

Genre-Based Instruction and Iranian EFL Learners' Argumentative Essay writing: Performance, Structure, Perceptions, and Authorial Identity in Focus

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ABSTRACT

The current mixed methods study was an attempt to approach genre-based instruction from a fourfold perspective. As for the quantitative phase, first, it was aimed to examine the effect of genre-based instruction (GBI) on EFL learners' argumentative essay writing performance. Second, the study investigated the overall organizational structure of learners' argumentative essays in control and experimental groups. The participants of the study were 71 learners selected out of an initial number of 95 chosen based on convenience sampling. The selected 71 learners were divided into two groups of 35 and 36 who were assigned to the control and experimental group, respectively. Then, a writing pretest was administered to the two groups. After the treatment, the participants in both groups were given a writing posttest. The quantitative findings indicated that GBI was significantly effective on learners' argumentative writing performance. Additionally, the quantitative structure analysis showed that the number of the argumentative essay elements in the essays of the experimental group was higher than those of the control group. Afterwards, ten participants in the experimental group were interviewed to seek their perceptions towards the efficacy of GBI in teaching argumentative essay writing and their authorial identity construction. The qualitative analysis of the interviews pointed to the learners' positive attitudes towards GBI and the usefulness of this type of instruction for improving their argumentative writing performance. Finally, the ten participants in the experimental group reported their positive perceptions with regard to their authorial identity construction.

KEYWORDS

L2 writing, genre; genre-based instruction (GBI); argumentative writing; writer identity; authorial identity

INTRODUCTION

Writing is considered as an individual undertaking, leading to the production of thought. The writing process involves one's goal-oriented, metacognitive monitoring and control (Vonne, Campbell & Filimon, 2018). In the view of Zhang and Liu (2017), writing has to do with the ability to produce a text, whereby the meaning is communicated to the reader effectively. Writing is thus a means of communication and of vital importance in learning both a first and a foreign language. Writing is considered an important area in language teaching and has recently attracted a great deal of attention in the Iranian (e.g., Alipanahi, 2015; Bonyadi, 2014; Ketabi & Torabi, 2013; khodabakhshzadeh & Samadi, 2018; Tabatabaei & Radi,

2012) and international (e.g., Lai, 2015; Melissourgoua & Frantzi, 2015; Prommas & Sinwongsuwat, 2011) context of English Language teaching (ELT).

According to Rusmawan (2017), English writing and correspondence play an important cross-cultural and traditional role in various contexts including business, cultural events, organizations, and governmental activities all over the world. It is believed that writing is a central component of education, characterized as a crucial path of language learning. Similarly, Pei, Zheng, Zhang and Liu (2017) emphasize that writing contributes to the development of career. Generally, it seems that learning writing skill serves as a proof, revealing one's mastery over a language. As pointed out by Prommas and Sinwongsuwat (2011), seemingly learners consider writing more challenging than speaking since in the case of writing, students have no access to the addressees' immediate feedbacks such as nonverbal expressions (e.g. body gestures, facial expressions, and head nodding) and verbal responses. Thus, the writer cannot figure out whether or not the addressee in question has grasped the intended message. Consequently, L2 learners need to write as clearly as possible to make sure that the right message is effectively transmitted (Melissourgoua & Frantzi, 2015). In fact, writing performance is viewed as a major component in the context of L2 learning and teaching (both EFL and ESL). College and university students find writing skill very important since they should deal with research writing as well as academic correspondence.

As a matter of fact, university students undertake writing in the early stages of their education to fulfill their assignments and composing personal letters up to the late stage, e.g., writing research, essay, research report, etc. Thus, for students, writing skill can be assessed as a predictor of success or failure in academic work. Lee (2013) asserts that there are multiple ways to deal with writing in the classroom. Some of these approaches include (a) product approach; (b) process approach; and (c) genre-based approach.

Historically, programs which take product approach to writing involve activities in which learners follow a model text. To this end, they are provided with some guidelines usually given at an early stage (Lee, 2006). As for process writing, the writer gets engaged in a reflective phase, whereby his/her own understanding is facilitated. In this context, language learners use various techniques such as "brainstorming" and "multiple drafting" (Ong, 2016). Given the important role of academic writing as well as the need to address the disadvantages of product and process approaches, and hence empowering learners to produce academic texts, a third approach to writing, namely, genre-based instruction was developed (Hyland, 2004).

Since its emergence, GBI has been the focus of numerous studies (e. g., Bae, 2012; Halira Abeni Litinin, 2012; Lee, 2006; Lee, 2013; Ong, 2016; Palmer, 2012; Rahman, 2011; Rusmawan, 2017; Salehpour, & Saeidi, 2016; Yang, 2016). As mentioned by Hyland (2005), the underlying assumption of genre-based pedagogies is that writers are always affected by their social activities, their engagement with their readers, as well as their interaction with their surroundings. Recent decades have seen a notable increased attention to "genre" and its uses in EFL and ESL classes. This development has been mainly created on the heels of emerging views of "discourse analysis". Another development which has contributed to this change has to do with the new approaches taken to the acquisition of writing skill. These new approaches involve better understanding of how to structure language so as to realize social and cultural goals in particular contexts of use (Yang, 2016).

