

## Application of Genre Theory in College-English Reading

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### Abstract

In college reading teaching, most students pay more attention on the word, sentence and syntax, but ignore the whole text structure, thus, investigations upon college students shall be made to prove effective, in order to help the learners have the awareness of generic structure, and improve their reading ability and communicative competence. The author analyzes five different genres in details from a generic perspective, which is narrative text, news story, argumentative text, exposition and introduction. The author puts forward two hypotheses and makes an experiment about two subjects, finally analyzes the data and gets some meaningful implications.

**Key words:** Genre; Genre analysis; Genre-based teaching approach; Generic structure

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### INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, a major shift has been taking place in reading studies at the theoretical levels, that is, texts are viewed as genre exemplars. Thus, genre has become a term referring to complex oral or written response by speakers and writers to the demands of a social context. Similarly, genre analysis employed here, has concerned itself most with describing the higher level organization and structure of written texts. Genre analysis, according to this view, is the study of how the contextual parameters,

discourse structure, and language interrelate. Recent years we have put more emphasis on the genre analysis in EFL teaching. Genre-based teaching approach is the pedagogy based on genre and genre analysis, which applies the theory of genre and genre analysis of classroom teaching, and develops teaching activities revolving around the schematic structure of a text. Relevant literatures show that genre-based teaching approach has proved to be an effective way to teach writing for both native and nonnative speakers in many parts of the world. According to many researchers (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 1998), there are some reasons as follows: a) genre-base approach will result in significant improvement in achieving communicative goals; b) genre-based approach will improve the students' ability to produce texts that conform to the allowable move structure; c) genre-based approach will improve the students' ability to texture their reading and writing.

The author considers the genre as the useful tool that students succeed in acquiring in the reading process and tries to contribute to the understanding of genre analysis of text and its application to the college English reading instruction. The author conducted an experimental study among 80 students in China West Normal University for half a year. In the experiment, the author developed some teaching activities based on different generic texts of college students. During the experiment, the author observed the whole process of training, and collected all the relevant data. On the basis of these data, the author summarized the outcomes of this teaching model with the hope to further promote such research practice in China.

### 1. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON GENRE-BASED TEACHING APPROACH ABROAD AND IN CHINA

Genre analysis is a recent but very significant development of discourse analysis (Bhatia, 1993, p.5). It is an insightful

and thick description of academic and professional texts. It aims at communicative purpose and language use strategy. The most striking characteristic of genre analysis lies in its explanation compared with the descriptive method. Besides, it ties closely linguistic analytic method to sociological and psychological method. Researchers are using this method explains not only the deeper social, cultural elements behind the text, but also the means of how people realize social as well as communicative purposes during communication. Genre analysis involves a methodology for teaching how a text is put together and creates meaning in its particular context of use. Genre analysis also enables students to enter a particular discourse community, and discover how writers organize.

Researchers have carried out some empirical studies on genre-based teaching in language education in China and abroad.

Littlefair's study in 1991 emphasized the importance of awareness of genre for text reading. Francis and Hallam's study in 2000 revealed that student learning in high education was affected not only by prior subject knowledge and in approaches to learning but also by the ability to deal with the text genre. Flowerdew's study in 1993 and Hyon's study in 1995 provided a number of example activities with a view to demonstrating how learners could be taught to approach, adapt to and ultimately acquire new genres. Henry and Roseberry's study in 1998 and Flowerdew's study in 2000 examined the effectiveness of genre-based teaching in professional writing settings. Kay and Dudley-Evans' study in 1998 were not tightly controlled experimental study, but they summarized the strengths and weaknesses of the genre-based teaching approach that was very useful for teachers to take as a reference when they attempted to practice genre-based approach. In China, more and more studies on genre-based teaching approach have been conducted in recent years. According to Chinese Academic Journal Database, about 60 teaching research papers have been published focusing on genre-based teaching approach and its application in English writing and reading instruction since the last 20 years.

