

THE EFFECT OF GENRE EXPECTATION ON EFL BRAZILIAN STUDENTS' INFERENCE GENERATION AND READING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the influence of genre expectation on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Brazilian undergraduate students' inference generation and reading comprehension. Eleven EFL readers from the last semester of the *Letras Course* at UFSC (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina) participated in this study. The effect of genre expectation was investigated by means of the assessment of students' inference making and reading comprehension in relation to two texts, namely a literary story and a news story. The instruments used for data collection were the Pause Protocol (CAVALCANTI, 1989) in the version adapted by Tomitch (2003) and a set of reading comprehension questions. Participants' reports from the Pause Protocol were transcribed and their utterances were categorized in accordance with Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz' (1999) Inference Categorization Model. Furthermore, participants' answers in the reading comprehension questions were analyzed and scored. Results obtained from this research have shown that participants' inference generation was not significantly influenced by genre expectation. However, data from the Pause Protocol reports and reading comprehension questions provided evidence that text type influenced participants' reading comprehension. Furthermore, data from participants with outstanding performance on the reading comprehension questions provided evidence that they were controlling their reading strategies considering the genre being read.

KEYWORDS: Reading. Inference generation. Genre expectation. Text comprehension.

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Introduction

The importance of reading nowadays is undeniable, not only because it enables information spreading, but also because it is responsible for entertaining, amusing and connecting individuals through time and space. Although reading is for most people an activity carried out so easily that is sometimes taken for granted (GRABE, 2009), there has been a lot of interest in the issue of what happens in the readers' minds when facing a written page, from focusing the eyes on it until comprehension is achieved.

For the purpose of this study, and in agreement with the literature in the area, reading is understood as the result of an interaction process between the reader and the text, in order to construct meaning (e.g. RUMELHART, 1977; 1981; KINTSCH; VAN DIJK, 1978; ANDERSON; PEARSON, 1984; DAVIES, 1995; ESKEY, 1998; URQUHART; WEIR, 1998; SOLÉ, 1998; TOMITCH, 2003, among others). We would like to acknowledge, however, that, although this study focuses on the reader and the text, we are aware that they are not the only parties involved in the reading comprehension process, which also involves the author, the context, and individual factors such as the reader's motivation, goals and skills (GRABE; STOLLER, 2002).

In the last decades there has been a great increase in the number of studies related to inference generation process, especially regarding how it is influenced by reading purposes, text types and genres. However, among inference generation research, the narrative type of text as stimulus has been much more investigated than the expository one. Furthermore, a small number of studies have compared the effects of both text types on inference generation (BARETTA, 2008; DUBRAVAC; DALLE, 2002; GERBER; TOMITCH, 2008; NARVAEZ; VAN DEN BROEK; RUIZ, 1999), and even fewer have investigated the effect of genre expectation on inference generation. (ZWAAN, 1991; 1994) It is also important to highlight that most research about the effect of different reading

purposes, text types and genres on the inference generation process was carried out in L1 and not in L2, which is the case in this investigation.

Regarding the above mentioned panorama, the need of filling these gaps is the motivation of this study, which aims at investigating how the expectation of reading different genres, namely a news story (a hybrid text type with mostly expository features) and a literary story (narrative text type), influences EFL students' process of inference generation.

Review of the literature

Inference generation process

The term inference refers to “any information about events, relations, and so on that the reader adds to the information that is explicitly presented in the text” (VAN DEN BROEK; RISDEN; HUSEBYE-HARTMANN, 1995, p. 353). Koda (2008) complements this idea affirming that inference generation is a part of the reading process and is crucial for ‘text-meaning construction’. The ability to generate inferences is, as stated by Baretta et al. (2009, p. 138), “a constructive cognitive process in which the reader strives for meaning and expands knowledge by formulating and evaluating hypotheses about the information in the text.”

Inference generation in general is very important for text comprehension, because it connects the information presented in the text to the reader's background knowledge. If readers fail to make these connections, they may fail to remember and even to understand the text (BARETTA et al., 2009; HORIBA, 2000; LINDERHOLM; VAN DEN BROEK, 2002; TRABASSO; SUH, 1993; TRABASSO et al., 1995).

Based on the studies of Zwaan and Brown (1996), and Trabasso and Magliano (1996), Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz (1999) proposed

an Inference Categorization Model, which is composed of three kinds of inference, i.e., associations, explanations, and predictions (see Table 1, below), where associations are backward inferences, explanations are concurrent inferences, and predictions are forward inferences. Furthermore, their model of classification also covers other kinds of statements readers can make during a think-aloud task, that is, repetitions, evaluations, and two kinds of coherence breaks: text-based and knowledge-based. For the purpose of this study, Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz' (1999) Inference Categorization Model is going to be adopted, as it has been used widely in the literature of reading and inference generation (TRABASSO; SUH, 1993; ZWAAN; BROWN, 1996; TRABASSO; MAGLIANO, 1996; NARVAEZ; VAN DEN BROEK; RUIZ, 1999; MAGLIANO, GRAESSER; TRABASSO, 1999; LINDERHOLM; VAN DEN BROEK, 2002).

Table 1 shows Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz' (1999) Inference Categorization Model, where inferences taxonomy is presented, as well as its features.

Table 1 – Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz' (1999) Inference Categorization Model

Inference Kind	Features
Explanations	Are related to the reasons why something happens and include explanations based on background knowledge (“I think that is the cause of the ice age”) and text-based explanations (“This must be what they meant by ash”);
<i>Associations</i>	Provide information about characteristics and functions of people, objects and events in the text, including background associations (“This reminds me of a planetarium show I saw”) and text-based associations (“Okay, this is in the spa”);
Predictions	Refer to inferences about future consequences of a specific event (“Okay, the gases will lead them to the actual object”);
<i>Evaluations</i>	Regard comments about the text content (“I think that’s such a strong assertion”), the text writing (“That sentence was difficult to say”) or the reader’s state (“I’m kind of losing track here, being distracted”);
Text-based coherence breaks:	Relate to statements about the coherence of the text content (“That doesn’t make any sense”);
Knowledge-based coherence breaks:	Include statements regarding the readers’ inability to understand as a result of lack of knowledge or experience (“It’s kind of hard to imagine, I mean, in space”);
Repetitions	Regard repetitions of words or phrases in the text.

