

The Effect of Genre-Based Teaching on EFL Learners' Speaking Performance

Mohammad Bagher Khatibi

PhD Candidate, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran

M.B.Khatibi@gmail.com

Abstract

The present study examined the effect of genre-based tasks on EFL learners' speaking performance and probed whether genre-based tasks may empower EFL learners to perform better on speaking tests. A further concern of the study was to explore whether the effect of genre-based tasks on speaking ability of EFL learners varied across different age groups, i.e. teenagers (13-16 years old) and young adults (24-27 years old). To this end, some generic based consciousness-raising tasks (CRT) were adapted from the model proposed by Benedict (2006) to develop control of a genre used as the treatment procedures. Two different speaking tests of different genres (e.g. recount, report, review, etc.), used as pretest and posttest, were administered to 120 senior university students majoring in English language translation. The results indicated that consciousness-raising tasks significantly affected EFL learners' speaking performance. However, the effect of generic based CRTs did not vary across different age groups. Overall, the findings provided empirical support for the facilitative effect of generic-based consciousness-raising tasks on speaking performance of EFL learners. The findings may promise implications for EFL speaking syllabuses and provide guidelines to designers to accommodate the insights derived from the genre-based instruction perspective.

Keywords: Genre; Consciousness-Raising Tasks; Speaking Fluency; EFL Learners.

1. Introduction

Genre is often defined as “a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written” (Swales, 1990, p. 33) that serves as “responses by speakers or writers to the demands of a social context” (Johns, 2002, p. 3). In recent years, genre has become “one of the most important and influential concepts in language education” (Hyland, 2003, p. 5).

The term genre has been interpreted in a variety of ways by experts from a number of traditions. Hyon, in her 1996 TESOL Quarterly article, separated genre theorists and practitioners into three camps: the Sydney School, based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics work of Halliday (1985), which has developed research and well-established pedagogies at a number of academic levels (see Feez, 2002); the

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) camp, whose most famous exponent, John Swales, is internationally-recognized for Genre Analysis (1990) and *moves* in research article introductions; and The New Rhetoric (NR) group, principally North Americans, for whom genre knowledge has been considered to be primarily social, embedded in the community and context of writer and audience (See, e.g., Freedman & Medway, 1994).

In a simpler taxonomy, Flower and Dewey (2002) dichotomized genre theorists into linguistic and nonlinguistic camps, claiming that the ESP and Australian school apply theories of functional grammar and discourse, concentrating on the lexicogrammatical and rhetorical realization of communicative purposes embodied in a genre, whereas the New Rhetoric group is more focused on situational context—the purposes and functions of genres and the attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors of the members of the discourse community in which the genres are situated (p. 91).

Dudley-Evans (1989) reminds us of the benefits of giving genre a more central classroom role when we teach language: [A] genre-based perspective focuses on language at the level of the whole text while at the same time taking into account the social and cultural context in which it is used. (Dudley-Evans, 1989, cited in Paltridge, 2001, p. 4)

In addition to such arguments for using genre-based approaches in daily classroom practice (see also McCarthy & Carter, 1994), attempts have been made to place genre more centrally in the development of language curricula and syllabus design, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). The reason for this is that a focus on genre "enables curriculum designers to group together texts that are similar in terms of purpose, organization, and audience". (Paltridge, 2001, p. 4)

The genre-based approach to teaching second language skills, with communicative purposes as its underlying foundation, originated from the work of Halliday (1985), Swales (1981, 1990), and Bhatia (1991, 1993). The aim is to raise learners' awareness of both the rhetorical organization and the linguistic features closely associated with the genre (Cheng, 2008; Henry & Rosebury, 1998; Hyland, 2006). Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998) believe that the concept of genre provides a way of looking at what students have to do linguistically; i.e., what kinds of discourses they have to be able to understand and produce in speech and writing. They add that the genre perspective may also provide students with an understanding of why a discourse is structured the way it is, through a consideration of its social context and its purpose. Finally, they conclude that genre would seem to be a potentially powerful pedagogic tool.

Genre-based approaches, where teaching and learning focuses on the understanding and production of selected genres of texts, have been identified by Rodgers (2001) as a major trend in English language teaching (ELT) in the new millennium. Such approaches are, of course, not "new". English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) are early examples, arising from pioneering work in genre analysis by Swales (1981, 1990) and others.

Genre-based approaches begin with the whole text as the unit in focus rather than the sentence. The preoccupation is thus the creation of meaning at the level of discourse and not the acquisition of syntactical forms: "rather than dealing with discrete instances of language, there is recognition that meaning accumulates and evolves over a stretch of text" (Derewianka, 2003). Here, a *text* refers to "a piece of language in use", which is a "harmonious collection of meanings appropriate to its context" and

hence has “unity of purpose” (Butt et al. 2001, p.3). In other words, texts are stretches of language that may be considered complete in themselves as acts of social exchange. Length and mode of communication are immaterial: each text may be long or short, written or spoken. Thus, a brief exchange of greetings as two acquaintances pass each other is as much a text as is a 600-page novel.

