Flourishing Creativity & Literacy

Genre Analysis and Writing Skill:
Improving Iranian EFL Learners Writing Performance through the Tenets of Genre Analysis

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Abstract

The main thrust of this study was to determine whether a genre-based instruction improve the writing proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, 30 homogenous Iranian BA learners studying English at Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch were selected as the participants of the study through a version of TOEFL test as the proficiency test. The selected participants were 15 females and 15 males who were randomly divided into two groups of experimental and control. The both experimental and control groups were asked to write on a topic determined by the researcher which were considered as the pre-test. The writing of the students were scored using holistic scoring procedure. The subjects received sixteen hours instruction—the experimental group using a genre-based pedagogy and the control group through the traditional methodology which was followed by a post-test—the subjects were, this time, asked to write on the same topic which they were asked to write before instruction. Their post-writings were also scored through the holistic scoring procedures. In analyzing the data, t-test statistic was utilized for comparing the performances of the two groups. It was found that there is statistically significant difference between the writing ability of the participants who go under a genre-based instruction and who don't. The study, however, didn't find any significant role for gender.

Keywords: genre analysis, writing skill, holistic scoring procedure, pre-test, post-test, t-test

1. Introduction

Writing skill as a sub-skill of literacy skills, according to Wall (1981), "range from mechanical control to creativity, with good grammar, knowledge of subject matter, awareness of stylistic conventions and various mysterious factors in between" (cited in Gholaminejad, Moinzadeh, Youhanaee, & Ghobadirad, 2013, p. 53). Hence, one of the issues emphasized by gener analysis is the notion of schemata.

To this end, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) point out that schemata, prior knowledge, and information processing influence not only the declarative knowledge but also the rate and extent of the information processed by a reader or a writer. Effectively, culture, similar schemata and prior knowledge, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), need to be considered in the recent models to literacy skills including writing skill.

Bartlett (1932) argues that schema are fundamental in constructing the meaning (cited in Wagoner, 2013). He adds that schema underpins the "active organizations of past reactions and experiences which are always operating in any well-developed organism" (Bartlett, 1932, P.201). Bartlett (1932) underscores the fact that world knowledge, language knowledge, and the insights regarding the texts and forms, i.e. genre are among the information clarified by schema which in its turn influence the process of literacy skills.

Rumelhart (1980) clarifies that genre function as "a network of interrelations that is believed to normally hold among the constituents of the concept in question" (p.34). It means that genre, according to Rumelhart (1980), represent "the generic concept stored in memory" (p. 171).

Notwithstanding, there are two types of schemata, namely, content schemata and formal schemata (Bartlett, 1932). Whereas, content schema deals with the background knowledge of the readers or writers; the formal schema or textual schema deals with the formal properties of the texts, including rhetoric or organizations (Bartlett, 1932). Hence, content schemata, effectively, includes the genres or different types of texts, language structures, vocabulary, grammar and level of register (Carrell, 1987). Carrell (1987) argues that the focus of formal schemata is on the whole discourse of the text, whereas, the focus of the content schemata is on the linguistic features of the sentences of the text.

It seems that genre theory has some potential for improving the literacy skills of the students among which reading skill is worth mentioning as the review of literature denotes (e.g. Alidib, 2004; Shishehsaz, 2006; Minaabad & Khoshkholgh,

2012). Effectively, genre analysis helps the students to be consciously aware of the genre particular to any text which seem affect the process of writing production, for example, the notion of schemata is crucial in the processes of writing which constitutes an element of people's cognition (Bartlett, 1932).

Neverthesles, there is no doubt regarding the crucial role of writing skill for Iranian EFL learners since the learners need to deal with English writing in their lives, for example as a project assignment, or writing occupational request. The Iranian EFL learners, who are not instructed in terms of the writing skill, are often lag behind their language-majority peers in dealing with writing assignments and this issue influences their progress in their majors, since this gap remains with them throughout their lives. Some researchers argue that the learners can achieve grade-level literacy skills provided that they receive the effective writing instruction (e.g. Waits, Campbell, Gau, Jacobs, Rex, & Hess, 2006).

The above introduction highlights the necessity for conducting a study since it seems that the Iranian EFL learners have some challenges in dealing with literacy skills. Accordingly, the researcher attempts to investigate the potentials of genre analysis in order to provide some bases for improving the writing skill of Iranian EFL learners. To this end, the study tried to answer the two following questions:

1. Are there any differences between the writing ability of the participants who go under a genre-based instruction and who don't?

2. Are there any differences between the performances of males and females in the two groups?

Based on the raised questions the following hypotheses were suggested:

1. There is no difference between the writing ability of the participants who go under a genre-based instruction and who don't.