SOURCE: Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz (1999, p. 490)

Genres and text types

Marcuschi (2010, p. 23) defines genre³ as “a purposely vague notion that refers to materialized texts that we find in our everyday life and that present *socio communicative characteristics* defined by contents, functional properties, style and characteristic composition”.⁴

3 In this study, ‘genre’ is the translation for what Marcuschi (2010) denominates *Gêneros Textuais*, in Portuguese.

4 Our translation – author’s emphasis. “[...] uma noção propositalmente vaga para referir os *textos materializados* que encontramos em nossa vida diária e que apresentam *características sócio comunicativas* definidas por conteúdos, propriedades funcionais, estilo e composição característica.”

Among the examples of genres are *a telephone call, a personal letter, a note, a restaurant menu, a manual, a novel, a news report, a spontaneous talk, the horoscope, and a shopping list*. Bazerman (1994, apud MARCUSCHI, 2011) claims that it does not seem to be possible to identify and categorize all genres, because these classifications change over time, and, we would include, among different societies.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is necessary to make a distinction between text type and genre. According to Marcuschi (2010, p. 23), text type is used to “designate a kind of sequence that is theoretically defined by the *linguistic nature* of its composition (lexical aspects, syntactic aspects, verbal tenses, logic relations)”⁵ According to this definition, genres are much more numerically expressive than text types, which include narration, argumentation, exposition, description and injunction. Travaglia (2007) states that genres are the ones that circulate and work in society, while text types are part of genres and do not exist without them.

Biber (1988, apud PALTRIDGE, 1996) seems to share the same notion of distinction between text types and genres when he claims that genres describe groups of activities while text types represent groups of texts with similar linguistic patterns, which means that, although these two terms represent different perspectives on texts, they are complementary.

Taking into consideration that every text is always part of one or more genres, the more one is aware of the features that characterize each genre, the easier it will be for him/her to recognize these attributes and make use of this knowledge for a better understanding of the text (MARCUSCHI, 2010). These are in some way the basic guidelines of Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (National Curricular Parameters, in a free translation, BRASIL, 1999), that suggest that oral and written texts should be used in the classroom on the

5 Our translation - author's emphasis. “[...] designar uma espécie de sequência teoricamente definida pela *natureza linguística* de sua composição (aspectos lexicais, sintáticos, tempos verbais, relações lógicas).”

basis of genres, so that students are able to interpret and write different genres in distinct situations.

For the purpose of this study, only the narrative and expository text types are going to be defined and approached. Due to the fact that narratives share characteristics of real interaction, appealing to “readers’ shared knowledge of the world”, they are considered easier than other text types, not only as regards comprehension, but also readers’ ability to recall textual information (KODA, 2008). Individuals are so familiar with the structure of narrative texts that no training is necessary for identifying it, as opposed to non-literary text types as exposition and argumentation (KODA, 2008).

As opposed to narratives, which are generally read for entertainment, expository texts are characterized by the main purpose of presenting information and inducing new insights on a specific topic (KODA, 2008). They are unified texts that follow a logical sequence and are written to present facts, not to tell a story, as opposed to narratives. Most readers are not familiar with this text type until they start going to school, and their contact with it is generally limited to a few texts read for study purposes, the reason why expository texts are considered more difficult to understand and recall than narrative texts.

Reading purposes, genres, text types, and their influence on the inference generation process: related studies

There have been numerous studies, especially in the past twenty years, which intended to check whether readers use different approaches to a text, depending on their reading purpose, as well as on the text genre (ZWAAN, 1991; GRAESSER; KREUZ, 1993; ZWAAN, 1994; TRABASSO; MAGLIANO, 1996; ZWAAN; BROWN, 1996; NARVAEZ; VAN DEN BROEK; RUIZ, 1999; MAGLIANO, GRAESSER; TRABASSO, 1999;

DUBRAVAC; DALLE, 2002; GERBER, SPONHOLZ; VOLKER, 2006; GERBER; TOMITCH, 2008; BARETTA et al., 2009). Most research was conducted in L1, but there are also studies regarding L2 and Foreign Languages. The following is a small sample of the major studies related to inference generation and text type/ genre expectation, which are connected to the main objectives of this research.

As regards the expectation of reading different genres, Miall (2002, p. 334) points out that “the readers’ knowledge of a text’s genre [...] is a control condition influencing the reading process”, the reason why readers’ responses to the text vary depending on the genre. According to Grabe (2009, p. 44), before reading any text, readers activate knowledge related to the genre, as regards its structure, and “are prepared to build the situation in which the information unfolds.”

Kintsch (1980, p. 87, apud ZWAAN, 1991) also supports the idea that readers approach texts differently depending on the genre. According to him, when any text is read, it is guided by a specific genre schema⁶, so a story would be read under a ‘story schema’, a news report under a ‘news schema’ and so on, which means that the operation of comprehension is the same for all these genres, what is different is the way and purposes they are applied for, and consequently the effects of these approaches. In sum, “discourse-type specific control systems influence the way a text is comprehended: how it is processed on line, how it is represented in memory, and how the representation is maintained over a long period of time” (ZWAAN, 1991, p. 140).

According to Zwaan (1991), readers also have specific reading strategies for each genre, so newspaper stories are generally skimmed, while

⁶ Schema is a concept widely used by reading comprehension scholars to designate the representation of generic concepts stored in memory, which encompasses all previous experiences, and is essential for information processing (RUMELHART, 1981). In that sense, readers are able to distinguish a news story from a literary story because these concepts are part of their ‘genre schema’. In order to achieve successful reading comprehension, the appropriate schemata (plural of schema) need to be activated (TOMITCH, 1991).

literary stories tend to be 'savored'. As a result, a label containing textual information like '*A Novel*' on a book cover, as well as contextual information like the instruction *read and summarize this novel*, would trigger the readers' 'literary control system'. Controversially, László (1988, apud MIAL, 2002) states that the fact that the reader is told that a text is literary does not necessarily make him read it as such, as we are going to discuss afterwards.

