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The Effect of Text Structure Awareness on Iranian EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Written Recall of Argumentative Texts

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ABSTRACT
The present study probed the effect of explicit text structure instruction on argumentative reading comprehension and written recall of Iranian EFL learners. Furthermore, it tried to find out whether the effect of text structure awareness was significantly different between learners at high and low reading ability. To achieve these goals, 40 English undergraduate students were randomly assigned into two experimental (n=18) and control (n=22) groups. To ensure the homogeneity of the two groups, a thirty-multiple-choice-item reading comprehension test and a free immediate written recall task were implemented. Furthermore, a Cambridge Advanced English (CAE) paper reading ability test was used for dividing the participants into high and low reading ability. The treatment was the instruction of argumentative text structure based on Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation. Finally, the post-test on argumentative reading comprehension and the post-task on argumentative written recall were administered on the two groups to show their comprehension and recall of argumentative texts after the instruction. Independent-samples t-tests were run to analyze the data. The findings of the study suggested that explicit instruction of text structure enhanced learners' reading comprehension; however, no significant difference was indicated for written recall ability between the two groups. It should be mentioned that a significant difference was observed with regard to the effect of explicit instruction of text structure on reading comprehension of argumentative texts for learners at high and low level of reading ability. The pedagogical implications of the study as well as suggestions for further research are reported at the end.

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1. Introduction

Researchers investigating on reading skills suppose that students' awareness of various genres and their different rhetorical structures can help them comprehend texts (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Williams et al., 2009). Texts are different regarding their specific writing styles and how they construct ideas within a distinguishable pattern of structure which are viewed as valuable for recognition and recall of text messages and design. However, scant attention has been paid to the effect of text structure instruction in different genres. Language has been indicated as a means of improvement if its formal regards are considered as a way of support for better reading comprehension (Mochizuki et al., 2019). Argumentation and argumentative texts are of great value among genres since understanding one's opinions is a key linguistic competence (Rojas-Drummond & Zapata, 2004).

Text structure awareness through explicit instruction might be a way through which teachers can support their students in dealing with difficulties they may face in their reading comprehension. As students find themselves reading different texts, rhetorical structure instruction as a metacognitive strategy (Ofodu & Adedipe, 2011; Teng, 2020) assimilating students' cognition for the construction of texts' elements through processes of thinking, can help them navigate and comprehend the discourse which is regarded as top-level anatomy of the text. Reading in discourse is regarded as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text (Grabe, 2002) as it brings the reader's schemata in mind which helps the new information embedded in the text to accompany background knowledge (Teng, 2020). The background knowledge encompasses formal schemata including text structure (Hyon, 2002). According to McNeil (2011), the meaning of the text is constructed according to the formal schema which provides text structure knowledge and is achieved through a sort of top-down and bottom-up interaction in the reader's mind.

Although students experiencing reading difficulties are likely to benefit from explicit text structure instruction, only a few studies have been conducted to date. Additionally, researchers have not assessed the potential of instructing text structure of argumentative genre in learners' comprehension of argumentative texts (Özdemir, 2018). Ferretti and Graham (2019) denoted the lack of students' literacy in argumentative structures despite detailed and meticulous analysis of theoretical aspects. The fact is that numerous students' challenges with reading comprehension might be due to the lack of text structure awareness. Some students use text structure knowledge which helps them at recognition of the rhetorical structure of a text and enables them to comprehend a text better, while others find themselves less well-equipped to cope with such concern (Magnusson et al., 2019).

2. Review of Literature

Reading Comprehension

Provided with various definitions, the ability of reading comprehension is characterized by various features. Yet, mostly, it is viewed as integration of capabilities namely "decoding ability" and schema knowledge along with multiple strategies that the reader implements to understand the messages and ideas conveyed through the text (Kintsch & Rawson, 2005). According to Trapman et al. (2014), it is through various contexts that the reader is engaged with various elements of the text and this in turn leads to comprehending the text. Another definition

JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH, Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2023, Page 563 to 578

provided in the literature considers reading comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language" (Snow, 2002, p. 11). Moreover, reading comprehension is viewed as mental plans by Pilonieta (2010), the application of which can help readers consciously fulfill their predetermined goals (Wijekumar et al., 2013). Kolic-Vehovec and Bajsanski (2006) stated that along with automatic processes in comprehension, readers also need to pay attention to complex processes concerning formal aspects of texts. Reading instruction science provides aspects on mechanisms and practices to be designed for a more cognitive process of reading by instructors (Shanahan, 2020). Many studies have surveyed and focused on text structure strategy and reading comprehension improvement (Jiang & Grabe, 2007; Prado & Plourde, 2011; Sencibaugh, 2007; Smith, 2006; Van der Schoot et al., 2008; Van Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005; Yang, 2006; Zhang, 2012).