2. There is no difference between the performances of males and females in the two groups

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Genre Analysis: Introductory Remarks

The introduction of genre analysis was emerged by the works of Russian Formalists in the 1920s. Early genre analysis was, in effect, literary critics who were following the perspectives of de Saussure (Duff, 2000). In fact, the early genre analysis was focusing on the formal features of the discourse which have a dynamic nature (cited in Duff, 2000).

Hence, Swales (1990) as well as Bakhtin (2004, 2010, and 2011) are among the researchers who played crucial roles in developing the field of genre analysis. Halliday's (1985) notion of systemic functional linguistics and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) notion of cohesion can be considered the main backgrounds of modern genre analysis. In modern genre analysis, linguistic choices which are determined by register, field and mode seem to be paramount.

Halliday (1973) argues about three meta-functions or macro-functions of language as the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Ideational function, based on Halliday (1973), refers to "the individual's meaning potential and relates to the expression and experience of the concepts, processes, and objects governing the physical and natural phenomena of the world around" (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 8). Interpersonal function, as the second meta-functions introduced by Halliday sheds light on the "An individual's personal relationships with people" (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 8) and textual meta-functions to "the linguistic realizations of the ideational and interpersonal functions enabling the individual to construct coherent texts, spoken or written" (cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 8).

Hence, the interaction between the three meta-functions of ideational, interpersonal and textual which explicates the role of situational and cultural contexts in genre analysis (Muntigl & Gruber, 2005). Kumaravadivelu (2008) points out that meaningful interaction embedded in a sociocultural milieu is fundamental for language learning in Halliday's view which seem to be in line with genre analysis.

Effectively, systemic functional genre analysis is a social one which considers not only the text but also the context in which the text is happened which leads into different language patterns (Muntigl & Gruber, 2005). Social-based genres, according to Muntigl and Gruber (2005), demand six common features of "social-based genres, namely, goal-orientation, stages or phases, culturally-laden, fuzzy borders, macro genres and semiotic modes" (pp. 3-5).

It is worth mentioning that Swales (1990) is among the researchers to genre analysis which has focused on cognitive schemata. Bhatia (2004) emphasizes on the shared purpose as well communicative event as the indispensable elements of any genre. He clarifies that it is the communicative purpose which ascertain the linguistic feature of the genre. For Bhatia (2004), linguistic features of the genre as well as conventions are crucial alongside the roles considered by communicative event and shared purpose. To this end, Bhatia (2008) explicates that "although the writer has a lot of freedom to use linguistic resources …, he must conform to certain standard practices within the boundaries of a particular genre" (Bhatia, 2008, p. 14). Bhatia (2004) elaborates that:

> In more recent years, genre analysis has developed further in the direction of a more comprehensive exploration of social space to raise a number of other interesting issues, in particular those that question some of the basic assumptions about the integrity of generic descriptions.' (p. 22)

The aforementioned issues suggested that both Swales & Bhatia considers genre through the connection between "discourse structures to communicative purposes" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, Bhatia (2004) observes conventions as another characteristics of genre which need to be considered. Bhatia (2004) explicates that genre:

> refers to language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexica-grammatical as well as discourse resources.' (p. 23).

Additionally, Bhatia (2010, p. 32) considers "genre as a configuration of text-internal and text-external factors". For Bhatia (2010), text-external properties of genre considers "the notion of inter-discursively as distinct from inter-textually, which is primarily viewed as appropriation of text-internal resources" (p. 32).

Nevertheless, Bhatia (2010) argues about a multi-perspective model to genre analysis which underscores the role played by context. To this end, he considers "three levels of realizations as textual, genre-specific, professional practice, and professional culture" (Bhatia, 2010, p. 33) as the following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates:

Figure 1. Levels of Genre Realization (Bhatia, 2010, p. 34)

Bhatia (2004) argues about a four spaces model which represents a socio-critical perspective as the diagram (Figure 2) shows. Bhatia (2004), in this model, considers four worlds of discourse, i.e. "the world of reality (Le. the world of discourse in action) , the world of private intentions (Le. an exploitations of discourse by expert and established writers), the world of analysis (Le. the role of analytical tools) and the world of applications" (p. 18).

