed," says Gary Burtless, an economist at the Brookings Institution.

Don´t expect a return to the exuberance of the mid-1980s – there´s still too much turmoil in the economy for that. Across virtually every industry, companies are still cutting workers by the roomful. In fact, Americans do still feel jittery about job security. But their overriding sentiment is a wary optimism...

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[199] *Business Week,* September 23, 1996. ("Whatever happened to Economic Anxiety?", M. Mandel et al.) pp.38-40.

DOWNSIZING CONTINUES...

1ST HALF OF YEAR
2ND HALF

ANNOUNCED JOB CUTS

▲ THOUSANDS OF WORKERS   *2ND HALF PROJECTED

...BUT UNEMPLOYMENT IS FALLING...

CIVILIAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

▲ PERCENT

...WAGES ARE RISING...

CHANGE IN CIVILIAN WAGES AND SALARIES OVER PREVIOUS YEAR, ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION

▲ PERCENT

...AND AMERICANS FEEL BETTER

CONSUMERS' ASSESSMENT OF PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION

▲ INDEX: 1985=100

DATA: CHALLENGER, GRAY & CHRISTMAS; BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS; CONFERENCE BOARD; BUSINESS WEEK

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN BASEDEN; CHARTS BY LISA KNOUSE BRAIMAN/BW

BUSINESS WEEK / SEPTEMBER 23, 1996 **39**

A **Schemata.** *Content schema.* Background information: students have read and been informed by the teacher about the circumstances that led to Clinton´s second nomination as Democratic candidate for the presidency (1996) and about the expectations of Republican candidates Buchanan, Bob Dole and Ross Perot. They also learnt that the economic issues were central to Clinton´s strategy including promises of tax cuts, wage increases, job programs, among others.

Formal schema/Macrostructure: *Text-type:* magazine article. *Topic:* the worry-free American economy in the 1996 election year. *Audience:* business and middle-class readers. *Register:* semi-formal business English.

B **Microstructure:** *Style and techniques:* Right from the start, after skimming the title and subtitle, students come to realize that the question put forward does not remain unanswered. On the contrary, the key word *optimism* in the subtitle provides a direct answer and is self-explanatory. Since this is a semi-specialist magazine the writer used an informal tone at the beginning to catch readers´ attention, at the same time incorporating subject specific vocabulary to make the text more palatable to a business-

like readership. The word *anxiety* in the title is printed in red and the interrogation mark in yellow, thus indicating, on the one hand, voters´ deep worries and fears for their financial well-being and future of the American economy and, on the other, their optimistic views and expectations of a full recovery. Added to this is the use of graphic representations printed at the bottom of the second page to increase awareness of text structure.

Lexis: the journalist chose the pronoun *Whatever* for the question of the title to express surprise/confusion and to add emphasis to the phrase, the same as in informal spoken English. Though other informal words have been used, such as: *job jitters, feel jittery, cutting workers by the roomful* ..as well as idiomatic expressions*: made a brief star turn, riding the wave of, economic doom and gloom,* technical terms are more common: *primaries, interest rates, inflation, labor market, pre-recession, unemployment rate, wages and salaries, consumer confidence, polls, downsizing* ...Formal nouns and phrases, such as: *remains quiescent, exuberance, turmoil* describe the condition of the American economy of the mid-1990s, its ups and downs. Furthermore, years, percentages and figures contribute to validate the reasons for citizens´ anxiety and new optimism. *Grammar:* questions in the title and first paragraph set the tone for the information supplied at the beginning of the other paragraphs; this is achieved by means of straightforward answers: *No wonder... The result:... In fact,...*The journalist also resorts to emphatic devices like parallelism at the end: *But their overriding sentiment is a wary optimism* which he repeats to introduce the **graphic designs** and create, at the same time, the literary technique of anti-climax[200]: *Downsizing continues... but unemployment is falling... wages are rising... and Americans feel better.*

Once students have completed the reading activities of the entire text, they are ready to proceed with the comprehension and interpretation of the accompanying diagrams: a bar chart and three graphs in this case.

The bar chart shows announced job cuts by thousands of workers in the first and second halves of 1994, 1995 and 1996. Paradoxically, the first graph measures the falling unemployment rate in percentage terms, from 1994 up to August 1996; the

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[200] "Anti-climax": the arrangement of words or ideas so that there is a distinct lessening of interest or a sudden fall from the sublime to the ridiculous.

second graph down left shows that wages and salaries have increased over the three years and, in consequence, American consumers are happier (graph down right).

In short, aside from the typical BE graphic representations, there are many other options for outlines that indicate discourse structure including: series of events chain (to describe the stages of a process); problem/solution outlines (to represent a problem, attempted solutions and results, e.g. the national debt); cycles (to show how a series of events interact to produce a set of results again and again); Gantt charts, etc.

A variation of the bar chart is the Gantt chart, used in connection with the process of control in a business. It gives an instant visual comparison between expected and actual performance. The example below shows the production levels (target) and the output achieved (actual) on a company´s production line. The performance would be recorded at the end of each day and the chart would provide information for the line managers who could see at a glance whether the targets were being met:

Week ending 21st September 200-

| *Monday* | *Tuesday* | *Wednesday* | *Thursday* | *Friday* |

◼ Target ☐ Actual
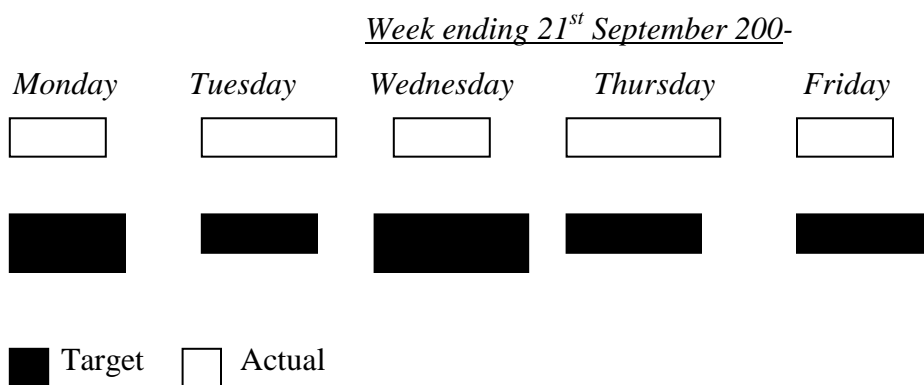
On which days did the company´s production line exceed its target? *Tuesdays* and *Thursdays.*

Alternatively, a variety of other outlines of text organization can be constructed, such as filling in parts of the graphic whilst leaving other parts blank, reassembling major units of the outline which have been moved around out of sequence, inserting the signal words that mark the various parts of the major sections of the reading, etc.

To conclude, students can always explain their decisions by referring back to signals and patterns in the text itself. Indeed, these examples show that there is considerable support for the direct instruction of textual organization by means of visual illustrations as a way to improve reading comprehension.

CHAPTER XVI

The technical register

The need to promote technological literacy among students and the focus on content-based instruction as the most appropriate method to learn and construct knowledge have resulted in the development of activities to integrate complex, specialized discourse into the classroom.

(Luzón Marco, 2002)[201]

Teachers share with many authors the conviction that teaching English to science and technology (EST) students can be at the same time professionally oriented, personally satisfying for learners and, why not, fun and stimulating for the instructor. The use of pedagogical and language strategies that are, for example, simulations of real socio-professional activities, such as problem-solving tasks used in BE teaching, have been designed to develop the qualities required by the professions and especially to improve performance in English.

After all, a professional technician, an electrical or mechanical engineer or a computer scientist is not merely someone with a certain amount of specific knowledge. To be truly professional, a technician or scientist requires many other qualities, such as personal motivation, professional commitment, flexibility and creativity in problem-solving, interpersonal and communication skills.

Activities in EST: The activities in which they can be involved are numerous, but the most common ones requiring the use of English as a foreign language and for specific purposes can be easily listed: **reading publications,** writing reports, attending conferences, giving presentations, telephoning, writing letters, taking part in technical meetings, showing colleagues round a plant, socializing and travelling.

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[201] Luzón Marco, M. J. (2002). Internet-based Activities for English for Specific Purposes. In *English Teaching Forum.* Vol. 40, N° 3, July pp. 20-25.

Intermediate and advanced students are aware of the fact that the language used in scientific and technological texts is highly specialized and specific to these disciplines, such as the environment, information technology, medicine, genetics, physics or space, among others. Its lexis – and the concepts described by it – reflect its highly complex nature. The fact is, this lexis is constantly being renewed and modified by neologisms and technical terms associated with it which are frequently calques[202] or borrowings that have become part of register through translations of scientific texts.

EST readers are usually familiar with the fields that provide subject matter for these texts and are often specialists themselves.There is one exception to this, namely texts which are intended to popularize science or technology. In such cases, the writer will use various means to make it easier for the reader to understand the text. Translators go even further, as it is frequently necessary to consult the author or other experts in the field to ensure that both the ST (Source Text) and the TT (Target Text) are fully understood. Furthermore, as far as translation from English into Spanish is concerned, information technology-related texts account for almost 90% of the market, whereas the amount of material in this field which is translated from Spanish into English is negligible.

In general terms, when reading in a new field as EST, students learn to familiarize themselves with information-dense material by focusing on certain strategies for easier comprehension of the subject matter, namely

1- statements of problems, hypotheses, definitions, known facts or the consequences of experiments are recognized from context, from the direct style in which they are written and from the grammatical structures. Usually expressed in the present tense, they often contain "be" as a main verb, or the passive form of the verb:

a) *Reproduction is the process by which human beings, animals and plants create more of their own kind.*

b) *Pollution in this part of town is caused by car fumes.*

2- descriptions of processes are often written in the present passive form when they have already been proved or in the progressive, if they are still being tested:

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[202] "Calques", also known as "loan translations", are types of borrowings in which each morpheme or word is translated into the equivalent morpheme or word in another language. The English word "almighty" is a calque from the Latin "omnipotens": "omni" (all) + "potens" (mighty).

a) *The embryo is implanted in a foster mother.*

b) *The method is being tested on mice.*

3- Results of experiments are written in the past simple if they took place in the more distant past and have been accepted in the field, but in the present perfect if research is still going on:

a) *This procedure was developed as a means ...*

b) *Rapid advances have been made in this area ...*

4- Arguments often present certain conditions and their possible results. The condition is usually presented in the form of an "if" clause:

a) *If the work is substantiated ...*

b) *If the hypothesis is proven correct ...*

c) *If these findings are replicated ...*

The outcome of such conditions is expressed in the form of a sentence containing a modal such as "can", "could", "will", "would", etc. When the "will" form is employed, the message is more positive and less conditional, while if the past form of the modal is used, it is less definite.

d) *If the work is substantiated, it <u>could</u> open new means of research.*

In order to make the statement following the "if" clause more definite, the writer might choose to use the modal "will":

e) *If the work is substantiated, it <u>will</u> mean that we have the answer to the problem.*

Altogether, the use of modals like "can", "could", or "would" in scientific and technical writing signals lack of available proof or lack of certainty, while the use of "will" signals certainty.

 Significant features of EST discourse. According to Trimble (1985)[203], the approach to teaching non-native speakers how to read (and secondarily to write) scientific and technical English discourse is built around three main rhetorical concepts: 1- <u>the nature of the EST paragraph</u>; 2- <u>the rhetorical</u> <u>techniques</u> most commonly used in written EST discourse including elements of time and space order, cause and result, order of importance, comparison and contrast, analogy, exemplification and illustration; and 3-

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[203] Trimble, L. (1985). *English for Science and Technology.* Cambridge: CUP, p.14.

the rhetorical functions most frequently found in written EST discourse, such as description, definition, classification, instructions and visual-verbal relationships. Associated with these three notions are the grammatical and lexical elements also important in this type of English discourse.

Rhetoric[204] is described as the process of choosing and organizing information for a specific set of purposes and readers, such as the presentation of facts and hypotheses. As a matter of fact, an EST text is not concerned with the forms of written English that editorialize, express emotions such as laughter or sadness, develop argument or are fictional/poetic in nature.

1- **The EST paragraph**, like all paragraphs, is a group of sentences which expresses a complete unit of thought, set off on a page of text by indentation or spacing. It is developed around the topic sentence or "core generalization" and carries information in clearly organized "packets" separating generalizations from specifics and from one another so that the trained reader can learn to differentiate easily between levels of generality.

Another important characteristic of EST paragraphs is that the majority are deductive in structure. Additionally, they have the core statement near the beginning; that is, the governing generalization precedes most or all of the supporting information. This will normally cause no problem to fairly advanced students who will be able to make such distinctions and at the same time grasp quickly the subject matter of the paragraph/text; indeed, this is one of the bases for **improved reading comprehension and speed** and for a successful transfer of these reading skills to writing.

This type of first paragraph is illustrated here extracted from the Science and technology section of *The Economist*[205]:

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[204] "Rhetorical functions/patterns": terms examined in more detail in Chapter VII: "Towards Reading Comprehension Strategies: a taxonomy".
[205] *The Economist.* September 28, 2002. ("An inside job") p.76.

Strokes and heart attacks. **AN INSIDE JOB**

CURRENT estimates suggest that half of the people living in North America and Europe will die from a blood clot in a vital organ such as the heart, the brain or a lung. Preventing clots is therefore an important goal, and two recent advances have brought that goal nearer.

      Athan Kukopulos, of the New England Medical Centre in Boston, and his colleagues have focused on cellular receptors. Body cells bristle with receptor molecules that react to chemical messages from elsewhere. If these receptors are blocked, the cell does not know what is happening in the outside world, and so does not react...

A __*Schemata*__*: Formal schema:* __*Topic.*__ Finding some ways of preventing dangerous blood clots.

B __*Microstructure*__*:* __*Techniques:*__The first paragraph is a typical example of paragraph structure organization of information: it begins with a one-sentence core statement and is neatly rounded off and supported by another statement or concluding sentence. While this is the structure found in most examples of EST texts, other paragraph forms are worth mentioning, such as the "implicit" paragraph with its core implied by the nature of the information. Here, the writer seems to assume that readers can supply their own generalizations from the details presented.

      The inductive paragraph, in turn, has its core statement at or near the end; that is, the supporting information precedes the generalization. In these cases, the events (physical or mental or both) leading to a discovery (or new hypothesis, etc.) are given chronologically with the results stated as a kind of climax, as in:

Internet topology

What does the Internet look like?

It is less random than people thought

Few questions are simultaneously so baffling and so significant as: "what is the structure of the Internet?" Baffling, because the thing has grown without any planning or central organisation. Significant, because knowing how the routing computers that are the net´s physical embodiment are interconnected is vital if it is to be used properly. At the latest count, there were 228,265 of these routers around the world. They direct the packets of data that make up Internet traffic.

                                         (*The Economist)*[206]

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[206] *The Economist.* October 5, 2002. ("What does the Internet look like?") p. 77.

The core statement of this paragraph is in the last sentence. It would not be difficult to make this a "deductive" paragraph by a simple transfer of the core to the beginning of the paragraph and only the change of two words (e.g., "228,265 routers *direct the packets of data that make up Internet traffic").*

As a rule, we need to give our students several examples of each type of paragraph structure to make sure they have grasped the basic concept of the organization of the EST text. Similarly, we should also try to "fix" this knowledge not only by making them analyze additional paragraphs, but also by requiring them to find "real world" examples in their own subject-matter reading. These reading assignments are generally designed to be given at the end of the discussion on the EST paragraph.

2- **The rhetorical techniques:**

These are elements that bind together the information in a piece of EST discourse. Students should be aware that the use of one rhetorical technique or pattern (comparison and contrast, exemplification, cause and result, etc.) does not exclude the simultaneous use of others. In fact, it would be very difficult to find an example of a paragraph using time/chronological order to describe a process that was not developed in conjunction with cause and result. We may also find two or more logical patterns working together, with one usually being dominant. Similarly, we may come across a paragraph developed by putting details in their order of importance in such a way that they compare and/or contrast as well.

The most common semantic markers or terms that writers use to signal each pattern to their readers are:

- Time order: first, second, finally, last, now, after, then...
- Space order: in, out, above, below, to the left, in the centre...
- Cause and result: thus, hence, therefore, as a result, causing, so that, since, as a consequence of...
- Order of importance: first, second, third, most important, least important...
- Comparison and contrast: in comparison, similarly, in like fashion ... in contrast, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, by way of difference ...

- Analogy: (compares things basically dissimilar) by way of analogy, analogically, by analogy, in much the same fashion ...

- Exemplification: for example, by way of example, for instance, as can be seen ...

- Illustration: as fig.1 shows, as we can see from Table 2, See fig. 3 ...

In the following text, extracted from *American Heritage of Invention & Technology*[207] most of these discourse patterns are seen working together, with cause/result and comparison/contrast being dominant all throughout:

DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

WHEN CONGRESS MANDATED A 90 PERCENT CUT IN AUTO EMISSIONS, ALMOST NO ONE THOUGHT IT COULD BE ACHIEVED. THE INVENTORS OF THE CATALYTIC CONVERTER PROVED OTHERWISE.   By Tim Palucka

When the passage of the Clean Air Act of 1970, Congress threw down a gauntlet similar in spirit to President John F. Kennedy´s 1961 challenge to put a man on the moon before the end of the decade. Both were bold strokes that placed a burden squarely on the shoulders of the nation´s scientists and engineers. And both looked impossible.

In the race to the moon the United States had only recently developed a rocket that could get off the launch pad with no cargo, let alone make it to the moon with humans aboard. In the race to clean up the air, no one knew if the goal, a 90 percent reduction in automobile emissions from pre-1968 levels by the 1975 model year, was even remotely possible. Like the race to the moon, this would take a crash program of research and development.

[...] Eugene Houdry, had he lived long enough to see it, would not have been surprised by the Clean Air Act. In fact, he would have welcomed it. Houdry was a French engineer who in the 1920s and 1930s had developed catalytic cracking, revolutionizing the petroleum industry. The Houdry process provided much of the aviation fuel that drove the Allied victory in World War II and the gasoline that powered the automobile boom after the war. In the postwar years he turned his own attention to reducing the damage that gasoline had caused, including (he believed, though the link remains unproven) an increase in lung cancer.

Unburned hydrocarbons from automobile exhaust gases were the primary culprit, he felt, and he had a solution. He began work on the problem in 1948 in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and founded a company called Oxy-Catalyst, Inc., to develop oxidizing catalysts to clean up exhaust gases.

By 1959 he had developed a "Catalytic muffler" that would fit into the exhaust system of an automobile. It consisted of a rectangular metal box containing 71 porcelain rods arranged in staggered rows among which exhaust gases would pass. The rods were coated with high-surface-area alumina containing tiny islands of platinum, which acted as an oxidation catalyst. "Put them on all cars and watch the lung cancer curve dip," he boasted.

[...] After much experimenting, scientists found that inserting a small amount of rhodium into the platinum catalyst could do the trick. To ensure that there was always some oxygen available for the oxidizing, they added ceria, a compound that would act as an oxygen reservoir and release oxygen as needed by switching back and forth between its $CeO2$ and $Ce2O3$ forms.

