



A Study of Quality and Quantity of Nominal Groups in the Vision and Interchange Series

Reza Abdi  (Corresponding Author)

Department of TEFL, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran
reabdi@uma.ac.ir

Vali Mohammadi 

Department of TEFL, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran
v.mohammadi@uma.ac.ir

Maryam Amani

Department of TEFL, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Iran
maryam.amaniiii1371@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO:

Received date:

2024.01.07

Accepted date:

2024.02.05

Print ISSN: 2251-7995

Online ISSN: 2676-6876

Keywords:

material evaluation, nominal groups, textbooks, vision, interchange



Abstract

Materials evaluation plays an important role in language teaching as it helps practitioners to develop an awareness of the coverage and quality of the existing materials and as such, guides most instruction and revision decisions. Therefore, we sought to evaluate three English Vision textbooks exclusively written for Iranian secondary high school students through a comparison to the identical Interchange book series, the fifth edition. Following a model of nominal groups outlined here, the evaluation targeted the quantity and quality of the groups appearing in the two series as they are assumed to be an important part of authentic language. For the quantitative part, the results indicated a significantly higher use of nominal groups in the Interchange series. Similarly, in the qualitative analyses, we found higher quality nominal groups appearing in the Interchange books. The findings revealed inadequate inclusion of nominal groups' potentially useful structures in the Vision textbooks, supposed to help teachers to raise an awareness so as to come up with appropriate instructional policies, and the textbook developers to consider the findings when any revision is due.

DOI: 10.22034/elt.2024.59975.2598

Citation: Abdi, R; Mohammadi, V; Amani, M. (2024). A Study of Quality and Quantity of Nominal Groups in the Vision and Interchange Series. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 16(33), 359-372. DOI: 10.22034/elt.2024.59975.2598

Introduction

Textbooks are an important part of English language teaching (ELT) and learning endeavor. They control the method, the content and the process of learning a language. **Cunningworth (1995)** argued that textbooks are an effective resource for the presentation of materials, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students and, and a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence. As **Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018)** also suggest, textbooks can serve as a valuable reference point for teachers managing their teaching progress. Furthermore, textbooks discuss the numerous roles that individuals play in the target community as well as the ways in which individuals at various levels of society express their intentions through utterances (**Sahragard, et al., 2009**).

According to **Litz (2005)**, without textbooks, a program might undergo a challenge to have an effect. In fact, they give the curriculum the structure which is vital for its accomplishment. As such, he emphasizes the importance of textbooks in ELT settings and argues that teachers mostly determine the goals of the lessons, test to be utilized, teaching methods and tests in accordance with the textbooks which provide ideas and options. In fact, textbooks inform them and provide for the kind of activities that can be used to notable facilitate teaching and learning experiences in the classroom.

In Iranian public schools, textbooks are written and published under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. They are developed domestically in an attempt to localize the content and make them compatible to the cultural norms of the society. The higher-order documents of different development plans instructing such a policy should be considered in any evaluation endeavor and also examining implications and applications of such studies.

On the other hand, private language institutes use worldwide learning materials developed by well-known ELT publishers such as Oxford, Longman and Cambridge. **Papi (2015)** states that the role of ELT material used in classroom is very important in Iran because outside the language classroom there are few opportunities for language learners to practice and use English. Therefore, it is critical for the textbooks of the public schools to include the authentic features as efficiently as possible. Grammatical and lexical potentials of the English language in general, and nominal groups, as a highly frequent and useful feature, in particular, deserves due care and attention.

The term "nominal" originates from the Middle English word "nominalle," which means "of nouns" and is borrowed from the Latin word "nōminālis" meaning "of names." "Nominal group" refers to a category of syntactic structure used to pair up head nouns with more words in several parts of speech to modify it and provide a more precise description of the referent (**Nordquist, 2023**). The simplest structure consists of just one word, which is a noun itself with no modification (**Simatupang & Dahla, 2018**); while sometimes the modifiers elongate it to take a few lines. They are a significant part of any language as they are used in almost all non-verb parts of sentences. The nominal groups are a significant part of the SVO (subject/verb/object) typology of English sentence as they cover both the subject and the object

part of the typology. According to Halliday (1985), English language users cannot do without mastery of ordering the nominal groups.

Studies we examined have not addressed the productive potential of the nominal groups, specifically the one that combines several structures together to produce more elegant nominal groups. As such, in the current study we embarked on comparing the use of nominal groups in secondary high school English textbooks (Alavi-Moghaddam et al., 2020) (VTs, henceforth) to those of the New Interchange book series (Richards et al., 2017) (IBs, henceforth). We assumed the Interchange international series as representative of authentic language. There could be arguments against such an assumption, yet we followed it as there are obvious practical benefits of such an assumption. The reason for choosing Interchange books for comparison in this research was that the series is one of the internationally and domestically widely used one in ELT, the content of which has been repeatedly tried and tested.

