A combined genre-register approach in texts of business English

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Abstract

The present paper uses a combined genre-register approach to carry out an analysis of some of the most representative written and oral professional texts from the field of Business English: the business letter, the job interview, the business meeting and the company presentation. We believe that the combination of these two approaches is an optimal way to help our students of Business English to learn and recall the linguistic peculiarities of some of the most relevant genres in this field of English for Specific Purposes. Genre analysis has become one of the research areas of greatest impact in the didactics of professional and academic English within communicative methodology. Its ultimate aim is communication by means of texts termed genres. Our analysis will be carried out using different parameters such as macrostructure, communicative politeness and discourse. Register analysis focuses on the structural elements (syntax and lexis) which form the backbone of these texts. To this end, the work follows the research lines of Dudley-Evans and St John (1998); Brown and Levinson (1987), Swales (1990, 2004), Bhatia (1993) and Alcaraz Varó (2000): lexicon-grammar or register analysis and text or genre analysis.

1 Introduction

The use of the English language in international communications and in economic activities has increased due in part to globalization. Our students must learn different activities in order to communicate efficiently in English in the fields of international commerce and Economics. To do so they need a linguistic framework to facilitate the learning process. Current research in Business English shows that both traditional and modern approaches are used in linguistic description. As a result, without ignoring the contributions of register analysis, whose interest centres on the study of morphosyntax and lexis, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), in line with the parameters of Pragmatics, also studies the analysis of genre.

Business English is made up of different genres due to the distinct communicative necessities arising from business activities. One of the most common written genres is the business letter since it is still widely used in the world as a main channel of business correspondence in spite of widespread developments in communication technology. The most representative oral genres are the job interview, the business meeting and company presentations (Charles, 1996; Suau Jiménez, 1998; Alcaraz Varó, 2000). The aim of the present work is to analyse both register (syntax and lexicon) and genre with their respective macrostructure, communicative

politeness and discourse of the written and oral texts mentioned above. It is our belief that students of Business English who are presented with both approaches will be able to learn and recall the linguistic peculiarities of this specific field in an optimal way. To this end, the work follows the research lines of Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Brown and Levinson (1987), Swales (1990, 2004), Bhatia (1993) and Alcaraz Varó (2000): lexis-grammar or register analysis and text or genre analysis.

The paper is divided into the following sections. The first section will consist of a brief description of the language of English for Specific Purposes. Secondly, we will introduce genre analysis as a research line. Thirdly, we will introduce the corpus under analysis and the methodology used. The following two sections will illustrate the genre and register of the business letter, the job interview, the business meeting and the presentation of a company in English. Finally, we will draw some conclusions.

2 The language of English for Specific Purposes

The first studies on ESP were made within the framework of register analysis, mainly between 1960 and 1970. This approach was described by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens in *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching* (1964). Register is defined as the variety of a language in which a set of lexical and grammatical features stand out. Due to the frequency and regularity with which these are repeated, there is a certain sense of a differentiated unit (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998; Alcaraz Varó, 2000). The purpose of register analysis consisted, therefore, of identifying these grammatical and lexical features. Consequently, the first ESP programmes were essentially of a structuralist type. Their contents were taught to students as they formed part of the language system without an explicit communicative purpose. The concept of register helps to analyse the discourse of business English by studying syntax and lexis. The syntactic component plays a relevant role in the articulation of a whole linguistic system and in the representation of reality. For Hoffmann (1985) and Robinson (1991) the grammatical structures of Business English are related to the importance and frequency of certain structures in the texts or dialogues studied. In order to analyse the syntax of the genres proposed we shall follow the most basic syntactic concepts in economics-business texts: (Alcaraz Varó, 2000:198; Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998:74-94):

a) Transitivity: *The organisation offers legal services.*
b) Passivization: *The figures have been prepared by our new accountants.*
c) Nominalization: *The development of small businesses.*
d) Ergative verbs: *The crisis has deepened…*
e) Personification: *The new plan suggests that…*
f) Long nominal groups: *We have received a consignment of… But on unpacking them we found that six heavy mahogany-finished dressing tables had been sent, instead of the light pine-finish ones asked for.*
g) Hypothetical expressions: *If we pay the tax on time, we won´t be liable for any further payment.*
h) Causal and consecutive expressions: *The company opened because they saw a gap in the market. Interest rates are down again. Therefore, we can look at new investments.*
i) Expressions of purpose: *They moved to a greenfield site so that they would have room to expand.*
j) Expressions of concession: *Even though their resources were limited, their results were excellent.*
k) Restrictive expressions: *As far as I know, the price of oil has fallen down.*

