

A comparative study of the previous and the new English language textbook: Pre-university book versus Vision 3*

Mavadat Saidi**

Assistant Professor of TEFL, Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran.

Abstract

The current comparative study aimed to juxtapose the newly compiled English textbook for the students in the third grade of senior high school, Vision 3 and the previously taught English textbook for pre-university students. To this end, 130 experienced teachers, with the experience of teaching both textbooks, were asked to complete an eclectic checklist comprising 38 items and evaluating the book in terms of nine major criteria, namely general considerations, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading, writing, pronunciation supplementary materials, tasks, and activities. Following that, 20 teachers were interviewed to enrich the results of the quantitative data. Overall, the results revealed the teachers' contentment with the newly developed English textbook. In particular, the mean values indicated that English teachers rated the speaking and listening sections as the most satisfactory parts while they ranked the supplementary materials criterion as the least satisfactory one in Vision 3. Indeed, they believed that notwithstanding the dramatically positive changes in Vision 3, the book still requires undergoing major revisions to act as a rich source for enabling the EFL students to communicate fluently, accurately, and effectively. In this regard, the findings would benefit the materials developers to locate the areas for further modifications.

Keywords: *English textbook, Evaluation, Pre-university English textbook, Textbook evaluation, Vision 3.*

*Received: 2020/11/19

Accepted: 2021/05/19

**E-mail: m.saidi@sru.ac.ir

Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that textbooks are important elements and play a key role in the ELT curriculum (Richards, 2001). Textbooks provide a framework for managing both teaching and learning procedures (Byrd, 2001). However, there are arguments for and against using them in educational contexts. The advocates point to the merits of using textbooks such as regulating the syllabus, providing a set of appropriate and well-organized texts and tasks, giving teachers a sense of security, and leaving a purposeful image of the courses in the students' minds. Contrarily, the opponents believe that using textbooks confines the teachers' creativity by presenting a predefined set of linguistic input and thereby, fails to address the different needs of the students with various levels and learning styles (Ur, 1996).

Nevertheless, fluctuating between these two extremes has never discredited the importance of textbooks. Lying between the two extremes, there is an option calling for selecting textbooks, unfolding their merits, and supplementing their shortcomings (Ansari & Babaii, 2002). Considering a textbook as a tool in a curriculum, the teacher is obliged to know not only how to make the most of it but also to gauge its value (Hutchinson & Waters, 1993; Williams, 1983). In this sense, textbook evaluation seems to be an educational imperative (Salehi & Amini, 2016) especially when new textbooks are introduced into the ELT curriculum in an EFL setting with its special limitations (Ellis, 1997; Williams, 1983).

Textbook analysis reveals the degree of congruity between the presented materials and objectives of a given English language curriculum (Williams, 1983). Evaluating textbooks enhances the teachers' awareness and command of the content, its merits and demerits (Hutchinson, 1987; Littlejohn, 2011; Sheldon, 1988) and contributes to updating the teachers' knowledge of the most recent developments in the field (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). It is conceived of as a prerequisite for meeting the learners' needs (Mirzaei & Tabatabaei, 2017) due to the tremendous impact of textbooks on teaching and learning procedures (Torki & Chalak, 2017).

English textbooks in the Iranian mainstream education have long been compiled taking no heed of EFL learners' communicative needs (Ahmadisafa, Ghonchehpour, Malekmohamamdi, Seifi, & Zekrati, 2017). However, a new series of English textbooks, Prospect and Vision, have been developed to make amends for the weaknesses of previous ones (Ahmadisafa et al., 2017). Most recently, Vision 3 has been introduced, planned to be taught to the students in the third grade of senior high school, currently known as the 12th grade of high school.

A host of studies have attempted to evaluate the books taught in junior and senior high schools in Iran. However, since Vision 3 has just been entered mainstream education, no study has yet focused on this textbook and its potential strengths and weaknesses have not been unveiled. Bearing this in mind, the current study tried to compare the newly developed English book into the Iranian mainstream education, Vision 3, designed for the third grade of senior high school with the previous English textbook for pre-university students through eliciting the English teachers' viewpoints to unravel the major revisions it had and the weak points to be overcome.

