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Article Title : **Genre-Based Instruction: the Key ESP Solution for Adult**

**Learning in Professional Settings**

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**Genre-Based Instruction: the Key ESP solution for Adult Learning in  
Professional Settings**

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**Abstract.** The present research aims at highlighting the importance of introducing the genre-based approach as an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) solution to speed up the mastery of the English language-related activities in the workplace. Business is considered as the most important field which requires English in Algeria. However, workers in this domain encounter difficulties to accomplish English language-related activities. They fail to explore their previous English language to meet the workplace needs. Even general English instruction was not beneficial for them. A Triangulated study was then conducted on a group of ten adult learners working in the field of business. A Genre-Based instruction was adopted in order to equip them with the required English language skills that enable them to master the different genres that constitute the business correspondence, mainly writing both ordinary and electronic letters (e-mails). Three data gathering tools were used. First, needs analysis method was used adopting Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) approach to NA to find relevant information about the most likely encountered genres in their professional settings. Secondly, an intensive genre-based instruction in the form of designed task-based activities over a period of two months at a rate of three two-hour sessions per week was followed. Different types of business e-mails with different communicative purposes were dealt with. In this phase the « Teaching-Learning Cycle » of Feez (1998) is used. Moves analysis' tasks, based on identifying the rhetorical moves of a specific genre were also used. Finally a post instructional questionnaire was used to elicit the learners' attitudes towards the genre-based instruction. Results of the present study suggest that the genre-based instruction is an efficient method to enhance the English language writing performance of adult learners. It helps in raising the awareness of the learners towards genre. The results also come to prove the importance of needs analysis in designing suitable ESP courses. The learners' attitudes towards genre-based instruction are positive since they can meet the workplace language needs. Results led to the construction of recommendations that focus on adopting the genre-based instruction as an ESP solution to promote mainly adult learners in the professional settings.

**Keywords:** Adult Learning, EOP, ESP, Genre, Genre-based Instruction

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the Algerian context, English is taught as the second foreign language after French. Therefore, many graduated adults come into real contact with English only when being immersed in professional and occupational settings. In the workplace most newly recruited workers encounter difficulties to accomplish English language- related activities. They fail to explore their previous English language knowledge in conducting language related activities. Business is considered as the most important field which requires English in Algeria, as a growing number of private companies are dealing with international companies as a natural result of being part of the international business network. Business correspondence then constitutes an integral part of the business daily work. Nowadays most of the business correspondence is conducted in the form of e-mailing because of its speed and low cost.

This situation led to the resort to a language private school by a group of ten adult learners working in the field of business to be equipped with the required English language skills that will help them conduct their professional activities and enhance the quality of their business correspondence. Their demand for an ESP course came after having previously general English lessons for a period of two months in a class of adult learners in the form of evening classes at the University of Continuing Education. They pointed out that their level remained the same. They claimed that the general English instruction was insufficient and of a little help to enable them to master the different genres that constitute the business correspondence, mainly writing both ordinary and electronic letters (e-mails). This reveals that the general instruction is not efficient for adults in the workplace. They need intensive ESP instruction in the form of genre-based instruction to really master the workplace language- related activities.

Starting from this research problem, the following research questions can be formulated. To what extent does genre-based instruction enhance the adult learners' proficiency of English? How can genre knowledge be exploited in ESP educational settings for adult learners? What benefits can be achieved through adopting the genre-based approach in the professional and occupational settings?

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Definition of English for Specific Purposes**

Building upon Strevens, 1971, 1972; Widdowson, 1979, 1984, 2000; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987; Swales, 1990, 1993; Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, Basturkmen and Elder (2004) define ESP as:

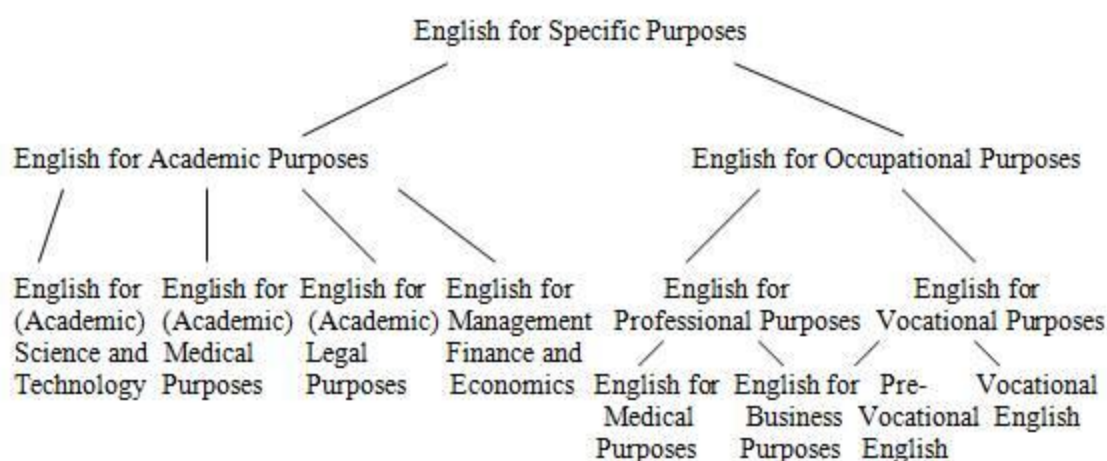
The teaching and research of language in relation to the communicative needs of speakers of a second language in facing a particular workplace, academic, or professional context. In such contexts[,] language is used for a limited range of communicative events...Analysis of language in such events generally reveals that language is used in constrained and fairly predictable ways...LSP courses usually focus on the specific language needs of fairly homogeneous groups of learners in regard to one particular context referred to as the target situation...The aim of such courses is to help the learners deal with the linguistic demands of their academic, workplace, or professional target situations. LSP courses can be “pre-experience” or “post-experience” (pp. 672-3).

Orr (2001) argues that ESP is “English language instruction designed to meet the specific learning needs of a specific learner or group of learners within a specific time frame for which instruction in general English will not suffice”

### 2.1.1. Branches of ESP

ESP can be divided into two broad divisions: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The former "concerns the learners who need the language for educational purposes such as pursuing studies in a given academic field of interest [while] the second category 'EOP' refers to the use of language with the intention of performing part or all of a job (Douglas, 2000)". These two divisions can be further classified into different sub-divisions as shown in figure 01

Figure 1 - Branches of ESP (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1997 (p. 7))



### **2.1.2. Needs Analysis**

'Needs analysis' refers to the methods and techniques used for gathering information about the communicative demands of learners engaging in formal or in vocational training courses (Basturkmen & Elder, 2004).

Needs Analysis is an essential first step for designing appropriate ESP courses. Many researchers (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1988) put forward the idea that identifying students' needs should be the first step in designing an appropriate English for Specific Purpose syllabus.

#### **2.1.2.1. Approaches to Needs Analysis**

Several approaches to needs analysis have been provided by different scholars: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), the Present Situation Analysis (PSA) and - Hutchinson and Waters (1987) approach to NA as well as Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) approach to NA.

**2.1.2.2. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) Approach to NA.** It is a natural development of the TSA and the PSA, in which they advocate that materials and methodology of an ESP course are to be determined by learners' needs. Their model combines both TSA and PSA, and objective needs as well as subjective needs. This approach divides learners' needs of the language into two types: target needs and learning needs. The former is related to what knowledge and abilities the learner needs to have in order to function effectively in the target situation; and the latter refers to what the learner needs to do in order to learn. In addition, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) divide target needs into three key parts: necessity (needs identified by the requirements of target situation), lacks (the necessary proficiency for the target situation minus what the learners already know), and wants (what the learners desire to learn).

### **2.2. EOP and Adult Learning**

EOP is concerned with learners who are immersed in real context of work. Therefore the target students are adults seeking the mastery of certain genres that meet their needs to conduct English language- related activities. The EOP then can be a matter of a personal choice to gain benefits such as promotions, professional development or it can be necessity as a part of a job requirement. In fact in this kind of ESP learners are so motivated and have their awareness about the kind of teaching.

### **2.3. Genre Theory**

#### **2.3.1. Definition of Genre**

The term 'Genre' is utilized in two different fields: Literature and linguistics. Flower and Dewey (2002), suggests that genre theories can be broadly distinguished as primarily non-linguistic or linguistic in their orientation. These two traditions have evolved independently and without much interest in each other, as noted by Freedman and Madway (1994) and Devitt (2000). The literary theories of genre with a non-linguistic orientation are often associated with the field of rhetoric.

Swales (1990) identified a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58). He also defines genre as "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".

