

Knowing Your Reader: Text-External Influences on Textual Features in Résumé Construction

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ABSTRACT

In the field of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), great importance has often been placed on using language in authentic ways. As a result of the inability of many second language (L2) students to construct and adapt language for various academic and professional needs (St. John, 1996), genre analysis has gained attention as a framework for teaching ESL students to write texts they way they are constructed in authentic situations. However, the lack of empirically-derived discipline-specific genre exemplars to practically utilize in the L2 writing classroom has prompted the need for (a) further analysis of various texts found outside of the classroom setting and (b) an investigation into how language is manipulated to meet the purposes of those texts. Following Bhatia's (2008) and Cheng's (2008) notions that students need to have practical genre exemplars to aid them in understanding how text-external influences (e.g., the purpose for writing and the reader's expectations) affect linguistic choices, the focus of this paper is to demonstrate how one type of professional text, the résumé, is constructed using a genre-based framework. The analysis follows a genre perspective of analyzing texts both linguistically, based on the English for Specific Purposes school of genre, and contextually, from the New Rhetoric school. In constructing this specific text, the writer's understanding of text-external influences, namely expectations the hiring company has for the desired applicant, was essential for the development of organizational patterns and lexical construction of their résumés. This study highlights the importance of having not only an understanding of the linguistic knowledge needed to construct various texts, but also of the text-external influences on those linguistic choices.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 30 years, the methodology of communicative language teaching (CLT) has prompted a focus on teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) as authentically as possible in order to prepare students for various situations that they may encounter outside of the classroom (Schmitt & Celce-Murcia, 2002). This focus has led to a move towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where learning English encompasses not only linguistic knowledge but also communicative knowledge outside of the classroom in other professional settings (St. John, 1996). This increased emphasis on teaching English for use beyond the classroom has led many in the field (e.g.,

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Bremmer, 2008; Louhiala-Salminen, 1996) to question whether second language (L2) students are adequately prepared to incorporate the language they have been taught in authentic settings. To illustrate, St. John found that the most rapidly increasing sector of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) instruction since the early 1990s has been business English, due to the marked increase in international transactions via the World Wide Web. She describes how many L2 students are severely misinformed about norms and strategies when it comes to written business communication. More specifically, when communicating in business English settings, L2 learners lack awareness of the reader's perspective, the purpose of the text, and how knowledge of the two influences textual construction (Johns, 1997). This discrepancy mirrors a common problem found in many language learning contexts: L2 students are unable to appropriately assess the context of interaction in order to make morphosyntactic, semantic, and lexical choices to meet the needs and goals of specific situations.

Given this dilemma, it might be assumed that instruction in advanced ESL composition classes at the post-secondary level would provide greater emphasis on contextual influences on linguistic choices in written communication in various professions and under different employment conditions. However, ESL students at all stages of post-secondary education generally do not focus on writing for their own professions, and instead focus mostly on the academic essay (Johns, 1997, 2003). Nevertheless, many L2 learners and instructors wonder whether essay writing is necessary for other undergraduate classes or for the students' future professional careers (Leki & Carson, 1994), prompting great concern about whether these students are prepared to write professionally in their respective fields once they leave their writing classes. L2 learners need to be exposed not only to the kind of written texts they will be expected to produce in their professional careers, but also, more importantly, they need to be able to assess the contextual expectations that influence the discourse organization, morphosyntactic structures, and lexical choices expected in the construction of those texts. L2 learners need to be able to write in various contexts and for various audiences, and understand how those contexts and the expectations of those audiences influence their writing.

The inclusion of authentic professional writing instruction in CLT (Brown, 2007) and business-focused ESP (St. John, 1996) has prompted a surge of studies analyzing professional texts beyond the classroom. Some studies have focused on analyzing texts as they relate to general professional business contexts, such as the studies of business proposals by Orlinkowski and Yates (1992), Bhatia (1993), and Freedman and Adam (1996). Other studies have specifically examined written texts in the context of L2 students' need to comprehend texts in professional settings: cover letters (Crossley, 2007; Ferreira & Lantolf, 2008), business proposals (Eustace, 1996; Stubbs, 2000), business letters (Pinto dos Santos, 2002; Vergaro, 2004), business email correspondence (Gimenez, 2000; Zucchermaglio & Talamo, 2003), and memoranda (Zhu, 2004). The latter group of studies provides generalizable findings relating to morphosyntactic structures and lexical choices found in those specific texts, yet provided limited connections to writing within specific contexts (Bhatia, 2004). Regardless of foci, most textual analysis studies have had difficulties with the vagueness of the term *context*, which has led some researchers to utilize other terms like *text-external influences* (Bhatia, 2008) or *rhetorical parameters* (Cheng, 2008) which account for awareness of the readers' perspective and their expectations of the writer. For the purposes of this study, the term text-external influences will be utilized.

Bhatia (1993) suggests examining language use in professional writing from a genre analysis perspective when analyzing text-external influences on textual features. He presents a genre approach as a means to examine texts for more than just their linguistic features. As he

explains, making linguistic choices (e.g., verb tenses) is not only related to syntactic and semantic constructions within a language, but is also influenced by sociocultural rhetorical judgments. Bhatia further explains that context can include the setting in which the text will be used and, more specifically, the readers to whom the text will be given, and their expectations of the writer of the text. Thus, to understand a written text in a professional setting, one needs to understand the context in which it is written and the audience for whom it is written. Swales (1990) also emphasizes that an understanding of a variety of written genres and how each is incorporated into the target context is necessary for individuals regardless of their language background in order for them to become successful members of their respective professional communities.

Genres are, primarily, repeated social actions (Miller, 1984) determined by writer, audience, and immediate context in addition to knowledge of morphosyntactic structures and the discourse rules of a language (Swales, 1990). A text type can be considered a genre if there is sufficient repetition for the readers and writers to recognize a text as a systematic example (Bhatia, 1993). Bakhtin (1986) describes the repetition of generic features as “relatively stable... structures that can be identified by thematic content, style, and compositional structure” (p. 65-66). The identification of this repetition is mostly found within specific social communities who often utilize the genre for specific purposes. This social aspect of genre may be its most important feature, yet it has been described in the literature in different ways. Some view an entire society or culture as the social community for a genre (e.g., Feez, 2002; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Macken-Horaik, 2002). Other theorists speak of more closed social groups that use certain genres such as *discourse communities* (Swales, 1990) or *communities of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Genres are also purposeful. They are “written to get something done” (Johns, 1997, pp. 24-25). Some purposes are quite complicated; for example, a wedding invitation may serve a number of purposes for the writer such as to invite, to receive gifts, or to placate family (Johns, 1997). Résumé writers might have varied immediate reasons to write in this genre, such as to get an interview or to demonstrate their alignment with the values of a specific company, yet ultimately this genre is used to obtain a new position (Besson, 1996).

