The Effect of a Genre-Based Approach on Development of Reading Comprehension Skills by Iraqi EFL University Learners

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The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of a genre-based instruction on Iraqi EFL learners. A total of sixty students studying at the University of Al-Qadisiyah, College of Arts, Department of English in the first year were equally distributed into two groups (an experimental group and a control group). A researcher (the instructor) taught the experimental group based on the genre approach and the control group based on the traditional approach of teaching reading comprehension, which is predominant in Iraqi universities. To meet the purpose of this research, the two groups were given a reading comprehension pre-test followed by twenty-four instruction sessions. Then, they were given the same test that they had taken as the pre-test, but this time as the post-test. The results of reading comprehension analysis, analysed by a t-test and independent variable test proposed teaching by a genre-based-group approach, showed that the latter significant role in developing Iraqi EFL learners' reading comprehension skills. The descriptive statistics revealed learners in the experimental group advanced significantly in reading comprehension when compared with the non-genre group. The study indicated that in the performances of both genders (male and female learners) there were non-significant differences.

Key words: *Reading comprehension, genre-based approach, gender.*

Introduction

Reading is an important skill that should be known by students. Learners read text for multiple purposes, from getting information to pleasure. It enables EFL learners to get acquainted with the topics of their majors and enhance their language skills. Comprehension,

as the essence of reading, involves 'the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning' (Sweet and Snow, 2003, p. 1). Hence, the process of reading comprehension is influenced by genre and its structure, which in turn brings up the complexity of reading passages. It seems to be essential to clarify the notion of genre. Bazerman (1988) points to the social aspect of genres and maintains that a genre contains something beyond simple similarity of formal characteristics among a number of texts. Regarding a multidisciplinary activity, Bahtia (1993) discusses three orientations: linguistic, psychological and sociological. There are thirteen types of genre. Each genre has certain purpose, certain stages and certain linguistic features (Gerot and Peter, 1994). Christie (1987) asserts that 'production of any text is realised through the context of situation and the context of culture. Context of situation refers to register and context of culture influences all aspects of genre'.

In light of the explanation above, the researcher sought to develop an innovative methodology that uses the principles of genre analysis to enhance reading comprehension. Thus, the aim of this research was to examine the effects of a genre-based instruction on Iraqi EFL learners.

Theoretical Background of a Genre-Based Approach

The definitions of genre
Genre, as you might imagine from the way it seems, comes directly from French, a language based on Latin. It is firmly connected with the *genus*, 'a term you may have met in biology class. Both words contain the *gen-* root because they indicate that everything in a particular category (a genre or a genus) belongs to the same family.' Therefore, these groups have the same roots (Roberts, p. 2002). Due to its typically similar characteristics, the early concept of genre classified species into a particular class (Dirgeyasa, p. 2015).

From a discourse analysis perspective, Richards et al. (1992, p.156) asserts that genre 'is a specific category of speech events emanating from the discourse group as the same type.' Examples of genres are prayers, sermons, conversations, songs, speeches, poems, letters and novels. They have special and distinguishing characteristics. Nunan (1999) surly states, 'Genre is a purposeful, socially constructed oral or written communicative event, such as a narrative, a causal conversation, a poem, a recipe, or a description. Different genres are characterised by a particular structure or stages and grammatical forms that reflect the communicative purpose of the genre in question.' Rose (2012, p. 338) describes genre broadly: 'a recurrent configuration of meanings that enact the social practices of a culture.' The concept of genre points to 'a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre' (Swales, 1990, p. 58). From a more specific perspective, Martin (1984) describes a genre as 'a staged,

goal-oriented and purposeful social activity that people engage in as members of their culture', which is recognised as 'the type fictional of social and rhetorical action' (Miller, 1984).

Theories of a genre approach

The theory of genre begins by premising that the use of language is goal oriented. Genres grow in culture to allow members of that culture to accomplish their social purposes. Some purposes might include satisfying necessities like telling the doctor about an illness or shopping for food. Some may have a more relational function in creating and maintaining social relationships, like casual conversation or gossip. Others may have a more aesthetic dimension, like poetry and songs. (Derewianka, 2003, p. 136). Hyon (1996, p. 705) states that some experts have modified the teaching/learning cycle to include three phases of modelling, independent construction of text and text joint negotiation by introducing a further stage termed 'building knowledge of the field.'