Researchers concluded that control over chemical reactions wouldn´t have been possible without the computing and sensing technology that was just emerging. The German firm Bosch developed zirconia sensors that could monitor the amount of oxygen in the combustion stream, improving the combustion process to diminish the cleanup work to be done by the catalytic converter.

The catalytic converter is one of the great environmental success stories of the last century. When each goal was reached, the government raised the standards another notch, and the scientists kept meeting them. The result was automobiles that ran more efficiently with better gas mileage, confounding fears that environmentally friendly cars would be sluggish cars. The current challenge is to produce a zero-emission vehicle.

A **_Schemata._** *Content schema.* Background information: students are told about President Nixon´s environmental plans submitted to Congress, establishing national air-quality standards and leading to the Clean Air Act of 1970. They also learn that reducing auto emissions by 90 percent in a few years looked easy to Congress though hopeless to engineers, until a few miraculous breakthroughs made the catalytic converter possible.

Formal schema: _Text-type:_ magazine article (segment from a larger text). _Topic:_ the invention of the catalytic converter and how it converts toxic gases into harmless ones. _Audience:_ technicians and engineers. _Register:_ technical register.

B **_Microstructure:_** the writer has used the following _rhetorical techniques_: Comparison and contrast (revealing similarities of things basically alike) (subtitle) *almost no one thought it could be achieved/the inventors of the catalytic converter proved otherwise*; cause and result, analogy (revealing similarities of things basically different), comparison and contrast *similar in spirit* (first paragraph); time order, comparison and contrast *in the race to the moon/in the race to clean up the air/like the race to the moon* (second paragraph); time order *in World War II/after the war/in the postwar years* (third paragraph); cause and result *he had a solution/began/founded/to develop* (fourth paragraph); exemplification, space order *fit into/containing/arranged/* (fifth paragraph);

cause and result *they found* (sixth paragraph); comparison and contrast *the German firm Bosch* (seventh paragraph).

Whenever process or function description (*it consisted of...,* paragraph 5) is the rhetorical feature chosen by the writer, <u>cause and result</u> is found in the text since this type of description requires statements of the occurrence of events and of the results of those occurrences. Along with the cause and result technique we find instances of comparison and contrast in the first two paragraphs which can be used profitably as a parallelism device to achieve emphasis. In short, this example very clearly shows the writer´s use of cause and result (often called "cause and effect") as the main frame of the paragraph/text, with the rhetorical technique of comparison and contrast providing the necessary support.

Illustration technique: The description of the catalytic converter in paragraph 5 is a good basis for a precise visual representation which, in fact, is provided in full colours on page 26 of the article under the heading "Anatomy of a Catalytic Converter".

 Both scientific and technical discourse, like business texts, rely heavily on graphical material to add information to points made verbally. Illustrations range from the very simple – for example, a drawing of a single line or a circle – to the very complex – such as a set of highly detailed blueprints or circuit diagrams.

Unfortunately, the quality of accompanying text does not always match that of the visual element. We either find information too skimpy and superficial to be of much use to the reader, or else too dense that even an expert can have difficulty with it. The graphic in this article does not have such a weakness; indeed, intermediate and, especially, advanced students may find it useful for clarifying the process and the arrangement of the catalytic equipment. It is an easily read visual, simply laid out, and the text tells readers what they need to know to be able to relate the visual to the discussion.

Lexis: though the information is conveyed from an expert writer to a specific audience, the tone is personal at times introduced by such phrases as *Both were bold strokes, both looked impossible, let alone, welcomed, primary culprit, do the trick ...* and direct address as in: *Put them on all cars and watch the lung cancer curve dip, he boasted.* Technical lexical items are in line with the formality of the subject: *auto emissions, hydrocarbons, lung cancer, exhaust gases, alumina, platinum, oxidation, rhodium,*

ceria, zirconia sensors, ... Some general words are used in a subject specific way: *reduction, islands of platinum, sensing technology, combustion stream* ...Symbols like CeO2 are used as a technical shorthand understood by an audience with shared knowledge.

Grammar: The article begins with a one-sentence core statement in the form of a generalization supported by two sub-cores or lesser generalizations in the second paragraph. The chronological framework is shown in the fourth paragraph by the use of dynamic verbs as *began work, founded, to develop, to clean up...* The mood is declarative since scientists usually deal with explanations and records of processes carried out.

3- **The rhetorical functions:**

When we examine types of EST discourse in more detail we see that, similar to the rhetorical techniques, certain types of discourse impose certain functions on writers´materials; that is, writers have no choice but to use a specific rhetorical function because the nature of the material requires it. An example is that of discourse written for students new to a field which demands the frequent use of "definition" as a rhetorical function, since the reader is faced with new words and possibly old terms with new meanings. Additionally, when teaching rhetorical functions, the descriptive pattern is treated first as it is commonly found not only in isolation but also in conjunction with other typical patterns.

These rhetorical functions and their "sub-functions" are outlined here:

- Description: physical, function, process.
- Definition: simple, complex .
- Classification: complete or partial.
- Instructions: direct and indirect.
- Visual-verbal relationships: illustrative material and written text that accompanies it.

Description:

a) physical description: includes such characteristics of an object as dimension, shape, weight, material, volume, colour and texture, in any order of importance or frequency of

occurrence and uses such locative terms as "above", "below", "in the center", "to the right", "at an angle to", "near", "directly above", etc. e.g. *A canal bottom sampler, used in the Imperial Valley, California, canals consisted of a brass tube 2.7 centimeters in diameter and 15.2 centimeters long. At the bottom was attached a sharp steel cutting blade.*This function is clearly tied together with the rhetorical technique of space order mentioned above.

b) function description: gives the reader information relating, as a rule, to a device of some kind and is concerned with the use or purpose of the device/machinery, e.g. *The helical gear reduces the ratio ...* or the functioning of each of the main parts of the device, e.g. *Depressing the lever causes the spring to compress.* This function is frequently associated with the technique of cause and result as the second example above shows.

c) process description: refers to a series of steps or stages that are interrelated in that each step is dependent on the preceding one and that all steps lead toward a definite goal. This description often takes the form of a series of instructions as part of a list or following paragraph structure.

Example of process description in paragraph form, extracted from an automobile guide:

By turning on the current, the teeth, or vanes, on the timer core pass by the teeth on the pole piece so that a magnetic path is established, causing a voltage pulse to be induced in the pickup coil.This voltage pulse causes TR-3 in the amplifier to conduct. This action turns TR-1 and TR-2 off, which interrupts the current flowing through the primary winding of the ignition coil. Thus, a high voltage surge is produced in the coil secondary, causing the firing of the proper spark plug.

Definition: The types of definitions we are usually concerned with in written EST discourse are short and simple; they appear in every day training manuals and textbooks; however, we also find them in more advanced discourse when writers present new concepts or when current technology needs further explanation. All of these require definitions ranging from a word to several paragraphs.

a) simple definition: implies giving precise information in one sentence or less. Usually, a fruitful approach with students studying science or technology is to show the relationship of the information items by means of diagrams whenever possible. In

working with definition and, as we shall see later, with classification, diagrams are a very useful adjunct to a standard class discussion.

Learners also need to be taught to tell the difference between non-formal definitions which are synonyms used to substitute a word or phrase familiar to the reader and one presumably unfamiliar, e.g. *An arachnid is a spider.* Here, a spider is merely one kind of arachnid, an approximate word; thus, the definition is incomplete. At a more formal level this would be *A spider is an arachnid which ...*

Other forms of non-formal definitions are: definition by negative statement and by antonym, e.g. *An arachnid is not an insect. The opposite of indigenous is foreign.*
b)complex definition: is a way of adding information by expanding definitions into paragraphs. The writer proceeds by explication of the original definition, giving the reader new information about the key terms used in the first definition.

In the following paragraphs excerpted from *The Economist* article, (Science and Technology section),[208] the journalist refers to a new malaria vaccine that is being tested in the Gambia:

Preventing malaria

Another jab

All existing vaccines, for all diseases that can be vaccinated against, work by stimulating the production of antibodies (protein molecules that recognise, lock on to and disable invading viruses, bacteria and other parasites). Antibodies are an important arm of the immune system, but are not the only one. Another arm works by recognising and destroying infected cells, and it is this that Adrian Hill and his colleagues at Oxford University hope to encourage with their vaccine.

The malaria parasite has a complex life-cycle. After someone is bitten by an infected mosquito, the parasites first infest his liver. After a week, they break out of the liver cells that they have been breeding in and enter the bloodstream. Finally, they develop into a form that can infect other mosquitoes that bite the victim, thus restarting the whole process.

Here, the writer starts with function <u>description</u> giving readers information on how *all existing vaccines work* and, then, proceeds with a complex <u>definition</u> of

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[208] *The Economist.* August 24, 2002. ("Another jab") p.60

antibodies in parentheses, thus expanding the meaning of the word by using a synonym *protein molecules* and a defining phrase. The first paragraph also contains a <u>comparison and contrast</u> element *Another arm works by...*

The second paragraph is introduced by a simple <u>descriptive</u> sentence which works as a thematic link with the three sentences that logically follow in the order of importance: from *malaria parasite* to *liver* to *cells* to *bloodstream* to *form* to *victim.* <u>Time order</u> is shown by the markers *after, first, after a week, break out of, enter, finally, develop.* The paragraph comes to the end with a <u>cause and result</u> element tied together by *thus.*

Classification: In order to identify the classification process in reading EST discourse (and in using it in writing), students start by finding a class for an item (or items) and then determine what other items, if any, belong to this class. Furthermore, we may find classification existing simultaneously at more than one level: a term which is a class at one level may well be a member of a class at a higher level or one step down. Indeed, the expression of these relationships – putting order into our minds and tasks - is one of the most common functions of EST discourse.

Teachers know that classification is worth spending teaching time on since, like definition, it is basic both to human thinking and scientific expression. Furthermore, it is concerned with levels of generalization and of related specifics. As a matter of fact, it is always surprising to discover how few students – whether native or non-native – realize that a generalization at one level of a classification can be a specific at another.

We may identify two types of classification; each of these two types, as with the basic types of simple definition, provides us with different amounts of information:

a) complete classification: occurs only if the basis is stated (is not implicit) or is clear from the context.
b) partial classification: leaves out the basis for classifying. Many times, writers fail to state the basis because they feel that it is obvious from the context.

Example 1: a complete classification with a finite number of members (*The Economist*)[209]

Lasers

Tune in to terahertz

Edinburgh.

Lasers now work at new wavelengths

From a human point of view, the terahertz frequencies are a curiously barren region of the electromagnetic spectrum. They lie, unexploited, between microwaves at long wavelengths and infra-red at short. They are neglected because no one has developed a convenient source of terahertz radiation. Not yet, anyway.

    Research into terahertz sources has been driven hard by demand from industry. They have great potential in medical imaging because they are strongly absorbed by large biological molecules and by water, and so promise to reveal tissues in astonishing detail. Research has indicated that terahertz imaging might distinguish cancerous skin cells from healthy cells. They could also provide long-range security for wireless networking because stray signals would be soaked up by moisture in the atmosphere, preventing the neighbours from eavesdropping. Furthermore, they may be useful in environmental sensors which could detect pollutant gases by measuring absorption of the radiation.

This example has two levels of classification: the largest class in paragraph one is "electromagnetic spectrum" which has "terahertz frequencies" as its member. These "frequencies" become a class in turn, including "microwaves at long wavelengths" and "infra-red at short wavelengths". The largest class in paragraph two is "terahertz sources/imaging", which has "cancerous skin cells" and "healthy cells" as its members, as well as "long-range security for wireless networking" and "environmental sensors".

Example 2: the paragraphs that follow appeared at the beginning of an article published in the medical journal *Scientific American* (Liechtenstein, 1993)[210]

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[209] *The Economist.* August 10, 2002. ("Tune in to terahertz") p. 67.
[210] Liechtenstein, L. M. (1993). Allergy and the Immune System. In *Scientific American.* Sept. pp.85-93.

ALLERGY AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

In allergic individuals, parts of the immune system misdirect their power at inocuous substances, producing sometimes deadly symptoms.

By Lawrence M. Liechtenstein

The allergic response – in which certain components of the immune system react strongly to a normally, inoffensive, foreign substance – accounts for a good deal of the illness and medical expense in developed countries. Indeed, an estimated 20 percent or more of the U.S. population is allergic to something. The largest group suffers from allergic rhinitis (including hay fever) or asthma, sneezing or fighting for air after inhaling particular pollens or other ordinarily benign chemicals. Many children and some adults are allergic to foods. Others fall ill after receiving such medicines as penicillin. Still others endure untoward local or systemic reactions to bee stings. Occasionally, allergic attacks are fatal. Asthma alone accounted for an estimated $3.6 billion in direct medical expenditures in 1990 and for nearly 1 percent of all health care costs.

To ease the financial, physiological and psychological burdens imposed by the wayward immune response, many researchers, including my colleagues and me at Johns Hopkins University, have long sought to expand existing therapeutic options. As part of this effort, we are attempting to uncover each step in the process by which exposure to an allergic trigger, or allergen, leads to symptoms. It is now clear that a number of the cellular and molecular interactions constituting the allergic response are often similar from person to person, regardless of differences in the substances to which the individuals react and the symptoms they exhibit. Many details of these exchanges remain to be deciphered, but recent discoveries are already generating exciting new ideas for prevention and control of allergic disorders.

A **_Schemata_**. *Content schema.* Background information: students know that many people nowadays are allergic or highly sensitive to substances such as animal hair, dust, wheat, soya milk etc. and that they may have skin problems or asthmatic breathing consequences among the commonest reactions to such conditions.

Formal schema: _Text-type:_ Medical research article. _Topic:_ disorders produced in allergic people thus affecting their immune system. _Audience:_ lay readers of scientific texts. _Register:_ medical English, though this register also belongs to the field of discourse called "scientific English".

The Introduction-Material and Method-Results- Discussion (IMRAD) structure of the research paper is in close agreement with Aristotle´s four elements of successful oratory: introduction, narration, proof, and epilogue.

Furthermore, the principles and rules for medical-text production are highly genre-specific. For each of the classical medical text genres – case report, treatment-focused report, research paper (original contribution), disease review, dissertation,

medical textbook and speech – we may identify specific characteristics at the deep level: lexical, syntactical, stylistic, pragmatic and cognitive levels, including, for example, the choice of active or passive forms, the positioning of adverbs and adjectives, the choice of first person or third person narrative and the referencing pattern, among others. At the surface level, argumentation is concerned with the limitations and quality of the methods and the material, the theoretical and/or clinical importance of the work, reflections on the results meaning, claims about the success of the original purpose of the study and, usually, directions for future research (Horton, 1995)[211].

Moreover, the interaction between content, form, structure and medium is close and culture-bound. For example, the use of modality varies much from genre to genre. In medical text-books, whose purpose is to present facts, modality is not frequently employed. In research articles, however, modality is mostly employed in the Introduction and the Discussion where the author downtones propositions, possible interpretations and conclusions.

B **_Microstructure:_** the writer has developed the following _techniques_ and _functions_:

- function description is used in the subtitle

- definition _in which certain components of the immune system react..._

- cause and result _accounts for a good deal of the illness and medical expense in developed countries_

- classification has been used in sentences 2,3,4,5 and 6 of the first paragraph, as shown in this graph: Figure 10

CLASS

MEMBERS OF THE CLASS

20% or more of the U.S. population is allergic to something

10% allergic to pollens...

4% allergic to foods

3% allergic to medicines

3% allergic to bee stings

BASIS FOR CLASSIF.

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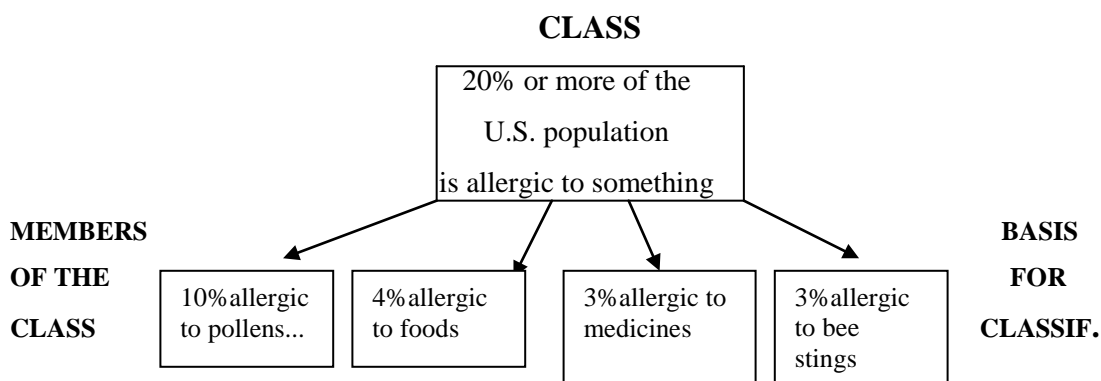
[211] Horton, R. (1995). The rhetoric of research. In _British Medical Journal._ 310: 985-986.

Students should bear in mind that all members of a class must have at least one characteristic in common: in this example, percentages for the U.S. population are given. Additionally, each class member must be clearly separated from all other members according to the basis for classification which functions to differentiate them from each other: *allergic to pollens, benign chemicals, foods, medicines etc.* are some of the causes of allergic reaction in human beings. On the whole, this "tree" method of recording text analysis results for classifying information, is found to be most useful for students, both in the classroom and outside, when they have to analyze their subject-matter reading and produce a written text.

- cause and result has been used in the last two sentences of paragraph one: *Occasionally, allergic attacks are fatal. Asthma alone accounted for...*and the first sentence of paragraph two.

- function description follows: *we are attempting to uncover each step in the process...*

- comparison and contrast has been introduced in *are often similar from person to person, regardless of differences in ...*

- cause and result is used again at the end when the writer resorts to naming *recent discoveries are already generating exciting new ideas ...*

Lexis: it is subject specific and technical: *allergy, immune, inocuous substances, symptoms, benign chemicals, penicillin, therapeutic, allergen...* Names of diseases have been included, *rhinitis, hay fever, asthma,...*Qualifiers in both pre- and post-modification are common: *immune system, inocuous substances, deadly symptoms / allergic to something, allergic to foods, 1 percent of all health care costs, part of this effort, regardless of costs ...*

The *grammar* is standard, in line with the formality of the tone. Some passive constructions are formulaic: *It is now clear that..., remain to be deciphered,...*

Instructions: Instructions are found most often in technical manuals. We can conveniently break this rhetorical function into two major groups: a) direct instructions, which are stated in the imperative, and b) indirect instructions, which often sound more like suggestions than commands and which usually contain a modal verb, such as "can", "may", "should" and less often "must" and the passive mood (or a combination of the

two, that is, passive modals), and a third group c) or instructional information, which is discourse that "assists" instructions by providing corollary information: cautions, warnings, specifying statements, descriptions and theoretical considerations. This type of information cannot stand alone but is always associated with either direct or indirect instructions.

In direct instructions, discourse is usually presented in the form of a vertical list often preceded by a statement indicating the objective of the instructions. In indirect instructions, the discourse is frequently in paragraph form, with the core statement of the paragraph often stating the instructions objective.

