

The genre-specific hypothesis of reading: Reading poetry and encyclopedic items[☆]

David Hanauer*

School of Education, Tel-Aviv University, Ramat-Aviv, Tel-Aviv 69978, Israel

Abstract

The experiment reported in this paper investigates the genre-specific hypothesis of reading in relation to the reading of poetry and encyclopedic items. Based on previous empirical research and theoretical positions, three hypotheses which differentiate between the reading of poetry and encyclopedic items in relation to surface information recall, reading time and self evaluations of levels of comprehension were proposed and tested. Using a within subjects design, 38 participants read and recalled four encyclopedic items and four poems. Random sampling methods were employed to choose the authentic texts used in this study. The results support all three of the genre-specific hypotheses and demonstrate the following processing differences between poetry and encyclopedic texts: (1) Reading poetry involves higher levels of surface information recall than encyclopedic texts; (2) Encyclopedic items are read at a faster rate than poems; (3) Poems are considered to be more difficult to understand than encyclopedic items. Accordingly, this study offers some empirical support to the genre-specific hypothesis of reading.

1. Introduction

Recent approaches to reading have proposed that genre can be used as a way of categorizing the reading process (Bhatia, 1993; Freedman and Medway, 1994a,b; Swales, 1990). Within this perspective, reading is considered to be a general umbrella term, which covers a wide range of specific reading phenomena affected by social, cognitive and textual variables. The underlying aim of these genre studies is to differentiate and, thereby, specify the particular aspects of reading specific genres.

Until recently, the term genre was mainly used as a literary term to describe historical groupings of texts (Todorov, 1991). Current research has reformulated the concept of genre. Genre as presently conceptualized involves the connection between specific prototypic language patterns, a standard way of reading and partic-

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* Phone: +972 3 640 7112; Fax: +972 3 640 9477; E-mail: davidha@ccsg.tau.ac.il

ular discursive functions (Bhatia, 1993; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1993; Freedman and Medway, 1994a,b; Marshall, 1991; Swales, 1990). In other words, genre is seen as the meeting ground between form, cognitive processing and social function. Unfortunately, most of the work conducted within the current genre-specific approach has avoided literary genre and has chosen instead to focus on academic or professional genre such as research reports (Swales, 1990) or legal texts (Bhatia, 1993).

Within the field of the empirical study of literature, the assumption that literary texts are read in a particular way has been proposed and researched quite extensively. In fact, the genre-specific hypothesis in relation to literary genre may be seen as a basic assumption of all research which specifically focussed on the way literary texts are read. Prominent examples of this direction in research are the work of Zwaan (1991, 1993), which focussed on the processing differences which result from a change in the external genre categorization of a text, and Schmidt's (1982) specification of macro-conventions that are applied when reading literary or non-literary genres.

One genre which has received relatively little attention from both the new genre theorists and the empirical approach to literature is the genre of poetry. Within the field of literary studies there is a wealth of theoretical positions relating to how poetry is read, but the body of knowledge relating to the way poetry is read based on empirical research is still rather limited. So far the main issues that have been related to are: the categorization of poetry (Hanauer, 1995, 1996a; Hoffstaedter, 1987), the conventions of reading poetry (Fairley, 1989; Thorne, 1989; Viehoff, 1986), the processing effects of specific poetic devices (Hoorn, 1996; van Peer, 1986, 1990), and the construction of meaning in poetry (Dias, 1987; Hanauer, 1996b; Harker, 1994; Shimron, 1980).

Following the genre research paradigm, the present paper will compare between the reading of the literary genre of poetry and the academic genre of encyclopedic items. The main aim of this comparison is to build on previous research by advancing our understanding of the way poetry is read. However, as the study is comparative in nature, genre-specific data in relation to the reading of encyclopedic texts will also be generated. As such, the present paper can be seen as further specifying work conducted within the field of the empirical study of literature and widening the frame of reference for research conducted by proponents of the genre-specific approach to reading.

2. The genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic texts

Within the field of literary studies, various researchers from different theoretical orientations have proposed that literary genres are very different from informational genres. This position has been presented by theorists who support both conventionalist and formalist positions.

