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ON SOME RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF SPECIALIZED DISCOURSE

English specialized discourse plays a crucial role in global communication and its investigation and methodology of teaching is of utmost importance today. The purpose of this article is to show some research and methodological peculiarities of specialized discourse in general and of domain specific English in particular. The study of recent approaches that exist within the sphere of specialized discourse provides the teacher of the mentioned discipline with some clues to coping with common challenges of the domain.

Key words: *specialized discourse, special language, discursive peculiarities, teaching domain- specific English*

Discourse in general is not restricted to only oral, non-fictional, verbal, non-verbal communication. It can refer to all the types of speech varieties/functional styles/registers and can focus on all the characteristics of human communication. It can include the use of spoken, written and visual/signed language and multimodal/multimedia forms of communication. It is a mode of organizing human knowledge, ideas, or experience(s) that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts. And, indeed, "discourses are aspects of culture, interconnected vocabularies and systems of meaning located in the social world" /Merry, 1990: 110/. Thus, phenomena of interest of discourse can range from silence, a single utterance, a conversation to fictional, scientific, technical, public, official, online and many other types of writing.

We adhere to the notion that discourses are rooted in particular functional varieties or registers and embody the style of the given variety. Specialized discourse is then a discourse used in a domain-specific language which can involve technical and scientific registers as well as many other spheres of communication and case-specific contexts of use.

Examination of discourse has always attracted the attention of linguists. The Prague linguistic school turned its interest to specialized discourse in 1920s-1930s. They used the term *functional style* to characterize scientific and technical discourse. Initially, their approach was conservative, as it tended to classify scientific-technical discourse totally separate from general discourse. There are differences between general English and scientific English that are not limited to specialized discourse

only. Yet, there cannot be a clear-cut line between them /Bares, 1972; Fried, 1972/. Research of 1950s into the concept of *register* attempted to identify the morphosyntactic, lexical and stylistic features that characterize specialized discourse; register analyses were part of a wider enquiry into language varieties. The perception of language "as a highly flexible means of communication employed in different situations placed the study of specialized discourse within the wider spectrum of situational-contextual varieties" /Gotti, 2010/. Register studies and analyses of British linguists resulted in their interest in marked/unmarked forms that distinguish not only the specialized but also all the other discourses /Firth, 1957/.

The general focus was on the lexical dimension as the most marked one and the most important in language teaching methodology /Halliday, 1964/. Many lexical items signal a certain discourse by themselves: *extrapolation*, *unfathomable, nanotechnology, multilateral*, *tonsillectomy*, *education*, *disarmament*, *nuclear*, etc. Yet, distinction of marked lexical elements is just a starting point for register analysis which should turn its attention to the description of any feature that diverges from the default level of common language. Besides linguistic features (phonetic, lexical, morphological and syntactic), there are a number of socio-cultural and technological factors (extra-linguistic features) that should be considered in register analysis and teaching discourses, in this case the specialized discourse.

Michael Halliday (1978) assumes that the communicative aim of the given discourse is conditioned by the following factors which he refers to as registers:

MODE (channel and medium of communication);

FIELD (object of communication);

TENOR (relationship between participants).

In the field of the specialized discourse of tourism, for example, all three registers are important in order to reach an effective, successful communication that persuades the tourist to choose the advertised destination instead of a competing one. The tenor, in particular, must be taken into account by the creator, investigator and teacher of a tourism discourse. He/she must be aware that he/she is in a dominant position since he/she (1) by using special verbal and non-verbal means is persuading the tourist to make a particular choice, (2) is analyzing all the functional-linguistic and paralinguistic means that contribute to the realization of the given communicative aim (in the case of tourism discourse realization of attractive, informative, persuasive functions and to a certain extent the function of impact), (3) is using special methodology based on a thorough analysis of the discourse features mentioned in (1) and (2) to be able to teach the discourse.

