

ESP Approach to Genre

Every discipline (medicine, psychology, economics, law, business, etc.) produces different **types of texts** called '*genres*' that ESP learners *need to* master. According to Hyland (2008), to be proficient communicators, ESP learners need to master (that is, through understanding or producing) specific genres used in the target situation, by the specialist discourse community to which ESP learners (will or aspire to) belong. (i.e., the community of lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, physicians, etc.). This is why, Genre Analysis in ESP helps ESP learners understand how language (lexis, grammar), audience and the specialist knowledge of the discipline interact; and **how genres differ from each other** according to **their communicative purpose and structure**.

Raising ESP learner's awareness to specific language of genres means to have them notice the **choice of words, grammar** (tenses, active or passive voice), and **lexical structures** (nouns, verbs) that are used to serve a communicative purpose and adjust to the intended audience. For example in legal writing, the frequent use of noun phrases suits the communicative purpose of drafting laws (Bhatia, 1993). Based on many instances of the same genre, called a corpus (computer-stored texts), **genre analysts** examine the communicative purpose of the genre, its audience (for whom it is meant) and how the latter influence the form/language (macro- and micro- organisation or choice of words and sentences), as detailed in the worksheet (see next page).

Examples of professional/business genres are medical, or technical report, application/resignation/summons/sales letter, a legal case, a contract, a job interview, a CV, etc. **Examples of academic genres** are dissertation introduction, dissertation abstract, conference call for paper/programme announcement, university announcement to students, recommendation/reference letter, book review, research article, etc. Genres can be **oral** (like a lecture, a meeting, a presentation, a telephone (sales) call, an interview, etc.) or **written** like meeting agenda, contract, dissertations or research articles. Genres are either **open/public** (like adverts, dissertations, book chapters) or **occluded** (like Résumé/CV or work meetings), that is not easily accessible (Swales and Feak, 2000).

Genre Analysis Assignment: search GOOGLE IMAGE for an authentic sample of any specialised genre -see the genre examples proposed above- and initiate yourself to doing genre analysis by completing this worksheet (add more dotted lines if necessary).

1- **Genre:** What type of specialised genre does the text illustrate?

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2- **Genre participants:** Who is the **source** (the one who produces/writes the genre) and Target /intended **audience** (the one who receives/reads the genre)? Colleague, student, (potential) employer, tourists, academic staff, etc.?..... and its discourse community /expert members (lawyers, doctors, hotel employees, accountants, engineers, physicians, etc.?.....

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3- **Exigencies:** When is this genre used? What is/are the specific function(s)/communicative **purpose(s)/aim** of the information presented in this genre (to advise, to describe, to instruct, to persuade, to inform, to argue, to complain, to entertain, etc.)?

4- **Macro-Organisation:** How is the text organised? What is the physical layout?

How many paragraphs are there? Is there a conclusion/introduction?

5- What is the communicative purpose (the main idea) of **every** paragraph?

Micro-organisation

6- **Sentence structure:** are sentences complete or in a note form?Are they punctuated?Are they linked with cohesive links (when, while, that, if, in case, etc.)?Are sentences simple/complex?Give an example of each if any.....

7- **Style:** How formal/informal, personal (self-reference using 'I')/ impersonal is the language?

8- **Lexico-grammar:** What are the most frequent grammatical structures (active/passive, verb tenses (past, present, future), complex noun phrases, Lexical phrases, etc.)? Give an example of the most frequent ones if any

9- Which lexical items occur most frequently? (e.g., nouns, verbs, pronouns, noun phrases, etc.)

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10- **Lexis:** What is the type of vocabulary used ? e.g., technical ry (i.e., words that are difficult to understand by people who are not specialist/insider to the domain), sub-technical vocabulary (i.e., general words used in high frequency or with limited meaning in specific fields/disciplines), genre-specific/domain-specific vocabulary? Give an example of each if any:

Sub-technical vocabulary:

Technical vocabulary:

REFERENCES

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Hyland, K. (2008) Genre and Academic Writing in the Discipline. Language Teaching, 41(4), 543-562.
Swales, J.M., & Feak, C.B. (2000). English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press
Genre analysis worksheet adapted from https://compositionawebb.pbworks.com/f/genre_analysis_assignment...PDF