The lexis analysis of the genres proposed is based on the following lexical characteristics of business English (Suau Jiménez, 1998; Alcaraz Varó, 2000):

a. Compound nouns: *Basic economic laws, the tax collection system, etc.*
b. False friends: *Assistant, agenda* and *attend*, *etc.*
c. Other linguistic resources which feature in business English are those related to the structure of the word, that is, affixes (*overbalance, wholesaler*), those related to the meaning of the word such as synonymy (*to haggle, to bargain*) antonymy (*deficit, surplus*) polysemy (*to quote*) and relationships of hypernymy and hyponymy (the hyponym *secure* is lexically related to the hypernym *safe*).
d. Metaphors: *A tailor-made loan, companies are in good health*, *etc*. Lindstromberg (1991: 207-225) highlights the place that the metaphor has in ESP vocabulary. From the viewpoint of cognitive semantics research works are being carried out on the teaching of figurative lexicon (Deignan et al., 1997; Boers and Demecheleer, 1997; Henderson, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2000; Herrera-Soler and White 2000; Almendárez López, 2001; Cortés de los Ríos, 2001 and Herrera-Soler, 2008), among others.
e. Lexical collocations: *Trade discounts, company car,* etc.

3 Genre analysis as a research line
The concept of non-literary genre was coined with the publication of *Genre Analysis* by Swales (1990). This work outlines the structure and discourse organisation of the parts or *moves* which make up a research work. According to Swales (1990), the non-literary genre is defined as a specific communicative event which can be recognised as such by the members of an academic or professional community which, as well as having one or several specific objectives in common, is structured according to a protocol which is not exempt of variables. Apart from the fact of belonging to a discursive community, Swales identifies a second aspect: the communicative objective. Swales (1990, 2004) argues that from a language teaching perspective, it is useful to think of genre as consisting of a series of "moves". A move can be thought of as part of a text, which achieves a particular purpose within the text. Each move is taken to embody a number of constituent elements called "steps".

Basically the genres are defined according to the use of language in conventionalised communicative contexts (Bhatia, 1997: 181-195). They serve the purposes of the discourse or epistemological community, whose conventions tend to establish relatively stable structural forms.

Starting from the concept of the non-literary genre, ESP offers genres in the academic field such as the abstract, research articles, the doctoral thesis, the exposé, etc. In the professional field, which is much wider, some professions possess many specific genres, for example, in the business world it is easy to distinguish genres such as the memo, the business letter, etc. (Alcaraz Varó, 2000).

Genre analysis has become one of the research lines of greatest impact in the didactics of professional and academic English within the communicative methodology[1]. It is not content with the simple identification of the lexical-grammatical features of the different varieties of

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[1] The introduction of genre analysis has implied a methodological change in ESP didactics, not only as regards the study of language, but also considering the oral and written genres used by professionals in their everyday activities.

the English language, the ultimate aim of register analysis, but rather it directs its attention towards the linguistic and socio-cultural conventions which can be analysed in each genre (Alcaraz Varó, 2000; Fuertes Olivera, 2003; Revilla Vicente, 2008). This analysis is carried out using different parameters such as the macrostructure, communicative politeness and discourse.

3.1 Macrostructure

The macrostructure, i.e. its format or higher organisation, is one of the first conventions of a genre. According to Alcaraz Varó (2000:135), its importance resides in the fact that it provides meaning to the text. Sometimes the incomprehension of the contents of a text is due to not knowing the specific vocabulary, but at other times empirical studies have shown that lack of familiarisation with the macrostructure of a genre is the cause.

The macrostructure consists of the primary and the secondary structures. The primary structure is made up of sections, each of which is made up in turn of moves. These moves correspond to the communicative objectives which each sections aims to accomplish and they make up the secondary structure, which may in turn be made up of lesser parts known as sub-moves. For instance, in a complaint letter the movements consist of formulating the complaint and requesting a solution using pressure tactics.