Hence, Bhatia (2004), resorting to this disarm, argues that a multi-perspective model captures the various frameworks used for discourse analysis. Bhatia (2004) explicates that discourse analysis can be represented in diverse ways "as discourse as text, discourse as genre, discourse as professional practice, and discourse as social practice" (p. 18).
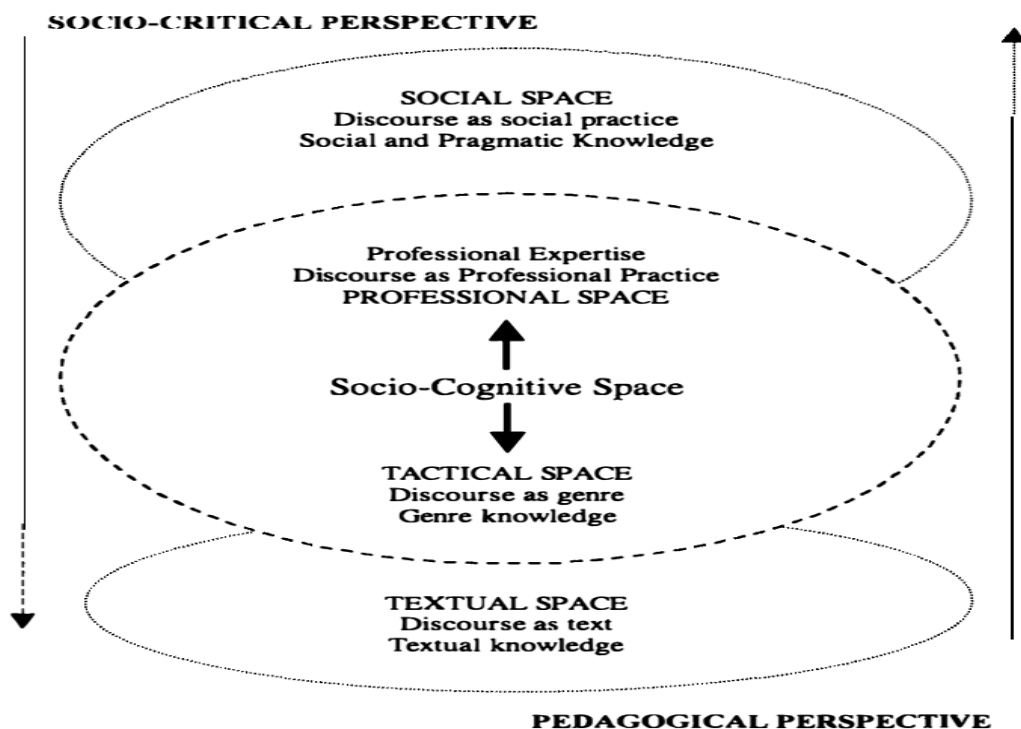

Figure 2. The four spaces framework (Bhatia, 2004, p. 19)

2.2 Writing Skill: Theoretical Definitions

Writing is, in effect, the locus in which the writer portrays one's identity (cited in Doyle & Song, 2005). Ivanic (1998) argues that writing is composed of the "writer's portrayal of himself or herself, the reader, their relationship, the writer's commitment to the ideational content, their assessment of the reader's knowledge and beliefs" (cited in Doley & Song, 2005. 94-95).

Homstad and Thorson (1994) state that writing is "a support skill" (p. 6) that is "used to reinforce the acquisition of grammar" (p. 1)—the perspective followed by the Grammar-Translation Method—or to memorize the correct language structures followed by Audio-Lingual Method.

The "ideas from writing-to-learn, writing across the curriculum, and writing for academic purposes movements in composition and English as a Second Language (ESL) have all had an impact on thinking about the place of writing in second language education" (Homstad &Thorson, 1994, p. 6).

The last three decades show that many researchers have tried to investigate the literacy skills in the domain of second or foreign language for an example, Nivales (2011) made a study to determine the way through which the second language writers made use of hedging devices. Hence, 30 undergraduate theses at the Institute of Arts and Sciences of Far Eastern University were the corpus of her study. To this end, Nivales (2011) explored the introduction and conclusion parts of the theses using Hyland's (2004) and Mojica's (2005) categorizations of hedges. Her study revealed that "psychology writers appear to be more detached while mass communication writers seem more committed" (p.35). Her study also showed that there were no difference in the frequency of hedges in the Introduction and Conclusion parts of the theses under investigation. Nivales (2011) argues that second language learners should be consciously raised to consider using hedging devices in their academic writing since they influence the acceptance of the learners in the academic community.

Effectively, writing skill is not "a naturally acquired skill" (Myles, 2002, p.1), but "learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments" (Myles, 2002, p.1) practice and experience have positive influence on writing skill.

Myles (2002) argues that writing skill demands the capability to express some information narratively or descriptively and to transform it argumentatively. Writing skill may demand a range of sub-skills from the more mechanical to the more complex act of composing (Spigelman & Grobman, 2005). Hence, writing skill is a productive skill which similar with the speaking skill which demands an "interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text" (Myles, 2002, p. 12). It means that academic writing pertains "conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas" (Myles, 2002, p.1).

Hence, writing skill seems to be a fundamental process in language learning. Chastain (1988) points out that "in advanced composition courses, the emphasis is on writing as communication, although increased knowledge of the language system is one of the by-products of writing to express one's ideas" (p. 244). There are two main approaches in teaching the writing skill, namely, the product approach and process approach (Sun & Feng, 2009). It seems that any approach in teaching writing need to be selected and adopted based on the characteristics of the students, the writing assignment, or even the curriculum or syllabus (Spigelman & Grobman, 2005).

