

# Moving Against the Grain: Exploring Genre-Based Pedagogy in a New Context<sup>1</sup>

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Received: 04/10/2015

Accepted: 20/01/2017

## Abstract

Considerable literature explores the contribution of genre teaching in English academic writing. The role of this approach in developing academic writing of Iranian EFL students, however, has been underresearched. This study investigated the implications of using this approach with a class of undergraduate students in Iran. The current study reports on the findings of a project which employed a text-based cyclical teaching and learning method to teach argumentative genres, that is, exposition and discussion. Findings suggest rapid changes in appropriate mode of meaning making for developing macrostructures of such genres and a sharp decline in deploying unknown rhetorical strategies. Quantitative analysis of micronominalized features also shows some developments after the application of the genre teaching pedagogy.

**Keywords:** EFL Academic Writers; Genre Taxonomy; Rhetorical Strategies; Grammatical Metaphor (GM)

## 1. Introduction

The field of English for academic purposes (EAP) has considerable research conducted for improving ESL and EFL students' academic writing. Amongst other things, in the literature, the role of rhetorical consciousness-raising has been highlighted as an important technique in improving students' writing (Connor, Goman, & Vahapassi, 1987; Crowhurst 1991; Johns 1993; Knudson 1994; Lloyd 1996). This view is broadly supported by contrastive rhetoric, North American genre pedagogies including English for specific purposes (ESP), new rhetoric, and by the Sydney genre school.

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<sup>1</sup>Please cite this paper as follows:

Jodairi Pineh, A. (2017). Moving against the grain: Exploring genre-based pedagogy in a new context. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 8(2), 136-158.

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Martin (1992), as a leading figure in the Sydney school, theorises context of culture and its realization in the form of genres as a pattern of context of situation above the Hallidayian model of language (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and puts equal emphasis on cultural awareness and knowledge of the L2. This model of language has been adopted by the Australian systemicists and developed into a new methodology known as genre-based pedagogy (Feez, 1998; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Martin, 2000; Rothery, 1994; Thompson, 2001). This framework, which is applied for literacy practices in Australia and many educational contexts worldwide, hinges on three important consecutive stages of “deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction” (Martin, 2000, p. 118). The model is like moving against the grain; for instance, in deconstruction a sample of prototype, genre is divided into its component parts and is described to make the students aware of different stages. In joint construction, first the students produce a sample of each stage of a genre and then a full genre in small groups. In independent construction, after appropriate groundings, the students are encouraged to produce several text-types independently. In Australia, this approach has been recognized for improving students’ writing, particularly among disadvantaged and marginalised groups (Martin, 2000). Similarly, studies which are carried out in EFL contexts (Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2016; Srinon, 2011) indicate that genre teaching and rhetorical consciousness-raising contribute to appropriate genre uptake.

Despite the importance of cultural and linguistic resources in developing academic writing, the Iranian EFL students are not well-prepared by writing instruction they receive. The traditional approaches for teaching writing in English are deployed at different stages of writing classes in Iran. The introduction of paragraph writing is the most common way of teaching writing in the English classes. Such writing practices are also supported by the research focus of academia such as the role of teachers’ feedback in increasing the degree of accuracy and complexity of students’ texts (Balegizadeh & Firoozbakht, 2009; Fahim & Nezhadansari, 2006; Hanjani 2015; Rahimi, 2009; Simin & Tavangar, 2008). However, there are some contrastive studies between the English and Persian languages, which show that academic writing is not only related to language aptitude but sociocultural factors as well (Jalilifar & Mohammadi, 2014). For example, a study by Xing, Wang, and Spencer (2008) and Beigi and Ahmadi (2011) identified five rhetorical features including circularity as specific feature of the Persian language. Similarly, Katchen (1982), in comparing English and Persian expository texts, found that there were major differences in the introduction, conclusion and topic sentence clarity, as well as the position of the texts produced by the English and Persian writers. Moreover, there are some important studies which have recently concentrated on academic genres (Jalilifar & Mohammadi, 2014; Riazi & Fingol, 2002; Sayfour, 2010). The studies revealed that the Iranian

academic writers had limited access to the target language rhetoric in comparison with the native speakers.

Jalilifar and Mohammadi (2014), for instance, in a contrastive analysis of the acknowledgement genres of Ph.D. dissertations written by the native speakers of English and the native speakers of Persian in soft sciences, found out that there were differences in generic patterns and language structures due to cross-cultural differences. Their corpus consisted of 70 dissertation Acknowledgements written by the native speakers of English and 70 dissertation Acknowledgements written by the native speakers of Persian. They selected seven disciplines (i.e., library sciences, literature, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology) for the qualitative and quantitative analysis. Their findings revealed that the sociocultural background of writers was realized differently in the generic structures of thanking in the Acknowledgement genres. Jalilifar and Mohammadi (2014) attributed such differences to the “deep-rooted cultural, religious, mental, and academic environment where they were brought up” (p. 42).