In the formalist camp, Roman Jakobson's (1960) differentiation between poetry and encyclopedic items is based on the different inherent language functions of each

of these genres. Whereas the poetic function is an intrinsic quality of poetry, the referential function is an intrinsic quality of encyclopedic items. For Jakobson (1960), poetry is a genre of texts in which language patterns are perceived in a very conscious and attention demanding way. This form of language function is termed by Jakobson as the poetic function and is defined as: “The set towards the MESSAGE as such, focus on the message for its own sake is the poetic function of language” (1960: 356). The term message, as used by Jakobson, refers to the structure of the utterance itself and not its content. Thus, for Jakobson a poem is a text in which the reader is made consciously aware of the linguistic patterns of the text by the structure of the language itself.

The referential function involves a focus on the content of the message beyond the linguistic features of the text. As such, while the poetic function involves focussing on the internal relations between linguistic signs and other linguistic signs in the text, the referential function involves focussing on the external relations between linguistic signs and non-linguistic signs in the external world.

For Jakobson, the conscious presence of linguistic features in poetry is achieved through the unique way language is constructed in the poetic function. As stated by Jakobson: “The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination” (1960:358). According to Jakobson, when reading a poem, the reader will be confronted by a structure of similarities, regularities and repetitions. These equivalences will force the reader to reconstruct the hierarchical structure of the text. Instead of a linear string, the reader will stop to consider the structure of similarities and contrasts and will, thus, reconstruct the poem according to its specific language patterns. When the principle of equivalence is used as a principle of combination, the text is no longer a linear string but is subdivided and reconstructed according to the patterns of similarity and contrast of the formal features of the text.

The emphasis on the formal features of the poem itself and the non-linear hierarchical structure of those features brings into question the relationship between the linguistic and non-linguistic sign. The illusion of a direct relationship between the linguistic and non-linguistic sign is broken by the perceptible presence of the formal features of the poem. By emphasizing the illusory nature of the relationship between the linguistic and non-linguistic sign and by situating the linguistic sign within a structure of other linguistic signs, a multiplicity of potential meanings is achieved within the poem. For example, in poems, similarity in sound may be taken as a similarity in meaning or the connotative associations (rather than denotative precision) of a particular linguistic sign is used for meaning construction in poems. As presented by Jakobson, a poem is a structural whole in which all the formal features of language play a role. The whole poem can only be understood in relation to its parts and its parts can only be understood in relation to the whole poem. The reader perceives multiple meanings in the poem as result of the structure of similarities and contrasts in the language of the poem.

In contrast to the poetic function, for the referential function of language, equivalence plays a significant role only for the axis of selection in that a choice is made of the appropriate linguistic element from a repertoire of equivalent items. Language

strings are constructed on the basis of contiguity relations alone. Accordingly, encyclopedic items are read in a linear fashion. For the referential function of language, the linguistic sign and its world referent are seen as having a close and automatic relationship. This is, of course, an illusion but the linguistic sign is perceived as having a direct interpretive relationship with the non-linguistic sign. In encyclopedic texts, the word functions as proxy for an object, idea or emotion. No distance is perceived between the word and its referent. Accordingly, the meaning of the text is fixed by its external context and not by the internal structure of the text. The denotative meaning of the words of the text and the search for a single meaning are of central importance since the text is to be understood in relation to external world referent.

As seen in Table 1, according to the Jakobsonian framework central differences based on an analysis of the poetic and referential function can be defined for poetic and encyclopedic texts. The central differences between poems and encyclopedic texts relate to the focus of the reading task (content/form), the source of meaning construction (external referent/ internal structure), the resultant representation (single meaning/multiple meaning), the direction of the reading process (linear/non-linear), and use of the mental lexicon (denotative meaning/connnotative and associative meaning).

Table 1
Summary of differences between encyclopedic items and poetry according to Jakobson (1960)

Encyclopedic items	Poetry
1. Focus on content	1. Focus on linguistic features
2. Denotative precision	2. Connnotative/associative meaning
3. Single meaning	3. Multiple meanings
4. Importance of external referent	4. Importance of internal structure
5. Linearity	5. Non-linearity

Within the framework of conventionalist theories of literature, several researchers have proposed that the reading of literary texts is directed by a specific set of macro conventions. For example, differences between the genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic texts can be defined according to the macro-conventions proposed by Schmidt (1982, 1989) and Meutsch (1989). In this scheme, poetry reading will involve suspending the criteria of the truth value and usefulness of the poem and focussing on the aesthetic aspects of the text (the ‘aesthetic convention’). The reader will look for textual patterns that are characteristic of poetry and will produce multiple understandings on various different levels of the poem (the ‘polyvalence convention’). In contrast, the reading of an encyclopedic text will involve evaluating the truth and usefulness of the text in relation to the real world and the construction of a single understanding of the text (the ‘fact’ and ‘monovalence’ conventions).

