UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN
ILORIN, NIGERIA

FUNDAMENTALS
OF THE
USE OF ENGLISH

EDITED BY:
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Chapter 20
ENGLISH USAGE IN SELECTED SPECIALIST DOMAINS

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Objectives:
At the end of the chapter, the students are expected to:

a. explain the notion of specialised English usage;
b. describe the graphological/syntactic features of specialised varieties of Legalese, Medical English, Business English;
c. classify sample texts according to their specialised domains of use;
d. use selected words accurately in given contexts;
e. suggest how to adapt sample texts to fit a different specialised language field; and
f. extract structures that constitute specialist language use in their core discipline lecture notes.

Resources: Books and online materials

Introduction

It is no news that language is influenced by the context of use. This is true for both verbal (spoken and written forms of language) and the non-verbal cues of communication. The context of use refers to the people using a language, the peculiarities and situation of discourse. The importance of language used in different domains has over the years led several linguists into trying to distinguish the characteristics of specialised discourse into various genres which make up a language. English in specialist domains is predominantly concerned with the peculiar English used in professional and institutional settings. These 'specialised' terms are mostly known to people in similar profession. It can be referred to as a 'private language' in a community as it is a feature which distinguishes people according to their profession. However, this 'private language' can also be adapted by people in different walks of life in their day-to-day interactions as long as they are aware of the semantics and implications of such terms. Thus, this chapter shall try to explain the notion of 'Specialised English Usage', as well as, describe the graphological and syntactic features of three specialist domains: Law, Medicine and Business. A thorough or an in-depth study of this chapter would not only increase the vocabularies of the users but also broaden their horizon about the use of English in similar or different domains to theirs by keying into the issues raised about the English language of the three specialist domains discussed in this chapter.

The Concept of Specialised English Usage

The lexicon of English language has over the years changed numerically; it can be said that the lexical entries have increased drastically rather than decrease. These changes can be traced to linguistic, cultural, historical, social and economic factors. Specialised English Usage, thus, refers to the English words associated to a group of people's profession or discipline. Specialised English Usage is also known as jargons. According to Hudley and Mallinson (2011), jargon is the specific terminology used to support our interests and occupations. Citing NIYB jargon is the language, especially vocabulary, peculiar to a particular trade, profession or

group and also "language that is characterised by uncommon or pretentious vocabulary and convoluted syntax and is often vague in meaning".

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that each profession has its own special vocabularies which are often unintelligible to outsiders. However, the fact that a person does not belong to a profession does not mean that s/he should not seek to have an understanding of the vocabularies of that profession.

The knowledge of specialised English words is pertinent in ensuring a smooth inter-professional communication. In fact, the understanding of the syntactic and graphological structures of specialised English lexicons would help in facilitating the easy comprehension of professional jargons that one may encounter. The syntactic and graphological features of the English Language of law (legalese), Medicine, and Business shall be examined and characterised into their various categories in this chapter.

The Language of Legal English

The legal system is an important machinery in man's society as it is charged with the responsibility of interpreting and enforcing law. Thus, an understanding of legal language peculiarities in terms of sentential structure, cohesion and graphology is needful.

The legal discourse or language involves interactions between those who are qualified lawyers such as: Judges, Magistrates, Area Court judges and lawyers or interactions between any of the aforementioned with an accused, defendant, client, etc. Legal discourse also involves: law materials, books, dictionaries, etc.

The Syntactic Peculiarities of Legalese

1. The mixture of archaic and simple expressions: Archaic words are obsolete or out of date expressions which belong to an earlier period. The legal language up till today has retained old words or expressions and this fact has become one of its major characteristics. However, these archaic words are used in company of other simple lexemes in a sentence for it to be comprehensible to most people. Some of these expressions include:
   a. Hereinafter: Mr Femi, hereinafter referred to as the plaintiff's counsel was hitherto absent at the last meeting; the plaintiff's counsel cannot say he is not aware of the letter requesting his presence that was served on him because he personally acknowledged receipt of same.
   b. Aforementioned / Aforesaid: "The aforementioned counsel rightly endorsed a copy of the motion on notice served on him at his law firm".
2. Heavy use of binomials, trinomials and parallelisms in sentences:
   a. Now this agreement witnesseth as follows:
   b. That in pursuant of the said agreement and in the consideration of fifty thousand naira paid by the purchaser to the vendor (the receipt whereof the vendor hereby acknowledges).
   c. In witness whereof the parties, hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.
3. Avoidance of pronouns and repetition of particular words and expressions: with reference to Halliday's (1976) cohesive devices, it is necessary to use anaphors such as (him, her, it, them, etc.) in making references to an earlier mentioned entity. However, the legal language is not characterised by the use of pronouns, rather, names and positions are usually repeated several times for clarity and emphasis. An example can