3.2 Communicative politeness

The concept of politeness can be understood in two ways (Escandell Vidal, 1999:137): either as an established social norm which regulates the behaviour of the members of a given society in order to preserve them from aggressiveness, or as a set of conversational strategies intended to mitigate possible conflict between speakers.

Traditionally, politeness has been treated as an aspect of conversational language. Genre analysis considers this parameter to be of interest in the academic and professional fields as well. It is, therefore, an appropriate topic of ESP and should be included in any syllabus of these courses (Crompton, 1997; Skelton 1988, and Salager-Meyer, 1994). Likewise, Dudley and St John (1998:77) add that learning activities and tasks should be programmed to allow students to assess the function of modifiers in professional and academic discourse, to manipulate the linguistic resources with which they express themselves and to understand the motives which led the writer to include them.

In the framework of pragmatics, linguistic research has come up with different models[2] which explain how this communicative phenomenon of Brown and Levinson (1987) is perhaps the most elaborate and best structured of these models to provide an explanation of communicative politeness. It has two basic concepts. Firstly, rationality, in other words the capacity of speakers to define accurately the aims they pursue in the communicative process; and secondly, the public image, or the social prestige which any individual wishes to hold. This may be negative or positive, and all politeness strategies are derived from the need to maintain it. In this sense we can distinguish between negative and positive politeness

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[2] For example, according to R. Lakoff (1973), politeness is understood as a mechanism which attempts to reduce the tension created in communicative interaction. Leech (1983), on the other hand defines it according to the relationship which exists between speakers, which imposes a series of selections which determine the type of statement and qualify its meaning. This author also distinguishes between positive and negative politeness.

strategies[3]. Negative politeness consists of respecting the speaker's territory. The most common strategies of negative politeness are impersonalisation and hedging. These are achieved using impersonal verbs, the use of shields, such as modal verbs (could), semi-auxiliares (seem to), adverbs and adjectives of possibility (it is possible), epistemic verbs (believe, suggest, consider, think) and intensifiers of an emotional kind (of particular interest, of particular importance). Other resources to moderate or soften the content of the message are approximators (somewhat, kind of), expressions of scepticism (in our view, in our opinion) and finally signals of pessimism by means of adjectives and nouns with negative connotations (difficult, problems, etc.). From a linguistic point of view, positive politeness includes the words, sentences or clauses which we should use in our communication to integrate the speaker into our terrain, or to integrate ourselves into his/hers. As such, the author of a research article uses solidarity as a positive strategy by using *we* and recognising the value of the scientific community by means of the complicity when assuming part of what others have contributed.

3.3 Discourse

Discourse is understood as language in action and is made up of a chain of linguistic signals which convey information with a view to developing an intrinsic instrumental language function which produces some effect on the receiver, not to mention other considerations such as sociocultural factors. To carry out the study of discourse, firstly, we should distinguish certain parameters, namely discursive modality: exposition, persuasion, description and narration and secondly, the communicative functions expressed as acts of speech. It is important to detect the features which allow us to determine the discourse modality of the genre, that is to know if the text is trying to persuade us of something (persuasion), to present some data (exposition), to depict a scene (description) or to recount something (narrative). A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. It might contain just one word, as in *Sorry!* to perform an apology, or several words or sentences: *I'm sorry for the inconvenience caused with your consignment*. Speech acts require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture. We perform speech acts when we offer an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal, etc.

4 Corpus and methodology

The corpus of our study has been taken from Bench (1986), Martin (1987), Littlejohn (1994), Palmer Silveira & Pérez Laval (2000), Tullis & Trappe (2000) and letters on-line: www.business-letters.com/categories.htm. These books and the website were selected since they contain a wide variety of texts and exercises with which students of business English can practice. They reflect the discourse they will be confronted with at their workplaces.

As stated in the introduction, our aim is to analyse the business letter as one of the most characteristic written genres of business English, and also the following oral genres: the job interview, the business meeting and the presentation of a company. For this purpose we will use a combined genre-register approach so that our students of Business English can learn and recall the linguistic peculiarities of these genres. The analysis of each parameter and the syntax and lexis will be illustrated with examples taken from the corpus mentioned above.

Our combined genre-register approach consists of two concrete analyses as follows:

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[3] Salager-Meyer (1994:155) establishes a wider classification of the linguistic resources that we use to soften or moderate the verbal message.

