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The Development and Validation of a Systemic Genre-Based Framework for Assessment of Iranian EFL Learners' Expository Writing



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ABSTRACT

Over the last years, systemic functional and genre-based approaches have contributed elaborately to how genre is assumed and administered in textual analysis and language teaching. The approaches that are developed mostly by Halliday and Martin accentuate the fact that language structure is inherently interconnected with social function and context. Applying these approaches to EFL settings can enhance teachers and learners' understanding of the essence of language use and usage in different contexts. Teachers can administer these approaches in teaching and assessment of language skills and sub-skills based on particular content and genres. The purpose of this study is to construct and validate a framework for evaluating expository texts written by advanced EFL learners. The research method was qualitative-quantitative (mixed-method study). The qualitative part was conducted through interviews with 15 university professors in Tabriz city using the snowball sampling method in 2021-2022 until theoretical saturation was reached. The quantitative part was conducted with 50 EFL teachers in branches of Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Tabriz using a purposeful sampling method selected from the research population including 183 teachers. The research instrument in the qualitative part was a semi-structured interview. The instrument of the quantitative part was a researcher-made questionnaire developed based on the framework extracted from the themes identified by the professors in the interview section. The themes of the interview section were reviewed during two consecutive stages with university professors to evaluate their validity. To ensure the validity of the researcher-made questionnaire, first content validity was used, then construct validity, and Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability. The findings in the qualitative part based on the thematic analysis obtained from the interviews with professors showed that from a total of 76 primary codes and 39 classified codes, eight secondary themes and three main themes including: Context of Culture, Context of Situation and Lexico-Grammar features were identified. Accordingly, the Context of Culture includes two secondary themes of Semantic Formatting and Content Formatting. The Context of the Situation includes three secondary themes of the Field, Tenor, and Mode; and Lexico-Grammar features cover three secondary themes of Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual features. Thus, systemic genre-based framework was developed based on the main themes and secondary themes. Moreover, the findings of the quantitative part based on the factor analysis showed that the presented framework of the qualitative part was confirmed and the constructed rubric in the form of the questionnaire was validated. The findings are beneficial for EFL teachers and learners.

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Introduction

Nowadays, English has been considered as a global language and as lingua Franca, and people are seriously required to learn this language; however, the ultimate outcomes of language learning are reflected to be the ability to build literal fundamentals on English use and usage that are widely evolved around learning and employing different skills and sub-skills. Learning a foreign language requires mastery of four major skills including receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (writing and speaking). Writing skill is one of the most important ones in EFL contexts, which permits writers to discover contemplations and notions, and create observable and tangible records. It similarly inspires discerning and learning, and provokes communication. As specified by [Ho, Phung, Oanh, and Giao \(2020\)](#), among four language skills, writing appears to be the most problematic since it necessitates a writer to master specific vocabulary knowledge, grammar, and writing rules. Accordingly, the learners typically are not heartened in the writing classrooms. Henceforward, it is hard for writing teachers to teach and assess writing skill of the learners with dissimilar proficiency levels and the texts of different content. Generally, writing skill follows certain precise features that are revealed in the form of specific genres and teachers are expected to assess texts and provide the necessary feedback based on the content and genre of the texts. Curiously, the genre-based approach has been executed widely in teaching writing skill worldwide. This approach entails writing teachers to be aware of the learners' specific learning needs and the objectives of writing.

Genre theory procured from the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). [Halliday](#)

[\(1994\)](#) and his followers developed SFL in Australia. According to [Eggins \(1994\)](#), SFL indicates how individuals use language for achieving social drives and getting something done intentionally in definite contexts. SFL framework is entitled functional since it can elucidate how the language is administered ([Halliday, 1994](#)), and it regards language as a meaning-making resource ([Halliday & Martin, 1993](#)). [Hyland \(2007\)](#) maintained that the genre-based approach to writing underscores the communicative function of writing skill.

In the last thirty years, the use of genre in the teaching and learning of language has gained enormous consideration in the foreign language context ([Rasyidah Mohd Nordin, 2019](#)). Genre pedagogies in EFL contexts are progressively being recognized as beneficial means to aid teachers offer targeted training to encounter the language and writing requirements of the learners ([Tardy, 2019](#)). A genre approach provides excessive applicability for EFL learners' writing in elementary and advanced proficiency levels. Thus, the identification and exploration of genre-based approach can train learners with acquaintance about the linguistic and structural components of diverse types of texts. According to [Lee \(2012\)](#), a genre-based approach can acquaint learners with the social breadth of writing skill and divulge that lexico-grammatical configurations are not an end in themselves in the process of writing instruction, but relatively a means to an end, qualifying learners to create texts for the accurate audience in a proper and applicable context. Consequently, genre is a supportive device to inform EFL learners about the context, purpose, and audience of writing and aid them recognize how the linguistic and

structural elements of writings can contribute to making meaning.

Wherever the acquisition of a definite language skill is perceived as central, it becomes correspondingly essential to evaluate that skill, and writing is no exception ([Weigle, 2009](#)). Meanwhile, writing has a key role in modeling the scientific and academic configuration of human life, as it is the medium to store, retain, and convey technical content; hereafter, teachers and researchers need to find a reliable method for assessing and ensuring the quality writing. This is not an exception in EFL contexts and there is superior mandate for valid and reliable methods to test writing skill, equally for classroom use and as a predictor of forthcoming academic and professional accomplishment.

Writing performance is estimated to be challenging for EFL learners in the language learning process ([Richards, 1990](#)). As explicated by [Richard and Renandya \(2002\)](#), the complications comprise those in (1) putting ideas into a comprehensible text and (2) engendering and organizing ideas using a suitable choice of lexis. Considering these problems in Iranian EFL contexts, we can claim that in addition to these troubles, Iranian learners are obliged to deal with several other hindrances when learning to write essays in the target language. The main struggle is related to the fact that English in Iran educational departments is currently regarded chiefly as a compulsory subject intended for learning and exam-focused objectives rather than as an instrument for communication. Furthermore, the teaching writing methodology and theoretical approach used by Iranian teachers might create some difficulties for learners and confuse them in having satisfactory performance in writing skill.

In this regard, [Pham and Bui \(2021\)](#) proclaimed that writing teachers do not pay abundant attention to communicative purposes and contexts in the process of teaching writing. The communicative purposes and contexts of writings influence the selection of language uses to serve communicative functions. The EFL teachers may lack proper realization of the association between texts and contexts. Hence, they need to be aware of this connection and they are expected to transfer their knowledge to the learners and clarify how language is used in authentic settings in various fields. Moreover, numerous EFL teachers are not strongly aware of the concept of genre and its application in writing. Accordingly, EFL learners may not be trained to write texts consistent with a genre-based approach and they may lack adequate knowledge of social function, generic structure, and linguistic features of different genres. Explicitly, most of the teachers merely center on providing their learners with general words and grammatical rules to organize their thoughts into the finalized paragraphs. Teaching writing in this way, which definitely entails assessment in this way, simply aids them to produce the error-free texts with no attention to the context; that is to say, most of the language classes are mainly language-based with slight focus on creating compositions to serve the purpose of variety of real readers outside the classroom. This procedure may not contribute to the realization and mastery of such aspects as audiences, purposes, and linguistic conventions of a text. For that reason, the way the writing ability is estimated is only grounded on the linguistic and grammatical precision and rarely punctuation aspect. Consequently, no explicit consideration is compensated on generic features of the writings.