Similarly, Sayfour (2010) investigated appropriate generic structures and grammatical metaphor (GM) deployments at the Introduction and Discussion sections of medical research articles published by nonnative Iranian and the English native speakers. She compared two sets of journal articles by Iranian authors, that is, ISC- and ISI-indexed journal articles, with research articles published by the English speakers. The findings revealed that, in spite of major similarities in macromove structure and nominalisation deployments between the articles published by the Iranians in ISC and ISI medical journals and the research articles published by the English native speakers, there were differences in the submoves and subcategories of GM deployments. Sayfour (2010) concluded that the Iranian’s cultural background and the lack of educational training might be a factor in the realization of such rhetoric. She suggests the development of appropriate methodology to raise the medicine writers’ awareness for highlighting such differences in the target English medical academic discourse.

Thus, having considered the importance of sociocultural awareness in appropriate text organization at different genres, the present study was an attempt to introduce genre teaching as a tool for increasing cultural and linguistic awareness of a group of Iranian EFL academic writers. For this end, the cultural conventions and linguistic resources were made explicit for a group of EFL writers and engaged them in a step-by-step genre production through a genre-based model developed by the Australian systemicists. Hence, this genre-based pedagogy aimed to help the writers in developing appropriate text organization and to avoid culture-specific rhetorical strategies through teaching sociocultural conventions and linguistic features. As presenting an effective rhetorical organization requires linguistic resources, I also

drew on quantitative analysis of nominalization across the students' texts at different stages of genre teaching course.

In this study, an attempt was made to present the theory that guided this research, the research process applied, and the findings from this study. It is claimed here that genre-based pedagogy may be a contributing factor in the development of a group of EFL writers' argumentative texts, and that the strategies deployed in teaching genre may add to EFL writers' awareness in developing appropriate text organization and linguistic features.

## 2. Theoretical Orientation and Literature Review

This study was informed by a framework from the Sydney genre school and systemic functional linguistics (SFL). The framework for the analysis of genre was derived from Martin's (1992) notion of context of culture and its realization in the form of genres. Unlike genre analysis in ESP in which move structures are the bases for the analysis of genres (Johns, 2002), in the Sydney genre school, the classification of genre types is specific to the identified taxonomies (Butt et al., 1997). For example, the identified conventions in the taxonomy of argumentative genres are divided into exposition or one-sided argument [Thesis ^ Arguments ^ Reinforcement], and to the discussion or a two-sided arguments [Issue ^ Arguments For and Against ^ Resolution], respectively (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2008). This framework was adopted because it enabled the researcher to develop a genre-based pedagogy which can be applicable to the context of Iranian EFL writers. A pedagogy was developed based on Feez's (1998) text-based model, which is stage-based and cyclical. This, in turn, allowed the researcher to introduce macro and microstructures of exposition and discussion genres. The aim was to make the writers aware of the existence of macrogenre and microlinguistic resources in the target English argumentative genres and to enable them to deploy these resources appropriately later in their English texts.

Therefore, the researcher drew on the Sydney school conventions that offer tools for both macro and microlevels of scaffolding of writing. The fact that the Sydney genre school emphasizes teaching conscious deployment of textual organization through genre-based pedagogy stems from the view of language by SFL. SFL develops a complex analytical methodology of consciousness. It postulates that language serves three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2006). Accordingly, the choices are triangular with one angle reflecting field—the experience in the happening or description in the social setting; another angle its tenor—rules and relationships in the communication; and third angle its mode—the nature of text. In SFL, the realization of field of discourse is largely related to the ideational, the realization of tenor to the interpersonal, and the realization of mode to the textual metafunctions.

As a result, any utterance configures the combination of these three choices. In studying any kind of register, SFL considers the triangular realization of field, tenor, and mode of the discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2006). Martin (1997) and Martin and Rose (2008) extends this contextual realization into the context of culture, which is the realization of choices made from the field, tenor, and mode at the level of register.

There is a reciprocal relationship between register and genre, and the choices in one reflect back on the other (Martin & Rose, 2008). That is to say, a genre which is realised by a register, in turn, is realised by choices made in the discourse semantics. This has been spelled out in Martin (1992) under the notion of two communication planes, that is, genre and register as one plane and language as another. However, this view has some critics among SFL scholars such as Hasan (1985) as well as Halliday and Matthiessen (2006). In spite of some debates, Martin (1997) emphasizes the educational aspect of this model, particularly for its easy applications.

The discussion on the notions of register and genre is essential for this study. This is because one possible postulation is that, as a result of the application of genre-based pedagogy, which is an intervention in the context of culture, students may avoid unknown rhetorical structures and deploy prototype generic structures and the ideational GM appropriately. The realization of these choices at the levels of genre and lexicogrammar is the sign of development, and that students are able to develop the meaning potential through the genre teaching approach.

Therefore, the aims of this study was to investigate how the application of genre teaching to a group of EFL writers with different proficiency backgrounds has changed the deployment of text organization, and to what extent the change in textual organization corresponds with the frequency of GM in the writers' texts. The research questions are:

1. To what extent does the deployment of generic structures change after the application of genre-based pedagogy among the three proficiency levels?
2. To what extent does the deployment of GM as the source of linguistic awareness change among the three proficiency levels after the application of genre teaching pedagogy?
3. To what extent do the three identified proficiency levels avoid inappropriate rhetorical strategies after the application of genre-based pedagogy?