However, these are not the only factors which determine the choice of specialized discourse. Other factors are to be considered, such as the speaker's profession and his/her knowledge of the discourse involved. Appropriate analytical tools are needed for each discourse especially when some features are shared by more than one specialized language. In fact, several rules and features may coexist with specific ones and which separate one variety from the other. This is because the specialized discourse uses features present in general language.

Specialized discourse can be classified according to

- the field where the discourse is created or used (academic, professional and occupational area of knowledge and practice);
- the promotion of a particular specialized communicative aim;
- the addresser (the creator or the teacher of the domain specific discourse) and the addressee (perspective specialists in a certain professional field);
- the medium (teacher, textbook, a promotional website, etc.);
- verbal and non-verbal structural and stylistic elements;
- the localized socio-cultural environment.

According to M. Gotti (2010) the dominant criteria of specialized discourse are *economy* (to use concise language), *precision* (to include all important details referring to the sphere) and *appropriateness* (to reach maximum communicative effectiveness by using the right language for the right kind of addressee). Peculiarities typical of the *discourse community*, i.e. people who are regularly using the specialized discourse (people involved in a certain profession or discipline, instructors and students of a certain discourse, operators and theorists of the given sphere) also affect, to a certain extent, the quality of specialized discourse/domain specific English.

Specialized discourse should not be comparable to *special language*, *restricted language* or *restricted code* in which "some registers are extremely restricted in purpose" and thus "employ only a limited number of formal items and patterns" /Halliday, 1964/ and represent a "severely reduced linguistic system" /Bernstein, 1971/ which is used by a particular group or for a particular activity. Such a system is often artificial and highly specialized, created and used with a particular end in mind. Restricted language expressions are understood by the members of the sub-culture/group but may or may not be understood by other members of the dominant culture. Examples of restricted languages are the coded communication systems of Seaspeak (a form of English serving to facilitate the safe movement of shipping), Airspeak (flight communication), Code Q (the language used in the telecommunications sector), DOS or Mac (computer languages), Tourism Discourse (the standard language referring to tourism). Here are some examples: © (copyright), * * (non-breaking space), *&amp* (the sequence for &=&), *&Ntilde* (the sequence for an uppercase N with a tilde), *QOF3* (the quality of the signals is commercial), *QOB?* (can you communicate by radiotelephony), *F&B* (food and beverage), *QA* (quality assurance), bb (bed and breakfast), etc.

The mentioned examples represent a restricted code rather than specialized discourse. Special language cannot be applied to the notion of specialized discourse as specialized discourse is much more than special language. Special language is a layer in specialized discourse which is referred to by all the students involved in the given profession but it is not the whole of the specialized discourse as it more deviates from than adheres to the rules of general language. Specialized discourse shares the communicative conventions of the language and also possesses other

conventions which are not part of the given language. This is a characteristic of specialized discourse that should be considered by all the discourse community, including teachers.

As to instruction, specialized discourse is the so-called English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which consists of the English language which is designed to meet specified needs, is related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities, is centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of discourse, and is sometimes in contrast with general English because it modifies language to serve its special communicative purposes within the specific discourse community. ESP includes Business English, Technical English, Scientific English, English for medical professionals, English for tourism, English for the Arts, Aviation English or Airspeak, etc. ESP is also a part of languages for specific purposes. ESP makes use of methodology and activities of the discipline(s) it serves and may use, in specific situations, a different methodology from that of general English.

The world of specialized discourse is by no means as homogeneous as it may at first appear. There is a clear distinction between different specialized languages, though any distinction based mainly on lexis is far too simplistic in this context. Disciplinary variation produces not only special lexical connotations, but often also influences other options (morphosyntactic, textual, functional and pragmatic), thus reflecting at the same time the epistemological, semantic and functional peculiarities of a given variety of specialized discourse. Specific use does not necessarily imply the presence of exclusive rules but it calls for appropriate analytical tools and caution whenever the features observed in one specialized language are extended to others. Just as general language is not a uniform entity but contains many varieties, common rules and features of specialized discourse coexist with specific ones separating each variety from the others.