Genre-based approaches are being increasingly applied in ESL/EFL pedagogy so that they are identified as one of the major trends in the new millennium, with discourse and genre analysis, schema theory, pragmatics and systemic functional linguistics rekindling an interest in functional-based approaches to language teaching (Rodgers, 2001). Similarly, Hyland (2002) sees genre approaches as having a considerable impact on the way we see language use and on literacy education around the world. Johns (2002) refers to a major paradigm shift over the past 15 years or so towards a more social, contextual approach based on genre theory.

However, as Sengupta, Forey, and Lyons (1999, p.3) argue, "amidst the enthusiasm over genre as a teaching tool, few studies have evaluated the effects of genre-based pedagogy on students' language and literacy development". In prefacing their evaluation of genre-based writing instruction in an English For Specific/Academic Purposes (EAP/ESP) course, Henry and Roseberry (1998) maintain that "the arguments for and against the genre approach in EAP/ESP have been limited to the theoretical, and few if any attempts have been made to evaluate the approach empirically in an ESP/EAP context" (p.148). Moreover, genre studies have predominantly addressed writing instruction (Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998) and very few empirical studies, like Atai and Khatibi (2010), have ever focused on the effect of genre-based teaching on oral skills including listening comprehension

performance and speaking fluency of EFL learners. Hence, there is a gap in our current empirical literature concerning the genre-based approach and speaking fluency specially in marked educational contexts, including Iran, preoccupied with an overemphasis on micro level skills of speaking fluency and bottom-up techniques of teaching with little or no systematic attempt to raise the learners' awareness of genre integrity and text as a whole unit. Also, the present study gains significance as the author investigates the application of genre approach to English for general purposes in an EFL context. The findings may promise implications for improving ESL/EFL speaking fluency instruction.

1.1. Developing a Genre-Based Speaking Fluency Program in Arsses Language Institute

Arsses Language Institute (ALI) as a center of language teaching, training, and study continuously improves its quality of language teaching and learning process. Up to now, ALI has carried out Speaking Fluency Program (SFP) as the main language course besides other courses for the English language learners at intermediate level and beyond. In managing the course, however, ALI faces some problems, such as the ineffectiveness of the course, the students' low achievement, and the lack of participants for the course due to little dissemination, etc. Based on those problems, the institution needs to improve the language course by carrying out research and development programs.

In March 2010, the researcher conducted an in-depth interviewing with the lecturers and students of Speaking Fluency Program of ALI. Based on the results of the in-depth interviewing, (1) all respondents agree to bring speaking skills as an “excellence” of graduates from this institution; (2) all respondents agree to choose topics which are varied and relevant to the life and spirit

of young adult; (3) the respondents feel that the performance of the course books which are currently used in teaching and learning process of speaking skills are not attractive and practical; and (4) the respondents agree that the roles of lecturers in developing course materials innovatively and creatively are the key to the success of teaching and learning speaking skills. The implication is that the lecturers need access of self-improvement sufficiently.

Based on the above analysis, the managers of ALI (the researcher as the academic manager) decided to change the syllabus from a conventional approach that blindly follows the textbooks to a syllabus with a Genre-Based Approach.

The genre-based ELT model used in this research has been operationalized by referring to the seminal works done by systemic-functional linguists such as Derewianka (2003), Martin (2009), action research studies like Sengupta et al (1999), Badger & White (2000), Flowerdew (2000), Bronia (2005), Cheng (2006), and experimental papers such as Khatibi (2007), Atai and Khatibi (2010). This is a simple model for developing complete lesson units around genres to be taught, and has as its ultimate aims helping learners to do things with language independently through mastery of genres.

Each lesson unit has as its central focus a chosen genre, and consists of a fixed sequence of stages. Descriptions of the unit mentioned in the studies above (e.g. in Derewianka, 2003 & Martin, 2009) vary in minor ways, but four phases essential for developing control of a genre may be identified, namely: 1. Context Exploration 2. Text Exploration based on model texts 3. Joint Construction of a text 4. Individual Application. It is necessary to mention here that by "text", we mean both oral and written texts. This is captured in Figure 1.