Recall

Recall is defined as the ability to remember something that has been learned or experienced (Longman Exam Dictionary, n.d.). Recalling ideas of text is mentioned as one of the implemented measures for assessing reading comprehension of the students as opposed to other measurements used in various studies such as inferential questions (Boscolo & Mason, 2003). Written recall protocols use various systems of scoring according to units of information recalled freely and immediately by learners after reading the text. Consequently, recall tasks are provided with different scoring systems in the previous studies.

As Hirose (2014) discussed, pausal units, propositional analysis, and content-structure analysis are among the main suggested methods in the available literature for the analysis of the recall tasks. In the first method of analysis, breath groups of words in the text are considered. In the second system of recall protocol analysis, basic meaningful units including predicates are considered as propositions. In the content-structure analysis, lexical units are associated with characteristics of specific unit structures. An alternative grading method used in this study is Alderson's (2000) system which simply counts idea units. Within this system of analysis, a single verb clause is regarded as an expressed state, event or an action. The sample produced by the student is scored based on counting idea units recalled. Memory, both in sort of short- and long-term is suggested to be improved based on text structure awareness and identification (Pearson & Fielding, 1996).

Ghaith and Harkouss (2003) explored the potential of text structure awareness in recalling information in four types of expository texts, namely descriptive, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, and problem/solution. The obtained results indicated the highest awareness in comparison/contrast, less awareness in problem/solution, and the least awareness in descriptive and cause/effect structures. Moreover, the results confirmed the positive effect of text structure awareness on information recall across all of the aforementioned text types. It should be mentioned that no statistically significant difference was reported between high- and low-proficiency readers with regard to their awareness of various text structures.

Models of Argumentative Texts

Researchers and teachers may use different text structures which are proposed based on

different models of argumentation for argumentative text analysis. Many researchers such as Perelman, Petrie, Toulmin, and Burke, who are considered new rhetoric researchers, worked on their own model of argumentation at the same time; yet, their models had no relation to each other. They studied different natural and real-life situations' argumentation. They believed that claims, counterclaims and reasoning can be built through real argumentation. They proposed various theories and models for argumentation but among them, Stephen Toulmin could build a comprehensive theory for argumentative texts or speech. In the present study, Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation was used for identifying and analyzing augmentative texts which includes six main components divided into two triads. The first triad is the necessary level for argumentation and includes claim, evidence, and warrant. A claim is the view the writer supports or the topic he/she argues. Evidence includes information, grounds, and facts which form the basis of each claim and support it. Warrants are logical propositions and assumptions, sometimes implicit, to connect evidence to claim. The second triad is the optional level for argumentation and includes backing, rebuttal or counterargument, and qualifiers. Backings comprise the credentials strengthening the warrants that readers do not accept at face validity. Rebuttals anticipate specific objections and situations where warrant does not apply. Finally, qualifiers indicate the writer's degree of belief and certainty in his/her claim.

Studies on Text Structure Instruction

Numerous inquiries have investigated the effect of text structure instruction on reading comprehension (Duke et al., 2011; Hebert et al., 2016; Meyer et al., 2018; Pyle et al., 2017). For example, Karbalaei and Amoli (2011) carried out a research to explore the effect of text structure training on Indian learners' reading comprehension ability. The results signified that learners' reading comprehension was significantly boosted as the result of text structure instruction. Another study in this domain was conducted by Vahidi (2008) on the relationship between learners' discourse knowledge in terms of paragraph structure and their reading comprehension ability of expository texts at the academic level. According to the obtained results, knowledge of text structure and text comprehension were proven to be highly correlated.

Williams et al. (2009) investigated the effect of an instructional curriculum based on text structure instruction on learners' reading comprehension. In the experimental group, the text structure analysis was performed through the introduction of clue words, organized graphics, and the analysis of sample paragraphs. However, in the control group, the new content was instructed through conventional methods. It was concluded that explicit text structure instruction had a positive effect on readers' reading comprehension dealing with new texts. Chalak and Nasr Esfahani (2012) aimed at determining the efficacy of text structure as a reading strategy and a solution for the insufficiency of traditional instruction for Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. The results showed that the instruction of text structure and its effect on learners' awareness led to the outperformance of the experimental group in comparison to the control group. A further study conducted by Haria et al. (2010) investigated the effect of text structure instruction of argumentative texts by analyzing sample texts by learners on their

JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH, Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2023, Page 563 to 578

reading comprehension. It should be mentioned that the participants did not receive any explicit instruction on text structure; however, the skills of summarizing, analyzing, and identifying the structural elements significantly improved among them.