M. Gotti (2003) distinguishes the following all-important features that are typical of any specialized discourse:

1. Monoreferentiality which is limited to the disciplinary field in which a term is employed and signals that in a given context only one meaning is allowed. Denotation is prevalent and the meaning of specific terms may be inferred without reference to their context. This terminological tendency is defined as "the tendency for a word to have a fixed meaning in reference to the world, so that anyone wanting to name its referent would have little option but to use it, especially if the relationship works in both directions" /Sinclair, 1996: 82/.

2. Lack of emotion or lack of emotive connotations is another feature of specialized discourse. Even seemingly connotative units lose this quality in the specialized context. The tone of specialized discourse is usually neutral, as its illocutionary force derives from the logical, consequential arrangement of concepts and supporting evidence rather than the use of emphatic language. The informative purpose of specialized language prevails over

other traits (emotive, aesthetic and other) typical of general language, lending professional communication a seemingly cold and artificial tone.

3. Precision or referential precision means that every term must be related to the concept it expresses. This requirement excludes the recourse to indirect reference systems in specialized communication, through stylistic devices and expressive means.

4. Transparency is an important feature of specialized lexis and allows to promptly access a term's meaning through a surface form. The use of certain suffixes with precise meanings allows coinages of easily comprehensible neologisms. The frequent use of classical words (Latin or Greek) in science reflects the widespread effort of scientists to avoid the lexis of general language, prone to dangerous misunderstandings and ambiguities associated with everyday use.

5. Conciseness is another highly-regarded criterion applied to word-formation by specialists in specialized discourse. This means that concepts are expressed in the shortest possible form. The need for conciseness generally leads to a reduction in textual surface which is done through omission of affixes, merging of two lexemes into a single term, reduction of the term, juxtaposition, which omits prepositions and premodifiers in nominal groups containing two nouns. Sometimes conciseness in specialized discourse relies on acronyms and abbreviations.

6. Conservatism indicates that the trend of forming new terms is highly limited. Fear that new terms may lead to ambiguity favours the permanence of traditional linguistic traits, which are preserved even when they disappear from general language. Old formulae are preferred to newly-coined words because of their century-old history and highly codified, universally accepted interpretations. Many examples of conservative usage are found in the Legal Discourse. An amount of conservatism is also found in business language, where a number of age-old terms and expressions may still be encountered and have not been replaced because their meaning is crystallized and widely accepted across the discourse community.

The above mentioned and other characteristic features are typical of not only traditional but also relatively modern forms of specialized discourse, say English Tourism Discourse. English is used in the field of tourism as a lingua franca. Indeed, it is the language of communication especially when different forms of tourist discourse are meant for speakers of a minority language. The language of tourism mirrors the complexity of this field, which is unquestionably hybrid: geography, art, history, architecture, sociology, business and economics, management, law are among the disciplines which influence the language of tourism.

The language of tourism (LoT) can be considered a type of specialized discourse because it is used within a specific professional domain and is used by both experts and non-experts. In addition, it operates through a conventional system of symbols and codes, including also dialect and colloquial registers, especially when

local culture and traditions are promoted. The LoT constitutes a special type of communication which uses verbal descriptions and displays of photographs, film footage, multimedia supports. As all languages have to be learned, the language of tourism, too, requires a process of socialization for those who generate it and those who teach or translate it. Apart from "discourse of tourism", "rhetoric and narrative of tourism" several other terms are used by researchers, which demonstrate that tourism is more and more being regarded as a language. Dann claims that tourism is also referred to advertising, publicity, promotion, and even propaganda /Dann, 1996: 28-29/. The language of tourism successfully combines together everyday language and specifically-devised elements referring to the most specialized concepts. As any specialized discourse, it is a subsystem of the general language; as such it has its own lexical, morpho-syntactic and discursive rules.

