THE EFFECT OF GENRE-BASED INSTRUCTION ON READING COMPREHENSION AMONG IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

Ali Reza Karbalaei1*, Mahshid Hejazi2

1Assistant Professor and Faculty Member of Farhangian University, Tehran,
2Department of English, Qeshm International Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qeshm (IRAN)
*Corresponding author: karbalaei2008@gmail.com

DOI: 10.7813/jll.2015/6-1/46

ABSTRACT

This study tried to explore the influence of teaching reading comprehension utilizing the principles of genre analysis. In conducting the present study, 53 homogenous EFL Students were selected out of the 73 ones as the subjects of the study and were divided randomly into two groups of experimental and control. Experimental group has composed of 27 language learners with 14 females and 13 males; and the control group included 26 language learners with 13 females and 13 males. Ten reading passages were instructed to the selected subjects during thirty hours-the experimental group using a genre-based instruction and the control group using the traditional approach usual in teaching reading comprehension. The results of the study revealed that those who received a genre-based instruction performed better than those students taught reading based on traditional reading. In terms of gender, the study showed non-significant and trivial differences between the performances of the two genders.

Key words: Genre-analysis; reading comprehension; pre-test; post-test; TOEFL

1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy instruction is one of the fundamental issues which has influenced the higher education and adult life. In effect, literacy instruction, especially reading comprehension seems to be crucial not only for success in education and careers, but also for everyday activities (e.g. reading a menu or checking the weather forecast, etc.). There are a number of components which influence the process of reading comprehension, e.g. phonics, fluency, or vocabulary development as a few among others. Opitz, and Eldridge (2004) argue that reading comprehension skills are frequently left untaught. How important it is to remember that comprehension is the essence of reading and that it has to be taught and cannot be left to chance! (p. 772).

Hence, one of the issues influences the process of reading comprehension is related to genre and its structure which in turn raises the complexity of reading passages. There is no doubt that reading comprehension demands considering a vast variety of factors, e.g. vocabulary, structure, or even the genre or type of the text like expository, fiction, argumentative, descriptive etc. Effectively, diverse genres demand different strategies in comprehending a passage. Johns (2008) in his book titled as “Basic Reading Inventory: Pre-Primer through Grade Twelve and Early Literacy Assessments argues that texts with different genres need to be approached or analyzed in the different ways.

Nowadays, it is emphasized that teachers present a balanced literacy program covering a vast variety of genres which are carefully selected (Ephraim, 2009). As an example, it may happen that the students have little trouble comprehending a particular genre; whereas, they experience difficulty in comprehending the other one (Ephraim, 2009). Hoyt (1999) emphasizes that “[t]o become reflective readers and writers of informational text, readers must have both extensive and intensive experience with information-bearing text” (p. 121).

Genre, specifically, refers to “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre” (Swales, 1990, P. 58). In effect, genre illustrates “the regularities of staged, goal oriented social processes” (Martin, 1993) in which “the typification of social and rhetorical action” (Miller, 1984) are recognized. Berkenkotter and Hucking (1995), considering the importance of social dimension in genre definition, argue that because it is impossible for us to dwell in the social world without repertoires of typified social responses in recurrent situations. From greetings to thank you to acceptance speeches and full-blown, written expositions of scientific or scholarly investigations. We use genres to package our speech and make of it a recognizable response to the exigencies of the situation.

Bazerman (1988), in the same vein, points out to the social aspect of genres, and states that a genre consists of something beyond simple similarity of formal characteristics among a number of texts. A genre is socially recognized, repeated strategy for achieving similar goals in situations socially recognized as being similar. A genre provides a writer with a way of formulating responses in certain circumstances and a reader a way of recognizing the kind of message being transmitted. [...] Thus the formal features that are shared by the corpus of texts in a genre and by which we usually recognize a texts inclusion in a genre, are the linguistic/symbolic solution to a problem in social interaction (p. 6)

Texts may also be analyzed to determine their specific genres which refers to the discipline of genre analysis. In effect, genre analysis deals with the formal features and conventions present in a text to be similar to other texts. There are diverse directions in approaching genre analysis, for example, Bhatia (1993) taking a multidisciplinary activity, argues about three orientations of linguistic, sociological and psychological. He pointed out that “from the point of view of the analysis of functional variation in language, one envisages at least three different kinds of orientation, depending upon the nature of background knowledge and the motivating purpose the researcher brings to genre analysis.” (Bhatia, 1993, pp.16-17).