The findings of the current study would enrich the theoretical and empirical literature and raise the material developers' awareness of the merits and demerits of the newly developed English textbook. In such an educational context like Iran's in which the textbooks are exploited as a tool for controlling large classes and leading intensive timetables, textbook evaluation sensitizes the teachers to the strengths and weaknesses of textbooks "so that optimum use can be of their strong points, whilst their weaker areas can be strengthened through adaptation or by substituting material from other books" (Cunningsworth, 1995, p.5). Since Vision 3 is introduced in the last grade of senior high school, before the students' entrance into the universities, it is of utmost significance. Indeed, it should provide the students with a platform for complying with academic requirements in the general and specific English courses they would take and present them with the lexico-grammatical resources they may need in fulfilling their university instructors' expectations. Entering university equals delving into the

current academic world in which English is the medium of information dissemination and circulation. Hence, the textbook in this stage seems to be of higher prominence to the students. Vision 3 was first used in the academic year 1397-1398 (2018- 2019). A comparative study of the previous English textbook for pre-university students and Vision 3 allows for unfolding the strengths and weaknesses of the two textbooks and thereby, enables the teachers to get involved in the evaluation and modification process (Ellis, 1997). Indeed, teachers' views and experiences provide invaluable insights for enhancing the quality of the textbook and aligning it to the Iranian students' communicative needs. Furthermore, the current study seems to be one step ahead of the existing textbook evaluation ones in that it addressed a newly introduced textbook and its previously developed counterpart in the English curriculum in Iran by eliciting the discernment of the teachers as one of its main users.

Review of Literature

Textbooks have been favored and disfavored in the existing literature. The advocates have considered textbooks as a framework that leads the educational programs. They have also highlighted their role in framing the students' perceptions of the purposefulness of the course. Textbooks have further been viewed as a source of security and support for novice teachers. On the other hand, opponents have warned against the failure of ready-made materials to meet the various needs of different groups of students. They have also leveled criticism on the use of textbooks and their preset sequences of input as a teacher-restricting tool with which the teachers' creativity is circumscribed (Ur, 1996).

These arguments and counterarguments have resulted in three options including using, abandoning and selecting and supplementing textbooks (Ansari & Babaii, 2002). To take the third approach, which seems to be the moderate one, textbook evaluation has been used. Through revealing general, linguistic, pedagogical, and technical features of the materials, it depicts the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks (Williams, 1983). A host of scholars have argued for the contributing role of textbook evaluation. In this regard, Hutchinson &

Waters (1993) believed that textbook evaluation reveals the degree to which it can gear to a given set of objectives. It also keeps the teachers informed of the nature of language and learning (Cunningsworth, 1995; Hutchinson, 1987) and provides them with a good control over the content (Sheldon, 1988), and thereby, enables them to adopt and adapt it more realistically (McDonough & Shaw, 2003).

Several studies have focused on evaluating ELT textbooks due to their vital role. Ranalli (2002) evaluated the intermediate-to-advanced levels of *Headway*. The results revealed that the book adapted the presentation-practice-production pattern and included various controlled exercises. Moreover, it was shown that the book failed to prepare the learners to handle unexpected situations. Dominguez (2004) analyzed the conversations in *New Interchange* in terms of gender representation and found out that the book included multicultural situations and meet the learners' needs while taking a gender-balanced approach. Further, Vellenga (2004) evaluated ELT textbooks concerning the pragmatic characteristics. Litz (2005) also evaluated the English textbook taught in Korean universities. Iraj (2007) analyzed *Interchange* textbooks considering communicative and task-based methods. He found out that despite the high capability of this book series among English teachers and learners, it failed to follow the procedures of these methods.

In another study, Tok (2010) evaluated *Spot On*, the English book taught in Turkey and demonstrated its appropriacy. Juan (2010) also evaluated *English College*, the book taught in Chinese universities. The results indicated that despite considering the cultural points, the textbook failed to provide adequate information about diverse cultures. Besides, Ahmadisafa, Moradi, and Hamzavi (2015) evaluated the *Top Notch* book series from the teachers' and learners' point of view. They concluded that the book could develop intercultural competence.

On the other hand, the English textbooks taught in Iranian mainstream education have been evaluated. In this regard, Ansary (2004) investigated the strong and weak points of Iranian high school English textbooks and concluded that the formats of those books were

not appealing and the illustrations were not useful and high-quality. He also found out that the reading parts were not well-organized and the students' background knowledge was not taken into account. Hosseini (2007) also evaluated ELT materials taught in Iranian high schools. The findings revealed the mere focus on reading skill especially at pre-university and senior high school levels. Furthermore, Jahangard (2007) analyzed various English textbooks taught in high schools. He referred to the challenging topics as merit whereas lack of adequate attention to the speaking skill was shown to be a weakness. Ghorbani (2011) also analyzed English Book 1 taught in Iranian senior high schools and demonstrated the high quality of the paper and printing while pointed to the lack of a well-balanced pattern of presentation of four language skills.

