

## APPROACHING GRAMMAR IN SPEECH GENRES: REFLECTIONS UPON ESP TEACHING

### ABORDAGEM GRAMATICAL DE GÊNEROS DISCURSIVOS: REFLEXÕES SOBRE ENSINO DE INGLÊS PARA FINS ESPECÍFICOS

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**Resumo:** *Para ser um professor reflexivo numa área que tem discussões importantes sobre a possibilidade de ensinar inglês, concentrando-se tanto na forma como no sentido, é necessário observar, analisar e melhorar a prática com o objetivo de proporcionar aos alunos a oportunidade de participar em contextos profissionais e acadêmicos. Dessa forma, o objetivo deste artigo é discutir sobre as características lexicais e gramaticais que são necessárias para que os alunos de uma escola de Ensino Médio Técnico aprendam para atuar nesses contextos, seja por meio da leitura ou produção de textos. Autores importantes na área da linguagem e ensino da gramática, gêneros do discurso e inglês para fins específicos – a saber: Celce-Murcia; Hilles (1988), Celce-Murcia (2002), Tonkyn (1994), Swan (1994) Bakhtin (1986), Martin (1984), Bhatia (1993; 1999; 2000), Swales (1990), Paltridge (2001), Ramos (2004), Hutchinson; Waters (1987) – são parte da fundamentação teórica deste trabalho. A parte que a segue diz respeito à análise de três gêneros diferentes (verbete de enciclopédia, biografia e resumo acadêmico) como uma tentativa de demonstrar que os aspectos linguísticos e lexicais são relevantes para os alunos atingirem o objetivo descrito anteriormente.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Ensino de língua inglesa; Inglês para fins específicos; Gêneros discursivos.*

**Abstract:** *To be a reflective teacher in a field that has major discussions about the possibility of teaching the English language by focusing on both form and meaning, it is necessary to observe, analyze and improve the practice aiming at providing the students with the opportunity to participate in professional and academic contexts. Given that, the purpose of this article is to discuss about lexical and grammatical skills that are necessary for students of a Secondary Technical School to learn so as to effectively act in those target contexts, either by means of reading or producing texts. Important authors in the area of language and grammar teaching, speech genres and ESP – to name a few: Celce-Murcia & Hilles (1988), Celce-Murcia (2002), Tonkyn (1994), Swan (1994) Bakhtin (1986), Martin (1984), Bhatia (1993; 1999; 2000), Swales (1990), Paltridge (2001), Ramos (2004), Hutchinson & Waters (1987) – are the part of the theoretical basis of this study. The part that follows is concerned about analyzing three different genres (encyclopedia entry, biography and abstract) as an attempt to demonstrate what linguistic aspects and choice of vocabulary are relevant for those students to achieve the goal described before.*

**Keywords:** *English language teaching; English for specific purposes; Speech genres.*

## 1 Introduction

In a professional context whose major discussions are upon the possibility of focusing on both form and meaning, teaching the English language (lexical and grammatical features) based on the analysis of speech genres has been shown to be very effective, according to what

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Ramos (2004) and Cunha & Borges (2010) suggest in their articles. This holds truth because the main purpose of ESP is to provide the students with the opportunity to achieve the necessary language skills to act in target contexts, i. e., academic and professional ones.

Since this paper is related to the field of Applied Linguistics (AL), it is reasonable to start by the definition of AL postulated by Cook (2003, p.5): “the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about decision making in the real world”, and this discipline investigates “problems in the real world in which language is implicated”, in this case, an ESP classroom. Since theory and practice are supposed to come together, by depicting a reflective view of one’s praxis, this article is about an ESP teacher’s experience at a federal institution of Secondary Technical Education. As an attempt to apply the reflections proposed here, the article presents considerations about grammar and genre studies, linguistic/grammatical aspects that seem relevant in certain genres, such as, encyclopedia entry, biography and abstract, and conclusions about what is approached throughout this study.