These empirical studies have been devoted to providing feasible classroom activities based on genre pedagogy and examining the effectiveness of genre-based approach. Thus an awareness of genre knowledge is necessary for students to succeed in the EFL reading classes. Meanwhile, genre provides a useful framework for both teachers and students.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN ABOUT THE GENRE THEORY IN READING COMPREHENSION

### 2.1 Aims and Hypotheses

Based on the previous discussion of reading psychology and some traditional reading theories, we put forward

a new way of reading—combining genre analysis with schema. We believe if a certain genre is stored in the students' memory, when they are reading, it's easier for them to comprehend the text better. Because the genre instructions can provide some explicit textural knowledge for the students, and can help them analyze the text from its macrostructure. According to the theory of genre-based approach, reading comprehension is regarded as a communicative process. We should believe each text has its intrinsic structure and feature, make the students familiarize the models and regulations of various genres, and help them comprehend the text efficiently, thus improve their reading confidence and interest.

In short, the aim of the experiment is to testify to the following two hypotheses.

a) Genre-based teaching approach will improve students' reading ability.

b) Genre-based teaching approach will improve students' communicative confidence and interest.

### 2.2 Subjects

The subjects in this experiment are all non-English-major students from China West Normal University in their second year. Their English course includes 4 classes per week. They belong to the different departments but have used the same English textbook (*College English*) for nearly two years. Some of them have succeeded in passing College English Test (CET) Band 4 and some of them are preparing for Band 6. Class A is the experimental group, and class B is the control group. There are 40 students in each class and the teacher of the two groups is the present author. All of them take a pretest which contains only 20 reading comprehension questions. Subjects were informed prior to the text that it would be brought into their usual performance, so they treated it carefully. To some extent, the validity of this experiment is guaranteed.

### 2.3 Instruments

The instruments used in this qualitative and quantitative experiment are one questionnaire, and two reading comprehension tests.

#### 2.3.1 The Reading Comprehension Test

The two reading comprehension tests are held before the experiment and after experiment. All the reading materials are chosen from CET 4. Each text consists of four reading passages, each of which has five multiple-choice questions, including narration, argumentation, exposition and biography. The types of questions include these following six kinds: a) fact or detail, b) vocabulary, c) inference, d) conclusion, e) thesis or main idea, f) the author's attitude. All the questions are to be finished within a given time (40 minutes), and each of the multiple-choice questions accounts for 2 points with the total score of 40.

#### 2.3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire which consists of several questions concerned with students' attitude towards the genre-based

teaching approach is to testify whether the genre-based teaching approach can improve the students' reading competence and interest.

## 2.4 Generally Analyzing Different Texts From a Genre Perspective

The author tries to expose students to a variety of genres in their reading comprehension and provide assignments and classes discussions that naturally motivate students to be aware of certain genres. Much emphasis should be put on teaching students the formal, staged qualities of genres so that they can recognize these features in the texts they read. According to the theory of genre and genre analysis, the five genres can be analyzed as follows.

### 2.4.1 Narrative Text

Narration is the most familiar genre to us. To narrate is to give an account of an event or a series of events. Narration recounts something that happened or is happening, and description states how something looks like, sounds like, feel like, smell like or tastes like. In a wide sense, narrative text includes stories, real or imaginary, biographies, histories, news items, and narrative poems.

As for the narrative genre, the most influential model is the model proposed by Labov (1972)—divides the main stages of narrative genre into six categories: Abstract (what), Orientation (who, when, where), Complication (then what), Evaluation (so what?), Resolution (how, what) and Coda (what is the bridge). Of the six stages, the Abstract tells briefly what the story is going to be about and serves as a kind of headline. Orientation sets the environment of the story and provides background information: When and where did the story happen to whom, and in which circumstances. The main part of the narration is composed of Complicating Action, which develops the story and is about what happened then. The realization of evaluation pervades the narration in which the speaker comments on the story from outside of the narration. Resolution, naturally, is the result of the story; how the events end up. Coda rounds off the story and bridges the story with the present situation of narration. It shifts to the pasttime of the story to the present time of the talk (Labov, 1972, pp.358-359). The model has the following steps:

- a) Abstract.
- b) Orientation: The first and the second paragraphs tell about the setting of the story: the time and the place, and the main heroes.
- c) Complication: From the second paragraph to the bottom, we are told what happens in the story.
- d) Evaluation: The plot, involving exposition and evaluation, is developed through the narrator's description.
- e) Resolution: The stage of resolution is the result of the story. The end provides a climax for the reader's emotions.

f) Coda: The stage of coda brings the story to an end with a description.

### 2.4.2 News Story

News is an account of what is happening around us. Melvin (1987, p.11) agrees that the structure of the news story is an inverted pyramid. But he details it in terms of genre analysis approach and obtains the generic structure of the news story:

- a) Lead: It is a brief summary of the news. The reader will get a main idea of the news by reading it.
- b) Explaining and amplifying the lead: Explain more important details about what is involved in the lead, such as "who, what, when, where, why and how".
- c) Providing the background: Provide some information connected with the event, and make readers know about clearly.
- d) Elaborating the lead: The writers will quote or cite the words by the people or organization involved in the event.

### 2.4.3 Argumentative Text

An argumentative essay tries to make the reader understand, agree with and support the author's point of view. Its purpose usually is to convince or persuade. Argumentative texts are various proposals, such as policies, editorials of newspapers, articles on political or theoretical questions. There are generally two ways of reasoning: a) Inductive reasoning; b) Deductive reasoning. Argumentative text analysis has certain basic moves:

- a) Putting forward the thesis that is a debatable point: before the author make comments on something, he should make readers known what the topic and his opinion are. Usually the thesis is explicit and brief.
- b) Offering the argument: In this move, the author usually employs persuasive and logic arguments on his topic, and provides a lot of persuasive materials.
- c) Reaching the conclusion: Make the author acceptable and reasonable, but the author should keep an honest and friendly attitude.

### 2.4.4 Introduction

As a genre, Introduction has conventionally been understood as a piece of discourse which introduces other forms of lengthy discourse, such as a research article, a project report, a laboratory report or even a student essay. The introduction is the first part of research article and "serves as an orientation for readers of the report, giving them the perspective they need to understand the detailed information coming in later sections" (Weissbery & Buker, 1990, p.20). We can find the generic structure like this:

- a) Establishing field: The author should make clear which field the present research is.
- b) Summarizing previous research: In this move, the author states the field and the previous work in this field, which is the background of the present research.

c) Preparing for present research: The author needs to state the other things connected with the research, in order to prepare for present research, making the readers understand more clearly.

c) Introducing present research: This move is to outline the purpose of the present research or describe the present research roughly. We can find the introduction ends where the abstract begins. The characteristic of the introduction is to motivate the readers' interest and roughly know what is about.

#### 2.4.5 Exposition

Exposition is a style of writing that expounds or explains. It is primarily used to inform or explain certain things or phenomena such as the process of making a machine, the causes of a natural or social phenomenon, the planning of a project, or the solution of a problem. The main aim of such style is to give knowledge or information.

An expository essay typically contains objective and disinterested language in a pre-determined form that has an embedded outline that includes an introduction, body and conclusion, classification, comparison and contrast, illustration, definition, or an analysis of causes and effects. Finally, he will conclude. Exposition is often seen as analytical, logical, objective and clear (Irwin, 1991).

There are different ways to organize the essays of this genre, but it generally includes most or all of the following important moves:

- a) Establish thesis statements in the introductory part;
- b) Select relevant details to discuss and order supporting details effectively and logically;
- c) Draw general conclusions or suggest implications for further discussion.

When analyzing expository essay, researchers usually adopt three models: problem-solution pattern, matching pattern and general-particular pattern. The following part gave a brief illustration of these three patterns.

