

ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES FOR U. D. L. A.
STUDENTS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,
ACCOUNTING AND ECONOMICS *

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The U. D. L. A. is a multi-cultural, functionally bilingual institution where English for Special Purposes is taught in three different areas: 1. - Business Administration, Accounting and Economics, 2. - Engineering and 3. - Humanities and Social Sciences.

It has been found that in each of these specific areas, certain grammar tenses and language functions are more relevant than others. For example, it has been observed that in history classes, the simple past and the present perfect tenses are frequently used. In scientific courses, the passive voice and connectives are the most relevant. In addition, within the area of Business Administration, Accounting and Economics, the tenses most frequently used are the simple tenses as well as modals and the functions more repeatedly employed are comparisons and conjectures.

The role of English for students in Business Administration, Accounting and Economics is far more important when compared with other fields in view of the fact that when recruiters from different companies, such as Proctor & Gamble, start looking for prospective employees, they always select those who competently speak, write and read English, as English is the "lengua franca" in business transactions. Consequently, one of the goals of the Business School is to provide students in the shortest time possible, with the English necessary for

* This article is result of independent research conducted by Professor Bertha L Martinez, a part-time instructor in the Language Department of the UDLA, giving courses in General English and Technical English. The article grew out of research suggested by Professor Jeffrey Teague and Professor George Keeler and conducted by Professor Martinez during the Fall, 1980, semester, research that was carried out in order to obtain data concerning the design of the curriculum in the Executive English Division of the Language Department. Professor Martinez is a member of the Puebla Chapter of Mextesol.

their area. The person should be able to understand, communicate and produce any kind of contract, letter or transaction in English.

In what way does the student benefit by taking English for his special purpose referred to at the UDLA as Executive English, instead of simply General English? The answer should be obvious. Time is an important factor for the students as not only will they be asked to read and write good, standard English; more important, they will have to be able to communicate verbally, using concepts related to business with a vocabulary that pertains to business. Therefore, concepts as well as specific vocabulary should be taught the Business Administration students from the beginning.

This is why it was thought necessary to analyse which tenses were more frequently used as well as the structures of the English language employed within the courses offered in English at the Business School. The result of this research provided the necessary data to design a more selective course syllabus as far as grammatical tenses are concerned. That is, our syllabus should emphasize those tenses which occur more frequently than others. This will greatly aid the professor instructing a course that produces functionally bilingual business students in the English language.

In order to do this research, five tables were prepared. Each of the tables contained a column for every grammar tense as well as modals and language functions. The researcher attended and tape-recorded lectures given in five different courses offered in English within the Business Administration, Accounting and Economics School. While the teacher spoke, the listener marked in the corresponding column each time a verb tense was used. Later, the tape was played again and the data was checked once more. This method was followed with the other four courses and, finally, the results were added and compared in flow charts.

The following tenses were studied: simple present, present progressive, simple past, past progressive, simple future, idiomatic future, present perfect, present perfect progressive, passive voice present, passive voice past and modals. In the modals column, a mark was put every time a conditional,

obligation, assumption, probability, permission or request utterance was used.

The first course observed was Latin-American Economics. It was a 90 minute lecture and the instructor was only interrupted twice in order to clarify concepts. He was analyzing the educational level at Latin-American universities and sharing his personal experiences with the students. During this particular course, the simple present tense was used 62.7% of the time compared to the other tenses.

Results of research:

Simple present	267 times	62.7 %
Present progressive	14	3.3
Simple past	21	5
Past progressive	1	.2
Future (Simple & Progressive)	9	2
Idiomatic future (S & P)	16	3.8
Present perfect	54	12.7
Present perfect progressive	4	.9
Passive voice present	14	3.3
Passive voice past	0	0
Past perfect progressive	0	0
Modals	26	6.1
TOTAL:	426	100 %

Labor Legislation and Economics was the second course the researcher attended. That lecture had to do with the development

of Labor Unions in Western Europe. During this 90 minute lecture, the teacher used the simple present 24.1% of the time and the simple past 37.8%. The instructor most often referred to the situation there during the last decades and established comparisons with the present situation.