Zwaan conducted two studies that aimed at verifying the influence of the text type on the inference generation process. Both studies were conducted with undergraduate students reading in their native language (Dutch). The first one, Zwaan (1991), had the purpose to check whether there are specific control systems regulating the comprehension of specific genres, such as news story and literary story. This hypothesis was confirmed after presenting the same texts to two different groups of participants, telling one group that the text was a literary story and affirming to the other group that the same text was a news story. Results showed that the literary perspective imposed slower reading time, when compared with the news perspective. Also, literary reading resulted in a 'stronger surface representation', when compared to the newspaper reading. Zwaan (1994) carried out a further and complementary research, focusing on the effect of genre expectations on text comprehension. For the purpose of that study, participants read texts under a literary or a news perspective, which means that a same text was said to be literary for one group, being afterwards presented as a news story to the other group. Afterwards, the participants were asked to verify statements pertaining to the texts. Results showed that readers allocate their processing resources differently, according to their expectations about the genre. The researcher also found out that students reading a literary text had longer reading times, better memory for surface information and a poorer memory for situational information than the students reading the news text, meaning that the expectation of a literary genre leads students to pay more attention to details, which in this genre

eventually tend to make a difference, while in news texts details do not play such an important role.

Zwaan and Brown (1996) investigated two factors that might influence situation-model construction, namely language proficiency (L1 and L2) and comprehension skill (L1). The experiment consisted in the thinking aloud during the reading of narratives in readers' L1 and L2. Results showed that a stronger situation model was built for the English texts (L1) than for the French texts (L2). Furthermore, more explanations were provided for the English text than for the French one, and more explanatory inferences were made by skilled participants, who also constructed stronger situation models than the less skilled comprehenders. According to Zwaan and Brown (1996, p. 322):

These results strongly indicate that a certain level of L2 knowledge and skill is necessary for L2 inference generation and situation-model construction so that L2 comprehension performance is not solely a function of general language-independent comprehension skill.

Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz (1999) carried out a study on how inference generation and comprehension in reading were influenced by reading purpose (entertainment and study). The method consisted of reading four texts, two aloud (one narrative text and one expository text) and two for comprehension measures (again, one narrative text and one expository text). All inferences generated by the participants during the think aloud protocol of the two first texts were evaluated and categorized according to a model proposed by the researchers, based on Zwaan and Brown (1996), and Trabasso and Magliano (1996). Participants also answered comprehension questions about the other two texts. Results showed that there is no correlation between reading purpose and off-line behavior (comprehension), but on-line reading behavior (think aloud) was influenced by the reading purpose. Also,

the study purpose led students to repeat the text more times, acknowledge lack of previous knowledge, and evaluate the text regarding its content and writing, which was less observed with the entertainment purpose. According to the researchers, “this pattern was stronger for the expository text than for the narrative text” (NARVAEZ; VAN DEN BROEK; RUIZ, 1999, p. 488), which leads to the assumption that not only the reading purpose, but probably the text type, influenced readers' inference generation process.

As regards L2 reading, DuBravac and Dalle (2002) conducted a study regarding narrative and expository textual inferences in Second language reading. Results showed that more inferences were generated when reading the narrative texts, probably due to the fact that these texts are by nature less explicit, leaving more gaps to be filled by the reader, in order to make sense of the text. On the other hand, as expository texts are generally written in an objective way, the responses for readers' questions are likely to be found in the text, and consequently fewer inferences are made. Another relevant finding was that more miscomprehension was observed for the expository texts, probably due to the nature of the text type. Graesser, Singer and Trabasso (1994) point out that expository texts tend to be more difficult to be comprehended because they do not maintain a single tone through the text, as narrative texts do. Instead, they shift from description to definition, analysis or commentaries on each paragraph, which may help readers to lose the track and miscomprehend the text. Bensoussan (1990, apud DUBRAVAC; DALLE, 2002) acknowledges that. In the case of L2 readers, it is more likely that global comprehension issues arise in narrative than in expository texts, while expository texts are more likely to create more linguistic difficulties than the narrative ones. The fact that more miscomprehension was observed in expository texts confirms Olson's (1985, apud DUBRAVAC; DALLE, 2002) conclusion that expository texts tend to be more difficult than narrative texts, regarding reading comprehension. Furthermore, according to DuBravac

and Dalle (2002, p. 227), due to the fact that miscomprehension and textual questions increased proportionally, it seems reasonable to affirm that local coherence is a greater problem in expository than in narrative texts.

Method

Participants

An initial pool of L2 undergraduate students – six men and seven women - from the seventh semester of the *Letras Course* (English Language and Literature), at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), agreed to participate in this study. Eleven students are native speakers of Portuguese, being proficient speakers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and one student is a bilingual speaker of Portuguese and French, being also a proficient speaker of EFL.

The data collection was done individually and each participant read and signed a consent form. This consent form contained the objectives of the research, the procedure for data collection, as well as confidentiality information.

Data from one of the participants' Pause Protocol report was inaudible due to technical problems, and was thus excluded from the experiment. Consequently, the analysis and discussions addressed in the present study only take into consideration 11 participants.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were the Pause Protocol (CAVALCANTI, 1989, adapted by TOMITCH, 2003), two texts excerpts, being one news story and one literary story, besides a practice text belonging

to the travelogue genre, and two sets of comprehension questions (one for each text), which will be described below. A reader's profile and a retrospective questionnaire (which aimed at verifying whether any difficulty arose during the data collection procedure) were also included in the study, but are not going to be described and analyzed due to length constraints.

Stimuli

The stimuli consisted of a practice text and two text excerpts, being a news story and a literary story. The news and literary texts were both naturally occurring texts, having an average of 320 words each. The practice text was partially adapted, having some words replaced by synonyms, in order to facilitate comprehension. It was composed of 245 words.