The genre-based approach selected in this study is to support teachers in assessing the learners' writing based on a purposeful rubric highlighting systemic and generic characteristics.

Generally, based on the above-mentioned points it can be argued that one of the principal decisions to be made in regulating a structure for evaluating and scoring writing quality is the type of scoring technique to be administered. The theories behind the assessment and measurement tools designed for EFL learners' writings have resemblances and dissimilarities considering their purposes. Commonly, most of the measurement tools administered in Iran use a 100-point or 20-point scoring system in a subjective way. The foremost problem with these scales is that there is no agreement among EFL teachers and raters, and it is not evident how to define the top and bottom points of a mark at a definite criterion. Nevertheless, the clarification of a specific criterion is very central and complex for both the rater (teacher) and the rated (learner), additionally, the objectivity of the assessment needs to be confirmed and understood by the raters and learners. That is to say, there seems to be no specific and common scoring rubric among EFL teachers in Iran to be used in assessing learners' writings. Despite a body of work exploring this issue over the last decade or so (e.g., [Nagao, 2019](#); [Dirgeyasa, 2020](#); [Pourdana & Asghari, 2021](#)) the process of rating written ability of the learners centered on a genre-based approach needs extra exploration and there is actually no systemic genre-based framework and rubric to evaluate expository texts. Inspired by the dearth of investigation on the incorporation of the genre-based approach into evaluating expository essays and the deficiency of such an approach, this paper proposed a systemic genre-

based framework for evaluating EFL learners' expository essays. Thus, the purpose of this study is to develop a systemic genre-based framework and a rubric based on the developed theoretical framework to evaluate expository essays written by advanced EFL learners. Accordingly, the following research questions are proposed:

1. What kind of systemic genre-based framework can be provided to evaluate Iranian EFL learners' expository texts?
2. Is the developed systemic genre-based rubric valid for evaluating expository texts of Iranian EFL learners?

Literature Review

Genre and Systemic Functional Linguistics

In the 1980s, with the research of John Swales, conducted in the UK, the word 'genre' first came into the field of second-language (L2) writing and, in turn, the field of English for specific purposes (ESP) ([Paltridge, 2014](#)). Generally, researchers like [Swales \(1990\)](#), [Bhatia \(1993\)](#), [Paltridge \(2001\)](#), [Hyland \(2003\)](#), and others have persuasively established the significance of concentrating on genres in several areas of the profession. Tony Dudley-Evans, Ann Johns and Ken Hyland are among the most important scholars who have claimed for the importance of genre concept in the teaching writing in ESL/EFL contexts.

Considering the role of genre concept specifically in language classes, [Paltridge \(2001\)](#) emphasized its benefits: a genre-based perspective centers on language at the level of the whole text whereas at same time allowing for the social and cultural context in which it is used ([Paltridge, 2001](#)). Along with such opinions for using genre-based approaches in daily classroom practice, efforts have been made to place genre more centrally in the development of language

curricula and syllabus design, particularly in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Swales, 1990). Researchers have defined the genre differently. Martin (1984) stated that genres are acknowledged grounded on language choice suitable for communicative context to express meanings efficaciously. Swales (1990) regarded genre as a class of communicative purposes and communicative events.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is a theory applied in explaining the association between linguistic perspectives and social context (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL is a school founded on Hallidayan functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978) and sociocultural theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), which “stresses the interactive, purposeful, and sequential character of diverse genres and the ways language is systematically linked to context through patterns of lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features” (Christie & Martin, as cited in Hyland, 2003, pp. 21-22). In SFL theory, as argued by Halliday (1978), language has a functional use and it is regarded a base for making meaning. There are several bases including sounds, language, symbols, pictures, paralinguistic features, and the like that are effective in making meanings in texts. Generally, it can be supposed that the theory of SFL is effectively applicable in the teaching of writing skill since it aids EFL learners with no trouble to select diverse sources of meanings functionally and intentionally consistent with each communicative situation. To SFL scholars, the forms and structures of academic genres are not fixed but situated. Specifically, they cannot be memorized as some writing teachers who follow cognitive theories would have their learners

contemplate. They have to be decided on consideration of three variables: context, purpose, and audience.

Genre-Based Approach to Writing

As mentioned by Tuan (2011), genre entails both frequent patterns of daily and academic texts in a culture and literary texts. Genres can be either spoken or written, and they are grouped founded on the prime purposes. According to Swales (1990), genres that have comparable objectives belong to the identical text categories. Derewianka (1990) classified six central genres grounded on their social purposes: recount, information reports, narratives, explanation, instruction, and expository texts. Generally, these social purposes of diverse text genres affect the linguistic inputs of each text. That is to say, linguistic conventions can be in the form of linguistic features and schematic structure. Tuan (2011) maintained that schematic structure state the text organization or internal structure, counting the text's introduction, body, and conclusion. On the other hand, language elements cover particular linguistic features (grammar, connectors, vocabulary, etc.) that the writers used to make a decipherable writing.

According to Elashri (2013), writing for EFL learners is not an easy issue, particularly once the learners' English competence is not very well established. There are four approaches for teaching and learning writing: the process-focused approach, the product-focused approach, the genre-based approach to teaching writing, and process and genre based approach to teaching and learning writing. The process approach centers more on implementing practices including exploring ideas, brainstorming, peer editing, and rewriting. The product approach is a traditional style to teaching writing in which learners

characteristically are provided by the teacher with an ideal and stimulated to mimic it with the intention of producing an analogous product. A genre based method hinge on the type of the texts that the learners compose. The most modern approach is to combine the genre and process approach.

The Prominence and Effects of Genre-Based Approach to Writing

[Martin and Rose \(2008\)](#) specified that the crucial feature of SFL genre theory is related to the dialectical associations that exists between context and language. Precisely, the form of language is intermediated by the context of language use, counting both the context of situation where the textual meaning-making arises (register) and the context of culture that decides the communicative purpose of written texts (genre). Additionally, there are three register variables, how participants interact (tenor), what was happening (field), and through which means (mode). These three constituents are recognized by the use of language to provide three meanings of texts: the interpersonal (i.e., how the relations between the reader and the writer are addressed and attitudes are expressed), the ideational (i.e., how the content is expressed), and the textual (i.e., how the text is organized and cohesion is established) ([Abdel-Malek, 2020](#)). SFL scholars believed that there are no guidelines that could be applied to all texts across purposes, contexts, and audiences. Writers must identify each of these variables in determining the textual configuration and lexical grammatical of their texts if they want their writings to be acknowledged by the discourse communities for which they are being transcribed.