Literary text types and the recurrent and predictable patterns seen in academic and literary writings utilized in a certain society are all considered genres, according to Hammond and Derewianka (2001). According to a survey of the literature, genre is defined in western nations as spoken or written discourse, which is frequently classified according to its primary

social functions. According to Hyland (2003), genre refers to socially recognized, abstract methods of employing language for certain goals.

As mentioned by Derewianka (2003), teachers working based on genre-oriented approaches must recognize that genres are not merely the manifestation of templates or of static rules and conventions, but have flexibility and rhetorical function. In fact, genre represents an ever-shifting, interactional process. Argumentative is a type of genre and has to do with asserting a claim. In the view of Crowhurst (1990), writing an argumentative essay poses more challenges compared to other types of writing since developing an argument is more demanding cognitively than developing a narrative one. Given the nature of argumentation itself, the writer puts forth a position toward a controversial issue by providing reasons and viewpoints, clarifying goals and going into details related to those opinions. Here the aim is to convince the audience to accept or not accept a position (Butler & Britt, 2011). Crowhurst (1991) maintains that poor organization because of lacking or inadequate knowledge of the argumentative structure and failure to provide detailed reasons to reinforce the arguments is one of the challenges faced by writers while composing argumentative writing. One more issue is concerned with using styles inappropriately as the learners whose language knowledge is developing in this respect. They are likely to produce inappropriate style of writing induced by employing inappropriate registers of language, and wrong connectors (Zainuddin, Rafik-Galea, 2016).

When writers take a particular stance toward a specific topic, this process can help them with the construction of their writer identity (Lee, 2017). Ivanič (1998) refers to four main dimensions of writer identity, namely as a) 'authorial'; b) 'discoursal'; c) 'autobiographical', and d) 'social/institutional' identity (pp.23-31). As defined by Ivanič (1998), authorial identity describes "a sense of self-worth or writers' voice in the sense of their position, opinions, and beliefs that enable them to write with authority, to establish an authorial presence in the text, and to enhance their willingness to make claims" (p.24-29). Although studies have shown that in argumentative genre, student-writers are instructed to remain objective with regard to their personal identification (Hyland, 2002), strategies such as GBI can help them to demonstrate some dimensions of writer identity (Martin, 1997, as quoted in Lee, 2017). According to Hyland (2002), due to some strategies such as avoiding the use of first person pronouns in academic writing, L2 writers may fail to develop a confident writer identity. Lee's (2017) study, in particular, showed that in argumentative writing, student-writers felt less confident with regard to developing their writer identity, as they did not succeed in pursuing the rules and basics of academic writing, (i.e., objectivity) on the one hand, and in showing their voice as writers on the other hand. In fact, various studies (e.g., Edberg, 2018; Lee, 2017; McKinley, 2017; Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014; Thomas & Reinertsen, 2019) put forward to the significance of writer identity construction particularly in academic writing. From the social constructivist perspective, all aspects of writer identity are in a state of flux which can be altered or advanced over time (Ivanič, 1998). Thus, it seems logical to examine student-writers' identity development after being instructed by a genre-based approach.

Similar to GBI, and writer identity construction, argumentative writing has also been subject to many studies (e.g; Almelhi, 2014; Butler & Britt, 2011; Fadhly & Ratnaningsih, 2017; Hasani, 2016; Henning Wachsmuth, Al-Khatib & Stein, 2016; Keskitalo, 2014; Pei, Zheng, Zhang & Liu, 2017; Ryu, 2016; Vonne, Campbell & Filimon, 2018; Zainuddin, Rafik-Galea, 2016; Zolotova, 2014). However, none of the previous studies in the Iranian context of ELT in particular, to the researchers' best knowledge, has adopted a fourfold approach toward genre-based instruction and argumentative writing. In line with the purposes of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does GBI significantly impact the argumentative essay writing performance of Iranian EFL learners?
2. Does GBI significantly impact the overall organizational structure of argumentative essays written by Iranian EFL learners?
3. How do Iranian EFL learners perceive the efficacy of GBI in their argumentative essay writing in terms of structure and performance?
4. How do Iranian EFL learners perceive the efficacy of GBI in their authorial identity construction while engaging in argumentative essay writing?

RESEARCH METHODS

Design

The research design was mixed methods explanatory sequential, in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches are merged in one single study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In the present study, both the writing tests (quantitative approach) and the semi-structured interview (qualitative approach) were employed to collect the data required to answer the research questions.