Every unit begins with *context exploration*, 'context' referring to the possible contexts of situation in which the chosen genre may be used. This phase resembles the pre-listening/reading/speaking/writing phase that has come to be typical in communicative language teaching, and the activities that may be carried out indeed resemble typical pre-activities in skills-based teaching. However, where traditional genre-based activities have aims ranging from mere warming up to activation of mental schema, one primary aim of the genre-based model used in this study is to help students to become aware of and understand the social purpose of the chosen genre, as well as other contextual factors influencing the production of the texts that they will

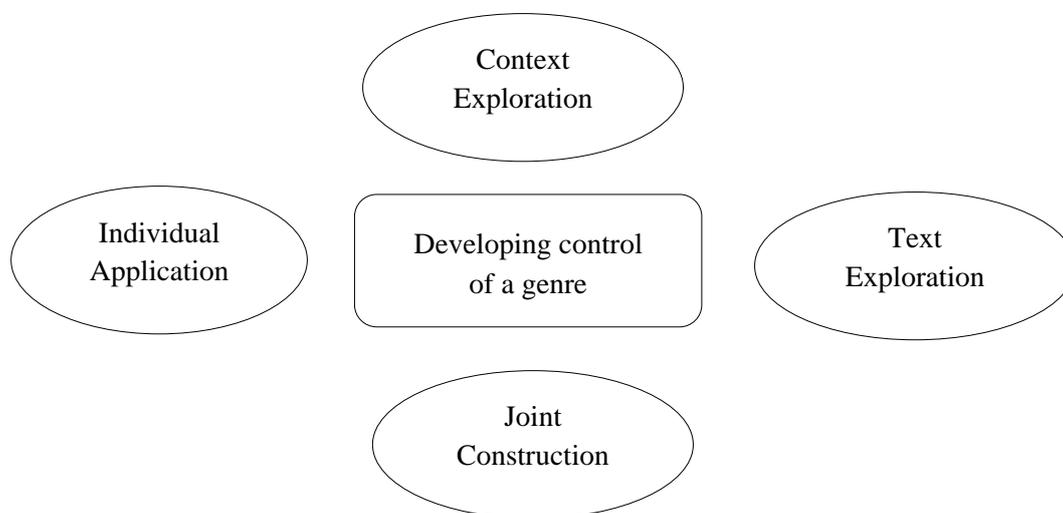


Figure 1: The Model of Lesson Unit (Benedict, 2006, p. 234)

examine as models, and the texts that they may be required to produce in speech or writing. Another important aim of the context exploration phase, from the teacher's point of view, is to establish the learners' 'actual development' or starting point.

The aims of *text exploration* are to familiarize the learners with the target genre, and to draw attention to organizational and linguistic features commonly found in texts belonging to it. *Model texts* play a crucial role in this phase. Using such model texts, pedagogical activities to make explicit the features of the genre are carried out. These may include a gamut of established 'communicative' activities, such as there-assembling of 'jigsaw' texts or information gap exercises, but the tasks are deliberately constructed in such a way as to highlight the salient lexical and grammatical features. Thus, the tasks aim to be at least implicitly 'analytical' in nature, and not just to facilitate interaction as an end in itself. Of course, more explicitly analytical work is also possible: for example, students may be asked to 'hunt' for and highlight all instances of a specific grammatical form. Direct teaching by the instructor is also an option, in order to make the features obvious to the learners. How the formal features work to help the genre achieve its purposes are also discussed or explored.

In the next stage, *joint construction*, referring to the model text or texts, and making use of the knowledge and awareness gained from the exploration of the text, the students work with the teacher to construct their own texts (spoken or written) in genre (or, in the case of listening and reading, to construct an *understanding* of the new text). This can take forms varying from teacher-fronted whole-class co-construction of a single text on the board, to small-group or pair construction with the teacher helping each group or pair by turn, to teacher conferencing with individual students. In the

case of speaking, as with process approaches, the texts may go through a few rounds of note-taking, editing, and re-drafting. The model texts continue to provide the learners with macro/micro structures. The teacher and students, especially more expert peers, guide others by referring each other to features in the models, and to points raised in the text exploration stage.

What is to be noted in both the *text exploration* and *joint construction* phases is that while there is much oral interaction taking place, its nature and intention is different from that of most forms of communicative language teaching. Where the interactive activities in the latter are often designed to simulate real life interaction, directed at providing opportunities for talking *in* the language, the talk here is *about* using language, and is focused on a collaborative effort to learn to accomplish a purpose in the language.

The last stage in the model, *individual application*, as the name suggests, requires learners to work individually and independently, for example, in the case of speaking, to produce individual talk. Ideally, this is carried out only after the students have successfully produced a jointly constructed text or understanding of a text. This phase then provides the opportunity for self-correction, i.e. what each learner produces can, of course, be further recycled through further peer editing and teacher feedback until the learner attains a desired level of attainment.

The following table shows genres which are used in Speaking Fluency Program at Arsses Language Institute.