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Participants and Context of Study

The study recruited 15 volunteered undergraduates who were looking to improve their English academic writing. They were from different majors such as computer science, engineering, and English language and literature. I made announcements on the boards of university and I offered a free class on English academic writing. The allocated times for the teaching and learning was three sessions per week. One and half hours was considered for each session. I allocated nine sessions for each cycle of teaching and learning, that is, exposition and discussion genres. The exposition and discussion genres formed two cycles. In each cycle, the students practiced different sections of exposition and discussion genres. In the end, they produced several independent texts from each genre. A complete and independent text by the students was the final stage of each cycle. However, only one independently produced text was considered for the analysis.

For evaluating the students' English language proficiency prior to the teaching and learning cycles, they were asked to attend a pretest session. A familiar topic for the context, that is, Studying Abroad, was introduced. They were not asked for the word limit, nor were they provided by feedback. After the test, nine students' texts were randomly selected. The texts were marked based on IELTS module 2 for academic writing. Three levels of students were identified: high-group students (HGSs), middle-group students (MGSs), and low-group students (LGSs). Each group had three students. Table 1 shows the background and the proficiency levels of the students:

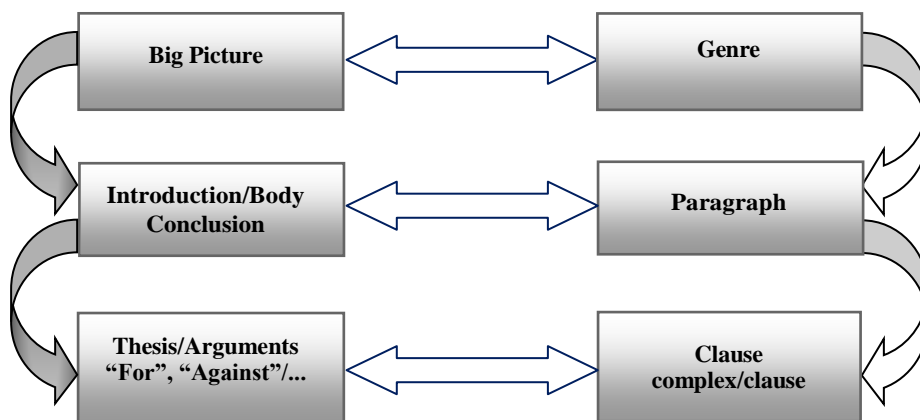
Table 1. *Students' Background and Proficiency Levels*

Student	Academic Background	Study Year	Age	Proficiency
Mina	English Language & Literature	2	Early 20s	High
Babak	Engineering	3	Mid 20s	High
Sanaz	Computer Science	4	Late 20s	High
Sahar	English Language & Literature	2	Early 20s	Middle
Farzaneh	English Language & Literature	2	Early 20s	Middle
Hakimeh	English Language & Literature	2	Early 20s	Middle
Freshteh	English Language & Literature	2	Mid 20s	Low
Mahsa	English Language & Literature	2	Mid 20s	Low
Behzad	Engineering	1	Early 20s	Low

#### 3.2. Procedure

There are major similarities between Feez's (1998) and Martin's (2000) model of genre teaching. Feez's (1998) model adequately accommodates the Sydney genre school conventions and SFL theory. It was for this reason that I chose her

model for syllabus design and the teaching and learning cycles. Feez (1998) summarizes her model of genre teaching and learning cycles in five stages. The stages include (1) building the context, (2) modeling and deconstruction of text, (3) joint construction of text, (4) independent construction of text and (5) linking related texts. Accordingly, for the teaching and learning, first a prototype sample of genre familiar to the context was described. The students became familiar with the overall structures of the exposition and discussion genres. Second, a sample text was deconstructed. For example, the introduction section of an exposition genre was deconstructed into its main component parts: background, thesis, and preview. In addition, the role of some language features, including GM, was described at clause/sentence levels. These activities were accompanied by reading, summary writing, and class discussions. One of the aims at this stage was to build the students' field knowledge. Third, the students were encouraged to read sample texts from different text-types such as reports, journals, narratives, exposition, and so on which were supplied by the instructor or gathered by the students. This measure was taken not only to build up students' field knowledge, but to avoid the criticism that the students had simply copied from the prototype texts if any improvements were identified later in the students' texts. Fourth, the researcher encouraged the students to write jointly on the topic and provide feedback to each other. Fifth, the students produced independently their own genre. Figure 1 depicts the overall text-based pedagogical activities.



*Figure 1.* A summary of teaching and learning activities.

The sequence starts from the big picture and continues to the middle ground and down to up-close features. The students gradually were guided from macrolevel scaffoldings at the level of genre to middle ground at paragraph and finally to up-close section at clause/group levels.

This model includes both macro and microlanguage features. Under the first two stages, the students became aware of the context of culture, the context of situation, and the language features of a model text. The model, then, highlights the general social purposes of the text and divides each genre to its component parts. The production cycles are the conscious reflection on the first two stages. The last stage is the comparison between similar texts within the same context or with other text-types which aims to develop the domain of consciousness beyond the model text-types.