In another set of studies and focusing on the new generation of English textbooks, Bemani and Jahangard (2014) also evaluated the seventh grade English textbook. They argued that although the textbook could meet the students' needs to some extent, it still needed to be modified concerning various skills and cultural issues. Evaluating the same book, Ahmadi and Derakhshan (2016) found out the English teachers' positive attitudes toward listening and speaking skills and their dissatisfaction with the way writing and reading skills were covered. Also, Ahmadisafa and Farahani (2016) pointed to an inefficient presentation of cultural topics and their failure in forming and enhancing the students' intercultural competence. More recently, Nejati, Cheraghi, and Naseri's (2018) study confirmed the acceptable degree of compatibility of CLT with the exercise and activities in this book. In a more relevant study to the current one, Jamalvandi (2014) evaluated the pre-university textbook. The results indicated that more than half of English teachers believed that the book could fulfill the students' needs. However, they mostly referred to the deficit presentation of cultural issues in the book.

Reviewing the existing literature shows the dominance of textbook evaluation of book series taught in the private sector. Nevertheless, a host of scholars have analyzed the textbooks previously taught in high

schools and pre-university schools and currently taught in junior high schools. It seems that all these studies adopted a post-use approach in textbook evaluation (Ellis, 1997) and the books have not been scrutinized in the first year of their introduction to the curricula. Moreover, a deeper and more extensive evaluation of EFL materials currently taught in public schools by experienced teachers is required (Jahangard, 2007). Since Vision 3 was first introduced in the academic year 1397-1398 (2018-2019) and due to the significance of textbook evaluation, the current study attempted to unravel twelfth grade English teachers' attitudes toward it through adopting a while-use evaluation approach.

Method

Design and Context of the Study

The study enjoyed a mixed method design, adopting both qualitative and quantitative approaches. First, the participants completed a checklist and then, twenty teachers were interviewed to supplement and clarify the obtained quantitative data.

Participants

The participants of the current study were 130 English teachers of the third grade of senior high school (so-called 12th grade), whose teaching experience ranged from 5 to 15 years and were teaching the newly published book and have been teaching the previous English textbook for pre-university students. Hence, they had the experience of teaching both books under the study. They were teaching at public schools in Tehran and Qom, and were included in the study through convenient sampling procedure. Their age ranged from 27 to 52. The teachers held BA (81), MA (41), and Ph.D. (8) degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) (82), English Literature (28), and English Translation (20). Out of 130 participants, twenty teachers voluntarily participated in the interview, that is, they expressed their willingness to be interviewed at the end of their completed checklist. They held BA (8), MA (9), and PhD (3) in TEFL and their concern with participating in the interview and sharing their insights seemed to be justified by their field of study.

Material

English (1) and (2) was designed for pre-university students in all majors by Birjandi, Anani Sarab, and Samimi (1381). It included eight lessons and each lesson consisted of three main sections, namely Reading, Vocabulary, and Grammar. Vision 3, the third book in “English for Schools” series is designed by Alavimoghaddam, Kheirabadi, Rahimi, and Davari (2018) to cater for the needs of the students in the third grade of senior high school in all majors. It was first introduced into the mainstream education in the academic year 1397-1398 (2018-2019) including three lessons. Each lesson consisted of nine sections, namely Get Ready, Conversation, New Words and Expressions, Reading, Vocabulary Development, Grammar, Listening and Speaking, Writing, and What You Learned.

Instrumentation

An eclectic checklist, applied by Shahmohammadi (2018) was utilized encompassing ten subcategories, namely General considerations, Vocabulary, Grammar, Speaking, Listening, Writing, Reading, Pronunciation, Supplementary materials and tasks, and Activities. It was driven from frameworks put forth by Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979), McDonough and Shaw (2003), Tomlinson (2003), and Razmjoo (2010). As an eclectic checklist, it took heed of such criteria as the aims, methodology, organization and layout of the materials, which made it a circumstantiated instrument (Sheldon, 1988). The checklist consisted of 38 Likert-scale items from Poor (1), Fair (2), Good (3), and Excellent (4). Three Ph.D. holders in TEFL with more than 10 years of teaching and researching experiences were given the checklist to check its validity. Additionally, Cronbach alpha was calculated as 0.89 to check its reliability. Furthermore, the English teachers were interviewed to elicit their insights and enrich the quantitative data. Taking into account the results of the quantitative phase of the study and the existing checklists, three questions were posed to be asked in the interview session post hoc. The questions were given to the experts who had already checked the validity of the utilized

checklist to be reviewed and revised. The following questions were finalized and asked in one session:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the twelfth-grade English book?
2. What are your suggestions for overcoming its weaknesses?
3. In your opinion, what is the reason underlying teachers' highest level of satisfaction with the listening and speaking sections and the lowest level of satisfaction with the supplementary materials?