Due to the varied uses of different genres, understanding the interaction between text and context is of central importance. In genre theories, the two are inextricably connected. Halliday and Hasan (1989) speak of “a systematic relationship between the social environment, on the one hand, and the functional organization of language [in the text] on the other” (pp. 11-12). The organization of the text and linguistic choices made by the author help make the text successful for an audience within a particular context. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995a) describe the centripetal forces of an immediate situation that contribute to text prototypes (e.g., the repeated organizational structure of a research paper) and the centrifugal forces that require the writer to revise a text for a context (e.g., specific audience expectations). They warn that commonly occurring textual elements “may resemble each other only in certain ways and only to a certain degree” (p. 6) in some text types, but must be considered within the situations in which they are being utilized. The use of certain textual features, such as lexico-grammatical structures, that may be commonly found in certain types of written discourse therefore needs to be considered in relation to the context in which they are being written.

The use of genre analysis in the ESL writing classroom may represent a different approach to writing for many students. Johns (1997) notes that in many composition classrooms, the *process approach* is usually utilized. This method, which has dominated composition classrooms since the 1960s, consists of brainstorming, writing a draft, getting feedback from either the teacher or other students, revising, and either completing other drafts or submitting a final draft. Genre analysis,

however, includes one further step, as *creation* (i.e., early planning) is used as a starting point in the writing process. Prior to the commencement of writing, students must research and analyze both the conventions of the genre to be used and the context in which the text will be written. Bawarshi (2003) states: “There are the various social forces that constitute the scene of production within which the writer’s cognition as well as his or her text are situated and shaped” (p. 5) and that “genres function [for] their writers, readers and contexts” (p. 8). Thus, in addition to understanding the linguistic forms of a language, writers need also to recognize the social functions of a text before constructing it.

Genre analysis, then, allows the writer to appreciate connections between textual features and text-external influences. However, it is unclear which aspects of genre analysis must be utilized to reach an adequate understanding of text-external influences on linguistic choices. The next section will examine various schools of genre analysis to obtain a fuller understanding of this analytic perspective.

Schools of Genre

For the purposes of the current study, two schools of genre analysis will be discussed: ESP and the New Rhetoric School. The ESP analysis of genre examines the interaction of text and context, but with a priority on lexico-grammatical features and structural moves within the discourse (Hyon, 1996). Within this approach to genre analysis, the discussion of context focuses on discourse communities and communicative purposes. This approach follows Swales (1990), who defines genre as

a class of communicative events, the members of which share the same set of communicative purposes. Those purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute a rationale for the genre which shapes the schematic structure of the discourse, and influences and constrains the choice of content and style. Exemplars of the genre exhibit various patterns of similarity with structure, style, content, and intended audience. (p. 58)

This definition of genre focuses on a group of participants within a discourse community who are communicating by using a genre for a specific purpose. Conventions of shared genres are widely known to members of a given discourse community, be it social, political, recreational, professional, or academic (Johns, 1997, 2003).

The New Rhetoric School of genre analysis comes from a rhetoric tradition and focuses on examining genres as social actions conducted within particular contexts (Freedman & Medway, 1994). This approach to genre investigates the social and physical surroundings in which genres are produced or negotiated depending on the specific circumstances (Johns, 2003). The key to understanding this approach rests not on the linguistic features of a text, but rather on the fact that a genre is based on the social and contextual knowledge of the group in which it is being used. Without an understanding of the group, it would be difficult to understand how a text is constructed. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995b) state that “genres are the intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed” (p. 501) and argue that those scaffolds reflect the community and immediate context. Thus, to fully understand genre in the New Rhetoric School, it is essential to understand the social context within which a text is written by following an actual practitioner’s construction of the text in an authentic setting.

The Current Study

The current study analyzes how text-external influences, such as reader expectations, affect the textual features within the text. Bhatia (2004, 2008) emphasizes that the lack of clear, salient connections between textual features (i.e., morphosyntactic structures and lexical choices) and text-external influences (e.g., reader expectations) in many studies of written discourse makes it difficult for learners of the text form, especially L2 students, to write in a way that adequately addresses the expectations of the context. He argues that it is necessary to demonstrate to learners how text-external influences affect textual features in the creation of a text for a specific situation by providing discipline-specific genre exemplars to model.

Following Bhatia's (2008) and Cheng's (2008) suggestions of using a genre-specific exemplar to demonstrate textual construction, the résumé, a commonly utilized text in professional settings, was investigated. Very few empirical research studies have discussed the résumé, which is surprising since, as Wilkinson, Wilkinson, and Vik (1986) emphasize, a résumé is essential for "launching a career upon graduation" (p. 271). Without a résumé, the opportunities for students to acquire a job in their field, and ultimately to write in other professional genres, are narrowed significantly. Thus, the focus of the current study on the résumé will provide teachers with information to help guide learners, particularly L2 students, in creating this crucial written genre. The résumé was also chosen as the focus of the current study because, as Popken (1993) emphasizes, "the résumé also can help [students] understand the notion of discourse community in a way that few other genres can" (p. 239). The immediacy of the résumé genre for students allows for even greater saliency of the effect of text-external influences on textual features in written discourse.

This study demonstrates how actual résumé writers utilize their knowledge of text-external influences, specifically knowledge of their readers and what they expect from potential applicants, in order to make textual decisions related to discourse organizational patterns and lexical choices. Given the importance of examining connections between text-external influences and textual features within the discourse, the study utilized both the ESP and New Rhetoric schools of genre analysis. Hyland (2003) argues that the ESP genre approach so far has been the most influential on North American writing because it focuses more on lexico-grammatical structures that may be more readily identified. He supports Bhatia's (1993) and Swales' (1990) arguments that genre knowledge of any field is important for L2 learners to "gain access to ways of communicating... in particular professional, academic, and occupational communities" (Hyland, 2003, p. 24). Nevertheless, as Bhatia (2008) also emphasizes, textual (i.e., lexico-grammatical) perspectives of a text need to be determined in relation to sociocultural perspectives (i.e., résumé readers' expectations of the text within certain communities) and institutional perspectives (i.e., specific company and position expectations). Therefore, a triangulation between the two schools provides a clearer picture of how writers take various influences into account during the text construction process.

METHOD

To control for extraneous variables influencing the data, only American business résumés were chosen (hereafter referred to simply as résumés). All of the résumés used in this study were considered successful in that the participants were hired for the positions for which the résumés

were submitted. Participants were chosen based on their length of time working in business, and initial interviews were conducted to get the participants' general guidelines for constructing their own résumés and also to determine patterns among them in their constructions. The participants' résumés were collected and analyzed for organizational patterns and lexical choices used, and follow-up questionnaires were given to the participants to focus on text-external influences. Finally, the answers in the questionnaires were compared with the findings from the analysis of the résumés.

Participants

To gain an understanding of reader expectations of a résumé written for an American business audience, a professional business résumé reader at a career center at a four-year university was interviewed. The résumé reader had 30 years of experience in reading and evaluating résumés for business professionals and novices. She provided insights into what employers in business focus on when evaluating a résumé, as well as what information must be included in a résumé. The professional résumé reader also described the writing process and what, according to her, constitutes a successful written product. She showed sample authentic business résumés to exemplify her explanation of what makes the finished product successful. The interview lasted 90 minutes and was audiotaped and transcribed.

