

IN THE NAME OF GOD  
THE COMPATIONATE  
THE MERCIFUL

**University Of Guilan**  
**Faculty of Literature and Humanities**  
**English Language Department**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENT FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING  
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**The Effect of Genre-Based  
Teaching on Reading  
Comprehension of Literary Texts**

By

Zahra Maleknia

Supervisor: Dr. Behzad Barekat

Advisor: Dr. Jaleh Hassaskhah

September, 2010

*DEDICATED TO*  
*MY DEAR MOTHER*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Barekat, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.

Besides, I offer my regards and blessings to my advisor Dr. Hassaskhah who supported me in any respect during the completion of the research.

Finally, an honorable mention goes to my family and friends for their understandings and supports on me in completing this project. Without helps of the particular that mentioned above, I would face many difficulties while doing this thesis.

## **Chapter One**

<b>Background 1-1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1-2 A brief review of "genre" and "genre analysis"</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>GBT as Related To Comprehension of Literary Texts 1-3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1-4 Statement of the problem</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Research questions and hypothesis 1-5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1-6 Purpose of the study</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1-7 Definition of key terms</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1-8 Limitations of the study</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1-9 Outline of the study</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Chapter Two**

<b>2-1 Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2-2 Genre and genre analysis</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2-3 Review of genre accepted definitions and view points</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2-4 Methods (theories) of genre analysis</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>2-4-1 ESP</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2-4-2 Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL)</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>2-4-3 New Rhetoric</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2-5 Three major approaches of genre analysis and the model presented</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>2-6 Using GBT as an effective EFL teaching tool</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>2-7 Literature and language learning</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>2-7-1 Considerations in linking literature to language learning classrooms</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2-7-2 Short story as a genre</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>2-7-2-1 Elements of short story</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>2-7-3 Story and language learning</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>2-7-3-1 Why use stories</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>2-7-4 Story, culture and non-native students</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>2-8 Reading</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>2-9 Attitudes and language learning</b>	<b>45</b>

<b>2-10 summary, emerging issues and need for empirical research</b>	<b>48</b>
--	-----------

### **Chapter Three**

<b>3-1 Introduction</b>	<b>50</b>
-------------------------	-----------

<b>3-2 Site and sample</b>	<b>51</b>
----------------------------	-----------

<b>3-3 Instrumentation</b>	<b>52</b>
----------------------------	-----------

<b>3-4 Design of the study</b>	<b>53</b>
--------------------------------	-----------

<b>3-5 Procedure</b>	<b>54</b>
----------------------	-----------

### **Chapter Four**

<b>4-1 Introduction</b>	<b>60</b>
-------------------------	-----------

<b>4-2 Outline of the study procedure</b>	<b>61</b>
---	-----------

<b>4-3 Checklist preparation</b>	<b>63</b>
----------------------------------	-----------

<b>4-4 statistical analysis</b>	<b>64</b>
<i>4-4-1 Statistical analysis of independent samples t-test of multiple-choice pre- test (MCH)</i>	<b>65</b>
<i>4-4-2 Statistical analysis of independent samples t-test of the essay-type (comment)</i>	<b>69</b>
<i>4-4-3 Statistical analysis of independent samples t-test of the multiple-choice post test</i>	<b>73</b>
<i>4-4-4 Statistical analysis of independent samples t-test of the essay-type (comments) post test</i>	<b>76</b>
<b>4-5 Attitude survey</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>4-5 -1 The result of attitude survey</b>	<b>81</b>
<i>4- 5- 2 Students' general attitudes towards literature and short story</i>	<b>82</b>
<b>Students' comments and suggestions 4-5-3</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>4-6 Summary</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<b>5-1 Introduction</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>5-2 Restatement of the problem</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>5-3 Summary of findings and discussion</b>	<b>88</b>



<b>5-4 Limitations of the study</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>5-5 Pedagogical implications</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>5-6 Conclusion</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Appendix A (teachers' manual)</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Appendix B (pre test and post test)</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Appendix C (checklist)</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>List Of Figures</b>	
<b>Table 4-1 Outline of the study procedure</b>	<b>62</b>
<i>Table 4-2 correlation</i>	<b>63</b>
<b>Table 4-3 Group Statistics <i>pretest(MCH)</i></b>	<b>65</b>