The practice text was an excerpt of a travelogue, which was previously used in Zwaan's (1994) study. This genre is somehow similar to a travel diary and according to Zwaan (1994) is considered to be between literary stories and news stories.

As regards the actual texts, the main reason for choosing a news story and a literary story to be the stimuli for this study was these researchers' intention to confirm Zwaan's (1991) and Zwaan's (1994) findings.

Although the selection of texts conformed to Zwaan's (1991) and Zwaan's (1994) studies, that is, presented at the same time characteristics of both news stories and literary stories, the texts selected for the present research are not the same. The two texts used here were selected for having a language level considered adequate for the participants, with a small number of intricate sentence constructions (e.g. passive voice and long sentences) and not containing many presumably unknown words. The topics of the texts were of general interest and it was supposed that the participants would have a background knowledge related to them, since they talked about issues

encountered in everyday life. *Text A* was about terrorism, more specifically about a terrorist act that happened in Dubrovka and the writer's perspective of the impact of these kinds of acts in capitals and small towns. *Text B* was about a series of mysterious events that happened on board of a fancy ship as it was sailing from New York to France, and the inability of the authorities to discover what really happened.

As the main objective of this research was to verify whether the expectation of reading a specific genre would have any influence in the participants' inference generation process, if different texts were used for each genre, the findings could be a set of text specificities, like the text level of difficulty or background knowledge related to the topic. Even with a similar topic, the number of unknown words/ expressions and also the familiarity with the writing style could influence the number of inferences generated. For this reason, following Zwaan's (1991, 1994) proposal, the texts selected for this study had to have characteristics of both literary stories and news stories. In other words, the two excerpts had to be able to fit in both genres, in order to make it possible to verify the influence of the expectation while 'textual factors' were maintained invariable (ZWAAN, 1991).

The news story (*Text A*) was taken from New Times Magazine, a Russian news magazine (DUBNOV, 2003). The literary story (*Text B*) was a passage from Sidney Sheldon's novel *A Stranger in the Mirror* (SHELDON, 1993). The two texts presented narrative characteristics, although *Text A* was hybrid, with narrative and expository paragraphs, while *Text B* was integrally narrative.

As previously mentioned, although the texts were from different genres, when reading any of them, participants should believe they were reading a literary story or a news story, depending on the instructions given. In this sense, a text was presented to some of the participants as a news story, while the same text was read under a literary perspective by the other

participants. For this purpose, the instructions given to the participants were different, depending on the genre perspective desired (see Appendices I and II), following Zwaan's (1991, 1994) procedures (see the Procedures for Data Collection for more details).

The texts used as stimuli in this study were untitled, so, after reading and verbalizing their thoughts, participants were instructed to give them titles, based on their content and genre. Although it may be considered unnatural, this activity was important in order to check whether students were really focused on the genre of the texts, or just read it without making distinction. As the texts were from different sources, newspaper and novel, it was assumed that, if students were aware of it, they would give them titles according to the appropriate genre, instead of a general (based only on content) title.

The Pause Protocol

For the purpose of this research, the Pause Protocol (CAVALCANTI, 1989) adapted by Tomitch (2003) was used, as it seems to have less interference in the reading process (TOMITCH, 2007). In this version, participants are instructed to read the text and stop whenever they find a problem or something that catches their attention, reporting it. Also, a red sign is placed at the end of each paragraph, in order to remember participants that at that moment they are expected to say something about what they have just read, even if they had already done it. At the end of the text, participants were instructed to summarize the text and give it an appropriate title, based on its content and genre. The verbalization performed for both texts was recorded for further transcription and analysis.

Comprehension questions

Right after reading each text, participants were given a written questionnaire containing comprehension questions related to it. There were two objective questions and four descriptive questions for each text. The questions were written based on Gagné, Yekovich, and Yekovich's (1993) subdivision of the Component Processes, which includes literal comprehension, inferential comprehension and comprehension monitoring. The elaboration of the questions was also supported by Pearson and Johnson's (1978) taxonomy, which divided questions in three categories: textually explicit (literal questions, to which answers can be found on the page), textually implicit (although the answers can still be found on the page, verbatim knowledge is not necessary), and scriptally implicit (the answer is derived from the reader's background knowledge).

Procedures for data collection

Participants read the texts and performed the tasks in one individual session, lasting around 50 minutes. In the first part, the procedure for the Pause Protocol was explained. Participants were instructed to read the texts silently, as if they were alone, and stop whenever any thought came to their minds.

The second part of the experiment consisted of the reading of the texts and verbalization of their thoughts. In order to get familiar with the verbalization procedure, students first read a practice text, following the verbalization procedure previously explained. After the practice task, participants received the news or the literary texts, one at a time, to be read and their thoughts verbalized. Both texts were read in the same session, followed by an instruction to give them a title, based on the content and genre. After

reading and verbalizing, students were instructed to synthesize the texts. The verbalizations were recorded, to be later transcribed and have the inferences generated by the readers categorized.

Considering that each participant was supposed to read a practice text, a news passage and a literary excerpt, the texts orders were counterbalanced in eight possible ways, e.g. *Student I*: 1. Practice Text (Literary); 2. Text A (News Story); 3. Text B (Literary); *Student II*: Practice Text (News Story); 2. Text A (Literary); 3. Text B (News Story).

The instructions were read and explained to the students before they read the texts. The instructions intended to inform the participants about the genre of the text that was going to be read, in order to help them activate the schemata related to that particular genre. The name of the author, newspaper, and the year of the publishing were given in order to give more credibility to the source and emphasize the genre of the text being read. The instructions were adapted from Zwaan's (1994), as follows. The instructions for *Text A* were the following (see Appendices I and II):

- (1) The following text is an excerpt from a news story published by Vadim Dubnov on New Times Newspaper, on January 2003. Please read this text just as you would normally read a news story.
- (2) The following text is an excerpt from a novel by Vadim Dubnov. Please read this text just as you would normally read a literary story.