## 4. Results

### *4.1. Macrolevel Analysis*

The data sources for this study were 27 texts by the HGSs, MGSs, and LGSs at three contexts of pretest, exposition, and discussion writings. There were nine texts for the analysis at each writing context. The analysis focused on unmarked and marked deployments of generic structures as well as unfamiliar rhetorical strategies. The unmarked features were congruent and were based on the L2 conventions. In the marked condition, the focus was on the deployment of macrogenres. According to Martin and Rose (2008), macrogenre is a genre in which other genres (or microgenres) are embedded. However, the function of these genres is determined by the genre in which they occur. For instance, an exemplum within an argumentative genre may function not as a description or an example, but as a support to an author's argument. A particular focus was also paid to the deployment of unfamiliar rhetorical strategies. Therefore, the analysis falls in two broad categories: conformity and nonconformity structures to the taxonomy of argumentative genres.

#### *4.1.1 Pretest writing*

Considering conformity, some students developed typical exposition and discussion genres. Two texts included the deployment of embedded exemplum, that is, a microgenre within an argumentative writing. In nonconformity, three kinds of rejections were identified. One student refuted Thesis, which was after the presentation of arguments in the concluding section. The second type of rejection was identified in the development of topic, in which a different topic was developed. The third type was detected within the embedded exemplum, which was deployed to support arguments. Among the HGSs, only HGS2 and HGS3 were able to produce one of the prototype argumentative genres. The introductory and concluding sections of HGS3 are provided below:



- Introduction:

*Some people prefer to study abroad. I didn't had this chance before so in my opinion it has some advantages and disadvantages.*

- Conclusion:

*Although studying abroad has some disadvantages, but I think it worth. So I prefer to study abroad.*

There is no clear-cut statement of issue in this student's text and after a brief background, she jumped to the advantages and disadvantages of studying abroad similar to a preview in a basic discussion genre. Then she presented a series of arguments *for* and arguments *against* in the body section. There are two arguments *for* and two arguments *against* in the body section. Although the arguments are supported by elaborations for justifying the author's position, they are stated briefly in one or two clauses. Finally, the text concludes with the restatement of the issue and the reinforcement. Although the lack of a clear-cut statement of issue in her introductory section is problematic, the use of reinforcement, that is, "I prefer to study abroad" is an indication of the author's stance. Therefore, this text was classified under the taxonomy of discussion genre and as a prototype text.

MGS3 is another example of conformity to the taxonomy of argumentative genres. She employed an embedded exemplum in the form of a report for argument. The following is an extract from her text:

*. . . for example in Iran or other developing countries, the government or other organizations do not mention to these things and don't pay any money or helps for young men. So in that what we can say bad or . . . . Situation young people especially rich ones leave their hometown or their family and go to strange city to reach their goals.*

The text starts with a background on studying abroad as a main concern of those who are looking for an education. However, the author indicated that studying abroad is not as simple as one can imagine. Financial support and literacy levels are highlighted as the main obstacles. In spite of these hurdles, in the thesis, she has flagged studying abroad as an excellent choice, particularly in developed countries. The reason for the advantages of this opportunity is attributed to the developed Western societies' care and attention for young men and women. In the next argument, the author refuted arguments for studying at home by the use of an embedded exemplum. The function of this exemplum in this context is an argument for supporting study abroad. Through the exemplum she complains about Iran and

other developing countries' lack of financial support and their ignorance. She concluded that in such circumstances some students, particularly those with a good financial background, choose to study abroad as an opportunity for reaching their goals. Although the exemplum is not developed skilfully and it suffers from some language deficiencies, its function within the text is well established.

The analysis revealed some nonconforming features in the students' texts. MGS2 and MGS3 deployed a nonconforming rhetorical strategy in which arguments *for* and *against* are presented simultaneously. For example, MGS2 constructed her arguments as:

*In studying there should be some internal attraction that I think I have that factor. But again I think there are not any external attractions like job opportunity. Studying in our hometown has it's advantages and disadvantages, but more disadvantages.*

In this extract, the positive and negative aspects of studying abroad and at home are shown one after another. In making an argument, the author moved from the positive to the negative either in two separate sentences or through one complex sentence. The author weighed up the instances simultaneously without providing sufficient evidence. In the end, she takes the positive stand arguing:

*Anyway, I prefer to continue it in universities that time and money are not wasted.*

However, again she shows her disagreement immediately:

*But, again it has its own problems. At first getting scholarship or visa, money difficulties, etc.*

Therefore, the author extended this cyclic strategy from the positive to the negative and back again. For this reason, I called this rhetorical strategy as a cyclical approach.

Arguing by offering advice is another rhetorical strategy which was identified among the pretest texts. The text by LGS1 contains this rhetorical feature. This text includes some features of the prototype exposition genre and some new rhetorical strategies. The analysis indicated that the identification of issue and the construction of thesis are followed by the author's advice. The use of strong modal verb *must* imply the author's *advice* rather than her argument.