The conventions that characterize poetry reading and encyclopedic item reading can be further specified by considering Culler’s (1975) classic analysis of structuralism. Culler (1975) proposed four conventions that are used for interpreting poetry.

The first convention relates to the status of the communicative act in poetry reading and is parallel to Schmidt's aesthetic convention. The convention of poetry reading is that the reader constructs the referents for the pronouns and the situation. The parallel convention for encyclopedic items is that the pronouns and the situation have a real world referent that the text refers to. The situation described is presumed to be a real one and not a fictional situation. The second convention relates to the reader's expectation of coherence in the poem. The aim of the reader is to see the totality of the poem by integrating as many linguistic and semantic elements as possible. The reader's expectation when reading an encyclopedic item is that the text will be informative. The reader does not expect to construct coherence through an in-depth analysis of the text but rather expects to be able to follow the coherence. The third convention relates to the social role of poetry. According to this convention, poetry is the genre in which significant statements are made. The social convention for encyclopedic items is that they convey information and do not have additional levels of meaning. The reader is not invited to construct additional meanings or to assign significance beyond the informative value of the text. The fourth convention relates to the on-line process of poetry reading. The reader must employ a series of micro-conventions that transform an opaque text into an intelligible one. The convention of poetry is that it should resist automatic understanding. The convention of encyclopedic items is that they are easily understandable and as transparent as possible. The reader should not need to work hard in order to make the text intelligible and produce a meaning for the text. As such the on-line meaning construction process should be both automatic and direct.

Table 2

Summary of differences between encyclopedic items and poetry according to Schmidt (1982, 1989), Meutsch (1989) and Culler (1975)

Encyclopedic items	Poetry
1. Evaluated in relation to criteria of True/false and useful/useless aspects of poem	1. Evaluated in relation to aesthetic
2. Single understanding of text	2. Multiple understandings of text
3. Real world situation	3. Fictional situation
4. 'Transparent' text	4. 'Opaque' text
5. Single level of meaning	5. Multiple levels of meaning
6. Informative	6. Human significance

Table 2 summarizes the main differences between the genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic items according to conventionalist approaches. As can be seen in the review and Tables 1 and 2, there is a significant degree of overlap between formalist and conventionalist theories of literature in relation to the genre differentiation between poetry and encyclopedic texts. The summary which follows, integrates both approaches in describing the reading of poetry and encyclopedic items.

Reading poetry: Reading a poem involves an interaction between the specific textual features of the poem and the literary conventions for reading poetry known

to the reader. Once the reader has identified the text as a poem, s/he will direct attention at the formal features of the poem and perceive specific formal patterns in the poem. The reader's experience as a reader of poetry, whether in a formal educational or informal context will affect the types of pattern that the reader is aware of and will look for. As a result of directing attention at specific language patterns that are incorporated in the poem, a wide range of meanings will be assigned to individual lexical items, groups of lexical items and specific formal features. While attention is directed towards the language patterns of the poem, the reading of the poem will proceed in a slow manner and will involve a non-linear reading process. While reading the poem, multiple schemata will be activated in a direct or associative manner and will be used, by the reader, in the on-going process of constructing of meaning. The reader will actively and consciously negotiate the meaning that is to be assigned by evaluating the semantic, emotive and formal structures of the poem. The reader's implicit and explicit knowledge of formal language patterns and conventions of poetry reading as well as general world knowledge are used as central information sources in this process. The reader has various possibilities for the construction of meaning and does not expect to find a single stable meaning for the poem.

Reading encyclopedic items: While reading an encyclopedic item, the reader will focus on the content of the text and will construct a real world referent for the item. The encyclopedic item is evaluated on the basis of its usefulness and truth value in relation to the real world situation that is constructed while reading the text. The reader expects the encyclopedic item to be informative and as intelligible and direct as possible. While reading the encyclopedic item the reader will aim for denotative precision in meaning construction and will not actively search for any additional meanings. The reader expects the encyclopedic item to have a single and stable meaning. The encyclopedic item will be read in a linear fashion and the reading process should proceed relatively quickly.