The instructions for *Text B* were the following:

- (3) The following text is an excerpt from a news story published on New Times Newspaper, on January 1999. Please read this text just as you would normally read a news story.

- (4) The following text is an excerpt from a novel by Edward Cohen⁷. Please read this text just as you would normally read a literary story.

Both texts, *A* and *B*, were followed by an instruction to give them a title, reinforcing the purported genre (see Appendices I and II):

- (5) Based on the information presented, give this novel an appropriate title. *or*
- (6) Based on the information presented, give this news story an appropriate title.

The third part of the experiment consisted of answering six comprehension questions, being two objective and four descriptive questions. When performing this task, participants were not allowed to look back at the text.

Framework for inferences categorization and analysis

Participants' utterances were divided into idea units (similar to the ones suggested by Gerber and Tomitch, 2008), which varied from three-word sentences to whole paragraphs. Besides, inference category change was also an indicator of a new unit, thus a same idea could be divided in two or more parts, if a new inference kind was observed. Inferences were then categorized by the authors of this article, according to Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz' (1999) Inference Categorization Model, as repetitions, explanations, associations, evaluations, predictions, knowledge-based coherence breaks, or text-based coherence breaks.

⁷ The name of the novel's author was changed because Sidney Sheldon is a worldwide known writer, which could have influenced participants' approach to the text.

Results and discussion

Inference generation

After collecting data, participants' protocols were transcribed and categorized according to the Inference Categorization Model proposed by Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz (1999). Table 2 below presents samples from participants' protocols:

Table 2 – Sample Protocols and their Respective Categorization

Participant	Statement	Statement Category
P1	Bem legal como eles voltaram, eles estão contando a história do que aconteceu através de uma memória dele, do capitão, do capitão contando o que aconteceu.	Evaluation
P2	Eu tô pensando o que o segundo parágrafo tem a ver com o resto do texto, que ainda não fez a conexão.	Text- Based Coherence Break
P3	Então fala de uma celebração, uma confraternização, alguma coisa assim. E aparentemente tinham terroristas no lugar.	Repetition
P4	Eu não sei o que é <i>sterling silver roses</i> , o que é esse <i>starling</i> , o que significa.	Knowledge- Based Coherence Break
P5	Provavelmente vai falar depois sobre isso.	Prediction
P6	Eu tenho problema com essas palavras que terminam com <i>ness</i> , <i>usefulness</i> . Elas sempre me confundem, eu sempre olho no dicionário quando vejo uma pela frente.	Evaluation
P7	<i>Skycrapers</i> devem ser <i>arranha-céus</i> , é verdade. Não conhecia a palavra, mas traduzindo literalmente... e na frase fez sentido.	Association
P8	Tá, eu lembrei do ataque às Torres Gêmeas quando eu li <i>terrorist attac</i> .	Association
P9	E como as pessoas envolvidas eram pessoas famosas a história foi contada...saiu em várias...foi contada em várias <i>headlines</i> por todo o mundo	Explanation

P10	Nessa primeira parte do texto eles estão falando a respeito de ter um grupo de terroristas, porque tem alguém aqui que está mantendo pessoas refêns enquanto havia uma festa, alguma coisa nesse sentido, que havia algumas pessoas celebrando.	Explanation
P11	Mas falou sobre explodir diversos clubes noturnos numa semana, então isso eu não sei a quê faz referência. Não conheço essa onda de terroristas, de explosões em clubes noturnos.	Knowledge- Based Coherence Break

A total of 422 inferences were generated by the participants during the Pause Protocol task, 114 for *Text A* (about terrorism) under a literary perspective, 126 for *Text A* under a news perspective, 90 for *Text B* (about the mystery in the ship) with a literary approach, and 92 for *Text B* with a news approach.

Tables 3 and 4 present the total number of inferences generated for each text perspective, divided according to Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz⁸ (1999) Inference Categorization Model.

Table 3 – *Text A* Literary vs News Inference Generation

Inference	Text A - Literary	Text A - News
Total	114	126
Repetition	33,33%	30,95%
Explanation	9,65%	15,88%
Evaluation	11,41%	13,50%
Association	21,05%	14,28%
Prediction	0,88%	6,35%
Knowledge-Based Coherence Break	12,28%	11,90%
Text-Based Coherence Break	11,40%	7,14%

Table 4 – *Text B* Literary vs News Inference Generation

Inference	Text B - Literary	Text B - News
Total	90	92
Repetition	53,33%	41,30%
Explanation	12,22%	4,35%
Evaluation	10%	6,52%
Association	7,78%	20,65%
Prediction	0%	1,09%
Knowledge-Based Coherence Break	12,22%	21,74%
Text-Based Coherence Break	4,45%	4,35%

The total number of inferences generated from *Text A* was apparently⁸ very similar for the two perspectives, showing a tendency for a greater number of inferences towards the *News*. Participants under a literary perspective

⁸ As no statistical tests were employed, it is not possible to affirm there is a significant statistical difference between the inferences generated for the two texts. We can only talk about a possible ‘tendency’.

generated 114 inferences, while those reading under a news perspective made 126 inferences. Repetitions had the greatest incidence, followed respectively by associations, explanations, evaluations, knowledge-based coherence breaks, text-based coherence breaks and predictions, as the least generated inference kind.

As with *Text A*, the total number of inferences generated from *Text B* also seems to be very similar for the two genres purported. Participants under a literary perspective made 90 inferences, while those reading under a news perspective generated 92 inferences. The percentage of repetitions generated seemed to be even more significant than in *Text A*, as it can be observed on Table 4, followed respectively by knowledge-based coherence breaks, associations, explanations, evaluations, text-based coherence breaks and predictions, that once again was the inference kind with the fewest generation incidence.