If we need to provide a definition of the LoT as specialized discourse, we should quote Gotti's /2003: 24/ definition, "the specialist use of language in contexts which are typical of a specialized community stretching across the academic, the professional, the technical and the occupational areas of knowledge and practice." The discursive features mentioned by this author typical of any type of specialized discourse are quite appropriate to LoT. The language of tourism has created its own **monoreferential** vocabulary expressed in terms like *backpacking*, *transportation, bed-night, bed-place, check-in, check-out, itinerary* etc. **Lack of emotion** is a general characteristic of the discourse, it is not obvious only in promotional messages aimed at realizing a persuasive function (*brilliant atmosphere, idyllic view*). The notions of **precision** and **transparency** are evident when identifying concepts (*agritourism, ethnotourism, virtual tour*). **Conciseness** is expressed in acronyms (*SSSI* – site of special scientific interest, *4WD* – four wheel drive), abbreviations (*tourdep* – department of tourism), eponyms (*Lyon-Saint-Exupéry Airport* or *LYS*), blendings (*travelodge* – travel + lodge).

Besides considering all the above discursive peculiarities of specialized discourse, the ESP methodology should include certain resources for classroom material. In the case of LoT the material may include:

1. Hospitality lessons – tourism & travel survey, travel problems vocabulary with video materials, intercultural tourism vocabulary, food vocabulary, consumer complaint menu vocabulary, writing a tourist visa application.

2. Hotel/airport lessons – airport vocabulary with video materials and speaking exercises, telephone conversations, booking a room at a hotel vocabulary and dialogues, airport and bus stations vocabulary, requesting travel information vocabulary, writing a description of a destination.

3. Talking about special places – museums and exhibitions of …, places of interest in…, ancient churches of….

4. Talking about types of tourism.

5. Talking about advantages and disadvantages of tourism development.

Thus, the study of discursive peculiarities of specialized discourse/domain-specific English demonstrates clearly that a specialized language does not have a different grammar or lexis with respect to common language. The only difference is the frequency of usage of grammar rules and lexis that condition its style.

Specialized discourse differs from general language not for its use of special linguistic rules absent from the latter but for its quantitatively greater and functionally and pragmatically more specific use of such conventions. This stresses also the importance of the type of user, the domain of use and the special application of language in specialized contexts.

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Ա. ՉՈՒԲԱՐՅԱՆ, Գ. ՄՈՒՐԱԴՅԱՆ – *Մասնագիտական դիսկուրսի հետազոտական և մեթոդաբանական որոշ առանձնահատկությունների շուրջ.* – Անգլերեն մասնագիտական դիսկուրսը մեծ դեր է խաղում գլոբալ հաղորդակցության ոլորտում, և նրա քննությունն ու դասավանդման մեթոդիկան չափազանց կարևոր են այսօր: Սույն հոդվածի նպատակն է վեր հանել մասնագիտական դիսկուրսի հետազոտական ու մեթոդական մի շարք առանձնահատկություններ, մասնավորապես անդրադառնալով մասնագիտական անգլերենի դասավանդման մեթոդիկայի որոշ խնդիրների: Ժամանակակից հետազոտությունների լույսի ներքո հոդվածում բացահայտվում են այն ուղիները, որոնք կօգնեն հաղթահարել մասնագիտական անգլերենի դասավանդման գործընթացում հանդիպող դժվարությունները:

Բանալի բառեր. մասնագիտական դիսկուրս, հատուկ լեզու, դիսկուրսի առանձնահատկություններ, մասնագիտական անգլերենի դասավանդում

А. ЧУБАРЯН, Г. МУРАДЯН – *О некоторых исследовательских и методологических особенностях специализированного дискурса.* – Английский специализированный дискурс играет важную роль в глобальной коммуникации, и его исследование и методика преподавания имеют огромное значение в настоящее время. Цель данной статьи показать некоторые научно-исследовательские и методологические особенности специализированного дискурса, в целом, и английского языка в профессиональной сфере, в частности. Анализ некоторых современных подходов в сфере специализированного дискурса дает ключ к преодолению существующих проблем при преподавании английского языка для профессиональных целей.

Ключевые слова: специализированный дискурс, дискурсивные особенности, английский язык в профессиональной сфере, обучение специализированному английскому языку