



The Effect of Genre-based Instruction of Humorous Narrative Texts on EFL Learners' Writing Performance

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ABSTRACT

The present quasi-experimental study investigated the instructional efficacy of genre-based instruction along with humorous texts on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. Out of 90 participants, 60 EFL male and female students at university level, with the age range of 19-28, were selected based on a standard proficiency test, Preliminary English Test (PET), and randomly assigned into control and experimental groups. Each group contained 30 students for whom a pre-test and post-test were administered. The teaching materials of narrative texts were prepared in a way to conform to the genre-based approach; but for the experimental group humorous texts were added. The results of the study, based on statistical analysis of one way of ANOVA, indicated that the genre-based+humorous texts methodology had significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance. It revealed the fact that using genre-based instruction along with humorous texts would be beneficial for language pedagogy.

Keywords: Genre-based instruction; Narrative texts; Humorous texts; Writing performance; EFL.

1. Introduction

The term and notion of genre and its application upon language teaching and learning have attracted the attention of many researchers and scholars in recent years. It seems that changing views in discourse and the crucial role of social purposes in finding out how language is structured have shifted the scholar's views upon a new horizon of language pedagogy in particular contexts of use. One of those important skills in language pedagogy has always been writing and writing performance. Recently, genre-based approach has been one of the most applicable and proper tool to enhance and promote writing skill. Genre is generally associated with terms such as short stories, science fiction, novels, fiction, satire, and many others. The term genre can be applied to most forms of communications, although it is mostly restricted to literary information (Swale, 1991). According to Swales (2004), a genre can be briefly defined as a class of texts characterized by a sequence of segments or 'moves' with each move accomplishing

some part of the overall communicative purpose of the text, which tends to produce distinctive structural patterns. Nwogu (1991) accordingly classified the definition of move as a text segment made up of a set of linguistic features, which gives the segment a uniform orientation and signals the content of discourse in it. These include communicative purpose or social function of the genre, the rhetorical function or dominant text structure, topic or content, dominant and typical linguistic markers of the genre. Genre-based approaches, where teaching and learning focuses on the understanding and production of selected genres of texts, have been introduced by Rodgers (2001, as cited in Benedict Lin, 2006) as a major trend in English Language Teaching (ELT) in the new century. Such approaches are, of course, not new. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) are early examples, extracting from pioneering work in genre analysis written by Swales (1981, 1990) and others.

Adding humorous texts to the instruction of genre based approach have been an innovative task in the present research. humor is nothing rather than the careful and effective use of language. Humor has been studied from different viewpoints. Goebel (2011) states that humor relies mostly on figurative language and wordplay and relates to linguistic problem solving; he further mentions that in a school climate, it is concerned with convergent thinking and helps finding the right answer, he adds that humor challenges students to think divergently, creatively, and to welcome an array of possibilities. Humor is widely accepted to be an indicator of positive mental health (Paul, 1986). Humor might also be an important component of differentiation in the English classroom. Shade (1996) argues that because much humor requires careful attention to and deftness with language, gifted students are often particularly adept in the reading and production of humorous texts. He suggests that the relationship between humor and creativity "allows an individual to 'jump the track' or 'think outside the box' more successfully" (p. 47) and to be more receptive to the kinds of risk taking that bright students require if they are to feel intellectually challenged. Furthermore, as Maurice (1988) stated, "humor can easily be seen as a way of activating motivation and directing attention. (p. 20)

Claire (1984; as cited in Ketabi et al, 2009) believes that sharing a joke or humorous texts with the students create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom and make learning pleasant. Loomax and Moosavi (1998; as cited in Ketabi et al, 2009) in an article on the use of humor in a university statistics class mentioned that anecdotal evidence in past studies consistently suggests that humor is an extremely effective tool in education. Such studies suggest that the use of humor in the classroom reduces tension, improves classroom climate, increases enjoyment, increases student-teacher rapport and even leads to facilitate learning in education and any pedagogy. Therefore making use of humorous terms or sentences in any pedagogical texts could be fruitful; furthermore, the humorous themes of texts and ; consequently , writing humorous texts may promote the motivation for writing and enhance the learners' language knowledge and language learning in long run. Very few EFL instructors have used genre-based instruction using humorous texts, as a model for teaching writing skill; therefore, generally speaking, the results of this study can have an illuminating role in Iranian EFL learners' writing skill development.