A possible explanation for the apparently greater incidence of inference generation regarding *Text A*, regardless the genre, is related to the possible familiarity of the participants with the text content. Also, the apparently greater incidence of associations and evaluations generated related to *Text A*, and the lowest incidence of repetitions are evidences of broad background knowledge related to the text topic, as stated by Grabe (2009, p. 47):

Readers with minimal background knowledge of a topic tend to produce recalls that reflect the information presented in the text, whereas students with extensive background knowledge produce recalls with higher levels of background knowledge and evaluative commentary.

The topic of *Text A* was terrorism, an issue that most individuals have an opinion about and have probably read many related texts. *Text B*, on the other hand, was about a mystery on a ship, which is a topic that might not be so familiar, and is not related to participants' everyday life

either. Nevertheless, less familiarity with the topic of the text did not prevent participants from comprehending it. In fact, participants performed better in the reading comprehension questions related to *Text B*, and this pattern was even stronger when they believed it was a literary text, as it is going to be discussed later. These data seem to bring evidence to support the claim that genre does influence how readers approach a text, but not as much as the text type, because, as previously mentioned, *Text B* was integrally narrative, while *Text A* was hybrid, with both narrative and expository sentences.

As regards the total number of inferences generated for each text, and taking the text type into consideration, the findings from this study do not corroborate those of Graesser (1981), Graesser and Kreuz (1993), Trabasso and Magliano (1996), Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz (1999), Narvaez (2002), among others, which provide evidence that readers generate considerably more inferences when reading narratives. In this study, participants generated more inferences regarding *Text A*, which was hybrid, containing characteristics of both narrative and expository text types, than for *Text B*, which was integrally narrative. More specifically, as it can be visualized in Tables 3 and 4 presented above, a total of 240 inferences were generated regarding *Text A*, regardless the genre, while 192 inferences were made when reading *Text B*. Although no statistical tests were used to confirm the significance of these results, it is possible to observe a slight tendency towards *Text A*. Nevertheless, in the studies conducted by Horiba (2000), and Baretta (2008), inferences were more frequently generated for the expository text, when compared to the narrative one. According to Horiba (2000), and Baretta (2008), a possible interpretation for the discrepant findings resides in the texts used in their experiments, which were not as demanding as those from previous studies (TRABASSO; MAGLIANO, 1996; NARVAEZ; VAN DEN BROEK; RUIZ, 1999, among others). In other words, the reading flow of the less demanding expository texts was probably very similar to the reading flow of the narratives.

As regards genre influence, after comparing and analyzing the inferences generated for each text, under both genre perspectives, some possible conclusions can be addressed. First, it seems that the number of repetitions increased when participants believed the text was literary, as it can be seen on Tables 3 and 4. This pattern was greater for the originally literary text (*Text B*), where the number of repetitions was 12% higher as compared to the news perspective. A possible explanation is that, as literary stories are generally associated with narratives, which are easier to understand, lower level processing, i.e., repetition, was sufficient for understanding.

Another interesting finding resulted from the comparison of the explanations and evaluations generated. The number of explanations was greater for *Text A* under a news perspective, and for *Text B* under a literary perspective, i.e., the original genres of each text. Similarly, evaluations presented greater incidence for *Text A* under a news perspective and for *Text B* under a literary perspective, i.e., the original genres of the texts. Hence, it seems that explanatory and evaluative comments tend to be generated when coherence is maintained. According to Zwaan and Brown (1996), a factor that distinguishes good and poor readers is the ability of generating explanations regarding the texts being read. As regards the evaluative comments, it is believed that they are an indication of critical reading behavior and metalinguistic awareness, as they reflect readers' view about the text content and their own reading behavior.

Text A under a literary perspective and *Text B* under a news approach were the ones with the greatest incidence of associations, which means that more associative inferences were generated for the texts when they were not being read under the original genre perspective. As associations are non integrative inferences and tend to be generated by less skilled readers, or readers trying to make sense of the text (ZWAAN; BROWN, 1996), two possible explanations are addressed. First, what may have influenced the results is the fact that, although both texts could be perceived as a literary story

or a news story, when participants read them under the purported perspective, some comprehension problems arose. The second possible explanation is related to participants' reading skills, which were not measured because it was expected that undergraduate students in the last semester of the *Letras Course* would be very skilled readers. If participants' reading skills were not great, the associations were probably made in order to try to construct a coherent representation of the text.

Text A under a literary perspective had 0,88% of predictions, while 6,35% of the total number of inferences under a news perspective were predictions. For *Text B*, on the other hand, no such inferences were made under a literary perspective, as opposed to 1,09% of predictions under a news perspective. This finding is somewhat surprising, because *Text B*, which is about a mystery in a ship, was expected to instigate more predictive inferences, regardless the genre. However, *Text A* was the one with the greatest incidence of predictions, which increased when readers believed the text was a news story. That may have happened because, according to Trabasso and Magliano (1996), predictions are also generated in order to try to solve coherence breaks, and some participants reported that they were not able to connect information among *Text A*'s paragraphs.

The number of text-based coherence breaks was very similar for both purported genres on *Text B* (4,45% for the literary and 4,35% for the news), whereas for *Text A* it was possible to see a small difference (11,40% for the literary perspective and 7,14% for the news one). In this case, the purported genre did not influence as much as the text specific features, such as lexical choice and style, to mention some examples.

Regarding knowledge-based coherence breaks, the incidence was very similar for *Text A* (12,26% under a literary perspective and 11,90% under a news approach). For *Text B*, on the other hand, the number of knowledge-based coherence breaks under a news perspective was almost twice as many as under a literary one, being respectively 21,74% and 12,22%. A possible

explanation may be that here again the text features have played a great role. The texts under the purported genre presented the greatest incidence, probably because something did not seem to 'fit', thus some effort had to be made in order to accommodate the information, or to realize that the features did not match the purported genre.

As regards the Pause Protocol, participants' reports were recorded and transcribed, including the titles provided for each text, taking into consideration the text content and genre.

Although it is not possible to ensure whether participants were really reading the texts under the instructed genre perspective, the titles suggest that most students tried to convey the genre traditional features to the text titles, although only two of them verbalized their intention to do so. Participants P1 and P6 were the only ones who verbalized their concern regarding the genre of the texts:

(7) P1: Talvez seja um pouco literário para uma manchete de jornal, mas algo como *Flowers Delivered*.

