Language Hygiene through Genre Awareness in Cockpit Repertoire: An IranAirian Approach

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Abstract – In the present techno-oriented world, there exist more inter-disciplines rather than pure disciplines. Applied linguistic in a macro perspective and language learning-teaching in a micro perspective can be traced in every single discipline. Aviation field of study is no exception, according to the technicians of this domain who claim the use, or in better terms the need of using English language proficiency in an acceptable level, which is announced by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) an operational level, is tremendously highlighted. There exists a specific well-known genre, English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP can engage the participants of English language courses by unfolding the implicit lexico-grammatical patterns of ESP texts, technical texts, and it is considered as a perfect approach towards the required need, but, in reality, the result is not acceptable in EFL situations especially in Iranian EFL context. Language Hygiene is not a new phenomenon in ESP domain; it is just a new perspective of what should be resulted in the future in real life situations.

Keywords – IranAir*ian* Approach; Language Hygiene; Genre Awareness; Cockpit Repertoire; English for Operational Purposes (EOP)

Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is mostly considered sufficient for the needs of Aviation English, but as far as the operational level of English language proficiency is required by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the need for English for Operational Purposes (EOP) is sensed in all sections of the wide domain of aviation, especially in the EFL contexts such as Iranian one.

IranAir*ian* Approach

The field of aviation is a specific one because it is full of technical terms and something beyond ESP, as it will be discussed further, so a specific look should be concerned. The technical terms, as it is so-called register, as Halliday [10] defines register as "*clustering of semantic features according to situation types*"**,** are so dynamic in this field of study and action, i.e. aviation field.

In the present article, the Iranian context is highlighted in each section, but as far as the Iran Air Airline, the National Airline of Islamic Republic of Iran, is concerned as the mainstream in language training of the Iranian context, so IranAirian approach is used instead of Iranian context or Iranian approach towards language learning/teaching in the field of aviation.

Long-term courses are applied in order for technicians and aviation academic engineering students to be mastered in this filed, or gain at least an acceptable understanding of the manuals and descriptions in order to have a better performance, unfortunately, the courses are beneficial, but the available approaches are inappropriate to engage the participants in adopting a better perspective towards the manuals, booklets, etc.

The approach applied in such courses which provide a plethora of tasks but something has been missing that Bourke [2] referred to as "enabling tasks". Mostly, tasks, in aviation course books, are not designed to make the participants in a way to be able to communicate in real life situations.

The communication tasks are highly needed, especially in this field, as Estaire and Zanon [7] defined, "*enabling tasks act as a support for communication tasks. Their*

purpose is to provide students with the necessary linguistic tools to carry out a communication task" (p.15). For sure, the tasks should be innovative enough in a way to come up with a solution of misunderstanding or semi-understanding of the participants in aviation field.

Language Hygiene

In the aviation field of study, the terms, technical and general ones, phrases, the speakers' intonation, sentences, etc. should be completely distinguished in the correct and authentic context. By providing the participants of this field with a bunch of authentic texts, the participants get more lost, subconsciously, in an ocean of technical terms without knowing the differences existing among them.

As Morrow [19] crystallized the use of authentic texts by referring to such notion as "*blind use of authentic texts*"**.** This blind approach can give a taste of authentic texts to the participants of ESP courses in this field, so it will be led to a *failure cycle* which is now common in aviation colleges in Iranian EFL context. In this regard, paying attention to the personality traits of learners is of great help to the teachers. Some students are extrovert, others are introverts. But as Fahim and Teimourtash [9] put, there may be some groups as "midtroverts" where their reflections to the world are quite different. So, by considering the personality traits of learners, the job of teachers would be facilitated as they have the background of the learners and know which practice would best fit those types of learners.

Aviation students in Iranian contexts, mainly majoring in Electronics &Electric engineering (E&E) and Airframe & Power Plant (A&P) engineering may not be on the right track of learning and putting into practice what they have been taught. The proficiency level in language has been one of the main concerns, but here the quality level of learning language is concerned the most.