Recently, reading comprehension attracted the attention of many researchers who tried to present some methods to overcome the challenges and difficulties the students go through in reading comprehension. Considering the aforementioned
issues, the present study endeavored to make an investigation on the potentials of genre analysis to improve the literacy skills of Iranian EFL students. In effect, the study aims to determine whether a change in text genre can affect learners' reading comprehension, and if so, whether the students go through a genre-based instruction performed better in comprehending the reading passages.

Significance of the Study
There is no doubt regarding the significant role played by reading comprehension in everyday life, from reading a menu to understanding the weather broadcast or understanding the usual or academic papers. Considering the challenges the language teachers and learner go through in dealing with reading comprehension, the results of the study will be of interest for language learners, language teachers, curriculum designers or even syllabus designers.

Purpose and Scope of the Study
The purpose of this study was to discuss how genre-based instruction may be beneficial in learning reading comprehension and to what extent the performances of the students experience learning reading improved. Hence this study focused on the following issues:

- directing the attention of language learners to the genres of diverse passages
- directing the attention of language learners to the vocabularies and structures of different reading passages based on its genre
- making a comparison between the results achieved from two groups of experimental (learners who went under a genre-based instruction in learning reading) and control (learners who didn't receive any instruction in terms of the genres of the covered reading passages)

Research Questions
Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:
1. Does genre-based instruction play any significant role in enhancing Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on genre-based instruction?

Research Hypotheses
Based on the raised questions the following hypotheses will be suggested:
- Genre-based instruction does not play any significant role in enhancing Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension.
- There is no significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on genre-based instruction.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Genre Analysis
Genre analysis refers to text analysis in which the position of any text within the limits of a genre is determined. It is worth mentioning that in analyzing the texts for determining the genre, the focus is given to the features and conventions of the texts and not the contents.

Bhatia’s (1993) approach to genre analysis has taken a “multidisciplinary activity” (p. 16) which “from the point of view of the analysis of functional variation in language, one envisages at least three different kinds of orientation, depending upon the nature of background knowledge and the motivating purpose the researcher brings to genre analysis” (pp. 16-17).

In suggesting his multidisciplinary approach, Bhatia (1993) argues that “they tend to associate certain specific features of language with certain types of writing or styles. However, very few of them distinguished a variety (or register) from a genre” (p. 17). In effect, Bhatia (1993) considers genre analysis challenging. He mentions that “analyses of varieties or registers on their own reveal very little about the true nature of genres and about the way social purposes are accomplished in and through them in settings in which they are used.” (Bhatia, 1993, p. 18)

It is worth mentioning that Bhatia’s (1993) model is not one dimensional but a multifaceted method which considers diverse aspects, i.e. linguistic, social, psychological, etc. Bhatia (1993) argues that any genre is defined within a limit of social frame. In effect, social “aspect of genre analysis emphasizes that text by itself is not a complete object possessing meaning on its own; it is to be regarded as an ongoing process of negotiation” (Bhatia, 1993, p. 18).

Bhatia adds that “the sociological aspect of genre analysis focuses on the conventional and often standardized features of genre construction” (Bhatia, 1993, p.19).

In dealing with the psychological aspect of genre analysis Bhatia argues about two aspects of it, i.e. psychological and tactical. In effect, whereas, “the psycholinguistic aspect of genre analysis reveals the cognitive structuring, typical of particular areas of enquiry, the tactical aspect of genre description highlights the individual strategic choices made by the writer in order to execute his or her intention.’ (Bhatia, 1993, p. 19)

It means that the tactical choices emphasized by Bhatia (1993) are made by the writer in order “to make the writing more effective, keeping in mind any special reader requirements” (Bhatia, 1993, p. 20). Effectively, non-discriminative strategies are utilized in such a way that the content is truly conveyed without influencing the genre’s communicative purpose.