Participants

Ninety-five Iranian women studying at an intermediate language institute in Tehran were the original participants in this study. These individuals were chosen via non-random convenience selection because of their availability and manageability. The researcher approached many intermediate courses at a language school in Tehran to choose study volunteers, and six classes agreed to take part. Each class included around seventeen EFL students. The age range of the participants was 20 to 30, with a mean age of 22.93. First, it was thought to be important to ensure that all of the participants had the same level of language competence. In order to achieve this, a Nelson English Language Test (Appendix A) was given to the first 95 students. Only those whose results fell within +/- on standard deviation from the mean were chosen as the primary study participants. The test had previously been piloted on thirty EFL students to ensure reliability. In order to do this, 71 students were chosen and split into two groups. 36 students were placed in the experimental group and 35 students were allocated to the control group. Moreover, out of 36 participants in the experimental group, 10 EFL learners, whose informed consent was obtained, were randomly selected and interviewed to identify the possible efficacy of GBI in teaching argumentative essay writing, and their authorial identity construction.

Instruments

The following instruments were used in the present study:

Nelson English language test

Nelson–Denny was used to homogenize the participants in terms of overall language proficiency. The Nelson–Denny test was created in 1929 by M.S. Nelson and E.C. Denny. The Nelson–Denny contains two sections (Vocabulary and Comprehension) in the form of multiple choice questions. It was revised and published for the last time in 1993 and is available from Riverside Publishing in Itasca, Illinois. The test was chosen from Nelson English Language Tests Book. To this end, Test 200 B was selected. This test consists of 45 multiple choice items (Appendix A). The results obtained from the test were drawn on to examine participants' overall English language proficiency. Although Nelson test is not a comprehensive test containing speaking and listening skills but it could serve the purpose of the study for homogenizing students in terms of language competence. This was because the

study did not contain any variables related to speaking and listening and also that administering a comprehensive proficiency test was not manageable due to lack of experts for measuring speaking proficiency. As for homogenizing students in terms of writing ability, a separate writing test was administered.

Writing pretest

To make sure that all of the participants were uniform in their ability to produce argumentative essays, a writing pretest was given in which they had to compose an essay on a topic that was obtained from the Internet. Twenty contentious themes (Appendix B) were first gathered from the Internet in order to choose the subjects. First, they were shown to three Ph.D. candidates in TEFL who had at least 15 years of experience teaching English as a foreign language to ensure that the issues were debatable. After that, the themes were given to the students, who were then asked to rank them from most to least fascinating on a scale. It should be mentioned that participants were presented the subjects, and students were asked to score them on a Likert scale where 1 meant they detested the issue. 2 = this is not my favorite topic. 3 = this is a topic I enjoy. 4 = this is a topic I truly enjoy. 5 = I adore this subject. The two subjects that were most popular were then determined by adding up all of the participant scores for each topic. The results of grading the topics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Results Related to Rating the Topics by the Participants

Topic number	Rating results
1	275
2	255
3	185
4	150
5	140
6	132
7	125
8	124
9	120
10	112
11	100
12	93
13	90
14	89
15	86
16	84
17	78
18	75
19	73
20	70

Pre-test and post-test themes were selected from the two most popular topics (Appendix C). The participants were given a topic and assessed on their abilities to reply by offering and defending a viewpoint, talking about the topic, summarizing specifics, describing issues, suggesting potential solutions, and providing reasons for their writing.

Writing Posttest

After the treatment, a writing posttest was administered. As mentioned earlier, the second most popular topic was chosen for post-test purposes. For both pretest and posttest, the

participants had 60 minutes to write a 250-word essay on the given topic. The writing tests were scored by three raters. They were three Ph.D. candidates in TEFL and had about 15 years of teaching experience.

Scoring Scheme

The scoring method utilized for the writing assessments was developed by Wang and Liao (2008) (Appendix D). This scheme had five criteria: Focus, Elaboration/Support, Organization, Conventions, and Vocabulary. Each of these criteria had five item descriptions. Inter-rater dependability was developed using the Pearson coefficient correlation calculation to ensure the consistency of the ratings. The Pearson correlation coefficient data for the pre-test and post-test scores that were assigned by the three raters are displayed in Tables 2 and 3, respectively.

Table 2. Results of Pearson correlation coefficient of the three raters for the pre-test scores

		Rater one Pre-test	Rater two Pre-test	Rater three Pre-test
Rater one Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	1	.727	.793
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003	.002
	N	60	60	60
Rater two Pre-test	Pearson Correlation	.727	1	.875
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003		.004
	N	60	60	60

Table 3. Results of Pearson correlation coefficient of the three raters for the post-test scores

		Rater one Post-test	Rater two Post-test	Rater three Post-test
Rater one Post-test	Pearson Correlation	1	.810	.748
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.042
	N	60	60	60
Rater two Post-test	Pearson Correlation	.810	1	.821
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001
	N	60	60	60

As Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate, all the reliability indices are above .70 and thus at a satisfactory level.