### **2.3.2. Genre-Based Instruction**

The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning has defined the genre approach as "a framework for language instruction" (Byram, 2004, p. 234). In the 1990s there was a growing interest in the notion of genre emerged and genre became a central principle of much writing pedagogy for L2 writing classroom (Matsuda et al., 2003 ; Tardy, 2006). Instruction that targets genres has a potential to help inexperienced novice writers to establish a principled link between the communicative purpose and the features of text at every discourse level (Johns, 1997) by making explicit what they need to know to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills. Hyland (2004) thus describes the main advantages of genre-based pedagogy as "explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive, empowering, critical, and consciousness-raising" (pp. 10-11). Genre-based pedagogy is based on having a relationship among the linguistic resources, purpose and audience that is at the center of genre-based writing pedagogy.

### **2.3.3. Approaches to Genre Research and Pedagogy**

There are three broad approaches to genre research and pedagogy in the non literary tradition of genre theory each with its own set of assumptions about genre, research focuses and the target learners, Hyon (1996). These three approaches to genre differ in terms of theory and method of text analysis. These schools are:

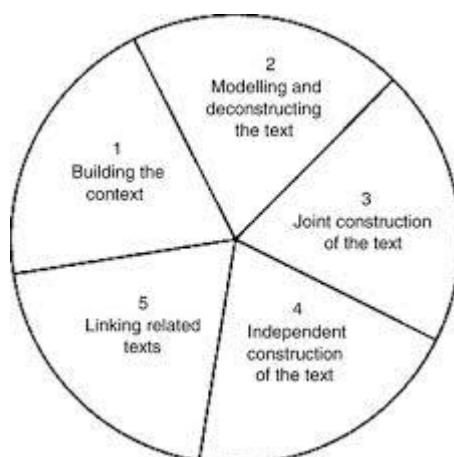
### 2.3.3.1. The Australian Sydney School in the tradition of Systemic Functional Linguistics

The approach to genre influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics also known as the Sydney school of genre has been developed based on the theoretical work of the linguist Michael Halliday (1994) and by subsequent contributions by other SFL theorists such as James R. Martin, Francis Christie and Rucaiya Hasan. Hyland (2004) describes that the SFL approach to genre is pedagogically the most successful of the three orientations. Martin and Rose (2008) define genre in SFL as staged, goal-oriented and social processes. This came as a response to three register variables : field( what is taking place/a variety of topics) tenor ( who is taking part / interactant roles) and mode ( what part language is playing/ purposes). In the SFL view, investigating these variables can lead to a systematic understanding of how genres are constituted and how they work.

SFL theorists base on ‘schematic structure’ (Martin, 1984) and ‘generic structure potential’ of (Halliday & Hassan, 1989) and rhetorical functions of a genre which are sometimes referred to as ‘text types’ ( Biber, 1988). Because SFL use both terms genre and text types the same way, the term ‘macrogenre’ is used for larger and more complex genres containing more basic ‘elemental genres’ (Hyland, 2004)

Genre pedagogy in SFL is based on ‘scaffolding’ (Bruner, 1990 ; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky notion of scaffolding together with Halliday’s language- based theory of learning contributed to the development of the SFL theory. Byrne’s (2006) analysis suggests that by combining the contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky, SFL can become a comprehensive language-based theory of learning. Scaffolding can be maintained through pedagogical sequences which are described in a straightforward manner by Feez (1998) as ‘The Teaching- Learning Cycle’. The teaching- learning cycle helps learners to have both great understanding and genre control of a genre in a particular context through a series of sequential steps illustrated in figure 02.

Figure 2. The teaching-learning cycle framework (Feez, 1999, p. 13).



The cycle has five stages (Feez & Joyce 1998; Hyland 2004):

- (a) Context building: experiencing and exploring the purpose, context and audience of the genre;
- (b) Modelling: analyzing the genre to reveal structural patterns and linguistic features;
- (c) Joint construction: guided, teacher-supported practice of genre;
- (d) Independent writing: independent writing monitored by the teacher;
- (e) Comparing; linking what is learned to other genres and contexts.

In early stages of (a) and (b), learners receive scaffolding in explicit instructions on generic conventions. In later stages, scaffolding gradually declines as learners gain greater control of the genre. Finally, learners are able to critique and exploit the linguistic possibilities of the genre (Macken-Horarik 2002).

The teaching-learning cycle framework helps teachers to organize and sequence their syllabus elements (topics, texts, language features, skills, activities and tasks) in EFL teaching into a coherent, systematic, and manageable way and allows students to have more learning opportunities to meet their learning objectives for a specific skill (Feez, 1999, 2002).