Hence, for Bhatia (1993), genre is an ambiguous notion in which “it must be admitted that it seems almost impossible to draw up clearly defined criteria to make a satisfactory distinction between genres and sub-genres” (Bhatia, 1993, p. 21).

Reading Comprehension and Genre Analysis
Reading is one of the skills which is crucial for any language course especially the students studying the higher education. Reading is particularly considered as a selection process dependent on readers’ expectations towards the content of a reading text. Goodman (1967) points out that “skill in reading involves not greater precision [of the graphic input], but more accurate first guesses based on better sampling techniques, greater control over language structure, broadened experiences and increased conceptual development” (p. 132).
Rumelhart (1977) argues about cognitive constructs which involve three factors of the readers, the text, and the interaction which occurs between the text and the readers and affect the process of reading comprehension. Cognitive constructs, according to Widdowson (1983), refer to organizing information in the long-terms memory. Cook (1989) emphasizes that "the mind, stimulated by key words or phrases in the text or by the context, activates a knowledge schema" (p. 69).

Hence, one of the crucial concepts in the field of reading skill is schema which is considered as one of the main parts of cognition (Bartlett, 1932). In effect, content and formal schema are the notions affect the process of reading comprehension. The following sheds light on these issues which seem to be in line with the focus of the present study.

Bartlett (1932) mentions that schema, i.e. the previous experiences, are determining factors in constructing the meaning. He emphasizes that schema is, in effect, "active organizations of past reactions and experiences which are always operating in any well-developed organism" (Bartlett, 1932, P.201). In effect, world knowledge—general or specific, language knowledge, and knowledge of texts and forms, i.e. genre are the main cognitive characteristics of schema which are considered crucial in relating the new information to the previous information (Widdowson, 1983; Cook, 1989).

Hence, Schemata may be structures and processes. Rumelhart (1980) clarifies that structures function as "a network of interrelations that is believed to normally hold among the constituents of the concept in question" (p.34). He adds that structures, in effect, represent "the generic concept stored in memory" (p. 171).

There are several types of schemata. Content and formal are two types of schemata. Content schema refers to the background knowledge of the readers which includes world knowledge (Carrell&Eisterhold, 1983; Carrell, Pharis, &Liberto, 1989). Formal schema or textual schema, on the other hand, refers to the formal properties of the texts, i.e. rhetoric or organizations which are especially utilized in the written texts. It is worth mentioning that the content schemata sheds lights on the genres or different types of texts which are laden differently by diverse rhetoric, language structures, vocabulary, grammar and level of register Carrell&Eisterhold, 1983; Carrell, Pharis, &Liberto, 1989).

Generally, formal or textual schemata deal with the items at discourse level, and content schemata with the decoding characteristics which is at the sentence level. There are two main methods in reading comprehension, i.e. Bottom-up processing or data-driven processing and top-down processing or conceptually driven processing. Hence, content schema is a crucial factor affecting second as well as foreign language reading (Barnett, 1989; Carrell&Eisterhold, 1983; Johnson 1982).

Review of literature shows that genre is crucial in reading comprehension in which the participants are more comfortable with the genre which they are more familiar with (Ammon, 1987; Carrell, 1981; Johnson, 1981, 1982; Langer, Barolome, Vasquez, & Lucas, 1990; Shimoda, 1989). This issue highlights the role of content schema theory. Furthermore, review of literature emphasizes that different types of text structures influence not only comprehension but also recall (Bean, Potter, & Clark, 1980; Carrell, 1984).

Systemic functional approach is one of the directions to genre analysis which classifies texts especially by considering the social context. Effectively, systemic functional approach was essentially intrigued by the ideas of Malinowski (1923) who is a social anthropologist. Malinowski (1923) argues that language understanding demands comprehending the local situation as well as the cultural context in which the language takes place.