Semi-structured Interviews

In order to explore the perceptions of Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level towards the efficacy of GBI in teaching argumentative essay writing, and their authorial identity construction, the researchers developed a list of six semi-structured interview questions (Appendix E) and gave them to 10 participants in the experimental group in order to address the third and fourth research questions of the study.

Procedure

Initially, a Nelson proficiency test, after being piloted on 30 participants, was given to 95 learners selected based on convenience sampling. Then, those learners whose scores fell within the range of +/- one standard deviation were selected as the participants of the study. To this end, 71 learners were selected and divided into two groups. 35 learners were assigned to the control group and 36 were put into the experimental group.

Then, a writing pretest was administered in which the participants wrote an essay on a topic in order to ensure that they were homogenous in terms of overall argumentative essay writing performance. After that, the treatment was administered.

During 10 sessions, the control group was taught how to write effectively, drawing on some essay writing tasks. The teacher provided the learners with the general guidelines for writing such as jumbled sentences as well as jumbled paragraphs different model essay texts including sports, life, entertainments and so on.

In this group, there were no analyses and explanations of various genres and the focus was on general writing guidelines and tips. As an example, one session was devoted to topic sentence and supporting sentences followed by practicing several writing assignments. Another session was spent on introductory and concluding paragraphs and so on.

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The topics covered in this class included: transitions between subtopics and clear distinctions between principal and secondary ideas, the clarity of relationship among ideas, evidencing organizational and developmental principles such as cause and effect, comparison, chronology, or other orderings appropriate to the target language culture. On the other hand, in the experimental group in addition to the aforesaid procedure for the control group, 30 minutes of each class was devoted to genre-based instruction of writing argumentative essays in 10 sessions.

To this end, the learners were introduced to the functions and components of argumentative essay genre and its moves were presented and then practiced during the treatment period. The presentation of the moves was based on GBI which is comprehensively elaborated on in what follows after the definition of a move and the moves of argumentative essay proposed by Hyland (1990). A move is thought to be “part of a text whose purpose is to fulfill the overall purpose of a genre” (Swales, 1990, p.43). In the words of Henry and Roseberry (2001, p.154) “a move can be thought of as a part of text, written or spoken, which achieves a particular purpose within the text. Move contributes in some way to fulfilling the overall purpose of the genre”. According to Hyland (2008), these moves are as follows:

1. Gambit (Attention grabber)
2. Information (provides background information to contextualize the issue)
3. Assessment (positive gloss, succinct argumentation)
4. Marker (identifies and/or presents a list)
5. Marker (identifies a claim's beginning and connects it to the text)
6. Restatement (rewording or restating the thesis)
7. Claim (explains why the proposal should be accepted).
8. Support (explains the foundation for the assertion)
9. Marker (indicates the end border)
10. Consolidation (shows how important the proposition is to the argument stage)
11. Reiterating the idea, or affirmation
12. Close (expands the context)

The first four moves are characterized as Thesis; the second four elements are classified under Argument, and the last four moves are featured as Conclusion.

As mentioned earlier, there were ten sessions all together. In the first session, the students were provided with the introduction paragraph of a number of argumentative essays. They were asked to try to figure out any sort of organization that the introductory paragraph

contains. In this way, the way the sentences are connected to each other and how the argument starts falling into shape were discussed with the learners. In the second session, some introductory paragraphs with jumbled sentences were given to the students. Students were expected to rearrange the sentences to come up with the correct order. In this regard, teacher encouraged the students to explain why they had selected a certain arrangement or the other. In the third session, students were provided with some topics of their interest and asked to compose an introductory paragraph. They were then provided with some sample introductory paragraphs on the same topics taken from the Internet and asked to evaluate their own paragraphs based on the samples.

The fourth session was spent on the analysis of the body paragraphs of the same essays belonging to the first three sessions. Students were asked to read the body paragraph and try to figure out its organization. In this respect, the way the sentences are connected to each other and how the argument starts developing were discussed with the learners. In the fifth session, some paragraphs with jumbled sentences were given to the students. Students were expected to rearrange the sentences to come up with the correct order. In this regard, the teacher encouraged the students to explain why they had selected a certain arrangement or the other. In the sixth session, students were asked to compose a body paragraph for the same topics in the first stage. They were then given some body paragraphs on the same topics from the Internet and asked to make comparisons with the samples.

The seventh, eighth and ninth sessions were spent on the concluding paragraph in the same manner. In the tenth session, students were given new topics to write essays on. Afterwards, they were provided with sample argumentative essays written on the same topics and asked to compare their essays with the essays taken from the Internet.

It is noteworthy that after each session, discussions were held regarding different elements concerning the organization of the paragraphs and essays composed by the participants. This is in line with Lemke (1994, p. 11) who states that a genre-based approach to writing instruction teaches learners “to dissect a text into its component parts, and to construct a text from its component parts, emphasizing an explicit understanding of the parts, their relations to one another, and the functions of part and the whole in their contexts.”