The literature on which this work is based can be divided in two groups. One group deals with grammar teaching: Celce-Murcia (2002), Celce-Murcia & Hilles (1988), Larsen-Freeman (1991), Tonkyn (1994), Woods (1995) and Swan (1994); the other concerns speech genres: Bakhtin (1986), Martin (1984), Bhatia (1993; 1999; 2000), Swales (1990), Flowerdew (1993), Paltridge (2001) and Ramos (2004); also Hutchinson & Waters (1987), Vereza (2005) and Zeichner & Liston (1996), which are some references in terms of teaching. Then, the concepts approached by the authors listed before will be analyzed in order to achieve the aim of this article, which is to discuss about lexical and grammatical skills that are necessary for those learners to act in the contexts specified above, either by means of reading or producing texts.

## **2 Reflections upon the Teaching of Grammar**

It is valuable to start talking about grammar by defining it. Celce-Murcia & Hilles (1988, p. 16) describe language before describing grammar; language is seen as “a type of rule-governed behavior”, and grammar as “a subset of those rules which govern the configurations that the morphology and syntax of a language assume”. In addition, Woods (1995, p.1) defines grammar as “that science which teaches the proper use of letters, syllables, words and sentences; or which treats the principles of rules of the spoken and written

language”. According to him, grammar can be seen as rules, form and resource; the latter applies in the sense of being a resource of decision making when it comes to communication.

Furthermore, “in formal linguistics, grammar is typically described and studied as context-free knowledge” (CELCE-MURCIA, 2002, p. 120), and, in fact, there are some rules that can be taught with no contextual reference. For instance, “verbs and verb phrases following prepositions must take the gerund” (CELCE-MURCIA, 2002, p. 121), but most of the problems with which teachers deal every day are not context-free. Thus, Orchs (1988, apud CELCE-MURCIA, 2002, p. 120) proposes the language socialization hypothesis, “which holds that the grammar one acquires and uses as one develops cognitively and socially is highly constrained in terms of local social and cultural expectations and is shaped by local mechanism.” That corroborates what Celce-Murcia & Hilles (1988, p. 8) calls “social factors of language”, which refer to “the social roles of interlocutor, their relationship to each other, and the purpose of communication”.

In the light of what was previously shown, it seems reasonable to correlate grammar teaching, social interaction and contextual knowledge. The latter, then, interacts with discourse knowledge, which interferes in the choices made by the writer/speaker (CELCE-MURCIA, 2002). It leads teachers to some questioning about the effectiveness of practice: how can English be taught so that students will be able to make the right choices of language use?

Taking into consideration the learning context described in the introduction, Swan (1994) brings up a good answer for the above question:

Effective grammar teaching, then, focuses on the specific problems (real and potential) of specific learners. This will necessarily mean giving a somewhat fragmentary and partial account of the grammar of the target language, rather than working through a ‘complete’ grammar syllabus giving ‘complete’ rules. (SWAN, 1994, p. 53)

That quote is related to teaching students what is relevant for them to fulfill their needs, which leads us to reflect upon the teaching of grammar in an ESP classroom. Tonkyn (1994, p.4) raised two very important questions concerning that: “What selection from the grammar and lexicon of the target language will be of most use to, say, a scientist?” and “What types of communicative event will our students be engaged in?”

Another point that is worth to be made is about talking not only about form, but also about meaning/semantics (LARSEN-FREEMAN, 1991). And in this paper, meaning has to do

with lexical meaning (choice of words) and also grammatical meaning (especially in the case of time expressions) that fit the genre that is being studied by ESP learners.

Finally, teaching grammar is more than a context-free activity, it considers the context, the purpose, discourse knowledge, and choice of words. Therefore, approaching grammar in a genre-based ESP teaching environment seems a way of achieving the topics before mentioned.