1. The genre: Macrostructure, communicative politeness and discourse from the viewpoint of communicative methodology.
   a. Macrostructure: We will show the sections or moves in Swales's words in the body of each genre. For example, in an enquiring letter we will show the following move: Requesting information, catalogues and price-lists (*Could you please send us your latest catalogue and price-list, including details of quantity discounts …*).
   b. Politeness: We will analyze negative and positive strategies to achieve communicative interaction between speakers. For example the act of enquiry constitutes a strategy of negative politeness expressed mainly using indirect acts.
   c. Discourse: Identifying the discursive modalities of each genre enables us to know if the text aims to convince us of something (persuasion) or to put forward some data (exposition), etc. For example, the writer of a complaint letter aims to solve the problem by means of persuasive tactics. Consequently, persuasion is the discursive modality of this type of letter, since the persuasive discourse is intended to influence the receiver (*receiver-oriented*). We will also identify the speech acts of each genre. For this aim we will follow Searle´s classification. Continuing with the example of a letter of complaint, the most representative acts of speech are directive (the complaint) and commissive (the threat).

2. The register: Syntactic and lexical peculiarities. For example with reference to the language of the reply to a letter ordering merchandise, from the point of view of syntax, sentences including the passive voice are typically found in this type of letter. Compound nouns are frequently used, such as *pro forma invoice, air way-bill, insurance certificate* and false friends like *dispatch* and *collect.*

5 Analysis of genre and register of the business letter
The business letter is the written macrogenre par excellence due to the need for internal communication of the members of this discursive community. Moreover, it is the business genre with the most sub-genres as a result of the diversity of fields which make up the firm's professional activity (Suau Jiménez, 1998; Wang, 2007).

This genre has the following macrostructure: the letterhead, name and address of the addressee, the date, the greeting, the main body of the letter and the farewell salutation.

There are many types of business letter (*enquiry*, *reply to enquiry, order*, *complaints*, *apologies*, etc.) each with its own macrostructure.

Politeness is expressed by means of ritualized language. For instance, *Thank you for your enquiry of 18th May asking for…/I should be obliged if you could kindly send us… /We should be extremely grateful if you would give us your opinion of...* In general terms, native English speakers use more strategies of negative politeness in business letters to preserve their image and more expressions of gratitude and pessimism than non-native speakers (Maier, 1992: 202).

There follows the genre analysis and register analysis of the most common types of business letter: an enquiry letter, reply to this request, order of merchandise, reply to this order, letter of complaint, letter of apology and the letter of job application. The latter is the type of letter

which our students most need to write once they have finished their studies and are looking for their first job. This study has collected 34 letters.

5.1 The genre and language of the enquiry letter
5.1.1. The genre
a. The macrostructure of this letter consists of the following movements:
1. Indicating the source of information on the other company or its products: *With reference to your advertisement in.../ As we saw in the advertisement published in…*
2. Showing interest in their products: *We are interested in increasing our…*
3. Requesting information, catalogues and price-lists: *Could you please send us your latest catalogue and price-list, including details of quantity discounts .../ We should be obliged if you would send us.../Please send us.../Please let us know…*

b. The act of *enquiry* constitutes a strategy of negative politeness expressed mainly using indirect acts. These acts are achieved by means of ritualized expressions which often contain modal verbs and conditional sentences, as well as imperative verbs accompanied by *please* acting as a modifier of the request.

c. As for the discourse, this sub-genre is articulated in the following discoursive modality: expositive. The act of speech is directive (requesting).

5.1.2. The language
a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of :
1. Modal verbs: *Could you please send...*
2. Imperatives: *Please let us know…*
3. Conditional sentences: *We should be obliged if you could send us further information…*

b. As regards lexis there is frequent use of:
1. Compound nouns: *Price list, quantity discounts, bulk buying*, etc.
2. False friends: *Obliged*

5.2 The genre and language of the reply to an enquiry letter
5.2.1. The genre
a. The macrostructure of this type of letter consists of the following moves:
1. Acknowledging receipt of the previous letter: *Thank you for your letter/enquiry of* (*date…*) */* Referring to the contents of the previous letter: *With reference to your letter … enquiring about…*
2. Indicating the dispatch of enclosed information: *We have pleasure in enclosing... / We are enclosing... / We are pleased to enclose...*
3. Formal closing: *We look forward to... / Please do not hesitate to write if you require further information.*

b. The reply to a request for information, catalogues and price-lists is mainly a strategy of positive politeness. The use of ritualised language such as *We are pleased to enclose... / We have pleasure in enclosing...* is intended to integrate the recipient into the terrain of the writer.

c. As far as the discourse is concerned, this sub-genre is articulated around the following discoursive modality: expositive. The characteristic act of speech is expressive (to please).

