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<https://doi.org/10.24833/2687-0126-2023-5-1-38-51>

AN UNCONVENTIONAL TURN: A LINGUOSYNERGETIC AND DIACHRONIC STUDY OF EVOLVING ENGLISH BUSINESS DISCOURSE

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Abstract: This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the transformational changes observed in English business discourse over time. Employing cutting-edge methodologies such as functional linguistics, linguosynergetics, and diachronic analysis, the authors delve into the evolutionary dynamics of business communication, examining the extralinguistic factors that drive the inner discursive mechanisms of self-regulation and modification of the functional field. By highlighting these factors, the study sheds light on the complex interplay between language, society, and cognition in shaping business communication. Drawing on a rich corpus of oral and written English business discourse spanning from the late 19th century to the present day, the research reveals that the rise of new tendencies in social and political life, coupled with the historical development of British and American societies, have sparked changes in the cognitive models of structuring speech behavior in business verbal interaction. Consequently, new trends have emerged, including simplification, deregulation, deviation from communicative norms of standardized Business English, and popularization of unconventional, non-standard business rhetoric.

Keywords: business discourse, functional linguistics, functional evolution, diachronic approach, business rhetoric, pragmatics, linguosynergetics, deregulation, unconventional rhetoric.

How to cite this article: Khramchenko, D.S., Radyuk, A.V. (2023). An Unconventional Turn: a Linguosynergetic and Diachronic Study of Evolving English Business Discourse. *Professional Discourse & Communication*, 5(1), pp. 38–51. <https://doi.org/10.24833/2687-0126-2023-5-1-38-51>

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the study of business communication has become an increasingly important topic in the field of linguistics. The conventional norms of verbal behavior in the business world have been gradually transforming, leading researchers to raise pivotal questions regarding the evolution of business communication.

What factors are driving these changes?

What should EFL students know about the nature of modern rhetorical devices to react to them appropriately?

How is the functional field of the most regulated discursive type being transformed?

Diachronic analysis of evolutionary processes over a long period of time may help answer these questions. Changes in the structural and functional properties of English business discourse reflect the development of typical communicative models that define the mental characteristics of goal-setting for individuals involved in business interaction. Therefore, a starting point for diachronic functional analysis should be the mid-19th century, a time of boosted economic growth, intensified business activity, and considerable shifts in the traditions that had long shaped the financial world. No wonder it was precisely then that the evolution of English business discourse was catalyzed. It was the epoch when the classical norms and typical models of business communication emerged. As the English language and communicative processes were transforming, the same was going on with the functional and pragmatic characteristics of business interaction. This paper aims to explore the evolution of English business discourse from this time to the present day, shedding light on the complex interplay between language, society, and cognition in shaping business communication.

2. THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Nowadays there is a large amount of research with a focus on various evolutionary aspects of language, speech, and discourse, as it is a widely recognized fact that verbal communication exists, functions, and develops as a dynamic system under the influence of both inner and outer (i.e. extralinguistic) factors.

Frauen [2020] proves that evolving human language is an inherent part of a more complex sociocultural evolution and, broadly speaking, of human becoming, evolution itself seen as a transition to a higher order of control. Studying conspicuous changes in American journalism, Smidt [2021] analyzes the gradual transformation of important norms, such as the emotionality norm which is manifested in the way mass media discourse is constructed. A diachronic study of deregulation and the formation of the new standard is carried out with the help of empirical material that encompasses more than three decades' worth of texts and discursive samples. Bruce [2020] deals with the evolution of language in special agreements between sister-cities, revealing how a discourse of diasporic identity is generated step by step, thus strengthening the bonds between people across the world. Hannan [2010] investigates the discursive evolution of software and programming languages and the causes behind it, applying Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of literary genres to a not purely linguistic problem. Ramos [2017] shows how the study of neology, terminology, and their modifications contributes to the understanding of the evolution of many important human-related spheres, e.g. culture, economics, science, politics, and ideology, which in their turn provoke

the evolution of language and discourse. While studying the representation of ethnicity in modern lexicographic discourse, Melnyk draws attention to the following signs of constantly transforming verbal interaction: “the evolution of language, development of English vocabulary and changes in the English world picture in relation to the development of ethnos culture, synthesis of language modifications in the context of global socio-cultural transformations” [Melnyk et al., 2021, p. 2]. It is specifically highlighted, that the dynamic changes in discourse are catalyzed by ideological, socio-economic, and sociocultural transformations, that took place in the turmoil of the XXth century. Li [2006] observes 20 years of the evolution of the discursive system of educational economics in China, noting, that multiple properties of discourse change over the course of time, especially the specialty of discourse, popular topics and themes, discourse expressions, and the perception of discourse by new generations of recipients.