Aviation students in Iranian contexts are exposed to many authentic materials, but the sense of making distinguished judgments among terms are not attained unfortunately. Allan and Burridge [1] made the issue crystal in their book **"*Forbidden Words*"**: "*According to Cameron, a sense of linguistic values makes **verbal hygiene** part of every speaker's linguistic competence, as basic to language as vowels and consonants. . . . [Verbal hygienists] are the people found in those language associations formed to promote causes as diverse as Plain English, simplified spelling, Esperanto, Klingon, assertiveness and effective communication . . .. Verbal hygienists also enjoy thinking and arguing about words, correcting the writing of others and looking things up in dictionaries and usage guides. These activities are born of the urge to improve and clean up the language.*"

In the aviation field of study, *Language Hygiene,* is more than the concept of ESP or EAP; it directly refers to the categorized set of ESP patterns which should be taken into consideration while they are being used by one particular group of language users, in simple terms, *Language Hygiene* is a mental framework in the mind of one particular group of language users. But the point here is that, the *Language Hygiene* is different from ESP in nature, as Carver [5] believes that "*In reality there is no such a thing as English without a purpose or English for general-purpose. All English teaching is teaching of ESP.*"

In every field of study which is relevant to the ESP or even EAP, the *Language Hygiene* should be considered as a distinguishable genre of study for the language users. It is called a distinguishable genre because, as Swales [21] defined genre as "*a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes*" (p.58), highlighting the importance of *Language Hygiene genre* can have a distinguishable effect on the aviation students, especially in the EFL contexts such as Iran.

Genre

Genre is an inevitable concept in TEFL and its importance is highly remarked by the scholars. The genre of the aviation is a little bit different with the ESP domain, especially in the EFL contexts such as Iranian one. Genre simply means putting a group of related terms, phrases, etc., which there are implicit boundaries among them while one wants to engage in a particular subject.

For example, a businessman who wants to write a letter to a company must use a list of specific terminology or something in a way to manage a constrcuctive negotiation and he finally achieves a successful communication.

Hyland [11] defined genre as "*a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations*"; he mentioned that genre "*is based on the idea that members of a community usually have little difficulty in recognizing similarities in the texts they use frequently and are able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to read, understand and perhaps write them relatively easily*" (p.543).

Language Hygiene should be considered, as mentioned above, as one particular genre. While the teachers or instructors use ESP texts which are full of implicit lexico-grammatical patterns in one particular domain, there should be a filter after this phase to homogenize or, in better terms purify, the output that the designed courses are seeking for.

Language Hygiene approach can play a significance of purifying and homogenizing the language, the implicit lexico-grammatical patterns in one particular genre, which is going to be produced and understood; there should be a great attention on the importance of *Language Hygiene* in the genre of aviation, as it is a crucial and vulnerable domain in the field of study.

Due to the importance of genre, different objectives are discussed for teaching genre, in better terms, engaging students with genre. Bruce [3] crystallized the goals of

teaching genre in simple terms: *"Achieving a discursive competence, in effect, is the ability deconstruct, understand and reconstruct discourses in ways that are linguistically correct and socially appropriate, but also in ways in which writers as individuals are able to achieve their own communicative purposes through their own authorial voices"* (p.169).

Once it is noteworthy to raise the attention about the difference between the genre and *Language Hygiene.* As the teaching genre is raising the consciousness of the learners about the implicit lexico-grammatical patterns and it is happened, first of all, but the *Language Hygiene* will happen in the second phase in order to make the learners understood which patterns should be used in the correct and appropriate manner and situation. By considering the genre or teaching one particular genre to the participants of aviation courses, especially in the Iranian context, the desired objectives may not be probably attained. Regarding the appropriacy and suitability of a particular genre, such desired objectives should in turn cover both the social and the cognitive aspects of learning. As Fahim & Mehrgan [8] artistically explain: *"that sociocognitive view to learning makes attempts to link the social and affective side of learning with what happens in the human brain"*.

Luke [16] explains that *"a salient criticism of the 'genre model' is that its emphasis on the direct transmission of text types does not necessarily lead on to a critical appraisal of that disciplinary corpus, its field or its related institutions, but rather may lend itself to an uncritical reproduction of discipline"* (p.314). The amalgamation of *Language Hygiene & Genre* can make the path easier to be paved.
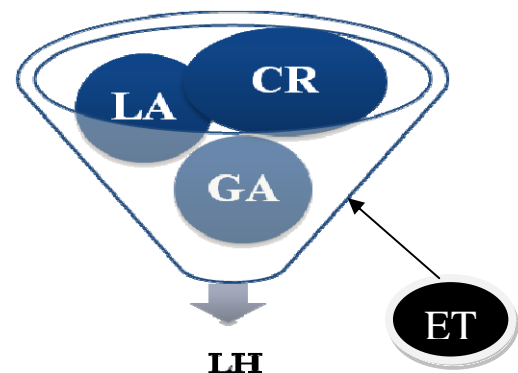
Genre Awareness

The concept of genre awareness is an umbrella term which can be considered for unfolding implicit lexico-grammatical patterns of one particular genre and raising the consciousness of the learners towards the unfolded patterns. Genre awareness is the *"rhetorical flexibility necessary for adapting...to ever-evolving contexts"* (Johns [13], p.238). But generally speaking, genre awareness is consciousness raising (CR) of learners about the language they are exposed to.