The résumés used for this study were collected from nine native English-speaking professionals who had been in the business world for at least five years. To ensure homogeneity of the sample, the participants had only worked for companies within the United States. In addition, professionals in business were selected, rather than novices, because they had a more thorough understanding of the context in which the résumés were produced. The participants were chosen through a snowball sampling technique (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) in which participants affiliated with the researcher were able to ask others that they knew in the fields of business to take part in the study. Participants represented various subfields such as marketing, finance, telecommunications, and international trade. Each participant's résumé and questionnaire were coded by the location of their current job. For example, if a male participant worked in San Diego, he was labeled as Mr. San Diego. Table 1 shows the categorization of the participants.

TABLE 1
Participant Background Information

Participant	Highest level of education	Specialization	Yrs. in field	Résumés	Applied positions
Mr. Philadelphia	B.B.A.	Sales	30	2	1. V.P. of Sales & Marketing 2. District Sales Manager
Ms. Washington	M.B.A. & M.A. in Economics	Trade	5	1	International Trade Policy Specialist
Ms. New York City	B.S.B.A.	Finance	9	1	Credit Analyst
Mr. Pittsburgh	B.S.B.A.	Finance	5	1	Financial Analyst
Mr. San Diego	B.A.	Management	28	1	V.P. of Financial Administration
Ms. Boston	B.S.B.A.	Finance	5	2	1. Solutions Analyst 2. Investment Performance Associate
Ms. Los Angeles	B.A.	Marketing	21	1	Managing Director of Financial Sales and Development
Ms. Alexandria	B.S.B.A.	Finance	5	1	Senior Financial Analyst

Initial Interviews

Short 15-minute informal interviews were conducted with the participants to get their perspective on the construction of their résumé(s) for different audiences. These semi-structured interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The interviews followed a phenomenological approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) where the researcher provided generalized questions about résumé writing (see Appendix A for the initial semi-structured interview protocol), but the participants steered the direction of the interview with their own interpretations of the writing process, including what they believed to be important for them as writers of this type of text. A phenomenological approach was also utilized in order to determine whether these participants would suggest on their own that researching their readers' expectations influenced the construction of the text. The patterns seen across all interviews were used to create the follow-up questionnaire (see Appendix B for the résumé writing questionnaire). The use of a phenomenological approach in gathering data also increased internal validity by minimizing the influence of the researcher on the participants' later responses to the questionnaire, thereby reducing researcher bias in the data.

Textual Analysis of the Résumés

Prior to analyzing the context in which each of the 12 résumés was written, all participants were asked to submit at least one successful résumé that they had used to gain employment in their field. Based on Firth's (2001) explanation that résumés consist of certain subsections in a particular order and specific word choices, the résumés were analyzed for organizational patterns of the different subsections and lexical choices.

Subsection Categorization

In some résumé writingbooks (e.g., Besson, 1996; Corwen, 1981; Holtz, 1984), authors focus on a top-down approach to organizing résumés, with the most important information first. However, it is unclear whether actual résumé writers construct their texts in this manner. Thus, the order of the résumé subsections was analyzed, as was the information within each section, to determine what the writer viewed as important based on the audiences for whom the résumés were written.

Analyzing Word Choice

Bhatia (1993) stresses the importance of choosing words carefully since self-representation and self-promotion, essential to a résumé (Besson, 1996), are needed in text construction. After analyzing job application letters, Bhatia asserted that “[the applicant’s use of] self-representation in job application letters needs to be persuasive, and in order to be persuasive, [the word choice] must arouse an appropriate emotional response in its readers, it must achieve credibility” (p. 65). In the current study, all word choices in the résumés were divided into type and token counts using Nation’s Vocabulary Program (Coxhead & Nation, 2001; Nation, 2001). Once the frequencies were tabulated, each word was individually coded for its overarching part of speech (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, etc.). The researcher and another graduate linguistics student hand-tagged all of the words in the 1,631 token corpus. Because some words’ part of speech was ambiguous, coders referred back to the original use in the résumés to determine the correct part of speech. For example, the word *to* could be a preposition or the infinitive *to* used with verbs of stance. As such, it was necessary to look at each word’s multiple uses in the résumés to determine the counts for the different parts of speech. Once the overarching part of speech categories were created, a second coding was conducted. Using Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan’s (1999) categorization for parts of speech, each word in the résumé corpus was hand-tagged for specific subcategories within the overarching part of speech categories. For example, the overarching noun category includes subcategories of abstract nouns, person nouns, and proper nouns, among others. The overall inter-rater reliability for the hand-tagging was 0.92.

Once all of the words in the résumé corpus were tagged, the frequency count in each category was normed to 1,000 words per résumé. All of the normed counts in each subcategory were then compared. As Biber, Conrad, and Reppen (1998) explain, normalization is a way to analyze texts of varied lengths for better comparison. Therefore, all of the counts in the résumés were normed in order to achieve a more comparable count. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to determine if a statistically significant difference in the use of different semantic categories existed. The normed data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.0 with multiple one-way ANOVA tests, one for each part of speech. The use of the ANOVA with the categories provides insight as to whether the writers used certain types of words more than others. A Scheffé post hoc test was used in order to retain more conservative guidelines for statistical significance. The Scheffé post hoc test highlights findings that an original ANOVA test might otherwise accept as significant even though they may be on the border of significance, and also helps to determine between which categories statistically significant differences occurred.

The Questionnaire

After supplying their résumés, the participants were given a questionnaire (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was based on the patterns found in the initial informal interviews where all the participants, without the influence of the researcher, mentioned the importance of researching the company prior to constructing the résumé. As opposed to the interviews, which focused on all aspects of résumé writing, the questionnaire focused specifically on questions about the audience for whom the résumés were written, and asked participants to discuss how knowledge of the reader influenced their textual choices. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire approximately one month after submitting their résumés to the researcher to ensure that participants could not change their résumés based on the questionnaire focus. Each respondent was asked to spend 20-30 minutes answering the questionnaire.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to provide the context in which to examine the results of the textual analysis. Questions related not only to how the writers understood the audience of the résumés, but also what the writer believed the audience valued in an applicant seeking employment for the specific positions. This focus aligns with Bawarshi's (2003) New Rhetoric claim that in order for a writer to create his or her text within a specific genre, he or she must first have a clear understanding of who will be reading the text, why they are reading it, and what they expect of the writer of that particular text. The participants were asked to explain how their knowledge of these factors affected the process they used in writing their résumés. Other questions concerning specific textual features of the résumés were also asked. The focus on specific textual features stems from the ESP school, and these questions were asked in order to help determine a correlation between the writers' perceived understanding of audience expectations and his or her word choices within the text.

Overall, a number of different methods were employed to determine the professionals' résumé construction process. The questionnaires focused on understanding text-external influences on textual features in the genre. The textual analysis of organizational structure of subsections and part of speech subcategory choices allowed for a clear connection between perceived knowledge of the reader's expectations and linguistic usage. The use of one-way ANOVA with the different parts of speech subcategories provided insight into whether the writers used certain types of words more than others for their audience. This triangulated approach connected quantitative findings from the ANOVA with qualitative findings from the initial interviews and the questionnaires demonstrated how the writers were able to construct their résumés, bearing in mind the expectations of the audience for whom they were writing, a necessity for all authors (Johns, 1997).