Regarding the fact that this study focused on genre-based instruction, writing performance and humorous writing, the researcher posed the following research question:

RQ. Is there a significant difference between genre-based instruction of humorous texts (G+H) group and control group (G) in terms of writing performance?

2. Review of Literature

The genre-based approach clearly emphasizes the explicit teaching of the linguistic conventions of the genre for second language novice student writers (Christie, 1990). It is argued that students cannot vividly produce a particular text-type successfully if they are not taught explicitly about linguistic conventions of that text-type with respect to language features and schematic structure. Various types of genres differ in their writing conventions and differ in language features. It is suggested that language teachers offer language learners enough writing practice of the different genres they require their students to write (Nation, 2009).

Genre-based approach has offered a teaching methodology which enables teachers to present explicit instruction in a highly systematic and logical manner, which are considered as factors assisting students with the cognitive organization of information (Firkins, 2007). Genre-based instruction is a rather recent term which focuses mainly on analyzing texts based on the allocated moves and purposes to be clarified explicitly by teachers. The direction of genre-based instruction starts from the very text to identification of utterances and sentences in which meanings and purposes are to be released. The teacher exposes students into different genres and classifications of any given texts, while the students are required to write according to their awareness of genres. They, finally, apply their genre knowledge to write skillfully and more accurately (Hyland, 2004).

Recent research on humor has focused not only on its linguistic and psychological aspects (Ritchi, 2003) but also on its pedagogical implications and potential applications. Cook (2000) describes humor as a part of the phenomenon of language play that is fundamental in human thought and culture, and argues that it can and should take its place in language teaching and learning. Humor is a neglected aspect of writing and reading texts in language pedagogy. Rochmawati (2009) emphasizes the importance of humor in writing, stating that language is closely related to thought, that means that humor may involve emotion, thought and action that later can lead to laughter. Still there is lack of understanding of those kinds of humorous texts, particularly by EFL readers. He further adds that this may bring about the intermediate plateau they often get stuck in which it is the main cause of their demotivation. In searching for a solution to the problem we should approach the humorous texts from various viewpoints, He finally claims that "One of them is genre analysis". (p. 119) Stankić (2011) refers to the significance of humor in language teaching as she states that humor plays an important role in communication in any language, it can't be avoided in foreign language teaching. She further mentions that it can help students gain a different viewpoint and better indication of language and another culture; moreover, it can make students more sensitive towards understanding and appreciating a foreign language in its full complexity. She continues that humor enables students to have a better insight into the culture and different values native speakers of English share, which is very important for students to enhance their interest and desire to learn, in particular, writing skill which is the most problematic skill among other skills. It is clear that humor is related to culture but it does not necessarily mean that any given text which is supposed to be humorous lacks its characteristics in other cultures, since it may still have its own fun and surprise, as Goebel (2011) defines humor as: "Although definitions of humor differ somewhat, depending on whether one approaches it from a psychological, anthropological, or literary perspective, most scholars agree that it is rooted in expectation and surprise". (p. 1)

One of the fundamental aspects of humor is that it violates logical perceptions of the normal events, texts; actually it breaks the patterns which generate surprise and may be followed by some fun. (Goebel, 2011). According to Goebel: "Language humor relies on the sounds of words, words with multiple meanings, unusual word combinations, and unusual syntax" (p. 3). Some of humor structures are as puns, portmanteaus, conventional and grammatical humor such as metaphorical verbs, adverbs and adjectives, participles.

The utilization of humor has been applied in classes as both verbal and humorous texts in which they need to be read and studied. Medgyes (2002) makes a practical case for the introduction of humor into the language classroom, supplying a list of twelve affective, pedagogical and linguistic justifications for its inclusion. He argues that although humor itself is essentially unteachable, but what can be taught is the language of humor in which language can be used (as written or spoken) to make humor accessible to the students and, conversely, use humor to make the language accessible. Gardner (2008) in his paper reduces Trachtenberg's (1979) seven reasons in defense of the use of humor in ESL classrooms to three categories: "classroom management benefits, linguistic benefits, and cultural benefits" (p. 9). Deneire (1995) suggests that humor can be integrated harmoniously into existing language teaching approaches. The advantage of humor is that it could be used with any language teaching approach or method. Humorous material can add variety to the class. It provides a change of pace, and can contribute to reduce tension that many learners feel during the learning process. But the use of humorous texts in classes should be planned by the teacher. In terms of styles of humor, Martin (2006) has grouped humor into two