The genre-based approach as assumed by [Suksawas \(2018\)](#) must center on the organization

of text and linguistic features. As asserted by [Hyland \(2002\)](#), each writing genre necessitates distinguishing language and generic structure; hence, EFL writing learners are required to recognize the knowledge related to “a specific form of communication” to communicate efficiently and unmistakably in context (p. 125). That is to say, the context adopts the organization of each type of writing genre and the use of language.

Accordingly, EFL classrooms need explicit and applicable genre-based writing instruction. Actually, as claimed by [Hyland \(2002\)](#), EFL teachers must provide learners with “an explicit knowledge or relevant genre” that guides them to interact effectually in their “target context” (p. 125). To accomplish this point EFL teachers are expected to realize the syntactic and communicative feature of the target language. Thus, they can help learners recognize the expectable and recurrent language configurations demarcated in the form of generic properties. [Lin \(2006\)](#) recommended that writing teachers can enhance the mastery of “text types and genres,” and then the learners will be able to apply the learnt features in writing certain genres. (p. 7).

The main assistance of the teachers is explaining the organization and arrangement of different text types. Identifying generic configurations and the linguistic properties used in different writing genres would be advantageous for both EFL learners and teacher in creating accurate and comprehensible writings and assessing writing skill based on particular genres. Moreover, SFL theoreticians (e.g., Hyland, Halliday, Martin) claimed that the fact that “generic structures” along with “their associated grammatical features” must be trained unequivocally aids learners partake productively

in “various disciplines and professions” ([Coffin, 2001, p. 113](#)). Therefore, it is essential for writing teachers to empower their learners in writing diverse types of writing genres systemically and explicitly in the direction of serving social purposes.

Expository Genre

[Richards and Schmidt \(2010\)](#) asserted that there are four leading modes of writing: narrative, expository, descriptive, and argumentative. Expository writing offers information, instruction, clarification, explanation, and definition via logical analysis ([Tseng, 2001](#)). Expository writing varies from descriptive and narrative writing in that it articulates a clue about a subject and uses supporting specifics to notify or clarify to the reader that the inkling is comprehensive. However, the descriptive or narrative modes try to arouse the reader’s feelings or senses, the exposition style exist in the dominion of reason. A struggle with expository writing might be attributable to learners’ lack of familiarity about the text organization used in producing and comprehending expository texts ([Taylor & Beach, 1984](#)).

Concerning the organizing structures of expository writing, [Cox, Shanahan and Tinzmann \(1991\)](#) claimed that expository writing depends heavily on the logical and hierarchical relations among the thoughts and concepts being discussed in a certain text. Providing information and explanation about a specific issue is the purpose of an expository writing. According to [Richards and Schmidt \(2002\)](#), essays, textbooks, and several of the articles published in magazines are regarded as expository texts and entail the subdivisions of “*type/contrast, sequence, classification, illustration, problem-solution,*

enumeration or collection, and process description” ([Weaver & Kintsch, 1991](#)).

[Pike and Mumper \(2005\)](#) argued that expository texts include the extensive genre in most range of our life and as they are the resources for finding explicit information about an issue, places and people, discovery of solutions to the problems, and to satisfy one’s curiosity and interest. [Duke \(2003\)](#) asserted that exposing learners to the expository texts aids them to raise their awareness and understanding of the genre in terms of syntax, vocabulary, and the text structure, and similarly empowers them to explore new information, classifies, and synthesizes the received information to the existing outlines. Having the ability to understand, create and discuss around expository text is a compulsory skillfulness for learners, since at all educational levels, they come upon these texts that requires them to extract the new information about social studies, world, health and their particular discipline from them.

[Tassler \(2012\)](#) mentioned that the most common configurations of expository writings embrace compare-contrast, description, cause-effect, listing and sequence, and problem-solution. Considering their excessive prominence in our existence, learners typically have difficulties in understanding, recalling and learning from expository writings. The main reasons partially might be structural complexity (subordinate clauses, complex noun phrases), bulk of knowledge, technical vocabulary, the abstract and logical relation between dissimilar parts of the text, and the organization of material.

[Alidib \(2004\)](#) believed that to become effective creators and users of expository version learners are required to hold both specific and general domain knowledge related to the

organizational features, content, and structure of these texts. By constructing situational model through interaction between explicit information in the text, learners can represent their global understanding of expository texts. Generally, the students can administer diverse types of strategies to facilitate the process of comprehension including paraphrasing, drawing inferences about text content, translation, self-explanation, prediction, checking and revising during reading these types of texts.

[Dirgeyasa \(2020\)](#) claimed that assessment plays significant role to accomplishment of teaching and learning. An appropriate assessment instrument leads to the reliable and valid learning achievement or otherwise. Considering genre based writing, as a typical approach to teaching and learning writing also needs the assessment instrument matching the nature of the genre-based writing itself. [Dirgeyasa \(2020\)](#) provided a preliminary understanding and sights of typical instrument for assessing the genre based writing. He concluded that in developing a genre-based writing assessment instrument the characteristics and features of genre-based writing such as communicative purpose, generic structure, and grammatical patterns and vocabulary choices must be considered to provide a qualified assessment outcome. That is why every type of genre-based writing has its own typical assessment instrument in terms of items, content, and number of items.

[Sritrakarn \(2020\)](#) examined the effects of employing the SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistic) genre-based approach in an English writing classroom to improve Thai learners' skills in writing an English explanation. The participants included of 22 English majors who were undertaking the English Report Writing

Course. The corpus comprised students' writing drafts, a questionnaire, and a group interview. The results exposed that the SFL genre-based approach has the potential to help equip students with awareness of the focused genre. Analysis of learners' writing revealed that students composed the drafts to achieve the writing goal and created explanation texts with the prerequisite schematic structure whereas their use of the language resources at clause level varied, depending on their levels of learning achievement.

Even though several studies have been conducted to provide appropriate assessment rubric for EFL writing worldwide, in Iran, especially, there are no published studies related to the use of systemic functional approach to provide a genre-based framework. Thus, the dearth of empirical research in this field gave impetus to the present study to provide an SFL genre-based framework for assessing writing of expository texts. The study focuses on the role of GBI in the assessment of expository essays and on how SFL and genre-based approaches could essentially assist both EFL learners and teachers assume a more applicable view of academic writing, which can permit them to serve the needs of the educational programs and professional effort. Subsequently, little is identified about the practicality of this approach for the accomplishment of these objectives in the Iranian EFL context.

Methodology

Participants

The statistical population of the research in the qualitative part included university professors of the English language teaching and literature faculty of the universities in Tabriz with more than ten years of teaching experience in the academic year 2021-2022. In order to determine

the sample group of the study, particular professors of the academic staff were identified and after semi-structured interviews with them and through purposeful and snowball sampling, the other suitable samples were identified and interviewed until theoretical saturation was achieved and the interviews were conducted with 15 professors.