The Product approaches to writing refers to the traditional approaches whose emphasis was on the ultimate writing which is accomplished in three stages, i.e. reading and highlighting the features of genres, organizing the ideas, and producing the end result, i.e. composition (Steele, 2004).

The Process approaches to writing, on the other hand, emphasizes on a number of class activities with the aim to foster language use, namely, brainstorming, discussing, drafting, editing and writing (Steele, 2004). Table 2.3 numerates the characteristics of each approach comparing to the other one:

Table 1. Process vs. Product Approaches to Writing (Steele, 2004, p.3)

Process Writing	Product Writing
• text as a resource for comparison • ideas as starting point • more than one draft • more global, focus on purpose, theme, text type, i.e., reader is emphasized • collaborative • emphasis on creative process	• imitate model text • organization of ideas more important than ideas themselves • one draft • features highlighted including controlled practice of those features • individual • emphasis on end product

Steele (2004) argues that both approaches are beneficial provided that they be applied appropriately, for example, formal letters or postcards is best instructed using a product-driven approach; whereas, discussion essays or narratives using the process-driven approaches.

Nunan (1999) argues that process-oriented approaches to writing underpin the roles of writing processes, meaning making, invention and multiple drafts which appear to be beneficial for the second language learners who are capable to implement revision strategies.

He also adds the process of writing learning may be influenced by the learning strategies which are influenced somewhat by the social and cognitive factors.

Effectively, writing proficiency is affected by a number of factors including, schemata, and educational, social or cultural experiences, knowledge of rhetoric, genres as well as topics of the writing tasks assigned to, along with the learners' commands of the second/foreign language (Myles, 2002; Langer & Flihan, 2000).

The following deals with two models to language writing which were originally designed for first language writing but were transferred to the second language writing, namely, Flower and Hayes' (1981) model and Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model (cited in Deane, Odendahl, Quinlan, Fowles,Welsh, & Bivens-Tatum, 2008).

Flower and Hayes' (1981) model was a shift from the traditional models whose main thrust were based on linear steps in writing to a hierarchical relationship between different parts to address the recursive nature of writing. Flower & Hayes' model has composed of three main components of "the task environment, the writer's long-term memory, and the writing processes" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p.369).

The following diagram (Figure 3) illustrates the chief components of The Flower & Hayes' (1981) model:
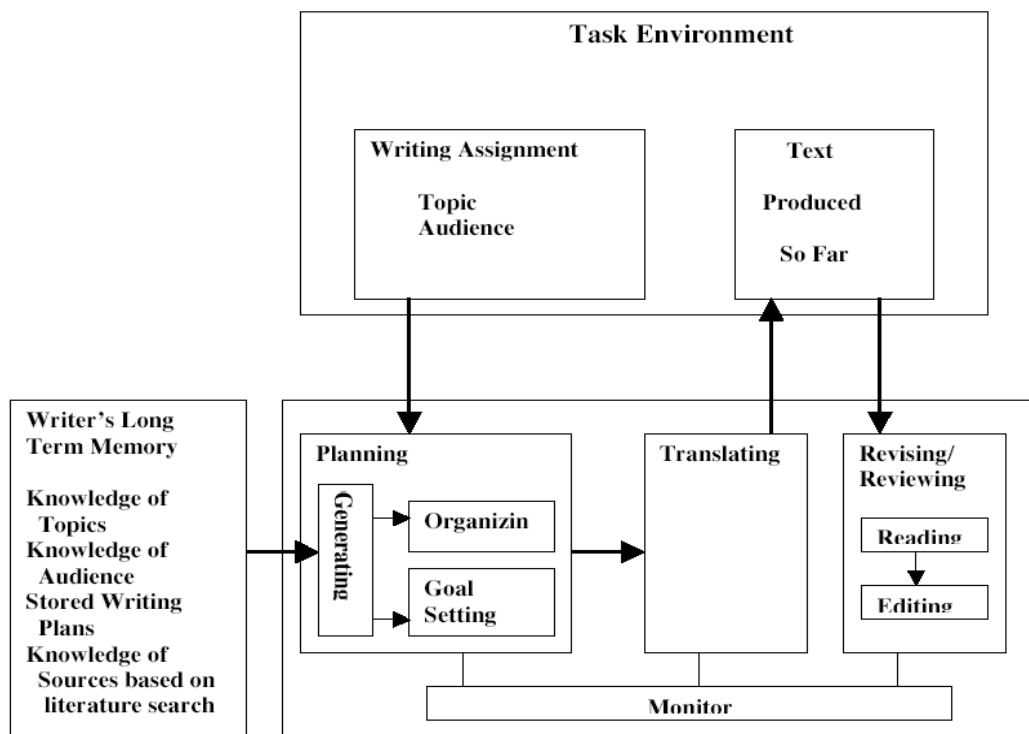