Ghorbani Shemshadsara et al. (2019) explored the effect of expository text structure awareness via text structure instruction as a reading strategy on learners' reading comprehension ability. After being introduced to a variety of expository texts, the participants were asked to extract the key elements functioning in the text structure and paragraphing of the target expository texts and to present them in graphic organizers. In so doing, the participants took part in whole class activities followed by small group, pair, and individual activities. They were provided with appropriate feedback with regard to their graphic organizers. The results confirmed the improvement of learners' reading comprehension ability as a result of text structure awareness through adopting various expository texts.

Most of the studies being conducted on text structure instruction of argumentative texts have investigated its effect on learners' writing ability. For example, Qin (2013) explored the effect of instructing Toulmin's model of argumentation on argumentative writing ability. A variety of activities namely explicit instruction, awareness raising, and identifying key argumentative elements were deployed. The results approved the enrichment of learners' argumentative writing ability and deployment of more complex argument structures in their writings. Özdemir (2018) investigated the effect of argumentative pattern instruction on learners' use of argumentative elements. The evaluation of 132 argumentative essays based on argumentative element rubrics revealed that quite a few learners used argumentative elements in their essays before being instructed on the argumentative text structure and almost none of them expressed justification for their counterarguments. Approximately, 66.7% did not include evidence, 81.8% counterarguments, 87.9% justification for counterarguments, and 84.8% rebuttals/counterarguments. About 48.5% of the participants' essays lacked conclusions. At the end of the study and after instructing argumentative elements, most of the learners' essays improved and almost all of them were partially successful in deploying all argumentative elements except refuting counterarguments in their writings. Heidari (2019) explored the potential of instructing Toulmin's model of argumentation via teacher- and collected scaffolding on argument structure and quality of essays among university students. The results confirmed the better performance of scaffolding groups in comparison to the control group on both variables. With a focus on computer-assisted language learning, Mochizuki et al. (2019) investigated the effect of analyzing argumentative text structure by means of a developed computer software on learners' writing ability. The participants were asked to present the key notions in organized and dynamic graphics. Although the organized graphics were used with the aim of improving the writing ability of the learners, the participants experienced an improvement in their ability to link different nodes expressed in texts and this in turn led to constructing more vivid knowledge maps to foster their reading comprehension as a result of their improvement in writing (Mochizuki et al., 2019). It is obvious that students may face many

problems at different levels of learning due to the fact that they are not competent enough to connect various ideas and components which appear in rhetorical structures of argumentative texts (Tengberg & Olin-Scheller, 2016). In fact, reading comprehension ability significantly varies among students as a consequence of different levels of familiarity and knowledge about text structure (Ness, 2011). Moreover, the improvement of recall ability might occur through providing appropriate input on argumentative text structure and explicit instruction. Although various investigations are done on the role of text structure, cognitive mechanisms, map organizers, and recall ability in comprehending expository texts, scant attention is paid to argumentative texts and the effect of explicit instruction of argumentative text structure on learners' reading comprehension. Furthermore, to the best of authors' knowledge, no study has examined the effect of explicit instruction of argumentative text structure on reading comprehension between learners with different levels of reading ability. Therefore, this study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Does explicit instruction of text structure have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension of argumentative texts?

2. Does explicit instruction of text structure have any significant effect on Iranian EFL learners' written recall of argumentative texts?

3. Does the effect of explicit instruction of text structure on reading comprehension of argumentative texts significantly differ between Iranian EFL learners at high and low levels of reading ability?

3. Methodology

Participants

The Participants of this study comprised a group of 40 university students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at BA level at Farhangian University of Kerman, aged between 18 and 22. All of the participants were males and Persian speakers who were selected based on availability and ease of accessibility. The participants were assured that their data would be kept confidential and there was no obligation to take part in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

The instruments utilized for eliciting data were as follows:

1. A CAE paper reading ability test including four texts of various types with 38 questions was used for dividing the participants into high and low reading ability groups.