### **3 ESP teaching as a genre-based approach**

“Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need” became the guiding principle of ESP.” (HUTCHINSON & WATERS, 1987, p. 8) Born in the United States after the demand of “specialization” in the English language, especially for economic reasons, the ESP is an approach that has as its focus the learners’ needs, that is, the syllabus is built based on the students’ motivation to learn the language (HUTCHINSON & WATERS, 1987). In Brazil, ESP is generally taught for academic and professional purposes, and one of the reasons for that, according to Vereza (2005) is that English is not normally used in regular daily communicative events in Brazil, but in academic-professional ones<sup>2</sup>.

Since the concept of reflective teaching intends to lead teachers to reflect upon their own practice and, by doing that, look for means of improving it, according to Dewey (apud ZEICHNER & LISTON, 1996), “[reflection] is a holistic way of meeting and responding to problems, a way of being as a teacher”. And as a reflective teacher, it seems sensible to research on better and different ways of approaching language teaching. Thus, in recent studies at the institution mentioned before, it was considered the possibility of teaching ESP based on the speech genres that are necessary for the students to participate in professional and academic environments. Then, instead of dealing with minimal grammar, reading strategies (DEYES, 1983, apud RAMOS 2004) and texts with general themes, the teachers started structuring their course syllabuses in a way that specific linguistics features would be developed in specific contexts by means of a genre-based approach to ESP teaching (RAMOS, 2004).

According to Bakhtin (1986), “each separate utterance is individual, of course, but each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types of these utterances*. These we may call *speech genres*”. Also, Martin (2000)

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<sup>2</sup> “O inglês não é normalmente usado em situações comunicativas da vida cotidiana, mas sim, na maior parte das vezes, em situações acadêmico-profissionais.”

characterised genres as staged goal-oriented social processes – (i) staged because it usually takes us more than one phase of meaning to work through a genre,(ii) goal-oriented because unfolding phases are designed to accomplish something and we feel a sense of frustration or incompleteness if we're stopped and (iii) social because we engage in genres interactively with others. From this perspective, cultures can be interpreted as a system of genres – and there is no meaning outside of genres. (MARTIN, 2000, p. 53)

Besides that, Swales (1990) sees genres as communicative events with purposes that are shared by members of a certain group. Finally, Bhatia (1993) reasserts Swales (1990) by saying that

genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s). (BHATIA, 1993, p.13)

In addition, this previous quotation by Bhatia (1993) corroborates the importance of discourse and purpose, which was emphasized by Celce-Murcia & Hilles (1988). Moreover, Bhatia (1999b, 2000, apud PALTRIDGE, 2001) says that learners are supposed to having *generic competence*, that is,

the ability to participate in and respond to new and recurring genres. This includes the ability to construct, use, and exploit, generic conventions to achieve particular communicative events. [...] Generic competence is different from yet includes both *linguistic competence* and communicative competence; that is, it includes both mastery of language code (linguistic competence) and the ability to use textual, contextual and pragmatic knowledge (communicative competence). Generic competence is not simply about the ability to reproduce discourse forms; it is to the ability to understand what happens in real-world interactions and to use this understanding to participate in real-world communicative practices. (PALTRIDGE, 2001, p. 7)

After having gone over the following conceptualizations of genre, it is possible to assume that it is by means of speech genre analysis in a foreign language that students are able to acquire generic competence (linguistic and communicative competence) to participate in the academic and professional contexts they are demanded to.

Hence, in an attempt to demonstrate the kind of analysis done based on the theory previously described, three genres that are part of the scientific community described here are going to be analyzed in terms of both linguistic and lexical features. The genre analyses that follow are the result of teachers' research, practice observation and activities done with the students in class.

#### **4 Relevant Grammar Aspects in Some Speech Genres**

In order to talk about linguistic and lexical aspects that are relevant in some genres, five instances of each speech genre chosen have been analyzed, seeing them as prototypical utterances (PALTRIDGE, 2001, apud FLOWERDEW, 1993). By doing this, the discussion is based on those grammar topics and lexical features that seem necessary for those EFL students to read or write in an effective way. Since the learners study at a Secondary Technical School, all texts must have relevance in terms of theme. Thus, they are all related to Sciences – Chemistry, Biology, Biotechnology, Laboratory etc.