Analysis of the theoretical sources of this article proves that by paying closer attention to the issues of dynamics, immanent development can not only describe hidden mechanisms propelling different types of human discourse but also explain why we speak in a certain extralinguistic environment as we speak now, predict future changes in people’s verbal interaction and their world outlook, provoked by subtle trends and tendencies in the way we choose words and phrases, arrange expressive language means and rhetorical devices, manipulate functional and stylistic relations between separate syntagms in oral and written speech. Understanding principles of discursive evolution is the key to understanding ourselves and our culture.

In modern linguistics researchers use a wide array of terms, referring to different aspects and issues of the ever-changing object of their interest, e.g. semantic evolution, structural-semantic evolution, structural evolution, functional evolution, functional-pragmatic evolution. In functional linguistics, the notion of discursive evolution is becoming more widely employed to explain tendencies and transformations in specific types of discourse, such as scientific chemical discourse [Volkova, 2019; Volkova, 2020], political discourse [Khlopotov, 2019; Khlopotov, 2020], business and professional communication [Khrumchenko & Radyuk, 2014; Khrumchenko, 2019].

To study the scale and overall meaning of major transformations in the functional field of English business discourse it is required to trace evolutionary modifications over a considerable period of time. Thus, this task can be solved by resorting to the methodology of diachronic analysis and functional linguistics as well as the selection of appropriate empirical material for the research.

3. MATERIAL & METHODS

Functional linguosynergetics seems to be the appropriate methodological basis to carry out the diachronic analysis of the dynamics of the functional field of English business discourse. The linguosynergetic theory of language/discourse evolution was suggested in the works by prof. E.V. Ponomarenko [Ponomarenko, 2012; Ponomarenko, 2016]. According to the theory, discourse, and language are regarded as complex open self-optimizing non-equilibrium functional systems.

Evolutionary processes within discourse are described in the following way. Any changes in the external environment (i.e. communicative situation, interlocutors’ mind, the language system), registered during a certain period of time, may lead to functional fluctuations (i.e. deviations from an equilibrium state of the system). These fluctuations accumulate, and when a “critical mass” is reached, they activate self-optimizing dissipative processes. As a result, chaotic tendencies/structures/elements are either rejected or assimilated by the system, switching from a destructive mode to a constructive one. For example, when a new lexical unit is introduced to the language system,

and it's used along with a previously existing synonym (which might have a broader / narrower semantics as well as different stylistic colouring), it creates competition, driving the system to chaos. The decisive factor in such a situation is the influence of the external environment, e.g. when a more active part of the society prefers only one of the two words. Thus, the "younger" lexeme ousts its more common and usual counterpart to the periphery, being fixed in the language vocabulary. The system stabilizes and returns to the equilibrium state.

From the viewpoint of linguosynergetics, business discourse is a complex self-optimizing pragma-semantic system with alternating phases of chaos and order. Systemic elements cooperate for the sake of mutual, i.e. synergetic, or cooperative, achievement of the communicative goal (in terms of linguosynergetics – the attractor). This paper aims to analyze the major stages of English business communication and its evolution from the viewpoint of diachronic functional-linguistic research.