dimensions, adaptive and maladaptive. Adaptive humor refers to humors that are beneficial to psychological well-being. It includes affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor (Martin 2006). Thus, affiliative humor refers to the tendency to tell jokes or engage in spontaneous witty banter in order to create amusement and fun, lessen interpersonal tension and facilitate any relationships. This kind of humor is non-hostile and tolerant. It affirms self and others and increases interpersonal cohesiveness.

Narratives are a part of all cultures, it can be a good point of departure to initiate students into more higher-level, discipline-specific writing. Second, using narratives will allow teachers to develop a more explicit knowledge about language which can be shared amongst the writing instructor and students. As students develop their metalanguage, they can exploit this foundation to move into more high-level writing. Finally, practicing deconstruction of texts with a functional genre metalanguage will help students become independent analysts themselves, providing them with the ability to discern what types of features texts contain when they are confronted with a new writing genre (Joshua, 2011).

Although few studies have been conducted in terms of the effect of humour on language learning and teaching, the results of using humorous texts in language pedagogy have been considerable. Ketabi (2009) and his colleague have conducted a research in the field of humor. In order to investigate the effect of pedagogical humor in the language learning and in the language classroom, a study of 300 foreign language learners and 15 foreign language instructors were undertaken, using a Likert-scaled questionnaire. In order to investigate the benefits of using humor in the language classroom, diverse groups of Persian EFL teachers and learners were asked to evaluate the use of humor in their classrooms. Results of this study strongly confirm a perceived effectiveness for humor as a very useful strategy to learning and teaching of foreign languages (Ketabi, 2009). There are many other empirical works, but few have attempted to carry out a comprehensive research which encompasses many of vital questions in the field of genre.

Aria (2003) has conducted a research using pre and post-test scores in the field of humor in vocabulary instruction focusing on engagement theoretical stance within a motivational theoretical perspective, which suggested that the students receiving the humor-based instruction achieved higher vocabulary performance scores because they were more engaged, and therefore more motivated, during their vocabulary lessons than were the students who received the traditional, non-humorous classes. The research indicated that the students were highly engaged during the humor-based instruction. Humor also was supposed to decrease stress and apathy in the classroom, diminishing the emotional distance between students and the teacher, and creating an environment in the classroom that was not only conducive to, but encouraged, academic endeavor. In addition, he concluded that humor in the classroom helped make learning just plain fun. For students in the experimental group the researcher perceived a heightened enthusiasm in the classroom on vocabulary days. Those in the experimental group would invariably respond with a measure of anticipation, asking if they were going to do those funny sentences again or not. Using engagement theory it is suggested that students in the experimental group may have outperformed their control group counterparts because they, in terms of the funny and fun instruction, received motivation in their vocabulary lessons. (Aria, 2003)

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study were male and female Iranian EFL students at intermediate level at Islamic Azad Universities of Orumie, Mahabad, Sardasht, Bukan Branches. Two classes, studying writing courses at these universities comprised the two groups of the study. There were one experimental group, Genre-based using Humorous (G+H) texts and one control group with genre-based instruction with no humorous texts. The standard proficiency test, Preliminary English Test (PET), which is used for intermediate level students, has been used to homogenise the students in terms of language proficiency in intact class, comprising 90 students, out of which 60 students were selected as the participants of the study. This selection was based on the criterion of one

standard deviation above and below the mean. The number of the participants in each of the two intact classes was 30. The participants' age range was around 19-28. Since the participants needed to have a basic command of English, especially in writing skill, they had passed their first semester and Basic Writing course, and they were studying Writing 1 course.