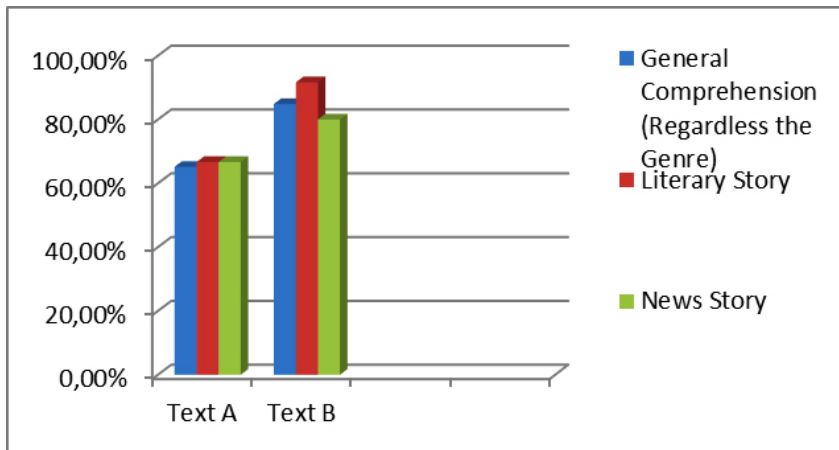
(8) P6: Bom, como é uma novela, eu daria um título tipo daqueles *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, alguma coisa que chamasse a atenção. Aqui um título... *The Glory of Terrorism*, talvez isso. Alguma coisa que chamasse a atenção pro problema.

It is important to highlight that, as the instruction was to give a title based on the text content and genre, some readers might have created the title taking the genre into consideration just at that time, which does not necessarily mean that they kept the genre in mind during reading.

Reading comprehension questions

Graph 1 presents the effect of genre expectation on the scores of reading comprehension questions.

Graph 1 – The Influence of Genre Expectation on Reading Comprehension



As can be seen in Graph 1, *Text B* was the one participants seemed to have less difficulty to comprehend. *Text B* under a literary perspective achieved the greatest incidence of correct answers in the reading comprehension questions (91,67%), followed by the same text under a news perspective (80%). Participants reading *Text A* scored correctly on 66,67% of the reading comprehension questions, for both news and literary perspectives. Regardless the genre, the average score for *Text A* was 65,25% of correct answers, while 84,85% of answers were answered correctly for *Text B*. It is likely that *Text B* was easier to comprehend due to the fact that it is entirely narrative, as opposed to *Text A*, which was hybrid, with both expository and narrative features. If this is true, the present study corroborates Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz' (1999), and Trabasso and Magliano's (1996) findings, that provide evidence that narratives are easier to comprehend than expository texts. Moreover, it confirms that genre expectation does not influence reading comprehension as much as text type.

Regarding the relationship between inference kind and performance on the reading comprehension questions, it was observed that for eight out of the eleven participants the number of inferences was inferior for the text they

performed better, which means that less inferencing was necessary to construct coherence. In other words, they generated more inferences in order to try to understand the text. In relation to that, Ericsson and Simon (1993) have argued that for readers to provide data during think aloud protocols it is necessary to make use of tasks that demand readers' strategic and monitored control, so that some automatic processes be 'de-automatized'. In this sense, texts considered easy by readers are read automatically, and consequently are less available to conscious report. According to Pressley and Afflerbach (1995), more challenging texts provide more data because they demand more controlled and careful reading, which was the case of this study, where participants generated more inferences for the text that was more challenging for them.

Final remarks

The design of the present study was based on two previous studies carried out by Zwaan (1994) and Narvaez, van den Broek and Ruiz (1999). The aim of this research was twofold: to check whether genre expectation has any influence on EFL Brazilian undergraduate students' inference generation process, as well as whether reading comprehension is somehow affected by the expectation of reading a given genre.

Results obtained from this research have shown that EFL Brazilian undergraduate students' inference generation is not significantly influenced by genre expectation. However, data from the Pause Protocol reports and reading comprehension questions provided evidence that text type influenced participants' reading comprehension. In accordance with discourse comprehension literature, that claims and presents evidence that narratives are easier to understand than expository texts (TRABASSO; MAGLIANO, 1996), participants from this study, regardless the purported genre, performed better in the reading comprehension questions related to the text that was integrally narrative.

Moreover, taking into consideration participants' inferences, it is possible to observe that the quality of the inferences generated had greater impact on reading comprehension than quantity, that is, the greater incidence of explanatory inferences (ZWAAN; BROWN, 1996; TRABASSO; MAGLIANO, 1996) was observed in the reports of the participants with greater reading comprehension.

From these findings it is possible to affirm that genre can only influence reader's behavior if the reader is aware that he/she should approach texts differently depending on factors like reading purpose, text type and genre. Data from participants with outstanding performance on the reading comprehension questions provided evidence that they were controlling their reading strategies considering the genre being read.

As regards pedagogical implications, results obtained from this research have shown that metalinguistic awareness is a predictor of reading comprehension, and that the more a person reads, the more he/she is going to know about specific features of distinct text types and genres. This knowledge, together with a well established reading purpose, may help readers to successfully comprehend a great amount of both L1 and L2/ FL material.

Furthermore, as regards participants' familiarity with the text topic, which in this study has increased the number of inferences generated, it is important to emphasize the significance of pre-reading activities for texts about unfamiliar (or not so familiar) subjects, so that readers can activate the relevant schemata related to the topic, being able to construct a coherent mental representation of the text (TOMITCH, 1991).

Findings from the present study support the claim that knowledge of text structure (TOMITCH, 2003), text type (NARVAEZ; VAN DEN BROEK; RUIZ, 1999), and genre (ZWAAN, 1991) can have beneficial effects on reading comprehension and recall. The participants who seemed to be reading the texts with specific strategies for the purported genre demonstrated better results in the reading comprehension questions. Based on this assumption, it seems reasonable to suggest that reading teachers include the teaching of text

structure, text types, and genres in their classes. Furthermore, besides explicit instruction, making use of texts from different text types and genres in the classroom may help readers to become aware of their specific features.