At the end of the treatment, one writing test was given to the learners as posttest based on which we had one set of scores concerning writing performance of the learners concerning argumentative writing performance. In this test, the participants wrote an essay based on a topic taken from the Internet to see whether their writing performance has improved.

The study also examined the overall organizational structure of learners’ argumentative essays in both control and experimental groups to see whether GBI did make a difference in the structure. Finally, ten participants of the experimental group were interviewed in order to explore their perceptions toward the efficacy of GBI in argumentative essay writing and also in their authorial identity construction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To select the participants of the study, initially Nelson was administered to 95 learners at the intermediate level. Table 4 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for the initial 95 learners.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the initial 95 learners

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Nelson95	95	30.00	15.00	45.00	34.4526	.59312	5.78106
Valid N (listwise)	95						33.421

Following that, those learners whose scores fell within ± 1 standard deviation from the mean were selected. Based on this procedure, 71 learners were selected and divided into two groups. To this end, 36 learners were assigned to the experimental and the remaining 35 were put into the control group.

Answering the First Research Question

It was first necessary to confirm that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups' argumentative essay performance before the treatment in order to investigate whether genre-based instruction significantly affects Iranian EFL learners' argumentative essay writing performance at the intermediate level. As a result, the two groups each received a writing pretest before the therapy began. The descriptive statistics for the writing pretest results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Pretest Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

	Groups	Experimental	Control	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test Writing	Experimental			36	13.2222	1.62324	.27054
	Control			35	13.1714	2.12112	.35854

Table 6 reports the results of independent samples t-test on the writing pretest scores of the two groups.

Table 6. Independent Samples T-test Results for the Writing Pretest Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Pre-test Writing	Equal variances assumed	.369	.546	.114	69	.910	.05079	.44748	-.84191	.94349
	Equal variances not assumed			.113	63.6	.910	.05079	.44915	-.84658	.94817

As Table 6 indicates, the significant value is higher than 0.05. Thus, there is no significant difference between the means of the scores for the two groups.

Subsequent to the treatment, a writing posttest was administered to the two groups to investigate any significant difference on the writing posttest scores of the two groups. Table 7 shows the results of descriptive statistics for the posttest writing scores.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Posttest scores of the Experimental and Control Groups

	Groups	Experimental	Control	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post Writing	Experimental			36	17.3333	1.39386	.23231
	Control			35	15.0000	2.04364	.34544

Table 8 displays the results of independent samples t-test on the writing posttest scores of the two groups.

Table 8. Independent Samples T-test Results for the Posttest Scores

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Post Writing	Equal variances assumed	3.42	.06	5.63	69	.000	2.33	.41	1.50	3.15
	Equal variances not assumed			5.60	59.82	.000	2.33	.41	1.50	3.16

As Table 6 presents, the significant value is lower than 0.05. Thus, there is a significant difference between the means of the writing posttest scores for the two groups with the experimental group outperforming the control group.

Answering the Second Research Question

To investigate the overall organizational structure of English argumentative essays written by Iranian EFL learners, the learners' essays in both control and experimental groups were analyzed and the elements proposed by Hyland (2008) were counted. These elements included: Gambit, Information, Evaluation, Marker of a List, Marker of a Claim, Restatement, Claim, Support, Marker of Conclusion, Consolidation, Affirmation, and Close. Figure 1 displays the elements in the essays written by control group on pretest and posttest.

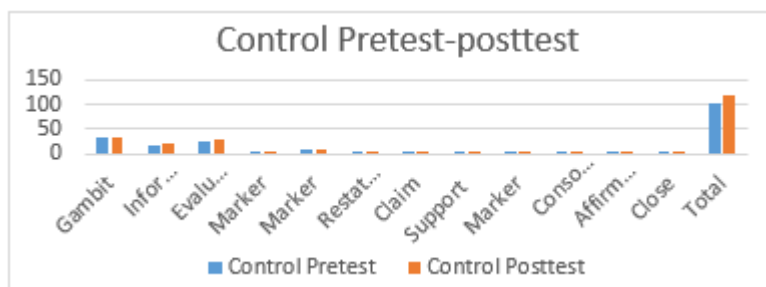


Figure 1. The elements in the essays written by control group on pretest and posttest

As it is noticed in Figure 1, the number of elements on pretest and posttest for the control group are almost the same for all the elements.

Figure 2 demonstrates the elements in the essays written by experimental group on pretest and posttest.