- Thesis construction:

*Most of the people specially young people have a dream of continuing their studies abroad. But going abroad and studying there has it's own difficulties and responsibilities.*

- Advices:

*A person who want to complete or continue his or her studies abroad must have some qualifications such as having knowledge about the culture, people, language, etc.*

This strategy, therefore, is in contrast with the taxonomy of argumentative genre. The text finishes with another unfamiliar rhetorical feature, that is, rejection of the set up question:

*having a certain goal is the most important thing that a person who want to travel in order to study must has.*

The difficulties and responsibilities of studying abroad, which was raised in the thesis, are rejected in the conclusion. This strategy creates a mismatch between the thesis and the restatement of the position. The mismatch destroys the communicative functionalities of the text as a whole so that it is difficult to pin down the author's stance. A similar type of rejection was also observed in the text by HGS1.

Rejection of the topic is another nonconforming feature which was identified in the text by LGS3:

*I am studying English for four years in IRAN language institute, and now I'm going to finish it. I prepare myself for entrance exam. last year I failed exam and now I decide to burn mide night oil to pass it. I want to study English because I know I can continue it. but unfortunately in Iran in English institute they focus on Grammer rather than conversation. I also has problem in conversation. This problem occur because in Iran there is no chance we use second language. just we use in English classes. I think it could be better a class was designated to speak second language. in that case we can develop our conversation.*

The author rejected the topic as a whole. Instead of developing arguments for studying abroad, he reported on his experiences in learning English. After a brief introduction, he reported on the teaching and learning events in his hometown. In the end, he offered advice and solutions for overcoming problems.

A different kind of rejection was also detected in HGS2. The following extract shows this strategy:

*The first and the most important one can be trying to find better and higher scientific values. But sometimes it's different. For example in our country "Iran" many of university students choose*

*to go to neighbour countries like Turkey because it's somehow easier to get acceptance rather than Iran universities. Although in the case of facilities and "global Ranking" their universities are much better than ours.*

Contrary to the features of embedded exemplum in English, this example shows a different characteristic. Whereas the argument starts supporting studying abroad, the shift in topic, that is, "but sometimes it's different" changes the course. That is, he takes a negative stance towards Turkey's universities. This stance refutes the position once taken at the beginning. Again, the shift in the topic has redirected the course in which the qualities, facilities, and the global rankings of Turkish universities are praised over Iran's.

#### **4.1.2 Exposition writing**

The context for the exposition writing was after the first cycle of teaching and learning. The students produced their texts as the final stage in the independent construction of text. For this, I introduced a set of questions. The students had to choose one question. After the test, the texts were collected for analysis.

The analysis revealed that all texts were structured like English exposition texts including orientation, thesis and a series of arguments. HGS1, HGS3, MGS1, LGS2, and LGS3 all successfully produced the prototype texts. For example, the analysis of the sample text by LGS3 starts with an identification of the issue followed by a thesis, preview and a series of supporting arguments and finishes with the restatement of position and recommendation. The text is functionally cohesive. For example, the sequences of preview at the introduction have the same order throughout the body of the text. The advantages of studying abroad were all traced from the preview to the arguments and to their supporting point elaboration sections. The thesis is reinstated at the conclusion. Therefore, regardless of grammatical and language problems, the execution of generic structures was well in place.

However, the students deviated from the genre in two ways. The first type is the unfamiliar rhetorical strategy of rejection, and the second is the rhetorical strategy of advice. MGS2 and MGS3 used two types of rejections. The first type is the rejection of the set up question, and the second is the result of the shift in the topic and its reflection in the embedded exemplum.

One kind of rejection appears in MGS3's text. In the restatement of the position the author employed a rhetorical feature which rejects the thesis. In the introductory section, she states that studying abroad is a good choice for students, and it is supported by a series of arguments in the body. This stance is still maintained in the first part of the restatement of thesis. Unexpectedly, however, she rejects her position by arguing that students are advised to think over this issue and

“try not to take it without weighing.” This type of text construction is contrary to the taxonomy of exposition genre.

Another kind of rejection is observed in MGS2’s text. Though she is the only student who has produced the embedded exemplum in her exposition, the change in the topic destroys its function. The following is an extract from her text:

*Secondly, by studying abroad they can increase their job opportunity during studying and after it. Working during studying help students to have more relationship with local communities and also it has economical benefits. Job opportunities after studying is increased. Because they have not had that much in their own countries. For example, in Iran students after graduation can’t find any appropriate job that suit with their field in university like English majors find a job in Banks as a clerk.*

As observed, the topic sentence, that is, “by studying abroad they can increase their job opportunity during studying and after it” has been shifted. This change, in turn, is reflected in the embedded exemplum in which the description of job opportunities for those who study at home is compared with those who had the opportunity of studying abroad.

Another unfamiliar rhetorical strategy, the deployment of advice for argument, is identified in HGS2’s text. The following is an extract from his text:

*So if you think that studying abroad is the right choice for you to find prosperity, when the impulse is there, no doubt, no second thinking, forget about laziness, don’t hesitate, take the chance, risk it all and universe will open doors for you.*

This is also interesting to note that this student is the only one who has developed a discussion text-type prior to the introduction of discussion genre.