RESULTS

Text-External Influences on the Subsections of the Résumés

Different résumé writing books (Besson, 1996; Lesiker, Petit, & Flatley, 1999; McDowell, 1987) state that the most important, or strongest, section for the potential employer to see should be positioned first, with the next most important following, and so forth. When asked in the questionnaire what the greatest strength in their résumé was, the participants provided varied answers based on the audience for whom they were writing. Mr. San Diego put a section entitled *Qualities* first to highlight his diverse knowledge of business for his audience. Ms. Los Angeles placed *Education* first on her résumé because the department specifically stated that a Bachelor of

Arts was required. Five other résumé writers also put the *Education* section first, but for different reasons. Based on their questionnaire answers, those participants did so because they had the least experience, and because their education was more noteworthy than their experience. For example, Ms. Washington had recently received her Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree when she wrote her résumé. She felt that the company to which she applied valued education more than experience for an entry-level position; therefore, for her, it was more of an asset to have *Education*, rather than *Experience*, listed at the beginning of her résumé. She stated, “My work experience is impressive, but I have only been working for five years, so having an MBA is more impressive at this point. Probably I will change the order within the next few years.”

Ten of the twelve résumés had *Education* and *Experience* as the first two sections. However, for both of Mr. Philadelphia’s résumés, he had *Experience* followed by a section entitled *Achievements*. This diversion from the other texts was again based on his perceived understanding of what his audience expected. Having already met his potential employers through shared professional committee work and conference panels, Mr. Philadelphia realized that it was necessary to underscore his already established personal connections with that particular company rather than highlight *Education*. Furthermore, the author stated that the section *Achievements* showed awards and honors bestowed on him within the last 20 years. Since he graduated from college 30 years ago, education may have seemed less relevant to his audience than the more recent awards.

Table 2 shows the organization of categories for each résumé after the *Education* and *Experience* sections. Looking at the table, one can note the different foci that each résumé writer had, based on the perceived values of their audiences. Even though the less important information was put toward the end (all writers agreed on this as the expected order of importance for this specific genre), all information in the résumés was still relevant to the position.

TABLE 2
Résumé Sections following *Education* and *Experience*

Participant (Résumé)	Résumé section(s)
Mr. Philadelphia (1)	Memberships, Other Activities
Mr. Philadelphia (2)	Memberships, Other Activities
Ms. Washington	Relevant Activities, Related Research, Relevant Awards, Skills
Ms. New York City	Skills and Interests
Mr. Pittsburgh	Computer Skills
Mr. San Diego	Functional Résumé (no specific sections)
Ms. Boston (1)	Additional Information
Ms. Boston (2)	Skills and Interests
Ms Los Angeles (1)	Skills, Leadership Positions
Ms. Los Angeles (2)	Languages, Skills
Ms. Long Island	Professional Qualifications
Ms. Alexandria	Additional Experience, Skills, Affiliations/Volunteer Positions

All participants listed *Activities* (or, *Other Activities*, *Relevant Activities*, or *Interests*) and/or *Skills* (or, *Computer Skills*, *Additional Information*, or *Language Skills*) sections. For all of the participants who included activities, there appeared to be two purposes. One purpose was to show *Relevant Activities*, such as membership in honor societies. The other was to show other

activities outside of the business world so that the reader would have an overall understanding of the candidate as a person. For example, Mr. Philadelphia described his chairmanship of the Catholic Parish Grant Committee. According to him, this activity demonstrated his leadership skills beyond business, and the fact that he could manage diverse groups of people, a trait he believed his employers would deem necessary for a vice president of sales overseeing numerous divisions. In her second résumé, Ms. Boston described her position as Vice President of her dormitory at school, thus establishing her leadership skills, an attribute which she identified as important to her audience.

The *Skills* section related more to the participants' business knowledge, and was included to provide the audience with more detail on the applicant, including qualifications necessary for the job that were not found in the *Experience* section. Skills mentioned here included language ability and knowledge of current technology and business practices, including computer skills. Ten of the 12 résumés submitted for the study listed computer skills. All the financial résumés included detailed descriptions of computer programs used for statistical and financial research. Ms. Los Angeles and Ms. Washington, both of whom focus more on international business, advertised their language skills. These practices demonstrate the participants' attempts to use their résumés as a reflection of their ethos; the résumé was the initial method by which the participants were able to present themselves as well-rounded candidates for the position.

Professional genres must have recognizable features that can be easily identified by members of the professional community (Swales, 1990). According to the professional résumé reader, the general résumé sections previously mentioned are salient characteristics of a business résumé that are expected within that particular professional community. However, Bawarshi (2003) and Devitt (2004) emphasize the need to adapt certain characteristics of a known genre in order to meet the demands of the specific context in which it is being utilized. Other sections were more specific to each applicant and each résumé's audience. Mr. Philadelphia and Ms. Los Angeles had discovered through their research that their audience wanted to know about their affiliations with recognizable professional organizations. Mr. Philadelphia's résumé contained a section entitled *Memberships*, while Ms. Los Angeles listed her leadership positions in various professional organizations. Ms. Alexandria, who did not specify that her audience was interested in knowing her professional affiliations, also had a section describing them (*Affiliations/Volunteer Positions*). However, she focused on her specific roles within each organization rather than on the organizations themselves because these roles were all financial in nature. This again shows that sections of a résumé may have more than one meaning or function.

In her research, Ms. Washington discovered that since the employer was a government agency researching international trade, they wanted to see research skills in their applicants' résumés; therefore, she had a separate section on *Relevant Research* describing all of her work-related and academic research projects. Additionally, Ms. Washington listed *Relevant Awards* showing her audience the various business awards she has received over the past six years. Finally, Ms. Long Island had a section entitled *Professional Qualifications* listed at the end of her résumé. Here she showed all of her professional licenses and current training (other résumés had listed these in the *Skills* section). It is interesting to note that she put this section directly after her *Education* section, where the audience could see that she received her Bachelor of Arts in 1983. As she stated in her questionnaire, companies like to see that potential employees have stayed current in their field's latest innovations. Ms. Long Island explicitly wanted to highlight for her audience that even though she received her college degree twenty-two years ago, she was still keeping herself up-to-date with all the new technology and regulations in her field.

The participants in this study included specific information in the subsections and ordered the subsections in specific ways in order to demonstrate to their audience that they reflected the core values of the company and satisfied the criteria required for the open position. This practice represents an important characteristic of the résumé genre.

Text-External Influences on Word Choices in Résumés

The participants stated in their initial interviews and follow-up questionnaires that their main purpose in constructing these résumés was to obtain a new position. Thus, the careful selection of lexical choices was necessary to persuade their readers. The participants further explained the importance of choosing their words carefully in order to (a) clearly show their purpose in writing the résumé, and (b) demonstrate to the reader their expertise in the field, including their knowledge of business practices. ESP genre analysis commonly includes attention to word choice in the text of a particular genre (Swales, 1990). Bhatia (1993) emphasizes that one important way of making connections with the writer's understanding of the reader is to analyze word choice based on readers' expectations of the text. This notion coincides with the professional résumé reader's insistence on understanding the readers of a résumé prior to commencing any writing. She stated:

In business, [companies] value leadership. If your action verbs are *follow*, *completed* then those are too passive and they make the person sound passive and don't indicate leadership or taking charge like *coordinated*, *monitored*, *researched*. This shows action and leadership and a strong person who likes to take charge of a situation. An example: *Completed marketing research study, which increased division profits by 20%*. This is quantifiable information that would transfer into potential by the company... leadership would be indicated in a statement like that. It all connects to what the readers want and how well the writer can meet those needs. (Professional résumé reader, interview)

Résumé books (e.g., Besson, 1996) and business writing textbooks (e.g., Lesiker et al., 1999; Wilkinson et al., 1986) highlight this tactic by focusing on certain types of verbs used in business résumés to direct the reader's attention to past performance; however, no other parts of speech are discussed. The failure of these texts to include more attention to word choice represents a disconnect with the professional résumé reader and the nine résumé writers who concurred that all words, not just "action ones" (Mr. Philadelphia, initial interview), are critical to a résumé's success.