5.2.2. The language

a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of conditional sentences to show willingness to provide further information.

b. According to lexis there is frequent use of:
    1. Compound nouns: *Price-list, trade discounts, quantity discounts, delivery dates,* etc.
    2. False friends such as *to dispatch* and *to deliver.*

5.3 The genre and language of the letter ordering merchandise

5.3.1 The genre

a. The macrostructure of this type of letter consists of the following moves:
    1. Acknowledging receipt of the previous correspondence: *We thank you for your letter of (date), enclosing your catalogue, price-list and samples of (items).*
    2. Showing satisfaction with the samples and formulating the order: *We have examined your samples and would like to place the following order...*
    3. Enclosing the official purchase order and describing the form of payment: *We enclose our official purchase order and will pay for the goods by banker´s draft on receipt of your pro forma invoice.*
    4. Formal closing: *We look forward to...*

b. The communicative politeness of this sub-genre is negative. The linguistic resources by which this politeness is transmitted are modal verbs which act as modifiers of the request for merchandise.

c. The discourse of this sub-genre is expositive. The act of speech itself is directive (requesting).

5.3.2 The language

a. From the syntactic point of view, there is frequent use of modal verbs: *We would like to place the following order...*

b. According to lexis there is frequent use of compound nouns such as *pro forma invoice* and *order form.*

5.4 The genre and language of the reply to a letter ordering merchandise

5.4.1 The genre

a. The macrostructure of this type of letter consists of the following moves:
    1. Acknowledging receipt of the order: *We are pleased to acknowledge your order of (date) for...*
    2. Enclosing documents: *The air way-bill, insurance certificate and invoice for freight charges and insurance are enclosed.*
    3. Informing about dispatch: *The goods will be dispatched by air on receipt of your banker´s draft.*
    4. Formal closing: *We look forward to receiving further orders from you in the future.*

b. The reply to a letter ordering merchandise mainly constitutes a strategy of positive politeness. The use of ritualized language such as *We are pleased to acknowledge your order* is intended to integrate the addressee into the terrain of the sender. The passive voice is also

used as a linguistic resource of negative politeness. By using it, the sender respects the terrain of the addressee and impersonalizes the action of sending the merchandise to request the agreed payment.

c. The discoursive modality of this sub-genre is expositive. The acts of speech themselves are expressive (to please) and directive (to request payment for the merchandise).

5.4.2 The language
a. From the point of view of syntax, sentences including the passive voice are typically found in this type of letter: *The goods will be dispatched…*

b. According to lexis there is frequent use of:
   1. Compound nouns: *Pro forma invoice, air way-bill, insurance certificate,* etc.
   2. False friends like *dispatch* and *collect.*

5.5 The genre and language of a letter of complaint
5.5.1. The genre
a. The macrostructure of this type of letter consists of the following moves:

   1. Formulating the complaint: *I am writing to complain about …/I have just received a consignment from you and regret that… / We have taken delivery of the above order which arrived at Pireaus on the M.V. Spitfire*
   2. Giving a detailed explanation of the reasons behind the complaint: *We ordered … pencils but the crate only contains … . /Most of the goods are off. In fact the whole consignment looks as if it was loaded and left for two days with no cooling system.*
   3. Requesting that the problem be solved using pressure tactics: *If you cannot reassure me about the reliability of your delivery dates, I shall have to seek an alternative supplier/I need a replacement of this consignment immediately. Such a situation cannot be allowed to happen again…*

b. The communicative politeness of this type of letter is negative. Numerous expressions are used to soften the threatening nature of the complaint. The following examples illustrate this point: *If you cannot reassure me about the reliability of your delivery dates, I shall have to seek an alternative supplier / We think you ought to know so that you might take some action to prevent possible damage in future deliveries.* Also, to attenuate the demanding nature of the complaint, nominalizations are sometimes used, such as *I cannot accept the possibility of this delay.* Moreover, the following linguistic resources should be mentioned as strategies of communicative politeness: modal verbs, conditional clauses and the passive voice. As far as the latter is concerned, the writer uses it to mitigate the threatening act, removing the agent or relegating it to a secondary role.

c. The expositive and persuasive discourse modalities are the most important ones. The acts of speech themselves are directive (the complaint, e.g. *I am writing to complain about…*) and commissive (the threat, e.g. *If you cannot reassure me about the reliability of your delivery dates, I shall have to seek an alternative supplier*).