Example: Direct and indirect instructions and instructional information in one text.

Instruction Manual

AM/FM Clock Radio

RADIO OPERATION

A clock-radio is a type of alarm clock that can be set to turn on a radio in order to wake someone up.
1. Set the FUNCTION switch to RADIO and the BAND switch to the desired band.
2. Tune in a desired station by turning the TUN control. (Tuning control). The TUNING indicator should light up when the station is accurately tuned in.
3. Adjust the VOLUME control to your desired sound level. For private listening, connect the earphone to the earphone socket (EAR). If water should enter the cabinet, electrical shock or a malfunction may result. Use in an area where there is low humidity and little dust.
4. To turn off the radio, set the FUNCTION switch to OFF. To wake by the radio, tune the radio to your desired station, then follow the steps under HOW TO SET ALARM.
5. Keep the unit away from heating appliances and electric sources that could cause static on the radio such as fluorescent lamps and motors.
6. Remember that you should use a clean soft cloth moistened with plain lukewarm water for cleaning the cabinet.

General Comments: This example presents the following characteristics:

The introduction gives readers the purpose (goal) of the set of instructions: *to wake someone up.* Instruction 1 begins with a direct instruction marked by the use of the imperative and is followed by 5 other instructions in the form of a vertical list. Instruction 2 is also in the imperative mood but the second sentence is a piece of indirect instruction containing the modal *should.* The second sentence of instruction 3 introduces instructional information explaining the use of the *earphone* and the

earphone socket. Sentences 3 and 4 are instances of indirect instructions (marked by the modals *should enter, may result* in paragraph form and as a warning in case of water spill), and instructional information respectively, adding a small amount of theory. Instruction 4 consists of three direct instructions: *set, tune, follow.* Instruction 5 provides once again extra information for the user and, instruction 6 combines indirect instruction (modal *should*) and additional information concerning maintenance of the unit by providing a word of caution: *Remember that you should use...*

      As can be seen, the example given illustrates all the possibilities in the same text. This list can also be used as the basis for student exercises such as collecting information to form tables and then matching words between columns, other activities using passives or modals or else:

a) finding specific verbs or phrasal verbs in the list, b) making sentences using the imperative form and c) joining all the sentences with connectives to form a coherent paragraph: *to turn on – to wake someone up – to set the switch to – to tune in – to adjust the volume control – to connect earphones – to turn off radio – to keep unit away from...*

Syntax and lexis problems in a set of instructions: a few of the syntactic and lexical problems that occur all too often in technical manuals are illustrated in the following example:

Technical services repair cart

1. Oil tank quantity must be 12 quarts or more.
2. Remove engine oil screen for disposal.
3. Before installing external filter assembly, check red button at top of filter. It it raises 3/16 inch, filter element should be changed. P/N 27-7965.
4. Open valve located at bottom of filter to full open position. Repeat valve should be opened to full open position before starting engine.
5. Run engine at 1.02-1.04 EPR for five minutes and observe oil pressure 40-35 PSIG. Oil temperature maximum 120 degree C. Oil quantity not less than 12 quarts.
6. After engine shutdown, close valve at bottom of filter and remove filter assembly cart and install new main oil screen.
7. Service oil tank.

General Comments: These instructions appeared in a *Technical Repair Manual* used by aircraft engineers and mechanics in Saudi Arabian Airlines. Of the seven separate instructions in the example, four invariably cause trouble for non-native readers.

Instructions 1, 2 and 7 are clear. In instruction 3, we find a final sentence (or symbols set off as a sentence: *P/N*: parts numbers) with no indication of the relation of this to the rest of the instruction, thus, it is both ambiguous and confusing. The problem in instruction 4 is caused by the <u>lack of a definite article</u> . A large proportion of readers will probably first read it as *The open valve is located at the bottom of the filter...*When they reach the end of the sentence they will adjust and, so , read: *Open <u>the</u> valve which is located at the bottom of the filter to full open position.* The second sentence was taken by many readers to mean:*The repeat valve should be opened...,* whereas it actually means: *Repeat! The valve ...*

Instruction 5 is a good example of the kind of <u>"cryptic" writing </u>too often found in manuals. In addition to the definite articles omitted, the writer leaves out the key terms that could make the compound direct object (*oil pressure 40-35 PSIG: pounds per square inch gauge)* of the verb *observe* clear to the reader. The writer here intended to instruct the reader to run the engine at a certain speed for five minutes and then to check the oil pressure to make sure that it is *40-35 PSIG,* and to check the oil temperature to make sure that it is no higher than 120 degrees C. These observations are to be made with the engine containing not less than 12 quarts of oil. In addition to trying to save words, the writer of this instruction is guilty of upside-down organization of his information; indeed, the last sentence should clearly have been placed first: *With the oil quantity not less than 12 quarts, run the engine..*

Instruction 6 is also inconsistent in its use of the definite article. However, this sentence is above all a good example of <u>noun compounding</u>, a special problem for some EST students. All the same, the majority of them are capable of handling most two-word compounds, even those that may have a technical meaning, as *engine shutdown, filter assembly cart, oil screen/tank/temperature/quantity, filter element...*Noun compounds (also called noun strings) can be defined as two or more nouns plus necessary adjectives (and less often verbs and adverbs) that together make up a single concept; that is, the total expresses a single noun idea.

In general terms, those who come across compound medical terms for the first time are likely to run into what we may call a "lexical barrier"(Pilegaard, 1997)[212]: the

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[212] Pilegaard, M. (1997). Translation of Medical Research Articles. In Anna Trosborg (ed.), *Text Typology and Translation.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia. John Benjamins Publishing Company. pp. 158-184.

opacity of semantically complex medical words. This is a fact we all have to face when reading scientific texts due to the inevitable expansion of specialized vocabulary and neologisms proposed by scholars, scientists, technologists, educators and others in the medical community. Still, virtually all the complex words of Latin-Greek origin are built up from simpler, smaller parts. Indeed, if the meanings of the smaller parts are known, it is often possible to deduce the meaning of the complex word itself; for example, the word *otorhinolaryngology* can be broken down as follows:

Oto means *ear, rhino* means *nose, laryngo* means *larynx* and *logo* means *study.*

Therefore, *otorhinolaryngology* is the study of the ears, nose and larynx, which is perfectly understandable to most native and non-native speakers of English, since all these words are part of the non-specialised English vocabulary.

However, another example will show that the lexical barrier may be raised to a level where it is not easily surpassed, particularly if the task involves a change of tenor from a specialist text to a non-specialist one. The compound word *pseudohypoparathyroidism* is made up of the words *pseudo* which means false, not real or only apparent; *hypo* which means under; *para* which means beside; *thyroid* which refers to the thyroid gland; and *ism* which means condition or state. So, *pseudohypoparathyroidism* is a condition resembling underactivity of the parathyroid glands. This is just one particular example of the lexical barrier problems found in medicine perhaps more than in any other LSP.

To conclude, teachers may also provide students with examples of additional technical compounds categorized by length and difficulty of paraphrasing (Trimble, 1985)[213] which may cause problems even to native speakers, as:

Complex: a) *aisle-seat speech-interference level,* which has been taken from an airplane manufacturing company report and refers to acoustic tests made to determine the level of interference with speech between an attendant and a passenger who is sitting in an aisle seat (on a medium-sized jet airplane). As is so often the case with five-word compounds of this type, the problem here is one of ambiguity. After a first reading one wonders if there is interference with speech taking place at an aisle seat or interference from speech issuing from an aisle seat.

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[213] Trimble, L. (1985). Op. cit.

b) *long-term surveillance test planning,* refers to plans for educational tests, these to be subject to surveillance over a long period of time.

- <u>Very Complex</u>: Each of these compounds requires thorough knowledge of the subject matter to be understood and, even then, the last one will have to be translated by its writer before it is decoded by colleagues or experts in the field.

a) *Full swivel steerable non-retracting tail wheel overhaul* is from an airplane maintenance manual. All of the modifiers of *overhaul* form a unit with the headword of this compound within a compound being *tail wheel;* thus, we have the overhaul of an airplane tail wheel (or of a wheel which retracts into the tail of the airplane), this tail wheel having the characteristics of being non-retractable, steerable, and capable of making a complete swivel.

b)*Heterogeneous graphite moderated natural uranium fueled nuclear reactor* becomes somewhat easier to read if a few punctuation symbols are used to clarify the problem of which word modifies which other word (or words): *A heterogeneous, graphite-moderated, natural-uranium-fueled nuclear reactor.*

For classroom discussion purposes, students may bring from their subject-matter readings samples of various types of compounds and then use them as bases for paraphrasing exercises or writing assignments.

Visual-verbal relationships. This final rhetorical function, illustrated in Chapter XV, will be further discussed in Chapter XVIII of this Thesis.

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CHAPTER XVII

Text-production competence. (Part I)

Essay writing

In the classroom, writing may be used as one of a number of techniques to help add variety and interest to the lesson. In addition, it lends itself to integration with other activities ...; thus, a reading activity may lead into discussion from which a piece of writing evolves.

(White, 1987)[214]

Introduction

As well as analysing texts produced by other people, language/reading courses often encourage students to develop their own writing skills. A knowledge of the ways in which audience, purpose and context affect speech, reading and writing, an understanding of lexical and grammatical patterns, a sensitivity to rhetorical and metaphorical language and an ability to recognize different formats should help learners to "craft" their own writing. Furthermore, the manipulation/exploitation of linguistic structures also enables them to create effective examples of a range of different varieties of English.

Indeed, there are different reasons why writing deserves a place in the language syllabus. To begin with, an ability to write remains a key to examination success. In addition, the teacher may also use writing as a testing device – not necessarily to grade learners, but rather to provide feedback on what they have learned. Student writing can also provide useful evidence of confusions and errors, and the teacher can diagnose individual as well as general problems on the basis of such written work.

Above all, writing requires thought, discipline and concentration; it involves committing something to a relatively permanent form. It is a record by which we are judged by whoever reads what we have written taking into account such matters as handwriting, spelling, grammar, style, content and logic of our production. In short, writing demands care, effort and attention to detail.

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[214] White, R. V. (1987). Approaches to Writing. In M. H. Long & J. C. Richards (eds.) *Methodology in TESOL. A Book of Readings.* Univ. of Hawaii at Manoa. Newbury House Publishers p. 259.

The composing process. Given the interactive nature of the reading process described in Chapter II and subsequently developed in various other chapters of this Thesis, we understand better why an experienced <u>writer</u> has the responsibility to compose a written <u>text</u> that will be decoded by an intended <u>reader</u> who is distant in time and place from the writing process, but who nevertheless will be able to comprehend the text.

Personal writing preferences and techniques that characterize each individual writer will be taken into account during the composing process. Some writers begin by drawing up outlines, others design flow charts or work with lists of questions to be addressed in a brainstorming fashion, while some simply sit down, experience a natural flow of creativity and then start writing. Some writers even report that they might use different **strategies** for different types of writing.

Moreover, since writing is viewed as a communicative act, it also entails considerations of how discourse must be shaped for a particular audience and a specific purpose (Kroll, 1991)[215] Though sometimes writers write texts for themselves to read (personal diaries, etc.), most of the time we write so that someone else can read and comprehend the message.

As stated at the beginning of this Thesis (Chapter II) when describing the reading process, I will **also** take a **top-down** approach to writing by placing more emphasis on the content, the organization and the structure of the written passage (Schemata: Content, Formal; knowledge of the world and writing conventions: topics, registers, etc.) rather than its linguistic form. However, in the long run and in order to ensure that the text has communicative power, it also needs to be well written in terms of the proper choice of words and use of cohesive devices, grammatical patterns, spelling and punctuation.

Once again, it is my contention that these **bottom-up features** should be focused on later in the writing process, when the initial barriers have been removed and the student is willing to engage in the creative process of communication through writing. In other words, students will gradually learn to organize their ideas in a way that can easily be understood by their readers and lead to better writing skills.

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[215] Kroll, B. (1991). Teaching writing in the ESL context. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House pp. 245-263.

Thus, the writing perspectives presented in this chapter - Figure 11 - to achieve text-production competence, are based on the basic model of discourse processing as first introduced in Figure 2 (Chapter II):

Figure 11: Written Text Production Framework

Top-down (Macro) processing

Schemata

Content: prior knowledge

Formal: discourse knowledge: registers...

knowledge of the world

Context

Situational

Awareness of audience

and purpose

Revision

Production of

written text

Metacognition:

writing strategies

Language knowledge:

grammar, vocabulary,

punctuation, etc.

Editing

Bottom.up (Micro) processing
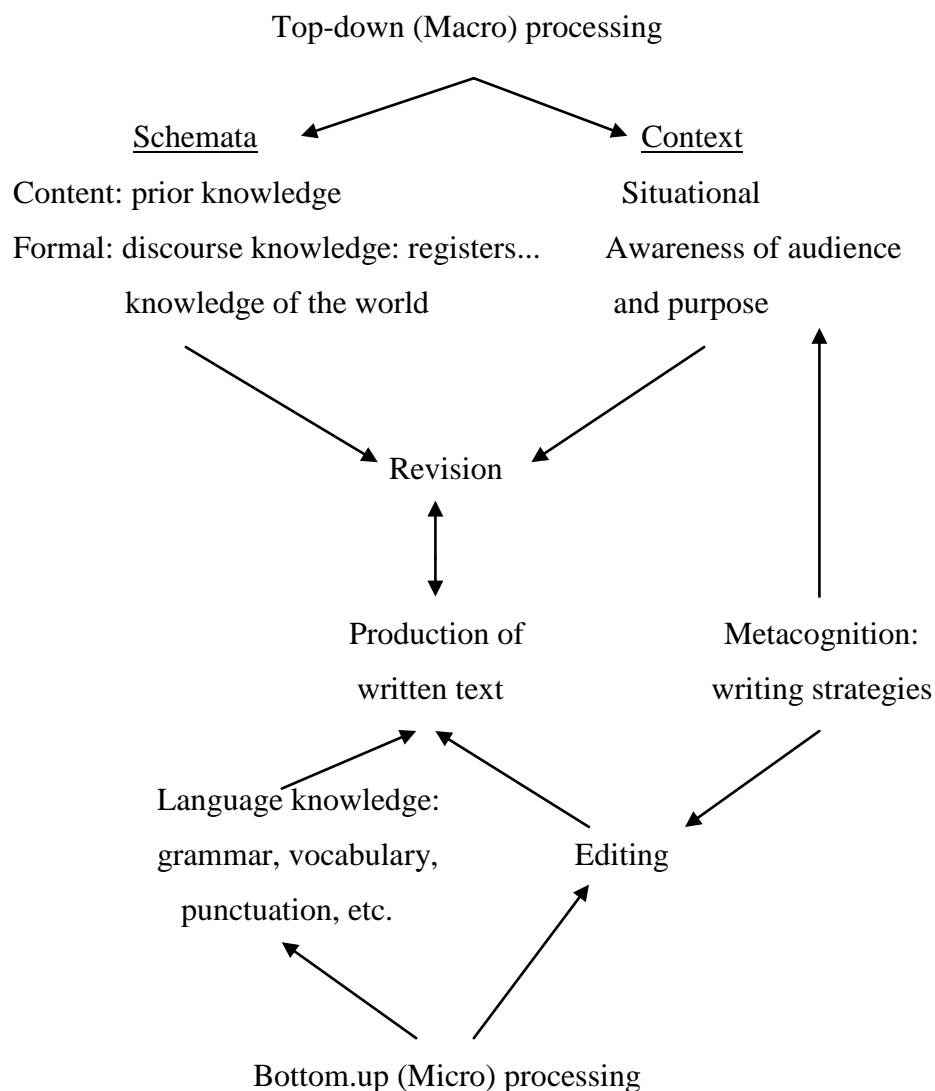
Figures 2 and 11 have a lot in common since both reading and writing deal with the written text, though the former is receptive and the latter productive. In both processing frameworks the language user begins with prior knowledge and experience with written texts, combining this with discourse knowledge of writing conventions and with the assessment of the purpose and audience. Furthermore, metacognition also plays

a crucial role in writing but, here, strategies are most significant in revision and editing of the written product. (In the reading process, comprehension of the text is essential). Here, too, we are concerned with three components: <u>the writer, the reader and the text,</u> but the focus is now on <u>the writer</u>, his motivations and goals for writing.

Approaches to writing

Among the most recent approaches to writing theory and writing instruction, a consideration of the expressivist versus the cognitive movements is highly relevant.

The **<u>expressivist</u>** <u>approach</u> views writing as an act which leads to <u>self-discovery</u> and encourages teachers to help students develop their own ideas, voice and stance in order to produce fresh and spontaneous prose. Leaders of this movement have emphasized <u>fluency</u> and activities such as the writing of <u>personal journals</u> as the major aims in the writing class.

The **<u>cognitivist</u>** <u>approach</u>, on the other hand, places great importance on writing as a <u>problem-solving</u> activity and therefore emphasizes <u>thinking</u> and <u>process</u> in writing. Cognitive/schema theories provide models of skill acquisition that have a dynamic, process-oriented framework; thus, language production is seen as an active process of problem-solving, meaning construction and expression that is then translated into text writing. According to this approach, the writer makes plans, considers the context, chooses and generates alternatives, presents arguments, arrives at a well-supported conclusion, prepares a draft and revises his work. Rather than following a linear progression of development, this composing process reflects <u>recursivity</u>: we write a first version, we make changes and then rewrite and reformulate the whole passage which includes responding to peer or teacher feedback.

Recent studies have shown that there must be careful <u>interaction</u> between top-down and bottom-up productions of the written text (**interactionist** approach); that is to say, at the top-down level it is the <u>audience</u> and the <u>intent</u> that are most important, while at the bottom-up level attention needs to be focused on <u>language features</u> and other conventions of the written language.

Product-process distinction: In teaching composition, the <u>process-oriented</u> approach, concerned with the underlying abilities and skills used in its composing process, is

sometimes compared with the product-oriented one which focuses on producing completed acts of communication or language output (products) with a pre-defined goal, emphasizing imitation of various kinds of model compositions. Thus, language teaching and the study of language learning are concerned both with products and with underlying processes. For instance, letters, compositions and essays are examples of the products of writing; but in order to write a long essay, a number of processes are involved, such as collecting information, note-taking, outlining, drafting and revising (process).

Traditionally, the teaching of writing was language-focused: writing was used as a means of reinforcing language which had already been dealt with from a grammatical perspective or in a vocabulary-building context. The emphasis, then, was on accuracy which was achieved mainly through the copying of models (Audio-Lingual Method)[216]. This gave way to the development of what is known as the model-based approach where the model is taken as the starting point; then, the text is analyzed and studied for features of form, organization and content; subsequently, linguistic items and rhetorical patterns are manipulated; finally, new input is provided as a basis for a parallel text. This concern with anticipated or predicted outcomes – with mimicking the model – has been challenged by those approaches that encourage the learner to communicate by all means possible. This change has led to the evolution of a new approach, which may be summarized thus:

Task specified → *Communicate as far as possible* → *Study* → *Practise* → *Recycle*
the model

Differences between spoken and written forms of language

Writing is not considered a natural activity. All physically and mentally normal people learn to speak a language; however, all people have to be taught how to write. Furthermore, writing, unlike speech is displaced in time. Indeed, this must be one reason why writing originally evolved since it makes possible the conveyance and

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[216] "Audio-Lingual Method": a method of foreign or second language teaching, prominent in the U.S. in the 1960s, which a) emphasized speaking and listening before reading and writing, b) used dialogues and drills, c) encouraged language-learning through the formation of habits, d) favoured the theories of Structural Linguistics and Behaviourism. It was also known as the "mim-mem method": both dialogues and drills made use of the mimicry (imitation) and memorization of material presented as a model.

communication or, in other words, the transmission of a message from one place to another and from one point of time to another. A written message can be received, stored and referred back to at any time. It is permanent in comparison with the ephemeral character of spoken language.