The three most commonly used parts of speech relating to content words in the résumé corpus (1,631 tokens) were nouns, verbs, and adjectives,² while the total frequencies for other parts of speech were much lower. Table 3 shows the division of parts of speech used and the tokens for each.

² Even though prepositions (170 tokens) individually outnumbered adjective counts, they were considered function words, which were not the focus of this investigation. N.B. Prepositions that occurred as part of noun, verb, and adjective phrases, when applicable, were counted in those respective categories.

TABLE 3
Token Counts by Part of Speech

Part of Speech	Token Count
Nouns	835
Verbs	201
Adjectives	162
Prepositions	170
Conjunctions	88
Determiners	60
Other (i.e., adverbs, possessive 's')	95

Since the most commonly used parts of speech were nouns, verbs, and adjectives, these were the different word types that were examined. Using Biber et al.'s (1999) categorization system, the following sections analyze text-external influences on the use of different types of nouns, verbs and adjectives.

Noun Use

The first part of speech analyzed was nouns. Table 4 shows Biber et al.'s (1999) different subcategories analyzed in each résumé. Words from the résumé corpus are shown as examples of different words that could be classified under each category.

TABLE 4
Noun Subcategories

NOUNS
1. Abstract: marketing, finance, contribution
2. Persons: assistant, associate, aid
3. Proper: Merrill Lynch, Canada
4. Collective: community, group, administration
5. Objects: boats, chairs presents
6. Actions/Events: race, event, move
7. Qualities: importance, reluctance, observance
8. Quantifying Attributes: barrel of, bunch of, pack of
9. Relations: sort, kind, types

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between the different subcategories. As Table 5 shows, there was a statistically significant difference in the use of the noun subcategories in all of the résumés.

TABLE 5
Analysis of Variance for Noun Category Use

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between Groups	679108.68	8	84888.59	148.94*
Within Groups	56425.47	99	569.95	
Total	735534.15	107		

*p < .05

Of all the noun categories, the three most commonly used were abstract, proper, and persons nouns. All writers tended to use these specific types of noun categories more than others when constructing their texts, which mirrored their questionnaire responses. To determine the order of highest use for these three most commonly used noun categories, a Scheffé post hoc test was used to determine where the differences could be found (see Table 6). The asterisks signify a statistically significant difference between the category being analyzed and the other subcategories. A positive number denotes that the analyzed subcategory was utilized more frequently than the others, and a negative number denotes that the subcategory was used less frequently.

TABLE 6
Scheffé Post Hoc Comparisons of Noun Categories

Subcategory	Other Subcategories	Mean difference
Abstract	Proper	142.93(*)
	Persons	187.33(*)
	Collective	223.16(*)
	Objects	233.72(*)
	Actions/events	241.19(*)
	Qualities	257.30(*)
	Quantifying	257.30(*)
	Relations	256.90(*)
Proper	Abstract	-142.92(*)
	Persons	44.41(*)
	Collective	80.24(*)
	Objects	90.80(*)
	Actions/events	98.27(*)
	Qualities	114.38(*)
	Quantifying	114.38(*)
	Relations	113.98(*)
Persons	Abstract	-187.33(*)
	Proper	-44.41(*)
	Collective	35.83(*)
	Objects	46.39(*)
	Actions/events	53.87(*)
	Qualities	69.97(*)
	Quantifying	69.97(*)
	Relations	69.57(*)

* $p < .05$

The Scheffé post hoc test shows that abstract nouns were used significantly more than any other type of noun. Biber et al. (1999) define abstract nouns as ideas or topics, rather than distinct objects. Therefore, nouns used in the participants' résumés such as *profitability* and *telecommunications*, which are not tangible objects, but rather ideas specific to the business field, are commonly found in résumés and show the audience that the applicant has knowledge of the field. These findings are not surprising given that most words chosen for a résumé need to be specific for the field. To illustrate, Ms. Alexandria emphasized in her questionnaire how her potential employers told her how they initially examined résumés to look for specific words that would show a basic knowledge of finance, including the incorporation of commonly used words like *database* and *network*. This was also directly reiterated by Mr. San Diego and Ms. Long Island, both of whom agreed that employers need to make sure that candidates have a basic knowledge of the field before looking at professional experience.

Following abstract nouns, proper nouns appeared significantly more than the other categories. These are defined as “personal names, geographical names, the names of objects, and institutions” (Biber et al., 1999, p. 245). The names of companies (e.g., *Verizon*, *Citibank*, *Morgan*

Stanley) were the most common types of proper nouns, followed by city and country names. Very rarely were the names of people used in the résumés, unless the name of a person was also the name of a company. For Ms. Washington, for example, her potential employers were analyzing the other corporations where she previously worked more than her position titles, which pushed her to include a large number of proper nouns.

Persons nouns were the third highest utilized category of nouns. Biber et al. (1999) describe this noun group as countable nouns that describe a person. The difference between a persons noun and a proper noun is that a proper noun is the name of someone whereas a persons noun describes a person without giving a name. For example, Mr. Smith is the manager of a corporation: *Mr. Smith* is a proper noun and *manager* is a persons noun. All but one of the participants indicated in their questionnaire that their audience would want to know the types of people that the applicants worked with, as well as the types of positions that they had. Therefore, it is not surprising to see persons nouns commonly used in the résumés. Words such as *chairman*, *manager*, *executive*, *speaker*, *liaison*, *customer*, and *clients* were used throughout all of the résumés in order to give the audience an opportunity to see with whom the applicants interacted, in what situations, and how. The use of these types of words is essential for an applicant who would be interacting with different co-workers and clients at the new job, a sentiment that was also reiterated by the professional résumé reader.

Verb Use

Verbs were analyzed in a similar manner to nouns. Biber et al.'s (1999) subcategories for verbs were utilized in the hand-tagging of the résumés. Table 7 shows the different categories with examples from the corpus to exemplify each.

TABLE 7
Verb Subcategories

VERBS
1. Facilitating/Causative: developed, implemented, initiated
2. Activity: worked, constructed, built
3. Communication: talked, wrote, discussed
4. Mental: approve, accept, think
5. Simple Occurrence: arise, fall, increase
6. Existence/Relationship: deserve, fit, seem
7. Aspectual: kept, stop, continue
8. The verb 'be'

Table 8 shows the results from the one-way ANOVA to determine if a statistically significant difference in verb use was present. As Table 8 illustrates, there was a statistically significant difference in the use of different verb categories in this corpus of résumés.

