



## **ABSTRACT**

The university context is a place where people read, write, exchange and respond to a considerable variety of texts within specific disciplinary studies. These texts involve a wide range of discourse genres, display different degrees of complexity, and are often produced in a foreign language, which today is almost invariably English.

A crucial approach to the teaching of English in this particular context is English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which offers interesting theoretical and practical insights into the nature of the problems ESP practitioners are likely to find when teaching a foreign language at this level, and into the difficulties students need to overcome to become full members of the university community.

One of these difficulties derives from the English tense system, and is particularly related to the recognition of verbs in the Simple Present Tense. Considering the importance of the mastery of verb tenses to attain a satisfactory degree of reading comprehension skill, this study addresses this problem by analyzing texts drawn from the reading material in English used in two Engineering careers at National University of Catamarca, Mining and Surveying. The texts are first analyzed in terms of their schematic structure, so as to identify the most recurrent moves. Then, a quantitative analysis of the occurrences of all tenses is carried out, to determine the percentage and distribution of Simple Present Tense forms across the different moves. Finally, on the basis of the results of this exploration, some methodological guidelines are provided as an attempt to facilitate the students' recognition of the relation between choices of SPT and function of the text segment in which this tense occurs.