Malinowski (1923) emphasizes on the context of culture and mentions that "language is essentially rooted in the reality of the culture, the tribal life and customs of a people, and that it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterance" (Malinowski, 1923, p. 305). Moreover, Malinowski (1923) argues about context of situation which refers to "the meaning of any single word is to a very high degree dependent on its context... [it] becomes only intelligible when it is placed within its context of situation" (Malinowski, 1923, p. 306).

Firth (1957) is one of the influential figures who tried to introduce an operational framework in defining context. To this end, Firth (1957) considers there elements of participants (their verbal and non-verbal actions), the relevant objects and non-verbal and non-personal events and the effect of the verbal actions (cited in Bruce, 2008, p. 15).

Halliday (1978), whose framework was selected and adopted in the present study, also introduces a framework in dealing with context. He argues about the social-semiotic nature of language which highlights the potential meaning of utterances. For Halliday, context of situations refers to register. Martin (1992) points out that "the socio-semantic organization of context has to be considered from a number of angles if it is to give a comprehensive account of the ways in which meanings configure texts" (p. 494). Halliday, in clarifying the concept of register which is crucial for genre analysis, argues about three notions of field of discourse, tenor of discourse and mode of discourse.

Field of Discourse refers to "what is happening, the nature of the social action that is taking place, i.e. what is it that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as some essential component (Halliday&Hasan, 1976, p. 12). Tenor of Discourse indicates to "who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles, i.e. what kinds of role relationship obtain among the participants" (Halliday&Hasan, 1976, p. 12). Mode of the Discourse deals with "what part language is playing, what it is that the participants are expecting the language to do for them in the situation: the symbolic organization of the text (Halliday&Hasan, 1976, p. 12).

Hence, the three dimensions of register (i.e. field, tenor and mode) are the semiotic variables which are defined in specific semantic structure based on the systems of the lexico-grammatical features of a text. Effectively, register refers to "the semantic variety of which a text may be regarded as an instance... [and which] can be defined as the configuration of semantic resources that the member of a culture typically associates with a situation type" (Halliday, 1985, pp. 110-11).

In a nutshell, genre, in a systemic functional approach, emphasizes on the cultural context in which language occurs. Martin (1984) considers genre as "a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" (1984, p. 25). Halliday and Hasan (1985) points out that "genre bears a logical relation to CC [contextual configuration], being its verbal expression. If CC is a class of situation type, then genre is language doing the job appropriate to that class of social happenings" (p. 108). Furthermore, Eggins and Martin (1997) emphasizes that "different genres are different ways of using language to achieve different culturally established tasks, and texts of different genres are texts which are achieving different purposes in the culture" (p. 236).

Eggins (1994) argues about actual generic structure of a particular text and the generic structure potential of the genre the text belongs to. Whereas, the former refers to the actual groups of functional stages which exist in that text, the latter refers to the general structural characteristics of a particular genre to which the text belongs.

In achieving generic structure potential of the genre, Eggins (1994) emphasizes on obligatory elements which refer to the functional stages crucial for a text to be classified as belonging to a certain genre. Hasan (1989) points any type of genre may include a number of structures with certain obligatory semantic elements. In fact, obligatory elements determines
the semantic features of the language performing in a genre (Hasan, 1989). Hasan explicates that the statement of genre-specific ‘language’ is best given in terms of the semantic categories, rather than the lexico-grammatical ones, since (1) the range of meanings have variant realization; and (2) the more delicate choices within the general area is not a matter of genre ambience (Hasan, 1989, p. 113).

Accordingly, genre is “a staged, goal-oriented social process” (Martin, 1992, p. 33). Hence, cultural context through genre as well as contextual situation through register influence the language which is used (Macken, Kalantzis, Kress, Martin, Cope, and Rothery, 1989, pp. 18). In fact, structure and grammar of any text is determined in somewhat by the genre to which the text belongs (Knapp & Watkins, 1994).