be seen in Article 44 of Regional Centre For International Commercial Arbitration Lagos on Arbitration rules:

The Director of the centre shall prepare an estimate of the costs of the arbitration and may request each party to deposit an equal amount as an advance of those costs. Where counter-claims are submitted, the Director may, at the request of any party, fix separate advances for claims and counter claims. During the course of the arbitral proceedings, the Director of the centre may request supplementary deposits... the Director of the centre shall so inform the parties...

4. The nominalisation of expressions: this involves the morphological process of converting other parts of speech (mostly verbs) into nouns. Examples are:
   To be in agreement rather than to agree
   To give consideration instead of to consider
   To be in opposition rather than to oppose

5. The use of long and complex sentences: the use of long sentences which are usually joined by coordinators (and, or, but, etc.) and subordinators (if, when, where, etc.) is one of the most prominent and distinguishing features of legalese. An example is given in the following:

By the virtue of section 341 (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code, it provides that where an offence with which an accused person is alleged to have committed is punishable with imprisonment of three years and above, such an accused person must satisfied the conditions enumerated thereto in its affidavit evidence as it is the evidence the court will base its exercise of discretion as earlier stated. It is on record before me via the first information report that the accused person has been alleged to have committed criminal conspiracy, causing hurt and theft contrary to section 97, 245 and 287 of the Penal Code law of Kwara State. Therefore, the applicant first has the burden of placing cogent and material facts before the court upon which its discretion can be exercised.

6. The presence of syntactic discontinuities: syntactic discontinuities are information which is used to quickly clarify, provide more information, and/or give concessions in between what is being stated or said. Usually, they are subordinators and are said to interrupt the flow of a discourse. Common examples include: if, after, in case, etc. as can be seen in the following sentences:
   a. Judgments, orders or decrees other than those mentioned in section 60 are admissible if they relate to matters of a public nature relevant to the inquiry, but such judgments, orders or decrees are not conclusive proof of that which they state.
   b. Notwithstanding section 62, in any civil proceeding, the fact that a person has been convicted of any offence by a court of competent jurisdiction....
   c. If the maker of the statement is called as a witness in the proceeding: provided that the condition that the maker of the statement shall be called as a witness need not be satisfied if he is dead, or unfit...

7. The use of negatives: legal documents are characterised by the use of negatives such as: not, except, unless, never, etc. Some examples given by Khan & Khan (2015, p.644) include:
   a. I am not subject to any of the disqualification specified in Article 63.
   b. There is no bar for a dual citizen to contest the election as a parliamentarian. It is stated by her learned counsel that she will not contest the election.

8. The use of passive sentences: there is a preponderant use of the passive voice rather than the active voice in legal documents. This is done in order to achieve formality. Examples include:
   a. We submit further that the defendant's claim has been paid.
   b. The matter has been brought to the lower court.
9. The use of pre-modification and post-modification: these include the use of modifiers and qualifiers in a nominal phrase. The legal language makes use of modifiers and qualifiers in order to give detailed or explicit information. Examples as given in Khan and Khan (2015, p.646) include:
   a. In response to our order *that any member of the parliament* may appear on his own by filing a reply…

The Graphological Peculiarities of Legalese
The graphological features in legal documents include the following:

1. Use of italicisation and bold text: important expressions are often placed in italics to show emphasis. Some of these important expressions include: legal maxims (Latin expressions), citation of cases from law reports, etc. These graphological devises help strengthen the arguments, submissions and case, etc. of a legal personnel.
   Examples are:
   a. We refer your Worship to the case of **Ayo Arise, PDP V Olubunmi Adetunbi & 9 or (2011) All FWLR (pt.558)941 C.A**
   b. **See Olowu v Olowu (1985)3 NWLR (pt.13) p 372 @ 386**
2. Use of Punctuation marks: commas, brackets, semi-colons, hyphen, dots, quotation marks, brackets, etc. are heavily used in legal documents.
3. Use of Acronyms and Abbreviations: an abbreviation according to Alabi (2015, p.192) is "a form of a word, phrase, etc. which is shorter than the full form. According to her, standard abbreviations are methodologically produced shortened form". Abbreviations are generally discipline specific. Acronyms on the other hand, are generated from the first or initial letters of words/expressions and they are not always discipline-specific. Examples of those that are legal-specific shall be given in the following:
   a. PW: Plaintiff's witness
   b. DW: Defendant's witness
   c. FM: Further Mention
   d. Env. Law: Environmental law
   e. NWLR: Nigeria Weekly Law Report
4. Use of capitalisation: capital letters are often used in the heading of written documents such as: judgments and rulings.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF KWARA STATE
IN THE ILORIN JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT ILORIN

SUIT NO:MCI//2016

BETWEEN:
ALHAJI IBRAHIM MUKTHAR DANLADI   …………… PLAINTIFF
                    AND
MRS. GLORIA OBAFEMI AROWOLO   ……………… DEFENDANT

Exercise 1: List the graphological/ syntactic peculiarities of Legal law

Language of Medical English

Greek and Latin were the language of medicine in the past. However, according to ... (2014, p. 39), English is today's lingua franca of medical international communication ... medical English includes the discourses (oral and written) between doctors and nurses ... and doctors, doctors and patients. The prevalent syntactic and graphological features ... medical English would be discussed in the following.

Syntactic Features of Medical English

Modal auxiliary verbs are often used as hedging devices and face saving strategies. Pelvin (2014, p. 43) asserts that the use of hedges represents the expression of politeness and ... possibility which plays a major role by allowing medical professionals to formulate ... statements with appropriate accuracy and caution, expressing possibility rather than overconfidence. Examples include:

a. We may need to increase the dosage of your medication.
b. It could take a while before it becomes symptomatic.

The structure of medical English is usually in the passive voice because the form is usually impersonal. An example is in the following:

a. The drugs were administered by the medical consultant on Lassa fever patients.

Variation of tenses: simple present tense is most commonly used when describing processes, functions, mechanisms, diseases; it is also used when asking questions about present illnesses: Do you skip meal? Do you take fatty or fried foods a lot? Do you have any other symptoms other than heart burn?

Past tense on the other hand is used especially when taking a medical history, such as: when referring to childhood/adult diseases, previous hospitalisation and the onset of a symptom, etc. "For example: when was your last menstrual cycle? When did you first notice the lower abdominal cramps?" (Pavel, 2014, p.43).

4. Nominalisation: in specialised texts, the derivation of a noun from the related verb appears to reflect the same process of deduction of results from experiments or the same process of derivation of objects from a manufacturing process. Examples include:
   a. "Modifications of the dose of cetuximab were made only in cases of toxic effects to the skin, and modifications in the dose of irinotecan were made in cases of hematologic or non-hematologic toxic effects".
   b. "Concurrent chemotherapy and radiation has improved the outcome for patients presenting with locally advanced squamous cell carcinomas of the head and neck (SCCHS). These improvements have come at a cost of increased-treatment-related toxicities" (Maglie, 2009, p.34).

5. Impersonal mode: sentences in Medical English often express impersonality. For instance, it is common for doctors to say: "A 30 year old premiere that was at the latent phase of labour was referred from Adepoju hospital. She was placed on admission and subsequently examined" rather than "A 30 year old premiere that was at the latent phase of labour was referred from Adepoju hospital. I placed her on admission and after a while, she was examined by me".