Figure 3. Flower & Hayes' (1981, p.370) model of cognitive processes used during revision by the National Council of Teachers of English

One of the factors which is underscored by Flower & Hayes' (1981) model is the rhetorical factor which highlights the difficulties a language learner go through in dealing with writing skill. Flower & Hayes' (1981) consider two components for writing task, namely, rhetorical situation and writer's goals. Rhetorical situation involves audience, topic, assignment, and writer's goals demand reader, the writer's personality, the construction of meaning, and the production of the formal text. It seems that Flower & Hayes' model, according to Myles (2002), involves "students' strategic knowledge and the ability of students to transform information . . . to meet rhetorically constrained purposes" (p. 28).

Hence, Flower & Hayes' model in line with genre analysis addresses the social dimension of writing. Swales (1990), for an instance, argues that writing "should not be viewed solely as an individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions . . . within particular communities" (p. 4).

Carl Bereiterand & Marlene Scardamalia (1985) proposed another model called *compare, diagnose and operate (CDO) planning stage*, developed from the evaluative and revising processes of Flower & Hayes in 1981 (cited in Becker,

2006). In designing and developing their model, Bereiterand &Scardamalia (1985) underpin the actual text written. In other words, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1985), according to Becker (2006), argue that any writer including the language learners in writing make a comparison between their mental text with what they have written during revision, recognize the problems; and function on the text to complete the revision phase.

The above mentioned two models to writing have served as the main theoretical basis for using the process approach in both L1 and L2 writing instruction. Hence, in these two models, the emphases are given to the processes the writers including the language learners go through which is accomplished in pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing, multiple drafts and peer-group editing activities which also involves collaborative brainstorming, choice of personally meaningful topics, or strategy instruction. The following numerates some empirical studies on writing skill by implementing the potentials of genre analsysis.

Sabouri, Zohrabi, &Vafa (2014) examined the influence of genre-based methodology to teaching writing in EFL contexts. To this end, 40 EFL learners were selected as the participants of the study who were randomly divided into two groups of experimental and control. The experimental group was instructed using the genre-based writing techniques and the control group through the traditional one. Their study revealed significant differences between the two groups with the supremacy of the experimental group. Arancon (2013) applied the SFL genre theory in analyzing the essays of students. His study showed that there are particular lexical-grammatical errors based on three macro-functions. Hence, he argues that genre-based instruction with the perspective of SFL is influential in improving the difficulties the Business English as an L2 go through in writing skill. He, particularly, argues that "better control of the canonical forms of the genre, they could start to be more unconventionally creative, but within the language system" (Arancon, 2013, p. 245).

Amogne (2013) made a study to improve the students' writing skills through the genre approach. In his study, Amogne (2013) examined the extent to which EFL students majoring English "improved their argumentative essay writing skills as they were exposed to a genre based writing practice with their writing teacher" (p. 242). The findings of his study showed that "students had serious problems of critiquing or rebutting opposition views and coming up with stronger refutations even after their exposure to genre based argumentative essay drafting" (Amogne, 2013, p. 242). His study also showed significant improvement in students' writing skills regarding "identifying the lexica-grammatical features and overall rhetorical (genre) structure of argumentative essays. The participants' reaction toward the approach was positive" (Amogne, 2013, p. 242).

Elashri (2013) made an investigation to explore the influence of genre-based approach on writing ability of the EFL Al-Azhr Secondary Students as well as their attitudes towards writing. Hence, two groups of experimental and control went under instruction—the experimental group using a genre-based approach and the control group using a traditional approach. To this end, he adopted and utilized a writing performance test, a holistic scoring rubric, an analytic scoring rubric and a writing attitude scale as the instruments of the study. His study showed "evidence for the effectiveness of using genre-based approach in developing students' writing performance and attitudes towards writing" (Elashri, 2013, p. 2).

Rezvani, Aqdam, &S aeidi (2012), adapting a semi-experimental pre-test/post-test assessment, studied the effect of a genre-based approach on writing ability of Iranian EFL students. To this end, 54 Iranian EFL students went under five weeks instruction which resulted into significant influence of genre-based instruction "on task-based writing achievement" (Rezvani, Aqdam, &Saeidi, 2012, p. 589).

Ahn (2012) explored the influence of implementing a genre-based method to improve the writing ability of Year 5 and 6, L2 primary school students. Hence, the students went through 10 weeks instruction which two lessons were covered in any week. Through the course, two types of genres, namely, report and essay writing were instructed. The students' writing samples were compared before they go under instruction and after the instruction. Hence, his study revealed that "the teacher's active scaffolding processes at the early stage of the cycle benefited students by making them aware of the different ways texts are organized for different communicative purposes" (Ahn, 2012, p. 2). Furthermore, his study showed that "students' confidence level increased and the approach encouraged a positive attitude towards writing" (Ahn, 2012, p. 2).