Empirical Studies on Genre Analysis

Haria and Midgette (2014) examined the effectiveness of genre-based instruction on reading comprehension strategy of the students. Effectively, they tried to equip the students with the ability to identify, summarize, and critically analyze different elements of an argumentative text. To this end, they selected 7 fifth-grade students who had reading difficulties in the study as the subjects of the study. The participants received instruction in order to be able to identify, summarize, and analyze the argumentative texts. Finally, the students’ performances were assessed on both reading comprehension as well as writing proficiency during baseline, post-intervention, and maintenance phases. Haria and Midgette (2014) showed that the students’ proficiency was improved in terms of identification of argumentative elements as well as summarization of arguments. Furthermore, the results of their studies showed that writing ability of the students were improved in terms of argumentative elements.

Rozimela (2014) made a study to explore the relationship between genre awareness and reading comprehension of EFL students studying in Indonesia University. To this end, 34 students were selected as the participants of the study who were asked to recognize 10 different texts from five diverse genres. In fact, the students had to answer a sixty-item test testing their knowledge about genres as well as an 80-item test testing their reading comprehension. Rozimela (2014) showed that there is a strong relationship between genre awareness and reading comprehension on part of EFL students. Rozimela (2014) argues that the students with higher genre awareness did better in reading comprehension, and the students with lower genre awareness did lower in the reading comprehension. He emphasizes that roles played by background knowledge about the content of the texts and field-related vocabulary in reading comprehension should not be ignored.

Sadeghi, Hassan and Hemmati (2013) made an investigation to explore the effect of a genre-based instruction on ESP learners’ reading comprehension. To this end, 116 homogenous students studying biology were selected as the participants of the study who were divided into two groups of experimental and control. Both groups went under instruction— the experimental group using a genre-based instruction and the control groups using a traditional one. The both groups took a 30-item proficiency test of English and two 30-item standard tests of English reading comprehension. The results achieved by the two groups were summarized, tabulated and analyzed using t-test which resulted into significant role of a genre-based instruction in improving the ESP learners’ reading comprehension.

Shafizadeh and Sajedi (2013) studied the effect of genre-familiarity as well as genre-based approach on second language reading comprehension proficiency. To this end, 40 students took an IELTS test and were divided into two groups of low and high proficient. The both groups took two pre- and post-reading comprehension tests of narrative genre. Shafizadeh and Sajedi (2013) showed that genre-familiarity influences reading comprehension ability of the learners. Moreover, it was founded that reading comprehension ability is influenced by the level of proficiency as well as the familiarity of the genres. Shafizadeh and Sajedi (2013) argues that genre-familiarity and language proficiency are crucial for reading comprehension.

Crossley (2013) also argues about the effects of genre analysis pedagogy. He stresses on the role played by different instructional approaches on writing. He points out that move analysis approach as an approach to genre analysis influence writing performance of the language learners than the chronotopic approach which is a non-genre-analysis approach. Crossley (2013) suggests that genre analysis methods be utilized in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

Minaaband and Khoshkhilgh (2012) made an investigation in order to explore the influence of genre-based instruction on English for specific purpose (ESP) for learners’ reading comprehension ability as well as the interaction between their reading comprehension achievement and their general English proficiency. To this end, Minaaband and Khoshkhilgh (2012) selected 150 BA students who were studying ESP in the field of computer engineering. The participants took a version of GEP test (i.e. a 1961 version of Michigan test). Based on the results of the test, the subjects were divided into two groups of high and low proficiency. The both groups of high and low proficiency were randomly divided into two experimental and control groups. The four groups (i.e. high level experimental, high level control, low level experimental, and low level control) went under a six-session instruction followed by a posttest. A factorial design was administered which resulted into a two-way ANOVA for analyzing the results. Minaaband and Khoshkhilgh (2012) showed that genre-based instruction influences learners’ reading comprehension who are studying ESP. Furthermore, they showed that there is a strong and positive relationship between learners’ ESP reading comprehension achievement and their general English proficiency.

Olagide (2012) made an investigation on the reading comprehension performances of the teachers teaching the advanced courses. In effect, he identified, quantified as well as evaluated the cognitive components of the comprehension performance of the teachers. Olajide (2012) argues that the cognitive components enhance the teacher preparation performance and influences their development and progress.