3. General design of study

The present study will use three global measures of reading in order to investigate the differences between the reading of poetry and the reading of encyclopedic items. The three measures chosen were: reading time, text comprehension judgements and surface information recall. Based on the theoretical positions presented above, the following genre-specific hypotheses of reading in relation to these measures and the genre of poetry and encyclopedic items can be proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Reading time: Significant differences will be found in the reading times for poetry and encyclopedic items. As a result of the non-linear reading process, explicit negotiation of the formal features of the poem, the search for additional meanings on various levels and the construction of multiple potential meanings for the whole poem, it is hypothesized that reading poetry will be a slow process that involves long reading times. As a result of the linear reading process, the focus on the informational content of the encyclopedic item, and the construction of a sin-

gle meaning on a single level, it is hypothesized that reading encyclopedic items will proceed in a relatively quick manner that involves short reading times.

Hypothesis 2. Comprehension judgements: Significant differences will be found in readers' judgements of their comprehension of poetry and encyclopedic items. As a result of the 'opaque' nature of poetry, the explicit negotiation of formal and semantic features, the construction of meaning on various levels, and the possibility of multiple understandings of the whole poem, it is hypothesized that the reading of poetry will be judged by readers as being difficult to understand. As a result of the 'transparent' nature of encyclopedic items, the automatic and direct processing of the formal aspects of the text and the construction of a single and stable understanding of the encyclopedic item, it is hypothesized that the reading of encyclopedic items will be judged by readers as being easy to understand.

Hypothesis 3. Surface information recall: Significant differences will be found in the amounts of surface information recalled when reading poetry and encyclopedic items. As a result of the search for linguistic patterns on various levels of the poem and the use of these formal patterns for the construction of meaning, it is hypothesized that reading poetry will involve high levels of recall for the specific lexical items and formal structures of the poem. It is further hypothesized that when reading poetry, surface information will be retained for long periods of time. As a result of the focus on informational content when reading an encyclopedic item and the construction of a real world referent, it is hypothesized that reading encyclopedic items will involve low levels of surface information recall.

4. Method

Participants: Thirty-eight participants took part in this study. All participants were native Hebrew speakers between the ages of 25–35. All the participants had completed B.A.s at Israeli Universities. None of the participants had had a university level education in the fields of literature or linguistics.

Materials: In order to avoid artificial genre definitions, random sampling techniques and authentic texts were used in this study. In all, eight authentic texts were used. Four of the eight texts were poems and four of the texts were encyclopedic items. The texts were chosen using random sampling techniques. The sampling frame for the poetry texts was four anthologies used for teaching Hebrew literature in introductory courses. The four anthologies were: *Young modern poetry* (Tzedka, 1986), *Modern Hebrew poetry* (Finer-Mintz, 1968), *Young poetry: An anthology* (Yaoz, 1980) and *The modern Hebrew poem itself* (Burnshaw et al., 1989). Using a random numbers table, ten poems were chosen and photocopied from each anthology. The set of forty poems was then randomly assigned a number from one to forty. Then, once again, using a random numbers table, the four poems used in this study were chosen. The four poems were: *The Bonfire* by David Rokach, *One day I will speak* by Naim Aridi, *The lament for Daniel's earth* by Natan Zach, and *Canaan* by Binyamin Galai (see Appendix A). The sampling frame for the encyclopedic items was the two main encyclopedias used in Israel – *The Encyclopedia Hebraica* and

The Encyclopedia Britannica in Hebrew. Using a random numbers table, twenty page numbers from each encyclopedia were chosen. On each page the shortest encyclopedic item was chosen and photocopied. Accordingly, twenty encyclopedic items were chosen from each encyclopedia. The complete set of forty encyclopedic items was then randomly assigned a number from one to forty. Then once again using a random numbers table, four encyclopedic items were chosen. The four encyclopedic items were: *Washingtonia: A distinct variety of palm tree*, *Sartre, Jean Paul*, *Samara: The ancient city*, *Knudsen, Jakob: Danish author* (see Appendix B). The eight texts chosen were photocopied and pasted in the middle of a white A4 page. The original typescript and titles were preserved.

In addition to the eight texts, eight ‘cloze’ versions of the texts were prepared for the surface information recall task. The cloze versions involved deleting five words from each text and replacing the words with an underlined empty space. To choose the words to be deleted, random sampling techniques were used. In each text the order of word presentation of content words was used as a way of providing a numerical value for each word. A random numbers table was then used to decide which words should be deleted. The same procedure was used for each text. The result of this procedure was eight cloze versions of the texts with five randomly deleted words in each text.