3.2. Instruments / Materials

The first instrument used in this study was a standard proficiency test (PET), at intermediate level. Also, there were a need for a pre-test and a post-test of writing; the topic of the post-test has been similar to the pre-test. The material used for the study was based on Alexander's book (1997). The humorous texts for the G+H group were well equipped with comic and fun pictures very similar to the pictures within the Alexander's book (1997) along with some English jokes. It should be added that the book is an integrated one for intermediate students. The comic pictures were either the same as the book or have been selected from internet which were very similar and related to the ones in the book to add to the humorous nature of the texts. The readability of both texts have been assessed using Fry readability scale to ensure the intermediate level of the texts. In order to maximize the degree of certainty about the humorous and non-humorous themes and concept of the texts from a cultural point of view the researcher used a Likert-scale questionnaire, within which five Iranian English professors (five Orumie, Mahabad and Boukan universities' colleagues) were required to fill out the questions to determine the extent of humorous themes of the texts. For control group, the comic pictures were removed and some modifications were conducted so that the humorous themes and some humorous terms along with humorous signals (based on Goebel, 2011) of the original texts were removed.

3.2.1. Pre-test and post-test

In order to gain the sufficient and pedagogical data from EFL learners, the researcher asked the participants to write three paragraphs about the given topic for the pre-test as: narrate an unforgettable event in your life. After instructional sessions for all groups, the participants were required to write post-test which was similar but not identical with the pre-test topic to avoid the effect of pre-test. The post-test topic was: narrate an important event in your life. The tests were evaluated and rated based on Jacob scale (1981). Students' writing performance, in terms of content, organization, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, cohesion, coherence, and punctuation was scored in pre-tests and post-tests.

3.3. Procedure

The pre-test was administered from the second session of the treatment to write a composition test in which one question was given to the all four groups. The participants were required to write a narrative composition about an unforgettable event in their lives more than three paragraphs about 300 words in one and half an hour. The participants were justified to write on their own along with their names and students' codes, so that they should take it seriously.

After the last session (10th session), the post-test was administered. The post-test was similar to the pre-test, the participants were required to write a narrative composition about an important event in their lives containing three paragraphs and about 300 words. In order to have the similar paragraphs, both the pre-and post-tests should resemble each other; on the other hand, to avoid the effect of pre-test on the post-test, some modifications was conducted ; as the substitution of unforgettable with important.

The study was conducted in 10 sessions; the first session was devoted to the pre-test and the preliminary introduction; the instructional treatment has taken place in eight sessions. In the 10th session, the post-test has been administered. Both groups had the same teacher; the researcher was the teacher. In all groups, in the beginning of the session, after administering the pre-test, the teacher explained what the students would study and what their roles would be during the learning process; the following sessions were devoted to the treatment in the experimental groups

and the traditional instruction in the control group.

In Experimental Group (i.e., Genre-based group + humorous text or G+H group), the students read a short narration written in the given textbook. In this phase, the teacher helped the students to identify and underline the genre along with the social purposes of the text. The learners were required to identify the references, antecedents, social relations among sentences and events. It took about 10 to 15 minutes in each session. The next phase of the lesson had been the teacher's explanation of each move, its functional orientation, the practice of identification of coherence and cohesion and the linguistic forms used in it. About 10 to 15 more minutes were needed for this phase. In the third phase of the lesson, the learners were asked to read another narration and identify and elaborate their moves, social purposes and events along with other characteristics of the narrative genre. This took about 10 minutes, too.

In the last phase, the students individually wrote their own narrative composition, based on a topic similar to the theme of the reading passages in the text-book, in about 20 minutes; it was based on what they had learned about genre characteristics (e.g., certain moves, social purposes...). They had about 25 to 30 minutes to prepare the final draft and edit it individually. Thus, the writing phase was about 50 minutes. Then they handed it in to the teacher. Finally, to enhance writing ability each student wrote another composition at home, based on the topic offered by the teacher and delivered it to the teacher for further comments. The researcher then analysed their composition based on genres and next session the students were notified about different aspects of their own writing, especially from genre point of view, and the awareness about genre classifications and functions. The topic of these compositions (e.g. narrate a special event in your life, narrate a funny event in your life...) were similar to the topics they had written composition in the class.

Students in G+H group developed understanding of text forms as genres and formats provided them with the tools they needed to express themselves effectively and to reach their target audience. Through direct instruction, the teacher provided students with an understanding of how different aspects of a piece of writing – including the theme or topic, the audience, the purpose of writing, and the form – all relate to one another. The students were informed that effective writers make connections to their prior knowledge, other texts, and the world around them as they draft their writing. Some examples of narrative texts were analysed for locating genres. As they were writing, students were encouraged to ask themselves: "What am I really trying to say?" "Who is my intended audience?" "How can I express my ideas?" "Have I made myself clear?" The analysis almost was based on questions such as following: Q.1. Who was involved in the text? Q. 2. What happened to them? Q. 3. What did the narrator think about their experience? Q. 4. How was the problem solved?