1.2. Significance of the Study

The study examined oral fluency in the speech of two groups of Iranian EFL learners differing in the age at which they first started studying English, but matched with respect to exposure to the language and

amount of instruction received in a formal learning context. We wished to investigate possible age effects on oral fluency in the two subject groups by testing the hypothesis that an earlier onset age of learning will have positive effects on learners. This hypothesis would predict better oral fluency scores for early starters than for late starters.

Differential gains in oral fluency explainable in terms of the age factor have received little attention in the second language acquisition literature (Dewaele, 1998; Towell, 2002); other factors, such as L2 proficiency or amount of L2 use in stay-abroad contexts, have been invoked to explain individual differences in oral fluency. Towell (2002), for example, in a four-year longitudinal study into the acquisition of French by English learners,

reports inter-subject differences in oral fluency development: learners beginning at a lower point increased their scores on temporal variable measures the most.

One study that does address the relationship between onset age of L2 learning (determined by age of arrival or AOA) and a fluency-related variable is Guionet al. (2000), who measured the duration (in milliseconds) of L2 utterances consisting of fluent sentences (without dysfluencies or pauses greater than 200 ms) elicited through a sentence-repetition task. A strong positive correlation was found between sentence duration and age of first exposure to English for a large group of Italian and Korean immigrants: subjects who were first exposed to English later in life pronounced sentences with a slower speech rate. Since speaking rate is normally

Table 1. The List of Genres to Be Used in the Study

Genre	Social Function
Recount	To retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining
Report	To describe the way things are, with reference to arrange of natural, man-made and social phenomena in our environment
Discussion	To present (at least) two points of view about an issue
Explanation	To explain the processes involved in the formation or workings of natural or socio-cultural phenomena
Exposition (Analytical)	To persuade the listener that something is the case
Exposition (Hortatory)	To persuade the listener that something should or should not be the case
News Items	To inform listeners or viewers about events of the day which are considered newsworthy or important
Anecdote	To share with others an account of an unusual or amusing incident
Narrative	To amuse, entertain and to deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways. Narratives deal with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning point of some kind, which in turn finds a resolution
Procedure	To describe how something is accompanied through a sequence of actions or steps
Description	To describe a particular person, place or thing
Review	To critique an art work, event for a public audience. Such works of art include movies, TV shows, books, plays, operas, recordings, exhibitions, concerts, and ballets.

higher in L1 than in L2 (Munro & Derwing, 1995), Guionet al. (2000) account for their findings by suggesting that the more established the L1 is at the time of L2 learning, the more it interferes with L2 production. That study suggests that there may be an effect of onset age of L2 learning on one speech rate measure in favor of early starters; but can the same effect also be obtained for other speech rate measures or oral fluency variables? And are such effects observable in the speech of relatively non-fluent learners acquiring the L2 in a formal learning context that has been elicited through a series of genre-based tasks?

Learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules. Learners must also acquire the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact. Therefore, it is difficult for EFL learners, especially adults, to speak the target language fluently and appropriately. Speaking a language is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in social interactions. Due to minimal exposure to the target language and contact with native speakers, adult EFL learners in general are relatively poor at spoken English, especially regarding fluency, control of idiomatic expressions, and understanding of cultural pragmatics (Shumin, 1997).

EFL learners need explicit instruction in speaking, which as any language skill generally has to be learned and practiced. However, in practice, it is too often assumed that spoken-language skills can be developed simply by assigning students general topics to discuss or by getting them to talk on certain subjects. Evidently, not enough attention is given to the factors that inhibit or facilitate the production of speaking genres. Therefore, in order to provide guidance in developing competent

speakers of English, instructors of EFL should take genre-based teaching into consideration as one of the key solutions to the problem of EFL speaking ability.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The present study examined the effect of genre-based tasks on EFL learners' speaking performance and probes whether genre-based tasks may empower EFL learners to perform better on speaking tests. A further concern of the study is to explore whether the effect of genre-based tasks on speaking ability of EFL learners varies across different age groups, i.e. teenagers (13-16 years old) and young adults (24-27 years old).

More specifically, we seek answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Do genre-based tasks significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance?
- 2) Does the effect of genre-based tasks vary across different age groups?

Based on these research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

- 1) Genre-based tasks do not significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' speaking performance.
- 2) The effect of genre-based tasks does not vary across different age groups.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

All the participants in the Speaking Fluency Program (SFP) took the Full-Course Placement Test (2006) developed by Pearson Education, Inc. and were placed at intermediate level of language proficiency. There were 124 learners registering to participate at Speaking Fluency Program (SFP). Sixty-four of the learners were teenagers (40 female and 24 male, aging between 13-16 years old) and 60 of the learners were young adults (26 female and 34 male, aging between 24-27 years old). The learners in these two age groups were different in the age at which they first started studying English, but matched with

respect to exposure to the language and amount of instruction received in a formal learning context. Each of these age groups were subdivided into genre and non-genre groups. Therefore, there were four groups in the study: genre-teenager (n=31), genre-adult (n=30), non-genre-teenager (n=33), and non-genre-adult (n=30).