Tasks: Each subject completed the following tasks:

- (1) Read each text individually at a self regulated pace.
- (2) Without looking back at the text and immediately after having read the text, the participants were asked to rate on a scale from one to ten the level of their understanding of the text. At the far left of the rating scale above number one it stated ‘Partially understood’. At the far right of the rating scale above the number ten it stated ‘Fully understood’.
- (3) Without looking at the original text and immediately after having finished the reading of the text, the participants completed the cloze version of the text with the precise wording found in the original text. Participants were informed that paraphrases would not be considered correct answers.
- (4) Without looking back at the text and immediately after reading the text, the participants wrote a short seven line summary of the text.
- (5) At a one week delay and without looking back at the text, the participants once again completed the cloze version of the text with the precise wording found in the original text.

Procedure: The thirty-eight subjects were divided into two equal groups of nineteen. One group was the treatment group and the second group was a control group. Each subject was tested individually. The control group did not take part in the whole experiment but was only presented with the cloze versions of the texts. They were asked to complete the texts with the words that they thought were in the original text. The control group was actually involved in a production task, since they had never read the original texts. The control group was used to ensure that the recall measure of the treatment group was actually recall and not the result of a production task.

The participants from the treatment group were tested individually in a quiet room. At the very beginning of the experiment, the participants were told that they would be taking part in a reading experiment and that they should read the texts in their usual manner and in a way that they think is appropriate. A wide empty table and comfortable chair were provided for the participants. Each text was presented to the participants on an individual page and face down on the table. The participant was informed to read the text carefully at her/his own pace and to turn the text over once they were finished reading. A digital stop watch was used to time the reading of the whole text. The stopwatch was started when the participant turned the text over in order to read it and stopped when the participant placed the text face down on the table. The participants were told that the text would be followed by a reading comprehension exercise. Once the text had been handed back, the researcher presented the participants with the comprehension rating scale. The participants were instructed to relate to the whole scale in their ratings of the level of their understanding of the text. Once the rating scale had been handed back to the researcher, the summary task was presented to the participants. At the top of the page the subjects were requested to write a short seven line summary of the text. No more than five minutes was allowed for this task. The summary task was used as a filler task to avoid making participants focus only on the surface information in the texts. Once the summary task had been handed back, the cloze version of the text was presented to the participant. At the head of the page, it was clearly stated in bold capital letters that the precise wording of the text should be used in completing the recall task. Once the recall task was handed back to the researcher, the next text was presented. All eight texts and exercises were completed in one session. The sessions ranged from 50 minutes to 75 minutes long. The order of texts was different for each individual participant in each group. Before the testing process began and using a random numbers table, 19 random orders of the texts were prepared.

One week following the initial testing process, each participant from the treatment group returned to the researcher to complete the cloze version of all the texts. The cloze versions were completed without rereading the original texts.

Data analysis: In order to allow the comparison of reading times between texts with different word length, the raw reading time in seconds for the reading of the whole text was divided by the number of words in the text. The resultant score was a measure of reading time per word. Since the study involved a within-subject design, no adjustment was made to the reading time for individual differences.

As described above, for the surface information recall task the participants were required to recall the precise words used in the original text. Since five words had been randomly deleted and each correct answer was given a positive score, the possible range of scores for each participant on each text was from 0 to 5. In this analysis, Hebrew morphology was taken into account. Hebrew, as a semitic language, has a wealth of morphological structures which involve the multiple use of the linear affixation of stems and affixes and the non-linear combination of consonantal root and vocalic pattern (Berman, 1987; McCarthy, 1981; Ravid, 1990). Hebrew morphology involves inflections of nouns, verbs and adjectives to take into account gender, number, person (verbs) and tense (verbs). In addition, possession, propositions

and definite articles may be expressed through affixed inflectional markers. In the current analysis, a word was considered the original word if the precise consonantal root plus the exact morphological inflections for gender, number, person and tense were preserved. Changes in the morphological inflections for possession, propositions and definite articles were not considered a reason to discount the word.

5. Results

The first issue that has to be related to in the results is the nature of the surface information recall task conducted by the participants. As pointed out above, surface information recall was measured using a cloze task. In order to test whether the participants scores are the result of a recall or a production task, the results of the treatment and control groups need to be compared. Table 3 summarizes the means and standard deviations for the control and treatment groups for poems and encyclopedic items and for the immediate and delayed recall task.