A consequence of the displacement of writing between space and time is that the writer and reader are physically separated. Certainly, if both are present simultaneously when the message is being sent, there is no reason for writing, unless of course the message is to act as a reminder or an instruction which the receiver can carry away with him. The physical separation of writer and reader puts the former in a very different position from that of face-to-face communication. Generally, in spoken interaction we can judge how our message is being received and comprehended by looking at how our audience is responding, whereas in writing, this is impossible. Indeed, feedback from the reader will always be delayed and, of course, it will be too late to change or improve the written message by then.

Nevertheless, the writer has an advantage over the speaker in that the former is able to monitor his own performance and make corrections/improvements without the reader realizing this process is taking place. In speech, hesitations and interruptions are obvious to the hearer but not so to the reader.

Moreover, because the writer and reader are normally physically at a distanace, it is important that the former be explicit and not take for granted shared knowledge with the reader. Different types of writing have developed conventions for making shared knowledge explicit; for instance, business correspondence will often open with such phrases as "With reference to ..." in which the writer establishes a context and shared understanding of what he is writing about.

Finally, whereas in speaking there are many ways of indicating shades of meaning – through stress, intonation, tone of voice, etc. – such features are absent in writing. Instead, there is a limited range of possibilities, such as underlining, the use of italics, upper/lowercase print and bold type.

The Dynamics of writing

When we look at writing instruction over the years, in many classrooms and in many textbooks, we see that the answers to the question "Why do language teachers ask

their students to write?" can be categorized into six pedagogical purposes (Raimes, 1987)[217]: for reinforcement, training, imitation, communication, fluency and learning.

Writing for reinforcement: When the audiolingual method was the dominant mode of instruction in language classrooms in the 1950s and 1960s, writing served a subservient role in that its purpose was to reinforce oral patterns of the language that students had just learnt to understand or say. This also meant reinforcing a grammatical concept that had just been introduced or drilling some aspect of sentence formation by means of repetition, substitution or transformation in order to demonstrate accuracy to the teacher. Drills are now less commonly used in communicative methodologies since it is argued that they practise pseudo-communication and do not involve meaningful interaction.

Writing for training: Here, students are given practice in using and manipulating patterns of linguistic and rhetorical forms that might be new to them by working with discourse units longer than the sentence and prescribed by the teacher or textbook. Students are trained in using transformations as in: *Telescopes make objects that are far away appear larger and nearer* which is changed to *Telescopes are instruments that make objects taht are far away appear larger and nearer.* These sentence combining exercises first appeared as isolated pairs of sentences to rewrite as one; later, they were presented as connected discourse forming paragraphs and as part of controlled-composition exercises.

Writing for imitation: Here, teachers want students to become familiar with rhetorical and syntactic forms by following carefully chosen models. For example, students read an essay, such as one classifying attitudes toward money, analyze its organizational pattern and write a similarly organized essay on a related topic, such as a classification of attitudes toward work or travel. Sometimes, learners are even asked to use chunks of the model in their own writing; in this way, they impose the skeleton of this contrived form onto new content.

Writing for communication: With the advent of communicative competence as a goal in language learning in the 1970s, writing teachers shifted their emphasis from accuracy and patterns to a greater awareness of the importance of the writer´s purpose and

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[217] Raimes, A. (1987). Why Write? From Purpose to Pedagogy. In *English Teaching Forum.* Volume XXV, Number 4, October, pp.36-41.

audience for writing. Guidelines disappear and free communication is stressed; there is feedback from the reader and the writer is no longer writing in a vacuum.

<u>Writing for fluency:</u> Here, language teachers ask for daily journals, freewriting, brainstorming, drafts and revisions in an attempt to encourage fluency and invention. Students are frequently free to generate their own content; they are urged to concentrate on ideas and not to be concerned about spelling and grammar (accuracy) until they are satisfied enough with their content to work on editing.

<u>Writing for learning:</u> Writing, as a major language skill, should be used for learning all the language skills. Students begin with content, not with grammar or form; they write journals, stories, answers to questions about summaries of readings, descriptions, drafts and final copy. They do sentence combining, fill-in exercises, transformations, controlled-composition activities to give reinforcement and training in grammatical and rhetorical concepts; they use the rhetorical modes of description, comparison and contrast, definition or analysis; they get help from fellow students and their teacher; they revise; they consider alternative methods of organizing their ideas; they might even do more imitating of rhetorical structure; they handle form, grammar and style in the context of their needs and, above all, they learn to **expand a repertory of techniques.**

> ***In short, learners perceive writing as a means and as a process, not as an end: it focuses on development rather than on outcomes***

The teaching of writing: A sequenced presentation of all the stages of the writing process

Teachers currently concerned with the implementation of the writing component of an advanced ESP course generally cover the following factual types of writing:

research papers – book reviews – journal articles – reading and listening comprehension exercises – letter-writing – assessment practices – graphic text representations – summary and essay writing, among others. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the last type of writing: the teaching of the stages and strategies in essay-writing development. The underlying aim is, once again, to expose students to as

wide a range of options as possible, including a <u>variety</u> of text-types, registers, topics, points of view, rhetorical features, etc.(Banfi, 1998)[218].

       Upon completion of the reading comprehension task via extensive work on the topic in previous courses, the reading/writing instructor may reinforce learners´ familiarity with the printed word by asking them to write an <u>essay</u> as follow-up activity, based on the subject matter and content related to the reading material.

Figure 12: A model of writing
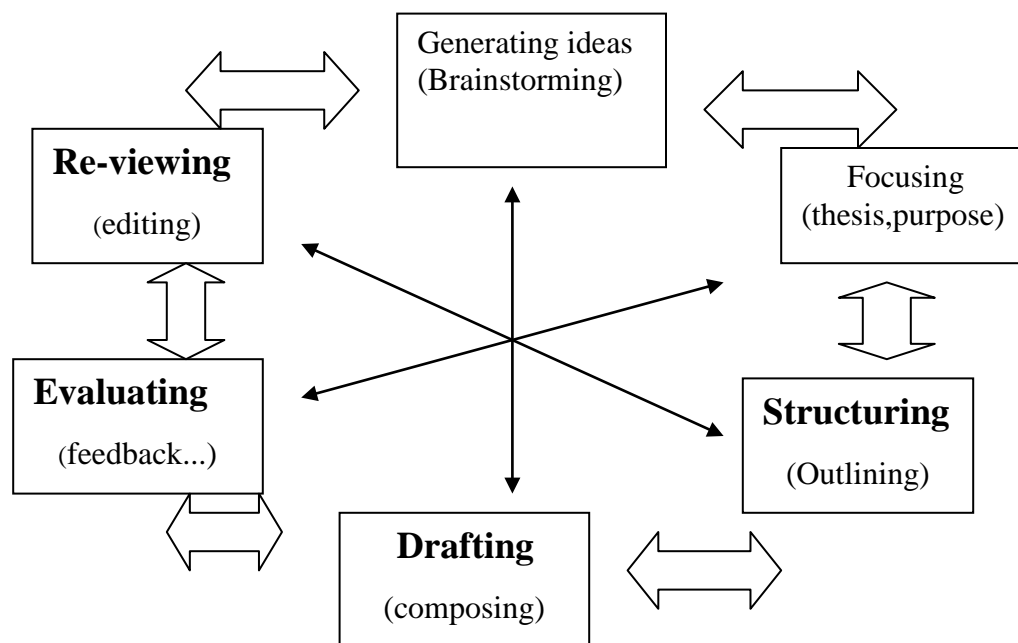
1- <u>Warm-up stage</u>: Teachers´first concern should be to get students hooked on an idea. We know that when learners can relate emotionally and experientially to a topic, they will write most spontaneously and fluently.The first minutes of the class should be devoted to breaking the initial barrier thus relieving the anxiety which often accompanies the writing task, usually for fear of failure or feeling of incompetence (the so-called "blank-page fear"). Motivated learners then engage in preparatory work leading to the selection of the <u>title</u> which may result from teacher/student interaction or, simply, from the teacher´s own decision.

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[218] Banfi, C. (1998). An experience in academic writing. In *ELT News & Views. Teaching Writing Skills.* Supplement 5.2 June pp. 4-10.

2- <u>Pre-writing stage</u>: <u>Generating ideas</u>: Once the preliminary questions of <u>title/topic</u> have been considered, there should be room for the choice of <u>text-type/genre</u> (letter, report, advertisement...), <u>register</u> (formal, technical ...) and <u>audience.</u> This stage, which is also commonly referred to as the <u>idea-generating stage</u> in much of the literature within the field of composition, describes the spontaneous realization of thought and involves drawing upon long-term memory which may be of three main kinds: (White & Arndt, 1991)[219]: a) episodic memory, devoted to events, experiences, visual and auditory images; b) semantic memory, which includes information, ideas, attitudes and values; c) unconscious memory, based on emotions and feelings. In generating ideas, discursive/expository writing will tend to call more upon semantic memory in which logically interconnected ideas will be important. By contrast, imaginative writing will call more for episodic and unconscious memories in the creating process of fiction or imaginary world/context

To assist in generating ideas at this initial stage, there are two main kinds of heuristic techniques: <u>guided</u> and <u>unguided</u>. Teaching procedures are heuristic in that they encourage learners to learn through experience or by their own personal discoveries. Guided techniques are teacher-directed modes of writing instruction in which he makes use of a range of prompts (usually questions) to enable writers to discover ideas. In this case, the teacher makes use of a stimulus to get students started which does not imply that he provides topics; rather, he uses more general catalysts to get their thoughts flowing. Indeed, words or phrases on the blackboard, visual and auditory stimuli (provocative music) can be used very effectively as starters. Unguided techniques are those in which writers do not rely on external prompts, but generate ideas themselves that are not predetermined, as in brainstorming.[220]

<u>Brainstorming</u>: Students devote their attention to this strategy mainly for ideas, but also for appropriate vocabulary and structures. Carried out individually or better still, by a group, brainstorming involves thinking quickly and without inhibition so as to produce or jot down as many ideas as possible on a given topic or problem. This process then

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[219] White, R. & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. Longman Group UK Limited p.17.
[220] "Brainstorming". Term developed in Chapter VIII ("The study guide in action: scientific/technical English").

leads to rethinking the original thesis and further onto its formulation. Indeed, learners´varied backgrounds, interests and motivation may significantly challenge attempts to offer uniform illustrations or examples, which is after all, the purpose of this strategy. Furthermore, during this stage students can engage in <u>free writing</u>, not just of words or phrases, but of whole chunks without worrying about grammar or accuracy, in order to develop fluency in writing. Some writing activities included under brainstorming are:

- clustering: the student writes a topic or concept in the middle of a page and gathers ideas into clusters around the topic

- word bank: the student lists words that come to mind about a topic and then arranges them into categories

- mapping: the student prepares a graphic representation of key words to be used in a composition.

Brainstorming is a useful technique when writers are faced with a very broad or general topic, such as *Computers, The Environment, Travel, The Death Penalty,* etc. Indeed, such open-endedness represents a problem which brainstorming can help to solve.

<u>Example:</u> Students were told to choose from a list of several topics written on the board. Here are ideas which were produced during the brainstorming phase based on the following title: *Latin Resurgence* (The topic dealt with the reorganization of football matches in Latin America and the fact that they are now highly respected international events):

<u>Useful lexis</u>

Footballers – coaches – baseball - sponsors – World Cup - referees – radio announcers – Olympic Games – journalists – rugby – Maradona – tournaments – championships – American football – foul – penalty – kickoff ...

<u>Useful structures</u>

To play football – to win a silver medal – to hold the championship – a state of chaos dominated the scene – to undermine development and results – to launch a new era – to strengthen the game – to watch players in their own stadiums ....

These stages of the activity should take no more than ten minutes. Furthermore, variations on the above are possible, of course, and will soon suggest themselves, such as the use of visually-based material (charts, diagrams ...)as a generating strategy which can provide ample opportunity for creativity. Besides, class size is also an important factor: with a larger class (twenty-five or more students), it is essential to organize students into sub-groups for brainstorming to ensure that all of them have a chance to participate.

3- Focusing: It is the duty of the writer to focus on a central idea, or upon a viewpoint, which will unify and inform the text produced. The lack of such a focus means the reader will find it difficult to grasp what it is the writer is trying to get across. Above all, the identification of the central idea enables the writer to discover the main thesis.

In the example mentioned above on *Latin Resurgence,* the main idea is: new football stability in Latin America.

The writer will also take into account the writing purpose: to entertain, to provoke thought and reflection, to record events or experiences, to inform, to influence opinion or to request information, among others. Indeed, purpose is an essential part of the writing process since this is what guides writers in making choices about the content they should include and how they should express it. For instance, people who write letters to newspapers (Letters to the Editor) have varying reasons for doing so: to complain, praise, thank, correct, put the record straight, oppose, agree, disagree, persuade, dissuade, put an alternative viewpoint and so on. It is therefore usually quite easy to detect the purpose of letters to newspapers and this, together with their relative brevity and accessibility, makes them a useful starting point for considering the importance of purpose in writing.

The two examples that follow have been excerpted from *The Economist*[221] magazine. The article and a reader´s response to it, though succint as it may be, illustrating the type of letter sent to the editor, may be useful for class discussion:

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[221] *The Economist.* September 28, 2002. ("Pain killer") p. 59. October 12, 2002. ("A double dose") p.16.

Drug side-effects

Pain killer

New York - **Its maker may finally have to admit that Tylenol can be a dangerous drug**

After 25 years of study, a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel decided last week to recommend that <u>acetaminophen,</u> the active ingredient in Tylenol, America´s most popular non-prescription drug, should carry an explicit warning about potential liver damage.

[...]Even the possibility that a problem exists in <u>acetaminophen</u> came as a shock to many Americans, 55m of whom use Tylenol each year, Johnson & Johnsonn, a big drugs company, made Tylenol into a huge success with an advertising campaign boasting, "nothing´s safer". The reputation of product and firm were intertwined in 1982 when J&J immediately responded to a tampering incident that cost seven lives, recalling every package. The incident became the most famous case study in corporate social responsibility.

But while J&J was quick to address external threats to Tylenol, it only grudgingly faced up to problems with <u>acetaminophen</u> itself. The distinction between a safe and a harmful dosage is particularly narrow and it can be toxic in relatively small quantities...

LETTERS

A double dose

SIR – Your article about the dangers associated with acetaminophen, the active ingredient of Tylenol, should have mentioned that it is also known as paracetamol ("Pain killer", September 28th). Hugh Anderson. Haslemere, Surrey.

First of all, the teacher should get the class to suggest as many reasons as they can think of why Mr Anderson wrote this letter to the magazine:

-Writer´s purpose: to correct, to set the record straight, to provide extra information ...

-Writer´s attitude: friendly, condescending, constructive, positive ...

Additionally, they should evaluate together the special language devices used and how effective the letter is: very/moderately/not very effective...

4- <u>Structuring:</u> Conveying a message through writing is mainly a matter of selecting information – both factual and linguistic – organizing and structuring it. Although we may start off with a general organizational scheme, new ideas are constantly generated, which means that we continually have to readjust our original plans. Summing up and as previously stated, writing should not be thought of as a process where organization of ideas is a finite stage or process, but rather one in which <u>on-going re-organization</u> or <u>recursivity</u> is the basic premise.

After compilation of relevant material to be used as supporting evidence has been done, or to put it in a more formal manner, after <u>research</u> has been conducted, students should be aware of the need to start categorising and grouping procedures to a greater or lesser degree leading to a general <u>outline</u> of the essay.

<u>Example</u> Grouping ideas into frameworks:

We assume learners have completed the reading comprehension task on the *Newsweek* article[222] that follows, and are then asked to write down possible categories or headings under which the information could be arranged. These illustrative frameworks will later provide a starting-off point for the <u>outline</u> and first draft of any essay assigned to them.

Come in, Mars

By Adam Rogers

Since human beings first looked into the face of the universe and saw only infinite night, we have wondered who was out there. Not what – that was clear enough. Stars, maybe rocks like the one under our feet. But did anything laugh and cry, have children, build monuments? Was anything looking back wondering the same things about us? Those questions remain unanswered, but last week a team of scientists announced that after two years of staring into a 1.9-kilogram meteorite from our neighbor planet Mars, they had found indications of life. The microscopic organisms they say they found, never experienced life the way we do. But if they´re right, then more than 3 billion years ago they lived – fed, reproduced, died. And the simple fact of their existence radically improves the odds that we are not alone in the universe...

<u>General comments:</u>

This text is only the first paragraph of the *Nesweek* article but, still, it is manageable and complete in itself and useful for the purposes of this study. The Red Planet Mars is here characterized as a guest who is invited in and asked to remain in our planet Earth.

As stated, students were asked to prepare a framework for the text above.They decided to group their ideas under the following headings:

A- <u>Identifying the text</u> in terms of content schema, background information: Martian meteorites and interplanetary travel. Formal schema: text-types and genres: an expository paragraph; topic, audience and register: semi-formal scientific text for the lay reader on Mars, one of the planets of the solar system whose meteorite, discovered in the Antarctica, was studied for 2 years by a team of scientists who are now ready to prove that life might have existed at some point on Mars.

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[222] *Newsweek.* August 19, 1996. A. Rogers, ("Come in, Mars") pp. 41-45

A hierarchical relationship of ideas is established: Universe: class; Mars, stars ...: members of class.

B- <u>Distinguishing</u> one piece of relevant information from another: same and different, other possibilities of life in the universe (UFO´s, extraterrestrial creatures, primitive tribes in Brazil or Africa); cause and effect: the first Mars crafts (Mariner, Viking, the Soviet Phobos ...) returned photos, videos, high-resolution images; others failed to go into orbit for malfunction reasons ...

C- <u>Classifying</u> relevant pieces of information into suitable groups: Astronomy (the scientific study of the stars), Biology (the scientific study of living things), Astrology, Anthropology ...

D- <u>Ordering</u> material as in sequence of occurrence, from general to specific: universe, the solar system, the sun, the planets, stars, galaxies, meteorites ...

E- <u>Synthesizing</u> relevant information from different sources into a composite whole: the rest of the article mentions the origins of the universe – NASA scientists and their discoveries since 1960 – the astronauts and their landing on the moon in 1969– the space race ...

F- <u>Inferring</u> beyond relevant information that was collected: establishing a non-stated conclusion or applying general principles to a specific case. The journalist Adam Rogers is suggesting that maybe we are not alone in the universe or, that there are definitely traces of primitive life in outer space ...