Zakrajewski (2012) made a study in order to show the business genres which evoke interest among the linguists dealing with business communication. To this end, a letter to shareholders, chairman’s welcoming speech and an about us website link were selected as the corpus of the study. Furthermore, Zakrajewski (2012) tried to incorporate genres into company culture. The results of his study showed that the process of globalization has unified the language. Moreover, he showed that there are cultural differences and similarities between the instigated texts. Zakrajewski (2012) argues that genre analysis approach needs to be implemented in writing classes since it influences understanding of a text. Zakrajewski (2012) points out that raising awareness among students—regarding different discourse communities— influences communication especially for ESP students.

Scott (2009) investigated the reading comprehension instruction in seven 4th and 5th grade classrooms. He recognized several significant trends namely, “considerable variability regarding what counts as reading comprehension instruction”, “fundamental disjuncture between how leading literacy scholars define reading comprehension and how reading comprehension is conceptualized in other resources” as well as superficial ways of “teaching reading comprehension” (p. xi).
Murphy (2008) investigated the authentic jokes in terms of genre and also its pedagogical implications. In effect, Murphy (2008) tried to provide a clear definition for jokes as a genre, as well as joke's history, its characteristics and a genre analysis framework. Furthermore, he studied the role of genre in Japanese EFL classroom. To this end, he analyzed two jokes utilizing his developed framework in terms of genre analysis. Murphy (2008) argues that Japanese EFL students analyzed English from an entirely realistic perspective.

Charmini and Audrey (2006) studied the potentials of genre analysis as a framework for teaching English language to secondary and upper-primary students. In effect, Charmini and Audrey (2006) resorted to genre analysis in order to equip the students with the knowledge regarding "text organization patterns, language and vocabulary associated with different genres (narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative)" (p. 1) to improve their reading comprehension ability.

Shishehsaz (2006) made a study to investigate the influence of explicit genre instruction on the reading comprehension of the students majoring engineering. To this end, Shishehsaz (2006) selected and adopted Swales’ CARS model through which 60 homogenous students majoring mechanical engineering were taught. It is worth mentioning that he selected the subjects utilizing Michigan Test of Language Proficiency (MTLP). Effectively, the both groups went under an eight-session instruction, the experimental group utilizing a genre-based approach, i.e. Swales’ CARS model and the control group through a traditional approach mainly focused on translation. Finally, the both groups took a newly developed reading comprehension test as the post-test. The results of his study showed that there is significant differences between the performances of the students who received instruction based on Swales’ CARS model and the ones who went under the traditional one. Shishehsaz (2006) argues that explicit genre instruction improves reading comprehension ability of the students.

3. METHODOLOGY

Participants

53 intermediate language learners were the subjects of the study who were selected out of 73 EFL students studying English in Bayan Language Institute. The selected students were divided into two experimental and control groups—control group with 26 and the experimental group with 27 students. It is worth mentioning that the experimental group has composed of 14 females and 13 males; and the control group includes 13 females and 13 males. The classes were held for three two-hour session per week for a total of 30 hours over 5 weeks. Hence, during the course, 10 different authentic reading passages with the diverse genres were covered in which the experimental group went through a genre-based instruction in which their attention were directed to the vocabularies, collocations, types of structures, grammatical, lexical features; whereas the control groups received instruction utilizing a traditional approach.

Corpus of the Study

The corpus of the study were 10 authentic reading comprehension passages selected from both fiction and non-fiction genres. The following sheds slight on the covered materials in the course:

- Seven Minutes of Terror, Eight Years of Ingenuity
- Traveling to Thailand
- Fewer Americans Are Now Going to Prison, Highlighting a Shift in U.S. Policy
- The Cooling from the Warmth of Nature
- Dropping the Ball
- What Mitosis Has to Do With Families
- Tag! You’re Hi!
- I’m Not Eating That
- A Crooked Election
- The Other Side of the Magic Shop

All the texts were given in the appendix part. It is worth mentioning that the materials were extracted from http://www.readworks.org which is an educational online curricula with highly reliable and valid materials which have been designed and developed for being used commercially. Hence, the texts are among the standardized tests which are used around the world by many language centers. However, the selected texts were piloted among 20 students to check its reliability, which equals to 72. In other words, the test was reliable enough to consider it for further study. Regarding the validity, three Iranian EFL teachers were asked to say their comments about the selected texts and those passages considered for pre- and posttest. Their comments were taken into account in the final versions of these texts.