Table 3

Means and standard deviations for the control and treatment groups, for poems and encyclopedic items and for the immediate and delayed recall task

Group	Genre recall	Immediate	Delayed recall
Treatment	Poem	3.22 (0.81)	2.50 (0.68)
Control	Poem	1.24 (0.39)	–
Treatment	Enc. item	2.42 (0.64)	2.25 (0.56)
Control	Enc. item	0.76 (0.29)	–

As can be seen in Table 3, there are big differences in the mean number of precise words defined by the control and treatment groups. For the poems, the treatment group correctly defined 1.98 words more than the control group. For the encyclopedic items, the treatment group defined 1.66 words more than the control group. A two-way ANOVA was calculated to test the significance of this result. A significant main effect was found for group, $F(1,72)=193.43$, $p<0.001$. No significant interaction between group and genre was found. The significant difference and the direction of the result suggest that the treatment group and the control group were involved in different tasks, with the treatment group recalling and not producing the precise wording of the texts.

The central hypotheses of this study predict significant differences between the genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic items in relation to reading time, text comprehension judgements and surface information recall. Table 4 summarizes the

means, grand means and standard deviations for four poems and four encyclopedic items for immediate recall, reading time per word and comprehension judgements for the treatment group. On the basis of the grand means, several trends can be defined in relation to the three hypotheses. As proposed in hypothesis 1, it seems that encyclopedic items are read at a faster rate than poems. As predicted in hypothesis 2, it seems that poems are considered to be more difficult to understand than encyclopedic items and as proposed in hypothesis 3, the precise wording of poems seem to be more highly recalled than the precise wording of encyclopedic items.

Table 4

Means, standard deviations and grand means for four poems and four encyclopedic items for immediate recall, reading time per word and comprehension judgements

Genre	Text	Immediate recall	Reading time	Comprehension judgements
Poem	Bonfire	3.05 (1.03)	3.58 (2.73)	2.53 (1.58)
Poem	One day	3.58 (1.35)	2.57 (2.05)	6.39 (1.62)
Poem	Daniel's earth	3.42 (0.96)	1.56 (0.84)	4.37 (2.39)
Poem	Canaan	2.84 (1.17)	1.84 (1.14)	3.32 (2.06)
Poem – grand means		3.22 (0.81)	2.38 (1.59)	4.15 (1.07)
Enc. item	Washingtonia	1.53 (0.96)	1.31 (0.70)	5.05 (2.22)
Enc. item	Sartre	3.32 (0.82)	1.20 (0.62)	8.05 (1.47)
Enc. item	Samara	2.89 (0.94)	1.38 (0.58)	7.42 (2.12)
Enc. item	Knudsen	1.95 (1.18)	1.78 (1.09)	6.21 (2.07)
Enc. item – grand means		2.42 (0.64)	1.42 (0.73)	6.68 (1.19)

In order to evaluate the above analysis of the descriptive data, a MANOVA was calculated using genre as the independent variable and immediate surface information recall, reading time per word and comprehension ratings as three dependent variables for the treatment group. Hotellings' T^2 multivariate generalization of the univariate t value was used. The MANOVA revealed a highly significant effect for genre (Hotellings' $T^2=1.79$, $p<0.001$). Since a significant multivariate effect was found, univariate F -tests were calculated to determine which variables contributed to the overall difference. The univariate F -tests were significant for all three variables: recall, $F(1,36)=11.45$, $p<0.002$; reading time per word, $F(1,36)=5.67$, $p<0.02$; and

comprehension judgements, $F(1,36)=41.25$, $p<0.001$. In sum, the inferential statistics presented above support the hypothesis that significant differences exist between the genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic items in relation to immediate recall, reading time and comprehension judgements.

The final analysis conducted related to the second part of hypothesis 3. This hypothesis predicts higher amounts of surface information for poems than for encyclopedic items both in the immediate recall task and the one week delayed recall task. As can be seen in Table 3, a comparison of the means for the immediate and delayed recall task suggest that although initially greater amounts of surface information are recalled for poems than for encyclopedic items, this effect is not long term. In the delayed condition, only 0.25 more words are recalled for poems than for encyclopedic items. A repeated measures, two-way ANOVA was calculated to test the significance of this result. The interaction between genre and time of recall was found to be significant, $F(1,72)=10.50$, $p<0.005$, and significant main effects were found for both genre, $F(1,72)=19.00$, $p<0.001$, and time of recall, $F(1,72)=17.34$, $p<0.001$. Post hoc comparisons of cell means using the Scheffe method were conducted to further understand the significant interaction. The immediate recall/poem condition was found to be significantly different from the other three conditions. This result does not support the prediction of hypothesis 3 that in poems surface information will be recalled for long periods of time or the hypothesis that the genre of poetry will be significantly different on the delayed recall task than the genre of encyclopedic item.