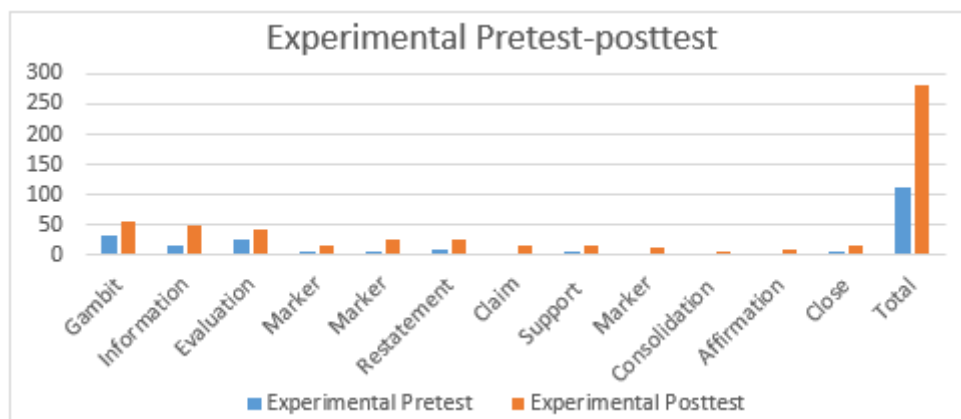


Figure 2. The elements in the essays written by experimental group on pretest and posttest

As it is seen in Figure 2, the number of elements has increased for almost all the elements from the pretest to posttest for the experimental group. For more clarity, the number of elements on pretest essays for control and experimental groups on pretest are shown in Figure 3.

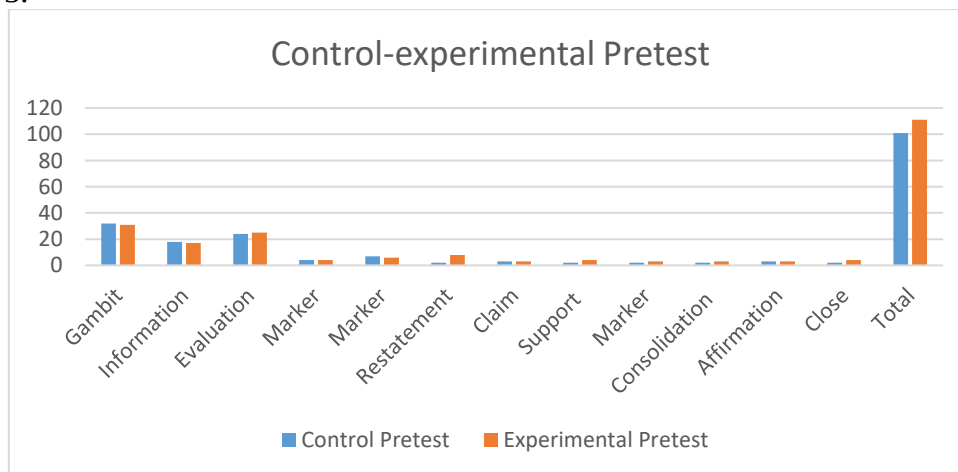


Figure 3. The elements in the essays written by experimental and control group on pretest

As demonstrated in Figure 3, the number of almost all the elements is the same on pretest for both groups. Figure 4 displays the number of elements on posttest essays for control and experimental groups on posttest.

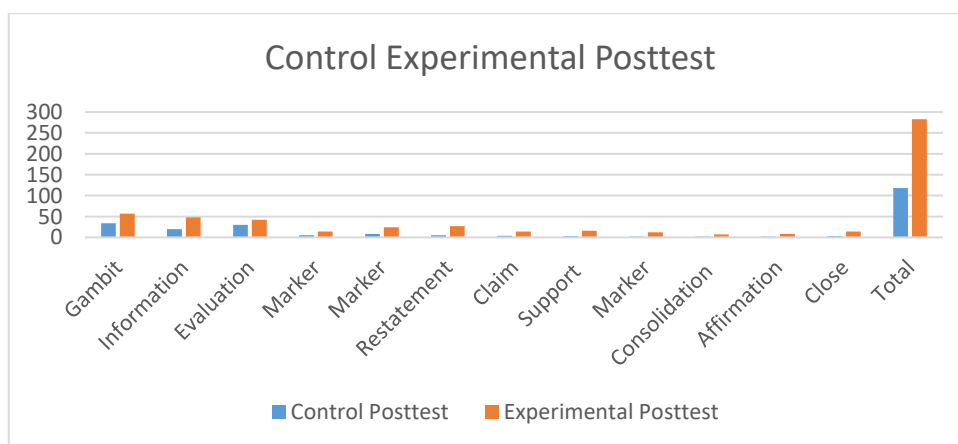


Figure 4. The elements in the essays written by experimental and control group on posttest

As seen in Figure 4, the number of all the elements in the essays by the experimental group is higher than those by the control group which indicates that GBI has had a positive effect on the use of argumentative elements in students' writings. Some examples of argumentative elements which were extracted from the experimental group's posttest essays are presented in the following excerpts:

Gambit: There is no doubt that volunteer work can play an important role in the development of business and education in any society.