<u>Outlining:</u> An outline is a plan for an essay or piece of writing which presents main points and supporting details covered in an essay as well as the order in which they will be mentioned. This stage of the composing process can also lead to the discovery of new ideas and insights, which explains the fact that it is considered a recursive practice and heuristic device (Groeschel, 1998)[223] Moreover, outlining can be described as a transition between generating ideas and writing a first draft. Some writers even prefer to make an outline of their paper after they have written a draft. When used this way, the outline is not a plan but rather a check to verify that the paper presents the ideas logically and covers all aspects of the topic. In either case, the outline is not an end in

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[223] Groeschel, G. (1998). An approach to introducing students to pre-writing techniques. In *ELT News & Views. Teaching Writing Skills.* Supplement 5.2 June, pp. 14-15.

itself; it is merely a method or tool to help writers produce an organized discussion on paper (Leki, 1998)[224]

At this stage, students proceed to draw up a plan or full outline for the essay on *Latin Resurgence* mentioned in Stage 2- Generating ideas. Brainstorming (useful lexis, structures), based on a four-paragraph expository essay. They will have to think about the elements that will take priority or be given greatest prominence when drafting the essay for the first time.

Example: *Latin Resurgence*

Introduction (Paragraph 1) Main idea: Latin American domination of the football scene and its reorganization. Facts: organization – power – talented players – coaches – teams – organizational chaos.

Development (Paragraph 2) Main idea: Harmony and unity among the football members. Facts: a new era – South American Confederation – Mexico and the United States – Copa America – parody of a tournament – now: a respected event.

Development (Paragraph 3) Main idea: The new stability prevented players from joining foreign clubs. Facts: opportunities – European and Japanese clubs – football fans – stadiums – champions – teams – coaches.

Conclusion (Paragraph 4) Main idea: The start of a new era. Facts: renewed activity – hot favourites – World Cup – contenders ...

5- Drafting: Post-intermediate students are well aware of the three basic principles underlying paragraph and essay construction: Unity (thesis, topic sentence...), Coherence and Cohesion (connectives...) and Emphasis (parallel construction, periodic sentences, figures of speech ...) (Chapter III of this Thesis). They have also learnt to note the typical characteristics of beginnings and endings in composition writing; they have established distinctions between the treatment of narrative, descriptive, expository... essays; have analysed models and discussed the more obvious pitfalls in essay writing, among other basic production features. They have also used successful strategies when dealing with:

-    worksheets containing mismatched examples of openings and endings

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[224] Leki, I. (1998). *Academic Writing. Exploring Processes and Strategies.* Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville. CUP.

- arresting openings for a text and emphatic conclusions

- the completion of stories in line with the development of characters, plot and theme

- planning cues for opinion/factual exposition

- selecting or dropping ideas for the body of the essay

- narrowing the topic/thesis in light of different audience and purpose

- the choice of ideas in the order of importance

- the deductive structure and turning it around into the inductive form of reasoning

- overlapping features in narrative/expository essays ...

Lastly, students may work with the essay *Latin Resurgence* as published in *Newsweek,*[225] noting the underlying characteristics mentioned above:

Latin Resurgence - A better organization makes a stronger power. That´s more or less the clue for the current Latin American domination of the international football scene. Yet for decades, the region´s enormous pool of talented players,coaches and teams suffered because of an organizational chaos that undermined development and results.

A recent reorganization of the continent´s football launched a new era that has, for one thing, strengthened the game in established nations like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Bolivia. Under the leadership of Nicolás Leoz of Paraguay, there is finally harmony and unity among the 10-member South American Confederation. That organization has not only started to back its own teams more than ever,but also has opened the gate for Concacaf (Confederation of Central and North America) by inviting Mexico and the United States to participate in the Copa América. Once a parody of a tournament, it is now a highly respected international event that gives the winner the official title of Champion of the American Continent.

The new stability has created more opportunities for potential corporate sponsors, which in part means that Latin America can finally afford to keep its players from joining well-financed European and Japanese clubs. So Argentine football fans can watch Maradona in their own stadiums again, Brazilians can cherish their powerful Säo Paolo world champions and Colombians can be proude to have Carlos Valderrama at close range again. And recently, talented Colombian Freddy Rincón chose the Brazilian team Palmeiras, financed by the Italian-based company Parmalat, over a European suitor. Plus, the best coaches of the world can now stay on their own continent. So masters like Tele Santana (Säo Paolo) and Colombia´s Francisco Maturana remain in Latin America.

All this renewed activity has helped make Brazil and Colombia hot favorites to win this summer´s World Cup, while Argentina and Mexico are among hopeful contenders. And for Latin American football fans, this is just the start of a new era.

General comments: The essay starts with a bold statement in the form of an emphatic device to catch the readers´attention: parallel construction, in the first sentence, incorporating a proverbial opening: *A better organization makes a stronger power.* Yet, the topic sentence is found in the second sentence: *The current Latin American*

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[225] *Newsweek.* June 13, 1994. ("Latin Resurgence") p. 33.

domination of the international football scene, which may be completed by adding *...
has launched a new era* (Paragraph 2).

The next two paragraphs constitute the body and bulk of the essay and are introduced to
support and clarify the writer´s main theme by resorting to facts (not details, since this
is an exository essay and not a descriptive one) concerning the international football
scene. The writer uses comparison and contrast, cause and result elements and ends
paragraph 2 with another instance of parallelism: *Once a parody of a tournament, it is
now a highly respected international event ...*which may also introduce figurative
language by employing a comparison/metaphor: *Copa America* is compared to a *parody
of a tournament* in that they are both a comic imitation of a real championship, a
mockery of a tournament.

Paragraph 3 contains repetition: *can finally afford, can watch, can cherish, can be
proud* which provides a more subjective point of view favouring Latin football
resurgence. To prove his point further, the writer gives names of players, countries,
confederations and coaches and rounds off his essay by using an ending technique: a
philosophical reflection on the future. In other words, he brings the reader back to the
main idea, thus giving it a closely-knit pattern: *the start of a new era.*

6- Evaluating: At this stage, not only the instructor´s role is essential but also that of
peers who may provide both positive and negative feedback on learners´work; in fact,
the latter are given opportunities to react to other people´s comments on their own
writing and decide whether significant changes are to be made or not. It is by noticing
these reactions that students will become more critical about the quality of their own
production and end up rewriting or reformulating the passage to make it more "reader-
based." Additionally, peer and expert feedback may be supplemented by adding
activities that will engage learners in comparative analyses of discourse.

As far as computers are concerned, they have alsoenabled teachers of writing to
develop new ways of training students in writing tasks. For instance, a short well-
written or even a poorly written text may be used in computer courseware whereby
learners are asked to alter, expand, shorten or elaborate on this text. Results are then
compared to a peer´s product; in this way, the computer enables them to choose from a
bank of texts, work on any given passage directly by making editorial changes in the

original text and, at the same time, retain the possibility of comparing new versions with the original one. The main advantage of the computer is that students can work on their versions individually or in pairs and then, rewrite or readjust such texts easily. In this sense, its use facilitates ongoing feedback and evaluation by the teacher, who can monitor the students´progress on-line and provide constant feedback.

Additionally, in order to become a critical reader of one´s own work and, maybe, to establish why a text is unsatisfactory, it is convenient to work with an evaluation checklist whereby we can apply the following criteria:

Is the writer´s purpose clear? - Does the piece lack focus?

Is the text properly segmented? - Are there any places where elaboration and clarification is required? - Is there irrelevant information provided?

Does the text fail to conform to conventions of its type?

Are there any places where language errors need to be edited?

Find alternative words for ...They do not seem quite appropriate in this context ...

Another procedure is conferencing, or a semi-structured conversation enabling the teacher to offer personalized attention to weak students or small groups in a mixed-ability class in order to improve their self-esteem and achieve better results than is generally possible with only written remarks. This procedure is always conducted on a face-to-face basis, so that students can respond to the teacher´s questions and comments as well as adding their own. The discussion can be one of joint negotiation of meaning, whereas written comments tend to be one-way. For instance, a student may present a collection of his writing in a portfolio and discuss the selection in it, difficulties encountered, etc. The teacher in turn, gives feedback on progress, suggested improvements and other pieces of advice. The portfolio is an evaluation/assessment as well as a revision tool.

7- Re-viewing: This stage in EFL composition/essay-writing classes, also known as revision or proof-reading, is concerned with the practice whereby students "look again" at their writing holistically, in its entirety and as a whole in order to improve such areas as organization, focus, etc.

The portfolio, usually, a collection of different writing assignments kept by the student in a folder or workbook, is also useful in revising material after feedback from

the teacher or others (Evaluating stage) and in helping learners become aware of personal development and mastery of knowledge. It may include not only written assignments, letters to authorities or key people in the community and Internet material, but also audio and video recordings, among others.

The writer may start "fine-tuning" the final draft by <u>checking the context</u> and then, proceed to <u>test the cohesive links</u>, <u>re-examine the segmentation of the text into sections or paragraphs</u>, <u>assess its impact</u> (by making the right impression with the text concerning vocabulary development, especially at advanced stages), <u>reconsider suitable expressions that may convey mood, attitude and feeling to the reader:</u> *fortunately, undoubtedly, clearly, at best ...* and other expressions that may appear to be neutral instead of subjective or personal and viceversa), <u>highlight the focal idea</u> (new angles may be exploited and emphasised as the focus for the ideas, thus developing a flexibility of approach to the subject), <u>adjust the style</u> (as when there is a mismatch between styles or ambiguities in the writer/addressee relationship), to name but a few writing procedures.

<u>Editing</u> is the last step in the process of completing the final draft which the writer will submit to the reader. It covers such points as spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, avoidance of abbreviated or numerical forms in certain types of texts, word breaks at line ends, use of contractions, etc.

To conclude, it is important to remember that the writing stages discussed above are not always clearly delimited and do not necessarily occur in sequence, but may **<u>recur</u>** throughout the whole composing process. Indeed, students may do research (Stage 4- Structuring) and some preliminary reading before brainstorming (Stage 2- Generating ideas), especially when they are not familiar with the writing topic and must obtain extra information to be able to complete their task. Similarly, the reviewing practices (Stage 7) after evaluating the text may be so extensive that they may force learners to re-organize ideas (Stage 4- Structuring), obtain extra information or make substantial language corrections. After all, a well-implemented process approach to the teaching of writing is based on all the above-mentioned stages of the process.

CHAPTER XVIII

Text-production competence. (Part II)
Graphic text representations

In the teaching of integrated language skills, writing is often realized as the grand finale of a unit. Extensive writing then becomes part of a wrap-up activity that foreshadows closure and the introduction of a new topic or unit. If carefully implemented, ... it should be perceived as a kind of consolidation of what has been taught.

(Rodríguez, 1998: 11)[226]

New emphases on teaching writing

As previously stated in Chapter XVII, writing has come to occupy the prominent role it deserves in foreign-language teaching and learning. Its value is confirmed by the latest research, which shows its classical relevance as a **recycling** tool in the classroom; indeed, the act of writing not only reflects our thinking but also helps to create new thoughts. In other words, when students are not focused on grammatical error but are instead writing freely, they develop confidence and a sense of achievement over the language that can be invigorating and satisfying.

Writing has thus moved up in the scale of classroom priorities, partly due to the following benefits it provides:

- The effort to express ideas and the use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way of intensifying learning.

- Students have the opportunity to be adventurous with the foreign language, to take risks, to go beyond what has been taught.

- The writing skill reinforces grammar, idioms and vocabulary that have been worked with in class.

- Students not only become involved with the language but also express themselves in writing, exchange thoughts and interact with their audience.

- Writing and thinking are closely connected. The writing process enables students to explore a topic fully.

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[226] Rodríguez, J. C. (1998). A process approach to teaching writing. In *ELT News & Views. Feature Supplement* 5. 2: Teaching Writing Skills, June pp. 11-12.

- Writing helps learners discover and shape what they want to say, to go over it until it seems to reflect what they think, and to exert their influence over the non-native language which is even true at the most elementary levels of English proficiency.

- Finally, the whole process is creative: we sit down to write with a definite idea in mind, but as we write new ideas develop.

However, teachers are well aware that the composing process is often perceived as the most difficult language skill since it requires a higher level of productive language control than the other skills. Additionally, as has been demonstrated, writing calls for careful planning and revision, processes which in themselves worry students and create anxiety.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that writing classes have changed; they have become friendlier, more humanistic and more fun. Learners now have a greater variety of writing tasks and more interesting opportunities to write. Both teachers and students are more relaxed; they work together, they collaborate.

The creative factor

Since variety is the spice of life, it seems imperative to find new directions for our writing classes. No longer should the production of paragraphs, compositions, reviews and reports be the only and ultimate goal. We must include in our post-intermediate ESP syllabi the kind of writing that enhances students´creativity and paves the way for the development of a fertile imagination.

So far in this Thesis, learners have been trained to develop text structure awareness, or simply reading comprehension knowledge, through a variety of reading-strategy instructional approaches, in an attempt to recognize the organizational features of ESP expository texts supported by top-level discourse analysis.

Another form of writing-strategy instruction– apart from essay-writing - which may open up new frontiers in the classroom, is the use of **visual representations** of text structure which may serve as an effective guide for student learning. Graphic representations are notational devices or visual illustrations of verbal statements which

show at a glance the key parts of the whole and their relations, thus helping the learner to comprehend ESP texts and solve problems.The task of creating these graphic organizers may not seem an easy undertaking and may require considerable practice and imagination but is best handled by initially examining small blocks of text structure and then moving on to larger representations in order to highlight a top-level text organization that guides the text overall.

The fact is that, by building from smaller, more recognizable patterns, students become comfortable with text organization without the practice becoming too complex. The larger text structures, requiring more complex synthesizing, are best done as <u>post-reading activities</u>, so that learners´comprehension of the entire text is established before devoting more time to the text-organization task. This will certainly prove that they have achieved both **<u>textual mastery and text-production competence.</u>**

Both forms of writing-strategy instruction – essay-writing and the use of graphic text representations – will give students not only a new context with innumerable linguistic possibilities, but also the opportunity to make full use of their **creative potential.**

Reading as a model for writing

Many writing courses involve using well-written, model passages which may serve as stimuli for writing assignments by providing content people are expected to react to. Thus, the first step is reading texts, then analyzing them, looking at them from both the reader´s and writer´s perspective, and finally using them as models for text production.

A focus of instruction in the teaching of reading and writing is <u>summarizing.</u> The ability to produce summaries is often referred to as "summary skills" or "synthesizing skills" and it is considered a study aid, an aid to research, a way to retain information and a way to communicate ideas. In many cases, a summary is done for the writer´s own use. Indeed, we read an article or a book and we summarize it for ourselves so that we will have the main facts and information available for future use without having to read the article again. Individuals who are good readers, good learners and experienced writers develop effective personal ways of summarizing.

On the whole, summarizing can be best perceived as a writing activity within a content class (mainstream classes)[227]. The reading of any article or chapter in a book is never out of context in a content course since the course provides the metastructure for the subject at hand. The content schemata therefore develop within the course of study and the formal schemata are also greatly dictated by the subject matter and the type of readings assigned in the particular ESP course. In this way, students can become more familiar with what is expected than if they are simply writing "summaries" in an English writing course. For instance, Biology is a good example of a content area where the summary needs to be compatible with the scientific style in which these topics are usually described. Above all, summary writing can be viewed as excellent writing practice to do in various subject areas.

Visual-verbal relationships

Summarizing and outlining (Chapter XVII), among other composing strategies, can be paired up with different ways of organizing a writing activity. Many such tactics have been suggested in the corresponding literature. This last Chapter will offer some suggestions for training ESP writers in planning and carrying out communicative activities that result from written texts.

Getting students to produce useful visual representations of text structure to support reading comprehension instruction, highlight essential information and, more importantly, understand reading texts that may seem somewhat complex, is considered one of the most effective approaches in numerous instructional research studies. Using visuals such as pictures have long had a role in language teaching as witness the number of picture composition books on sale nowadays. Some writers have classified visual material as follows:

- *Charts, diagrams, maps ...:*symbolic material or diagrammatic representations.
- *Photographs, pictures ...*: representational material.
- *Physical objects ...*: realia.

Each type of visual has its own particular characteristics appropriate to different kinds of use. In general, the more detailed and explicit the material, the less room

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[227] "Mainstream programme": ESL/EFL programmes which prepare students to enter mainstream classes where English is the medium of instruction in the content areas.

there is for writers to use their imagination. On the contrary, material which is vague, ambiguous and open to numerous interpretations provides plenty of room for writers to exercise their creativity, and is especially useful for stimulating divergent and original writing within a group.

However, all of these graphic designs have one characteristic in common: their aim is to provide information, usually detailed, that is tedious to read in solid text, or is difficult or even impossible to describe accurately in words alone. This is what Henry Widdowson (1978)[228] called "information transfer", that part dealing with illustrative material and the written text (such as captions) which accompanies it. He concluded that

A good deal of written discourse makes use of non-verbal modes of communicating and an understanding of how these function in association with the verbal text is often crucial for interpretation. ...Maps, charts, diagrams, formulae, graphs ... have to be read as well in the interpreting of the discourse as a whole.

Since then, many linguists (Schnotz, 1993; Palmer, 1998)[229] have focused on the use of visual elements to aid the understanding of textual information.

Visual literacy and the impact of technology

The earlier part of the twentieth century saw a strong tradition of prioritizing the strictly verbal over the pictorial, and because images were (and in many ways still are) considered to be less important than writing – less meaningful or useful in everyday life – they were deemed unworthy of serious study. Indeed, verbal English was regarded until quite recently as the mode for "serious" information.

However, because of the increase in design software and the wider availability of computer technology, traditional definitions of literacy as the ability to read and write, are no longer adequate in a world where texts communicate in new ways – through graphics, pictures and layout techniques, as well as through words. It is difficult these days to find a single text which uses solely verbal English.

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[228] Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication.* London, OUP, pp.154-156.
[229] Schnotz, W., et al. (1993). How Do Successful and Unsuccessful Learners Use Texts and Graphics. In *Learning and Instruction,* 3, pp. 181-199.
    Palmer, J. C. & Posteguillo, S. (1998). Graphical Input in Linguistics Research Articles. In. I. Fortanet, S. Posteguillo, J. C. Palmer, J. F. Coll (eds.) *Genre Studies in English for Academic Purposes.* Spain. Universitat Jaume I, pp.253-267.

Newspapers, for example, contain numerous diagrams, photographs and changes of typeface; company letterheads usually contain graphic devices such as logos or borders. In this sense, texts in English are becoming increasingly <u>multimodal</u> (Goodman, 1996)[230], which means that they use devices from more than one semiotic mode of communication simultaneously.

A good example is that of a letter on company notepaper which often has a corporate logo (visual), the name of the company in full (verbal), and the address/telephone number (verbal). It may also have a border around it (visual), be printed on coloured paper (visual) and, of course, have the basic text of the letter itself (verbal). Furthermore, an electronic text, such as a page on the World Wide Web, may have even more modes: it may contain photographs, recordings of spoken English, or music.