<b>Table 4-4 Independent Samples Test <i>pre test (MCH)</i></b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Table 4-5 <i>pretest frequency MCH</i></b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Table 4-6 Group Statistics(<i>comment</i>)</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Table 4-7 Independent Samples Test <i>pretest (comment)</i></b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Table 4-8 <i>frequency (comment)</i></b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Table 4-9 Group Statistics <i>post test (MCH)</i></b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Table 4-10 Independent Samples Test <i>posttest (MCH)</i></b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Table 4-11 <i>frequency posttest MCH</i></b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Table 4-12 Group Statistics <i>posttest (comment)</i></b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Table 4-13 Independent Samples Test <i>posttest (comment)</i></b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Table 4-14 <i>frequency post test (comment)</i></b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Table 4-15 <i>Students' general attitudes</i></b>	<b>83</b>
<b>List of figures</b>	
<b>Figure 4.1 <i>frequency analysis of independent sample t-test pretest (MCH)</i></b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Figure 4-2 <i>frequency analysis of independent sample t-test pretest(comment)</i></b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Figure 4-3 <i>frequency analysis of independent sample t-test</i></b>	<b>76</b>

**posttest(MCH)**

**Figure 4-4 frequency analysis of independent sample t-test posttest 79**

**(comment)**

## **Abstract**

This research considers the application of genre-based approach in English for general purpose context. Genre-based approaches assist students to progress from a naïve reader to a competent one. Some researchers argue that **genre-based** teaching can support learners to gradually develop control of **genres** (Hyland, 2004). Meanwhile, there has been an increasing awareness of the significance of integrating literature in EFL/ESL curriculum. When literature becomes a subject of study, it may be seen as an activity involving and using language. The claim "the study of literature is fundamentally a study of language in operation" (Widdowson, 1971) is based on the realization that literature is an example of language in use, and is a context for language use. Considering the aforementioned points regarding the application of literature in the language classroom, still less is done about a systematic approach to exploit literature. Therefore this work aims to investigate the use of literature within a genre-based approach which provides students with a model of reading literary texts. In doing so, 24 female students of low intermediate proficiency of an English institute were selected and assigned to two groups of study under the title of control and experimental groups. The experimental group (N=12) was taught through using the genre-based approach while the control group received placebo. The data was subjected to a number of statistical techniques in particular the independent samples t-test to test the hypothesis. To trace the second hypothesis, an attitude survey was conducted to gather students' ideas and viewpoints through an informal attitude survey in the form of an anonymous letter to their teacher in which they were asked to express ideas toward the GBT model utilized (considering the experimental group) and their general feeling about the short stories used. The results of the study, positively responding the research questions, indicates that learners do comprehend better and access the text more willingly when they are made aware of the genre of the text they are reading.

**Key words: genre based teaching (GBT), reading comprehension, literary text.**

## *Chapter 1*

### *Introduction*

#### **1-1 Background**

The last decade has experienced a renewed enthusiasm over the concept of genre as a teaching tool, or genre based approach to teaching of language. This approach has originated from the works of Halliday (1985), Swales (1981, 1990) and Bhatia (1993) and many other prominent figures.

Although the very idea of "genre" seems to be controversial, and the term "genre" has been interpreted in a variety of ways by experts from a number of traditions, there is a general definition of the concept as stated in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English:

*"A particular type of art, writing, music, etc that has certain features that all examples of this type share" (2005).*

All genre scholars agree that genres are complex because there is a network of relationship among textual, social and political dimensions of the text; ironically, this complexity might be what the scholars are drawn to.

In its restricted and immature view of genre, as accepted in its early stages of emergence it was synonymous with style and stylistic analysis. Therefore examining textual elements or structural aspect of the text was given the most crucial importance. Over the last decade, however, scholars have reinterpreted genre as being a natural propensity for innovation and exploitation, so it severs socially recognized common purpose.

The basis of the approach is that in addition to surface structure, there is a need to address the underpinning language use.

Tracing the issue in language learning and teaching, it immediately becomes clear that genre based approaches are not new. English for specific purposes (ESP) and English for academic purposes (EAP) are examples, initiated by pioneering work in genre analysis by Swales et. al. (1990).