6. Discussion

The results of the present study support the hypotheses that significant differences exist between the genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic items in relation to immediate recall, reading time and comprehension judgements. As such, the current study offers some empirical evidence which supports the genre-specific hypothesis of reading. The basic claim which is presented here is that the genre of a text will influence the way that text is read and accordingly, differences in measures of reading will be found for different genres.

Prevailing conceptions of literacy support the position that reading is a multifaceted and situated phenomenon (Baynham, 1995; Bazerman, 1988; Freedman and Medway, 1994a,b; Kress, 1989; Swales, 1994). The current study differentiates between genres by investigating processing and representation differences. As such, this study upholds the position presented by Hanauer (1997) that differences in processing and levels of representation can be used to categorize genres. The description of reading that emerges is of a pool of potential processing modes and potential levels of representation that manifest themselves in different ways in relation to specific genres, tasks and social situations.

In the review section of this paper theoretical literary and linguistic positions were introduced which proposed differences between the genre of poetry and the genre of encyclopedic items. The results of the current study demonstrate that these two gen-

res are different in relation to the way they are read. In general, the reading of poetry can be characterized as involving slow reading times, high levels of surface information recall and difficulties in comprehension. The reading of encyclopedic items can be characterized as involving fast reading times, low levels of surface information recall and high levels of comprehension.

This pattern of results is consistent with the positions taken by the theorists presented in the review section of this paper, however, it should be noted that the data presented here relates to the global picture of reading for the genres considered in this study. The theories presented in the review section propose a much more detailed analysis of the differences between these two genres. To further differentiate between poetry and encyclopedic items, studies which use psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic paradigms are needed. Of specific interest may be the role and effect of textual features in various genres. For instance, the processing effects of rhyme, graphic form or figurative language in different genre.

7. Methodological issues

The present study raises several methodological issues that need further elaboration. The research reported in this paper investigates genre differences using authentic materials chosen through random sampling. While this method allows the generalization of the results to the genre as a whole, it does not allow the presentation of specific answers in relation to the causes of the differences between poetry and encyclopedic items. As presented in the review section of this paper, arguments have been put forward that claim that differences in processing result from formal textual features and/or conventions of reading. The present study cannot differentiate between these options but rather offers some general processing data relating to the overall effects of reading poetry and reading encyclopedic items. For the field of the empirical study of literature the role of formal features and conventions of reading is an important one. Further research which manipulates specific structural features and conventions of reading should be conducted. This will allow the evaluation of the interaction between these groupings of factors. Using experimental designs on a limited number of variables, much greater specificity than the claims of the current study can be attained.

The second methodological issue relates to the reading time measure. As reported in the methodology section, the reading times were measured using a digital stopwatch for the reading of a whole page of text. As such the reading time reported above is a measure of the total exposure time of the participant to the text. This exposure time includes all of the mental processes which were involved in the processing of the text. As such, the reading time measure used in this study may be a much more inclusive measure than that used in other studies. In addition, participants reading times were not measured with the aid of a software computer program while reading the texts on a computer screen. Although, the use of computers is a more exact way of measuring reading times, for the purposes of the present study it was also a very artificial method which in itself may affect reading times. At present,

the reading of Hebrew poetry on a computer is a very unusual situation. Therefore, the current study used the more usual setting of reading poetry on pages.

8. Concluding remarks

Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) in their seminal work propose that the processing of texts is directed by a textual schema. In relation to literature, this position has been directly supported and developed by Zwaan (1993). The present paper continues this direction in research by employing the genre comparison paradigm to investigate the differences between the reading of poetry and encyclopedic items. The results reveal differences between the two genres investigated and thus in general support the genre-specific hypothesis. This study demonstrates that the genre of a text is an important factor in the process of reading.

Appendix A: Poems

Canaan

בנען

בנען, הוּ בנען!
 בשָׁכֶם, בְּבֵית-לְחֶם,
 הָיוּ הַיּוֹתִימִים רוֹחֲשִׁים.
 אֶךְ כָּאֵן, אֱלֹהֵי,
 כָּאֵן כְּרָכִים סוֹעְרִים,
 כָּאֵן קִנֵּי נַחֲשִׁים.
 שְׁבַעִים דְּרָכֵי-מֶלֶךְ עוֹלוֹת לְעִיר רוּמָא
 וְשֶׁבַע דְּרָכִים יֵשׁ לְלֵב.
 אֶךְ חַד הוּא, רַק חַד הוּא הָאֶרֶח הַבְּיָתָה.
 יְהִי נָא סוֹעֵר, יְהִי נָא שְׁלוֹ!