For a genre-based approach, the focus is on meaning creation in the entire text. Rather than wrestling with separate instances of language, there is a perception that meaning gathers and grows throughout text (not doubting the worth of exercises that supply practice regarding particular points) (Derewianka, 2003, p. 135-36). This means genre is not merely 'text' but 'text-and-context.' Today, this integrative image predominates current multidisciplinary genre concepts, which are well described by Günther and Knoblauch (1995). They claim that the genres of communication cannot be separated from their social-structural characteristics. Günther and Knoblauch identify ties between personal stockpiles of knowledge and society's social structures. According to Halliday (1997, as cited in Rose, 2012), texts manifest their unique elements and structuring through language. These texts are reflective of social practices manifested through language by enacting and mirroring situations, genres, and culture, which can be detected and analysed. Thus, 'genre theory is a theory of the unfolding structure texts work through to achieve their social purpose' (Eggins and Slade, 1997, p. 231).

The advantages of a genre-based approach

The importance of learning genre has seen great interest in English education in Iraq over the past 15 years. Since the 2005 high school curriculum adopts a communicative approach, learners are anticipated to be able to communicate in the English language about many selective texts of diverse genres. For Devitt (2004), students' awareness of genre may make them able to communicate in the English language easily, as they understand 'the intricate connections between contexts and forms, to perceive potential ideological effects of genres and to discern both constraints and choices that genres make possible.' To achieve this objective, classroom tasks usually comprise text analysis, modelling and text construction.

Regarding the learning cycle, Dreyfus et al., (2016) proposes a genre-based pedagogy, where the deconstruction points to modelling, joint construction of text representation and independent construction of parsing, where the students have to take into account whole linguistic aspects according to genre. Rose (2015, p. 7) clarifies that during the deconstruction stage, reading and discussing texts can help students move beyond their level of independent reading. Here, teachers can also 'guide the student to identify and mark key information in each paragraph, building their (students) skills in recognising and comprehending key information.'

The knowledge of genre is beneficial to students in their environmental understanding, where they have utilised language and access their ways of communicating in specific professional academic and occupational communities. Throughout this teaching, diverse types of writing are demystified. This improves student's career chances and gives them access to a wider range of options in life (Johns 1997 cited in Hyland 2003).

Many have highlighted genre's potential as a powerful educational tool for English Academic Purposes (EAP) (Cheung and Lai, 1997; Flowerdew, 2000; Bunton, 2002). Such studies give teachers a way to look at what students need to do linguistically and the sorts of discourses they need to be able to comprehend and perform in speaking and writing. Goh and Burns (2012) demonstrate that the genre-based approach promotes meaningful learning of genuine interactive conversational discourse in a message-oriented and language-oriented manner at the same time. It focuses on improving the micro and macro skills in context while promoting accuracy and fluency of comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

Definitions of reading comprehension

The Research and Development Reading Study Group (RAND) (RRSG, 2002) defines comprehension as 'the process of simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning through interaction and engagement with print.' Brantmeier (2004, p. 52) defines reading comprehension as '…a critical part of the multifarious interplay of mechanisms involved in L2 reading.'

Pearson (quoted from Isarel and Duffy, 2009) considers comprehension as an act of apprehending texts, whereas Snowling and Hulme (2005) describe it as 'a mental representation of a text message' that occurs at diverse levels: 'word level (lexical processes), sentence-level (syntactic processes) and text level.' In other words, processes of comprehension appear orderly and at levels that enable readers to understand the kind of texts they face better.

Koda (2004, p. 4) alleges comprehension occurs 'when the reader extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known.' Urquhart and Weir (1998, p. 22) declare reading is 'the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print.' For Hellekjær (2007, p. 2), reading comprises 'decoding the written text on the one hand and efficiently processing the information on the other hand.' Reading comprehension is an intricate equilibrium between the recognition of printed symbols and their interpretation (Dennis, 2011).