5.5.2 The language
a. From the point of view of the syntax there is frequent use of:
   1. Passive voice: *Such a situation cannot be allowed…*

2. Modal verbs: *I cannot accept...*
3. Conditional clauses: *If you cannot reassure me about the reliability of your delivery dates...*
4. Concessive clauses: *In spite of the fact we have already had to write to you three times this month concerning the above, we now find that we must write yet again.*
5. Consecutive clauses: *We need the pencils to complete deliveries already promised to our customers. Therefore, we must ask you to despatch the additional 8,000 pencils at once.*

b. According to lexis there is frequent use of:
   1. Compound nouns: *Delivery dates, alternative supplier,* etc.
   2. False friends such as *dispatch*.
   3. Acronyms like *M.V.* (*merchant vessel*).

5.6 The genre and language of a letter of apology
5.6.1 The genre
a. The macrostructure of this type of letter consists of the following moves:
   1. Referring to a previous contact: *Thank you for your letter of... /We have received your letter of... complaining about….*
   2. Formulating the apology: *I apologise for... /I was very sorry to hear about the problems.../We are extremely sorry to…*
   3. Justifying the mistake made: *We normally pride ourselves on …. , but in this case…./ The mistake was due to… .*
   4. Proposing a solution to the problem: *We are looking into some of the specific points you mentioned to solve …*
   5. Reiterating the apology in the hope of maintaining the business relationship with the company: *I can only offer my most sincere apologies and can assure you that … / We can assure you that every effort will be made to ensure that similar errors do not occur again.*

b. The communicative politeness of this sub-genre is negative. The linguistic resources used constitute strategies which aim to respect the speaker's terrain. The following are examples:
   1. Modifying adverbs, emotional intensifiers which emphasize the apology: *We are extremely sorry.../We greatly regret...*
   2. Expressions referring to the positive image of the sender who has been threatened: *We can assure you that every step has been taken to avoid this type of situation in future.*
   3. The use of the passive voice with the aim of emphasizing the proposed solution to the problem: *…have already been forwarded to you/ Every effort will be made …*

c. The discourse of this genre is expositive and persuasive. The acts of speech themselves are commissive (promising) and expressive (apologising).

5.6.2 The language
a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of:
   1. Causal clauses and of the passive voice. For example *This was due to/ Every effort will be made...* with the intention of emphasizing the proposed solution to the problem.
   2. Concessive clauses: *However, your order is being dealt with and will be sent without further delay.*

b. From the lexis point of view there is frequent use of:
1. Compound nouns such as *delivery dates*
2. Lexical collocations like *sincere apologies.*

5.7 Analysis of the genre and language of the letter of application for a job
5.7.1 The genre
a. The macrostructure of this type of letter consists of the following moves:
1. Identifying the source of the information on the job offer and indicating the interest in the job advertised: *With reference to your advertisement in yesterday´s Guardian I would like to be considered for the post / I should like to be considered for the post of assistant to the Export Manager, as advertised in The Times of March 12th.*
2. Giving details of the applicant's academic qualifications and work experience: *Having graduated from business school in 1989, I began working for the marketing department of United Telecom.*
3. Enclosing the applicant's curriculum vitae: *My further particulars are shown on my curriculum vitae which is attached / Enclosed is my curriculum vitae which will give you further particulars of my career.*
4. Expressing the applicant's willingness to attend an interview: *I am available for interview at any time, and should be happy to come to Toledo if necessary / If I am given two or three days´ notice I could attend an interview at any time.*
5. Formal closing: *I look forward to your reply/hearing from you.*

b. The act of applying for a job constitutes a strategy of negative politeness which is basically expressed by means of indirect acts in English. These acts are achieved by means of ritualised expressions which usually present conditional clauses: *I would like to be considered for the post / I should like to apply for the position / I would like to find out more about the position/If you would like me to call for an interview, I shall be pleased to do so at your convenience.*
 Also, the use of adverbs as emotional intensifiers stress the applicant's interest in the job offered: *I am extremely interested in the position you are advertising/I am particularly interested in the situation you are offering.*

This sub-genre is characterised as being an act which threatens the image of the receiver. The conventions imposed by this sub-genre establish the use of language which tries to mitigate the categoric act of applying for work.

c. The discourse of this sub-genre is expositive and persuasive. The act of speech itself is directive (requesting).