Procedures

The teachers were given the checklist through email or social media and were asked to complete the checklist. At the end of the checklist, they were asked to jot down their phone number if they were willing to attend the interview session. A total of 130 English teachers filled out the questionnaire and 20 teachers expressed their agreement to answer the interview questions. The researcher set an appointment with those twenty teachers and interviewed them individually. The interview sessions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used and the mean values and frequency counts were obtained for the checklist items. The content of the teachers' responses to the interview questions was also scrutinized and analyzed.

Results

The findings of the study are presented for each subcategory of the checklist for Vision 3. Nevertheless, since pre-university English textbook lacked several sections, those parts were left blank by the respondents. In this regard, the Listening, Speaking, Writing, and Pronunciation items of the checklist were unanswered for the pre-university English textbook. The results of comparative analysis of the two textbooks are presented below.

General Considerations

The first criterion is general considerations. Considering Vision 3, the results reveal that the teachers are more satisfied with the directions for the presentation of language items. Following this, the teachers are quite satisfied with the way content is related to the learner's culture and

context. Nevertheless, they are more satisfied with the cultural sensitivity considered in pre-university textbook. In general, the teachers express their higher degree of content with the general considerations in Vision 3.

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics for General Considerations

Items	Mean Vision 3	Mean Pre- university	Mean of the Criteria For Vision 3	Mean of the Criteria for Pre- university
The textbook takes into account the current accepted methods of ESL/EFL.	2.4	1.65		
It gives directions for presentation of language items.	3.6	1.42	3.04	1.74
It relates content to the learner's culture and context.	3.07	1.95		
Cultural sensitivity has been considered.	3.25	2.3		
It has authentic and real use of language.	2.9	1.5		

A comparison between the new and old English textbook in terms of general considerations demonstrates that the newly developed book needs to be modified in terms of the application of updated teaching methods of ESL/EFL and inclusion of more authentic and relevant samples of language use.

Vocabulary

The second criterion addresses the presentation of vocabulary. As Table 2 illustrates, most of the teachers are satisfied with the selection of the vocabulary and repetition and recycling of the words in Vision 3.

Likewise, they refer to the appropriate load of vocabulary in pre-university English textbook. On the other hand, it seems that English teachers believe that the distribution of words across chapters and the whole book and their presentation in contexts and situations needed to undergo substantial modifications in pre-university English textbook and the same problem still exists in Vision 3. Overall, the English teachers were more satisfied with the vocabulary sections in Vision 3 compared to this section in its previous counterpart.

Table 2.*Descriptive Statistics for Vocabulary*

Items	Mean Vision 3	Mean Pre- university	Mean of the Criteria For Vision 3	Mean of the Criteria for Pre- university
It presents vocabulary in appropriate contexts and situations.	2.6	2.11		
The selection of the vocabulary is based on specified criteria.	3.6	2.64	3.04	2.45
Load of vocabulary is appropriate to the level of learners.	3.2	3.07		
Words are efficiently repeated and recycled across the book.	3.2	1.8		
Distribution of the vocabulary across chapters and the whole book is good.	2.60	2.67		

The content analysis of the interviews reveals that the teachers point to contextualizing words through including visual elements such as pictures, photos, etc., providing examples, presenting synonyms, opposites, and definition as the strengths of Vision 3. The results of the

interviews also demonstrate the teachers' satisfaction with the sections which aim to expand the students' lexical knowledge.

Grammar

As Table 3 displays, the teachers assert that the grammar sections in Vision 3 provide adequate models of the target structures. They also state that developing communicative competence is covered to some extent whereas more emphasis is needed to be put on incidental recycling of the grammatical structures and their contextualization. Similarly, they assert that grammar sections in previous textbook provide adequate models of the grammatical structures but is deficient in recycling the grammatical points.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics for Grammar

Items	Mean Vision 3	Mean Pre- university	Mean of the Criteria For Vision 3	Mean of the Criteria for Pre- university
It stresses communicative competence in teaching structural items.	2.6	1.65		
It provides adequate models featuring the structure to be taught.	2.76	2.46	2.31	1.85
Grammar is contextualized.	2.20	1.85		
Grammar is introduced explicitly and reworked incidentally throughout the book.	1.70	1.44		

On the whole, the teachers seem to be lowly content with the grammar sections in the newly developed English book. The results of the interviews also confirmed this dissatisfaction. The teachers mostly

refer to inadequate number of activities and exercise for consolidating the presented points. They stated that including a new grammatical point without providing any explanation, and accompanied by a few mechanistic type of exercises hinders the development of communicative competence among the students. The teachers also point to allocating a large bulk of each lesson to teaching structural points as one of the major drawbacks of Vision 3, which relegates the book to a compiled set of structural lessons with few communicative objectives.