Results of research:

Simple present	114 times	24.1 %
Present progressive	10	2.1
Simple past	179	37.8
Past progressive	59	12.5
Future (Simple & Progressive)	24	5.1
Idiomatic future (S & P)	18	3.8
Present perfect	24	5.1
Present perfect progressive	0	0
Past perfect	16	3.4
Passive voice present		
Passive voice past	10	2.1
Modals	19	4
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TOTAL:	473	100 %
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The next course observed was Introduction to Micro-Economics. This was a 60 minute class in which the teacher discussed cost reduction by means of automatization and the use of machines replacing employees, unnecessary waste of time thus being avoided. This was an interaction-and-feedback type of class. The students and the teacher were in constant dialogue and comparisons were constantly established. Consequently, modals and present tense, simple and progressive were fre-

quently used.

Results of research:

Simple present	270 times	58.7 %
Present progressive	66	14.5
Simple past	36	7.8
Past progressive	3	.7
Future (Simple & Progressive)	8	1.7
Idiomatic future (S & P)	6	1.3
Present perfect	12	2.6
Present perfect progressive	6	1.3
Past perfect	0	0
Passive voice present	5	1.1
Passive voice past	0	0
Modals	47	10.3
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TOTAL:	459	100 %
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Budget and Investment, the fourth course, was a 60 minute course, dealing with capital investments under doubtful conditions and the benefits of having a balanced portfolio. During the class, the teacher as well as the students were analyzing and discussing the benefits or risks of different investments and there was a constant interaction. Again the simple present (68.4%) and modals (13.5%) played an important role.

Results of research:

Simple present	193 times	68.4 %
Present progressive	13	4.6
Simple past	11	3.9
Past progressive	2	.7
Future (Simple & Progressive)	8	2.8
Idiomatic future (S & P)	8	2.8
Present perfect	2	.7
Present perfect progressive	0	0
Past perfect	1	.4
Passive voice present	5	1.8
Passive voice past	1	.4
Modals	38	13.5
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TOTAL:	282	100 %
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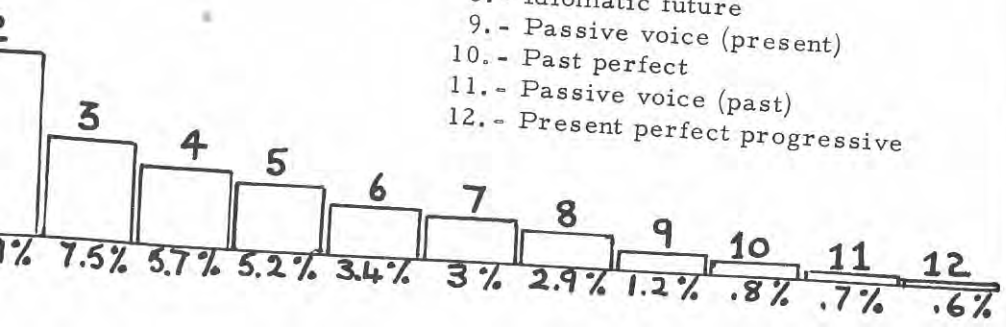
The last course observed was Money and Banking, also a 60 minute class with constant interaction and dialogue among the students and the teacher. The discussion had to do with the benefits of investing under certain circumstances. During this class, the simple present had a significant 72.7% compared to the other tenses and again modals had a 5.5% usage.

Results of research:

Simple present	237 times	72.7 %
Present progressive	9	2.8

Simple past	26 times	8 %
Past progressive	2	.6
Future (Simple & Progressive)	10	3.1
Idiomatic future (S & P)	9	2.8
Present perfect	10	3.1
Present perfect progressive	1	.3
Past perfect	0	0
Passive voice present	0	0
Passive voice past	4	1.1
Modals	18	5.5
TOTAL:	326 times	100 %

- 1.- Simple present
- 2.- Simple past
- 3.- Modals
- 4.- Present progressive
- 5.- Present perfect
- 6.- Past progressive
- 7.- Future
- 8.- Idiomatic future
- 9.- Passive voice (present)
- 10.- Past perfect
- 11.- Passive voice (past)
- 12.- Present perfect progressive



CONCLUSION:

It was clearly demonstrated that the simple present, the simple past and the modals are the grammar tenses more significantly used in the five areas of the School of Business Administration, Economics and Accounting and they represent over 50% of the total of the grammar structures used. Therefore, it is evident that in our basic courses much more emphasis should be given to these areas in order to give to the students the necessary practice of these tenses before introducing them to extensive grammatical structures that only tend to confuse the student at this basic stage, enabling them to understand and achieve to the utmost the courses they take in this second language.

With the results obtained, a valid curriculum will be prepared, based on the specific needs of the student in those areas. We strongly encourage every institution teaching English for Special Purposes to consider the benefit of doing similar research in their fields in order to design curriculums that really meet the needs of the students.

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