#### **4.1.3 Discussion writing**

The overall analysis of discussion texts showed that the texts conformed to the taxonomy of discussion genre. However, there were still instances where students shifted from this convention.

HGS1, HGS3, MGS2, MGS3, LGS1, LGS2, and LGS3 developed prototype discussion texts. The text by HGS1 starts with a statement of the problem. Following this, the author gives some background as preview. She extended her arguments for and against in the body. However, the sequence of these arguments is not in harmony with those in the preview. For example, in the preview the author raises the issue that “Playing violent video games increase under pressure and

depression in children.” In the body and under the argument *against*, she argues that, “according to researchers failing in games decrease self-confidence of children and cause they do not believe their abilities and their own ideas.” Therefore, only an indirect relationship between children’s depression and their lack of confidence can be inferred. In the end, the author makes a connection between the statement of problem and the restatement of the position.

HGS2, MGS1, and LGS3 produced the embedded exemplum in their discussion texts. HGS2 produced a rather successful exemplum by referring to his experiences and descriptions of playing video games. LGS3’s exemplum focuses on educational impact of video games, and he reports on the use of these games by some educational institutions. MGS1 employed this strategy to justify her positive assessment of playing video games by children:

*Although there are arguments against video games, but some socialists and psychologist believe that these games help children to gain some social skills and they can develop their social behaviours. For example with playing games like Sherek children can learn some good behaviour from these games heroes that they can use them their ordinary life.*

Though much of the information is unsupported by evidence, it still supports the author’s position. Only the name of the game, that is, Shrek is mentioned and the author has focused on its positive ethical impact. Considering nonconformity features, there is still one student who has employed the rhetorical strategy of rejection in his discussion text. The following is an extract from his text:

*On the whole, video games are an undeniable part of modern life and surely we will see that the art of video games even will get better day by day.*

The question on the merits and demerits of video games is rejected through the deployment of the restatement of the position. Moreover, instead of evaluating both sides, he has stated the advantages of playing video games only.

Table 3 depicts the overall results of generic structure analysis. In the relevant cell the letter C stands for the conformity to the prototype genres, and the letters [NC] in the brackets for nonconformity features identified in the students’ texts:

Table 2. *Conformity and Nonconformity to Generic Structure in Students' Texts*

Student	Pretest	Exposition	Discussion
HGS1	C	C	C
HGS2	C	[NC]	[NC]
HGS3	[NC]	C	C
MGS1	C	C	[NC]
MGS2	[NC]	[NC]	C
MGS3	[NC]	[NC]	C
LGS1	[NC]	C	C
LGS2	[NC]	C	C
LGS3	[NC]	C	C

The analysis indicates that the number of students who produced the prototype taxonomy of argumentative texts developed from three in the pretest to six in the exposition and seven in discussion genres. As it can be observed, LGSs have almost gained full control on textual organization after the application of this pedagogy. However, there are still one in the HGSs, two in the MGSs in the exposition genre, one in the HGSs, and one in the MGSs in the discussion genre who developed nonconformity features.

#### 4.2 *Microlevel Analysis*

The quantitative analysis of GM was the focus of analysis at microlevel across the students' texts. This level of analysis was carried out to find out the extent to which genre-based pedagogy contributed to the development of GM as an important linguistic feature. Halliday's (1998) categorization of GM taxonomy in the English language was used for the analysis. Table 3 summarizes his categorization of ideational GM in the English language:

Table 3. *Halliday's (1998) Categorization of Grammatical Metaphor*

No.	Congruent	Metaphorical	Grammatical Class Shift
1	Quality	Thing	Adjective to Noun
2	Process	Thing	Verb to Noun
3	Circumstance	Thing	Prepositional Phrase to Noun
4	Relator	Thing	Conjunction to noun
5	Process	Quality	Verb to adjective
6	Circumstance	Quality	Adverb/Prep. Phrase to Adjective
7	Relator	Quality	Conjunction to Adjective
8	Circumstance	Process	Prepositional Phrase to Verb
9	Relator	Process	Conjunction to Verb
10	Relator	Circumstance	Conjunction to Prep. Phrase
11	No Congruent Form	Entity	Noun
12	No Congruent Form	Process	Verb
13	Thing	Expansion of thing	Noun

Based on this categorization, the students’ texts were analyzed and computed. However, throughout the analysis, it was found that the students deployed unidiomatic nominalised expressions after the application of genre-based pedagogy. The following are some of the examples taken from the students’ texts at different stages by the three proficiency groups:

1. *Studying abroad has lots of advantages such as acquirement of English language.*
2. *They encounter with difficulties of financial, barrier of language, home sickness new life style, etc.*
3. *Violent game increase afraid, worried, suspicions behaviour*
4. *Because the nutrition value of fast foods are les, the children cannot absorb the vitamins and proteins that is necessary for their body and face them with a lot of healthy problems.*
5. *Some of video games can use in curriculum and helps children in education improvement.*

These expressions were excluded from the analysis. Table 4 is the summary of the overall results from the analysis of GM in the students’ texts:

Table 4. *Trends in Deployment of Grammatica Metaphopr Across Three Texts*

Type and Categories of GM		Pretest		Exposition		Discussion	
		Total Clauses (133)		Total Clauses (257)		Total Clauses (331)	
Type	GM Categories	GM/ Numbers	GM/ Clause	GM/ Numbers	GM/ Clause	GM/ Numbers	GM/ Clause
1	Quality-Thing	0	0	3	0.01	3	0.00
2	Process-Thing	72	0.54	156	0.60	234	0.71
3	Circumstance-Thing	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
4	Realtor- Thing	0	0	5	0.01	4	0.01
5	Process-Quality	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
6	Circumstance-Quality	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
7	Relator-Quality	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
8	Circumstance-Process	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
9	Relator-Process	2	0.01	9	0.03	17	0.05
10	Relator-Circumstance	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
11	No Congruent Form-Entity	0	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
12	No Congruent Form-Process	2	0.01	1	0.00	0	0.00
13	Thing-Expansion of Thing	12	0.09	52	0.20	44	0.13



Among the 13 major types of GM recognized in Halliday's (1998) categorizations, there were three categories in the students' texts which indicate higher proportions in comparison with other categories. The identified categories are number 2, 13, and 9, respectively.

The highest proportion of the GM deployment took place in type 2 category. The value increased from 54% to 60% and 71% across the three contexts of pretest, exposition, and discussion genres. The second highest percentage was identified in type 13. The value in this category increased from 0.09% in the pretest to 0.20% in the exposition and decreased to 0.13% per number of running clauses in discussion genres. The third highest category was observed in type 9. In this category, the value increased from 0.01% in the pretest to 0.03% and 0.05% in the exposition and discussion genres, respectively. Therefore, the findings in the context of this study suggest that the major GM deployment was related to the shift from the verbal to nominal group, that is, type 2, and there were differences in the deployment of the subcategories of GM in the students' texts.

In order to find out the distribution of the identified GM among the three proficiency groups, a further analysis was carried out. Among the 13 types of GM, the students deployed types 1, 2, 4, 9, and 13. The analysis indicated that type 2 category had also the highest proportion of deployment over other subcategories among the three writing stages. For computing the overall percentages of subtypes of GM, the numbers were divided by the overall number of clauses at each stages of writing. The number of clauses and the percentages of each subcategory are shown in the parentheses. Table 5 is the summary of the findings among the HGSs, MGSs, and LGSs:

Table 5. *Comparison of Grammatical Metaphor Types Across Three Proficiency Groups*

Types and GM Categories	Pretest Clauses (133)			Exposition Clauses (257)			Discussion Clauses (331)		
	High (58)	Middle (39)	Low (36)	High (97)	Middle (75)	Low (80)	High (116)	Middle (98)	Low (117)
(1)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.01)	1 (0.01)	1 (0.01)	3 (0.02)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
(2)	33 (0.56)	19 (0.48)	20 (0.55)	56 (0.57)	52 (0.69)	48 (0.60)	62 (0.53)	90 (0.91)	82 (0.70)
(4)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (0.03)	1 (0.01)	1 (0.01)	3 (0.02)	1 (0.01)	0 (0.00)
(9)	2 (0.03)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.01)	4 (0.05)	4 (0.05)	10 (0.08)	3 (0.03)	4 (0.03)
(12)	2 (0.03)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	10 (0.10)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)
(13)	7 (0.12)	1 (0.02)	4 (0.11)	17 (0.17)	17 (0.22)	18 (0.22)	13 (0.11)	20 (0.20)	11 (0.09)

As observed, there were improvements in the deployment of the subcategories of GM across the students' texts. For example, there is a continuous development in the deployment of type 2 category in the MGSs and LGSs after the teaching and learning cycles. However, as observable in Table 5, this development is not consistent for every subcategory identified in the students' texts, and it fluctuates from the pretest to the exposition and discussion genres. The deployment of the proportion of nominalisation per number of running clauses in the HGSs, for instance, increased from the pretest to the exposition genre, but it slightly decreased from the exposition to discussion text-type. Although the overall analysis indicates that there was progression in the deployment of the subcategories of GM, there are no fixed patterns in the deployment of this feature.

## 5. Discussion

This study adopted genre teaching for making macro and microscaffolding features explicit in the context of Iranian EFL academic writers. The ability to deploy generic structures and develop GM as lexicogrammatical features was scaffolded in a genre-based pedagogy. It was postulated that teaching genre is an intervention in the context of culture and any development in prototype generic structures, and GM deployments are the sign of successful application of this pedagogy. The adopted pedagogy was cyclical, and it started from the big picture at the level of genre and continued to middle ground at the level of paragraph and down to up-close section in language features. It was like moving against the grain, and the students examined consciously both macro and microlanguage features of exposition and discussion genres. The overall results indicated improvement in the students' texts.