Moreover, the teachers complain about the lack of thematic coherence and relevance of three sections of the book which deal with the grammatical knowledge, that is, Grammar, See Also, and Writing. They elaborate that since no link exists among these three sections and each touches upon a single grammatical issue separately, presenting and consolidating new sections are time-consuming in the classroom. This irrelevant arrangement of these parts leads to higher cognitive loading and debilitates effective learning of grammatical points.

Speaking, Listening, and Writing

The next three criteria deal with the speaking, listening, and writing skills. These sections were absent in pre-university English textbook. Hence, the teachers responded to the relevant items taking into account only Vision 3. As Table 4 shows, the teachers have the highest degree of satisfaction with the relevance of the speaking sections to the learners' background. Further, they point out that the speaking sections can involve the learners in meaningful communication. However, they refer to the inadequacy of the activities and tasks for developing and enhancing the learners' speaking skills.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics for Speaking

Items	Mean	Mean of the Criteria for Vision 3
Speaking tasks are complete, appropriate, and adequate.	2.75	

It includes speech situations relevant to the learners' background.	3.38	3.12
The speaking activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication.	3.33	

Considering the listening skill, the results show that the teachers are satisfied with the sequencing of listening tasks in terms of their level of difficulty (See Table 5). They note that listening sections are at a satisfactory level. Nevertheless, they believe that more authentic samples should be included. Since this part is added to the new book and this skill is more highlighted in the new series of English textbooks, the teachers are satisfied with the inclusion of a separate section for developing the learners' listening skills although it needs further modifications.

Table 5.
Descriptive Statistics for Listening

Items	Mean	Mean of the Criteria for Vision 3
The tasks for listening are arranged from simple to complex.	3.24	3.02
The tasks are authentic.	2.80	

In line with the results of the quantitative phase of the study, in the interviews, the teachers express their satisfaction with the inclusion of listening and speaking sections in Vision 3. They stated that these sections provide an opportunity for those students who have never attended English classes and expose them to at least a few auditory samples. However, similar to the results of the quantitative phase, the analysis of the interviewees' responses reveals the teachers' dissatisfaction with the number of pages allocated to these two important skills. Moreover, they assert that although Vision 3 has witnessed remarkable improvements in terms of these two skills

compared to the previous textbook, it still needs further modifications in that more authentic samples of language use should be provided.

Concerning the writing skill, the teachers hold positive attitudes towards controlled and guided exercises. Indeed, they express a high level of satisfaction with the tasks and activities which target improving the learners' writing skill. Still, they hold that the writing section needs dramatic improvement in terms of taking heed of the learners' interest and local context. The interviews also confirm the teachers' satisfaction with this section in Vision 3. However, the teachers believe that the expectations set in the book seem to be unreasonable since the time allocated to English subject in the last grade of senior high school is limited. Moreover, the students' focus is more on improving their performance on multiple-choice tests and thereby, they are less concerned with developing this skill.

Table 6.
Descriptive Statistics for Writing

Items	Mean	Mean of the Criteria for Vision 3
The written tasks are related to the structure and vocabulary practiced orally.	3	
They give practice in controlled and guided composition in early stages.	3.25	2.72
They relate learning to the learners' interest and context.	2.20	

Reading

Reading comprehension was considered in both previous English textbook and Vision 3. This skill is of paramount significance to the authors since it forms one of the basic needs in academic settings (Atai, 2002). As Table 7 shows, the teachers seem not to get complete satisfaction from both books. In this sense, although they agree that reading tasks provide the learners with numerous opportunities for understanding of plain sense and implied meaning, they assert that the

reading passages fail to represent a wide range of styles in both books. Further, the selection of reading passages is not meticulously done, particularly in Vision 3. In general, this section is not at a satisfactory level in neither of the books from the English teachers' point of view.

Table 7.

Descriptive Statistics for Reading

Items	Mean Vision 3	Mean Pre- university	Mean of the Criteria For Vision 3	Mean of the Criteria for Pre- university
Reading tasks offer exercises for understanding of plain sense and implied meaning.	3.55	2.45	2.66	2.36
It selects passages within the vocabulary range of the students.	2.65	2.40		
It selects passages reflecting a variety of style of contemporary English.	1.80	2.24		

The teachers state that the reading passages fail to expose the students to various genres and authentic samples extracted from such sources as magazines, books, and websites. They also complain about disregarding the students' interest in choosing the topics of each reading passage. More seriously, they think including three reading passages in Vision 3 does, by no means, suffice for developing the students' reading skills before entering university, which demands mastering a reasonable degree of reading comprehension skills and strategies.