Rahman (2011) numerates the beneficences of genre-based approach on writing ability of EFL students. He argues that "the use of generic patterns can complement the dicta prescribed by the Process approach, and coordinating the approaches offers learners genuine opportunities to develop skills to reproduce coherent and cohesive texts" (Rahman, 2011, p. 8).

Hyland (2007) argues about the great advantages of genre-based methodology in teaching with writing. He emphasizes that "an understanding of the ways language is used to create meanings in writing empowers teachers by offering them ways to analyze texts, to reflect on the workings of language, and to provide more robust and targeted support for learners" (Hyland, 2004, p. 162). Hyland (2007) regards genre-based approaches as a major response to the needs of learners who are learning writing as a second or foreign language ability since, according to Hyland (2007, p. 163) "a well-formulated theory of how language works in human interaction has become an urgent necessity in the field of teaching second language writing".

3. Method

The main thrust of the study was to implement the tenets of genre analysis in teaching writing skill. To this end, two experimental and control groups were designed as the baseline of the study (the experimental group went under a genre-based instruction on on writing skill and the control group was instructed writing skill utilizing a traditional model).

In terms of the context of the study, Iranian EFL learners were the selected population who were selected from Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch. It should be mentioned that the selected participants were sophomores and juniors who had passed at least 50 credit hours and whose their age range was between 21 and 25 years old.

After a sixteen hours instruction, the both experimental and control groups were asked to write on a topic (the effects of smoking). Their scores were put in SPSS version 21 which was analyzed using t-test statistic. It is worth mentioning that both groups took previously their pretest, i.e. the same writing test.

Hence, the baseline for selecting this population as the population was convenience. The selected learners were homogeneous in terms of the native language as well as in terms of the language courses and the amount of credit hours presented to them. Effectively, the participants were 30 Iranian BA learners studying English at Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch. The selected participants composed of 15 females and 15 males (experimental group: 8 females and 7 males; control group: 7 females and 8 males).

The 60 Iranian BA learners were selected out of 70 learners who were studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch. In fact, the 70 participants took the adapted TOEFL test. After scoring and descriptive statistics, the ones whose scores were one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as the participants of the study which in this case 60 ones received the scores between one standard deviation above and below the mean.

The selected participants were randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control groups (they were randomly divided in order to guarantee that the samples are the representative of the population which highlights that the results of the study is generalizable for the whole population).

The two groups went under a sixteen hours instruction. Effectively, the experimental group received instruction on writing based on a genre-based instruction and the control group received instruction on writing utilizing a traditional model. The classes were held for two sessions per week, each session was two hours, for a total of 16 hours over four weeks. This study was quantitative and experimental survey.

The following sheds light on the steps in teaching writing to the experimental group:

1. Brainstorming: teacher suggested a topic (for example, marriage and its challenges), the participants—each one—said something regarding the topic which the teacher wrote on the board.

2. The learners, were asked to write a free composition on the topic;

3. In third stage, the teacher distributed several authentic forms of writing among the learners which differ in terms of formality, structure and context and asked them to detect the differences among different versions.

4. The learners discussed their points of view regarding different aspects of the exposed written materials;

5. The learners were asked to compare their compositions with the authentic versions through which they noticed the gaps in their writing ability;

6. The learners were asked to write on the topic several versions based on the distributed authentic writings as homework;

7. Their writing were encoded and discussed by teacher in order to consciously raised the learners to be equipped for improving their writing ability;

The following sheds light on the steps in teaching writing to the control group:

1. Introduce and brainstorm the topic

2. Increase range of vocabulary and write on the board

3. The learners were asked to write on the topic the teacher presented to them, while teacher provided the appropriate support in terms of language and linguistic deficiency the learners went through.

The variables of the study were reading comprehension, writing ability and genre-based instruction. The sex and age as well as the major of the participants were controlled in order to provide more dependable results.

In analyzing the data, t-test statistic was utilized which is a statistical technique for comparing the means of two independent populations to determines whether the performances of groups are significantly different or not. It is worth mentioning that there are two types for t-test statistic, paired-t-test statistic and independent sample t-test statistic. Paired-t-test statistic is utilized for comparing the progress of one group on pre-test and post-test; whereas, the independent sample t-test statistic is utilized for comparing the performance of two independent groups. In this study, the researcher utilized the both t-test statistic. In effect, the Paired-t-test statistic was utilized to investigate each group on the both pre-test and post-test. The independent sample t-test statistic was utilized to compare each two groups (reading experimental group vs. reading control group, writing experimental group vs. writing control group; reading experimental group, vs. writing experimental group) on the pre-test and post-test separately.