Graphological Features of Medical English

1. Acronym and Abbreviations: some common abbreviations and acronyms in medical English include the following:
   i. Formation by the initial letters of words:
   a. C&S: culture and sensitivity (performed to detect infections)
   b. PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

ii.   Formation by clipping:
    a.   Urinalysis: from Urino analysis
    b.   Patofiza: from Patofiziologija
iii.   Formation by blending which consists of the initial or final syllables of words:
    a.   Cap: capsule
    b.   LINAC: Linear Accelerator
iv.   Pleonasms, that is the use of more words or word parts than necessary:
    a.   PMS sindrom: premenstrual syndrome

Medical acronyms may have more than one referent, thus, one has to be very careful when confronted with them. One of the ways of identifying the right referent is by considering the linguistic context of the expression. Also it is possible for different medical acronyms to mean the same thing. Examples of such include:

    a.   Ca: which means cancer (noun) and carcinoma (verb)
    b.   DNC, D&C, or D and C: dilation and curettage

2.   The use of signs and symbols: the field of medicine is one of those that make the most use of numbers, signs, symbols, notions, scientifically-generated term, etc. among other communicating devices (Odebunmi, 1996, p. 265). Examples are:
    a.   x/7: where X represents the number of days the ailment started in the week. Thus 3/7 means three days or thereabout.
    b.   x/52: indicates number of weeks and x/12: represents number of months as in 1/12 for one month or since a month.
    c.   0: means none
    d.   (+++): means the ailment is intense.

Exercise 2: identify the syntactic peculiarities in the following; give the meanings of the underlined words:
2 years of extensive preparation by medical and surgical teams preceded the hand-foream transplantation of this child. The initial immunosuppressiveprotocol included thymoglobulin, tacrolimus, prednisone, and mycophenolate… the surgery included four teams who were working simultaneously on the donor and recipient limbs, aided by customaised cutting guides that aimed to reduce ischemia time. (An extract published on The Lancet 18th July, 2017)

Exercise 3: Examine a passage in your field closely and underline words/ structures/ features that constitute specialist codes in the domain of use.

The Language of Business English

Business English language is a variety of English used locally and internationally to transact business. The internationalisation of English in business world, according to Dalalau (2017, p.1), can be traced to the irreversible growth in business institutions and the micro revolution and computerisation worldwide. This specialised English has to do with the language of trade, work place, business, and international relations. Business English is not only constituted of English words but French, Greek and Latin words; just like other jargons, it has its lexical features which include formal words:

Formal words	Common Words
i. purchase	buy
ii. approximately	around

ii.   Formation by clipping:
- a.   Urinalysis: from Urino analysis
- b.   Patofiza: from Patofiziologija

iii.   Formation by blending which consists of the initial or final syllables of words:
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Formal words		Common Words
i.	purchase	buy
ii.	approximately	around

iii.	commence	
iv.	execute	start/begin
v.	terminate	sign
		end

Examples of documents written in Business English include application letter, curriculum vitae andminutes of meeting. Oral Business English is used in business telephoning, interviews, business presentations, etc. Some examples involve but oral and written aspects of language. One of such examples is adverts. The following are general syntactic and graphological features of business English

The Syntactic Features of Business English

Business English according to Yanxin (2015, p.31) have the following syntactic features:

1. Conciseness and tightness: Business English is characterised with its targeted, direct and practical language which ensures that business information are disseminated promptly and effectively. The conciseness of Business English sentence is mainly reflected in the use of simple sentence, compound sentence, and parallelism sentence. An example can be seen in the following:
We aspire to the highest standards in secondary school education. We offer intensive trainings in educational, moral, extra-curricular and life-survival skills.

2. Omission of Prepositions, Articles and Objects: some syntactic elements are sometimes omitted in Business English:
   a. We have accepted your order for 1,000 cases (of) Toilet soap. (Omission of preposition)
   b. We acknowledge (the) receipt of your letter. (Omission of article) (Yanxin 2015, p.32)

3. The usual and unusual use of pronouns: the pronoun, it, is often expected to be used for companies, however, the first person plural pronoun is mostly used in business correspondence. This is instantiated in the following:
In reference to your application, we have found out that Jide & Ropo law firm cannot represent you in court as **they** have irreconcilable conflicts of interest in the matter.

Also, the use of first person singular pronoun 'I' in business correspondence is often avoided. The second person pronouns are often employed in order to convey politeness: for instance the sentence: "Your goods will reach you before 20th March" is preferred to: "I tell you that your goods would get to you before 20th March". According to Yanxin (*ibid*), the former sentence sounds comfortable and euphemistic and it shows the concern with the reader's convenience than the latter.