Empirical material for the research, undertaken in this article, comprises 3,200 fragments of business discourse of various lengths, taken from publications in the business press, non-fiction books on business and commerce, transcripts of negotiations and presentations, fiction novels, where authors recreate typical verbal behavior of their characters in simulated situations of business communication, covering the period from the second half of the XIXth century to the present day. Statistical analysis of the gathered empirical material has been carried out to identify trends in the use of certain rhetorical non-standard techniques and devices in business communication.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Comparing the dynamics of the synergetic evolution of English business discourse with other institutional types of discourse, one can't help noticing the high level of resistance that the functional system of business communication demonstrates towards fluctuations that arise as a result of the chaotic interferences coming from the external environment. Unique cooperation of the language system; a specific set of extralinguistic situations; the minds of the participants of business communication who pursue certain goals of their own; generally accepted conventional norms and rules, which regulate verbal behavior; business etiquette – all these important factors ensure not only stable development of the pragma-semantic field of a separate, individual fragment of discourse but also prevent serious functional and stylistic transformations of whole genres and business discourse in its entirety. Incidental deregulation isn't capable of having a significant influence on the inner systemic processes, meanwhile spontaneously emerging useful functional properties, resulting from artificially orchestrated constructive chaos of the semantic system, make non-standard rhetorical devices more appealing in the eyes of native English speakers as these devices allow to solve important communicative tasks despite explicit disregard of key principles and norms of business communication. The growing popularity of the language means of deregulation and their spread even in the most regulated and strictly conventional genres of business discourse may be seen as a reason for the formation of one of the greatest bifurcation points in the history of English business communication, thus giving value to the diachronic analysis of the synergetic evolution of the functional system within the context of deliberate violation of communicative norms, H.P. Grice's maxims and traditions of the structural-semantic organization of business rhetoric.

For a very long time, English business discourse remained in a stable equilibrium state, being in close interaction with the external environment. In the XIXth century business communication system one can observe an abundance of clichés, set expressions, linguistic means used to express politeness, etiquette speech formulas, i.e. discursive elements that highlight the regulated conven-

tional nature of communicative norms and are responsible for making speech easier to understand and interpret from the viewpoint of its pragma-semantic qualities. One of the main reasons for the synergetic cooperation of systemic pragma-semantic components is to sustain a positive pragmatic effect, stimulating benevolent relationships among the participants of business communication.

In written business discourse following H.P. Grice's maxims [Grice, 1975] and assuring stable evolution of the system is achieved through the use of obligatory set expressions, typical of particular genres (*We remain truly, sir, your obedient humble servants, we venture to, we trust, be assured*), and structural elements that don't lead to fluctuations of the functional field. For example, the XIXth century was marked with the popularity of special books, which featured collections of business letter samples for practically any situation. These ready-made texts presupposed minimal contextualization and variability, thus greatly simplifying business correspondence. Strict regulation and conventionality of textual structure was a key factor for the system to reach its functional attractor. For example, see the following standardized ready-made letter sample:

Messrs. James Grey & Co. Liverpool

London, 11th August, 18-

Gentlemen, - having informed an establishment in this city, as merchants and general agents, we take the liberty of acquainting you therewith, and solicit the preference of your orders. From our experience in mercantile affairs generally, and our intimate acquaintance with business as conducted in this metropolis in particular, we venture to promise that we shall be enabled to execute any commission with which you may favour us, to your satisfaction and in the most prompt and economical manner <...>

We are extremely desirous of rendering our correspondence mutually advantageous, as the only means of placing it on a solid and permanent basis; and this, be assured, will be our constant aim.

Requesting your attention to our respective signatures at foot, we subscribe ourselves, with great truth, gentlemen, your faithful servants. Harrison, Wilson & Co. [Lang, 2008, p. 144].

The division into paragraphs clearly shows the transparent logic of the mind flow of the author, bringing about a quicker movement of the functional elements of the discursive system towards the achievement of the communicative goal, i.e. the functional attractor. This also makes it easier for the addressees to perceive the positive pragmatic meaning of a successful partnership with the author's company. The synergy of the semantics of the following elements - *our experience, our intimate acquaintance, we venture to promise, extremely desirous, to your satisfaction, in the most prompt and economical manner, mutually advantageous, your faithful servants* – impacts the minds of the readers, helping to form positive evaluative judgments to the author's advantage.

In the XXth century, historical changes in the social and economical environment were destined to impact internal systemic processes and cause fluctuations which didn't have destructive potential and weren't enough to significantly modify the steadily paced evolutionary development of the business discourse system. New forms of private property emerged, big commercial enterprises grew even bigger, business activity erupted on a global scale, people got access to new technologies to share information, political and financial crises, and cataclysms occurred. All the above-mentioned whirlwind changes were reflected in the replenishment of Business English vocabulary, simplification of syntactical constructions, and deviations from standardized norms of bookish correctness.