4. Results

30 EFL learners—15 learners in the experimental group and 15 ones in the control group—took the pre-writing test. Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of each group in detail:

Table 2. Pre-writing Test: Experimental vs. Control

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-writing	=exp.	15	1.7333	.96115	.24817
	=ctrl	15	1.4000	.50709	.13093

According to table 1, the mean score of the experimental group who took the pre-Writing test was 1.73 with the standard deviation of 0.96. In addition, the participants in the control group had the mean score of 1.40 and the standard deviation of 0.50. It is worth mentioning that the writings of the learners were scored out of 5 and the reading test out of 20. In a similar vein, t-test statistic was utilized to compare the performances of the two groups of experimental and control on the pre-writing test.

Table 3. T-test & Pre-writing Test: Experimental vs. Control

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pre-writing	Equal variances assumed	7.866	.009	1.188	28	.245	.33333	.28059	-.24143	.90809
	Equal variances not assumed			1.188	21.233	.248	.33333	.28059	-.24979	.91646

The p-value, as table 3 shows, is 0.245 which indicated to the non-significant differences between the two groups on the pre-writing test due to the fact that its value is higher than the cut score of 0.05.

The performances of the two genders were also compared on the pre-writing test. Table 4 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of their performances.

Table 4. Pre-writing Test: Females vs. Males

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-writing	=female	15	1.6000	.91026	.23503
	=male	15	1.5333	.63994	.16523

According to table 4, the standard deviation of females who were in the writing groups was 0.91 and their mean score was 1.60. Furthermore, the standard deviation and mean score of the males in the writing groups were 0.63 and 1.53, respectively. T-test statistic was utilized to compare the both genders on the pre-writing test which resulted into table 5:

Table 5. T-test & Pre-writing Test: Females vs. Males

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
prewriting	Equal variances assumed	2.502	.125	.232	28	.818	.06667	.28730	-.52183	.65517
	Equal variances not assumed			.232	25.122	.818	.06667	.28730	-.52489	.65822

This t-test as other previous run t-test statistics indicated to the non-significant differences between the two groups of genders since the p-value is 0.818 and quite above the cut value of 0.05. The next section is devoted to the results of the post-tests.

After a sixteen hours instruction, the writing-based groups, in a similar vein, took the same writing test they had taken before instruction as the post-writing test. The descriptive statistics of the performances of the two groups writing-based experimental and control were put in table 6.

Table 6. Post-writing Test: Experimental vs. Control

			Group Statistics		
	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-writing	=female	15	3.3333	.61721	.15936
	=male	15	2.6667	.48795	.12599

The mean score of the experimental group, according to the table, is 3.33 and their standard deviation is 0.61. The control group has the mean and standard deviation of 2.66 and 0.48, respectively.

In a similar vein, independent t-test was run to determine whether the two groups of experimental and control had significantly different performances on the posttest after instruction which lead to table 7:

Table 7. T-test & Post-writing Test: Experimental vs. Control

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-writing	Equal variances assumed	1.155	.292	3.282	28	.003	.66667	.20315	.25053	1.08280
	Equal variances not assumed			3.282	26.584	.003	.66667	.20315	.24953	1.08380

Table 7 indicated to significant differences between the performances of the two groups of experimental and control on the post-writing test. It means that genre-based instruction influenced the process of reading proficiency of the writing-based participants.

Paired-sample t-test was run to compare the differences between the performances of the participants before and after writing instruction as table 8 shows:

Table 8. T-test & writing Test: pre-writing vs. post-writing

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	prewriting - phase	.78333	.73857	.09535	.59254	.97413	8.215	59	.000

According to the table, there are significant differences between the writing-based groups before and after instruction which indicated to the efficiency of writing instruction. In the next phase, the both genders who took in the two writing-based instructional groups are compared. Table 9 illustrates the performances of the both genders on the writing post-test.

Table 9. Post-writing Test: Females vs. Males

			Group Statistics		
	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-writing	=female	15	3.1333	.74322	.19190
	=male	15	2.8667	.51640	.13333

According to table 9, the mean score of the females is 3.13 and their standard deviation is 0.74. Moreover, the mean and standard deviation of the males are 2.86 and 0.51 respectively. In a similar vein, t-test statistic which is appropriate for comparing the two independent groups was utilized which resulted into table 10.

Table 10. T-test & post-writing Test: females vs. males

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Post-writing	Equal variances assumed	2.409	.132	1.141	28	.263	.26667	.23367	-.21199	.74532
	Equal variances not assumed			1.141	24.962	.265	.26667	.23367	-.21463	.74796

Considering the information in the table shows that the differences between the two genders who went under writing instruction are non-significant since the p-value is above the cut score of 0.05.

5. Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

Likewise, the results of this study showed that genre analysis is capable in improving the writing skill which are in harmony with the previous studies. It means that, a genre-based framework needs to be implemented in the traditional teaching methodology on designing and developing a piece of writing through the utilized rhetorical schemata. In fact, the learners in the experimental group outperformed comparing their counterparts due to consideration of the discourse community, topic, setting, and function of the texts they were asked to write.