Types of graphic displays

The key to achieving competence in ESP text production along these visual lines and in the classroom context, is to decide how specific texts can be matched up appropriately with certain types of representations that form part of the <u>iconography</u>. Indeed, teachers and curriculum designers need to fit the best options for icons and graphic displays with what the text itself offers. For example, a <u>problem-solution table</u> does not easily fit with a narrative text, but it does fit with a <u>series-of-events chain</u>. Similarly, a <u>procedural time line</u> or <u>flow chart</u> may not be suitable for a cause-and-effect text, but will probably be appropriate for the description of the town where students live (with a reference to its history, the scenic spots, musical events, etc.). The ability to fit texts to visual aids of this sort does take practice, but over a period of time, teachers become quite skilled at "seeing" text structure and then leading students to "see" its organization as well.

A practical explanation for using graphic icons for text comprehension is presented in Tang (1993)[231] She recommends <u>hierarchical tree structures, classification</u>

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[230] Goodman, S. (1996). Visual English. In S. Goodman and D. Graddol (eds.) *Redesigning English new texts, new identities.* The Open University. Routledge, pp.38-47.
[231] Tang, G. (1993). Teaching content knowledge and ESOL in multicultural classrooms. In *TESOL Journal,* 2 (2), pp.8-12.

tables, time lines, descriptive arrays and cause-and-effect tables. In addition, Jones, Pierce and Hunter (1989)[232] offer a useful set of guidelines for training students to create graphic organizers:

- Model how to construct a graphic organizer with students and use think-aloud techniques so that they can hear and see what you are thinking as the teacher.

- Provide a lot of coaching for the students as they create graphic representations for sections of texts and for whole texts.

- Give learners "rules" for placement of visuals. If the graphic display is not of direct importance to the discourse, tell students to put it at the end of the main text or in a position that does not appear to give it more importance than it warrants.

- Learners should realize that the visual and accompanying verbal elements must complement one another. They should not put too much detail in the text nor too much detail in the visual.

- Give students many opportunities for practice and give them appropriate positive feedback.

- Set clear and manageable goals since the training process takes a sizable amount of time.

Trimble (1985)[233] mentions some of the more common types of visuals found in scientific and technical discourse, such as tables, graphs, schematics, exploded views, maps, photographs and representative drawings (sometimes to scale). He explains that all of these provide us with detail difficult to describe in words. Tables and graphs usually give us numerical detail, with graphs being less precise than tables as they are designed to show relationships quickly and, often, more generally. Schematics and flow charts give similar information to the reader, with the flow chart also showing the stages of a process or a procedure. Exploded views are a kind of visual physical description as they give the spatial relationships of the parts of an object or a device. Maps also show physical relationships but more often of territory than of machinery. Photographs and representative icons cover a wide range of types of information; however, **without some kind of text explanation (caption, gloss, reference ...), no type of visual display provides information with the same clarity and precision that well-written scientific and technical discourse does**.

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[232] Jones, B. F., Pierce, J. and Hunter, B. (1989). Teaching students to conduct graphic representations. In *Educational Leadership,* 46, pp.20-25.
[233] Trimble, L. (1985). Op. cit.

As shown in Chapter XV on Business English, there are other options open to the teacher/students that may help textual comprehension, namely <u>bar and pie charts, graphs or diagrams, organigrams and tables</u>. Indeed, writers who wish to reformulate text in diagram form may also resort to <u>spider maps, time lines, series of events chains, problem/solution outlines, network trees or cycles,</u> among others.

Graphic representations in the English news media - Examples

A   In the following **<u>Table</u>** (Figure 13), we can see the ways, such as time references, in which a typical news story from an international news agency (Reuters) differs from other stories. The story originated in Lima, Peru, and was published in Wellington´s *Evening Post,* a New Zealand newspaper.[234]

<u>Figure 13</u>

Sentence number		Time structure
	Protest cut short	
S. 1	LIMA, Jan. 18. – The estranged wife of Peru´s President	0
	Alberto Fujimori was taken to hospital today just 24 hours	- 2
	after she began a hunger strike to protest at her party´s	
	elimination from congressional elections.	- 3
S. 2	Doctors said she was suffering from tachycardia, or an	+ 1
	accelerated heartbeat.	
S. 3	Earlier, [deposed first lady Susanna] Higuchi, sitting under	- 1
	an umbrella in a scorching summer sun outside the National	
	Electoral Board´s headquarters, had pledged to press on with	
	her protest.	
S. 4	The electoral board said on Monday Higuchi´s Armonia-Frempol	- 3
	party had not qualified for the April Congressional vote because	+ 2
	it failed to present a full list of candidates for the 120-member	- 4
	legislature.	
S. 5	Board member Manuel Catacora said today that since Higuchi	0
	had presented her party´s congressional slate just 10 minutes	- 4
	before the filing deadline, a provision allowing parties five days	
	to correct any error did not apply.	0
S. 6	Higuchi, a 44-year-old civil engineer, has been estranged from	- 5
	Fujimori since August when she protested an election law that	- 6
	banned her from running from [sic] public office. - Reuter	

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[234] *Evening Post.* January 20, 1995. ("Protest cut short").

General Comments

The time structure of the story events appears in the column on the right of the table and shows:

- Time zero which is the present tense of the story and may be defined as the time of the lead event in the lead sentence: Higuchi´s departure to hospital.

- Times prior to this are labelled Time –1 for the event immediately preceding, moving back up to Time –6 in this story, the earliest occurrence in the reported background.

- The story also reports on events subsequent to Time 0, labelled Time +1 (Higuchi´s diagnosis), and so on.

As can be seen in the table, the time sequence of the story is very complex, with nine points in time identified in the analysis.

The first sentence of the *Evening Post´*s story, known as the "lead" or "intro"[235], functions as its abstract, summarizing the central action and establishing the point of the story. Here, the story has a triple abstract covering a sequence of three events, but in reverse chronological order. Students should note that news stories are seldom, if ever, told in chronological order. We see that the result (Higuchi´s departure to hospital) precedes the cause (her hunger strike), which itself precedes the prior cause (her party´s disqualification from the elections). Events are generally linked by time expressions such as *after* for a sequence (as in Figure 13) and *as* for simultaneous events. Besides, these time expressions commonly imply a cause-and-effect link: Higuchi´s hunger strike is the cause of her hospitalization.

Moreover, learners should also pay attention to the fact that each news sentence is also its own paragraph, which means that there is no larger unit of text organization. Indeed, there is no flow of time sequence from one sentence to the next and there are no devices such as adverbs (however, therefore...) to express linkages between those sentences. The impression the reader gets is that the news story "jumps" from one statement to the next offering isolated chunks of information

Some other time references place events in relation to each other: *24 hours after she began a hunger strike* in S. 1 and *just 10 minutes before the filing deadline* in S. 5.

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[235] "Lead", "Intro": terms developed in Chapter XII "The Written Press (Part I) Newspapers: headlines and reporting styles".

Still others are "deictic"[236], such as *today* in S. 1 and 5. Teachers should also clarify the fact that these stories are "datelined" at the top for place and time of origin: *LIMA, Jan 18* when the story was written though it was published in New Zealand two days later on 20 January. Thus, *today*, in this story, has a different meaning for the journalist who wrote the story than for the story´s readers in New Zealand.

B   Using the same text in Figure 13, students may learn to sketch a **<u>Time Line</u>** to show the chronology of events proceeding from left to right:

<u>Figure 14</u>

1994   Protest cut short   1995

-6
Before
Aug.94

-5
Aug.94

-4
Before
Mond.
16Jan.
1995

-3
Mond.
16 Jan.

-2
Tuesday
17Jan.

-1
Wed.
18Jan.

0
Wed.
18Jan.

+1
Wed.
18Jan.

+2
April
1995
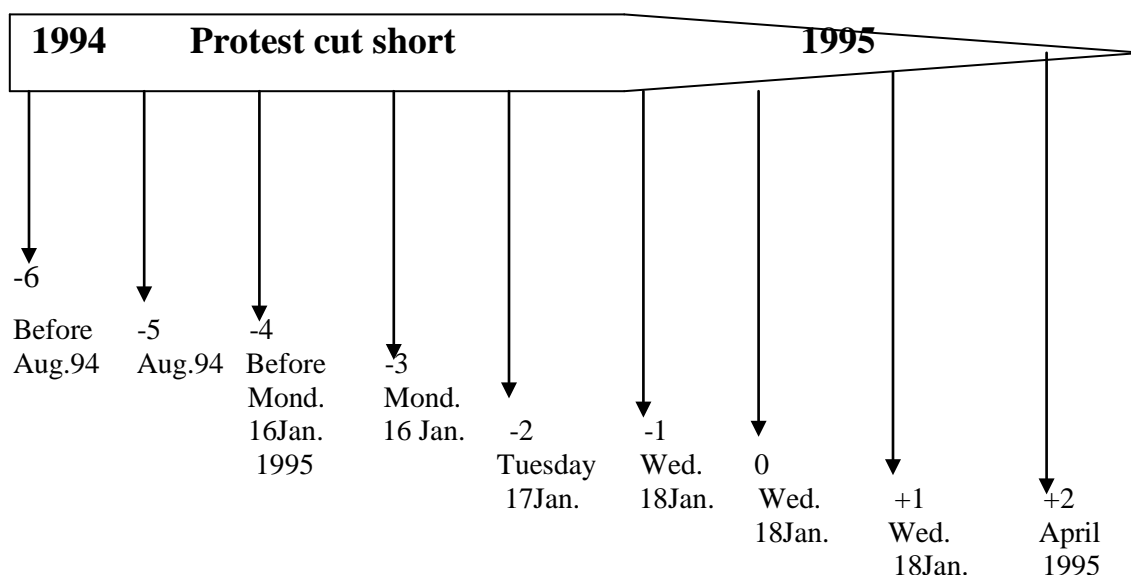
General comments

In this graphic representation, the <u>story time</u> and <u>calendar time</u> have been provided with the glance forward to the future endpoint of this process (the elections in April) being a standard representation of the ongoing nature of most news stories. For lack of space, the <u>action</u> in each case has been omitted but included in the following list:

-6 The law bans Higuchi from the elections

-5 Her protest estranges her from Fujimori

-4 Her party files an incomplete candidate list

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[236] "Deixis" refers to language features that anchor statements in relation to space (e.g. *here, there*) or time (e.g. *now, then*) relative to the speaker´s viewpoint.

-3 Her party is disqualified from the elections

-2 Higuchi begins a hunger strike

-1 She pledges to continue her protest

 0 She is taken to hospital

+1 Doctors diagnose her condition

+2 Date of upcoming elections

C   Time is not the only dimension that structures news stories in English. A more general framework for analysing the discourse structure of news is presented here in the form of a **Tree Diagram** (Bell, 1996)[237]

Figure 15
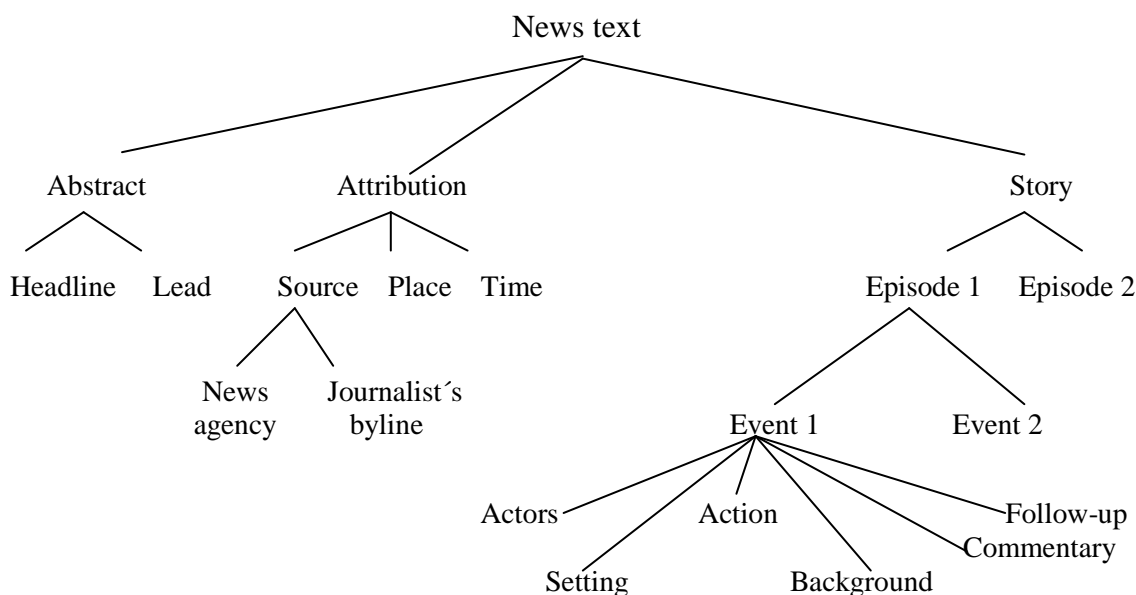
General Comments

When teachers train students to make their own representations concerning news English as in the tree diagram of Figure 14, the latter should be taught that a news story usually consists of an abstract, an attribution and the story proper.

The abstract is made up of the lead sentence of the news story and for press news, the headline. The lead covers the main event, and possibly one or more secondary

[237] Bell, A. (1996). Text, Time and Technology in News English. In S. Goodman and D. Graddol (eds.) *Redesigning English new texts, new identities.* The Open University. Routledge, pp. 3-37.

events, whereas the headline is in fact a last-minute insertion, written by a sub-editor rather than the journalist. Time, in turn, is virtually never expressed in headlines, so it is not surprising to find no time expressions in *Protest cut short* exemplified in Figures 13 and 14.

The attribution, which indicates where the story came from (source), is not always explicit; it can include a credit to a news agency (Reuters news agency at the end of S. 6 in Figure 13) and/or a juournalist´s byline.[238] It may also indicate place and time, as can be seen in the dateline *LIMA, Jan 18* in the same story.

The body of the story itself consists of one or more events; besides, related events may be grouped together and treated as a more general episode. Each event must describe the actors involved, the action that takes place and the setting (time and place). The commentary provides the journalist´s or news actor´s observations in the present time period (the electoral board´s evaluation of why Higuchi´s party was disqualified: S. 4 and 5); the follow-up is represented by the future of the events, such as the doctor´s diagnosis in S. 2 and possibly the elections to be held in April (S. 4). One additional category may be that of "background" which covers events prior to the current action. If the background goes back beyond the near past, it is classed as "history".

Graphic representations in Business English - Examples

The following text, extracted from a student´s textbook (Blakey, 1990)[239], shows how a baker managed to set up and expand his business under English law:

The structure of a Mixed Economy

Joe McPherson

Joe McPherson was <u>a baker</u> – a very good one, who sold his loaves to a number of local shops. He thought he might make more money if he could bake more bread by taking on extra workers and getting some new electric ovens. To do this he needed money and the bank wouldn´t give him a big enough loan. His brother-in-law, Jimmy Cochrane, suggested that if they joined their money together and formed a <u>partnership</u>, Joe could expand his business. Joe asked his mother

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[238] A "byline" is a line at the beginning or end of an article in a newspaper, magazine, etc., giving the writer´s name.

[239] Blakey, R. et al. (1990).*Contemporary Britain.* Edinburgh. Oliver & Boyd. pp. 35-36.

to put some money in as well, and though she agreed right away, Joe drew her a diagram of how the business worked.

The partnership worked – Joe had the extra money he needed and Jimmy was a skilled cake-maker. Part of the agreement was to change the name of the firm to <u>"McPherson and Cochrane"</u>. Soon they were able to move to larger modern premises at a low rent on an industrial estate.

With the success of the partnership, Joe thought of expanding further by forming a <u>private limited company</u>. He would offer shares in the company to the rest of his family: if the firm failed they would lose only the amount they had invested; if it succeeded they could earn interest on their shares in two ways. His mother, wanting to make sure of her income, bought stocks in the company. These gave her a fixed rate of interest, so that no matter what happened to the company´s profits she would be guaranteed her income... The rest of the family agreed to take ordinary shares which earned a <u>dividend or income</u> – usually the same every year, though in theory they could get more or less depending on the size of the company profits.

With the extra investment, <u>McPherson and Cochrane Ltd</u>. went from strength to strength. Their range of products widened – they began printing labels, wrapping paper and boxes for their cakes and bread – <u>"diversification"</u> Jimmy called it. He also thought it would be a good idea to move into grain farming and into transport too – so they would have control of earlier and later stages in the making and selling of bread, He gave this the grand title, <u>"vertical integration"</u>.

Joe wasn´t so happy about this. Where was the money for this extra investment to come from, since the family had no more? His <u>bank manager</u> suggested he make the company a <u>public limited</u> one and have shares sold on the Stock Exchange. This idea proved a success, as many investors, including some pension funds, saw the potential in McPherson and Cochrane Ltd.

The bakeries had become increasingly mechanised. Joe had problems every now and then with some of his employees. He sympathised with their complaint that standing beside a <u>conveyor belt</u> and doing the same task all day, every day was boring. Since each worker was skilled in his own job it was difficult to vary their tasks. Sometimes there were shortages of wrapping paper due to transport difficulties and if that happened, no bread was wrapped, the workers had to be laid off, and less bread was sold, Joe eventually worked out a deal with the unions which improved thing. Both sides were happy with the concessions made – especially the new staff canteens.

... After fifteen years they had become a <u>multi-national company</u>, with cakes and bread being made and sold throughout Europe and almost every loaf of bread in Britain was made by McPherson and Cochrane. Competitors, apart from a few small businesses, had either been taken over or had given up. The Labour Government of the time thought they could make a more efficient industry if it was <u>nationalised,</u> like electricity and gas, removing wasteful competition and ordering more research and development than Joe was prepared to do.

Joe was horrified at such interference, the bureaucracy and paperwork. ... It was unfair that an Act of Parliament could remove his business from him and appoint a new board of directors reponsible not to him and his shareholders, but to a minister of the government and Parliament. After all, he had built it up from nothing.

A **<u>Series of Events Chains</u>** which apply in this case, may be used to describe the stages or sequence of events leading to a final outcome. Key frame questions that are fundamental to understanding a given topic may be asked, such as: What is the

object, procedure or initiating event? How do the stages or steps lead to one another? What is the final outcome?