2.2. Instrumentation

In order to probe the research questions of this study, two sets of speaking tests based on the genres analyzed during the SFP were constructed and utilized as pretest and posttest. In each test, the students were provided with specifications of a particular context. Then, they were asked to use their imagination and background information to function in that specific context. After that, they were given 5 minutes to prepare themselves and take notes of key points and 3 minutes to report their responses. All the students were familiar with this test format because they had already taken this sort of test several times in the previous semesters.

The *genre* approach proposed here offers an objective approach to assessment based on the particular generic, structural and grammatical features of genres. For example, the features of speaking using the genre of *Explanation* will be significantly different from those of *Exposition* or *Discussion*. In the following section, I will identify the salient features of each of the genres and apply these to a systematic methodology to assess student speaking in each of the genres. When evaluating students' speaking skills on the Speaking Tests, the researcher took the following criteria equally into account.

I. Generic Features

- *Genre*: Criteria in this group consider whether the speaking successfully uses the appropriate genre for the task. For example, if the task requires an 'Anecdote' but the speaking is a 'Narrative', it indicates that

there is an inadequate understanding of the appropriate genre.

- *Theme*: This criterion considers whether the speaking has addressed the task or the degree to which the speaking stays on task, or the inventiveness of weaving the task to produce particular effects.

- *Structure*: Different genres have different structural features. For example, the introduction to a description will generally classify what is being described, whereas the introduction to a narrative will generally orient the reader to the characters, time and setting of the story that will follow. There will be similar differences to other structural features of particular genres and it is important to identify these differences when assessing speaking tasks.

- *Rhetorical and language features*: Different genres use different rhetorical strategies or figurative devices to enhance the effectiveness of the speaking. In general, these types of criteria are useful indicators of a student's control of their speaking or effective discriminators for identifying competent and/or advanced speakers.

- *Vocabulary*: Different genres use different types of vocabulary, depending on determining categories such as topic, purpose and audience. A factual text like a report, for example, will use a range of technical vocabulary including nominalizations and technical noun groups, whereas a description will use descriptive verbs, adjectives and adverbs, and affective language intended to have an emotive effect on the listener.

II. General Features

- *Appropriateness*: Talk is on topic.
- *Completeness*: Talk addresses all aspects of the given topic.

- *Accuracy*: Speech is grammatically correct; vocabulary and social language expressions are used appropriately.

- *Fluency*: Speech flows smoothly and is not halting; the students speak with ease and confidence.

- *Intelligibility*: Speech is clear and could be readily understood by a native speaker.

The students were given up to 10 points for each criterion, so the perfect score for speaking skill was 100. The speaking performance of the students was observed and scored by the researcher and another well-trained examiner in order to establish the inter-rater reliability.

A Full-Course Placement Test (2006) developed by Pearson Education, Inc. was utilized in this study as a general language proficiency measure in order to homogenize students and make sure that all of them were proficient enough to understand the treatment in genre and non-genre groups. This placement test consisted of 140 multiple-choice items in three sections: listening comprehension, structure and written expression, vocabulary and reading comprehension and it was followed by a speaking test, too.

2.3. Procedures

This study was carried out in three phases. First, all subjects in the four groups were given the pretest in order to provide a database about their speaking ability prior to the treatment. Second, subjects in the genre groups were treated based on genre-based tasks (as they were elaborated on in details above) for 30 sessions, each 90 minutes long. The treatment procedures for subjects in non-genre groups included the conventional skills-based approach, i.e. prescriptive and deductive teaching of the components of speaking skill, on the same genre for 30 sessions, each 90 minutes long. Some of the speaking tasks, in non-genre group, that aim at helping students use language in real-life situation were (1) pre-teaching the topic-related words, phrases, and collocations, (2) brainstorming, (3) reading a passage and discussing the main points, (4) listening to a passage and discussing the main points, (5) looking at the photos and talking about the common theme, (6) expressing personal opinions on

a famous quote, (7) establishing a relationship between the situations in the passages and the situations they had experienced themselves, (8) surfing the Net on some specific topics and reporting them to the whole class, and (9) watching a video and arguing for/against the main theme. In the third phase of the study, the subjects were given the speaking skill posttest after the treatments. In both tests, test takers had only one chance to give a talk during the time limit of tests. After collecting the data, the scores were to be tabulated and subjected to descriptive and inferential analyses in order to explore the research questions formulated earlier.