Nevertheless, native English speakers preferred to obey basic rules of business speech etiquette and stay mutually polite, politically correct, and reserved, while being faithful to the requirements of the accepted social role and oriented to constructive cooperation.

The following example shows emerging tendencies to simplification of English business discourse and establishing less formal relationships between the parties:

“What’s your name, young man?” he asked, leaning back in his wooden chair.

“Cowperwood.”

“So you work for Waterman & Company? You want to make a record, no doubt. That’s why you came to me?”

Cowperwood merely smiled.

“Well, I’ll take your flour. I need it. Bill it to me.” [Dreiser, 2008].

Simple, short sentences are becoming more common as they enrich the speech with more expressive brevity, assertiveness, and straightforwardness of a conversation on issues of real substance. Intentionally explicit politeness and respect to interlocutors now tend to get marginalized and pale into insignificance, leaving room for a fully-fledged partnership relation in the case of the so-called horizontal communication. In oral and written speech, the number of clichés and set expressions is conspicuously plummeting, various genres of business correspondence being the only exception. The easing of the tight constraints and regulations in English business discourse has begun.

First signs of the upcoming structural and functional changes in the synergetic evolution of business discourse start to emerge when native speakers become aware of how important it is to organize your verbal interaction in terms of lexis, stylistics, and prosody as well as to possess such crucial rhetorical skills as eloquence or techniques of non-confrontational business communication.

These ideas were promoted in highly popular works by D. Carnegie and his disciples and widely accepted by millions of people who saw business communication through a totally different, new perspective. Principles of business interaction were revised and changed in favour of a more creative approach to verbal exchange. An active part of the population in the USA and the UK embraced the trend to expressiveness, emotionality, humour, and all the available means of creating a pragmatic impact on recipients, i.e. every trick advertised in best-selling guidebooks on eloquence. In terms of linguosynergetics, signals sent by the external environment began to discord with the current stable state of the pragma-semantic discursive system. It gave rise to fluctuations that destroyed the balance and marked the beginning of a new stage of functional-synergetic evolution.

Inventory of linguistic means, available to members of English business discourse, becomes more varied and expands due to the fact that it’s now easier and more appropriate to use verbal means of expressiveness and imagery while deviating from the traditional requirement to state factual information only. It’s worth noting that now more often than ever people strive to overcome barriers connected with the prescribed level of formality in horizontal communication and the increase of casualness in vertical communication is registered a lot more frequently. Analysis of empirical material proves that the abovementioned tendency was circa 30% more intensive in American English than in British English.

In the following extract from D. Carnegie's "How To Win Friends and Influence People" the author suggests an example of an effective communicative model to use when you need to talk to your colleagues:

"One morning, Carl dropped by our office and casually mentioned that his company had just introduced a new life insurance policy for executives and thought we might be interested later on and he would get back to us when he had more information on it.

"The same day, John saw us on the sidewalk while returning from a coffee break, and he shouted: 'Hey Luke, hold up, I have some great news for you fellows.'

He hurried over and very excitedly told us about an executive life insurance policy his company had introduced that very day". [Carnegie, 1979].

Informal interjection *Hey* in combination with such elements as great news and fellows strikes a discordant note in the view of the current state of pragma-semantic systemic development. It causes minor functional and stylistic fluctuations. Functional self-optimization of discourse leads to spontaneous (i.e. emergent – in terms of linguosynergetics) appearance of semantic components, contributing to the pragmatic effect of friendliness, which enriches John's utterance. The author's contemplation in the passage is aimed at making readers believe in the practicality of establishing semi-formal confidential relationships with colleagues and the creation of a positive psychological atmosphere to better achieve the functional attractor of the pragma-semantic system.

In vertical business communication, people begin interacting in a more uninhibited and free-wheeling manner, deliberately deviating from traditional communicative norms of discourse. In A. Hailey's novel "The Final Diagnosis" (1959) there is a dialogue between the head of surgery Kent O'Donnell and hospital administrator Harry Tomaselli in their usual typical way:

Tomaselli was leaning over a table. Unrolled before him were whiteprints and sketches. O'Donnell crossed the thick pile carpet and looked down at them too.

"Daydreaming, Harry?" He touched one of the sketches. "You know, I'm sure we could put you a fancy penthouse there—on top of the East Wing."