5.7.2 The language
a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of:
1. Modal verbs: *I should like to apply for...*
2. Conditional sentences: *If you would like me to...*
3. Passive voice: *I shall be pleased...*

b. From the lexis point of view there is frequent use of compound nouns such as *personal assistant, finance director,* etc.

6 Analysis of the genre and language of the job interview, business meetings and company presentations

The oral genres follow the basic outline of conversation. Traditionally, politeness has been studied as an element of conversational language. For instance, in oral genres of the business or academic fields, where there is frequent interchange of opinions in debates and forums, politeness is shown in the way speakers take turns, alternate, overlaps or interruptions. This study has collected 20 texts.

6.1 The job interview
6.1.1 The genre
The interview is related with the written genre of the curriculum vitae and it is characterised by the asymmetric relationship existing between the two speakers (interviewer and interviewee) as they do not possess the same social power. The genre is the following:

a. The macrostructure of this genre is an occurrence of speech made up of four conversational phases: greeting and phatic communication, analysis of the curriculum, negotiation, phatic communication and farewell. Each of these is generated by the introduction of a new topic. The central move is the analysis of the curriculum in which four steps can be identified (Guillén, 1995:86 and ff.)[4]:

1. Greeting and phatic communication: *Please sit down. You´re...*
2. Analysis of the curriculum:
    a. Motives: *Why do you want to change?/Why do you apply for this job?*
    b. Professional experience: *What's your present job like?*
    c. Expectations: *So you want a job with better prospects?*
    d. Private life: *When do you plan to get married?*
3. Negotiation of salary and conditions of work: *How much would you expect to earn in this job?*
4. Phatic communication: Thanking and saying goodbye: *Thank you very much for your time, (name). You'll be hearing from us soon.*

b. As regards the communicative politeness, the conventions imposed by this sub-genre establish the use of conversational markers to signal the alternation of turns of speech between the interviewer and interviewee, and the use of non-verbal language to achieve the correct politeness.

c. The discourse of this sub-genre is persuasive and expositive. The act of speech itself is directive (requesting).

6.1.2 The language
a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of present simple: *Why do you apply for this job.*

b. From the lexis point of view there is frequent use of synonyms in the job interview, for instance *candidate or applicant, to recruit or to employ, job or position, etc.*

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[4] Cited by Alcaraz Varó, E   (2000: 159-160).

6.2 The business meeting
6.2.1 The genre
The business meeting is one of the most common oral genres in the business world. Company managers often hold meetings with members of their own companies to discuss issues of interest. Two macrostructures can be differentiated in the business meeting. One refers to the moves and linguistic expressions that a manager should use to chair a meeting. The other indicates the moves and linguistic expressions that the other participants should use:

a. To chair a meeting there are ritualized expressions which follow a specific macrostructure using the following moves:
1. Opening the meeting: *Could I start by asking Mr... for a few words?/Right, we may move on to the agenda then, please, etc.*
2. Setting the tone: *Before we begin, I should like to say that I hope the meeting will be constructive.*
3. Commencing the debate: *Who would like to start with a comment on this?*
4. Controlling the debate: *Who agrees with…?*
5. Summing up: *To sum up this seems a sensible and constructive suggestion.*
6. Closing the meeting: *Thanks for coming everybody.*