4. The use of passive voice: Yanxin (2015, p.33) submits that passive voice are usually employed in unpleasant transactional situations, to achieve language euphemism and appropriateness.
   a. You have to make an offer before next Friday.
   b. The offer has to be made before next Friday.

The first example cannot be said to be polite as it sounds almost rude, while the second would make the decoder comfortable.

iii.	commence	start/begin
iv.	execute	sign
v.	terminate	end

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Exercise 4:
State the common words of the following formal business English words and use them in possible sentences in your field or area of specialisation: 'inform', 'require', 'state', 'convene', 'sufficient', 'certify'.

Graphological Features of Business English

As said earlier, Business English is a type of English that covers communication in the worlds of finance, trade, as well as presentations at workplace and report writing. Thus, the graphology of the different areas where business English is used varies. However, the common graphological features that cut across the different types are: punctuations, upper case, italics, acronyms, etc. Punctuations, uppercase, bold fonts and italics retain the functions they perform in general English when used in Business English. The use of upper case, italics and bold fonts is to draw the attention of the receiver of the message. Some acronyms and Abbreviations that cut across the various types of business English include:

a. AOB: Any other Business
b. LLC: Limited Liability Company
c. SME: Small to Medium sized Enterprise
d. EOD: End of Day
e. VAT: Value Added Tax
f. HLML: Hypertext Make-up Language

Some of the graphological features of the language of print advert which is an aspect of business English include the following:

a. Punctuations: as a stylistic tool helps the writer's meaning clearer. In the language of adverts, they are used with other linguistic tools in the bid of convincing the audience of the adverts. Examples include:
   i. Make the right choice now!
   ii. Do you want double value for your money? Come to Adeks Bank and have a feel.

The punctuation mark used in the first sentence is an exclamation mark and it indicates the interest of the advertiser(s) which is too intimate the public of the services being advertised. The first sentence in (ii) ends with a question mark which is stylistically aimed at appealing to the emotions of the audience.

b. The use of colours and pictures: Pictures and colours are often heavily exploited in print adverts. Usually, the colours used in print adverts are usually those which reflect the brand. For instance, a page coloured 'yellow' would likely be an MTN advert. Logos and emblems of brands are also used in print advert to differentiate it from other types of adverts. All of these work hand in hand to sell a brand or a product to the unsuspecting audience.

Exercise 5: Using Business English features, discuss 'corporate entertainment'.

Exercise 6: What department does which job? Match each job from the column on the left to a company department from the column on the right:

Puts products into boxes	Personnel
Recruits new staff	Packaging
Deals with complaints	Advertising
Plans to promote products	Sales
Buy media space/ design copyrights	Customer service

(*Business English* by Nikolaenko, 2008)

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Conclusion

This chapter has focused on specialised discourse or specialised language which is an aspect of English for specific purposes. The syntactic and grapholgical peculiarities of Legal English, Medical English and Business English have been described. It is deducible that each of these specialist domain/ professional jargons has its distinguishing elements. Thus, it can be rightly said that specialised discourse are functional varieties of English language. Students, workers, etc. should be encouraged to study outside their immediate field of study. This is needful as the world is rapidly becoming a global market where not only intercultural, cross-cultural and transcultural communication would take place but also, cross-fertilisation of insights from varying disciplines would be necessary in meeting man's unending needs. Hence, an understanding and a functional use of specialist discourse is an asset to man.

Suggested Answers

Ex. 2:
- a. Nominalisation
- b. Passsive voice
- c. Impersonal tone

Immunosuppressive usually refers to drugs that are used to partially or totally

Recipient means a person that receives something.

Protocol as used in the text refers to medical method or guideline for carrying out a treatment.

Ischemia refers to shortage of blood supply to a body part.

Ex. 4: 'tell, 'need', 'mention', 'arrange', 'enough', 'please', 'confirm'

Ex. 6:

Puts products into boxes	Packaging
Recruits new staff	Personnel
Deals with complaints	Customer service
Plans to promote products	Sales
Buy media space/ design copyrights	Advertising

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