Thus, the purpose of this evaluative study is to shed some light on strengths and weaknesses of the VTs with regard to the type and amount of nominal groups which can help the textbook authors to remove the weaknesses and improve the strengths, and the teachers to take any necessary supplementary materials to their classroom.

Accordingly, the following research questions are proposed:

1. Is there a difference in the frequency of nominal groups in VTs and IBs?
2. How are the different nominal groups distributed within VTs and IBs?
3. How is the quality of the nominal groups compared in VTs and IBs?

Literature Review

Running materials evaluation projects is a widely followed practice as it is crucial for the success of a course, and it helps assess the suitability of materials in terms of authenticity and in relation to the course aims and students' needs. Some empirical research on books evaluation is reported here.

Raseks et al. (2010) conducted a post-use evaluation of ELT textbooks in Hong Kong, specifically focusing on Interchange, On Your Mark, Top-Notch, and Headway at the elementary proficiency level. The evaluation used internal and external criteria developed by McDonough and Shaw (2003). The study's findings highlighted both advantages and disadvantages for each of the four textbook series. However, the Top-Notch series demonstrated more advantages compared to the other three textbooks.

Yok (2010) conducted an evaluation of an ELT textbook called "Spot On" used in primary public schools in Turkey. The study involved randomly selecting 46 English language teachers and distributing a five-point Likert questionnaire to assess the textbook's applicability. The evaluation focused on several aspects, including design and layout, tasks and activities, subject and content, and language type. The findings indicated that the textbook was not deemed sufficient to meet the learners' actual needs.

In another study, Litz (2005) embarked on a study in South Korea to evaluate a textbook entitled English Firsthand 2 (EF20). He reported some of its advantages like a well-designed package, multi-skills curriculum, and helpful supplementary materials. Also, his findings showed that EF2 motivates students to learn the language more. With regard to the disadvantages, he believed that many activities designed as tasks for the students undermined the promotion of realistic discourse.

In another study conducted by Luo (2023), English textbooks used in Taiwanese junior high schools were examined in relation to the national English curriculum and from the perspective of English as a lingua franca (ELF). The study employed an analysis framework that incorporated ELF features to evaluate the current English textbooks. The research revealed the presence of ELF characteristics in the analyzed textbooks. Additionally, the study found that the units covered a wide range of topics, and the activities and exercises within the textbooks exhibited an orientation towards ELF, including reading, writing, listening, and discussion.

Some book evaluation projects are conducted in Iran. Pouranshirvani (2017) conducted an external evaluation of the Vision 1 book, focusing on the perspectives of senior high school English teachers. The study involved gathering feedback from 25 teachers regarding their attitudes towards the book's objectives, physical characteristics, and supplementary materials. The findings demonstrated that, overall, the teachers expressed satisfaction with the physical characteristics and objectives of the book, although they did not completely agree with the quality of the supplementary materials.

In a study conducted by Bagheri and Moghadasi (2020), the frequency of politeness markers, language functions, and speech acts was examined in Iranian high school English textbooks, specifically the Prospect and Vision series. The findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between the level of the textbooks and the frequency of pragmatic elements. Furthermore, the study revealed that these elements were not equally distributed throughout the conversations included in the textbooks.

In another study, Sadeghi et al. (2022) conducted an evaluation of the content of the English textbook used in Iranian senior high schools. The study used a descriptive survey approach, selecting twelve senior high schools in Isfahan through stratified random sampling. Teacher participants were chosen using convenience sampling, and both teachers and students were given a structured questionnaire. The statistical analysis of the collected data revealed that the most favored characteristics of the textbooks were their accessibility and affordability. However, a significant number of students expressed concerns about the lack of supplementary materials (online or offline) included in the textbooks. Overall, the findings highlighted the need for modifications in the teaching materials to better suit the intended situation of use.

Riasati and Zare (2010) wanted to evaluate the New Interchange which is widely used in Iranian language institutes. The aim of the study was to evaluate the series overall educational value and applicability. The study involved 35 Iranian teachers, including both males and females. A textbook evaluation questionnaire created by Litz (2005) was their study's instrument. The results demonstrated that most teachers hold the same views about the series'

efficiency and applicability. The results also showed that the series has a number of weaknesses that teachers need to be aware of and take into account.

In a further investigation, Sahragard et al. (2009) examined the third edition of the New Interchange series' applicability. The findings of their evaluation compelled them to claim that, despite its numerous advantages, the said course book has a number of weaknesses, including an inadequate focus on the role of the learners' sensory experiences in the learning process.

Methodology

The materials selected for the purpose of this study were Vision textbooks for Iranian secondary high school students and Interchange series taught in most private institutes in Iran and internationally. The English textbooks for high school students comprised three books known as Vision 1, 2 and 3. Vision 1 consists of four units, while Vision 2 and 3 each have three units. The workbooks associated with these textbooks were not analyzed. The IBs consisted of four books, i.e., Interchange Intro, 1, 2, and 3. Each book encompassed 16 units. The series was designed with three books, including the student book, the workbook, and the movie book. However, in the current study, only the student book was analyzed.