Regarding the first research question, it can be argued that the students' texts showed a continuous progression in deploying appropriate generic structures. A close analysis indicated that, over the application of the genre teaching course, the number of students who had developed prototype genres increased from three students in the pretest, that is, HGS1, 2 and MGS1 to six in the exposition, that is, HGS1, 3; MGS 1 and LGS1, 2, 3, and to seven students in the discussion genre. The positive result of this study corresponds with similar genre-based studies in native and nonnative contexts. For example, Macken-Horarik's (2002) successful development of this pedagogy with secondary-school science classrooms and the Disadvantaged Schools Programs in Sydney, and Feez's (2002) positive outcomes of genre pedagogy with the Adult Migrant English Program in Australia are instances of the application of this pedagogy in the Australian contexts. Similarly, Srinon's (2009) report on the successful role of this pedagogy in the context of Thai undergraduate academic writers is an example of effective application of this pedagogy in an EFL context. Therefore, it can be concluded that genre-based

pedagogy in the context of Iranian academic writing contributed to cultural awareness of students in appropriate deployment of generic structures. This, in turn, is in contrast with the traditional approaches to academic writing in Iran, where the emphasis mostly hinges on language aptitude and, consequently, on the role of, for instance, feedback in developing students' writing.

However, there are still cases where the students deployed unknown rhetorical strategies after the application of genre teaching course. This is compatible with Sayfour's (2010) findings of the analysis of the medical articles by the native English and Iranian EFL writers. Although she found that there were similarities in the deployment of macromoves structures by both group of writers, the Iranian EFL writers faced problems in successful deployment of submoves structures. Similarly, Jalilifar and Mohammadi (2014), in the analysis of Acknowledgements genre by the native and nonnative Iranian EFL students, also found that the Iranian students had deployed some unknown rhetorical strategies and argued that their roots were probably in the Iranian EFL students' cultural background or literacy practices. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in spite of the positive impact of this pedagogy, there are still instances where Iranian academic writers opt for unfamiliar rhetorical structures. This might be due to lack of genre uptake or deep-rooted indigenous cultural conventions.

Regarding the micro and linguistic level and in order to answer the second research question, the analysis indicated that the students increased the deployment of the GM resources over the course of genre teaching. The analysis showed that the major drift to thingness in the EFL students' texts took place from process to thing, that is, category type 2. This finding is compatible with Halliday's (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen's (1999, 2004), and Ravelli's (1999) identification that the major GM deployment in the English language took place from process to thing. At the same time, according to Halliday and Martin (1993), it is a major indication of the development of field knowledge as well as complexity in the students' texts.

A further analysis of students' texts at different stages also indicated that the major move from congruent to metaphoric took place in type 2 category. The analysis also showed that there was no fixed pattern in the deployment of the subcategories of GM across the different proficiency groups. Moreover, the close analysis of GM indicated that the students had deployed unidiomatic nominalised expressions after the application of genre pedagogy. Sayfour (2010) also found that there was no fixed pattern in the deployment of the subcategories of GM in medical journal articles published by the Iranian EFL writers. She attributed such inconsistencies to cultural backgrounds and lack of educational training. Other possible contextual factors can be the role of teacher, teacher education, and appropriate application of pedagogy as potentially contributing factors.

Overall, this study suggests that genre teaching was helpful in improving the argumentative writing of the EFL writers. However, a few issues emerged in this study that need to be considered in genre-based teaching. The students still deployed some unknown rhetorical strategies. These rhetorical strategies, which form a cyclical approach, were the major interference in the process of meaning making. The analysis showed that this rhetorical feature took on different forms. It acted both positively and negatively in the Iranian EFL students' argumentative texts. This rhetorical strategy was positively associated with the discussion genres or embedded exemplum in the pretest stage prior to the teaching and learning cycles. Negatively, it resulted in inappropriate rhetorical strategies such as rejections and advice. The results indicated that the influence disappeared as the students moved from the pretest to exposition and discussion. In the discussion texts, only two students had deployed the rhetorical strategy of rejection, that is, HGS2 and MGS1. Therefore, regarding the third research question, it can be reasonable to argue that the development was observable, as we moved from the pretest to the final stages, where the students deployed more appropriate rhetorical styles familiar to the English argumentative genres.

## **6. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications**

In this study, an attempt was made to develop the students' awareness in appropriate generic structures and GM deployments and avoid unknown rhetorical strategies through a genre-based model adopted from the Sydney genre school. The report of the work confirms that there was improvement in the students' texts over the application of the genre teaching pedagogy. As it was postulated, this model of genre-based teaching potentially contributed to teaching culture and linguistic features in the context of this study. A culturally emanated nonconformity feature (i.e., a cyclical approach) was deployed only by two students towards the end of the genre teaching course. However, there were still instances where the students had deviated from the prototype genre and had deployed unfamiliar rhetorical strategies. There were also inconsistencies in the deployment of the subtypes of GM across the three proficiency groups.

This study has several limitations. I worked with a small number of students who had volunteered and were highly motivated to learn and improve. Other groups of students might bring different expectations in deploying generic structures or avoiding unfamiliar rhetorical strategies. This study also did not include a control group, which limits the ability in drawing firm conclusions regarding the impact of the genre-based teaching course. This was done with two academic genres, that is, exposition and discussion, and future studies can extend the role of genre-based pedagogy to other genres. Future studies also need to take into account the role of the teacher and teacher education in the application of genre-

pedagogy. Finally, teachers and curriculum designers in EFL contexts may remind themselves of possible cultural diversities and their realization in students' English texts.

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