Procedure

Fifty-three homogenous EFL students were selected using a modified version of TOEFL. The selected students whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean score were divided into two groups of experimental and control-experimental group with 27 students and the control group with 26 ones. The experimental group included 14 females and 13 males, and the control group consisted of 12 males and 14 females. Then, a reading comprehension as pretest were given to all the selected students in both control and experimental group. In the next stage, the two groups went under 30 hours of instruction, in which 10 authentic reading passages with different topics and genres were covered. The two groups received the same instruction except that the experimental group received some instruction in terms of genre, collocations used in the texts, the differences between and among the passages, lexical and grammatical features in addition to the one the control group received. Finally, the same reading comprehension tests in the pretest was given to all these as posttest. The results of the pretest and posttests were put into SPSS for further analysis by considering the research questions.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1

Q1: Does genre-based instruction play any significant role in enhancing Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension?

H01: Genre-based instruction cannot play any significant role in enhancing Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension.
In order to see whether we are able to use t-test as a parametric test, first we should check whether the data have been normally distributed or not. If the level of significance is more than 0.05, it indicates the normality of data distribution. Therefore, we can use parametric test for further data analysis.

Table 1. One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for pretest in control and experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pretest control</th>
<th>Pretest experimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Parameters (a, b)</td>
<td>Mean 10.54</td>
<td>10.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>2.195</td>
<td>1.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most extreme differences</td>
<td>Absolute 1.70</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>-1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>0.868</td>
<td>0.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is evident from Table 1, the result of normality test shows that p values of two groups (.438, and .365) are more than significance level (0.05). Therefore, we can accept the assumption of normality and we can use independent sample t-test for comparing the results of posttest in control and experimental group.

Table 2. Mean pretest of reading comprehension scores for samples in control and experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest control</th>
<th>Pretest Experimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>10.54</td>
<td>10.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>2.195</td>
<td>1.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, in order to analyze the data for research question 1, independent sample t-test was used. As it is evident from Table 4, there is a significant difference between posttest scores in control and experimental group in Iranian EFL context (t=3.479; P=.001). By looking at table 3, we can see that in experimental group scored higher in posttest (M=2.70, SD=1.03), when they were taught based on genre structure, than pretest (M=1.46, SD=1.52). With respect to this point, the first hypothesis (Genre-based instruction cannot play any significant role in enhancing Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension.) is rejected. In other words, genre-based instruction could play a significant role in developing the level of reading comprehension among Iranian EFL learners.

Table 3. Mean sample test for posttest score in control and experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.46</td>
<td>1.529</td>
<td>.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20.70</td>
<td>1.031</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Independent sample test for posttest scores for samples in control and experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain total</td>
<td>3.767</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>3.479</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-1.242</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>-1.959 to -.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>3.454</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-1.242</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>-1.967 to -.517</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2

Q2: Is there any significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on genre-based instruction.
H02: There is no significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on genre-based instruction.

### Table 5. Mean posttest of males and females in experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>1.668</td>
<td>.431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>1.832</td>
<td>.529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is evident from table 6, there is no significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension in the experimental group in Iranian EFL context ($t=964$; $P=.345$). In fact, according to this table, the $t$ value of 964 was found to be significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the second hypothesis (There is no significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on genre-based instruction.) is confirmed. In other words, gender could not play any significant role in enhancing reading comprehension based on genre structure. In other words, males and females had the same performance in reading comprehension after they are taught based on genre structure.