2.4. Delimitation of the Study

In order to minimize the effect of external factors in this study, certain limitations were made. First of all, the study was limited to the speaking genres listed above and the effect of genres like interview, conversation, lecture, sermon, etc. was ignored. Secondly, only intermediate EFL learners studying English for general purposes at Arsses Language Institute were chosen for this study. Thirdly, only learners' onset age was investigated in this study, i.e. other factors like gender, English proficiency level, aptitude, attitude, motivation, etc. were totally ignored. Fourth, the focus of the study was on speaking skill. Actually, speaking was the only language skill which was to be studied. Fifth, this research was conducted in Iran, and the students' first language is Farsi. Therefore, students from other countries and languages were excluded. Finally, the study focuses on the process genre-based model in which learners together with the help of teachers try to discover the factors affecting the macro/microstructure and the form-function relationship of a particular genre. There was a sort of dialogue and negotiation between the learners and the teacher. In contrast, a product approach was a prescriptive model

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for All Measures Involved in the Study

Descriptive Statistics												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis			
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
LONGM	120	194	454	648	550.92	5.18	56.694	3214.228	-.026	.221	-1.212	.438
PRETEST	120	10	10	20	15.09	.27	2.965	8.790	-.008	.221	-1.079	.438
POSTTEST	120	20	10	30	20.21	.53	5.798	33.612	.077	.221	-1.114	.438
Valid N (listwise)	120											

in which the teacher provides the learners with some specific generic conventions with no negotiation of linguistic/functional features.

3. Results

Initially, the subjects' performances on the three measures employed in this study (i.e. the speaking tests and the Longman placement test) were tabulated and subjected to the conventional descriptive analyses as illustrated in Table 2 below.

As indicated earlier, the treatment for subjects in the genre groups included genre consciousness-raising tasks. Subjects in the non-genre groups were treated based on the conventional skills-based instruction of the same genre. At the end of the treatment, all the four groups were given the speaking posttest in order to examine their speaking performance and the possible differences among them after the treatment. In order to probe the two null hypotheses corresponding to the research questions (i.e. the effect of genre-based awareness raising tasks and age groups of subjects on their speaking performances), a two-way ANOVA was run on research groups' performances on the posttest listening

comprehension measure. The results are illustrated in Table 3 below.

As Table 3 indicates, there are significant main effects for both AGE and GENRE factors: the effects of both factors are significant at .01 level. Despite the main effects of both factors, there is not any significant interaction; the *p*value is .197. Clearly, the GENRE factor has the same effects upon teenager and adultage groups. As Table 3 illustrates, there is a significant difference between genre and non-genre groups. Based on the results, the first null hypothesis predicting no significant effect of genre consciousness-raising tasks on EFL learners' speaking performance was rejected. The consciousness-raising tasks significantly improved the learners' speaking ability. There is also a significant difference between teenager and adult age groups. However, the interaction between genre consciousness-raising tasks and age groups of the subjects was not significant. So, the second null hypothesis is supported, i.e. the effect of genre consciousness-raising activities does not vary across the two age groups. In order to locate the exact differences between pairs of groups, a Post Hoc Scheffe test was run, the results of which are summarized in Table 4 below. As Table 4 depicts, there are significant differences among all the four groups (*p*<.05).

Table 3. Summary Table for Two-Way ANOVA for Listening Posttest

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: POSTTEST					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3695.492(a)	3	1231.831	469.577	.000
Intercept	49005.208	1	49005.208	18680.921	.000
AGE	2832.408	1	2832.408	1079.722	.000
GENRE	858.675	1	858.675	327.329	.000
AGE * GENRE	4.408	1	4.408	1.680	.197
Error	304.300	116	2.623		
Total	53005.000	120			
Corrected Total	3999.792	119			

A R Squared = .924 (Adjusted R Squared = .922)

Table 4. Post Hoc Scheffe Test for Posttest

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: POSTTEST						
Scheffe						
(I) 4	(J) 4	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
genre teenager group	non-genre teenager group	5.73(*)	.418	.000	4.55	6.92
	genre adult group	10.10(*)	.418	.000	8.91	11.29
	non-genre adult group	15.07(*)	.418	.000	13.88	16.25
non-genre teenager group	genre teenager group	-5.73(*)	.418	.000	-6.92	-4.55
	genre adult group	4.37(*)	.418	.000	3.18	5.55
	non-genre adult group	9.33(*)	.418	.000	8.15	10.52
genre adult group	genre teenager group	-10.10(*)	.418	.000	-11.29	-8.91
	non-genre teenager group	-4.37(*)	.418	.000	-5.55	-3.18
	non-genre adult group	4.97(*)	.418	.000	3.78	6.15
non-genre adult group	genre teenager group	-15.07(*)	.418	.000	-16.25	-13.88
	non-genre teenager group	-9.33(*)	.418	.000	-10.52	-8.15
	genre adult group	-4.97(*)	.418	.000	-6.15	-3.78

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 5. Homogeneous Subsets for Posttest

POSTTEST Scheffe					
4	N	Subset for alpha = .05			
		1	2	3	4
non-genre adult group	30	12.87			
genre adult group	30		17.83		
non-genre teenager group	30			22.20	
genre teenager group	30				27.93
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 30.000.