TABLE 8
Analysis of Variance for Verb Category Use

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between Groups	31010.30	8	3876.29	*68.76
Within Groups	5581.33	99	56.38	
Total	36591.63	107		

*p < .05.

Table 9 shows the results of the Scheffé post hoc test to determine among which of the verb categories the statistically significant differences could be found, thus indicating which verbs were applied more often in this résumé corpus. As with the findings from the noun categories, the statistically significant differences between the verb categories can be found with an asterisk, with positive numbers indicating more frequent use and negative numbers indicating less, comparatively.

TABLE 9
Scheffé Post Hoc Comparisons of Verb Categories

Subcategory	Other Subcategories	Mean difference
Facilitating/ Causative	Activity	21.00*
	Communication	42.92*
	Verb 'be'	51.75*
	Mental	50.67*
	Simple	52.42*
	Occurrence	
	Existence/ Relationship	45.67*
	Aspectual	53.00*
Activity	Facilitating/ Causative	-21.00*
	Communication	21.92*
	Verb 'be'	30.75*
	Mental	29.67*
	Simple	31.42*
	Occurrence	
	Existence/ Relationship	24.67*
	Aspectual	32.00*

*p < .05

The most commonly used types of verbs for all the résumés were facilitating/causative verbs. Biber et al. (1999) define facilitating/causative verbs as “[verbs where] some person or inanimate entity brings about a new state of affairs...or oversees [one]” (p. 363). The use of this

type of verb is not unexpected since most participants noted in their questionnaire responses that the companies wanted applicants with leadership skills and who would begin new projects and manage others. Facilitating/causative verbs also show a sense of authority and in doing so, show the writer as one who takes charge, supervises, and guides others. Based on the category definition of facilitating/causative verbs provided in Biber et al., verbs such as *developed*, *started*, *caused*, and *created* were identified as part of this category, and were found often in the résumés. These words were present throughout Ms. Boston's first résumé. Ms. Boston described that her word choice, especially her use of verbs, reflected qualities her résumé readers would value. She explained that her choice of verbs highlighted leadership skills (e.g., *facilitated*), and entrepreneurial skills (e.g., *developed* and *created*), both skill sets which she stated were required for the open position.

Participants believed that their audience wanted clear explanations of the applicant's actions in previous positions in order to determine whether those actions were comparable to those of the new position. This tactic relates to the second most commonly employed verb category, activity verbs, which Biber et al. (1999) describe as actions or events connected with a volitional action. Various activity verbs were used in the résumé corpus, including *contracted*, *recruited*, *purchased*, and *researched*. The frequency of verbs used from other semantic categories dropped after these first two, which may suggest that résumé writers targeted their verb usage to match their audience's criteria for the position. However, there were examples of other verb categories being more prominent in résumés based on participants' understanding of audience expectations. For example, Mr. Philadelphia and Ms. Los Angeles used many communication verbs in their first résumés, because both participants had indicated that their audiences were expecting them to perform public speaking before different groups. Overall, participants used facilitating/causative verbs more than any other verb category, indicating these applicants decided to use words that specifically showed leadership, managerial, and start-up skills, all of which related back to the perceived criteria valued by the audiences.

Adjective Use

Unlike nouns and verbs, a double tagging system was required for adjectives. Table 10 shows Biber et al.'s (1999) subcategories of adjectives, with specific words from the corpus that exemplify each. Biber et al. divide adjectives into two main categories: descriptors and classifiers. Descriptors are defined as adjectives signifying such features as color, size, weight, chronology/age, and emotion. In the current study, descriptor adjectives were divided into color, size/quantity/extent, time, evaluative/emotive, and miscellaneous, which includes adjectives that do not fit into any of the other categories. Classifiers, on the other hand, are defined as "[adjectives] that restrict a noun's referent by placing it in a category in relation to other referents" (p. 509). They are further divided into relational/classificational/restrictive, affiliative, and topical adjectives. For this study it was first necessary to determine if the adjectives fell under the descriptor or classifier categories, and then to determine to which subcategory they belonged.

TABLE 10
Adjective Subcategories

ADJECTIVES	
A. Descriptors	
1. Size/Quantity/Extent: big, deep, heavy	
2. Time: annual, late, old	
3. Evaluative/Emotive: bad, beautiful, best	
4. Miscellaneous Descriptive: appropriate, cold, complex	
B. Classifiers	
1. Relational/Classificational/Restrictive: additional, chief, complex	
2. Affiliative: Thai, Jewish, American	
3. Topical: financial, managerial, political	

Similar to the analysis of nouns and verbs, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether or not certain adjective categories were utilized significantly more than other adjective categories in these résumés. Table 11 shows a statistically significant difference in the use of adjectival subcategories in all of the résumés. All résumé writers in this corpus tended to use certain types of subcategories of adjectives more than others when constructing their texts.

TABLE 11
Analysis of Variance for Adjective Category Use

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F
Between Groups	13685.81	6	2280.97	17.38*
Within Groups	10107.75	77	131.27	
Total	23793.56	83		

*p < .05

Table 12 shows the results of the Scheffé post hoc test to determine among which of the adjective categories the statistically significant differences could be found.

TABLE 12
Scheffé Post Hoc Comparisons of Adjective Categories

Subcategory	Other subcategories	Mean difference
Topical	Size/Quantity/Extent	26.42*
	Time	31.25*
	Evaluative/Emotive	31.42*
	Miscellaneous descriptive	36.83*
	Relational/Classificational/Restrictive	8.00
	Affiliative	29.75*
	Topical	
Relational/Classificational/ Restrictive	Size/Quantity/Extent	18.42*
	Time	23.25*
	Evaluative/Emotive	23.42*
	Miscellaneous descriptive	28.83*
	Relational/Classificational/Restrictive	
	Affiliative	21.75*
	Topical	-8.00

*p < .05

The Scheffé post hoc test showed that topical adjectives were most commonly used. Biber et al. (1999) state that topical adjectives are used only in specific situations that show a particular connection to the topic of the discourse. Again, the fact that this type of adjective appeared to be the most prevalent in the texts is not surprising since business résumé writers need to focus their texts on the field of business. Ms. Alexandria explained how in American business, the résumé is an essential text that needs to be specified for its audience. She described how in her résumé, every word needed to be accountable, including those words not considered key content words (e.g., nouns). Her use of *statistical*, *clerical*, *financial*, and *political*, all of which can be described as topical adjectives, ensured her potential employers that she was not only focusing her text on business, but that she was also focusing it on a specific field, namely finance.

The second most commonly used adjective group was relational/classificational/restrictive, which Biber et al. (1999) explain as adjectives that focus on comparing one referent in the text with another. Common examples of relational/classificational/restrictive adjectives found in the résumés included *first*, *primary*, *public*, and *advanced*. For example, when Mr. Philadelphia discussed his “direct selling to clients” in both of his résumés, he was comparing it to other sales techniques in which he was not directly involved with the client. Thus, Mr. Philadelphia described in his questionnaire how “the use of this word [and others like it] gives [the audience] a chance to compare different ways I do sales and marketing to see if [these methods] match [those of] their company”.