To be more exact, since the mid-1980s, great attention has been paid to the genre approach as an EFL/SL tool.

Although most applications for teaching genres, such as specific reports (Jacoby et.al, Swales & Feak, 1994, Weissberg & Buker, 1990 as cited by Hyon, 2001) have been geared towards writing, researchers have also discussed "genre-based" application for ESP reading and listening.

In spite of this increasing interest in the concept of genre and genre-based teaching, few studies have investigated the effects of GBT (Genre-Based Teaching) on learners' comprehension of literary texts, which are rather complicated and not as straightforward as other texts.

In fact, as Niazi and Goutam put it: "an important feature distinguishing literary genre from the other written genres is the creative writer's willingness to break the usual rules and conventions" (Niazi and Goutam, 2007: 22). Furthermore, cook (1994:10) asserts: "Literary texts are not merely a category which needs to be included in an overall theory for the sake of completeness. It is rather that they are different in kind, representative of a type of text which may perform the important function of breaking down existing schema, recognizing them , and building new ones".

Learning the process of reading has always been a challenging skill for learners to develop, especially, in EFL setting where exposure to English is restricted to language classes. Newly, researches on reading comprehension have focused on the concept of reader as an active participant whose background knowledge is activated in every act of learning.

Recently, however, theories and models of reading have changed, from seeing reading as primarily receptive processes from text to reader to interactive processes between the reader and the text (Adams, 1990).

As Montgomery et.al. put it:

*"We approach texts actively, with expectations of different kinds and at different levels in mind. That is readers are actively involved while interacting with texts, by interpreting the text and inferring its meaning with the help of their mental background knowledge. Whether we intend to or not ,as we read words and sentences in a written text we are looking for patterns and developing interpretive hypotheses as we go along [...]we are further involved in establishing some forms of relationship between the text and what we judge to be its discourse-type or genre"(Montgomery et.al 2000:7).*

Accordingly, regarding literary texts and approaches applied so far, one of the main reasons for our learners' low performance in English reading, among other factors, might be the lack of genre-specific reading across the curriculum.

Therefore, a strong need is felt to develop and utilize an approach to help learners understand texts and have real control over it. GBT can be a facilitative approach regarding a deeper understanding of the text, which is fundamental to reading comprehension on the part of the learners.

## **1-2 A brief review of "genre" and "genre analysis"**

Genre" in the most generic definition, takes the meaning "kind; sort; style" (Oxford English Dictionary). Prior to the term's inception, the notion of genre in the study of media emerged in *"The Poetics"*, with Aristotle's discussion of the mode or manner of imitation in poetry.

Apparently, this is a rigid definition of the term because it fails to introduce "genre" as a multidimensional concept.

Recently new and more comprehensive definitions of the concept are put forward, and models of language teaching have been developed based on the concept of genre and genre analysis.

In addition, as Lin (2006) underscores, genre-based approaches, where teaching and learning focus on the understanding and production of selected genres of texts, have been identified by Rodgers (2001) to be a major trend in English language teaching (ELT) in the new millennium.

He further suggests, "genre-based approaches begin with the whole text as the unit of focus rather than the sentence. The preoccupation is thus the creation of meaning at the level of discourse (Lin 2006).

Closely related to the idea of "genre" and "genre analysis" are some prominent figures and their works on the issue.

Genre theory is most referred to "John Swales" with his research on the introduction to an academic article.



Swales (1990) notes that there is a regular pattern of "moves " and "steps" that appear in certain order in the majority of introduction investigated (cited in Evans,1998:89).The point is that the concept of "genre" seems to be of different meanings to different scholars. Swale identifies a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (ibid: 58).

Moreover as Martin (1985) puts it, "A genre is a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity, in which speakers engage as members of one culture ...Virtually everything you do, involves you participating in one or other genre. Culture seen in these terms can be defined as a set of generically interpretable activities" (Martin 1985:25).

Bahatia (1993) defines it as follows: "the notion of genre analysis [...] is a very powerful system of analysis in that it allows a far thicker description of fictional varieties of written and spoken language than that offered by any other system of analysis from linguistic description to explanation taking into account not only socio-cultural but psycholinguistic factor too"(1993:39).