To participate in a business meeting there are ritualized expressions which follow a specific macrostructure consisting of these moves:
1. Expressing opinions: *I think/I consider/I feel that/I have no doubt that...*
2. Expressing agreement: *I quite agree/I'm all in favour of that.*
3. Expressing disagreement: *I'm sorry but I don't agree at all/But excuse me. I can't agree.*
4. Suggesting: *How about… ?/Why don't we/Don't you think this would be…?*

b. The communicative politeness of this genre is negative. The linguistic resources which are used are modal verbs (*I can't agree),* expressions of apology with mitigated forms (I'*m sorry/Excuse me)* and emotional intensifiers to show agreement or disagreement (*I quite agree).*

c. This oral genre features the following acts of speech (Alcaraz Varó, 2000: 161):
1. Expressive acts (welcoming, congratulating, apologising, etc*).*
2. The speaker uses directive acts to get the listener/s to do something: ordering, asking, begging, requesting, etc.
3. The speaker uses representative or assertive acts to show that what he/she is saying is true (assuring, explaining, describing, etc.).
4. The speaker uses commissive acts to express the commitment to act or carry out something in the future (promising, guaranteeing, threatening, etc.).

6.2.2 The language
a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of
1. Present simple: *I think...*
2. Modal verbs: *I can't agree...*

b. From the lexis point of view there is frequent use of:
1. False friends: *Agenda, sensible, etc.*
2. Synonyms: *Think, feel, consider*, etc.
3. Metaphors like *a sensible and constructive suggestion.*

6.3. Company presentation

6.3.1 The genre

The presentation of a company is an oral genre which is used to transmit the history, characteristics and main aims of a company to one or several listeners. The genre is the following:

a. The macrostructure of company presentations consists of the following moves:
1. Introducing the company: *Good afternoon my name´s … and I´d like to talk to you about my company which is called …*
2. Describing the company (location, headquarters, branches, type of company, activity, number of employees, turnover and current projects*): I'll begin firstly by describing our organization and then go on to outline for you the way in which we operate. Well it's based in… The head office is in …but we have a small branch office in… It's a PLC. Laramont´s main business is … This company employs over… people. Our turnover is…Our current projects are…*
3. Summing up: *So, what I´ve been trying to do this afternoon, or in this brief introduction, is to show the kind of organisation we are.*
4. Inviting questions: *Are there any questions?/If there are any questions, I´ll be happy to try to answer them.*

b. The communicative politeness of this oral genre is negative. The linguistic resources which the speaker uses as a kind of indirect language are modifiers such as modal verbs and impersonalization strategies such as the passive voice and impersonal verbs.

c. The discoursive modalities of this genre are narrative and expositive. The most characteristic act of speech is representative (describing).

6.3.2 The language

a. From the syntactic point of view there is frequent use of:
1. Modal verbs: *I´d like to talk about…*
2. Passive voice: *My company which is called …*

b. From the lexis point of view there is frequent use of:
1. Compound nouns like *a limited liability company, head office, branch office*, etc.
2. Acronyms: *PLC*

7 Conclusions

The present article shows the complementarity of the two methodologies used, that is to say, text or genre analysis and lexis-grammar or register analysis, allowing our students of Business English to learn and recall better the linguistic peculiarities of some of the most relevant genres in business English: the business letter, the job interview, the business meeting and the company presentation.

Regarding genre, each professional text analysed in this work presents a specific macrostructure depending on the communicative objectives of the writer or speaker. As for communicative politeness, our study has proved that the written genres analysed feature more strategies of negative politeness to mitigate the content of the message. Only in the reply to

enquiry letters and the reply to ordering merchandise have we found strategies of positive politeness. In oral genres only strategies of negative politeness are used.

This paper has also proved that the discursive modalities in the written genres are expositive and persuasive, whereas the speech act most often found is directive. Regarding oral genres the most representative discursive modality is expositive, whereas the acts of speech vary according to the communicative aim, with none standing out above the others.

With respect to register, we have analyzed the morphosyntactic structures of the selected written and oral genres together with their lexical characteristics since syntaxis and vocabulary are the backbone of the genres analysed. Our analysis has showed that the most common syntactic structures in the written genres are the use of modal verbs, conditional sentences, passive voice, imperatives, concessive, consecutive and causal clauses. Regarding lexis, compound nouns, false friends and acronyms appear in a greater number. In oral genres there is a tendency to use modal verbs, present simple and passive voice, while the lexis features the use of synonyms, false friends, acronyms, compound nouns and metaphors.

In short, the complementary nature of gender analysis and register analysis can allow students of business English to gain a thorough understanding of the most representative written and oral genres of this branch of ESP. We trust that this analysis will prove a useful methodological tool to allow students to learn the techniques of comprehension and expression of the professional texts analysed in this work.

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