The statistical population of the research in the quantitative part included the EFL teachers of the branches of the Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Tabriz in 2021-2022, which was reported to be 183 teachers. In order to determine the sample of the study, 50 teachers with M.A. and higher degrees and 5 years of teaching experience were selected and participated in the research.

Instrument

As for qualitative phase of the study, a semi-structured interview was developed and used by the researcher according to the research objectives. It was used to explore and elicit university professors experiences, attitudes, views and descriptions to have benefit of uncovering issues or concerns about their perception of expository writing assessment that have not been anticipated by the researcher. The interview had two parts. The first part consisted of demographic information on the professors' age, gender, academic degree, years of experience and institutional affiliation. The second part comprised of eight questions about teacher's perception of expository writing assessment (e.g., *Do you consider the generic factors when assessing a text? Do you take into account the concept of genre? Could you please define the concept of genre and genre analysis? How many genres are you familiar with?*). The researcher developed the questions of this instrument based on the related literature and

theories, and the validity of the questionnaire and then the obtained themes was ensured according to content validity through consulting thesis supervisor, advisor, and experts in TEFL field.

The second instrument of the study, which is used in second phases of the study (quantitative phases) is related to a questionnaire (rubric) developed by the researcher based on the themes achieved from the interview with university professors (respondents) for validation process. This questionnaire included three indexes with 39 questions designed based on 5-point Likert Scale. The first 12 questions were related to Context of Culture Index (e.g., *I consider whether the thesis statement is clarified clearly and concisely near to the end of the introductory paragraph*). The second index with 12 questions is related to Context of Situation (e.g., *I consider the content of the written text*). Moreover, the final 15 questions are related to Lexico-Grammar features in assessing expository texts (e.g., *Expository text is characterized by the use of declarative verbs (define, exemplify, compare, contrast, analyze)*). The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through content validity by consulting the experts in TEFL field. Using Cronbach's alpha the reliability of each index was estimated and confirmed (>0.7); for this end, the initial questionnaire was distributed among 20 EFL teachers and the reliability results are 0.94 for Context of Culture, 0.94 for Context of Situation, and 0.92 for Lexico-Grammar features. Additionally, construct validity was also used to validate the questionnaire, which was approved (>0.3).

Procedure

The present study begins with the qualitative phase of studying and reviewing the related literature including theoretical and conceptual

frameworks regarding scoring rubrics, expository writing, SFL, and genre-based teaching for assessing writings produced by EFL learners. Based on the review of the related literature, the interview questions were developed and distributed among aforementioned experienced university professors in the form of a semi-structured interview. Using Delphi method, the professors' ideas about the most important factors and indexes were explored. The obtained information was required in order to evaluate and score EFL learner's expository texts. The professors were asked to answer the questions via online 20-minute meetings planned and scheduled in advance. It took almost one month to gather the data and the interview continued until theoretical saturation was achieved (15 professors). The sampling method applied in this stage was Purposeful and Snowball sampling. That is to say, the sampling selection was based on purposeful sampling of intensity type which means selection of the participants who have rich information regarding the interview questions (Benoot, Hanes & Bilsen, 2016).

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from the interview. The data analysis stages of this phase was conducted based on the categorization proposed by Bloukat, Sharifi and Afkaneh (2020):

Stage 1: getting acquainted with the data

Having collected the data and interviews, the researcher referred to them repeatedly and studied the data and gained sufficient mastery over the data and immersed herself in the data, so to speak.

Stage 2: creating primary codes

The second stage started when the researcher has read the data and found familiarity. This step included the creation of primary codes from the

data. Codes introduce a feature of the data that represents a specific theme. In this research, after studying the data, the initial 76 codes were extracted.

Stage 3: creating classified codes:

In this stage, after classifying the initial codes of the research, 39 classified codes of the same topic were extracted.

Stage 4: searching for themes:

In this stage, 3 main themes were extracted in the form of 8 secondary themes, which were considered as potential themes, by categorizing the codes of the same topic in one class.

Stage 5: reviewing and naming the themes:

In this stage, 8 secondary themes and 3 main themes were identified from the total of 76 primary codes and 39 classified codes of the same theme. In the following, we labeled the 3 main themes identified with the help of literature.

Stage 6: preparing the report:

The sixth stage started when the researcher has a set of main topics. This stage includes the final analysis and report writing.

By doing the mentioned steps and studying the main and secondary themes and their codes, the researcher has achieved the three main themes of Context of Culture, Context of Situation, and Lexico-Grammar features and the developed framework was presented.

For the validity of the current research, it was tried to monitor the interview, including the beginning of the interview, entering into the discussion, and the course of the questions, in order to avoid scattering. The interviews were conducted through online meetings. Most of the time of the interviews was devoted to identifying the concept, dimensions and process of the characteristics of genre-based teaching and assessing expository writing. Retest reliability

was used to measure the consistency and reliability of the research. Re-coding was also done by two colleagues, which resulted in 84% agreement.

For the quantitative phase of the study, a questionnaire was designed by the researcher that covers the major themes, indexes of the framework and results of the interview. The questionnaire consisted of 39 items designed based on five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. The questionnaire measures the three components of Context of Culture (12 items), Context of Situation (12 items) and Lexico-Grammar (15 items).

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire in identifying the features of scoring of the learners' expository texts, including Context of Culture, Context of Situation, Lexico-Grammar, pilot study had been conducted with the sample population of 20 EFL teachers who were selected based on purposeful random sampling. The results of Cronbach's alpha indicated an acceptable reliability for each of these three features ($\alpha > 0.7$). Moreover, the content validity of the questionnaire was ensured through consulting with different professors and experts in the field of TEFL. Additionally, construct validity of the questionnaire was estimated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis to confirm the main and secondary themes of the developed questionnaire. The gathered data was analyzed through confirmatory factor analysis, which confirmed the proposed systemic genre-based framework and rubric. The most important goal of the confirmatory factor analysis is to determine the power of the predetermined operating model with the set of observed data. In other words, the

confirmatory factor analysis attempts to determine whether the number of factors and variables measured on these factors is consistent with what was expected based on theory and theoretical model. In other words, this type of factor analysis examines the degree of conformity and consistency between the theoretical construct and the empirical structure of the research.

During quantitative phase, the teachers were provided with the online link through email, whatsapp, telegram to fill out the questionnaire. The teachers' voluntary participation was sought and the participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured in the way that they were guaranteed that the collected data were regarded as being private and names would not be disclosed at any rate. As mentioned earlier, the data of quantitative phase was analyzed and validated by confirmatory factor analysis for the themes identified based on the developed framework in qualitative phase.

Results and Discussion

RQ1. What kind of systemic genre-based framework can be provided to evaluate Iranian EFL learners' expository texts?

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show the main themes and secondary themes resulting from the classification of the themes based on the primary codes with similar topics related to Context of Culture, Context of Situation and Lexico-grammar features. Each of the classified codes is extracted from the themes of the interview in the framework development stage.