### **2.3.3.2. The English for Specific Purposes Approach**

The ESP approach to genre is underpinned by the genre theory addressed by John Swales (1990). Swales defined genre as structured communicative events engaged in by specific discourse communities whose members share broad communicative purposes (Swales, 1990).

ESP genre practitioners believe that communicative purposes are expressed in a sequenced manner, with a text being built up schematically through a series of moves and steps (Swales, 1990). The notion of moves in ESP might correspond to that of the schematic/generic structures in SFL. However, while the SFL approach aims to provide more coherent textual features, ESP genre research is more inclined to focus on the rhetoric context of or the regularly occurring activities in academic and workplace settings.

#### **2.3.3.2.1. Swales' Genre Analysis**

Swales' (1981, 1990) study on research articles (RA) pioneered the use of moves analysis in the genres of academic and scientific discourse. Swales' study was sparked by his desire to help writers with the introduction section of the research article which appeared to be so difficult to write.

#### **2.3.3.2.2. Moves Analysis**

Swales' (1981, 1990) work on 'moves' which is defined as a semantic units related to the writer's purpose in RA introductions can be considered seminal and has sparked off a number of studies in the same area.

In moves analysis, each move as a component of the schematic structure of a genre is labeled and given a specific role. When all the moves in a genre have been identified and labeled, a model for the genre can be proposed. Some of the moves are obligatory and some moves are optional. The moves are further noticeable as particular language features are found under each move.

One of the most well-known examples of the descriptions of genres or disciplinary discourses is Swales' (1990) description of the research article introduction. Through the analysis of the rhetorical moves in the research article introduction, Swales developed the « Creating a Research Space (CARS)» model.

**Table 01: The Create A Research Space (CARS) Model for Research Articles Introduction**

(Swales, 1990 :141)

<p><b>Move 1 Establishing a territory</b></p> <p>Step 1 Claiming centrality and/or</p> <p>Step 2 Making topic generalization(s) and/or</p> <p>Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research</p> <p><b>Move 2 Establishing a niche</b></p> <p>Step 1A Counter-claiming or</p> <p>Step 1B Indicating a gap or</p> <p>Step 1C Question-raising or</p> <p>Step 1D Continuing a tradition</p> <p><b>Move 3 Occupying the niche</b></p> <p>Step 1A Outlining purposes or</p> <p>Step 1B Announcing present research</p> <p>Step 2 Announcing principal findings</p> <p>Step 3 Indicating Research Article structure</p>
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From the study of moves proposed by Swales, researchers are able to define the move structure and the role of each move in the text.

### **2.3.3.3. North American New Rhetoric Genre**

The New Rhetoric Approach to genre studies denotes a movement of non-literary genre scholarship that emerged in North America in the 1980s (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010 ; Freedman & Medway, 1994). The approach called for the rethinking on the genre on the part of L1 composition scholars who had been familiar with traditional literary genre studies. In traditional literary studies, the genres were defined by conventions of form and content and therefore focused on text regularities. On the other hand the non-literary, the new rhetorical non-literary genre theorists of the 1980s went further. As Freedman & Medway (1994) described it : “ without abandoning earlier conceptions of genres as ‘types’ or ‘kinds’ of discourse, the new rhetoric approach aims to connect a recognition of regularities in discourse types with a broader social and cultural understanding of language in use” ( Freedman & Medway, 1994, p. 1).

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Problem Statement**

In the workplace most newly recruited workers encounter difficulties to accomplish English language-related activities. They fail to explore their previous English-language knowledge in conducting language related activities. The general English instruction was insufficient and of a little help to enable them to master the different genres that constitute the business correspondence, mainly writing both ordinary and electronic letters ( e-mails).

### **3.2. Research questions**

- To what extent does genre-based instruction enhance the adult learners' proficiency of English?

-How can genre knowledge be exploited in ESP educational settings for adult learners?

What benefits can be achieved through adopting the genre-based approach in the professional and occupational settings?

### 3.3. Participants

The population of the present study consists of ten participants. All of them hold posts in different business companies as sales managers or secretaries. They enrolled for ESP courses in a private language school in the state of El- Oued, Algeria. The table below gives detailed information about them.