### Table 6. Independent sample test for posttest scores among males and females in experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.286</td>
<td>.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-1.953</td>
<td>22.611</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 2. Mean posttest of males and females in experimental group**

### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to answer the three raised questions. Effectively, the aim of the study was to determine whether a genre-based instruction on reading comprehension is beneficial for Iranian EFL Students or not. Hence, the first question of the study was "Does genre-based instruction play any significant role in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension?".

The results of the study indicated that the students who were instructed in the experimental group outperformed the subjects who were instructed in the control group on the posttests they participated. Goodman (1967), in emphasizing on the role played by genre argues that:

Skill in reading involves not greater precision [of the graphic input], but more accurate first guesses based on better sampling techniques, greater control over language structure, broadened experiences and increased conceptual development (p. 132).

Bartlett (1932) mentions that schema, i.e. the pervious experiences, are determining factors in constructing the meaning. Bartlett (1932) emphasizes that schema is, in effect, “active organizations of past reactions and experiences which are always operating in any well-developed organism” (Bartlett, 1932, P.201). In effect, world knowledge—general or specific, language knowledge, and knowledge of texts and forms, i.e. genre are the main cognitive characteristics of schema which are considered crucial in relating the new information to the previous information (Widdowson, 1983; Cook, 1989).

Effectively, the results of the present study is in line with the issue that genre is crucial in reading comprehension in which the students performed better with a genre-based instruction (Ammon, 1987; Carrell, 1981; Johnson, 1981, 1982; Langer, Barolome, Vasquez, & Lucas, 1990; Shimoda, 1989). This issue highlights the role of content schema theory. It seems that types of text structures influence comprehension as well as the recall of the content of the texts (Bean, Potter, & Clark, 1980; Carrell, 1984).

Considering the classifications of the levels of reading comprehension provided by Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) (i.e. surface code, text-base, situation model, pragmatic communicative context, and text genre); it seems that text genre plays a
crucial role in the process of reading comprehension of the students. In fact, the present study supported Saljo’s (1984) view who considers the text type as a demanding factor for reading comprehension. Furthermore, the results of the study are in harmony with Hallam and Francis’ (1998) argument that style, organization and language of the texts are crucial elements for reading comprehension. It seems that knowledge of genre is resulted into constructing of reference frames through which meaning is understood (Knight, 1994).

In fact, genre information apparently resulted into interaction between text and reader which strengthen the students’ involvement, i.e. “critical or accepting, resisting or validating, casual or concentrated, apathetic or motivated” (Livingstone, 1994, p. 253) which influence reading comprehension process.

Generally, the findings of the present study showed that genre instruction influences the students’ proficiency in terms of linguistic features, topic and expectations which in turn influence students’ reading comprehension. The rationale for the achieved results are rooted in the cultural and contextual context which determine the meaning (Malinowsky, 1923). Effectively, immediate context (register) and cultural situations (genres) are crucial in reading comprehension (Halliday, 1978).

Regarding the second research question “Is there any significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on genre-based instruction.”, the results of the study showed that gender played a neutral role since the differences observed between the performances of females and males on the posttest were insignificant and ignorable. Effectively, the second hypothesis which states “there are no differences between the performances of males and females in the experimental group” was supported.

Effectively, review of literature showed mixed results regarding the role played by gender on language proficiency in general and reading comprehension in particular. For example. Arellano (2013) emphasizes that females have shown a higher reading comprehension than males. Effectively, it was expected that females outperformed the males in fulfilling the reading comprehension tests; however, some mixed and ambiguous results were observed.

Pedagogical Implications
This study as other studies in the field of education has some pedagogical implications for language learners, language teachers, as well as course designers. The following illustrates some of these implications:

- Familiarity with the genres of the texts equip the students to have a better sampling techniques, greater control over language structure, broadened experiences and increased conceptual development which results into influenced reading comprehension
- Genre analysis on reading comprehension processes equip the learners in constructing the meaning which rooted in their previous experiences,
- Furthermore, the results of the study give the teachers the insights to utilize the potentials of genre analysis in their teaching paradigm to improve the reading comprehension of the students;
- The findings of the study also have implications for language courses as well as curriculum or even in teachers’ training courses

REFERENCES