Table 1

Main Themes and Secondary Themes Resulting from the Classification of the Themes Based on Primary Codes of Context of Culture

Main theme	Secondary themes	The same topic codes resulting from primary codes	Number of respondents
Context of Culture	<i>Semantic formatting</i>	I consider whether the thesis statement is clarified clearly and concisely near to the end of the introductory paragraph. (thesis statement)	15
		I consider seeing whether the thesis statement states the topic and motifs for writing. (thesis statement)	15
		I reflect on to see whether the paper follow a logical flow of information and give an unbiased analysis of the topic. (thesis statement)	14
		I consider whether the writer use relevant evidence and examples to support the thesis. (thesis statement)	13
		I consider whether every paragraph in the main body focuses on a single point and whether each include a topic sentence and supporting evidence.	15
		I consider whether there are any deviations from the main topic or irrelevant information.	13
		The smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs are important.	14
		The essay should be engaging, clear, reader friendly, and effective.	14
	<i>Content formatting</i>	I consider whether the text exposes the facts and supplies the reader with concrete details.	15
		I consider whether all the facts and supporting arguments are valid.	14
		I consider if the conclusion highlights the importance of the thesis and summarizes the key arguments.	15
		The essay must be formatted based on expository genre instructions.	15

(Source: research findings)

Based on obtained responses from semi-structured interview and thematic analysis of the university professors' responses, illustrated in

Table 1, it can be found that the main theme of Context of Culture included two secondary themes and 12 codes resulted from the interview sentences. Accordingly, eight codes are classified

in the category of *semantic formatting* and four codes are classified in the category of *contentment formatting*.

Main Themes and Secondary Themes Resulting from the Classification of the Themes Based on Primary Codes of Context of Situation

Table 2

Main theme	Secondary themes	The same topic codes resulting from primary codes	Number of respondents
Context of Situation	<i>Field</i>	I consider the content of the written text.	15
		I consider whether the text content is general or specialized.	13
		If the content is specialized, I consider the use of technical terms.	13
	<i>Tenor</i>	I consider the relationship between author and readers in a text produced by the learners.	15
		I consider the relationship between author and audience in terms of being personal or impersonal.	14
		I consider the relationship between author and audience in terms of being formal or informal.	14
		I consider whether the essay is written in first person, second person, and/or third person.	13
		I consider whether the essay is written using formal language, colloquial language and/or slang.	14
		Expository text requires noticeable frame to show where the author is placed.	14
	<i>Mode</i>	I pay attention to the symbolic organization of the text.	15
		The status and function of the texts should be taken into account.	14
		The role language plays in an interaction must be considered.	15

(Source: research findings)

Based on obtained responses from semi-structured interview and thematic analysis of the university professors' responses, illustrated in Table 2, it can be found that the main theme of Context of Situation included three secondary

themes and 12 codes resulted from the interview sentences. Accordingly, three codes are classified in the category of *Field*, six codes are classified in the category of *Tenor*, and three codes are classified in the category of *Mode*.

Table 3

*Main Themes and Secondary Themes Based on Primary Codes of Lexico-Grammar
Resulting from the Classification of the Themes Features*

Main theme	Secondary themes	The same topic codes resulting from primary codes	Number of respondents
Lexico-Grammar	<i>Ideational</i>	The proper and precise word choice is important.	15
		The language of expository text must include domain specific vocabulary to explain the notions and information.	15
		Using certain words that evidently express what the author is talking about is necessary.	15
		A well-written exposition remains focused on its topic and lists events in chronological order.	15
		Grammatical cohesion consisting reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction are needed in expository text.	14
		Lexical cohesion (repetition, collocation, synonymy, superordinate) are required.	15
		Expository text is characterized by the use of declarative verbs (define, exemplify, compare, contrast, analyze).	14
		The verbs are mostly in present tense and indicative mood.	13
		I consider processes (verbs) types in transitivity system including Material, Mental, Relational, Behavioral, Verbal, and Existential.	14
	<i>Interpersonal (mood)</i>	I consider the realization of Mood types including declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences.	15
	<i>Interpersonal (modality)</i>	I consider the use of types of modalization and modulation including probability, obligation, inclination, usuality.	15
	<i>Textual</i>	I consider the thematic choices of texts, composed of Theme, the onset of a clause, and Rheme, the newly expanded information around its Theme.	15
		Connectors are needed in an expository text.	15
		Graphological devices are essential elements (paragraph structure, correct spelling, and punctuation) of expository essays.	15
		I consider the direct and indirect semantic relations between lexical items and sentences.	14

(Source: research findings)

Based on obtained responses from semi-structured interview and thematic analysis of the

university professors' responses, illustrated in Table 3, it can be found that the main theme of Lexico-Grammar Features included three secondary themes and 15 codes resulted from the interview sentences. Accordingly, nine codes are classified in the category of *Ideational*, two codes are classified in the category of *Interpersonal*, and four codes are classified in the category of *Textual features*.

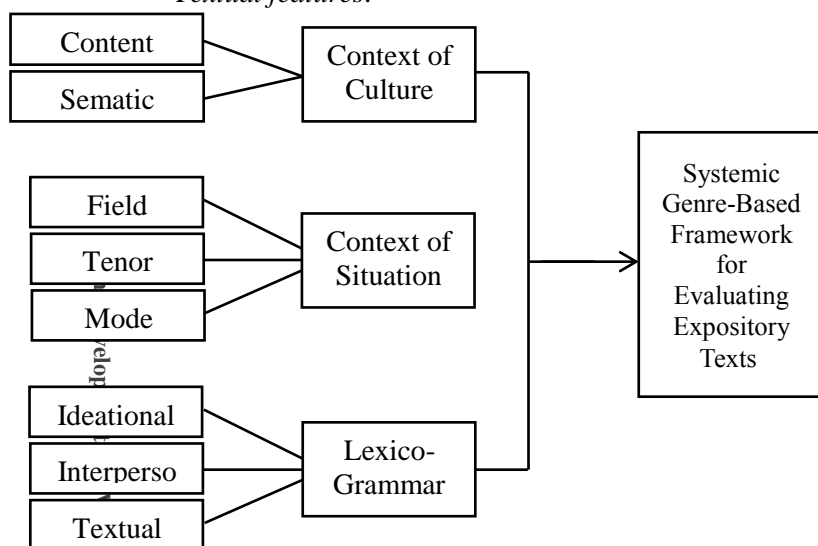


Figure 1: Systemic Genre-Based Framework for Evaluating Expository Texts of Iranian EFL Learners (Research Findings)

After analyzing the main themes and secondary themes, Figure (1) demonstrates the systemic genre-based framework for evaluating expository texts of Iranian EFL learners including three main factors of 1. Context of Culture, 2. Context of Situation, and 3. Lexico-Grammar features. Moreover, their indicators from the standpoint of the university professors were illustrated. As a result, the first question about providing a systemic genre-based framework for evaluating EFL learners' expository texts was answered.

RQ2. Is the developed systemic genre-based rubric valid for evaluating expository texts of Iranian EFL learners?