The significant differences among all four groups are illustrated more clearly in Table 5 where the groups are divided into homogeneous subsets, thus showing the differences among the means of the four groups. Here, all the four groups are significantly different from each other. The two main factors, i.e. genre awareness-raising and proficiency, influenced the students' listening comprehension positively. The genre and age groups performed higher than their non-genre and low proficiency counterparts.

4. Discussion

Regarding the effect of genre consciousness-raising tasks on the speaking ability of the EFL learners, the results of data analyses revealed that both genre consciousness-raising tasks and age groups had significant effects on EFL learners' speaking performance, but there was no meaningful interaction between the two factors. The findings showed that genre consciousness-raising tasks enhanced speaking performances of adult and teenager age groups. Also, the findings revealed a significant difference between teenager and adult age groups. However, the interaction between genre

consciousness-raising tasks and age groups of the subjects was not statistically significant.

To compare the research findings with those of previous empirical literature, the results of the present study are in agreement with the study done by Henry and Roseberry (1998) and also Atai and Khatibi (2010). In these studies, genre analysis techniques and genre-based teaching proved helpful to EFL learners. Similarly, Weber (2001) focused on genre consciousness-raising tasks and concluded that these tasks turned language learning activities into confidence-building, cooperative and collaborative activities.

The findings of the present study are in congruity with Johns (1999) in which students analyzed genre forms as well as their shaping social forces in preparation for approaching a variety of texts. She noted that genre-based approach was particularly successful. As it is true about the present study, Hyon (2001) found genre-based approach helpful in improving reading confidence and speed, but the findings of this study contradicts the last part of Hyon's study (Hyon, 2001) in which the author pointed out that the effect of

genre-based pedagogy was limited to increasing vocabulary knowledge and content comprehension.

The results of the present study are in line with Hyland (2007). Hyland reports that repeated experiences with a specific genre and recognizing similarities in the frequently used genres help learners read, understand, and perhaps write them more easily. As proposed by Firkins, Forey, and Sengupta (2007), genre-based pedagogy views language as an open dynamic system, and suggests that knowledge about language should be taught explicitly. Genres, here, are seen as the starting point for modeling, deconstructing, and understanding language.

5. Conclusion

Our findings revealed that genre consciousness-raising tasks significantly improved EFL learners' speaking performance. Also, the effect of genre consciousness-raising tasks was consistent for both adult and teenager age groups. The learners' performances indicated that the tasks were effective learning tools because they could use specific textual and contextual features of the speaking genres that they had learnt as a result of having completed the genre consciousness-raising tasks. This study attempted to reveal how, through a carefully devised and conducted study, an EFL generic speaking syllabus may accommodate the insights derived from the genre-based instruction perspective. The genre-based tasks proved as a felicitous way to the requirements of instructed language learning with a balanced focus on meaning and form. Accordingly, it is hoped that the procedures carried out in this study to design and implement genre-based pedagogy may offer a useful example for other researchers and syllabus designers to probe how genre approach can enhance the effectiveness of instruction of general English language

skills as well as their assessment. Finally, syllabus designers are expected to include genres and consciousness-raising tasks, according to the needs, interests as well as language proficiency of the learners, in the textbooks in order to give students the opportunity to practice and use the genre knowledge actively in their own language learning and use.

References

- Atai, M. R., & Khatibi, M. B. (2010). The effect of genre consciousness-raising tasks on Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension performance. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 7(3), 121-138.
- Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 54(2), 153-160.
- Benedict, L. (2006). Genre-based teaching and Vygotskian principles in EFL: The case of a university writing course. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(3), 226-248.
- Bhatia, V. (1991). A genre-based approach to ESP materials development. *World Englishes*, 10(2), 1-14.
- Bhatia, V. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings*. London: Longman.
- Bronia, P. (2005). From analysis to pedagogic applications: Using newspaper genres to write school genres. *Journal of English for Academic purposes*, 4(1), 67-82.
- Butt, D., Fahey, R., Feez, S., Spinks, S., & Yallop, C. (2000). *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide* (2nd ed.). Sydney: NCELTR
- Cheng, A. (2008). Analyzing genre exemplars in preparation for writing: The case of an L2 graduate student in the ESP genre-based instructional framework of academic literacy. *Applied Linguistics*, 29(1), 50-71.
- Cheng, A. (2006). Understanding learners and learning in ESP genre-based writing instruction. *English for Specific Purposes*, 25(1), 76-89.
- Coe, R. M. (2002). The new rhetoric of genre: Writing political briefs. In A. M. Johns