Both the pre-tests and post-tests were scored by two TEFL raters who had more than fifteen years of English teaching in many universities, the reliability of which was calculated through inter-rater reliability. To ensure about the reliability, the researcher randomly chose forty post-tests to be re-evaluated then their intra-rator reliability were calculated (0.75).

The control group had exactly the same genre-based instruction procedures but without humorous texts. In order to apply genre based instruction the same procedure as the experimental group was conducted except for applying humorous texts. In other words, the participants in the control group didn't receive the mostly textual humorous treatments applied to the experimental group. They just fulfilled the normal requirements of the curriculum for BA students of English during the course of this study.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability of PET

In order to determine the reliability of PET which were distributed among 60 students, Cronbach's Alpha was used. Table 1 shows the reliability of PET.

Table 1. Reliability of Questions of PET

	N of Items	Cases	Cronbach's Alpha
PET	100	60	0.802

As indicated in Table 1, reliability of PET is 0.80 which indicates that it is suitable for the present research.

4.2. Proficiency Test Results

Table 2 Displays Descriptive Statistics for PET Before and After Homogenization.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Non-homogeneous PET	90	10.00	82.00	47.2444	16.34086
homogeneous PET	60	34.00	62.00	52.4500	7.70883

Table 2 indicates that PET test was performed among 90 English language students, the mean is 47.24 and the SD is 16.34. As indicated in Table 2 and After homogenization of the scores, based on one SD below and above the mean, 60 participants with average score of 52.45 and SD of 7.7 were remained for the present research; so that the range of variation of scores fluctuate from a minimum of 34 to a maximum of 62.

4.3. The normal distribution of data

To check the normal distribution of scores in the groups, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Normal Distribution of Writing Scores in Two Groups

	Pre Test	Post Test
N	60	60
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	.994	.980
P value	.277	.292

As Table 3 indicated, the data distributions are normal, since in both the pretest and posttest the P value was significantly higher than 0.05. As Table 3 also shows Kolmogorov-Smirnov for pre-test is .994 and for post-test is .980, respectively. P value is .277 for pre-test and .292 for post-test.

4.4. Homogeneity of slopes

According to Levene's test, as indicated in Table 4, the homogeneity of slopes is tested.

Table 4 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for Writing Scores in Two Groups

F	df1	df2	P value
2.258	3	116	.085

As Table 4 indicated, the equality of variances among groups in the present research was confirmed ($F = 2.25, p > 0.05$); Confirming the default equality of variances in the population, it means that the distribution of scores in the study groups have been equal.

4.5. Slope of regression

The mutual effect among Group×Pretest score has been evaluated in the prediction of the dependent variable. Table 5 shows the slope of regression results.

Table 5. Covariance to examine the slope of the regression for writing scores in two groups

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P value
Group	7.676	3	2.559	.672	.571
Pretest score	1134.336	1	1134.336	298.106	.000
Group *	5.817	3	1.939	.510	.677
Error	426.177	112	3.805		

As indicated in Table 5, it is concluded that the mutual effect is not significant ($F=0.510, p>0.05$); it means that there is no significant relations between independent variable intervention variable. Thus one way of ANOVA analysis can be followed by means of the homogeneity of slope of regression; confirming the above mentioned pre-requisite assumptions.

4.6. The Descriptive Statistics for two Groups

Table 6 shows the results of descriptive statistics for scores of writing performance in pretest and posttest in both groups.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics for two groups in terms of writing scores in pretest and post test

	Pre test				Post test			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
			Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper
G+H	15.63	3.26	14.41	16.85	23.23	4.40	21.59	24.88
control	16.33	2.56	15.38	17.29	18.73	2.92	17.64	19.83

As Table 6 indicated, the mean of pre-tests for writing performance scores are $G+H= 15.63$; *control group*= 16.33. On the other hand, the mean for post-test results are: $G+H= 23.23$; *control group*=18.73. SD for the two groups are: $G+H= 4.40$; *control group*= 2.92.