Pronunciation

Taking pronunciation into account, the results show that the teachers assume that the presentation of pronunciation features is perfectly satisfactory in Vision 3. This section was totally absent in previous English textbook, which is considered as one of its major drawbacks

from the teachers' point of view. Although it is allocated a separate section in the newly developed textbook, the teachers expound on the inadequacy of the exercises which aim to improve the learners' recognition and production of stress patterns and intonation. Moreover, the teachers' lowest level of satisfaction belongs to practicing individual sounds. The analysis of the interviews also confirms their dissatisfaction with the number of exercises for enhancing the students' mastery of segmental and suprasegmental features of English. In general, the teachers consider the book quite satisfactory in terms of presentation of pronunciation although this section requires extensive modifications to help the learners master an acceptable and intelligible accent.

Table 8.

Descriptive Statistics for Pronunciation

Items	Mean	Mean of the Criteria for Vision 3
The presentation is complete and appropriate.	3.25	
There is a sufficient exercise on recognition and production of individual sound.	1.50	2.33
There is a sufficient exercise on recognition and production of stress patterns.	2.20	
There is a sufficient exercise on recognition and production of intonation.	2.40	

Supplementary Materials

Since pre-university English textbook was presented as the sole source, this criterion was considered only for Vision 3 which accompanies a workbook and audio files. As Table 9 displays, the lowest level of satisfaction among different criteria for evaluating Vision 3 belongs to the supplementary materials. Although the student book is

accompanied by a workbook, it seems to fail to provide adequate and relevant audio-visual resources. Moreover, lack of the teacher's manual, or at least its inaccessibility, is pointed as a major drawback.

Table 9.

Descriptive Statistics for Supplementary Materials

Items	Mean	Mean of the Criteria for Vision 3
The book contains visual materials such as pictures, videos, flash cards.	1.64	
It contains audio/video material.	1.88	
The teacher guide is available and gives useful and complete guidance along with alternative activities.	1.65	1.88
The book has work book and supplementary activities.	2.35	

The interviews verify the results of the quantitative phase as the teachers point to the lack of timely and easy access to the audio files, and lack of flashcards. They state that the CD was not appended when the book was first released on the market and they received the audio files via informal channels in social networks. They believe that a new book should be accompanied with adequate supplementary resources to pave the way for the teachers to enhance the students' communicative skills. The teachers assert that a newly published book is better to be presented as a complete package including the audiovisual files, workbook, teacher guide, flashcards, etc.

Tasks and Activities

According to Table 10, the teachers are more satisfied with the tasks and activities in the newly developed textbook compared to its previous counterpart. In this regard, they express their satisfaction with controlled and free exercises in Vision 3. Moreover, they are quite satisfied with the design of the activities which prepare the learners to put language into use and communicate effectively. Nonetheless, they

think that activities are inadequate and rather dull and must be improved in this regard.

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics for Tasks and Activities

Items	Mean Vision 3	Mean Pre- university	Mean of the Criteria For Vision 3	Mean of the Criteria for Pre- university
The activities are interesting and adequate.	1.43	1.08		
The activities are designed so that the learners are using language rather than just practicing specified features of it.	2.65	1.55	2.39	1.34
The activities help learners to communicate fluently, accurately, appropriately, and effectively.	2.80	1.15		
There is a balance between controlled and free activities.	3.05	1.45		
The activities and exercises are varied in format so that they will continually motivate and challenge learners.	2.05	1.48		

The interviewees' responses also show that that the tasks and activities are satisfactory in Vision 3. Still, they require considerable modifications to fulfill the students' needs and enable them to establish effective communication. In this regard, they believe more communication-oriented activities and tasks should be included and more involvement should be invoked in English classes.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current comparative study aimed to unravel the strengths and weaknesses of pre-university English textbook and the newly developed English textbook for the last grade of senior high school, Vision 3, through eliciting the experienced English teachers' insights. The findings revealed that Vision 3 represents considerable modifications and dramatic improvement in terms of all subcategories of the checklist. The teachers asserted that Vision 3 allocated prominent attention to such skills and components as speaking, listening, writing, and pronunciation, which were disregarded in previous English textbook. However, they were not satisfied with its supplementary materials. Overall, they believed that the newly developed textbook needs to be adapted to gear to the students' needs. To this end, more authentic samples of language use should be incorporated and new materials should be contextualized. Moreover, the teachers insisted upon increasing the number of activities and exercises which tailor the development of the students' communicative competence.