##### a) Problem-solution pattern

The first pattern is termed a problem-solution structure that occurs frequently in expository text. In this model, two facts interact, one citing a problem, the other a solution of that problem. Specifically, a situation will be first offered, and then a problem will be put forward, followed by a response. In the end, a certain evaluation or result will be given. The usual pattern is: situation—problem—response—evaluation of response (Hoey, 1983; McCarthy, 2000).

##### b) Matching pattern

The second pattern is termed a matching structure. When the author describes the similarity and difference of two things, this pattern is often adopted. In the text, the following words are used: like, similar to, on the other hand, however, unlike and different

##### c) General-particular pattern

The third pattern is a general-particular structure, where a generalization is followed by more specific

statements, perhaps exemplifying the generalization. Generalization followed by example or examples is one type of general-particular structure which is called generalization-example.

#### 2.5 Genre-Based Teaching Approach Procedures

Sunny Hyon (1996) from Michigan University conducted an experiment under the guidance of Swales' genre theory, which proved to be fruitful. Originated in this theory, Hyon divided her Reading and Vocabulary Development subject into following parts: Instructions, Newspaper Writing (including News Stories and News Feature Articles), Textbooks and Literary Works. The major teaching processes can be summarized as:

Step A: Genre analysis of a text. The teacher analyzes the schematic structure of certain genres in class using concrete examples.

Step B. Imitative analysis. Learners are to analyze a text of the same genre by themselves. Follow procedures in step A.

Step C. Group discussion. The structures of several texts are disarranged according to "schematic structure" theory. Learners are required to discuss and rearrange them so that they accord with genre tradition.

Step D. Independent analyzing. Learners should go and find some text with the same genre types to analyze and comment.

Step E. Deeper analysis. Learners should make clear the language style of the genre and finally produce of own writing by imitating sample text so as to fully understand the generic structure and language style.

Inspired by the above model, the author connects with the own reality and design the following teaching procedure. Before the experiment, all the subjects take a reading comprehension test. The genre-based teaching approach is applied to class A, and the teacher supplements some other teaching materials about various genres, while the traditional teaching approach is applied to class B. After the two-month experiment, the subjects of two classes are given a reading comprehension test again. Meanwhile, the experimental class needs to do a questionnaire concerning their attitude to the genre-based teaching approach.

##### a) Preliminary activities

Reading class should be a two-way communication rather than the teacher's monologue. Before introducing a genre to the student, the teacher asks the students to prepare their own reading material of the certain genre. And in class, the teacher asks the students to talk about the main features of this genre, concerning the general structure of the genre. At the same time, teacher provides some hints for students so that they can predict what is coming. Then, the teacher should introduce all the knowledge of society, history, and customs about the genre to the student.



b) Providing sample genre and analyzing the structure in pairs

The teacher could contribute to a passage which is a representative example of a genre and ask the students to read it carefully, then figure out the basic components of genre, finally summarize typical generic structures. Students should discuss these following questions: what's the characteristic of this genre? How can the special generic structure reach the communicative purposes? And each group is expected to come up with a list of their findings or comments about this particular genre as a result of their discussion. The form of the discussion depends on the size of the class and levels of the students and is decided by the teacher. The forms possess the following: questioning techniques, involvement techniques, feedback techniques, review techniques and student-supportive techniques (Antonellis, 1983, pp.23-26).

c) Contributing a summary

After each group has contributed its summary, the teacher could summarize characteristics of the given genre, including the generic structure, word choice, sentence patterns, tenses and aspects, and write down them on the blackboard. Since different genres are different stages, there are certain stages in a certain genre. The most important point of the teaching process is analyzing the structural features in order to enable the students to grasp the structural features of a text, because the essence of genre-based teaching approach is to enable students to know the procedures and characteristics of the certain genre and form the schema of this genre in students' memory.