In all, the qualitative findings and ANOVA tests indicate that the résumé writers made specific word choices for their résumés in part to satisfy their reader’s expectations. Thus, it is necessary for résumé writers to understand that certain words are deemed more appropriate in this type of text within this specific context. The next section will focus on applying this knowledge to teaching written genres for different reader audiences to L2 students.

DISCUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study utilized Bhatia's (2008) and Cheng's (2008) suggestion that genre analyses need to make more salient connections between text-external influences on textual features in written discourse by using genre-specific exemplars. The focus of this study was on analyzing how knowledge of text-external influences, namely a résumé reader's expectations of the text, affects the writer's use of certain textual features. Specifically, the study demonstrated how this specific text-external influence affected the organizational patterns and lexical choices used in résumé construction. One reason for using résumés in this study was that they are commonly mislabeled as a generalizable genre both in their construction and language usage across different contexts (Popken, 1993). The current study has exemplified that even a so-called generalizable résumé cannot be categorized as such. Rather, résumé writers need to take into account specified contextual influences in addition to expected generic features of the genre that affect its textual features (Swales, 1990).

The importance of audience awareness during text construction has been demonstrated in the participants' discussion of their writing process. Bawarshi (2003) describes this awareness as the "invention" of a genre in the writing process. The invention refers to researching and understanding the nuances of the genre, such as the societal and professional community expectations (Bhatia, 2004) of how the genre is constructed as well as knowing the context in which it is being written, i.e., the purpose and reasons for the text and audience (Johns, 1997) prior to initiating the writing process. The participants tailored their résumés to a certain degree for their respective companies and positions. Both in their responses in the initial interviews and the questionnaires, the participants explained how the text creation process included researching both their audience's expectations of potential employees, as well as their own knowledge of what a résumé entailed within business fields. For Mr. San Diego, this process was different from other writing he had constructed in the past. In his questionnaire, he stated, "[my] past writings helped me, but this [is] a completely new situation...I really believe that when you write, you need to take into account every situation that you write in, otherwise no matter how fancy your vocabulary is, you won't succeed." This reflects Berkenkotter and Huckin's (1995b) idea that "[g]enre knowledge embraces both form and content, including a sense of what content is appropriate to a *particular purpose* in a *particular situation* at a *particular time* [emphasis added]" (p. 13). While the ultimate goal of the participants was to obtain a position, all of the participants explained in their interviews that the initial purpose of writing their résumés was to be granted an interview with their prospective companies, a belief which was reiterated by the professional résumé reader: "A résumé is not only to get a job, but to be granted an interview." Thus, résumé writers in this study focused on the most appropriate content for their purpose and the situation based on their readers (i.e., text-external influences) as well as what form was necessary in order to best meet that purpose (i.e., textual features).

In the current study, subcategories and organizational patterns varied in each résumé based on the specific company's criteria for applicant characteristics and the open position. Writing books such as Besson (1996) and Lesikar et al. (1999) state that a résumé needs to start with its strongest section first, followed by other sections in descending order of importance. The participants all reaffirmed this notion and acknowledged that they followed this prescribed organizational structure. Their reasoning, as explained in their questionnaires, was that this is standard practice within the field of business, supporting Bakhtin's (1986) claim that the repetition of a genre's generic features are identified by certain "compositional structure[s]" (p. 66). These

structures are identified and expected by specific discourse communities (Swales, 1990). Nevertheless, the ordering of different sections, which the résumé writers deemed important, did vary depending on their audience. As Ms. Washington stated, “You can’t always put *Experience* first... think about what your readers want and not always what the books say.”

Additionally, from Bhatia’s (1993) explanation that “choices of [words] are not solely dependent on syntactic and semantic considerations, but also involve rhetorical judgments including a knowledge of the situation” (p. 7), the participants may have chosen their words based on what they knew of the context in which, and the audience for whom, they were writing. Although the specific audiences were different, all participants in this study were in fields of business, and, as such, there are specific expectations of a business résumé that are different from other professional fields, such as the sciences (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995a). Thus, the similarities in word choices among all of the résumés examined in this study for all noun, verb, and adjective categories might be accounted for by the fact that all of the participants were writing within a similar field. This idea parallels Miller’s (1984) proposal that genres are “repeated social actions... a classification based in rhetorical practice... and organized around situated actions” (p. 155). All members of various business communities such as marketing, finance, and management at one point in time need to construct texts within this genre. However, unlike generalized perceptions of résumés, each is unique in that it conforms to audience specifications in order to secure a job interview. Different word choices denoted different emphases that the writers wanted to convey, whether it was competency in project construction through the use of activity verbs or management experience through facilitating/causative verbs.

Overall, this study demonstrates how professionals in business write résumés for specific audiences. Applicants must remain cognizant of the context in which they are constructing a résumé (e.g., the company’s criteria for the position and for their employees in general) as well as the form of the genre itself. Therefore, for a résumé to be initially successful (i.e., securing an interview for the applicant), applicants need to research the companies so that they can tailor their résumés to satisfy those specific audiences’ values and criteria. Importantly, decisions relating textual features of a résumé to text-external influences could be either conscious or unconscious. Familiarity with the genre (as members of the business discourse community) may have allowed the participants to unconsciously make certain lexical choices or organizational patterns. The initial interviews and the questionnaire questions may have brought that unconscious decision into the conscious realm; however, conscious reflection after construction may not entirely describe the process experienced writers of a certain genre use to form their texts.

This study also demonstrates that labeling writing as a generalizeable activity not only disregards text-external influences that affect textual features but also may fail to portray the complexity of the text construction process to students. This inaccurate perception is apparent in many business textbooks and résumé writing handbooks (e.g., Besson, 1996; Lesiker et al., 1999), which may lead students to conclude that writing is a generalized activity that does not take context or audience into consideration. This belief is not strictly limited to résumé writing, for as Johns (1997) argues, various types of writing instruction both within and outside of ESP have turned towards generalized methods such as the process approach that employs a linear set of activities including planning, drafting, reviewing, revising, and editing. She cautions that students may be taking formulae away from their writing classes with the belief that they can be utilized across contexts. This misrepresentation of writing as a process that need not consider audience and purpose in addition to linguistic features (Bawarshi, 2003) may lead L2 learners to a lack of “conceptual understanding of the communicative function of language” (Ferreira & Lantolf, 2008,

p. 308) in written discourse. Therefore, during field-specific writing instruction for ESL/EFL students, teachers need to focus not only on the linguistic characteristics of those texts, but also on how the inclusion of reader expectations affects those textual features.