Pressley (2000) and Birsch (2011) describe reading comprehension as the capacity to obtain the meaning of what is read. It requires various reading skills like word perception, fluency, lexical knowledge and pre-existing knowledge to be initiated immediately, so that the reader obtains knowledge from text. Tompkins (2011) expresses that reading comprehension is an inventive process that depends on four skills: syntax, phonology, semantics and pragmatics.

As the above authors say, reading comprehension is defined by the process of people accessing knowledge themselves.

Theories of reading comprehension

There are various theories regarding reading comprehension. Second-language reading is seen in interactive theories as a cognitive process in which learners construct meaning through their background knowledge and interaction with information (Pulido, 2004). Stanovich (1992) maintains that reading processes are not only interactive but also compensatory processes, so that other processing components can be compensated when a processing element is missing.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, reading is not principally a visual process. Reading involves two types of information: (1) visual information that comes from the page in print and (2) non-visual information that comes from the reader's mind. Visual information can be presented in a text or any form of writing, while non-verbal information is what the reader previously knows about reading, about language and about the world as a whole (Smith, 1973, as cited in Ngabut, 2015). This suggests that it is not enough to see sentences before our eyes; we need to learn something about the language in which the material is printed, about its subject matter and about reading itself.

In the last few decades, several researchers have tried to plan different theoretical models to clarify the reading process involved in reading comprehension (Goodman, 1967). Different models may therefore be divided into two meta-models of bottom-up and top-down. Treiman (2001, p. 2-3) argues that 'bottom-up processes are those that take in stimuli from the outside world, from letters and words, for reading and then deal with that information with little recourse to higher-level knowledge'. Hence, in bottom-up models, the main thrust of the

language learners in the process of reading comprehension is to focus on letters to construct sounds, focus on sounds to construct words and focus on words to construct sentences. This process finally results in comprehension and meaning extraction.

Top-down models play a crucial role in the previous knowledge and expectations of individuals, according to Treiman (2001). Effectively, Top-down models for reading comprehension emphasise that 'readers form hypotheses about which words they will encounter and take in only just enough visual information to test their hypotheses' (ibid., p. 3). Therefore, top-down models for reading comprehension require that language learners partake in guessing games and recognise the main ideas and the main objective of the text while ignoring individual words, verb conjugations or separate grammar points (Grabe, 2009). Hence, the top-down approach to reading comprehension underpins the role of schemata in reading comprehension.

As far as instruction is concerned, the purpose of reading classes is to teach students good reading plans. Students are encouraged to activate their background information before reading a text. It is thought that increasing the awareness of readers of the strategies that they are utilising and their style of reading can provide positive outcomes (Kusiak, 2003; Yang, 2002).

Factors possibly affecting reading comprehension
Studies examine diverse factors that can contribute to readers' attempts to comprehend texts, like the role of schemata, later conceived as background knowledge (Carrell, 1983; Clapham, 1996; Liu et al., 2009). Mubashir et al. (2015) affirms that different factors, such as weak command of vocabulary, the habit of cramming, lack of interest in learning creative reading and having the single goal of merely passing an exam are responsible for weak English reading comprehension. According to Grabe (2009, p. 4390), motivation plays an essential role in evolving reading, whereas teachers and in-class contexts have a stunning effect on students' motivation. He further says that a student's motivation does influence reading comprehension, 'both directly and indirectly' (ibid., p. 4557). McCormick (2007) lists six factors that make expository texts hard to read: text construction, new information, specialised vocabulary, readability level of the text, abstract concepts and the expectation that information should be retained by the readers.

Researchers point out that the degree of learners' grammatical knowledge, vocabulary knowledge and prior knowledge are some of the significant difficulties influencing reading comprehension (Koda, 2007). Nergis (2013) and Brown et al. (1986) posit that deepness of vocabulary knowledge, syntactic consciousness and metacognitive recognition are some of the important factors influencing reading comprehension.