עַל כֵּן בִּלְלֵל שְׁפַעִים לְכָל עוֹחַ –
 אִם אָנוּ עוֹלִים לְרֵאשׁ גָּבַע,
 פּוֹלְטִים טַבְּעוֹת-שֶׁל-עֵשֶׂן לְאֵין סְפוֹר
 וְצוּפִים – לְמוֹל דְּרָךְ בְּאֶרֶץ-שֶׁבַע

The Bonfire

המדורה

הִנֵּה הַשְּׁעוֹן עוֹצֵר מְחוּגָיו.
 וְהֵים, הֵים בְּלֶבֶד קוֹצֵב פְּעִימוֹת חֶרְדָּתָהּ.

הוא מציג את המורשת הספרותית והחברתית של העיר, ואת תרומתה לתחום המחקר. המחקר נעשה על ידי פרופסור יעקב כנוסן, ראש המכון לחקר התרבות והמורשת, ונעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות.

P.M. Mitchell, *A History of Danish Literature*, 1957; R. Andersen, *J.K.*, 1958.

המחקר נעשה על ידי פרופסור יעקב כנוסן, ראש המכון לחקר התרבות והמורשת, ונעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות.

המחקר נעשה על ידי פרופסור יעקב כנוסן, ראש המכון לחקר התרבות והמורשת, ונעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות.

Appendix B: Encyclopedic items

המחקר נעשה על ידי פרופסור יעקב כנוסן, ראש המכון לחקר התרבות והמורשת, ונעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות. המחקר נעשה בשיתוף פעולה עם מוסדות חינוך ותרבות.

ס' היתה עיר חשובה גם כשחזרה הבירה לבגדאד, ובני כת שיעית גדולה („שיעה של י"ב") עלו לרגל אליה, בשל קדושתה אצלם. ס' חרבה ביה"ב המאוחרים, וסופרים מהמאה ה 14 מתארים אותה כהרבה ברובה.

G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 53-56, 1905; E. Herzfeld, *Die Ausgrabungen von S.*; VI: *Die Geschichte der Stadt S.*, 1948.

Sartre

סאָרטֶר, ז'אן פּוֹל (1905–), סופר, מחזאי והוגה דיעות צרפתי, דמות ציבורית ופוליטית ומאבות התורה הפילוסופית הנקראת אָקזיסטֶנְציאַליזם, המת' רכות במהות קיומו של הפרט בעולמו. סארטר נולד בפאריס. הוא התייתם מאביו בגיל רך וגדל בבית סבו. בשנים 1935–1942 הרצה על פילר סופיה ולימד בבתי-ספר תיכוניים. בפרוץ מלחמת העולם השנייה שירת בצבא צרפת ונשבה בידי הגרמנים, אך שוחרר לאחר שנה, ובשנים 1941–1945 נמנה עם חברי תנועת ההתנגדות לגרמנים בצרפת הכבושה-ה"רויס-טאנס".

את הרומאן הראשון שלו, "הבחילה", כתב בשנת 1938, ואתרי כן פירסם מחקרים פילוסופיים, ביוגרפיה של מארסל פרוסט, נובלות ורומאנים, וכן מחזות, שהידועים שבהם הם "בדלתיים סגורות". "ידיים מלוכלכות" ו"גידוני אלטונה". יחד עם סימון דה בובואר, סופרת ולוחמת לזכויות הנשים, חברתו בחיים, יסד את כתב העת הספרותי "זמנים מודרניים", בו כתב מאמרים רבים. בשנת 1964 סירב מגימוקים עקרוניים לקבל את פרס נובל לספרות, שהוצע לו בעבור ספרו האוטוביוגרפי "מליו". היה זה המקרה הראשון של סירוב לקבל את פרס נובל בכל תקופת קיומו של פרס זה (ראה נובל, פרט).

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David Hanauer is Lecturer for Literacy at the School of Education at Tel-Aviv University and a research member of the Unit of Human Development at Tel-Aviv University. His research integrates issues and research methodologies from literary theory, reading research and literacy research. He has published a series of articles on literary text reading with a special interest in the specific aspects of poetry reading and literacy education. His studies have appeared within *Poetics*, *Poetics Today*, *Cognitive Linguistics*, *Language Awareness* and *Teaching and Teacher Education*.