2. A thirty-item reading comprehension test in multiple-choice format comprising four argumentative passages was administered both as pre- and post-test. The argumentative texts included in the reading comprehension test were retrieved from various online sources (e.g., https://www.studymode.com, https://studfiles.net & https://www.scribd.com). The reliability of the tests was calculated for both tests and found to be .71 and .70.

3. A free immediate written recall task was administered before and after the instruction. The written recall tasks were developed based on four short argumentative reading passages adopted from online sources. In the pre- and post-tasks on written recall of argumentative texts, the participants were asked to write whatever they recalled from the two texts they read. Their papers were assessed based on ideas counted according to the verb clauses recalled from the texts. Different argumentative texts were used for

JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH, Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2023, Page 563 to 578

pre- and post-tasks on written recall of argumentative texts. The reliability indices were computed for both pre- and post-task using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and turned out to be .82 and .87 for pre-task and post-task, respectively.

Data Collection Procedure

One week prior to the onset of instruction, the participants took the CAE reading ability test. They answered 38 questions in 65 minutes. The participants were divided into high and low reading ability groups based on their CAE reading ability test scores (the cut-off point was considered the sample's median score which was set at 23.5). Assigning the participants with high and low reading ability into experimental and control groups was carried out randomly. The following steps were taken for conducting the research:

As the first step and prior to the study, in order to make sure of participants' homogeneity, all of them took the reading comprehension pre-test and the written recall pre-task on argumentative texts.

In the second step, the argumentative text structure was explicitly instructed in the experimental group over five weeks (10 sessions). During the first session of the course, the argumentative genre and the course objectives were introduced to both groups. In the control group, the conventional classroom activities including pre-, while-, and post-reading of argumentative texts and reading comprehension activities without analyzing text structure were utilized. In this group, the focus was put on vocabulary, grammar, pros and cons, and reading comprehension activities. However, Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation was explicitly instructed in the experimental group. In other words, the key elements of argumentative text structure were introduced and exemplified through graphic organizers, definitions, applications, and specific examples for each one. Then, a sample argumentative text was analyzed based on Toulmin's model and its key elements were analyzed and outlined. During every session, the participants of the experimental group practiced Toulmin's model through taking part in group or individual activities to organize scrambled ideas, analyze and extract main components of texts, identify keywords and phrases in text structure, and paragraphing. The participants had to present the structure of every text in graphic organizers. They received feedback on their graphs. Identifying and analyzing the elements of argumentative texts based on Toulmin's model was done for all argumentative texts and in all sessions. It is worth mentioning that the same texts were used in both groups.

In step 3, the post-test on reading comprehension and the post-task on written recall of argumentative texts were administered to both groups to testify their reading comprehension and written recall ability.

4. Results

At the outset of the study, the participants of both groups were evaluated based on their performance on the pre-test in terms of homogeneity and their reading comprehension of argumentative texts. The mean and standard deviation were M = 20.818, SD = 5.058 and M = 19.388, SD = 6.069 for the control and experimental group, respectively. To make sure of running an independent-samples t-test, the gathered data were checked in terms of normal distribution. Table 1 presents the results of an independent-samples t-test on pre-test scores.

Table 1 ***Independent-Samples t-Test on Argumentative Reading Comprehension Pre-test Scores***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean dif	Std. Error dif
Pre-test	EVA	.577	.531	.813	38	.51	1.429	1.758
	EVNA	-----	-----	.798	33.145	.52	1.429	1.791

EVA: Equal Variances Assumed

EVNA: Equal Variances Not Assumed

According to Table 1, the obtained results report no significant difference in learners' performance on argumentative reading comprehension ability. $T(38) = .81$ and $p = .51 > .05$ indicate that the two groups met the condition of homogeneity in terms of argumentative reading ability.

In order to answer the first research question, the post-test on argumentative reading comprehension was administered to both groups. The mean and standard deviation were $M = 22.095$, $SD = 4.784$ and $M = 25.5$, $SD = 3.014$ for the control and experimental group, respectively. To check whether this mean difference was significant, another independent-samples *t*-test was run. It should be mentioned that one of the participants of the control group with low reading ability did not take the post-test and was considered as outlier. The results of independent-samples *t*-test on post-test scores are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2 ***Independent-Samples t-Test on Argumentative Reading Comprehension Post-test Scores***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean dif	Std. Error dif
Post-test	EVA	3.120	.086	-2.606	37	.013	-3.40476	1.3066
	EVNA	-----	-----	-2.696	34.189	.011	-3.40476	1.2629

EVA: Equal Variances Assumed

EVNA: Equal Variances Not Assumed

As Table 2 indicates, $t(37) = -2.606$ and $p = .013 > .05$ show a significant difference between the two groups on the post-test. The outperformance of the experimental group can be attributed to the effectiveness of text structure instruction. The effect size was also computed and turned out to be .81 which indicates that the mean difference was of high significance.