Another factor is the environmental circumstances that affect students who attempt to read a passage. Readers may encounter more obstacles in comprehending a text in a chaotic environment than when reading in a quiet and controlled place. If students feel insecure, they find it hard to concentrate on their reading. When they are in safe surroundings, their ability to comprehend reading develops. When it comes to noise like television or radios, readers lose their focus on understanding the text as well (Dennis, 2008).

Methodology

Research Questions

In the state study, the researcher endeavoured to examine the effect of a genre-based approach to improve the reading comprehension skills of Iraqi EFL university learners. This paper tried to address the two following research questions:

1. Does the genre-based approach have any effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension skills?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on a genre-based approach?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the questions raised, the following hypotheses was suggested:

1. Genre-based instruction does not play any significant role in improving Iraqi EFL learners' reading comprehension.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on a genre-based approach.

Sample

The subjects of this paper were 60 students studying at the University of Qadisiyah, College of Arts, Department of English, in the first year. They were studying Select Readings (Pre-Intermediate) in the 1st semester of 2018-2019. All of the subjects were native speakers of Arabic. Most of them were at the age of 19-20. They were informed of the fact that they had been selected to partake in this research, and that the obtained data would be used only for the sake of research.

The 60 subjects were equally distributed into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. The mean age of both groups was 19.5.

Instruments

The researcher utilised the following instruments:

1. The first testing instrument was a pre-test: The participants conducted a pre-test to ensure the comparability of the two participant groups before their treatment.

2. Post-test: the post-test aimed to measure the amount of improvement the learners made. Each test included one passage with 16 items on reading comprehension and 8 items that tested language form and vocabulary. It should be mentioned that these tests are reliable and valid because they are amongst the commercially classified ones, which are objective. In addition, they are straightforward and quickly administered. Consequently, these two tests were scored based on an answer key, which guarantees objectivity in scoring. The time allotted was 50 minutes for each test.

It is worth emphasising that the pre-test was excerpted and adapted from https://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/elc/studyzone/, which is for students of the English Language Centre (ELC) at the University of Victoria. ELC teachers created the English language lessons and practice exercises. The post-test was excerpted from https://www.ngllife.com/story-aral-sea-0, which is National Geographic Learning, a Cengage Learning Company.

Moreover, six reading comprehension passages were taught. The readings were chosen from Select Readings, Second Edition by Lee and Gundersen (2011), which is a reading course for students of English. Its highly-interesting, authentic reading passages serve as springboards for reading skills development, vocabulary building and thought-provoking discussions and writing. The readings represent a wide range of genres (newspaper and magazine articles, personal essays, textbook chapters and online discussions) collected from well-respected sources, like The Wall Street Journal and National Geographic and are approved by experienced teachers.

Procedure

The experimental procedures of the current study were carried out during the first semester of the academic year of 2018-2019. The following illustrates the steps of the experimental group in teaching reading comprehension:

1. Asking students to describe what they see in the photos or artwork on the page and guess what the chapter is about.

2. Presenting the topic, which is designed to get students to connect personally to the topic of the chapter and to activate their background knowledge of it.

3. Clarifying the following support tools: vocabulary glosses, culture and language notes, maps, numbered lines and recorded reading passages.

4. Encouraging students to read actively, circle words, write questions in the margins, take notes and listen to the recorded version of the reading passages.
5. Introducing students to reading skills such as skimming and scanning and vocabulary-building strategies such as learning synonyms and understanding phrasal verbs.
6. The expository genre was explicated for the learners in terms of description, contrast and comparison, cause and effect, enumerative description or listing, sequences as well as problems and solutions.
7. Reviewing the explanations and sample sentences at the beginning of each reading skills section.
8. Letting students discuss a question a second time with a different partner or group.