d) Independent analysis

In this stage, in order to strengthen the form of a certain genre in the students' mind, they are given a number of examples of a particular genre to identify and analyze the generic structure. In this way, students can explore the characteristic features of particular genre and think independently, digest and employ the knowledge into their own. This approach changes the teacher-centered situation. In this process, the teacher must give up the authority of the giver of knowledge and become the positive facilitator and helper.

e) Improving exercises

As an efficient follow-up activity, the teacher can assign some homework for students to use their acquired knowledge of a genre. Nowadays, most reading comprehensions are multiple-choice, open questions, true/false questions and topic sentences identification. However, these types have their own deficiencies. In this approach, open-ended exercises are used. These fall into two general types: exercises focused on the text and exercises extending from the text (Murdoch, 1986). Exercises focused on the text include the following forms: priming questions; "detective"

questions; margin "knowledge" questions; "cohesion" questions; understanding the text; information transfer; summaries; dictionary exercises. Exercises extending from the text include the following forms: paragraph structure, prediction exercise, "jigsaw" exercise, the function of sentences, grammar review, and vocabulary follow-up.

### 3. THE DATA ANALYSIS AND TEST OF HYPOTHESES

The author collected the experimental data according to the subjects' scores, one is the pretest, and the other is the posttest. Here the author will use the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 12.0 for Windows) Independent-Samples *T*-test to compare the scores of two groups, the experimental group and the control group.

#### 3.1 The Comparison and Analysis of the Scores of EG and CG in the Pretest

Here we use SPSS Independent-Samples *T*-test to deal with the data obtained from the pretest of EG and CG to test whether the results of two groups have significant differences in two variables (Pretest and Posttest). The following descriptive statistics table displays the mean (*M*), standard deviation (*S.D.*), and size of sample (*N*) for the scores of the pretest of EG and CG before the treatment.

**Table 1**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation, and Numbers of Subjects for the Scores of EG and CG in the Pretest**

Group	<i>N</i>	Mean	Std.deviation	Std. error mean
PreTest EG	40	22.4000	5.58753	.88347
CG	40	22.4500	5.59281	.88430

From Table 1 we can see EG got an average score of 22.40 points in the pretest, while CG got 22.45 points on average. There is only -0.05 point difference between those two means. Yet we cannot conclude that there is no significant difference between EG and CG in the pretest. In order to judge whether there is statistically significant difference, we need to check the Independent Samples Test table (Table 2).

From Table 2 we can see the significance is 0.971, much bigger than 0.05, which means the variances of the two groups are equal. Sig.(2-tailed) is the significance probability of two tailed *T*-test. In this pretest, the Sig.(2-tailed) is 0.968, bigger than the 0.01 significance level, which indicates there is no significant difference between those two groups in the pretest. Moreover, 99% Confidence Interval of the Difference includes 0, which also indicates statistically that there is no significant difference between EG and CG in the pretest.

**Table 2**  
**Independent Samples Test Between EG and CG in the pretest**

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.error difference	99% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Pretest equal variances assumed	.001	.971	-.040	78	.968	-.05000	1.25000	-3.35043	3.25043
Equal variances not assumed			-.040	78.000	.968	-.05000	1.25000	-3.35043	3.25043

In short, these results of data analysis provide the researcher with the information that the differences between EG and CG are not statistically significant. They also mean that there are no marked differences between both groups in comprehending text, namely, both groups have no significant difference in reading ability before the treatment.