Table 7 shows ANOVA for comparison of the writing scores in both groups.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P value	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power
group	411.749	3	137.250	36.537	.000	.488	1.000
Pretest score	1214.607	1	1214.607	323.338	.000	.738	1.000
Error	431.993	115	3.756				

As indicated in Table 7, the results of ANOVA statistical analysis shows that there is a significant difference among the writing performance scores of two groups ($F=36.53, p<0.05$). The squared eta is 0.48 and it means that 48 percent of variance of scores is due to the group membership. The statistical square equals one and it means that the accuracy of this analysis to render the significant differences is 100%. The results of ANOVA on scores of writings have been shown in Table 7 for two groups. In the present analysis, the pre-test scores have been controlled by means of statistics. It means that the impact of pre-tests effect has been removed from writing scores, and then the four groups have been compared based on remaining variance.

Table 8 Final estimates after controlling pretest of writing scores in two groups

	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
G+H	24.537	23.129	.355	23.833
control	19.315	17.912	.354	18.613

As indicated in Table 9, the mean of writing scores after controlling intervention are; *control*=18.61 *G+H*=23.83; which has significant differences ($F=36.53, p<0.05$). Thus, the results show that the first null hypothesis claiming that "There is no significant difference between the experimental group, Genre-based using Humorous text (G+H), and the control group, in terms of writing performance is rejected, indicating that there is a significant difference between the experimental group, Genre-based using Humorous text (G+H), and the control group, in terms of their writing performance.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As an innovative study, the researcher added a humorous theme to the given treatment (texts) by means of humorous elements (such as comic pictures, humorous structures, and themes) to investigate the effect of genre-based instruction plus humorous texts upon writing performance. This time, genre-based instruction is equipped with humorous texts. The results show that the mean score for this group is significantly higher than the control group. The results confirm the similar but not identical studies, such as Ketabi (2009); Aria (2003) who reaffirm the role of humor upon better writing performance. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no study has already been conducted regarding GBI in terms of humorous texts with comic pictures and themes. The use of humorous texts have been neglected in EFL pedagogy, it has led the learners not to be involved with improving writing performance. The findings are also in line with other related studies in the field; the effect of humor on enhancing performance as denoting that, humor triggers interest and produces intrinsic motivation in individuals (Martin 2006,; Medgyes 2002,; Shade 1996,; Tamblyn 2003). Renninger (2000) states that, "for an individual interest to continue to develop, a person needs opportunities for cognitive challenge" (p. 379). It was already argued that, to comprehend humor, one should be able to solve the incongruity involved with it and resolving the incongruity imposes a cognitive challenge on the mind of the reader. Based on this, it can be said that as the participants of the humorous group (G+H) continue reading the texts during the instructional sessions, reading every text along with the comic picture at the beginning of the passage challenges their cognition and consequently their interest continues to develop over the successive sessions. Learners with good attention control skills in G+H group could maintain the information stored in short term memory and have been able to practice humorous writing better than control group with no humorous text readings (Wickens, 2008). The implicit nature of the linguistic texts along with explicit non-verbal signal of the comic image, on top of the instructional materials, based on Tamblyn (2003) notions in learners' entertainment and arousing their interest might have enhanced their consciousness, attention and memory capacity of learners so that they had been able to perform better in post-test.

It also confirms the related findings of Reisberg (2006) who has compared the effect of joke on the performance of the humorous group with the non-humorous group. He concluded that reading the joke produces an inner motivation and interest in reader, so the reader goes through reading the text with greater enthusiasm and thus pays closer attention to the content (Reisberg, 2006). The findings confirm the effective role of humor upon learners' memory and learning since humor and fun are intrinsically motivating and arouse and maintain interest during the lesson (Martin, 2006; Medgyes, 2002; Tamblyn, 2003). Tamblyn (2003) states that humor entertains learners and this entertainment, in turn, develop intrinsic motivation which is essentially what is called personal relevancy. In clarifying the role of humor in presenting information visually, he adds the view that "everyone remembers pictures far better than words or thoughts" (p. 143). According

to the present results, the type of the instructional material is a significant factor to be considered.