It should be pointed out that the control group's teaching procedure (the traditional-based reading approach) was comparable to the genre-based reading approach, with the exception of steps 5 and 6. This research only addressed the expository genres in teaching the skills of reading comprehension. For both groups, 24 sessions were conducted within 12 weeks. Each text was allocated 2 sessions. The materials taught in the course were as follows:

Table 1
The materials taught

| Are You Getting Enough Sleep? |
| Mika's Homestay in London |
| It's Not Always Black and White |
| Helping Others |
| Generation Z: Digital Natives |
| How to Be a Successful Businessperson |

Results

The pre-tests in the experimental and control groups were compared utilising an independent samples t-test. Table 2 describes the descriptive statistics for both groups.

Table 2
Pre-reading test in experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Means
Experimental	30	26.92	5.54	1.432
Control	30	26.4	5.2	1.28

From table 2, the mean value for the experimental group was 26.92 and 26.4 for the control group, whereas for each group the standard deviation was 5.54 and 5.2 respectively. The observed differences between the mean scores and the standard deviation for both groups were demonstrated by the fact that the statistics for the t-tests were not significant, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3
The t-test for the equality of the pre-test means of experimental and control groups

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			T-test for Equality of Means							
Group	F	Sig.	t	d.f.	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								lower	upper	
Experimental	0.6	1.16	0.54	56	1.57	0.533	1.932	-3.424	4.492	
Control			0.54	55.46	1.57	0.533	1.932	-3.426	4.494	

Taking into account the t-test results presented in table 3, no significant variations were observed for the mean score and the standard deviation between the experimental and control groups under reading instruction. This is because the p-value is 0.785, which is well above the cut-score of 0.05.

In their pre-test performances, the two genders who were given reading instructions were compared. According to table 4, the females had a mean score of 26.532, while the males indicated had a mean score of 26.8. Furthermore, the standard deviation of both genders was 5.526 and 5.058 in that order.

Table 4
Females versus males on the pre-reading test

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	30	26.532	5.526	1.426
Male	30	26.8	5.058	1.306

The t-test statistics were used in a similar vein to compare females with males in the pre-reading test, as shown in table 5. This table reveals that the performance of both genders was

non-significant because the p-value is 1.782. This is considerably above the reduction score of 0.05.

Table 5

The t-test for comparing the performance of females with males on the pre-reading test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	d.f.	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							lower	upper
0.002	1.94	- 0.276	56	1.782	- 0.266	1.934	- 4.228	3.696
		- 0.276	- 55.568	1.782	- 0.266	1.934	- 4.23	3.698

The two groups conducted the same reading test as the post-reading test after a 24-hour instruction. From table 6, the mean scores of the experimental and control groups were 34.4 and 31.332, whereas the standard deviations of both groups were 2.746 and 2.69 respectively.

Table 6

Post-reading test in experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Means
Experimental	30	34.4	2.746	0.708
Control	30	31.332	2.69	0.694

A t-test is an appropriate statistical analysis utilised to compare the two means of different groups who received different treatments. From table 7, the p-value indicates that the two groups performed considerably differently in the post-reading test, which demonstrates that the genre-based approach was effective.

Table 7
The t-test of the post-test means of experimental and control groups

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
F	Sig.	t	d.f.	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							lower	upper
0.124	1.608	6.178	56	0.008	3.066	0.996	1.032	5.1
		6.178	55.976	0.008	3.066	0.996	1.032	5.1

Paired t-test statistics were used to determine if the participants' reading skills changed before and after instruction. Table 8 demonstrates that the mean scores for reading tests before and after instruction are significantly different. In addition, this is an indication that both groups benefitted from the reading instruction concerning their reading comprehension ability. Also, the table shows that the level of significance, 0.000, was smaller than the set value 0.05. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 8
The t-test of the post and pre-reading tests of experimental and control groups

Paired Differences					t	d.f.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			lower	upper			
26.766	4.744	0.612	25.54	27.992	87.378	119	0.000

Table 9 shows the two genders who were given reading instructions according to their performances on the post-test. It indicates that the mean score of the females was 33.466, and their standard deviation was about 3.066. The males showed a mean score of 32.266 and a standard deviation of 3.104.