Tomaselli smiled. "I'm agreeable, providing you'll convince the board it's necessary." He took off his rimless glasses and began to polish them. "Well, there it is – the New Jerusalem." [Hailey, 2004].

Gradually multiple factors of the external environment synergetically create favourable conditions for the decrease in the regulation of business communication and for the spread of various linguistic means of functional-pragmatic deregulation, which generate useful emergent properties of discourse. From the diachronic viewpoint, the system starts to accumulate fluctuations. If and when these fluctuations reach a critical mass, they can provoke a phase transition, drastically changing the vector of discursive evolution. Modification of the external environment influences the functional peculiarities of the non-linear discursive system. Along with elements, which are typical of business communication at the end of the XIXth – the beginning of the XXth century, there rise new competing tendencies.

The reasons for the popularity of stylistically marked lexical units, previously excluded from English business rhetoric, are

- diversification of social strata, which have an impact on the business community;
- the growing role of a less educated and poorer part of the population, which begins to actively participate in business discourse;
- spreading democratic ideas and values, which are reconsidered after World War II and extrapolated to discourse.

Colloquial, informal, stylistically low words and expressions, and vulgarisms contradict maxims of politeness and tactfulness, deregulate business discourse, and cause powerful fluctuations in the functional system. But by the mid-XXth century, they are getting more and more natural in different genres of business communication.

The thought of royalty reminded him of a question he must raise tonight. The small entourage had paused, and now, easing the Governor General away from the others, Howden asked, 'It's next month, sir, I believe, that you leave for England.' <...>

'The eighth,' the Governor General said. 'Natalie's coerced me into going by sea from New York. Fine damn thing for an ex-Chief of Air Staff, isn't it?'

'You'll be seeing Her Majesty in London, of course,' the Prime Minister said. [Hailey, 1986].

The bunny-faced girl crept in.

"Where's John Stevens working now, honey?"

The bunny-faced girl said she would find out. After a couple of minutes she came back and said Stevens worked for Gregory Wainwright, Hillside, Jefferson Avenue.

"How about Janet's personal maid? Where's she now?" I asked.

Mrs. Bendix waved the bunny-faced girl away. When she had gone, she said, "That bitch? She's not working any more, and I wouldn't give her a job if she came to me on bended knees." [Chase, 1950].

As time goes by, the evolution of the discursive external environment has its impact on the system of English oral and written business communication. Both grammar and vocabulary are affected. Long and complex syntactical structures are minimized, while the structural organization of sentences is getting closer to the norms of colloquial speech. Nevertheless, when planning the functional perspective of written official business discourse, native speakers are still guided by the time-tested traditional conventional rules that require to comply strictly with the widely accepted communicative norms with a slight possibility of occasional functional and stylistic deviations. Less official genres of written business discourse, on the other hand, allow the author of the text to use a broader variety of language units, including some means of rhetorically justifiable deregulation, e.g.

- changing the length of sentences and/or using metaphors

This is a strange, strange period. Not since 1937-38 has this country had anything resembling a business depression. We've talked depression. The 1946 stock market crash was the signal for a rash of predictions and a postwar depression. But no depression. In 1949, we had a business decline, but it was shallow and short lived. So we've become well-nigh depression-proof, mentally. Twelve years of upward business since 1938 have produced a sweet narcosis. [«12-Year Rise Produces Sweet Narcosis», 1951].

- alliteration and ironical simile which intensify expressiveness and pragmatic effect

Dear Sirs – I, too, find intelligent talk interesting, but hard to define. Surely it is intelligent to discuss our business and business methods, as housewives this may mean formulas and floor waxes. Business discussions can be continued to the point of boredom and of getting so lost in the details that we never find the BIG IDEA in our work. [«Confidential Chat. Quality of a Mind May Be Judged by Conversation», 1954]

In the second half of the XXth century postmodernist cultural paradigm begins to infiltrate the external environment of English business discourse, affect the system and provoke a new series of considerable fluctuations and functional shifts. Postmodernism reflects a new state of society which is on the verge of globalization. The significance of mass culture with its stereotypes and templates is growing exponentially at a scale previously unseen and unheard of within the preceding movements like modernism. Typical attributes of postmodernism are gradually taking root in English business communication, modifying its pragma-semantic field and increasing fluctuations. Discourse is slowly pushed to the bifurcation point, i.e. in linguosynergetics – the moment when it is necessary to choose one of the trajectories of evolutionary development.