- (Ed.), *Genre in the classroom* (pp.195–205). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Derewianka, B. (2003). Trends and issues in genre-based approaches. *RELC Journal*, 34(2), 133-54.
- Dewaele, J. M. (1998). Speech rate variation in two oral styles of advanced Frenchinterlanguage. In V. Regan (Ed.), *Contemporary approaches to second language acquisition in context* (pp. 113–124). Dublin: University College Dublin Press.
- Dudley-Evans, T. (1989). An outline of the value of genre analysis in LSP work. In C. Lauren & M. Nordman (Eds.), *Special language: From humans thinking to thinking machines* (pp. 47-68). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Feez, S. (2002). Heritage and innovation in second language education. In A. M. Johns (Ed.), *Genre in the classroom* (pp. 47–68). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Firkins, A., Forey, G., & Sengupta, S. (2007). Teaching writing to low proficiency EFL students. *ELT Journal*, 61(4), 341-353.
- Flowerdew, L., (2000). Using a genre-based framework to teach organizational structure in academic writing. *ELT Journal* 54(4), 369–378.
- Flowerdew, J. (2002). Genre in the classroom: A linguistic approach. In A. Johns (Ed.), *Genre in the classroom: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 89–100). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Freedman, A., & Medway, P. (Eds.). (1994). *Genre and the new rhetoric*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Guion, S.G., Flege, J.E., Liu, S.H., & Yeni-Komshian, G.H. (2000). Age of learning effect on the duration of sentences produced in a second language. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 21(1), 205–228.
- Halliday, M. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Henry, A., & Roseberry, R.L. (1998). An evaluation of a genre-based approach to the teaching of EAP / ESP writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(1), 147–156.
- Hyland, K. (2003). Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of second language writing*, 12(1), 17-29.
- Hyland, K. (2006). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book*. New York: Routledge.
- Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy, and second language writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 148-164.
- Hyon, S. (1996). Genre in three traditions: Implications for ESL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(4), 693-722.
- Hyon, S. (2001). Genre and ESL reading: A classroom study. In A. M. Johns (Ed.), *Genre and pedagogy: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 56-67). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Johns, A.M., (1999). Opening our doors: Applying socioliterate approaches (SA) to language minority classrooms. In L. Harklau, K. M. Losey & M. Siegal (Eds.), *Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in the teaching of writing to US- educated learners of ESL* (pp. 159- 171). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Johns, A. (Ed.). (2002). *Genre in the classroom*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kay, H., & Dudley-Evans, T. (1998). Genre: What teachers think. *ELT Journal*, 52(4), 308-14.
- Khatibi, M. B. (2007, July). *The effect of genre-based approach on EAP lecture comprehension*. Paper presented at the Fourth Conference on Issues in English Language Teaching in Iran (IELTI-4), University of Tehran.
- Kim, Y. & Kim, J. (2005). Teaching Korean university writing class: Balancing the process and the genre approach. *Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 7(2), 69-90.
- Martin, J. R. (2009). Genre and language learning: A social semiotic perspective. *Linguistics and Education*, 20(1), 10-21.
- McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (1994). *Language as discourse: Perspectives for language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T.M. (1995). Processing time, accent, and comprehensibility

- in the perception of native and foreign-accented speech. *Language and Speech*, 38(3), 289–306.
- Paltridge, B. (2001). *Genre and the language learning classroom*. Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Rodgers, T. (2001). Language teaching methodology. *Eric Digest*, September 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/ericcl/digest/rodders.html>.
- Sengupta, S., Forey, G., & Lyons, L. H. (1999). Supporting effective English communication within the context of teaching and research in a tertiary institute: Developing a genre model for consciousness-raising. *English for specific purposes*, 18(1), 7-22.
- Shumin, K. (1997). Factors to consider: Developing adult EFL students' speaking abilities. *English Teaching Forum*, 35(3), 1-8.
- Swales, J. (1981). *Aspects of article introductions*. Aston ESP Research Report No.1, Language Studies Unit, University of Aston in Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Towell, R. (2002). Relative degrees of fluency: A comparative case study of advanced learners of French. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40(1), 117–150.
- Weber, J. J. (2001). A concordance-and genre-informed approach to ESP essay writing. *ELT Journal*, 55(1), 14- 20.