**3.2 The Comparison and Analysis of the Scores of EG and CG in the Posttest**

Before the posttest, EG had been exposed to a certain treatment (the theory of English discourse patterns) for about one month, while CG had not. By applying the same analytical method, the researcher has got a descriptive statistics table displaying the mean (*X*), standard deviation (S.D.) and size of sample (*N*) for the scores of EG and CG, which is as follows:

**Table 4**  
**Independent Samples Test Between EG and CG in the Posttest**

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std.error difference	99% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Pretest equal variances assumed	.004	.948	3.712	78	.000	4.70000	1.26628	1.35659	8.04341
Equal variances not assumed			3.712	77.994	.000	4.70000	1.26628	1.35659	8.04341

From Table 4, we can see the significance is 0.948, much bigger than 0.05, which means the variances of the two groups are equal. Therefore, we need to check the data of the "Equal variances assumed" row as the result of the *T*-test. Because the average score of EG is bigger than that of CG, the *t*-value and the mean difference are positive. Sig.(2-tailed) is the significance probability of two tailed *T*-test. In this posttest, the Sig.(2-tailed) is 0.000, smaller than the 0.01 significance level, which indicates there is significant difference between these two groups in the posttest. Moreover, 99% confidence interval of the difference does not include zero, which also indicates

**Table 3**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation, and Numbers of Subjects for the Scores of EG and CG in the Posttest**

Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Posttest EG	40	27.2500	5.68737	.89925
CG	40	22.5500	5.63847	.89152

From Table 3 we can see EG got an average score of 27.25 points in the posttest, while CG got 22.55 points on average. There is 4.70 points difference between those two means. Although, from the Mean Difference, the average score of EG is much bigger than that of CG in the posttest, we cannot conclude that there is significant difference between EG and CG in the posttest. In order to judge whether there is statistically significant difference, we need to check the Independent Samples Test table (Table 4).

statistically that there is significant difference between EG and CG in the posttest.

On the basis of the results, we can get the conclusion that EG does better in the posttest than CG in comprehending text and the application of the teaching method of English discourse patterns is a contributing factor.

**3.3 The Comparison and Analysis of the Scores of EG in the Pretest and Posttest**

Here we use SPSS Paired-Samples *T*-test to test whether the result of one group students in one test is significantly different from that in another test, that is, whether there is

significant difference between the result of the pretest and the posttest.

This section is concerned with comparison and analysis of the scores of EG in pretest and posttest. The following table displays those data of EG between the two tests.

**Table 5**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation, and Numbers of Subjects for the Scores of EG in the Pretest and Posttest**

Group	Mean	N	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Pair PreEG	22.4000	40	5.58753	.88347
1 PostEG	27.2500	40	5.68737	.89925

**Table 6**  
**Paired Samples Test Between Pretest and Posttest of EG**

	Paired differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.deviation	Std.error mean	99% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair1 Pretest. Posttest	4.85000	2.71322	.42900	-6.01169	-3.68831	-11.305	39	.000

From the mean difference in Table 6, we can easily see that there is significant difference between the scores of EG in the pretest and the posttest. 99% Confidence Interval of the Difference dose not include zero, which indicates that there is significant difference between the two tests of EG. The Sig.(2-tailed) in Table 6 is 0.000, much smaller than 0.01, also indicates that there is significant difference between the two tests of EG.

From the data above we can see that after the two-month' study EG made more significant progress in the posttest than in the pretest in comprehending text. Here we can conclude that the application of the genre-based teaching approach to the teaching of college English reading contributes much to their improvement in

We can see, EG got an average score of 22.40 points in the pretest, while 27.25 points in the posttest. There is -4.85 point's difference between those two means. Although, from the Mean Difference, the average score of EG in the posttest is much higher than that in the pretest, we cannot jump to the conclusion that there is statistically significant difference between the scores of EG in the pretest and the posttest. In order to test further whether there is statistically significant difference or not, we need to check the Paired-Samples Test table (Table 6).

reading ability.

### 3.4 The Comparison and Analysis of the Scores of EG in the Pretest and Posttest

We can see, CG got an average score of 22.45 points in the pretest, while 22.55 points in the posttest. There is only 0.10 points difference between those two means. Although, from the Mean Difference, the average score of CG in the posttest is a little higher than that in the pretest, we cannot jump to the conclusion that there is no statistically significant difference between the score of CG in the pretest and the posttest. In order to test further whether there is statistically significant difference or not, we need to check the Paired Samples Test Table.