##### 4.1 Encyclopedia Entry

All examples are available at [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), a site that is reference – and is accessed worldwide – when it comes to encyclopedia entries. A good way of defining an encyclopedia entry is by using an encyclopedia entry itself, but the entry available at [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org) is “encyclopedia”. However, it contains the definition for “encyclopedia entry” embedded:

An encyclopedia (also spelled encyclopaedia or encyclopædia) is a type of reference work, a compendium holding a summary of information from either all branches of knowledge or a particular branch of knowledge. Encyclopedias are divided into articles or *entries*, which are usually accessed alphabetically by article name. *Encyclopedia entries are longer and more detailed than those in most dictionaries. Generally speaking, unlike dictionary entries, which focus on linguistic information about words, encyclopedia articles focus on factual information to cover the thing or concept for which the article name stands.*

Also, since the main function of an encyclopedia is to introduce definitions for words, there are characteristics that are typical of an entry.

The first, and probably the most important one, is the predominant verb tense: Simple Present. All entries chosen to be analyzed start with a statement in the present, and as the words/expressions are all related to sciences, one reason for that may be that they are scientific truths, that is, truths that are scientifically proved, and pretty improbable to be changed. Some examples are: “States of matter *are* the distinct forms that different phases of matter take on.”; “Plant cells *are* eukaryotic cells that *differ* in several key respects from the cells of other eukaryotic organisms.”; “The periodic table of the chemical elements (also periodic table of the elements or just the periodic table) *is* a tabular display of the chemical elements.”; “Nutrition (also called nourishment or aliment) *is* the provision, to cells and organisms, of the materials necessary (in the form of food) to support life.”; and “The boiling point of an element or a substance *is* the temperature at which the vapor pressure of the liquid *equals* the environmental pressure surrounding the liquid.”

However, in two of the entries – nutrition and periodic table – there is a subsection that is different from the other three ones: history. That part, for chronological reasons, has the Simple Past and Present Perfect as main verb tenses. See some examples:

Humans *have evolved* as omnivorous hunter-gatherers over the past 250,000 years. The diet of early modern humans *varied* significantly depending on location and climate. The diet in the tropics *tended* to be based more heavily on plant foods, while the diet at higher latitudes *tended* more towards animal products. Analysis of postcranial and cranial remains of humans and animals from the Neolithic, along with *detailed* bone modification studies *have shown* that cannibalism was also prevalent among prehistoric humans.

Another example is “Russian chemistry professor Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev and Julius Lothar Meyer independently *published* their periodic tables in 1869 and 1870, respectively.”

Furthermore, another important feature, especially in this electronic encyclopedia, is the content list, and when it comes to linguistic analysis, it can be said that noun phrases play a major role here. This content list is formed by links that direct the reader to parts of the text – they are the subsections of the encyclopedia entry. By observing the following list:

Contents

- [1 Overview](#)
- [2 Nutrients](#)
  - [2.1 Carbohydrates](#)
    - [2.1.1 Dietary fibre](#)
  - [2.2 Fat](#)
    - [2.2.1 Essential fatty acids](#)

- 2.3 Protein
- 2.4 Dietary minerals
  - 2.4.1 Macrominerals
  - 2.4.2 Trace minerals
- 2.5 Vitamins
- 2.6 Water
- 2.7 Antioxidants
- 2.8 Phytochemicals
  - 2.8.1 Intestinal bacterial flora
- 3 History
  - 3.1 From antiquity to 1900
  - 3.2 From 1900 to the present
- 4 Malnutrition
  - 4.1 Insufficient
  - 4.2 Excessive
  - 4.3 Unbalanced
- 5 Plant nutrition
  - 5.1 Macronutrients
  - 5.2 Micronutrients
  - 5.3 Processes
- 6 Animal nutrition
- 7 Human nutrition
  - 7.1 Governmental policies
  - 7.2 Teaching
  - 7.3 Healthy diets
    - 7.3.1 The French "paradox"
  - 7.4 Sports nutrition
    - 7.4.1 Protein
    - 7.4.2 Water
    - 7.4.3 Carbohydrates
  - 7.5 Malnutrition
    - 7.5.1 Illnesses caused by improper nutrient consumption
    - 7.5.2 Mental agility
    - 7.5.3 Mental disorders
    - 7.5.4 Cancer