The teachers also noted the significance of presenting new words in meaningful contexts and recycling them throughout the book to internalize new words. Furthermore, they all agreed that due to the key role of the last grade of senior high school for preparing the students to enter their academic life, the passages, and their accompanying exercises and activities should be more wisely selected and developed.

The results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed that teachers evaluated the newly developed textbook to be quite satisfactory. However, they believed that it required to be modified in terms of reading and writing skills. In this regard, the results were in line with those of previously conducted studies (Salehi & Amini, 2016; Torki & Chalak, 2017). However, the findings contradicted those which referred to the lack of attention to different skills in English books (Jahangard, 2007; Moghtadi, 2014) since the newly developed book includes numerous activities that aim to develop and enhance the students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Also, the findings were at odds with those of Rashidi and Kehtarfard's (2014), which pointed to the deficit coverage of different language components in English books. However, the teachers' lowest level of satisfaction with the supplementary materials confirmed the same findings in their study. In this regard, Vision 3 requires considerable modifications.

In general, in accord with the limited literature on evaluating new series of English textbooks in mainstream education in Iran (Shahmohammadi, 2016), the findings of the current study might lead to this conclusion that developing and introducing new and updated books into the language curricula would lead to more efficient books. It seems that the new book could fulfill the students' needs to a great extent while incorporating some modifications would add to its value and put it on the right track. In this sense, the findings of the study showed that the newly compiled book could partially meet the teachers' pedagogical expectations. In this regard, the teachers rated the listening and speaking skills of Vision 3 as satisfactory or good. Considering other criteria, namely general considerations, vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, pronunciation, tasks, and activities, the teachers expressed their satisfaction to a moderate extent. This may indicate the need for revisions and modifications. Further, supplementary materials had the least level of satisfaction among English teachers.

Notwithstanding the substantial improvement in the new version of the book for the last grade of senior high school, it still requires to be revisited and revised to meet the learners' needs. In this regard, providing the learners with a large bulk of activities representing the real-life use of language seems essential to empower the students to build meaningful communication through applying their language knowledge.

Eliciting the insights of the interviewed teaches, one might draw this conclusion that holding workshops for presenting and analyzing teaching methods allows for exchanging ideas between the main users of the textbook and material developers in order to establish a robust link between the real classroom settings and the materials developers'

perception of the teaching context. Providing the teachers with such professional meetings in the first year of introducing a new textbook into the mainstream education seems to avoid numerous discrepancies among the stakeholders' perceptions. In this regard, teachers expressed their willingness to be involved in the textbook modification and adaptation. Furthermore, the teachers asserted that regular evaluation of the textbooks reveals its strengths and drawbacks and thereby, enhances the quality of the materials and adds more transparency to their teaching practice.

The findings of the current study would benefit the authors of the newly compiled book to alter and modify it to better gear to the students' needs. Moreover, holding several meetings, workshops, and seminars is recommended to obtain the book real users', teachers' and students', insights into the newly introduced book to mainstream education to promote its effectiveness and practicality. In this line, further studies can divulge the factors which might make an impact on the teachers' and learners' evaluation of ELT books in schools. Moreover, the constituent activities of the book can be meticulously analyzed to unravel their merits and demerits.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University under contract number 23110.

References

- Ahmadi, A., & Derakhshan, A. (2016). EFL teachers' perceptions towards textbook evaluation. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(2), 260-267.
- Ahmadisafa, M., Ghonchehpour, A., Malekmohammadi, R., Seifi, Z., & Zekrati, S. (2017). Textbook evaluation of Prospect 2 from teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Language Research*, 9 (24), 7-32.
- Ahmadisafa, M., & Farahani, M. (2016). Developing intercultural competence in Prospect 1 from EFL teachers' perspectives. *Critical Studies in Texts and Programs of Human Sciences*, 15 (36), 1-24. [In Persian].