In the postmodernist era, irony is brought to the fore as a communicative model of both private and sociocultural communication. Irony is a mental invariant of the majority of postmodernist texts. It expresses a skeptical attitude to the cultural basis of human civilization and functions as the main principle of derivation and production of meanings and senses. Irony becomes a constitutive feature of the thinking process and a special kind of world outlook. All this makes irony a popular rhetorical device that deregulates business discourse and activates internal systemic mechanisms of synergetic semantic self-optimization. Ironic perception of the business world and specific peculiarities of British and American national mentality have helped greatly to popularize irony in various situations of oral and written business communication.

For example, Alexandra, the main character of Sydney Sheldon's "Master of the Game", comes to her work for the first time only to be surprised by her new colleagues' hostile attitude, disguised in the form of irony:

"What do you need?" Vince Barnes asked.

The question caught Alexandra off guard. "I – I guess I just need to learn the advertising business."

Alice Koppel said sweetly, "You've come to the right place, Miss Blackwell. We're dying to play teacher." [Sheldon, 2005].

An ironic attitude to reality, typical of British and American businessmen, is especially well expressed in the so-called Murphy's Laws – witty quotes by famous and successful entrepreneurs which summarize years of reflections and speculations on problems, twists, and turns of the world of big business. Consider the following popular sayings about the aptitude and competence of so many people in power or at higher levels of corporate hierarchy:

- (1) *"Those who can – do. Those who cannot – teach. Those who cannot teach – administrate"*
- (2) *"Technology is dominated by two types of people: Those who understand what they do not manage. Those who manage what they do not understand".*

The authors arrange a series of linear and non-linear deregulating verbal means that belong to different layers of the language system, e.g. irony, syntactical parallelism, anaphora, and alliteration. Such a complex cooperatively generates serious functional fluctuations in the discursive system and preconditions synergetic pragma-semantic self-optimization of each fragment under analysis to secure the rise of new emergent pragmatic properties of the discourse.

In modern handbooks on business rhetoric and techniques of conducting business negotiations and presentations, authors keep on developing D. Carnegie's ideas and recommend millions of their readers to use humour as a powerful efficient tool to modify the pragmatic field of discourse and cause an impact on recipients. All this popularizes operators of functionally motivated deregulation and deliberate creation of stylistic fluctuations of the semantic discursive system.

Large-scale changes in the external environment of English business discourse began in the first half of the XXth century and are still in progress at this moment. They transform the functional field of business communication. What used to be a distinct isolated sphere of communication is now becoming more open to changes, imposed on this institutionalized type of discourse by the cooperative interconnectedness of multiple factors. Postmodernist influence and natural modification of exchange processes among the pragma-semantic system, interlocutors' minds, and the communicative situation (as well as the weakening of functional elements, peculiar to previous stages of the pragma-semantic evolution) lead to the fact that English business discourse partially converges toward other discursive types, including functionally antonymic ones. For example:

There's a carnival atmosphere in India's business capital this week. The last of the monsoon rains have cleared and bright skies are back, marking the start of Mumbai's busy festival season.

Tomorrow, millions of Mumbaikars will flood the streets to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi, in which huge idols of the Hindu elephant god Ganesh will be paraded through the streets and dunked in the sea — the boisterous climax of a ceremony designed to invoke his power as a remover of obstacles.

India's business leaders are hopeful that this year's "immersions" will be of more than merely symbolic value. [Supermarket restrictions are elephant in the room, 2012].

The persuasive rhetoric of this passage is formed by the combination of different linear and non-linear means of deregulation of a business-related text, e.g.:

- ironic wordplay with the idiomatic expression *elephant in the room* deliberately brought to the headline;
- mentioning Ganesh, a Hindu god, and other elements with non-business semantics of a religious cult (*to celebrate, idols, the Hindu elephant god Ganesh, ceremony, to invoke his power*).

As a response to functional fluctuations in the system, mechanisms of pragma-semantic self-optimization are activated. Destructive qualities of the chaotic elements are offset by new pragma-semantic components which come to the system from the external environment. These components cooperate with other preexisting systemic elements *India's business leaders, hopeful* and *immersions* to generate the pragmatic effect of the hopelessness of the Indian economy.