### **1-3 GBT as Related To Comprehension of Literary Texts**

GBT is teaching language based on the result of genre analysis. As defined by swales (1990) genre analysis is the study of how language is used within particular setting. Genre analysis also examines the text patterns as well as its communicative purpose.

As a trawl through ELT-related research indicates, although the approach is mostly associated and practiced with non-literary disciplines such as science, economics and legislation, applied linguists conduct studies letting them bring to the fore the potential of genre as a useful pedagogic means for TEFL/SL especially in terms of ESP/EAP.

Hopkins & Dudley Evans, (1988), Hyland, (2002), Swales, (1990), and recent studies such as Toledo, (2005) & Mauchlan, (2005) provide teachers with new horizons to deal with the concept of language learning, specifically skills of writing and reading.

This does not mean that genre approaches are discipline-specific and not practiced with literary texts. According to Niazi and Gautam (2007), "a literary genre can be seen as a set of characteristics that is commonly recognized and agreed upon". Considering this view there are conventions and characteristics concerning literary genres to be analyzed; as a result, literary texts like the other texts has the potential to be the subject of GBT as it in the present study.

#### **1-4 Statement of the problem**

Having the text, as the only source of information seems difficult to comprehend if it is regarded to be genre-less (Montgomery, 2000:207). In fact, Part of what it means to understand a culture is knowing the differences, and knowing how to distinguish the differences between the riddle and joke, tragedy and comedy, musical and thrillers (Frow, 2005). This might shape one of the major problems with which learners of a second language deal in terms of reading comprehension. As a skill of critical reading, the most obvious importance of the idea of genre involves seeing generic conventions in a text rather than assuming the text to be a kind of immediate human expression or way of getting at social meaning or truth (ibid:207). So understanding a text not only involves understanding how

texts are classified and defined , but grasping how the discussion in which system of classification are based fit into larger, aesthetic & social frameworks governing how text are created, used and evaluated (Montgomery 2000:200). If this is the case, it is of central importance to familiarize learners of a second/foreign language with the genre, or genres within which the text participates.

This is one of the major problems, which gets prominent in an EFL setting where exposure to the target culture and society is less than that of ESL setting. Although genre based approaches have crucial status in EFL/ESL setting in a number of countries, a review of the studies done in Asian EFL Journals indicate that less is done in Asian context. Besides, in most cases the topic has been restricted to non-literary genre and mainly to dealing with the skill of writing.

However, the issue needs more contemplation while considering the literary texts, which are by nature complex on the part of the reader as a foreign language to be comprehended. Consequently, as Brumfit states: "literature teaching began to disappear from "language" classroom to be replaced by a surrogate literature, commonly in the form of textbook dialogues [...] (Brumfit 2000:91)", a strong need is felt for the literature to find its way to language classrooms.

### **1-5 Research questions and hypothesis**

Building upon what is stated, the study investigates the relationship between genre based approach and second language learners' literary text comprehension. Therefore, the main research questions are as follows:

Q 1. Does genre-based teaching (GBT) increase learners' comprehension of the literary text?

Q 2 . Do the learners have a positive attitude toward reading literary texts in particular in GBT framework?

Considering the two mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses were put forward (probability level= 0.05):

1. Reading through a genre based teaching approach does not affect the comprehension of literary texts among foreign language learners.

2. Learners do not have a positive attitude toward literary texts or even within GBT approach to literary texts.

### **1-6 Purpose of the study**

As Short & Candline assert, if a student taught language and literature by the same person, that is the teacher, it is possible for the lesson to be mutually reinforcing . Literary texts, or extracts from them , can be used to break up language classes and identify difficulties that students experience in reading in general and reading imaginative texts in particular (Short & Candline cited in Brumfit 2000:92).

As literary texts especially short stories illustrate, sophisticated details of language and culture through an imaginative and beautiful framework can be enjoyable to the learners.

Moreover, as enjoyment plays an important role in any learning activity, literature is a potentially useful aid to language learning .The question, however, lies in the method applied by the teacher to enhance the utility of literature in language classrooms. Therefore, the