To investigate the effect of explicit instruction of text structure on learners' written recall, all 40 learners participated in a written recall pre-task. The mean and standard deviation were $M = 24.227$, $SD = 8.047$ and $M = 22.333$, $SD = 8.526$ for the control and experimental

JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH, Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2023, Page 563 to 578

group, respectively. To check the homogeneity of the two groups, an independent-samples *t*-test was run. Table 3 reports the results.

Table 3 ***Independent-Samples t-Test on Written Recall Pre-test Scores***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean dif	Std. Error dif
Pre-task	EVA	.019	.890	.721	38	.475	1.893	2.626
	EVNA	-----	-----	.717	35.530	.478	1.893	2.642

EVA: Equal Variances Assumed

EVNA: Equal Variances Not Assumed

As evident in Table 3, $t(38) = .721$ and $p = .475 > .05$ indicate no significant difference between the performance of the two groups in terms of written recall of augmentative texts at the outset of the experiment.

To answer the second question and check whether the explicit instruction of argumentative text structure had any significant effect on learners' written recall ability, the participants took a post-task on written recall based on two argumentative texts. The mean and standard deviation were $M = 28.571$, $SD = 13.944$ and $M = 27.111$, $SD = 10.185$ for the control and experimental group, respectively. An independent-samples *t*-test was run on post-test scores. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 ***Independent-Samples t-Test on Written Recall Post-test Scores***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean dif	Std. Error dif
Post-task	EVA	.616	.437	.368	37	.715	1.460	3.970
	EVNA	-----	-----	.377	36.163	.709	1.460	3.876

EVA: Equal Variances Assumed

EVNA: Equal Variances Not Assumed

As Table 4 demonstrates, $t(37) = .368$ and $p = .715 > .05$ indicate no significant difference between the two groups in terms of written recall ability.

To check the effect of explicit instruction of text structure on reading comprehension of learners at high and low levels of reading ability, the gain score for each participant was calculated subtracting each person's score on pre-test from his score on post-test. The mean and standard deviation were $M = 8.62$, $SD = 3.46$ and $M = 4.2$, $SD = 4.96$ for the low and high reading ability groups, respectively. Another independent-samples *t*-test was applied to check the significance of this mean difference. Table 5 represents the results.

Table 5 ***Independent-Samples t-Test for Comparing the Effect of Text Structure Instruction on High and Low Reading Ability Groups***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean dif	Std. Error dif
Gain score	EVA	.530	.477	2.135	16	.049	4.42500	2.07262
	EVNA	-----	-----	2.224	15.775	.041	4.42500	1.98997

EVA: Equal Variances Assumed

EVNA: Equal Variances Not Assumed

As Table 5 depicts, $t(16) = 2.135$ and $p = .049 > .05$ indicate the outperformance of the low reading ability group on the reading comprehension test which can be attributed to the effect of explicit instruction of text structure.

5. Discussion

The main aim of this research was to probe the effect of explicit instruction of argumentative text structure on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension. As was signified previously, the results indicated a significant difference between the two groups in terms of reading comprehension of argumentative texts. In other words, the explicit instruction of argumentative text structure based on Toulmin Model of argumentation (1958) led to more awareness and better comprehension of the argumentative texts.

On the one hand, the results are in line with a large number of investigations conducted on the effect of text structure knowledge on EFL learners' reading comprehension. However, most of the previous studies mainly focused on narrative and expository text structure not argumentative. For example, the obtained results are in line with Chalak and Nasr Esfahani (2012), Ghorbani Shemshadsara et al. (2019), Hirose (2014), Karbalaei and Amoli (2011), and Vahidi (2008) who investigated either the effect of text structure knowledge or explicit instruction of text structure of expository texts on learners' reading comprehension. On the other hand, the results are harmonious with some other research in first language and English as second language contexts indicating the effect of explicit instruction of text structure on reading comprehension (Duke et al., 2011; Meyer & Wijekumar, 2007; Nakamura & Hirose, 2009). In the same vein, Welie et al. (2017) attested that readers' comprehension of expository texts could be predicted by their text structure inference skill.