On the one hand, interdiscursive elements, integrated into the system, destabilize the semantic field. On the other hand, they help intensify the cooperation between the system and the environment as well as activate self-optimization mechanisms, generating emergent pragma-semantic properties of discourse. Increasing the efficiency of verbal business interaction boosts the attractiveness of manipulating the functional potential of interdiscursivity in business communication as an effective rhetorical device both in oral and written discourse.

Intertextuality is another distinctive functional feature of postmodern communication. It has become one more attribute of modern Business English connected with the deregulation of discourse and violation of H.P. Grice's maxims of quantity and informational relevance. For example, consider The Economist's analytical articles on the economy, called "*QE, or Not QE*", "*The Magnificent Seven*", and "*Home Is Where The Money Is*". All of them contain foregrounded allusions to the famous monologue from a W. Shakespeare's play, a classical American western, and the proverb "home is where the heart is", which has one of its lexical components replaced with a contextually antonymic word with typically business-related semantics. When specific cognitive concepts and frames are activated in the readers' minds, and these concepts are not associated with the topic of business, it brings new components of meaning to the functional system. These components generate dissonance with the key elements at further stages of discursive unfolding. Nevertheless, the spontaneous emergence of useful functional properties as a result of pragma-semantic self-optimization compensates for the previous deviation from the equilibrium state of the system. It also makes allusions, reminiscences, and other intertextual means prominent among acceptable rhetorical devices which are becoming popular with participants of modern English business discourse.

The evolution of Business English has been marked by a significant trend toward the deconventionalization of communication. This trend is evident in the dynamic diversification of verbal means of functionally motivated deregulation. A comparative study of empirical material spanning from 1970-2020 and discursive fragments from previous stages of evolution reveals an increase in the frequency of operators of deregulation.

For example, the use of vulgar and stylistically low vocabulary has increased by 27%, while ironic utterances have become more frequent by 35%, hyperboles by 16%, metaphors by 12%, and intertextual and interdiscursive elements by 39%. These statistics suggest that Business English has become more informal, creative, and expressive over time.

This trend toward deconventionalization of communication can be attributed to several factors, such as globalization, technological advancements, and changes in societal norms and values. As businesses expand their operations globally, they need to communicate with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This has led to the adoption of more creative and flexible forms of communication that can transcend cultural barriers.

Furthermore, technological advancements, such as social media and digital communication platforms, have enabled businesses to communicate with their stakeholders in real time, resulting in the need for more immediate and informal forms of communication. The evolution of Business English has been characterized by a trend toward deconventionalization of communication, which is reflected in the increased use of verbal means of functionally motivated deregulation. This trend has been driven by globalization, technological advancements, and changes in societal norms and values, and is likely to continue in the future as businesses continue to adapt to changing communication needs.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum it all up, an analysis of the main evolutionary tendencies of English business communication provides enough data to conclude that the most significant phenomenon of the evolution is functional-pragmatic deregulation which sets the vector for further development of the functional field of business discourse. Deregulation is the result of transformational processes in the external environment and is defined by fluctuations, accumulated in the system up to a critical mass, causing the phase transition to a new level of order.

At the current stage of evolution, the functional system is regulated by conventional communicative norms, which compete with a set of new relevant tendencies to deconventionalization of business discourse and deviation from the above-mentioned norms and rules. In other words, it is sustainable order vs. deliberate chaos, brought to the functional system to achieve a certain rhetorical effect.

Research into the dynamics of evolutionary changes sheds light on the most important tendencies in the development of the functional field of business communication. These tendencies are going to define future cross-cultural interaction in numerous important spheres. Teaching practice clearly benefits from the functional-linguistic & diachronic research of business discourse. By discussing conventional norms of classical verbal business interaction and non-standard deviations in speech behaviour of book characters and speeches of famous people, EFL teachers can attract students' attention to the functional loading of popular stylistic and rhetorical devices and show them how to use these devices successfully in professional business communication.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest. Dmitry S. Khranchenko is the Editor-in-Chief of "Professional Discourse & Communication", and the article underwent the same peer-review process as any other submission.

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Received: December 1, 2022.

Accepted: February 6, 2023.