**Table 7**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation, and Numbers of Subjects for the Scores of CG in the Pretest and Posttest**

Group	Mean	N	Std. deviation	Std. error mean
Pair PreCG	22.4500	40	5.59281	.88430
1 PostCG	22.5500	40	5.63847	.89152

**Table 8**  
**Paired Samples Test Between Pretest and Posttest of CG**

	Paired differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	Std.deviation	Std.error mean	99% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair1 Pretest. Posttest	-.10000	.63246	.10000	-.37079	.17079	-1.000	39	.323

From the mean difference in Table 8, we can easily see that there is no significant difference between the score on the pretest and the posttest of CG. 99% confidence interval of the difference includes 0, indicating that there is no significant difference between the two tests of CG. The Sig.(2-tailed) in Table 8 is 0.323, much bigger than

0.01, which also indicates that there is no significant difference between the two tests of CG. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no significant difference between the scores of CG in the pretest and posttest. That indicates that CG has made little improvement in their reading comprehension.

### 3.5 The Students' Attitude to the Genre-Based Teaching Approach

The Table 9 shows us that a) most students (51%) didn't like reading class before the genre-based teaching

approach was introduced; b) more than half of the students like reading class now (63%) and this reading pedagogy (85%); c) their interests and confidence of reading were both greatly improved.

**Table 9**  
**Descriptive Statistics on the Subjects' Attitude on the Genre-Based Teaching Approach**

Questions	Items	Number	Like (%)	Moderate (%)	Dislike (%)
1. How did you like reading in English before you took this class?		40	16.85	32	51
2. Which do you prefer traditional approach or the approach used in this class?		40	New 85	Old 6.5	Other 8.5
3. Your awareness of the genre in reading raised or lowered after you took this class?		40	Raised 88.3	No change 11.2	Lowered 0
4. Your confidence in reading raised or lowered after you took this class?		40	Raised 62.2	No change 30.5	Lowered 6.8
5. Has this class raised or lowered your interest and motivation to read?		40	Raised 66.3	No change 24.5	Lowered 9.2
6. Do you pay more attention on the topic sentence or the generic structure in reading?		40	Yes 76	Moderate 11.4	No 12.6
7. Do you adopt different methods to read different generic text?		40	Yes 85.2	Moderate 10.8	No 4

## CONCLUSION

### A. The Summary of the Thesis

A genre is defined as “a class of communicative events”. Communicative purpose determines the genre and the organization of text. Genre is the carrier of content and content must be conveyed with the aid of a certain genre. Genre analysis is an efficient way of analyzing language since it is far superior to other means in describing the cognitive structure of both oral and written discourse.

In college English reading teaching, the application of genre analysis is significant. By employing the generic structure of a text, students can figure out the communicative purpose. Meanwhile, they can find out the writing strategies in the text, which is very significant in analyzing text with different genres. At the same time, students take more responsibility for organizing and carrying out their own reading, that is, it contributes to an important educational initiative—the development of the efficient, independent, self-directed reader competent in organizing his or her own reading long after programs of formal instruction have ceased. According to cognitive psychology, perception of organizing patterns of texts can help the reader form background knowledge. Based on such knowledge, the student can make sound prediction and judgment. So it is necessary for teachers to analyze macrostructure of text in reading class, bring genre patterns to student's attention, and improve their reading abilities in consequence. The experiment

shows that the trial group of students made progress in reading process and concludes that genre approaches should be applied for students in order to have a better understanding of the reading materials and its context. Therefore, it is concluded that students' reading does improve when genre awareness is heightened. In the long run, it promotes flexible thinking and informed creativity.