In order to answer the second research question, considering the developed framework based on the systematic genre-based approach for evaluating expository texts of Iranian EFL learners, a questionnaire was created by the researcher. Next, in order to validate the rubric, the factor analysis technique was administered for each of the three factors identified in the developed framework.

Regarding the first factor, based on the results of the interviews with professors related to Context of Culture factor and the questionnaire derived from it, in this section, the results of exploratory factor analysis including the construct validity of the questionnaire as well as its factorization were performed. Finally, to confirm the identified factors, the reliability of each index was calculated and confirmed with Cronbach's alpha technique. Table 4 presents the results related to the construct validity of the Context of Culture factor.

Table 4
Construct Validity of Context of Culture Items

Item	Initial	Extraction
Q1	1	0.78
Q2	1	0.75
Q3	1	0.66
Q4	1	0.76
Q5	1	0.70
Q6	1	0.81
Q7	1	0.88
Q8	1	0.70
Q9	1	0.76

Q10	1	0.8
Q11	1	0.75
Q12	1	0.61

The results of exploratory factor analysis were used to separate and categorize the 12 items of Context of Culture factors in the form of 2 factors based on the analysis into main components. First, the construct validity was calculated for the internal stability of each item with other items, and according to the information in Table (4), the internal stability of each item with other items is at a suitable level (<0.5).

Table 5 displays the results of Kaiser-Meier and Bartlett's test of Sphericity for the factors of context of culture

Table 5 .Kaiser-Meier and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for the Factors of Context of Culture

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.88
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Component	Total	% of variance	Cumulative%
1	5.33	44.46	44.46
2	3.68	30.66	75.13

Based on the information in Table 6, it can be seen that the highest specific value is 5.33 and 3.68 respectively for the first and second factors and about 44.46% with the first factor and 30.66% with the second factor of the total variance of the factors can be explained. In total, up to 75.13 percent of the total variance of factorization and reduction of 12 items has been done with two main factors, which is a good

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Q1: I pay attention whether the thesis statement is clarified clearly and concisely near to the end of the introductory paragraph.	0.88	

¹. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling

Bartlett s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	519.096
	Df	66
	Sig.	0.000

The information in Table 5 shows that KMO¹ = 0.88 was obtained, and as a result, the number of samples is very suitable for factor analysis. According to the above-mentioned table, the value of Bartlett's test of Sphericity is equal to 519.096 with a significant level of p=0.000, and the result is that the separation of the factors has been done correctly and the items included in each factor have a high root correlation with each other.

Table 6 shows the variances and factors of context of culture.

Table 6 .Variances and Factors of Context of Culture

criterion. In factor analysis, it is necessary to explain at least 50% of the variance.

Table 7 illustrates the separation of the factors related to the context of culture based on factor loading coefficients with varimax rotation.

Table 7

Separation of the Factors Related to the Context of Culture Based on Factor Loading Coefficients with Varimax Rotation

Q2: I consider seeing whether the thesis statement states the topic and motifs for writing.	0.83	
Q8: I consider whether there are any deviations from the main topic or irrelevant information.	0.77	
Q11: I consider the essay should be engaging, clear, reader friendly, and effective.	0.75	
Q10: I consider the smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs are important.	0.75	
Q6: I consider whether every paragraph in the main body focuses on a single point and whether each includes a topic sentence and supporting evidence.	0.74	
Q4: I consider whether the writer use relevant evidence and examples to support the thesis.	0.73	
Q3: I reflect on to see whether the paper follow a logical flow of information and give an unbiased analysis of the topic.	0.59	
Q7: I consider whether all the facts and supporting arguments are valid.		0.94
Q5: I consider whether the text exposes the facts and supplies the reader with concrete details.		0.75
Q9: I consider if the conclusion highlights the importance of the thesis and summarizes the key arguments.		0.69
Q12: I consider the essay must be formatted based on expository genre instructions.		0.60

Source: Research Findings

According to the information in Table 7 and based on factor loadings rotated by varimax method, 12 items related to dual factors have been identified, which are recorded in the table along with their factor loading coefficients. Considering the resulting factorization of the context of culture, two factors were identified. After studying the items related to each factor and classifying each of them in the specified factor, in fact, the first factor is related to Semantic Formatting and the second factor is related to Content Formatting.

In the following part and after identifying the factors of Context of Culture according to the opinions of the studied teachers, the reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha for each of the two identified features and the results are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8 .Reliability Values of the Items Related to the Characteristics of the Context of Culture from the Teachers' Point of View

Factor	Item	Reliability
Semantic Formatting	8	0.94
Content Formatting	4	0.87

Source: Research Findings

According to the information in Table 8, the reliability values of the items of each of the identified factors were obtained in an acceptable manner ($\alpha > 0.7$), which indicates the internal stability of the items of each factor with each other. As a result, the identified factors were confirmed as the characteristics of the Context of Culture.

Regarding the second factor, based on the results of the interviews with professors related to Context of Situation factor and the questionnaire derived from it, in this section, the results of confirmatory factor analysis including the construct validity of the questionnaire as well as its factorization were performed. Finally, to confirm the identified factors, the reliability of each index was calculated and confirmed with Cronbach's alpha technique. Table 9 presents the results related to the construct validity of the Context of Situation factor.

Table 9 .Construct Validity of Context of Situation Items

Item	Initial	Extraction
Q1	1	0.72
Q2	1	0.84
Q3	1	0.88
Q4	1	0.71
Q5	1	0.82
Q6	1	0.79
Q7	1	0.80
Q8	1	0.82
Q9	1	0.88
Q10	1	0.75
Q11	1	0.78
Q12	1	0.87

The results of exploratory factor analysis were used to separate and categorize the 12 items of Context of Situation factors in the form of 3 factors based on the analysis into main components. First, the construct validity was calculated for the internal stability of each item with other items, and according to the information in Table 6, the internal stability of each item with other items is at a suitable level (> 0.5).

Table 10 displays the results of Kaiser-Meier and Bartlett's test of Sphericity for the factors of context of situation

Table 10

Kaiser-Meier and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for the Factors of Context of Situation

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.89
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	544.656
	Df	66
	Sig.	0.000

The information in Table 10 shows that KMO= 0.89 was obtained, and as a result, the number of samples is very suitable for factor analysis. According to the above-mentioned table, the value of Bartlett's test of Sphericity is equal to 544.656 with a significant level of $p=0.000$, and the result is that the separation of the factors has been done correctly and the items included in each factor have a high root correlation with each other.

Table 11 shows the variances and factors of context of culture.

Table 11

Variances and Factors of Context of Culture

Component	Total	% of variance	Cumulative%
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1	4.07	33.96	33.96
2	2.93	24.48	58.45
3	2.68	22.34	80.79

Based on the information in Table 11, it can be seen that the highest specific value is 4.07, 2.93, and 2.68 respectively for the first, second, and third factors and about 33.96% with the first factor, 24.48% with the second factor, and 22.34 with the third factor of the total variance of the factors can be explained. In total, up to 80.79 percent of the total variance of factorization and

reduction of 12 items has been done with three main factors, which is a good criterion. In factor analysis, it is necessary to explain at least 50% of the variance.