The obtained results are not going to reject the effect of other techniques on fostering learners' awareness and reading comprehension. The present research claims that the explicit instruction of text structure is a suitable technique for improving reading comprehension of argumentative texts. Therefore, instructors should pay more attention to text structure instruction and expose learners to different models of argumentative text structures.

The second research question explored the effect of explicit instruction of text structure on learners' written recall of argumentative texts. The results showed that the difference between the two groups in terms of recalling ideas of the argumentative texts was not statistically

JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH, Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2023, Page 563 to 578

significant. The findings are in line with Hirose (2014). He concluded that the explicit instruction of text structure did not have any significant effect on the amount of information recalled from expository texts. However, recall improvement was confirmed in some other studies conducted on different genres and based on different text patterns. For example, Meyer and Poon (2001) found that the information recall ability of the learners significantly improved through text structure organization awareness practices and training. The results of the current study might be due to different reasons. First of all, the classes were held after the university classes and at the end of the day and this might result in learners' tiredness and affect their performance. Furthermore, the specific model of argumentation utilized in this study might only foster learners' reading comprehension of argumentative texts but not their written recall ability. However, the results of this study do not reject the relationship between text structure knowledge and recall ability of learners. The explicit instruction of text structure through other models of argumentation or other genres might lead to different results.

The last research question addressed the reading comprehension of learners with high and low reading ability as the result of explicit instruction of argumentative text structure. The obtained results indicated the outperformance of the low reading ability group. The results confirm Hirose's (2014) findings indicating the notable improvement in low reading ability group's reading comprehension after text structure instruction. Since no other study has compared the high and low ability readers' reading performance after text argumentative text structure instruction, the present findings could not be compared with any relevant previous study on this genre.

6. Conclusion

The obtained results concerning the significant effect of explicit instruction of text structure on learners' reading comprehension, especially low reading ability readers emphasize the importance of teachers' consideration of fostering learners' awareness of text organization and structure while instructing reading. Accordingly, the role of inference skill of text structure and its effect on reading comprehension should not be neglected but should be instructed as a strategy to improve reading comprehension (Magnusson et al., 2019). In fact, text structure knowledge can be regarded as an efficient way for a better grasping of what a writer means (Meyer & Poon, 2001; Teng, 2020). Being aware of text structure knowledge, readers can organize and visualize the key elements and ideas of the text in their minds. Thus, while teaching reading, teachers should introduce different text structures, even teach them, and analyze various texts based on text structure. This may result in learners' increased motivation and viewing text structure as a strategy for fostering other language skills such as writing and speaking. It is worth mentioning that instead of too much focus on vocabulary and grammatical structures, teachers should also focus on text structures and patterns in their reading classes. In the same vein, Fathi and Barkhoda (2021) believe that activating more top-level mental processes such as critical thinking, processing and analyzing texts, and problem-solving are of paramount importance in reading development.

EFL teachers, learners, course and syllabus designers, language institutes, managers, language teaching ideologists, researchers interested in reading comprehension, and those

interested in genre-based instruction can benefit from the results of this study. The current study besides emphasizing the role of text structure awareness in reading comprehension, highlights the importance of underpinning content-based and task-based pedagogy. The results of the present investigation make significant contributions to teaching as well as learning. To improve learners' reading comprehension, teachers should equip them with more strategies and skills to gain a better grasp of text structure (Shanahan, 2020). As a result, they would be able to anticipate the reader's interaction with the text. Material developers and syllabus designers can also greatly contribute to the success of language programs through focusing on text structures and raising learners' awareness of different genres and text structure features.

It should be mentioned that this study is not without limitations. First, the present study was conducted on 40 male EFL university students due to availability and ease of accessibility issues and this affects the generalizability of the findings. It is recommended that similar studies be conducted on larger samples comprising both males and females, at different academic levels, and at different universities. The second limitation is due to selecting Toulmin's model of argumentation as a basis for explicit text structure instruction. Other interested researchers can investigate the effect of instructing other models of argumentation on learners' reading comprehension and written recall of argumentative texts. Exploring the effect of text structure instruction in other genres and comparing the obtained results with argumentative genre provide another promising direction for more research. It is hoped that this study opens up new horizons for more research on reading comprehension of argumentative texts and paves the way for EFL learners.

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JOURNAL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE RESEARCH, Volume 13, Number 4, Winter 2023, Page 563 to 578

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