### B. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Genre-Based Teaching Approach

Compared with other teaching pedagogy of reading, genre-based teaching approach has its peculiar advantages. First, it treats the reading as a communicative activity between the writer and the reader. In this way, readers can be more active to interact with the writer by doing genre analysis. Hence, reading here is no longer a dull task to be carried out. Second, genre types of a reading passage can supply us with the chance to predict the linguistic structure of a discourse at lexical and grammatical level, which will undoubtedly enhance reading comprehension. Next, this approach tends to make learners aware of genres and to empower them with the strategies necessary to replicate these features in their own production and eventually create their own text. Furthermore, if learners are better informed of generic knowledge of a certain genre, they will be more competent in producing writings of similar genre.

However, we know genre-based teaching approach has its limitations. In the first place, the prescription of genres



maybe leads to the lack of creativity, and students may feel this approach is boring. First, the formulation of genre might lead teaching activities to prescriptivism. Next, this approach is apt to make classroom teaching discourse-oriented. The teacher is likely to put the emphasis on description, whereas some grammar, lexical items go unnoticed. Third, it is impossible to exhaust all genre types that students might come across in their future life due to the complexity of communicative purpose.

#### C. Major Findings

The findings from the research suggested that the experiment had yielded promising results:

a) The application of the genre-based teaching approach to the teaching of college English reading contributes much to their improvement in reading ability. The reading comprehension level of the students in experimental class was significantly improved.

b) The finding suggested that genre-based teaching approach was helpful for improving students' reading interest and confidence, which were beneficial to improve their reading ability gradually.

c) The approach demands that students take more responsibility for organizing and carrying out their own reading, that is, it contributes to an important educational initiative—the development of the efficient, independent, self-directed reader competent in organizing his or her own reading long after programs of formal instruction have ceased.

d) It is concluded that students' reading does improve when genre awareness is heightened.

All in all, the result indicated that the genre-based teaching approach could be a useful tool for improving students' reading ability as well as stimulating students' reading interest and confidence. The findings of studies seem to have an important implication for teachers.

#### D. Pedagogical Implications

The approach is a learner-centered and cognitive approach, which encourages students to participate in reading actively, makes use of their imagination to initiate creative thinking, carry out peer and self-observation and evaluation, and analyze findings, so it is likely to produce more positive results for both student and teacher. Teachers play a very important role in the genre-based teaching approach. Whether this approach be successful or not, to greater extent, depends on teachers performance in class. Qualified English teachers who adopt this approach need to have an adequate mastery of knowledge of discourse and genre, techniques of text analysis, program design and material production. They could summarize the rules as stable models for students to follow, which is a short cut for students.

The approach offers students models which were felt to be valuable, gives them confidence and liberates them from their own fears of producing a text by giving them security. Teachers should provide as wide a variety of

texts and tasks as they can, to give students practice in different kinds of reading. In addition to this, students need to be shown how the different text types are characterized by different generic structures. They should be given opportunities to compare different generic text and helped to see how the way in which information is organized within a text. So reading comprehension can be enhanced if they are sensitized to generic structure of the text they are reading.

Our study also confirmed that the analysis of different genres can effectively help students to acquire a relatively fixed text model which can be imitated to improve their reading ability. Familiarizing a particular generic structure and linguistic features can not only benefit students' understanding of the whole text, but also help them in the reading comprehension tests. We know reading comprehension questions include main idea, detail, conclusion, inference, and opinion. As long as students understand the macrostructure of text, they may easily locate the main idea, the important details, conclusions and evidence.

There are also some implications with regard to the subject: Students are encouraged to be open-minded and flexible in their reading process rather than resorting to rigid and autonomous theories of texts which allow for little flexibility and negotiation. Moreover, by learning to study genres features of texts, learners should be more capable of writing in that genre, which involves creating a piece of text in the target language by examining carefully the specific generic features of similar texts in the same genre.

Furthermore, to what extent does the genre-based approach enhance the students' comprehension of the content of the texts that they read? Can this approach enhance the students' reading speed? And to what extent does the approach enhance the students' comprehension of genre features in the texts that they read? All of these issues still remain unresolved and need further exploration.

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