Table 12 illustrates the separation of the factors related to the context of culture based on factor loading coefficients with varimax rotation.

Table 12

Separation of the Factors Related to the Context of Situation Based on Factor Loading Coefficients with Varimax Rotation

Item	Factor 1	Factor2	Factor 3
Q9: I consider expository text requires noticeable frame to show where the author is placed.	0.89		
Q5: I consider the relationship between author and audience in terms of being personal or impersonal.	0.81		
Q8: I consider whether the essay is written using formal language, colloquial language and/or slang.	0.704		
Q6: I consider the relationship between author and audience in terms of being formal or informal.	0.701		
Q7: I consider whether the essay is written in first person, second person, and/or third person.	0.67		
Q4: I consider the relationship between author and readers in a text produced by the learners.	0.57		
Q11: I consider the status and function of the texts should be taken into account.		0.83	
Q10: I consider I must pay attention to the symbolic organization of the text.		0.74	
Q12: I think the role language plays in an interaction must be considered.		0.55	
Q3: If the content is specialized, I consider the use of technical terms.			0.87
Q2: I consider whether the text content is general or specialized.			0.72
Q1: I consider the content of the written text.			0.55

Source: Research Findings

According to the information in Table 12 and based on factor loadings rotated by varimax method, 12 items related to three factors have

been identified, which are recorded in the table along with their factor loading coefficients. Considering the resulting factorization of the Context of Situation, three factors were identified. After studying the items related to

each factor and classifying each of them in the specified factor, in fact, the first factor is related to Tenor, the second factor is related to Mode, and the third factors is related to Filed.

In the following part and after identifying the factors of context of situation according to the opinions of the studied teachers, the reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha for each of the identified features and the results are illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13

Reliability Values of the Items Related to the Characteristics of the Context of Situation from the Teachers' Point of View

Factor	Item	Reliability
Tenor	6	0.93
Mode	3	0.87
Field	3	0.86

Source: Research Findings

According to the information in Table 13, the reliability values of the items of each of the identified factors were obtained in an acceptable manner ($\alpha > 0.7$), which indicates the internal stability of the items of each factor with each other. As a result, the identified factors were confirmed as the characteristics of the context of situation.

Regarding the third factor, based on the results of the interviews with professors related to Lexico-Grammar factor and the questionnaire derived from it, in this section, the results of exploratory factor analysis including the construct validity of the questionnaire as well as its factorization were performed. Finally, to confirm the identified factors, the reliability of each index was calculated and confirmed with Cronbach's alpha technique. Table 14 presents

the results related to the construct validity of the Lexico-Grammar factor.

Table 14

Construct Validity of Lexico-Grammar Items

Item	Initial	Extraction
Q1	1	0.87
Q2	1	0.90
Q3	1	0.66
Q4	1	0.71
Q5	1	0.84
Q6	1	0.79
Q7	1	0.87
Q8	1	0.67
Q9	1	0.79
Q10	1	0.83
Q11	1	0.87
Q12	1	0.85
Q13	1	0.93
Q14	1	0.82
Q15	1	0.76

The results of exploratory factor analysis were used to separate and categorize the 14 items of Lexico-Grammar factors in the form of 4 factors based on the analysis into main components. First, the construct validity was calculated for the internal stability of each item with other items, and according to the information in Table 11, the internal stability of each item with other items is at a suitable level (> 0.5).

Table 15 displays the results of Kaiser-Meier and Bartlett's test of Sphericity for the factors of lexico-grammar component.

Table 15 .Kaiser-Meier and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for the Factors of Lexico-Grammar Component

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.80
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Bartlett s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	675.734
	Df	105
	Sig.	0.000

The information in Table 15 shows that KMO= 0.80 was obtained, and as a result, the number of samples is very suitable for factor analysis. According to the above-mentioned

table, the value of Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is equal to 675.734 with a significant level of $p=0.000$, and the result is that the separation of the factors has been done correctly and the items included in each factor have a high root correlation with each other.

Table 16 shows the variances and factors of context of culture.

Table 16 .*Variances and Factors of Lexico-Grammar Component*

component	Total	% of variance	Cumulative%
1	6.37	42.47	42.47
2	3.26	21.76	64.24
3	1.38	9.25	73.49
4	1.19	7.93	81.43

Based on the information in Table 16, it can be seen that the highest specific value is 6.37, 3.26, 1.38, and 1.19 respectively for the first, second, third, and fourth factors and about 42.47% with the first factor, 21.76% with the second factor, 9.25 with the third factor, and 7.93% with the fourth factor of the total variance of the factors can be explained. In total, up to 81.43 percent of the total variance of factorization and reduction of 15 items has been done with four

main factors, which is a good criterion. In factor analysis, it is necessary to explain at least 50% of the variance.

Table 17 illustrates the separation of the factors related to the lexico-grammar component based on factor loading coefficients with varimax rotation.

Table 17 .*Separation of the Factors Related to the Lexico-Grammar Based on Factor Loading Coefficients with Varimax Rotation*

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Q5: I consider grammatical cohesion consisting reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction are needed in expository text.	0.88			
Q9: I consider processes (verbs) types in transitivity system including Material, Mental, Relational, Behavioral, Verbal, and Existential.	0.86			
Q1: I consider the proper and precise word choice is important.	0.86			
Q4: I consider a well-written exposition remains focused on its topic and lists events in chronological order.	0.84			

Q7: I consider expository text is characterized by the use of declarative verbs (define, exemplify, compare, contrast, analyze).	0.83			
Q3: Using certain words that evidently express what the author is talking about is necessary.	0.807			
Q8: I think the verbs must be mostly in present tense and indicative mood.	0.805			
Q6: I consider lexical cohesion (repetition, collocation, synonymy, superordinate) are required.	0.77			
Q2: I consider the language of expository text must include domain specific vocabulary to explain the notions and information.	0.75			
Q13: I consider connectors are needed in an expository text.		0.93		
Q12: I consider the thematic choices of texts, composed of Theme, the onset of a clause, and Rheme, the newly expanded information around its Theme.		0.90		
Q15: I consider the direct and indirect semantic relations between lexical items and sentences.		0.88		
Q14: I consider graphological devices are essential elements (paragraph structure, correct spelling, and punctuation) of expository essays.		0.65		
Q11: I consider the use of types of modalization and modulation including probability, obligation, inclination, usuality.			0.84	
Q10: I consider the realization of Mood types including declarative, interrogative, and imperative sentences.				0.58

Source: Research Findings

According to the information in Table 17 and based on factor loadings rotated by varimax method, 15 items related to four factors have been identified, which are recorded in the table along with their factor loading coefficients. Considering the resulting factorization of the Lexico-Grammar component, four factors were identified. However, the item number 10 in the fourth factor and the item number 11 in the third factor are considered to be in the same factor and

grouped in the third factor due to similar characteristics. After studying the items related to each factor and classifying each of them in the specified factor, in fact, the first factor is related to Ideational Factor, the second factor is related to Interpersonal Factor, and the third factors is related to Textual Factor.

