

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE IN THE ESP CONTEXT



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Abstract. *The article discusses the confusion surrounding the use of the term EST in TESP. It explores whether EST should be considered part of EAP or EVP and examines the major features related to EST, including the nature of scientific English, the universality of scientific discourse, and the three-way translation procedure. The implications of these features for EST teachers and learners are also discussed. Keywords include EST, scientific English, universality of scientific discourse, three-way translation procedure, and EST teachers and learners. It needs to be pointed out first of all that EST (English for Science and Technology) is the senior branch of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) – senior in age, larger in volume of publications and greater in number of practitioners employed.*

Keywords: *methods, scientific style, abstract, main text, discourse.*

In the context of EST, understanding information structure is crucial for effective communication. Scientific and technical texts often contain complex and highly specialized information, and organizing this information in a clear and coherent way is essential for conveying meaning accurately. By mastering the principles of information structure, EST learners can develop the skills needed to effectively communicate complex scientific ideas to a range of audiences.

Furthermore, understanding information structure can also be useful for analyzing and comparing different types of scientific and technical discourse. By examining how information is packaged and presented in different texts, researchers can gain insights into the underlying assumptions and values of different scientific communities. This can be particularly valuable for understanding the ways in which different cultures approach scientific and technical knowledge, and can help to promote greater cross-cultural understanding and collaboration in these fields.

In addition to syntax and prosody, other linguistic resources can also be used to indicate information structure. For example, the use of discourse markers and conjunctions can help to signal the relationships between different pieces of

information, while the use of passive voice can be used to shift the focus onto the object of the sentence rather than the subject.

Overall, understanding information structure is essential for effective communication in EST. By mastering the principles of information packaging and using a range of linguistic resources to indicate information structure, EST learners can develop the skills needed to communicate complex scientific ideas clearly and coherently, and to analyze and compare different types of scientific and technical discourse.

Discourse markers and conjunctions can also be used to signal the relationships between different pieces of information, indicating whether they are adding to, contrasting with, or elaborating on previous information. For example, the use of "however" or "on the other hand" can signal a contrast, while "furthermore" or "in addition" can indicate an elaboration.

Passive voice can also be used to shift the focus onto the object of the sentence rather than the subject. This can be particularly useful in scientific writing, where the object (e.g. the experiment or data) is often more important than the person conducting it.

Understanding and effectively using information structure is crucial for effective communication in EST. By using a range of linguistic resources to indicate information packaging, EST learners can communicate complex scientific ideas clearly and coherently, and analyze and compare different types of scientific and technical discourse

Of the four structures analysed in detail here, extraposition is the only one to occur more frequently in the written articles than in the oral presentations. It is widely employed in the articles not only as a hedging device but also as a means of facilitating information processing for the reader by enabling the given and new elements to be distributed more evenly over the sentence. In the oral presentations, in contrast, such a device is used far less frequently because it is not needed: authorial comment is expressed congruently, without recourse to extraposition for hedging, and clausal themes are considerably less complex, due to the constraints of live communication, thus obviating the need for this syntactic structure. The second specialised structure that is found in both modes, namely existential there, shows the opposite distribution, being far more frequent in the oral presentations than in the articles. While its traditional function of introducing a new referent into the discourse is apparent in both modes, its role as an enumeration device appears to be particularly marked in the oral presentations, where it helps the audience to follow the discourse organisation and to process sequential information. We surmised that the same role

was fulfilled by typographical devices in the written article. The use of existential there in spoken and written science indicates that the same specialised structure may, therefore, be used in both oral and written modes but not necessarily in response to exactly the same information packaging needs.

Translation involves identifying and reconstructing text coherence, which depends largely on the translation strategy adopted by the translator. To achieve a successful translation, it is important to have a clear understanding of the original text's structure and use cohesion and coherence methods flexibly to fully express its meaning while conforming to the expression habits of the target language and being accepted by its readers. Accuracy is crucial in translation, as it contributes to scientific and cultural exchanges between languages.

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