Teaching literacy skills has been emphasized by many researchers, for example, Hyland (2007) numerates the great advantages of genre-based methodology in teaching writing. He argues that "an understanding of the ways language is used to create meanings in writing empowers teachers by offering them ways to analyze texts, to reflect on the workings of language, and to provide more robust and targeted support for learners" (Hyland, 2004, p. 162).

Put it in a simpler way, genre-based approaches in teaching writing in a foreign or second language, according to Hyland (2007), is a major response to the needs of learners which provides "a well-formulated theory of how language works in human interaction" (Hyland, 2007, p. 163).

Hyland (2004), as one of the influential figures in supporting a genre based writing instruction, numerates the advantages of a genre based writing instruction as explicit, systematic, needs-based, supporting, empowering, critical and consciousness raising. He argues that explicit advantage of a genre based writing instruction refers to clarifying "what is to be learned to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills" (Hyland, 2004, p. 10). Systematic advantage of a genre based writing instruction refers to providing "a coherent framework for focusing on both language and contexts" (Hyland, 2004, p. 10). Needs-based advantage, according to Hyland (2004, p. 10), "ensures that course objectives and content are derived from students' needs" (p. 10). Supportive advantage, according to Hyland (2004, p. 10), enables the teacher to play "a central role in scaffolding student learning and creativity".

 Empowering advantage refers to the access which a genre based writing instruction provides "to the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts" (Hyland, 2004, p. 11).

Critical advantage, on the other hand, explicates "the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourses" (Hyland, 2004, p. 11). Last but not least, consciousness raising help the teacher to improve his/her "awareness of texts" in order to be able to "confidently advise students on their writing" (Hyland 2004, p. 11).

The second questions of the study tried to investigate the role of gender on the writing ability of the participants which asked whether there are any differences between the performances of males and females in the two groups who go under writing instruction. The results of the study showed a neutral role for gender which means that the both females and males performed similarly.

It was concluded that a genre-based approach which highlights the context of situation and culture is beneficial in improving the literacy skills of Iranian EFL learners. It seems that implementing a genre-based approach in teaching writing skill may lead to promising results in which the writing skill is improved greatly. It seems that the promising results of genre analysis is rooted in clarifying the discourse community and contextual situation it highly explicates. For example, in terms of writing, Yi (2009) argues that writing should be viewed as "the ability to perform writing tasks for a given purpose, satisfy a given discourse community with regard to the structure and content of the discourse, and communicate functionally" (Yi, 2009, p. 61).

Effectively, the results of the study indicated to the four principles suggested by Swanson (2003, p. 15) to be implemented in teaching classes, i.e., "the importance of meaning in language study; the essential need for authentic

research corpora; the necessity of investigating language variation; the existence of both routine and creativity in language production".

Notwithstanding, the results of this study also showed significant improvements in the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners who went under the genre-based instruction which are in line with the review of literature (e.g.Sabouri, Zohrabi, & Vafa, 2014; Arancon, 2013; Amogne, 2013; Elashri, 2013; Rezvani, Aqdam, & Saeidi, 2012; Ahn, 2012; Rahman, 2011).

In a nutshell, the writing ability of the learners who received a genre-based instruction showed to be statistically improved comparing the ability of their counterparts who were instructed using the traditional model. The results of the study also showed that gender played a non-significant and neutral role. In fact, genre analysis as a direction in which the community context, audiences, linguistic choices and markers are being clarified seems to be beneficial in equipping the learners with the necessary strategies to deal with writing skill. However, there are many elements which affect the writing skill of the learners; apparently, implementing genre analysis is beneficial.

Hence, the results of the study supported the arguments of some researchers like Badger and White (2000) who argue that writing skill is appropriately instructed using the principles of the genre analysis which has combined with the process-approach to writing in which using a set of revision processes is emphasized. They add that writing task may be reviewed from two viewpoints simultaneously, i.e. from the viewpoint of the writer and of readers which resulted into improved wring tasks.

This point is worth mentioning that in a genre analysis perspective to writing skill, there is an interaction among text—writing task, learner and genre—discourse community, linguistic choices which apparently influence the process of literacy skills which this study proved some merits in implementing a genre-based pedagogy in teaching writing skills.

The pedagogical implications of the study are as follow:

- Equipping the learners to construct or comprehend the meaning in its situational and cultural context resorting the principles of genre analysis
- Considering the association between form and meaning in its appropriate context and utilize the suitable markers;
- Utilizing multi ways the EFL learners are capable in comprehending and constructing meaning;
- The learners also learn to consider the discourse community which highlights the collaborative nature of literacy skills;
- Facilitating the development of sub-specific skills crucial in the both literacy skills;

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