Figure 16

Initiating Event

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Event 1                 │
│ Joe´s bakery            │
│ Sole Proprietorship     │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Event 2 – Partnership   │
│ McPherson and           │
│ Cochrane.               │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Event 3 –               │
│ Private Limited Co.     │
│ McPherson & Cochrane    │
│ Ltd.. Shares, dividends.│
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Event 4 –               │
│ Public Limited Co.      │
│ Shares listed on the Stock│
│ Exchange.               │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Event 5 –               │
│ Multi-national company  │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
            ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Nationalisation     │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Final Outcome
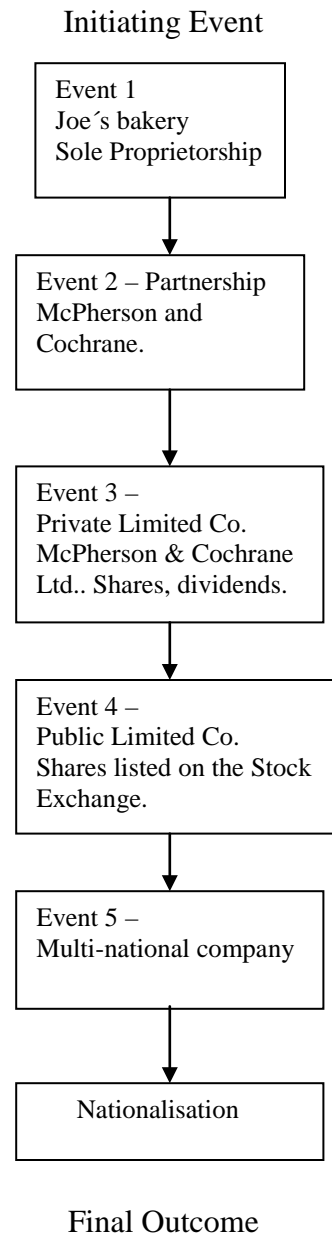
B   Students may also learn to draw **<u>Cycles</u>** to show how a series of stages interact to produce a set of results again and again (weather phenomena, the life cycle, etc.) Key frame questions are: What are the critical stages in the cycle? How are they related? In what ways are they self-reinforcing?

In the previous text we have read about the effects of automation/mechanisation on workers´ jobs and lives and what standing beside a conveyor belt entails. As follow-up, students may do research into the stages of any assembly line and produce the following graphic display to aid text comprehension:

Figure 17: An Automobile Assembly Line

1. Box cars bring basic parts to the line

2. Body parts are united

3. Parts are welded and soldered

4. Body is treated with chemicals so that paint will stick to metal

5. Chemicals are oven-dried

6. Body is sprayed with two coats of enamel

7. Upholstery is installed

8. Window glass and dashboard are installed

9. Door frames and hardware are installed

10. On a side line, the fron-fender assemby is attached

11. The chassis is assembled

12. The motor is lowered to the chassis

13. Body is lowered onto chassis

14. Wheels are mounted

15. Cushions are installed

16. Final wiring, testing are completed

17. After final inspection, the new car is ready for shipment

General comments

At this stage of an ESP course on business English, learners have read and commented about typical business situations such as factory production whereby workers perform short work-cycles, repeating the same actions again and again. They know that everywhere, factories producing large numbers of more or less identical units, such as motor vehicles or food processing, are in continuous production. The only difference is that what were called mass-production lines in the past (assembly lines),

are called robotic production lines today. After reading the text on *Joe McPherson* and the way he ran his business, they will conclude that robotisation is a double-edged sword because although it has brought about prosperity it has also led to boring jobs – on account of the routine and repetitive nature of the jobs – and unemployment.

C   Based on the same text (the bank´s denial to give Joe a big loan; the suggestion put forward by Joe´s bank manager to make the company a public limited one), learners may consider drawing a **<u>Spider Map</u>** or **<u>Spidergram</u>** to describe a central idea:

<u>Figure 18: The Structure of a Bank</u>

CASHIERS

Deal with customers
at counter. Sort cheques
from Clearing House
and check signatures.

FOREIGN
EXCHANGE
Clerks deal with
foreign currency/
travellers´cheques.
Help local exporting
firms with foreign
deals.

BANK MANAGER

Overall responsibility. Interviews
clients/visits companies. Grants
loans/overdrafts. Honours cheques.
Supervises opening/locking strong
room. Studies computer print-outs
of accounts.

ASSISTANT BANK MANAGER

↓

Deputises for Manager.
Deals with staff problems.

ACCOUNTANT

↓

Responsible to Manager for
day-to-day running of office.

STANDING

ORDERS

Clerks deal with
customer standing
orders – automatic
payment made by
bank; e.g., mortgage
repayments,
subscriptions.

MACHINE

ROOM

Computer program-
mers, machine
operators produce
computer print-outs
of accounts. Send
account statements
to customers.

SECURITIES- Clerks handle work arising from services offered
by bank – arrange buying and selling of shares for
clients. Issue receipts for valuables left in strongroom.

Graphic representations in Legal English – Examples

The text that follows (Clarkson et al., 2001)[240] describes the distribution of property among heirs or next of kin under Intestacy Laws in the United States.

Intestacy Laws

Each state regulates by statute how property will be distributed when a person dies intestate (that is, without a valid will). These statutes are called statutes of descent and distribution, or more simply, intestacy laws ... [which]attempt to carry out the likely intent and wishes of the decedent. Intestacy laws assume that deceased persons would have intended that their natural heirs (spouses, children, grandchildren, or other family members) inherit their property. Therefore, intestacy statutes set out rules and priorities under which these heirs inherit the property. If no heirs exist, then the property will escheat, or revert, to the state; that is, the state will assume ownership of the property.

[...] Distribution to grandchildren

When a person who dies is survived by descendants of deceased children, a question arises as to what share the grandchildren of the decedent will receive. Per stirpes is a method of dividing an intestate share by which a class or group of distributees (for example, grandchildren) take the share that their deceased parent would have been entitled to inherit had that parent lived.

Assume that Moss, a widower, has two children, Scott and Jules. Scott has two children (Bonita and Holly), and Jules has one child (Paul). At the time of Moss´s death, Scott and Jules have predeceased their father. If Moss´s estate is distributed per stirpes, the following distribution would take place: 1. Bonita and Holly: one-fourth each, taking Scott´s share. 2. Paul: one-half, taking Jules´s share.

An estate may also be distributed on a per capita basis. This means that each person takes an equal share of the estate. If Moss´s estate is distributed per capita, Bonita, Holly, and Paul will each receive a one-third share.

In most states and under the UPC[241], in-laws do not share in an estate. If a child dies before his or her parents, the child´s spouse will not receive an inheritance. Assume that Moss´s child, Jules, is married and that Moss has no grandchildren. If Jules predeceases his father, under most state laws and under the UPC, Moss´s entire estate would go to Scott. Jules´s surviving wife would not inherit what would have been Jules´s portion of the estate if he had not predeceased his father.

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[240] Clarkson, K. W., Miller, R. L., Jentz, G. A., Cross, F. B. (2001). *West´s Business Law.* (8th ed.) West Legal Studies in Business, Ch. 50, pp. 959-61.

[241] "UPC"or the Uniform Probate Code, was approved in 1969 by the American Bar Association for adoption by the states. It codifies general principles and procedures for the resolution of conflicts in settling estates.

A   Another option that students have when creating their own graphic organizers and wish to present causal information, is the **<u>Network Tree,</u>** a hierarchy or branching procedure. Key frame questions are: What is the superordinate category? What are the subordinate categories? How are they related? How many levels are there?

<u>Figure 19</u>

Per Stirpes Distribution
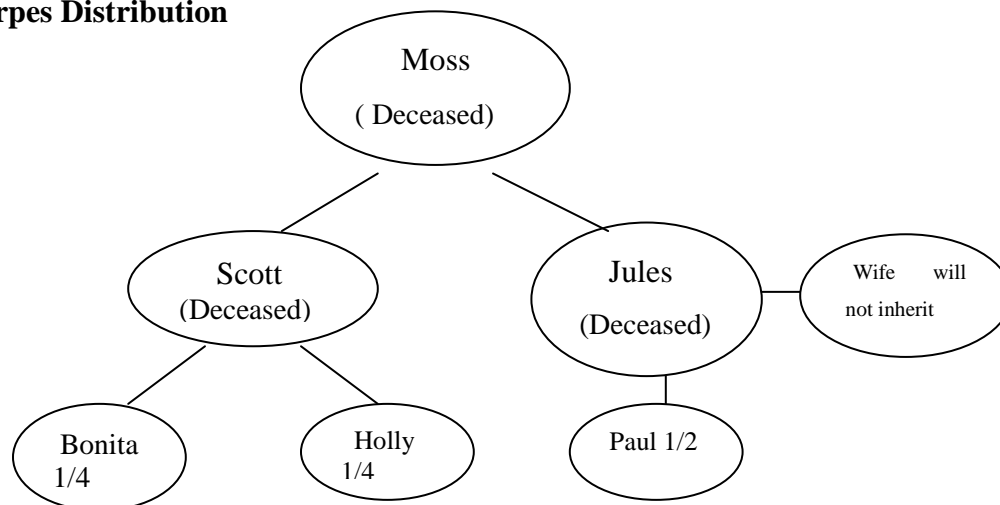
Per Capita Distribution
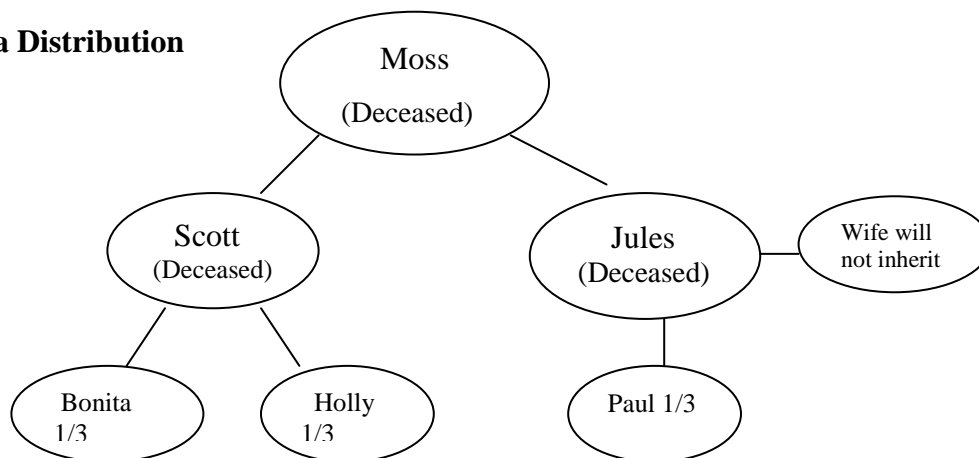
General comments

In the <u>per stirpes</u> method of distribution, a class of distributees (the grandchildren), will not inherit in equal portions.Bonita and Holly only receive one-fourth of Moss´s estate, whereas Paul inherits one-half. This is also known as their right of representation. <u>Per capita</u> distribution denotes that method by means of which an equal share is given to each heir, all of whom stand in equal degree to the decedent.

In addition, the law provides that first the debts of the deceased must be satisfied out of his/her estate, and then the remaining assets can pass to the surviving spouse and the children, if any. The surviving spouse will only receive a share of the estate – one half if there is also a surviving child and one-third if there are two or more children. Only if no children or grandchildren survive the decedent will a surviving spouse receive the entire estate.

Students should bear in mind that the rules of descent vary widely from state to state and, also, pay particular attention to the strict wording of the provisions. Therefore, it is extremely important for them to re-read and then use the exact terms of the applicable state statutes when addressing these matters concerning intestacy distribution.

B Learners may also experiment with another planning format - the **<u>Compare/Contrast Matrix</u>** - which is used to show similarities and differences between two or more ideas, events, places, people, procedures, etc. The subject of Intellectual Property Law provides an excellent opportunity for further ESP training in writing strategies, thus improving students´ content learning and text structure awareness.

Intellectual property

In order to prevent a new discovery or scientific process from being copied, it is necessary to apply for a <u>patent.</u> If granted, a patent makes it illegal for others to manufacture or use the invention without permission. However, a patent will only be granted if the invention has not yet been shown in public and if it has industrial application. Ideas – mathematical and scientific theories, for example – cannot be patented. The patent must be carefully worded since it may be possible for someone to copy any part of the process or invention not mentioned in the patent.

Literature, artistic works, computer programs, movies and radio and television broadcasts cannot be patented, but they can be protected by <u>copyright.</u> In most countries, such work is automatically protected when is created; there is no need to apply for or to register copyright. It is usual to record the date of creation and mark it with the international copyright symbol C, but this is not essential.

[...] Another kind of intellectual property is a <u>trademark</u>. Companies often use a certain name or description to help sell their products, or sometimes a symbol which everyone comes to associate with that company, such as the M design of McDonald´s or the shell design of Shell Oil. To prevent other businesses from using their trademark, companies often register them. Another legal remedy is to take out an injunction against a company which has tried to pass itself off as your company by using the same name or similar packaging.   (Powell, 1993)[242]

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[242] Powell, R. (1993). Op. cit.

Figure 20

	Definition	Requirements	Types/Categories	Duration
Patents	A grant from the government that gives an inventor exclusive rights to an invention.	An invention must be: Novel Not obvious Useful	Utility (general) Design Plant (flowers, vegetables ...)	20 years from the date of application; 14 years for design patents.
Copyrights	Right granted to authors and originators of a literary work or artistic production.	Must be: Original. Fixed in a durable medium of expression Within a copyrightable category.	Literary works, Musical, dramatic, pictorial, graphic, audiovisual and choreographic works Films, sound recordings...	The life of author plus 70 years.For publishers: 95 years after date of publication or 120 years after creation.
Trademarks	Distinctive word, name, symbol, device or combination used by an entity to identify its goods or services from others.	Must be: Distinctive or must have acquired a secondary meaning.	Strong marks: fanciful, arbitrary, suggestive marks. Must have acquired secondary meaning by use.	Unlimited, if it is in useTo continue registration, it must be renewed between 5th-6th. years.

General comments

This type of visual display can be used as a pre-and/or post-reading activity and can lead to a number of possible types of oral group work and opportunities for guided written assistance. In order to complete this writing task, new boxes will have to be incorporated into the design specifying such rights as civil remedies for infringement and registration procedures where applicable. Other related intellectual property such as trade secrets, service/certification and collective marks may also be included in this table.

Implications for teaching

Comparison and contrast matrices (Figure 20), the same as the other formats discussed above, are open to many variations. The possibilities are only limited by the **imagination and creativity** of teachers and students alike. Notwithstanding, the visual elements can be just as conventionalized and discipline-specific as the verbal texts which originated them. In sum, graphic organizers such as these useful **strategies** that

help non-native students understand and fix ideas, are a crucial part of the learning process, namely **reading and writing**, two major components in any **ESP** context.

The purpose of this chapter has thus been to introduce students to the notion that different disciplines (Business, legal ...English) have different initiations into the iconography. Therefore, teachers must facilitate learners´ entry into the specific field by making explicit to them some of the ways of devising and interpreting diagrams and charts. Teachers of languages for academic and specific purposes are well acquainted with the fact that each approach to specialized texts has a different place for the visual and that conventions vary across disciplines.

Clearly, the examples of graphic text representations mentioned above do more than just illustrate, supplement and break up the sometimes dense blocks of text that advanced students may encounter when reading ESP material. These strategies serve as study skills that will be applied in future learning situations and make foreign-language communication more effective.

After all, students know that learning to use graphic designs is also learning to understand a given text.

PART   III

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Words are symbols of shared memories.
I suppose, in a time to come, men will care for beauty, not for the circumstances of beauty.

(Borges, 2000)[243]

The need to promote *ESP reading competence* among intermediate/advanced students and the focus on *top-down processing* as the most appropriate method to learn and construct knowledge in this area of *Applied Linguistics*, have resulted in the development of successful *strategies* and activities to integrate reading comprehension with writing skills. Such strategies offer learners not only opportunities to interact with the target language and its varieties in meaningful ESP contexts, but also enhanced motivation and active participation in tasks relevant to their professional futures.

The teacher´s major role as a facilitator, helper, stimulator and resource overlaps with the students´*autonomous learning styles* as shown in this Thesis. Indeed, I have demonstrated that the purpose of teaching is not simply to transmit knowledge – a challenging and demanding task itself – but to provide resources, guide the learning process, help students develop and adopt suitable strategies and offer support to work out meanings, rules, uses of words and other aspects of the language they are trying to acquire and master.

Moreover, a *learner-centered approach* of this type reduces the teacher´s dominance in the classroom by fostering cooperative learning activities, since students usually have to collaborate and share information to understand complex text and/or solve real world issues. Working together as a team to complete a reading task, such as selecting details relevant to specific ideas or generating implied main ideas from detailed information or simply preparing an outline from a given text, are some of the procedures readers are encouraged to use in order to help textual comprehension.

Metacognitive strategies as used in this research help increase the amount of student participation in the classroom by enabling not only constant feedback from

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[243] Borges, J. L. (2000). *This craft of verse. Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 1967-1968.* Cambridge. MA: Harvard University Press.

peers but also the development of *critical reading and synthesizing ski*lls, such as generalizing principles, inferring conclusions, comparing texts, classifying categories, decoding specific data or evaluating different perspectives about controversial issues, to name but a few. In other words, teachers´ aim in a post-intermediate course of this type is to promote learners´ text structural awareness by incorporating the so called SQ3R technique (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) into the reading curriculum and by emphasizing an overall organization of the text/discourse or *macro-structure*.

Indeed, top-down processing should be seen as one of the ways in which humans analyze and process language for comprehension and learning. As applied to the full understanding of a text, this involves higher-level information that includes the reader´s previously existing knowledge of the world and special attention to topics, literary genres, rhetorial structures and audience (content and formal schemata).

In second/foreign language instruction and as sustained all throughout this work, the assumption is that these strategies are not only easier but also more effective in building up students´confidence when approaching a given text for reading comprehension. Bottom-up procedures, that rely heavily on linguistic information, have been also analyzed in this work and presented as data-driven models that construct the text from the smallest units (words, sounds, grammar) to achieve higher-level meaning. Additionally, proof was also given of recent studies in reading comprehension incorporating the possibility of parallel or interactive processing techniques involving interplay between both kinds of procedures. Evidence has thus led to the conclusion that they are complementary in nature in that they modify and act on each other.

Examining general discourse features before specific text features was just one of the main objectives of this Thesis. Further aims included:

-Developing EFL students´communicative competence.

-Devising strategies for understanding authentic written texts in ESP.

-Providing plenty of hands-on training.

-Creating awareness of current developments in the field and promoting criteria to evaluate their relevance to different contexts.

-Enhancing capacity for future professional development.

Together with these useful considerations and proposals, several other themes have been dealt with in the different parts and chapters of this Thesis.

Students´typical errors when handling ESP texts have been specially examined in this work; besides, strategies have been devised so that mistakes may not contribute to embarras or frustrate weak learners. In addition, such techniques were also commonly chosen to enhance peer or self correction with teacher guidance. In general, I have proposed using cloze exercises, cause-effect relationships, word-recognition tasks and contextual factors, among others, as different study skills to check reading mistakes.

Effective text-production strategies, viewed as part of the ESP writing component, have also been tackled in the last two chapters of this research. They are usually introduced by teachers as follow-up to ensure that learners have mastered the process of reading comprehension and are ready and willing to engage in the creative production of written discourse. The idea is to get students approach writing by providing a sequenced presentation of all the stages in the process: warm-up stage, outlining, focusing, structuring, drafting, evaluating, reviewing and editing, among others. The ultimate aim of teaching writing in an ESP course of this type is to encourage learners to develop self-evaluation strategies that will enable them to write according to their personal needs. In the same way as reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts, writing is considered a recycling tool in that it not only reflects our thinking but also helps to create new thoughts and meanings.