Based on the results of the study it can be concluded that teaching EFL students to write using genre-based instruction might enable the learners to improve their writing skill. Writing has always been such a cumbersome skill for learners to learn. The present research illuminated the benefits of GBI+ humorous texts upon writing performance. Consequently, it can be said that if the genre approach is balanced with humor in the curriculum, students will better improve their writing skills through experiencing a whole writing process as well as realizing the social functions of genres and the contexts in which these genres are used. Recently, the very notion of social aspects of language pedagogy with explicit and implicit explanation, in particular, in writing have been advocated; according to Hyland (2003), at the heart of the approach, therefore, is the view that writing pedagogies should "offer students explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts" (p. 18) which is an essential part of genre-based instruction.

With regard to genre-based instruction +humorous texts, the results show that the mean score (post-test) for this group is higher than the control group. Comparing the results also show that when genre-based instruction is combined with humor, it rendered interesting results, it shows that humorous texts (along with comic illustration) when are used instead of the traditional or non-humorous texts yield better results. Thus, the type of the text also plays a significant role in any GBI and should be considered as a powerful pedagogical means.

Supporting the importance of humor in pedagogy, Schmidt and Williams (2001), in their study, provided strong evidence for the mnemonic benefit of humor. The positive effect of humor on learning, may be due to the fact that humorous material leads to sustained attention and subsequent elaborative processes. It is not sufficient to look at the positive effect of humor on recalling some isolated words or sentences without considering a specific context or genre pedagogy. However, when we want to learn more about processes and mechanisms that may help to explain the effects of humor on recall and comprehension of any given texts, then it is essential to use specific genre measures and to examine memory and comprehension processes in a specific situation, and to choose a definite subcategory of humorous text type (Hayati, & Shooshtari, & Shakeri 2011). Therefore, it can be recommended to add humorous text to the instructional materials in many EFL context where the texts are strict and non-demanding. In order to overcome the problem of involving learners with the productive aspect of language learning, humorous texts might be an appropriate material for them to keep going. According to the results of humorous texts in the present research, it might be also concluded that the type of the genres and subgenres do affect GBI pedagogy. Using humorous texts in language classroom is useful since a majority of EFL learners are currently exposed to very serious and non-humorous texts which may hinder them to just continue or have an endeavor to learn a foreign language. The findings might be useful for language teachers, syllabus designers, material developers, language learners, EFL language instructors.

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Appendix A

30 – 36 76% - 90% Very good	Content completely relevant and very well organized. Cohesive devices link text together well. Range of vocabulary is above average. Grammatical structures generally correct. Use of syntax shows a very good fluent command over style. Correct use of punctuation and very few spelling errors. Candidate shows ability to edit work. Task achieved very well.
24 - 29 60% - 75% Good	Content generally relevant and well organized with few lapses in organization. Cohesive devices are used well but are not very varied. Vocabulary is sufficient for the purpose and occasionally ambitious. Grammar structures mainly accurate. Sentences are well constructed and language is generally idiomatic. Punctuation is for the most part correct and spelling errors are non-basic. Candidate at times edits work. Task achieved quite well.
19 - 23 47% - 59% Average	Content for the most part relevant and organized quite well though there may be some gaps or redundant information. For the most part satisfactory cohesion but this may be repetitive. Vocabulary is limited to the most frequent. Grammatical structures used are safe, candidate does not take chances. Sentences are fairly complex but stylistically not striking. Some unidiomatic use of language occurs. Punctuation not always consistent and some spelling errors are made. Task is achieved satisfactorily.
14 - 18 35% - 46% Rather weak to slightly inadequate	Content under-developed and not always relevant. Organization is flawed or lacking in control. Unidiomatic expression evident. Vocabulary, grammar structures and syntax are either very basic or limited and often inaccurate (including difficulty with tenses). Punctuation limited to full stop and comma and not always used correctly. Several spelling errors. At times candidate struggles to put message across and therefore task is not achieved well.
9 – 13 23% - 34% Weak	Task is very inadequately attempted: sentences are short and simple with numerous errors in spelling, grammar and syntax. Sentences are linked together only in the simplest way or not linked at all. Vocabulary is basic. Numerous instances of unidiomatic expression. Punctuation practically nonexistent or erratic.
0 – 8 0% - 22% Minimal performance	Text composed of short sentences that are poorly organized and at times even incomprehensible. High incidence of errors in spelling, grammar and syntax Vocabulary extremely simple. Task not achieved.

Adopted from Rating Scale based on Jakob (1981) http://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/81964/englwrite.pdf