- [7.5.5 Metabolic syndrome](#)
- [7.5.6 Hyponatremia](#)
- [7.5.7 Antinutrient](#)
- [7.6 Processed foods](#)
- [8 See also](#)
- [9 Further reading](#)
- [10 References](#)
- [11 External links](#)
- [11.1 Databases and search engines](#)

it can be noticed that it is mostly made up of nouns or noun phrases, which are composed of nouns (as a modifier and as the head), adjectives, articles, prepositional phrases and other modifying elements. Those noun phrases may be either simple (one modifier) or complex (more than one modifier).

Lastly, as far as lexical features are concerned, to achieve the main aim of an encyclopedia entry that is to define/conceptualize words and expressions, the verb “to be” is widely used, especially because of its meaning. According to the Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, “to be” is “used to say something about a person, thing or state, to show a permanent or temporary quality, state, job, etc.” or “used to show what something is made of”. Those are the definitions that best match the exemplification that follows: “The wall *is* most commonly thickest at the corners, where three or more cells come in contact, and thinnest where only two cells come in contact, though other arrangements of the wall thickening are possible.” and “In 1906, Wilcock and Hopkins showed that the amino acid tryptophan *was* necessary for the survival of rats.”

#### 4.2 Biography

All examples are available at [www.nobelprize.org](http://www.nobelprize.org), a site that is reference when it comes to biographical information about celebrities who won Nobel Prizes. After analysing the texts chosen as examples, there are some characteristics that are really relevant to mention. However, in order to set the scene, it is interesting to bring up some information about the genre “biography”. According to the Wikipedia entry for biography,

[a biography] is a detailed description or account of someone's life. A biography is more than a list of impersonal facts (education, work,

relationships, and death), it also portrays the subject's experience of those events. Unlike a profile or curriculum vitae (résumé), a biography presents the subject's story, highlighting various aspects of his or her life, including intimate details of experiences, and may include an analysis of the subject's personality.<sup>3</sup>

Also, it should be considered who reads a biography and why it is written and read, so that some linguistic and lexical features can be understood. A biography reader is someone who is probably interested in the other person's life story, achievements etc. Science students are usually interested in biographies of great scientists in order to use their findings as an inspiration for researches.

One of the characteristics of a biography is that, since it depicts the history of a person's life and this person is usually dead, the predominant verb tense is the Simple Past, as in the following sentences: "He *was* again at Harvard Medical School as Professor of Biological Chemistry in 1962-63 and then *returned* to the National Institutes of Health to assume his present position."; "The use of the atomic bomb near the end of the war turned Pauling in a new direction."; "Here the Professor of Anatomy was Jacob Henle and Koch was, no doubt, influenced by Henle's view, published in 1840, that infectious diseases were caused by living, parasitic organisms."; and innumerable other examples present in the five biographies chosen. There are exceptions: a) when the person is still alive – which is not the case here – or there is no specific time in the past, which makes it possible the use of Present Perfect (Continuous): "Linus Pauling (February 28, 1901- ),<sup>4</sup> the only person who *has won* two undivided Nobel Prizes, was born in Portland, Oregon, the son of a pharmacist, Henry H.W. Pauling, and Lucy (Darling) Pauling."; b) when the writer wants to make it clear that something happened before another by using the Past Perfect Tense: "Earlier the anthrax bacillus *had been discovered* by Pollender, Rayer and Davaine, and Koch set himself to prove scientifically that this bacillus is, in fact, the cause of the disease."; "As one who *had* long *worked* on the structure of molecules, [...], he took an immediate and intense interest in the potentially malignant effects of nuclear fallout on human molecular structures"; and c) the use of Simple Present Tense to talk about scientific truths: "proteins *are* synthesized sequentially from the amino-terminal and in vivo, and to calculate the rate at which amino acids *are* polymerized"; "the amino acids, which *are* called the "building blocks of life"; and "a discovery which *has* implications for the understanding of the living cell. He has studied and published papers on the effects of certain blood cell abnormalities".