I have also recommended that reading activities in the ESP classroom should include the exploitation of visuals for making associations thus facilitating students´deeper thinking. There is no denying that visual information has become an element of great relevance in the transmission of knowledge, especially through newspaper, magazine or journal articles and, of course, the Internet pages. Hence, I have focused on the description of cross-disciplinary variations of the English language, namely legal, technical, business and journalistic registers using graphical input to aid the understanding of textual information. Results have shown that graphic representations are undoubtedly illustrative, either introducing new data, summarizing facts or even completing details with additional information that may not have been commented in the main text.

The bulk of this work was essentially taken up with practising the theoretical premises developed and accounted for in the first seven chapters entitled *Language Issues – Aspects of English.* Indeed, chapters VIII – XVIII, *Varieties – English in Use,*

proposed various ways to overcome the difficulties in reading comprehension at intermediate/advanced levels by tackling specific issues with the help of strategic tools. Along these lines, I provided explanations and illustrations from the corpus chosen in an attempt to develop a useful methodology and increase students´ language awareness.

The ideal scenario for achieving such EFL competence presents the combination of different roles: teachers should be seen as drawing on their research experience and practical work in order to introduce foreign-language learners not just to the mechanics of linguistic and cultural mediation but to the possibilities of ESP strategy exploitation.

It is my firm opinion that using varied and sometimes unusual but effective activities in the classroom setup helps to take the boredom out of study and open the mind to multiple perspectives on the original reading text. Indeed, the dynamics triggered by the process of deconstructing an ESP text using flexible but selective techniques have the advantage of making students personally interested in the relationship of words to meaning. At the same time, a process of mediation is created that is the source of both power and pleasure.

On the whole, the chapters in this Thesis might be particularly suitable for classroom teachers using a course which they wish to enrich with supplementary exercises and tactics for the sake of learners´ English language consolidation.

Moreover, thanks to its modular structure, the different parts or stages of the current approach can also be used as optional modules in the training of ESP writers or students of other disciplines, an additional qualification and a "multifunctional" element suitable for many academic and professional contexts. In other words, the various instructional units are planned as self-contained and independent learning sequences with their own objectives. Besides, a programme of this type is said to allow for flexible organization and may give students a sense of achievement because objectives are more immediate and specific since assessment is usually carried out at the end of each module.

By contrast and in addition, the theme of the reading passage can be integrated with detailed aspects of other major components of a language-teaching unit. The fact is that given the pivotal importance of reading in the ESP curriculum, it can be thematically linked with other instructional components, e.g. *skills* (the spoken with the written, the receptive with the productive, listening and reading with speaking and

writing); *structures* (phonology, grammar and lexis); and *functions* (the communicative use of language on a variety of topics, in a variety of settings, with individuals performing different roles). These components may in turn be interwoven with items of language, including the formulas of conventional usage in speech (Listening comprehension exercises) and the mechanics of writing (text-production skills: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, hyphenation).

Furthermore, since motivation is also viewed as an essential factor in the learning context, I have used authentic material that is highly motivational in that it inspires creativity, encourages open-ended responses and offers unlimited possibilities for developing students´skills.

In short, by teaching our students how to learn more effectively we are also encouraging them to become not only autonomous learners but also successful decoders and expert individuals, prepared to continue improving on their own within an increasingly challenging, thought-provoking and demanding reading context.

Finally, it is my belief that advances in language teaching stem, above all, from the independent efforts of teachers in their own classrooms. This independence is not brought about by imposing fixed ideas and supporting new formulas. It can only occur where teachers and students, individually or collectively, explore principles and experiment with techniques and strategies. My chief aim has thus been to promote this dual purpose and offer guidance on how it might be achieved.

PART IV

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GENERAL INDEX

GENERAL INDEX

PART I

Developing a "top-down" approach ("higher-level knowledge" processing/concept-driven approach). From text to sign in Reading Comprehension.
- Starting points: genre and context.
- Differences with the "bottom-up" approach (data-driven processing).
- Integration of both processing techniques.
- Schematic knowledge: i)Content schema: background or prior knowledge.
                              ii)Formal schema: knowledge of the rhetorical and organizational structure of texts or macrostructure: text-types/genres, registers, topics...
- Language knowledge or microstructure: paragraphs, topic sentences, unity, coherence, emphasis, collocations...
- Authentic texts in the ESP class.
- Three basic themes: Textual meta-competence
                              Contrastive text competence
                              Text-production competence
- British and American English.
- Spoken and written registers.
- Written varieties: the language of the press, legal English, business English, technical registers.

PART II

Development

LANGUAGE ISSUES – ASPECTS OF ENGLISH

- Language as a dynamic, social, interactive phenomenon – either between speaker-listener or writer-reader.
- Prescriptive and descriptive approaches.
- Language change stimulated by: a) historical factors, b) social factors, c) cultural transmission, d) geographical location, e) use of different registers, f) the development of English as a world language.
- The domain of Linguistics. Interdisciplinary fields.
- Applied linguistics. Pragmatics.
- Linguistic analysis. Discourse: language that has been produced as athe result of an act of communication.

- Discourse analysis. Text analysis. Text linguistics. Applied discourse analysis.
- A brief historical overview.

- Reading: a receptive skill.
- The interactive nature of the reading process: (writer) - reader – text
- Reading models – Approaches to discourse processing:
a) Top-down approach: knowledge-driven/concept-driven. Theoretical framework of psycholinguistics. Goodman (1988). Reasons for the implementation.
b) Bottom-up approach: data-driven processing. Behaviourism. Gough (1972).
c) Interactive school of theorists. Rumelhart (1977). Exercise.
d) A model that incorporates affective factors. Mathewson (1985).
e) A model that views reading as a socio-cultural event. Bloome (1993).
- Conclusion. Effective language readers.

- Communicative competence. Hymes (1972).
- Chomsky: competence and performance.
- Canale and Swain (1980/1983) and the four categories of factors that influence communicative competence:
a) Linguistic/grammatical competence.
b) Sociolinguistic competence.
c) Discourse competence.
d) Strategic competence.
- Coherence: expressed through sentences developing a main idea. Unity of discourse. Reader-centered. Part of top-down planning; deep-structure level. Exercise.
- Cohesion: expressed through language resources that provide "ties" or links between sentences. Text-bound. Part of bottom-up planning; surface-structure level. Exercise.
- Lexical ties: synonym, antonym, repetition. Exercise.
- Grammatical ties: reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction. Exercise.
- Extratextual and intratextual factors.

- Reading comprehension: understanding the meaning of the written material. A process of negotiating understanding between reader and writer. Reading deals with language form; comprehension with language content.
- Semantic analysis: a) deep-structure level. Cognitive level: contextual meaning, pragmatic meaning.Underlying coherence.

b) surface-structure level. Linguistic level: denotative and connotative meanings. Surface cohesion.

- Content-based language teaching.
- Theme and rheme. Exercise.
- Types of reading comprehension: a) literal comprehension
  b) inferential comprehension
  c) critical or evaluative comprehension
  d) appreciative comprehension.
- Extensive/Intensive Reading.
- Identifying problems and purposes.

Chapter V: From text awareness to macrostructure analysis 48

- Introducing texts. Definitions.
- Text typology. Categories.
- Rhetorical functions. Rhetorical patterns.
- Text: the product of a process. Discourse: the process of text production and text comprehension.
- Discourse function and discourse topic.
- Literary and non-literary texts.
- Genre. Definitions. Genre and source. Genre and register.
- Macro structures: the relationship of high-level units within a discourse; the underlying structure that accounts ofr the overall semantic organization of a text.
- Micro structures: the details or low-level textual elements found in a piece of discourse: syntax structures, lexical devices, suprasegmental features.
- Non-verbal elements.
- Analysis of macrostructure formation: financial/legal English: "That Martha moment" (*The Economist*): headlines, super-headlines, subheadlines, initial position, lead, event, context, evaluation. Materials selection.

Chapter VI: Engaging EFL learners in strategy use 67

- Strategy-Based Instruction (SBI).
- The haves and the have-nots.
- Good and slow learners and the internalization of a set of goals.
- Instructional models: a)General Study Skills Courses.b)Awareness Training. c)Strategy Workshops. d)Peer Tutoring. e)Strategies in Language Textbooks. f)Videotaped Mini-Courses. g)Strategies-Based Instruction.
- Explicit or implicit strategy training?
- The importance of underlying learning styles in strategy selection: global, analytical, visual, auditory styles.
- Classifying learning strategies (R. Oxford):
1. Direct strategies: memory, cognitive, compensatory strategies.
2. Indirect strategies: metacognitive, affective, social strategies.
- Strategic Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).
- Building Strategic Techniques (Brown).

- Strategic competence/Metacognitive strategies:
a) Selecting the most appropriate learning strategies.
b) Monitoring strategy use.
c) Orchestrating various strategies.
- The effect of metacognition on reading.
- Reader motivation.
- Developing reader efficiency
- The Taxonomy:
I-   Reading text: A- Source, B- Form, C- Subject, D- Register, E- Rhetorical Functions, F- Rhetorical Patterns.
II-   Macroinformation. Approaches to skimming a text. Approaches to scanning a text.
III-   Microinformation.
- Conclusion.

VARIETIES – ENGLISH IN USE

- An example: "Healing by Wire" by A. Purvis (*Time*).
- Interpretation - Analysis.
- Text source –text form – text subject – register – rhetorical function – rhetorical patterns.
- Macroinformation: interpretation: semantic map, brainstorming, word bank.
- Microinformation: analysis. Vocabulary: from beginning-level exercises to intermediate-level activities to advanced-level intensive vocabulary-building.
- Dictionaries.
- Context clues: a) Definitions, b) Morphology, c) Restatement, paraphrasing,
              d) Inductive reasoning, e) Synonyms, antonyms,
               f) Hyponyms, superordinates, g) Acronyms,
               h) Comparison and Contrast: metaphors, similes
               i) Wordplay, j) Punctuation.

- Need for a unified approach. The nature of mistakes and errors.
- Comprehensibility as a criterion.
- Examples of problematic strategies:
  a) Ineffective readers often change the context to fit what they mistakenly think the word means.
     "Musical Context" by analogy with "Musical Chairs".

Miscue analysis: insertion miscue – reversal miscue.
b) Alternate versions or subgroups of "musical context".
Malapropism for comic effect.
What the cloze procedure is.
c) Readers sometimes misconstrue the text by employing improper word grouping.
d) Non-native readers frequently miss the point when they leave out crucial parts of sentences.
e) EFL students are also used to reading one sentence exclusively as if it were isolated from the larger context.
f) Many times learners find some similar-looking word(s) in the text and try to fashion an answer.
g) Weak readers quite often show a tendency to use previous knowledge that is irrelevant to the context.

- Emergence and development of ESP:
- <u>Origins</u> A) The role of English
            B) New developments in Linguistics.
            C) Learners´central importance.
- <u>Phases of development</u> a) The notion of special language: register analysis-based syllabus.
            b) The importance of discourse/rhetorical analysis.
            c) The concepts of needs analysis/target situation analysis
            d) Focus on the underlying interpretive strategies and skills
            e) A movement towards ESP as an approach and not as a particular language product.
-   Conclusion.
-   Types of ESP.
-   Designing an ESP course. What, Who, Where, When, Why, How?
-   Needs analysis: necessities, lacks, wants.
-   How to go about a written ESP text.
-   Evaluating the content of the passage. Sample Work-Sheet.

-   The treatment of English varieties: audience, purpose, context.
-   Appropriateness – Flexibility – Acceptability – Political Correctness.
-   Appropriate contexts: examples.
-   Variety classes:
    a) Standard, b) Non-Standard/Substandard.
-   Standard English (SE): BBC English, the Queen´s English – Network English – Received Pronunciation (RP) – Estuary English: examples.
-   National Standards of English: British and American English: examples.
-   Spoken and written varieties: nature, audience, style, function.

- Context-dependent or freestanding discourses?
- <u>Register</u>: field, mode, tenor.
- Register analysis in translation.
- Mistaken spoken registers – Mistaken written registers.
- Jargon.

- Integrating the written press to the curriculum: questions – acivities.
- Insights into newspaper style: journalese.
  Analysis: "Journalese for the Lay Reader" (*Time*).
- Pedagogic implications of news English: genre – discourse practice.
- A mixture of genres. Hybrid texts.
- Features of newspaper language: 1) Headlines.
  Examples: a) *The Guardian*, b) *The Daily Mirror*, c) *The Sun*.
                              2) Reporting styles.
  Articles/Stories, Hard news articles, Reports, Feature Stories.
  Examples (Legal/Business English): Report 1 "Government drops plan for no-fault divorce" (*The Guardian*) – Report 2 "Prenuptial Accords: Walking down the Aisle and Reading Fine Print", (*International Herald Tribune*).
- The News in Depth: A-Schemata:ContentSchema.FormalSchema/Macrostructure: text-types, topic, audience, register, skimming, scanning. B- Microstructure: style and techniques, lexis, punctuation marks metaphorical language, grammar.

- News discourse schemata: headlines, lead, story/event, context, background, explanation, consequences, reactions...
- Weeklies different news schema: they do not report actual news.
- Accounting for American/British news magazines.
- Exploring the style of *Time* and *Newsweek:* dynamic, racy.
- Background to the magazines: "Timespeak", "Timese", "Newspeak".
- A) Vocabulary choice: registers, neologisms, wordplay, alliteration, specialized/ buzz words, literary borrowings, shortened and abbreviated forms.
  How can readers cope with problematic vocabulary?Brainstorming, synonyms.
- B) Sentence construction: ambiguous, obscure sentences, subject delayed, word combinations (pre- and post-modification), love of sound, parallel construction, figures of speech (personification, similes, metaphors)
- Using a checklist to identify key features in newspapers and magazines.

- The nature of legal language.

- Functions: referential, descriptive, conative, metalinguistic, formal, predictable, not spontaneous.
- Legalese. Examples: lack of clarity.
- Plain English principles: precision, conciseness, accuracy, simplicity, clarity.
  Examples: a) Breach of contract b) Traditional agreement.
- In favour of legalese.
- Legislative discourse: easification for the specialist audience; simplification for the lay audience.
- Features of written legal language:
  <u>Wills</u> – General Comments: <u>A</u> <u>Schemata</u>. 1-Content schema: Background information. 2-Formal schema/Macrostructure: Text-type, topic, audience, register. <u>B</u> <u>Microstructure</u>: style, typography and layout, lexis, grammar.
  <u>Statutes</u> - General Comments. Tabulation technique.
- <u>Informal legal writing</u>: "If at first you don´t succeed..." (*The Economist*).
- Competing discourses.

Chapter XV: Business English 213

- Differences between teaching General English and Business English (BE).
- Historical background to teaching BE.
- Lack of specific training at TTC (Teacher Training Colleges): business-speak; lack of business language common core.
- Categories in BE teaching: -Methodology.

                             -Business   Communication   Skills: negotiation, correspondence , report writing, telephoning, taking part in meetings, giving presentations. Sample Business Letter/Circular – Survey report. Diagram – Comprehension of visual presentations: graph, pie/bar charts, organigram, flow chart, diagram, table. Class application. Graphic procedures for comprehension of business texts. Examples.

                             -Business   Communication   Strategies: roleplays, simulations, case studies.

                             -Business Studies Materials: coursebooks, supplementary materials. Class application: magazine article (*Business Week*).

Chapter XVI: The technical register 233

- Activities in EST: reading publications, writing reports, attending conferences, giving presentations, telephoning, writing letters, taking part in technical meetings, showing colleagues round a plant...
- Significant features of EST discourse:
  1- The nature of the EST paragraph: "core generalizations" – specifics – deductive structure: example – inductive paragraph: example.
  2- The rhetorical techniques: time order, space order, cause and result, order of importance, comparison and contrast, analogy, exemplifications, illustration: example (*Invention & Technology).*
  3- The rhetorical functions:

a) Description: physical, function, process. Examples.

b) Definition: simple, complex. Examples. (*The Economist).*

c) Classification: complete, partial. Example 1 (*The Economist) –* Example 2 (*Scientific American).*

d) Instructions: direct, indirect, instructional information. Examples.

Syntax and lexis problems in a set of instructions: lack of the definite article, "cryptic" writing, noun compounding. Technical compounds categorized by length and difficulty of paraphrasing: complex, very complex.

Chapter XVII: Text-production competence. (Part I)

- Introduction.
- The composing process: top-down/bottom-up features. Written text production framework.
- Approaches to writing: a) the expressivist approach: self-discovery, fluency, personal journals; b) the cognitivist approach: a problem-solving activity, thinking and process in writing, recursivity; c) the interactionist approach: interaction between top-down and bottom-up production.
- Product-process distinction: from product-oriented to process-oriented models.
- Model-based approach: language-focused (Audio-Lingual Method).
- Differences between spoken and written forms of language.
- The dynamics of writing: a) for reinforcement, b) for training, c) for imitation, d) for communication, e) for fluency, f) for learning.
- The teaching of writing: a sequenced presentation of all stages of the writing process. A model of writing: 1- Warm-up stage; 2- Pre-writing stage/idea-generating stage; 3- Focusin*g*; 4- Structuring;5- Drafting; 6- Evaluating; 7- Reviewing. Examples.
- Recursivity of the writing process.

Chapter XVIII: Text-production competence. (Part II)

- New emphases on teaching writing.
- The creative factor.
- Reading as a model for writing. Summarizing.
- Visual – verbal relationships: charts, diagrams, maps...: symbolic material
  : photographs, pictures: representational material
  : physical objects: realia.
- Visual literacy and the impact of technology.
- Types of graphic displays. Iconography: procedural time lines, flow charts, classification tables, descriptive arrays, graphs, diagrams, schematics, exploded views, spider maps, series of events chains, problem-solution outlines, network trees, cycles...

- Graphic representations in the English news media. Examples.
  A <u>Table</u> (*Evening Post*). B <u>Time Line</u>. C <u>Tree Diagram.</u>
- Graphic representations in Business English. Examples.
  A <u>Series of Events Chain</u> (*Joe Mc Pherson).* B <u>Cycle</u> (*The Automobile Assembly Line*). C <u>Spider Map/Spidergram</u> (*The Structure of a Bank*).
- Graphic representations in Legal English. Examples.
  A <u>Network Tree</u> (*Per stirpes.Per capita distribution*). B <u>Compare/Contrast Matrix</u> (*Intellectual Property Law*).
- Implications for teaching.

PART III

Conclusion 296

- The teacher´s major roles of facilitator, helper, stimulator, resource.
- Fostering cooperative learning activities.
- Metacognitive strategies in Reading Comprehension enable: a) constant feedback from peers, b) critical reading and synthesizing skills, c) awareness of the SQ3R technique (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review).
- Objectives of the course: Developing EFL students´communicative competence – Examining general discourse features before specific text features – Devising strategies for understanding authentic ESP texts – Providing plenty of hands-on training – Creating awareness of current developments in this field – Enhancing capacity for future professional development.
- Original contribution: Modularity – Integrative thematic units – Motivation and Creativity – Greater learner autonomy.
- Language study: challenging, thought-provoking and demanding.

PART IV

Bibliography 301

I.- General Bibliography

II.- Specific Bibliography

  a) Intensive Readings: Specialized dictionaries, journals and e-magazines.

  b) Supplementary Readings: Articles from newspapers and magazines.

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