ROSCIOLI, Deise Caldart; TOMITCH, Lêda Maria Braga. A influência da expectativa do gênero textual na geração de inferências e na compreensão leitora de estudantes brasileiros de inglês como língua estrangeira. **Revista do Gel**, São Paulo, v. 11, n. 1, p. 73-109, 2014.

RESUMO: *Este estudo investigou a influência da expectativa do gênero textual na geração de inferências e na compreensão leitora de estudantes de Inglês como LE. Onze alunos do último semestre de Letras/Inglês da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) participaram desta pesquisa. O efeito da expectativa do gênero textual foi investigado através da categorização das inferências geradas e da compreensão leitora dos alunos após a leitura de um texto literário e de uma notícia. A coleta de dados foi realizada utilizando o Protocolo de Pausa (CAVALCANTI, 1989), na versão adaptada por Tomitch (2003), e perguntas de compreensão. As verbalizações provenientes do Protocolo de Pausa foram transcritas e categorizadas de acordo com o Modelo de Categorização de Inferências de Narvaez, van den Broek e Ruiz (1999). As respostas das perguntas foram analisadas e avaliadas. Os resultados desta pesquisa mostraram que a geração de inferências dos participantes não foi significativamente influenciada pela expectativa do gênero textual. Contudo, dados do Protocolo de Pausa e das perguntas de compreensão demonstraram que a tipologia textual influenciou a compreensão leitora desses participantes. Além disso, dados de participantes com excelente desempenho nas perguntas de compreensão evidenciaram que estes estavam controlando suas estratégias de leitura levando em consideração o gênero textual sendo lido.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Leitura. Geração de Inferências. Expectativa do Gênero Textual. Compreensão Textual.*

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Appendix I – Text A and instructions⁹

INSTRUCTION I: The following text is an excerpt from a news story published by Vadim Dubnov on New Times Newspaper, on January 2003. Please read this text just as you would normally read a news story.

INSTRUCTION II: The following text is an excerpt from a novel by Vadim Dubnov. Please read this text just as you would normally read a literary story.

They say that the Federal Security Service high-ranking officials were celebrating some sort of holiday that night. They also say that the hostages who managed to get through to the police heard the usual irritated voice on the other end: yes, we know, stay calm and wait. It seemed that if some of the hostages hadn't had cell phones, they would have stayed there together with the terrorists for the rest of the night (nobody would have known about their drama) until their relatives eventually sounded the alarm. ●

... A car that had just come from the direction of the Theatre Centre stopped at the gas station near Dubrovka, and I asked the driver if the street had been actually blocked off. The sound of nostalgic jazz was drifting from the interior of the car, and the driver seemed genuinely surprised by my question. He asked, "What happened?". "Has something happened?", a young gas station attendant also wanted to know. It was around midnight. Two hours had passed since the first announcement of the drama on Dubrovka. And almost three hours since the start of the second part of Nord-Ost... ●

A terrorist act in a capital is, undoubtedly, the cherished dream of any terrorist. It's the apogee of his sinister glory and the most solid proof of his

⁹ The font and space between lines were diminished due to length constraints. Either instruction I or II was presented for each text, followed by the appropriate instruction (in bold) to give the text a title based on the genre.

professional usefulness. After all, few manage to reach the top of the black list of the most successful. Maybe several dozen out of tens of thousands. ●

At the same time, from a practical standpoint, acts of terror in capitals – except of course, when terrorists direct planes at skyscrapers and blow up several night clubs a week – are not very effective in achieving the established goals if those goals involve frightening the most number of people. In that sense, Budyonovsk was more impressive. To seize a hospital in a town where everyone is everyone’s neighbor or a classmate is to seize the whole town. ●

Based on the information presented, give this **news story/novel** an appropriate title.

Appendix II – *Text B* and instructions

INSTRUCTION I: The following text is an excerpt from a news story published on New Times Newspaper, on January 1999. Please read this text just as you would normally read a news story.

INSTRUCTION II: The following text is an excerpt from a novel by Edward Cohen. Please read this text just as you would normally read a literary story.

On a Saturday morning in early August in 1999, a series of bizarre and inexplicable events occurred aboard the fifty-five-thousand-ton luxury liner S.S. Bretagne as it was preparing to sail from the Port of New York to Le Havre. ●

Claude Dessard, chief purser of the Bretagne, a capable and meticulous man, ran, as he was fond of saying, a “tight ship”. In the -fifteen years Dessard

had served aboard the Bretagne, he had never encountered a situation he had not been able to deal with efficiently and discreetly. Considering that the S.S. Bretagne was a French ship, this was high tribute, indeed. However, on this particular summer day it was as though a thousand devils were conspiring against him. ●

It was of small consolation to his sensitive Gallic pride that the intensive investigations conducted afterwards by the American and French branches of Interpol and the steamship line's own security forces failed to turn up a single plausible explanation for the extraordinary happenings of that day. Because of the fame of the persons involved, the story was told in headlines all over the world, but the mystery remained unsolved. ●

As for Claude Dessard, he retired from the Qe.Transatlantique and opened a bistro in Nice, where he never tired of reliving with his patrons that strange, unforgettable August day. It had begun, Dessard recalled, with the delivery of flowers from the President of the United States. One hour before sailing time, an official black limousine bearing government license plates had driven up to Pier 92 on the lower Hudson River. A man wearing a charcoal-gray suit had disembarked from the car, carrying a bouquet of thirty-six Sterling Silver roses. He had made his way to the foot of the gangplank and exchanged a few words with Alain Safford, the Bretagne's officer on duty. The flowers were ceremoniously transferred to Janin, a junior deck officer, who delivered them and then sought out Claude Dessard. ●

Based on the information presented, give this **news story/novel** an appropriate title.