Information and background knowledge: Volunteering provides a golden opportunity to change people's lives. It may give volunteer workers a sense of satisfaction while

supporting those who may not be able to achieve their wishes. Moreover, volunteer workers can gain valuable work experience and develop their social skills as well.

Evaluation (positive gloss-brief support of proposition): I strongly support the idea that social organizations should encourage volunteer work in different layers of our society, including education and business.

Marker (list identifier): A number of reasons can be listed for supporting volunteer work in schools and business organizations.

Marker of a claim: Not only does volunteer work awaken a sense of responsibility, but it also gives opportunities to people who are at the beginning of their carrier path.

Restatement: Another reason why volunteering must be supported is to encourage university graduates to deal with real issues of workplaces and try to come up with possible solutions.

Claim (reason for acceptance of the proposition): It is indisputable that volunteer work can help particularly educated people to show their capabilities to their community members and improve their self-fulfilment and self-esteem by getting involved in social activities.

Support (the ground for underpinning the claim): Statistics show that volunteering associations contribute to entrepreneurship opportunities in developing countries.

Marker of the conclusion boundary: To conclude, volunteer associations can provide a wide range of services for those who are engaged in educational and commercial organizations.

Affirmation: In sum, I strongly suggest that

Answering the Third Research Question

To explore learners' perceptions towards the efficacy of GBI in teaching argumentative essay writing, ten participants, who were randomly chosen from the experimental group, were interviewed by the researchers. The first interview question sought to probe if teaching the genre of argumentative essay sections and subsections in details helped learners understand this type of writing better. All the interviewees commented that this type of teaching assisted them in understanding different sections of argumentative essays. As one of the interviewees said:

“Since the teacher clearly explained all the sections, it was easy for me to understand all the sections and I easily noticed the whole structure of this type of essay. I can now picture all the sections and tell you what information should be put in each section.”

Overall, the participants believed that teaching the genre of argumentative essay sections and subsections in details helped you understand this type of writing better.

The second interview question set out to find if the learners found argumentative essay writing interesting. Almost all the interviewees mentioned that genre-based instruction was interesting for them.

“As the teacher talked explicitly about different sections of the argumentative essay genre, it was very useful. After all the sessions I could write an argumentative essay very easily.”

The third interview question sought to explore if learners would like to receive genre-based instruction for other types of writing (e.g., letters of application) in your future courses. One of the interviewees commented that:

“I am sure this type of instruction is really helpful for all other kinds of writing and I would like to receive the same type of instruction for other writing types.”

All of the participants expressed willingness to receive such instruction for other genres of writing such as application letters.

The third interview question sought to examine the way(s) GBI helped learners improve their writing. The participants believed that talking about each component of the genre had helped them understand the overall organization of the argumentative essays which had consequently led to their improvement in terms of argumentative essay performance. As one of the interviewees thought:

“The teacher told us about different parts of writing and gave us examples for each part. So, many examples and the teachers’ explanations was very useful for understanding the parts of genre.”

The fourth interview question aimed to discover what the learners liked most and least concerning genre-based instruction of argumentative essays. As for the point they liked most about the GBI, the participants mentioned that the lessons were easy to follow and the overall structure of presentation in the class was more organized compared with writing instruction in classes which were not based on genre instruction. With regard to the point they liked least, the participants believed that there was too much writing and they had to write many essay samples.

Answering the Fourth Research Question

In order to examine how Iranian EFL learners perceive the efficacy of GBI in their authorial identity construction while engaging in argumentative essay writing, the previously selected ten participants were also asked to take part in an interview with regard to their writer identity and their voice as a writer of an argumentative essay. The qualitative analysis of the interviews revealed that the participants had positive perceptions with regard to their authorial identity construction through GBI. One of the interviewees commented that:

“GBI helped me construct my authorial identity while writing an argumentative essay. That is to say GBI assisted me recognize the importance of distinguishing my own voice from other individuals’ perspectives.”

Another student commented that:

“GBI aided me to transfer the uniqueness of my contribution to establish commitment and authority while engaging in argumentative essay writing.”

Overall, as stated earlier, the results showed that GBI was sufficiently helpful in constructing language learners’ authorial identity while engaging in argumentative essay writing, as one of the interviewees stated:

“Through GBI I realized that in argumentative type of writing the authors’ voice and stance should be clearly presented since we are supposed to argue different issues and thus our voice should be clearly stated.”

Likewise, another student commented that:

“Genre-based instruction helped me identify that in this type of writing (i.e., argumentative type writing) more socialist presentation of my voice and stance should be practiced since I believe that identity of the author is in actual fact constructed by the use of such features.”

Additionally, another student asserted that:

“Genre-based instruction encouraged me to meticulously study different text models thus helping me to recognize and also write appropriately with clearly while presenting my voice and viewpoint in different genres in general and argumentative genre in particular.”

