3.4 The Basic Conceptions/Principles of ESP

At this point, you should note that there are five conceptions considered to be the foundations, essential features or basic principles of ESP. Swale (1990) uses the term "enduring conceptions" to refer to them. These five conceptions are: authenticity, research-base, **language/text**, need and learning/methodology. These five conceptions originate from both the real world (the "target situation" of the ESP) and ESP pedagogy.

3.4.3. Language/Text

In the 1990s, there were a number of ESP projects which were triggered by concerns over international safety and security. The first of these was SEASPEAK. It was a practical project in applied linguistics and language of engineering. According to Strevens and Johnson

(1983), SEASPEAK, which was published in 1987-1988, was the establishment, for the first time, of international maritime English. They explain that other ESP projects were published later as a result of the success of the first project. These projects included AIRSPEAK (1988) and POLICESPEAK (1994). Each of these projects involved a substantial research phase with linguists and technical specialists cooperating. The NEWSPEAK research shared the large-scale base of the register-analysis approach but the principal advance was that it was now applied to a more sophisticated, four-level concept of text: purposes of maritime communication, operational routines, topics of maritime communication, and discourse procedures. Although register analysis remains small-scale and restricted to native-speaker encounters, later research demonstrated the gap between ESP materials designers' intuitions about language and the language actually used in ESP situations (Williams, 1988; Mason, 1989; Lynch & Anderson, 1991; Jones, 1990).

The reaction against register analysis in the early 1970s concentrated on the communicative values of discourse rather than the lexical and grammatical properties of register. The approach was clearly set out by two of its principal advocates, Allen and Widdowson (1974). They specifically argued that one might usefully distinguish two kinds of ability which an English course at ESP level should aim at developing. The first is the ability to recognize how sentences are used in the performance of acts of communication, or the ability to understand the rhetorical functioning of language in use. The second is the ability to recognize and manipulate the formal devices which are used to combine sentences to create continuous passages of prose. One might say that the first has to do with rhetorical coherence of discourse, the second with the grammatical cohesion of text.

In practice, however, the discourse-analysis approach tended to concentrate on how sentences are used in the performance of acts of communication and to generate materials based on functions. The main shortcoming of the approach was that its treatment remained fragmentary, identifying the functional units of which discourse was composed at sentence/utterance level but offering limited guidance on how functions and sentences/utterances fit together to form text.

As an offspring of discourse analysis, the genre-analysis approach seeks to see text as a whole rather than as a collection of isolated units. According to Johnson (1995), this is achieved by seeking to identify the overall pattern of the text through a series of phases or 'moves'. The major difference between discourse analysis and genre analysis is that, while discourse analysis identifies the functional components of text, genre analysis enables the material writer to sequence these functions into a series to capture the overall structure of such texts. The limitation of genre analysis has been a disappointing lack of application of research to pedagogy. There are few examples of teaching materials based on genre-analysis research.

Self Assessment Exercise1 :

(a)-Discuss Language/ Text as a priciple of ESP.

Definition and Samples of Restricted Language

RESTRICTED LANGUAGE

- *Mackay* and *Mountford* (1978) clearly illustrate the difference between restricted language and language with this statement:

- ... 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 novel situation, or in contexts outside the vocational environment.

- The language used by air traffic controllers or by waiters are examples of English as a restricted language.

  SEASPEAK
- SEASPEAK, also English for maritime communications. The English of merchant shipping, a RESTRICTED LANGUAGE adopted in 1988 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of the United Nations for use in ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications as a necessary consequence of vastly increased shipping during the 1960s–70s. The need for regularization of practices in one language and the training of officers in its use was agreed, and English, already the language of civil aviation, was chosen by the IMO.

A typical exchange, in which a ship called *Sun Dragon* calls up Land's End Coastguard, to inform them of a change of plan:

- <u>*Ship*</u>. Land's End Coastguard, Land's End Coastguard. This is Sun Dragon, Sun Dragon. Over.

- <u>*Coastguard*</u>. Sun Dragon. This is Land's End Coastguard. Switch to VHF channel one-one. Over.

- ◉ *Ship*. Land's End Coastguard. This is Sun Dragon. Agree VHF channel one-one. Over.

AIRSPEAK

- ◉ Also Air Traffic Control English, Aviation English. The English of international civil aviation, a restricted language established after the Second World War by the International Civil Aviation Organization *(ICAO)*. Although in some conditions aircraft may use a local language, commercial flying is universally conducted in English.

An aircraft descending from cruise height towards its destination airport:

- ◉ *Control*. BA six zero six Alfa: squawk indent.

- ◉ *Pilot*. Indenting, BA six zero six Alfa.

- ◉ *Control*. BA six zero six Alfa, radar contact. Descend to flight level three one zero.

- ◉ *Pilot*. Leaving flight level three nine zero. Descending to level three one zero. BA six zero six Alfa.

Self Assessment Exercise2 :

(b)-What is the difference between language and restricted language?