In the following part and after identifying the factors of lexico-grammar component according to the opinions of the studied teachers, the reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha

for each of the identified features and the results are illustrated in Table 18.

Table 18 .Reliability Values of the Items Related to the Characteristics of the Lexico-Grammar Component from the Teachers' Point of View

Factor	Item	Reliability
Ideational (Factor)	9	0.95
Inter personal	4	0.89
Textual	2	0.71

Source: Research Findings

According to the information in Table 18, the reliability values of the items of each of the identified factors were obtained in an acceptable manner ($\alpha > 0.7$), which indicates the internal stability of the items of each factor with each other. As a result, the identified factors were confirmed as the characteristics of the Lexico-Grammar component.

After conducting factor analysis for the three factors of Culture Context, Context of Situation, and the Lexico-Grammar Features, the construct validity and reliability for each of their indicators were estimated. Finally, in response to the second research question, it was determined that the rubric constructed based on the developed systemic genre-based framework is valid for evaluating expository texts of Iranian EFL learners.

Discussion

The present article was carried out with the aim of developing and validating a systemic genre-based framework for evaluating expository texts of Iranian EFL learners. The research findings exposed that the developed framework embraces three main themes of Culture Context, Context of Situation, and the Lexico-Grammar Features in the form of eight secondary themes

including Semantic Formatting, Content Formatting, Field, Tenor, Mode, Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual. The results of factor analysis and construct validity confirm the developed framework in this study.

Accordingly, it can be stated that based on traditional approaches to language teaching, writing skills, which mainly emphasize the transcription of spoken language, grammar and idioms, are being replaced by the notion that writing skills in language classes are valuable preparation.

According to the traditional elucidation of language programs, writing acts predominantly to emphasize and accentuate the arrangements of oral language use, grammar, and terminology, which are being substituted by the conception that writing in EFL classes is an appreciated readiness. [Hyland \(2003\)](#) asserted that a pedagogy that not only acquaints learners with the academic genres in their specific fields of study but also provides them with a more situated view of writing is systemic functional linguistics (SFL) genre-based instruction (GBI).

The analysis of the collected responses related to the interview demonstrated several main and secondary themes resulting from the thematic classification. The main themes included context of culture, context of situation, and lexico-grammar features. Accordingly, context of culture was defined in terms of two secondary themes of semantic formatting and content formatting. The main theme of context of situation is regarded in terms of field, tenor, and mode. Moreover, the final lexico-grammar theme was considered as ideational, interpersonal, and textual themes. These themes evidently fit in the framework and approaches developed by Halliday and Martin.

Based on the obtained results it can be argued that the fundamental notion of a genre-based approach toward writing reveals the argument that texts have different purposes, thus, the intended meanings could be transferred via language in dissimilar grammatical and linguistic elements based on the discourses and contexts, which prevail in diverse cultures. In this study, the teachers became aware of a systemic genre-based approach to evaluate expository texts.

The findings revealed that EFL teachers are mostly aware of the generic features of the texts and they believed that these elements must be considered in assessment of EFL learners' expository text writing. With the emergence of new methods and technology in EFL context most of the teachers are trying to escape the traditional methods of writing assessment. This will lead them to develop their professional and academic knowledge and status by studying particular rubrics with powerful theoretical and empirical foundations such as New Rhetoric, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approaches. Furthermore, recently, most of the teachers are educated instructors with related degrees in TEFL, Translation and Literature majors in M.A. and Ph.D. levels. Their educational level will certainly guarantees their high knowledge in language learning theories and skills in general and writing in particular. In addition, their academic knowledge along with their teaching experience enable them to transfer their theoretical knowledge into practice.

Moreover, English is a foreign language in Iran, so most of the Iranian learners need to achieve high proficiency in English to attend various international exams including IELTS, TOEFL, PTE, etc. with the aim of entering global

educational and professional settings. In these exams, writing is regarded as a significant skill. Thus, learners are required to achieve knowledge of generic features of certain texts to perform well in these tests, as the writing topics of the exams cover a wide range of expository and argumentative varieties. In a similar vein, teachers are expected to be aware of these features and apply them in their assessments of the learners' texts and familiarize the learners with certain elements.

In addition, the framework proposed in the present study helps the teachers to stay away from the imprecise descriptors and phrases regularly established in analytic scoring rubrics for instance, "adequate knowledge of syntax" or "a limited variety of mostly correct sentences," (Hyland, 2007, p. 162). Genre and SFL stipulations empower teachers to perform more efficiently in providing feedback on writing of the learners. Accordingly, both teachers and learners would be capable of responding more specifically and effectively to the produced writings with emphasizing the particular generic elements than decontextualized and improvised feedbacks to error.

The results are in line with the study of Piriyasilpa (2016), which proposed that SFL is the most appropriate theory for Thai EFL learners in the writing classrooms. Halliday's (1994) SFL teaching framework was similarly found to be effective with regard to the present study, equally, the pedagogical implications related to Martin's (2009) genre-based view to language learning. Accordingly, the teachers who partook in the present paper were qualified to realize the generic elements and lexico-grammatical characteristics of the target writings. They also discern that writers need to implement fitting

terminology and syntax with the intention of creating meaning. Moreover, regarding the importance of genre-based teaching and its effective role in developing learners' writing [Nagao \(2019\)](#) found that the implementation of a genre-based method and a teaching-learning cycle in writing training could develop EFL learners' attentiveness of generic structure and interpersonal meaning in writing argumentative compositions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings it can be concluded that EFL teachers' conceptualizations of grammar changed from a traditional sentence-level, form-focused viewpoint to a more functional comprehension working in interrelated manners across lexico-grammatical, discourse semantic, and generic structures of the texts. Moreover, it can be stated that considering the purpose of a certain writing and the specified stages in developing a texts of a particular genre can be effective in providing unbiased and reasonable feedback about EFL learners' writing.

Regarding the findings, a number of pedagogical implications can be debated. Primarily, the current study proved the efficacy of genre-based approach in boosting the quality of writing assessment, especially, the genre of expository. The findings of the present study are beneficial for EFL teachers and learners. For teachers, genre-based and SFL pedagogies provides a treasured resource for teaching and assessing writing skill, as the learners can create effective and relevant texts. Paying attention to generic and SFL features instead of concentrating simply on the content of the texts and the abstract instructions of disembodied grammatical rules qualify teachers to empower their methods to assess the writings of the learners based on

certain genres, this will eventually support learners to learn purposefully and contribute successfully in the world outside their language classes. Hence, genre theory and research give teachers a more essential role in preparing learners to write accurately based on the presented genre and assessing the written texts confidently. This paper can also be valuable for teacher instruction programs since it suggests a framework that can be used to provide substantial theoretical and practical applicability to teacher trainers preparing individuals to teach and evaluate writing in EFL classes.

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