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to investigate how genre-based training affected the argumentative essay writing abilities of EFL students. The study also aimed to investigate how learners perceived the effectiveness of genre-based training in enhancing their ability to write argumentatively. The current study also made an effort to look at the general form of English argumentative essays that Iranian EFL learners wrote. The study's conclusions showed that genre-based education had a major positive impact on students' ability to write persuasively. The interview results demonstrated that students' opinions toward genre-based training were good and that they may benefit from this kind of instruction to write more persuasively. Additionally, the findings showed that the quantity of each component in the articles written by the experimental

The findings of the present study concerning the positive effect of genre-based instruction on argumentative essay writing performance are in line with Lee's (2006) study. The study conducted by Lees showed that EFL writers were able to write longer and more well-structured compositions with better contents following being trained based on the genre-based approach. Similarly, the results of the current study are consistent with an investigation conducted by Salehpour and Saeidi (2016), indicating that genre-based teaching was effective in enhancing academic writing. The results of the present study are also in line with Ong (2016)'s study, which revealed that the participants who had been exposed to genre-based instruction had improved in their capability to employ all the rhetorical and linguistic rules of a literary criticism piece of writing. In the same vein, the study conducted by Bae (2012) revealed that the experimental group which had been exposed to explicit genre-based instruction outperformed the control group statistically in terms of their writing ability. The present study's conclusions align with the research conducted by Henry and Roseberry (1998). We taught L2 students how to create travel brochures. According to their research, the genre group outperformed the non-genre group in terms of performance. More in-depth data analysis showed that understanding the content's normal structure aided learners in organizing their thoughts to meet their communicative objectives and produce more coherent writing.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are in keeping with the comments of functional linguistic scholars, asserting that emphasis on functional language plays a central role in enhancing “advanced language learning” in foreign language education (e.g., Byrnes, 2006; Byrnes, 2009; Byrnes, 2010). The results of the present study further reinforce the comments of many researchers concerning the positive effect of Genre-Based Instruction on writing performance and the argumentative essay writing (Miller, 1984; Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 1998; Chen, 2002; Jin, 2004; Wang & Zhang, 2006).

The results of this study suggest that teaching genre shifts explicitly can aid EFL students in producing more persuasive argumentative essays. This study shows that by being familiar

with the task's genre conventions, EFL students may be taught to write well. Moreover, the results support the claim that because genres are not explicitly taught, L2 authors are denied beneficial chances (Delpit, 1988; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Fairclough, 1995; Hass, 1996; Johns & Swales, 2002). According to this study, writers who intentionally pay attention to genre are more focused on the ways in which language operates and is organized to convey meaning in the argumentative genre (Martin, 2009; Yasuda, 2011). Besides, when students completed their writing following being exposed to the treatment which clarified to them how the genre works, their knowledge of the genre served as an outline that gave an overall framework for their writing in the posttest. Clearly, deconstruction of the moves contextualized in the genre to be taught helped the writers to construct genre on the posttest.

The findings of the current experiment are consistent with the results of previous genre-based studies in foreign language programs (e.g. Byrnes, 2009; Byrnes, 2010; Yasuda, 2011) that showed improvement in learners' writing performance due to the explicit instruction of genre. Given the results of the current study, scholars who take the GBI approach do well to encourage teachers to become more familiar with genre so that they can transfer this knowledge to the learners. According to Connor (1990), being equipped with explicit knowledge of genres helps teachers to acquire a better idea of the skills learners need to do. According to Haas (1996), when teachers start teaching with interest and real understanding of discourse patterns, they can guide the learners to read and write different disciplinary genres available to them.

Furthermore, the content analysis of the interviews revealed that participants believed that GBI was adequately beneficial in constructing their authorial identity while engaging in argumentative essay writing. Research on writing in general and academic writing in particular has long highlighted the link between writing and the construction of authors' identity (Hyland, 2008). According to Burgess (2002), the presentation of authorial identity in the academic texts is a sign that authors want to enter 'intimate gatherings' or 'packed houses'. In other words, engaging in argumentative essay writing and with the purpose of claiming "a space in the 'packed' competitive sphere of international publication" (Mur-Duenas & Sinkunien, 2016, p.), it is critical to authors to make a vigorous authorial presence in their own writings demonstrating their own contribution to their field.

Based on the findings of the present study it can be concluded that GBI can lead to a more construction of writer's identity especially while students are engaging in argumentative writing such as academic texts in which they have to argue and discuss their views in detail. Consequently, it can be argued that educators should not avoid the use of first person pronouns, but should teach language learners how to use them more effectively through GBI. In other words, as pointed out by some scholars and researchers (e.g., Tang & John, 1999; Taylor, 2017), the writers' identity and presence should be more evident when arguing different academic issues, suggesting that through GBI students should be taught as to when, where and how to use those pronouns and construct their authorial identity.

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