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biography>.

<sup>4</sup> The information about the date of death of Linus Pauling is at the end of the text. He died in 1994.

Another characteristic is that the information about the person's life is generally organized chronologically, which is only possible by the massive use of adverbials – time expressions. To name a few: “From 1963 to 1967”, “From his graduate days until the mid-thirties”, “During World War II”, “In the early fifties and again in the early sixties”, “at that time”, “Some two years after his arrival in Berlin”, “In December, 1904”, “Later”, “on May 27, 1910”, “from 1911 until her death and since 1922”, “on July 4, 1934” etc. Those are some of the expressions that help a biography make sense in terms of timing; the first one in a text is generally related to the date of birth and the last one, to the date of death.

There is yet another element that helps linking information in a text in a coherent way: the reference, which is achieved by the use of pronouns or noun phrases. That resource is very effective as a way of avoiding repetition, and in a biography – a text that generally has one person in the spotlight – finding different manners of referring to that person seems a very good tool to build a more fluent text. Some of the examples found in the biographies analyzed are the following: Christian B. Anfinsen – “Dr. Anfinsen”, “he”, “he and his colleagues”, “they”; Linus Pauling – “he” and “Pauling”, and there are also some noun phrases that qualify him, but make reference to him, such as, “the son of a pharmacist”, “a gifted teacher”, “a research professor”, “a professor of chemistry”; Robert Koch – “Koch”, “he” and “him”, and some that qualify him, such as, “The son of a mining engineer”, “Professor of Hygiene in the University of Berlin”, “an Honorary Professor of the Medical Faculty of Berlin”, “Director of the new Institute for Infectious Diseases”; Marie Curie – “née Maria Sklodowska”, “she”, “Marie”, “Mme. Curie”, and others, like, “Professor of General Physics”, “Head of the Physics Laboratory”, which work as characteristics of hers; finally, Pierre Curie – “he”, “Curie”, “Pierre”, and some other qualifiers, such as, “a demonstrator in the physics laboratory”, “Professor in the Faculty of Sciences”, “Titular Professor”.

In terms of lexical choices, besides the time expressions above mentioned, there is vocabulary that is typical of biographies. For example, “to be born”, “to die”, “degree”, “to attend [university]”, “to publish”, “to be cited”, “to live”, “to settle”, “to study”, “to be appointed”, “to be known”, “to be awarded”, “in recognition of”, “to announce the discovery of [something]” and many others equally important.

#### 4.3 Abstract

All examples of abstracts are available at [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com), a journal site that is reference when it comes to scientific publications. And, by analysing the five examples chosen, some important features have been observed.

To start, it is interesting to mention the concept and objectives of an abstract, because it helps understand why the text is written the way it is. According to the site of the University of North Caroline,

an abstract is a *self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work*. Components vary according to discipline; an abstract of a social science or scientific work may contain the scope, purpose, results, and contents of the work. An abstract of a humanities work may contain the thesis, background, and conclusion of the larger work. An abstract is not a review, nor does it evaluate the work being abstracted. While it contains key words found in the larger work, *the abstract is an original document rather than an excerpted passage*. You may write an abstract for various reasons. The two most important are selection and indexing. Abstracts allow readers who may be interested in a longer work to quickly decide whether it is worth their time to read it. Also, many online databases use abstracts to index larger works. Therefore, abstracts should contain keywords and phrases that allow for easy searching.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, an abstract may be seen as one of the densest pieces of academic writing, because it is supposed to convey, in a few lines, the information of a whole larger research paper, article, thesis, etc. That is the reason why a great deal of noun phrases are found, especially in the title. Below are the titles of the abstracts, with the noun phrases underlined:

TITLE 1: A primate-specific, brain isoform of KCNH2 affects cortical physiology, cognition, neuronal repolarization and risk of schizophrenia

TITLE 2: Validated prediction of clinical outcome in sarcomas and multiple types of cancer on the basis of a gene expression signature related to genome complexity

TITLE 3: Lipid accumulation and dendritic cell dysfunction in cancer

TITLE 4: Methylation determines fibroblast activation and fibrogenesis in the kidney

TITLE 5: Innate immune lectins kill bacteria expressing blood group antigen

As can be noticed, more than 90% of the titles are made up of noun phrases. Another important feature is the verb; when they are present, they are generally used in the Simple Present Tense – “affects”, “determines” and “kill”. It probably happens because it is crucial to show that the subject being dealt with is updated.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html>.

When it comes to the body of the abstract, the characteristics observed in the titles are also present, but there are some other important ones; both in terms of grammar and lexis, as it is seen in the following paragraphs.

The Simple Present is the predominant verb tense, but there are some instances of Simple Past, besides few, not so relevant, examples of Simple Future and Present Perfect. The Simple Present is most used in the introductory and conclusive parts.

However, when they show the procedures made or the results obtained, Simple Past is also used. For example, “To explore potential defense mechanisms against such pathogens, given these limitations in adaptive immunity, we *screened* for innate proteins that could recognize human blood group antigens” or “Pharmacological normalization of lipid abundance in DCs with an inhibitor of acetyl-CoA carboxylase *restored* the functional activity of DCs and substantially *enhanced* the effects of cancer vaccines”.

Also, there is one instance of Simple Future: “Application of the signature *will permit* more selective use of adjuvant therapies for people with sarcomas, leading to decreased iatrogenic morbidity and improved outcomes for such individuals”, which was used to show the future applications of the research.

Finally, there are some examples of passive voice; and, it is generally used when mentioning the phases of the research developed and described in the text itself. Here are two examples: “. The killing activity of both Gal-4 and Gal-8 *is mediated* by their C-terminal domains, occurs rapidly and independently of complement and *is accompanied* by disruption of membrane integrity.”

Besides the relevant grammatical features, which have to do with the study of form, it is also possible to talk about meaning, because abstracts require lexical choices that are specific of this genre. To name a few: “identify”, “predict”, “these results”, “outcome”, “here we report”, “these findings suggest”, “in a search for”, “these studies/results demonstrate” etc. Therefore, it is mandatory that learners get to know how to use those words and expressions adequately to understand and produce abstracts effectively.

## **5 Final Considerations**

This paper aimed at reflecting about English language teaching under the perspective of an ESP genre-based approach that comprises both form and meaning, since it is concerned about analyzing genres, especially academic ones, according to the linguistic and lexical aspects that seem relevant for the students of a Secondary Technical School to participate in

the academic and professional fields. The theoretical background exposed here is related to ELT, ESP teaching, speech genres and grammar teaching. Then, five examples of encyclopedia entry, biography and abstract were analyzed in an attempt of demonstrating what kinds of skill are necessary for the learners.

It is possible to notice that each genre varies in terms of relevant linguistic and lexical features, and that those features are dependent on the purpose/objective of the utterance inside a larger text. All the features described in the present article are dealt in classroom by means of exercises, group discussion, etc.

This paper only focused on the linguistic and lexical characteristics of the genre prototypes chosen to be analyzed. However, in class, other elements, equally important, are also observed because the main objective of a genre-based approach to ESP is to provide the learners with the necessary knowledge of text genres so that they will be able to act academically and professionally by means of them.

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