Table 9

Females versus males on the post-reading test

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Female	30	33.466	3.066	0.792
Male	30	32.266	3.104	0.8

In a comparable vein, a t-test was carried out to determine whether gender played a part in the reading comprehension. The difference was shown to be statistically insignificant, as table 10 shows:

Table 10

t-test for comparing the performance of females with males on the post-reading test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	d.f.	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	lower	upper
0.374	1.338	2.13	56	0.592	1.2	1.126	1.108	3.508
		2.13	55.976	0.592	1.2	1.126	1.108	3.508

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of genre-based instruction on Iraqi EFL learners. In effect, the first question of this study was, 'Does the genre-based approach have any effect on EFL learners' reading comprehension skills?'

On the basis of the statistical results, the use of expository passages as reading materials in the experimental group developed a statistically significant variation in EFL Learners' reading comprehension skills. In contrast, making use of these passages did not lead to a statistically significant variation in EFL Learners' reading comprehension abilities involved in the control group. In other words, the size of the difference between the means of control and experimental groups in the pre-test was insignificant. Nevertheless, the difference in the post-test was entirely significant after treatments (mean difference = 34.4). This confirms the results of several studies, such as (Sadeghi, Hassani and Hemmati, 2013; Kalali and Pishkar, 2015; Karbalaei and Hejazi, 2015). This also shows that expository texts play an effective role in developing learners' reading comprehension skills.

The use of expository passages in language learning environments may lead to further variation in EFL learners' reading comprehension abilities. These results may be the consequence of the psychological effect and role of exposition in the operation of memory and other cognitive processes. This signifies that a sense of expository text structure facilitates comprehension. According to Lee and Gudersen (2011), 'exposing students to a variety of text types and genres helps them develop more effective reading skills.' Students learn to handle the richness and depth of writing styles they will encounter as they read more widely in English.

Many researchers are also discussing the essential role of genre analysis in the reading comprehension process. Toledo (2005) stresses the need to implement the concept of genre or the rhetorical scheme in teaching reading comprehension. He claims that 'the comprehension of textual macrostructure does not necessarily imply comprehension along essential dimensions such as the text's communicative or pragmatic function' (ibid.: 1059). This issue requires a great deal of consideration regarding genre analysis, which primarily shows the pragmatic dimensions of text.

Overall reading comprehension is highly influenced by the level of previous or background knowledge that readers have about a topic (Klauda and Guthrie, 2008). The level of background knowledge positively influences the ability of readers to infer meaning in texts of social studies (Tarchi, 2009). Hence, providing explicit insights about language, including the features related to the concept of genre, seems to be beneficial for reading comprehension of Iraqi EFL students. Empowering advantage refers to the access that genre-based writing instructions provide 'to the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts' (Hyland, 2004, p. 11).

Concerning the second question of research, 'Is there any significant difference between male and female performance in reading comprehension after they are instructed based on a genre-based approach?' Although females were better than males in the post-test, no significant interaction between the performances of both genders was found, according to the findings of this study. Therefore, it can be inferred that both females and males, regardless of their gender, obtain lexical gains from instructed texts. This corroborates the findings of other studies (Kalali and Pishkar, 2015; Karbalaei and Hejazi, 2015), which reveal that gender has a neutral role, since the differences between females and males in the post-test performance were non-significant and ignorable. In effect, the second hypothesis, which states 'there are no differences between the performances of males and females in the experimental group' was validated.

The students encountered little difficulties. The major difficulty was participation, where they did not take an active part in lectures. The students only took part when being asked or

directed by the tutor. Based on the findings, only a small number of students took part. This was because of the level of competence of the students. Students with poor competence were not willing to part take because they were afraid others would make fun of them. This keeps the participants mostly calm. Another reason was that the theme of some readings was not pertinent to their interests. In addition, the difficulty of texts implicitly influenced the students' performance. As Khatib et al. (2011) said, 'the difficulty of the text may cause difficulties for language learners and even demotivates them.' Therefore, EFL instructors should encourage their students to read diverse materials, identify the difficulties of students' reading comprehension and have favourable views involving their readings to comprehend various texts readily. This builds up good reading skills EFL instructors should provide information about their students ' weaknesses as well.

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