- Ahmadisafa, M., Moradi, M., & Hamzavi, R. (2015). "Iranian EFL Teachers and Learners Perspective on Potentiality of Top Notch Series for Intercultural Competence Development". *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 3(2), 47-66.
- Ansary, T. (2004). An analytical look at high school English textbook and introducing a sample lesson based on communicative syllabus design [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Islamic Azad University- Tabriz Branch, Iran.
- Ansari, H., & Babaii, E. (2002). Universal characteristics of EFL/ESL textbook: a step towards systematic textbook evaluation. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 2, 1-8.
- Atai, M. R. (2002). Iranian EAP programs in practice: A study of key methodological aspects. *Sheikhbahae Research Bulletin*, 1(2), 1-15.
- Bemani, M., & Jahangard, A. (2014). "Attitude Analysis of Teachers: The Case of Iranian Newly Developed EFL Textbook for Junior High Schools". *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 7 (1), 198-215.
- Byrd, P. (2001). Textbooks: evaluation for selection and analysis for implementation. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 3, 415-427.
- Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Heinmann Publishers Ltd.
- Daoud, A., & Celce-Murcia, M. (1979). Selecting and evaluating a textbook. In M. Celce-Murcia and L. McIntosh (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 302-307). Newbury House Publishers.
- Dominguez, L. M. (2004). Gender textbook evaluation [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- Ellis, R. (1997). The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials. *ELT Journal*, 51(1), 36-42.
- Ghorbani, M. R. (2011). Quantification and graphic representation of EFL textbook evaluation results. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1(5), 511-520.

- Hutchinson, T. (1987). What's underneath? An interactive view of materials evaluation. In L. Sheldon (Ed.), *ELT course books and materials: problems in evaluation and development, ELT documents* (p. 126). Modern English Publications.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1993). *English for specific purposes: A leaning-based approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Iraji, A. (2007). Pragmatic features of the New Interchange: How communicative and task-based is it? [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. Shiraz University, Iran.
- Jahangard, A. (2007). Evaluation of EFL materials taught at Iranian public high schools. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 9 (2), 130-150.
- Jamalvandi, B. (2014). ELT textbook evaluation in Iran, new insights. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 3(4), 1068-1078.
- Juan, R. (2010). A content analysis of the cultural content in the EFL textbooks. *Canadian Social Science*, 6(5), 137-144.
- Littlejohn, A. (2011). The analysis of language teaching materials: Inside the Trojan Horse. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (pp.179-211). Cambridge University Press.
- Litz, D. R. A. (2005). Textbook evaluation and ELT management: A South Korean case study. *Asian EFL Journal*. Retrieved from [http://www.asian-efljournal.com/Litz thesis.pdf](http://www.asian-efljournal.com/Litz%20thesis.pdf)., June 2018.
- Low, G. (1987). The need for a multi-perspective approach to the evaluation of foreign language teaching materials. *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 1(1), 19-29.
- McDonough, J., & Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and methods in ELT: A teacher's guide* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Publishing.
- Mirzaei, N., & Tabatabaei, O. (2017). Textbook analysis: comparing the recent and the old first grade high school English textbooks, teachers and learners' perspectives in focus. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 5(2), 167-180.
- Moghtadi, L. (2014). Iranian high school EFL textbooks. Why they should be modified. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 5(2), 53-69.

- Nejati, R., Cheraghi, Z., Nasery, A. (2018). Evaluation of tokens of Communicative Language Teaching in Prospect (1) of junior high school in Iran. *Journal of Technology of Education*, 13(1), 259-272. [In Persian].
- Nunan, D. (1987). *The learner-centered curriculum*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ranalli, J. C. (2002). An evaluation of New Headway upper-intermediate. Retrieved from <http://www.cels.bham.ac.uk/resources/essays/Ranalli3.pdf>, September, 2018.
- Rashid, N., & Kehtarfard, R. (2014). A needs analysis approach to the evaluation of Iranian third-grade high school English textbook. *Sage Open*, 1-9.
- Razmjoo, S. A. (2010). Developing a textbook evaluation scheme for the expanding circle. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 2(1), 121-136.
- Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Salehi, H., & Amini, M. (2016b). Teachers' perceptions of the new English textbook named Prospect 1 used in Iranian junior high schools. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 6(6), 407-416.
- Shahmohammadi, S. (2018). Textbook evaluation: looking at Prospect series through teachers' perspective. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 6(2), 182-2014.
- Sheldon, L. E. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *ELT Journal*, 42(4), 237-246.
- Tok, H. (2010). TEFL textbook evaluation: from teachers' perspectives. *Educational Research and Review*, 5(9), 508-517.
- Tomlinson, B. (2003). *Developing materials for language teaching*. Continuum.
- Tomlinson, B. (2008). *English language learning materials: a critical review*. Continuum.

- Torki, F., & Chalak, A. (2017). An evaluation of English textbooks used in Iranian high schools: teachers' and learners' attitudes. *Research in English Language Pedagogy*, 5(1), 52-60.
- Ur, P. (1996). *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vellenga, H. (2004). Learning pragmatics for ESL and EFL textbooks: How Likely? *TESL EJ*, 8(2). Retrieved from <http://www.teslej.org/wordpress/pastissue/volume8/ej30/ej30a3>., August, 2018.
- Williams, D. (1983). Developing criteria for textbook evaluation. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 37(3), 251-255.