English Language and Translation II
2nd Language - 2024-25

Translation Module

Lesson 8

Register

Genre

- Culturally recognisable phenomena, e.g. crime fiction, recipe, sermon, company financial statement

- Not necessarily connected to usage and choices of specific individuals

- Not based on recognisable language patterns

- Extra-linguistic

Style

A given style (or styles) may appropriate to a particular genre:

- the revelation of 'whodunit' from a group of suspects in crime fiction
- the list of ingredients and the procedural instructions in recipes
- the (encouraging) forecasts in business reports

Style is rather an individual (or standardised) way of doing something, a language repertoire

Half-way between extra- and intra-linguistic

Register

Recognisable language patterns employed by users in particular contexts for particular objectives:

- Use of particular lexis (legalese, slang, promotional language, etc.)
- Different modal verbs used to make requests
- Differences between written and spoken language

Fundamentally intra-linguistic

Elements of Register

A functional approach to Register in Systemic Functional Linguistics identifies these elements:

- Medium/Mode: The channel used and the text intention (how)
- Field: The overall situation in which the text is set (what)
- Tenor: The inter-relationship between the people involved in the text (who)

Halliday, Michael A.K. and Ruqaiya Hasan (1994). Cohesion in English. London: Longman.

Elements of Register: Medium/Mode

Spoken Language	Written Language
Listener-oriented, Collaborative, Interactional, Social	Message-orientated, Uni-directional, Transactional Informational
Spontaneous, uncorrected grammatical 'errors'	Structured, checked and revised for mistakes

Elements of Register: Field

- Subject area (compare a medical text and a film review)
- Field may determine changes in all elements of language use:

    - Specialised vocabulary (doctors, experts, defined groups (jargon, domain language)
    - Text Type: Type of communicative objective (informative, persuasive, descriptive);
    - Text form: Academic article, Business mission statement

Elements of Register: Tenor

The communicative relationship assumed and/or established between a reader/writer and the speaker/listener of a given text

Indicated by recognisable language (lexis or syntax) choices

Elements of Register: Tenor

User-determined language variations

- Regional and geographic variations

- Pronunciation (accent)

- Dialects

Elements of Register: Tenor

- Historical variations:
  - recognisable elements of historical usage
  - old-fashioned
  - neologisms

- Modifications in 'standard' usage over time

Elements of Register: Tenor

Impact of social context on language usage:

- Interaction with peers
- Interaction with (hierarchical) superiors
- Interaction with children (dependents)
- Social Status

Register and Complexity/Formality

Variations in register often results in language use described as more or less complex/formal.

Register and Complexity/Formality

What makes language usage in English more complex/formal?

Language Complexity/Formality

Written rather than spoken (Mode)

Complex subject matter (Field)

Difference in social level of figures involved in communicative act (Tenor)

Register and Complexity/Formality

Lexis	Syntax
Less use of simpler, high frequency, less precise vocabulary, often mono-syllabic (Germanic), Phrasal verbs, slang, neologisms	Avoidance of simpler sentence structure, with less variation and Imprecision. Less use of contractions/weak forms (can't, I'll), discourse markers (you know, like, hmm)
Richer, less frequent, more varied and sophisticated vocabulary, often polysyllabic (Latin/Greek roots), domain terminology, specialised terms	More complex sentence structures: passives, impersonal forms, nominalisation, hedging. More sub-ordination
	Prepositions moved to the beginning of the sentence: • To whom are you speaking rather than at the end: • Who are you speaking to?