Carter [4] defined language awareness as *"the development in learners of an enhanced consciousness of and sensitivity to the forms and functions of language"* (p.64). The possibility of considering the forms and functions simultaneously requires being a critical thinker on the part of the teacher, as Khatib and Mehrgan [14] define critical thinking as: *"Critical Thinking is the process of using reasoning to discern what is true, and what is false"*.

But this point should be taken into a careful consideration that there exists a little bit difference between language awareness (LA) and Consciousness Raising (CR). The difference is not mainly in their process, the main difference is in their audience. James

(1998) artistically defined the difference. James [12] concludes that *"language awareness (LA) is for knowers and consciousness raising (CR) is for learners"* (p.260).

LA: Language Awareness
CR: Consciousness Raising
GA: Genre Awareness
LH: Language Hygiene
ET: Enabling Tasks

There is another concept in language teaching which can be overlapped by genre awareness, which is the notion of noticing. Genre awareness mainly refers to the input phase, and the other phases such uptake, intake, etc. are not mainly concerned in this realm, however, the concept of noticing as Schmidt [20] puts, *noticing* is *"the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input into intake"* (p.4), related to the other phases, so there is a need to make a clear-cut distinction between genre awareness and noticing.

Cockpit Repertoire

It should be highlighted that in spite of making a crystal look on the ESP domain of aviation field of study, and the great importance of genre which is focused in recent decades as Hyland [11] argues that *"today, genre is one of the most important and influential concepts in literacy education"* (p.543), the result of concentrating on the aviation genre in the provided courses in aviation colleges, in EFL contexts, especially in Iranian EFL context, is not successful as it is needed to be. Being successful in this regard is a longitudinal process because the manifestation of any application would be vivid in the following generation. As Khatib and Teimourtash [15] state: *"the aim of each and every educational system is to prepare a generation for experiencing a better life in general and to bring up individuals with a better command of their own lives in a way that they be able to make the right choice at the right time."*

As a research done by NASA panel of researchers analyzing the real causes of jet transport accidents and incidents between the years 1968 and 1976 (Cooper, White & Lauber, [6]) and they come to the conclusion

that pilot error was more likely due to reflect failures in cabin crew communication and coordination than the alleged deficiencies in technical proficiency.

Aviation English, for sure it can be concluded that, is English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), or a restricted language to some extent as Mackay & Mountford [17] unfolded: "*the language of international air-traffic control could be regarded as special, in the sense that the* **repertoire** *required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined situationally, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining-room waiter or air-hostess. However, such restricted repertoires are not languages, just as a tourist phrase book is not grammar. Knowing a restricted "language" would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in a novel situation, or in contexts outside the vocational environment*" (p.4).

Now it is believed that the process-oriented approaches, especially in the ESP domain, which includes paving the way of learning by discovery learning, has a better attainment rather than the old fashioned product-oriented approach. But the point here in a narrower perspective is that, the way the process is analyzed or put into practice is also important. Here, it is suggested that the amalgamation of *Language Hygiene & Genre Awareness or in better terms Language Hygiene through Genre Awareness* can make the path easier to be paved.

In IranAirian approach toward *Language Hygiene* in aviation field of study, the language learners aiming at different subdivisions of aviation discipline are trained in such a way that they get prepared for the operational purposes as ICAO prerequisite for technicians in the field. Hence, the main part of departure which makes IranAirian approach toward *Language Hygiene* so outstanding is that in this approach the language learners are viewed as the user of the English for Operational Purposes (EOP) rather than the learner of EOP.

Final Remarks

Aviation English which is mostly considered just ESP or a specific genre is actually English for Operational Purposes (EOP). So by making the implicit lexico-grammatical patterns unfolded, the ESP domain will be attained, but EOP is not attained thoroughly. The amalgamation of *Language Hygiene & Genre Awareness* can make the path easier to be paved by the participants, and the EOP will be attained thoroughly. Meanwhile, the overemphasis on either case is not welcomed in any educational realm because the element of bias has got no room in this regard, and a humanistic approach should be taken into consideration and be practiced as Mehrgan [18] states "*One of remarkable movements in the realm of language teaching was the type of language education approach which was called Humanistic Language Teaching (HLT).*"

As Johns (2008) noted out, the genres is as "*socio-cognitive schemas*" (Johns [13], p. 239); the socio, the aviation field of study, should be carefully investigated by the learners inside the classroom in order not to get into trouble by putting the implicit lexico-grammatical patterns into practice in a more secure way.

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