Unfortunately, as Louhiala-Salminen (1996) observes, many tools used in the ESL/EFL classroom, such as textbooks, do not provide students with the opportunity to engage in authentic language interaction. To help students understand the texts, contexts, and processes of genres, Johns (1997) recommends raising students' awareness by having them take on the role of researcher to learn why a certain text is important for their "current and future lives outside of [the] literacy classroom" (p. 92). By understanding the importance of contextual influence on linguistic choices, L2 educators can begin to incorporate activities and methods that would enable students to truly comprehend what it means to construct a text in a second or foreign language. The findings from the current study can be used to illustrate some activity ideas that may assist writing instructors to make connections between text-external influences and textual features in résumé writing:

1. Instructors can have students work together in groups to come up with a definition of a résumé and a variety of reasons why résumé writing would be necessary in their field. Students who are more familiar with this text can assist others in this introduction of the résumé writing unit.
2. A variety of résumés could be brought into the class, and students could investigate their similarities and differences, including the different subsections within the résumés and their order, and the types of words being used. Johns (1997) suggests identifying discipline-specific and general academic vocabulary in texts. For résumés, students can look for specific jargon that may be used in their respective disciplines and discuss why those words are necessary in résumés.
3. Students can determine why particular résumés were written (e.g., to gain a new position within the same company, at a different company, to change careers, etc.) and discuss the audience for the respective résumés. Because there could be more than one audience, ESL/EFL students would have the opportunity to practice speaking skills by participating in debates focusing upon why their choice of audience is correct based on the information found in the résumé.
4. The instructor could invite résumé writers into the classroom and have the class as a whole interview them about their résumé writing experience. If time permits, the instructor could have students go out and interview professionals in their respective fields about their résumés and report back to the class either in an oral presentation or in another writing assignment, such as an academic essay. This would allow students to understand how practitioners write this text in authentic settings, which in turn would help them in constructing their own résumés.

Even though linguistic knowledge is essential for L2 learners, it is also necessary to understand how a language is used interactively; therefore, teachers and students must take into account the text-external influences on textual features when constructing texts within genres.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was not to generalize about résumé construction but rather to gain insight into how experienced writers create this text using knowledge of their readers' expectations. Because of the limited scope of the study and the limited access to participants due to time constraints in their schedules, it was difficult to determine what other factors aside from reader expectations may have affected the textual choices made by the writers, such as prior relationships with the prospective company through other professional outlets that would have given them an additional insight into how to construct their texts. Additionally, it is difficult to tease apart which choices were made consciously based on audience expectations and which choices the writers made unconsciously based on their knowledge of business community expectations of the résumé genre in general. In particular, attention should be directed towards conscious/unconscious decisions in order to determine which specific aspects of genre analysis, if any, may not be teachable but rather may depend on cultural and societal knowledge and trial and error through experience.

DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study used retrospective accounts of résumé construction by writers already familiar with (a) the genre, (b) the field, and (c) their audience's expectations. However, analysis of the process of text construction itself would also be beneficial. Case studies of the text construction process would provide insight into writer thought processes (by using think-aloud protocols, for example) and would help determine whether their decisions were, in fact, conscious or unconscious. Results from such a study could then provide insight into what aspects of genre analysis could be deemed teachable or not. Other studies (e.g., Cheng, 2007, 2008) have advocated for further research on the processes through which L2 students construct written texts using genre analytic approaches. Combining results from these types of studies with the results from the current study would also provide insight into how the process of a novice (i.e., an L2 student) differs from that of an expert writer of a text. This information would also provide a way to determine not only what is teachable, but also which areas of genre construction require more focus in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

Initial Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. Introduction: talk about the participants' field of business, how long they have been in it, their current position
2. Résumés: discuss the following attributes (in any order as it seems fit in the interview based on the participants responses):
 - a. What they think is important about résumé writing and why
 - b. How do they go about constructing their résumés
 - c. What do they consider when they construct their résumés and why
 - d. What do they do to make things stand out in their résumés
 - e. General vs. specific résumés: what are their opinions about this?
 - f. Other ideas that they want to talk about

APPENDIX B

Résumé Writing Questionnaire

1. Are you now using or did you use this résumé to:
 - get new employment at a different company
 - use it to get a promotion within the same company
 - update your information for your own personal files
 - update your information for your own professional files (e.g. Human Resources needed an updated version)
 - other (please specify):

2. If you are using or used this résumé to seek new employment, how did you research companies prior to applying? **Please check all that apply.**

- looked online at the company's website
- got information via word-of-mouth from colleagues
- learned about the company through professional conferences in your field
- talked with people at the company
- other (please specify):

3. Based on your knowledge of the company or entity, what do you think they value in their employees (note: this is not for the specific position you applied for, but instead is for all employees in the company)?

4. Please list the title of the position that you are going to apply for or had applied for.

5. Please briefly explain your motivation for applying for this position.

6. Which of the following do you think your (potential) employers value in an applicant for that specific position you just wrote? **Please check all that apply.**

- area of specialization in your education (e.g. marketing, finance, management, etc...)
- level of education (e.g. must have a BA, BS, BSBA, MBA, etc...)
- position held at previous jobs
- length of stay at previous jobs
- specific duties held at previous jobs
- specialized training or certification for a job (beyond college degrees, e.g., real estate license)
- affiliations with professional organizations in your field
- research skills
- computer skills, please specify:
- language skills, please specify:
- specialized extracurricular activities, please specify:
- other (please specify):

7. How did the responses you gave for question #3 (company's general values) and question #6 (specific job position) influence what content you put in your résumé and what information you chose to leave out?

8. Which of the following qualities do you think your résumé's readers value in your résumé? Only think about what you put in the résumé, not what you may discuss in an interview. **Please check all that apply.**

- leadership skills
- start-up skills (beginning a new division or strategy, for example)
- communication skills
- thinking/strategizing (non-physical actions)
- knowing people you have worked with
- knowing specifically the institutions you have worked at

- knowing specific events you have attended
- knowing specific actions you have done
- personal qualities
- entities (committees) which you have served on *at a job or at other professional affiliations*
- other (please specify):

9. In your own words, how is this résumé fit for your particular audience?

10a. Based on your résumé's audience, what would you consider to be your résumé's greatest strength? ***Please choose only one.***

- objective/summary of experiences
- length of experience (years in the field)
- types of experience/areas of expertise (job positions held, regardless of length of time)
- education (college)
- other credentials
- research
- professional affiliations/memberships
- professional awards received
- computer knowledge
- language knowledge
- personal affiliations
- other (please specify):

10b. Please briefly explain your choice:

The following questions are about the decisions you make in planning your résumé writing.

11. How do you normally start writing your résumés?

- research the company's and position's values
- read a résumé writing book to get tips
- talk with my colleagues and review their résumés
- look over my old résumé to see how I can change it
- talk with a professional résumé writer
- think about my own strengths and weaknesses
- other (please specify):

12. Do you:

- focus on writing each section of your résumé (e.g. experience, skills, education) individually and then put them together
- write out the whole résumé without worrying about individual sections

13. At what point in the process do you think about picking words that will strengthen your job duty descriptions?

- very early in the process
- half-way through the process
- towards the end

14a. If you do put an objective, at what point in the process do you do it?

- very early, there can be no résumé without an objective
- half way through
- at the very end when I see the finished product

14b. If you do not have an objective, briefly explain why.

15a. Do you have anyone proofread your résumé before sending it out?

- No
- Yes

15b. If you answered yes to the previous question, who do you get to read over the résumé?

- colleague at work
- someone who knows the potential employer's values
- a professional résumé writer
- family member
- friend
- other (please specify):

16. In the past, résumé had to be printed on specialized paper and formatted perfectly for the potential employer. However, in this digital age, many people submit their résumés via electronic mail or fax, without having to worry about "résumé paper". Do you:

- send only hard copies of your résumé to potential employers?
- send only electronic/fax copies of your résumés to potential employers?
- send both (please explain):

17. Is there anything else about your résumé writing process that you would like to share with me?