**Table 2: Participants of the Study**

<b>Academic Degree</b>	<b>Previous English-language knowledge</b>	<b>Recent Position</b>	<b>Length of professional Experience</b>
University Degree	Courses in UFC as well as private language schools	Sales Managers	Less than 5 years
Undergraduate Level	UFC general English courses	Secretaries	Less than 3 years

### 3.4. Data Gathering Tools

To conduct this research, a triangulated study was adopted by using three data gathering tools.

- First, a needs' analysis method was used adopting Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) approach to NA to find relevant information about the most likely encountered genres in their professional settings. Results of the first step reveal that most of them were interested in the e-mail genre because e-mailing is becoming the main type of business correspondence.

- Secondly, an intensive genre- based instruction in the form of designed task- based activities over a period of two months at a rate of three two-hour sessions per week was followed. Different types of business e-mails with different communicative purposes were dealt with. In this phase the « Teaching-Learning Cycle » of Feez (1998) is used. It is based on subsequent steps: deconstruction of a text, joint construction and independent construction of a text. Moves analysis' tasks, based on identifying the rhetorical moves of a specific genre was also used. The instruction was based on the explicit teaching of genre to gain time and effort

- Finally a post instructional questionnaire was used to elicit the learners' attitudes towards the genre-based instruction.

### **3.5. Description of the three stages of Methodology**

**3.5.1. Stage One:** The ten participants were surveyed through a short questionnaire comprising two parts:

- **Part I:** Aimed at eliciting general information about the participants: their academic degree, their familiarity with English, their professional positions and experiences.
- **Part II:** Aimed at investigating the participants' English language needs in their professional settings. The participants are asked to indicate the level of importance of each business genre encountered in their workplace. They are provided with a list of five business genres: the business e-mail, the ordinary letter, the business report, the business telephone conversation as well as the office memos. They are also asked to evaluate their previous experiences with English and if it was helpful in their present careers. Meanwhile, they are questioned about their preference in terms of the number of sessions per week they would like to have English class. In this part, the participants are requested to indicate the extent and the way in which the ESP English course can help them in mastering the required genres and therefore conducting the workplace activities. The last question concerns the possible aspects and skills that will be acquired in English- language by the end of the ESP English course.

#### **3.5.2. Stage Two**

An intensive genre- based instruction was adopted using the teaching – learning cycle as well as the moves' analysis approach. The Teaching-Learning Cycle of Feez (1998) is based on the following subsequent steps:

- **Building the Context:** In this phase the teacher introduces the social context of the e-mail genre by reading relevant material. Different types of e-mails were presented to participants.
- **Modelling and Deconstructing the Text:** the teacher introduces different e-mail texts drawing attention to their organisational and linguistic features. It is here that the learner would learn to identify and gain some practice using some of the specific lexico-grammatical features of texts in the target genre. At this stage a genre analysis framework, can be adopted. Participants learn how to use the Moves' analysis framework from the teacher. This aims

atmaking them aware about the necessary moves found in an e-mail. After that,participants will be able tocarry out their own analyses of the contextual and linguistic features of sample texts.

- **Joint Construction of the Text:**In this phase, learners could work together in groups constructing an e-mail message with teacher guidance.

- **Independent Construction of the Text:**during this phase,the scaffolding is removed completely. The learners work independently atconstructing their own texts. Participants are asked to construct an e-mail.

- **Linking Related Texts:**links can then be made to related text-types to enable learners to use what they have learned. This would enablethem to see the uses, effectiveness, and similarities and differences of texts in various other contexts.

### 3.5.3. Stage Three

In this final stage, a short questionnaire was used to elicit the learners' attitudes towards the genre-based instruction.Participants were asked to give their opinion about this mode of instruction and how they evaluate their level of English after being subject to Genre-Based Instruction. They were also asked to measure the effect of this approach on their English language- related activities in the workplace.

## 3.6. Results

Results of the present study suggest that the genre- based instruction is an efficient method to enhance the English language writing performace of adult learners. It helps in raising the awareness of the learners towards genre. After being subject to genre based instruction, participants gained control over the e-mail genre. They are now able to write different types of business e-mails to fulfill different communicative purposes.

The results also come to prove the importance of needs analysis in designig suitable ESP courses. The learners' attitudes towards genre- based instruction are positive since they can meet the the workplace language needs.

Results led to the construction of recommendations that focus on adopting the genre -based instruction as an ESP solution to promote mainly adult leraners in the professional settings.

ESP practionners are responsible for using carefully designed curricula that help in equipping the learners with the required language skills that will satisfy the professional settings' needs.

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