In order to investigate the nominal types employed in VTs and IBs, the nine categories of nominal groups were selected from among several types as reference as appears in Table 1, below. Then, the content of the books was examined carefully. The nominal groups were identified and then tabulated.

To answer the third research question of the study, which involved qualitative data, instances of Type 2, 4, and 9 nominal groups were selected and examined. The reason for selecting these types was the fact that much variation in the quality was seen in the use of these types. For the purpose of this part, the most elaborate groups of nominals were selected and compared. That is, the nominals groups demonstrating greater semantic and syntactic complexity were examined.

Table 1. *Frequently Employed Nominal Group Types*

| | Type No. | Structure | Example |
|----------------|----------|--|---|
| Pre-modifiers | 1 | (article) + HN | A man |
| | 2 | (article) + (adjective) ⁿ + HN | A recent study |
| | 3 | (article) + (adverb) ⁿ + (adjective) ⁿ + HN | The assumingly untouched group |
| | 4 | (article) + (N) ⁿ + HN | The research methodology section |
| post-modifiers | 5 | HN + [preposition + N(or NP)] ⁿ | An investigation of the impact of team-working on language proficiency |
| | 6 | HN + adjective clause | The article that appeared in this journal |
| | 7 | HN (v + ing) | Providing a plan of the future programs |
| Pre & post | 8 | noun clause | what she explained |
| | 9 | A combination of types | The seemingly familiar strategy to the one previously employed by them |

Notation "n" refers to the possibility of repetition

Results and Discussion

In order to address the first research question, first we tabulated the result of thorough content analysis of all seven books, which produced the number of occurrences of each nominal group type. The overall and separate data appears successively in Table 2 and 3. Then, for the overall results, we ran 10 Chi-square tests; nine for each type of nominal groups, and one for the total frequency. The results indicated a significant difference in the frequency of nominal groups appearing in VTs and IBs across types and also overall.

Table 2. *Frequency of the Types of Nominal Groups across the Two Series*

| Type No. | IBs | | VT | | Chi-square |
|----------|-------|-------|------|-------|------------|
| | N | % | N | % | |
| 1 | 3223 | 22 % | 958 | 28 % | 1227.03 |
| 2 | 6942 | 47 % | 1390 | 41 % | 3699.55 |
| 3 | 101 | 0.6 % | 14 | 0.4 % | 65.81 |
| 4 | 1315 | 9.0 % | 172 | 5.0 % | 878.58 |
| 5 | 546 | 3.7 % | 154 | 4.5 % | 219.52 |
| 6 | 339 | 2.3 % | 58 | 1.7 % | 263.54 |
| 7 | 633 | 4.3 % | 168 | 4.9 % | 269.94 |
| 8 | 531 | 3.6 % | 142 | 4.1 % | 224.84 |
| 9 | 898 | 6.1 % | 331 | 9.7 % | 261.58 |
| Total | 14528 | 100 | 3387 | 100 | 6928.37 |

The results are in line with the findings of a more or less similar study in terms of lexical richness, where [Ahangari and Zununi \(2013\)](#) compared collocation types in the IBs and VTs. Their findings revealed that the IBs utilized more collocations compared to the VTs. The findings align with the results of another study conducted by [Roohani \(2011\)](#) who investigated the inclusion of lexical and grammatical collocations in high school and pre-university English textbooks as compared to the IBs. Their data analysis demonstrated that the frequency and proportion of collocations in the IBs were significantly higher than those in the high school and pre-university English textbooks.

Table 3. *Frequency of Nominal Types in each Book of the Two Series*

| Type No. | IBs | | | | Chi-square | VTs | | | Chi-square |
|----------|-------|------|------|------|------------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| | Intro | 1 | 2 | 3 | | Vision 1 | Vision 2 | Vision 3 | |
| 1 | 613 | 742 | 881 | 988 | 99.38 | 182 | 139 | 191 | 9.04 |
| 2 | 983 | 1622 | 1929 | 2211 | 485.53 | 494 | 435 | 461 | 3.76 |
| 3 | 24 | 39 | 28 | 19 | 9.37 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 0.99 |
| 4 | 239 | 343 | 302 | 373 | 33.23 | 51 | 43 | 78 | 11.72 |
| 5 | 50 | 128 | 173 | 183 | 80.92 | 35 | 67 | 53 | 10.02 |
| 6 | 4 | 50 | 115 | 169 | 136.98 | 11 | 16 | 31 | 11.2 |
| 7 | 10 | 72 | 209 | 339 | 615.04 | 42 | 69 | 57 | 6.52 |
| 8 | 12 | 49 | 177 | 284 | 201.29 | 48 | 40 | 54 | 2.06 |
| 9 | 68 | 177 | 310 | 355 | 227.55 | 58 | 78 | 82 | 4.55 |
| Total | 2003 | 3222 | 4124 | 4921 | 1301 | 926 | 1032 | 1201 | 78.76 |

For the second research question, as appears in Table 3, it was found that Type 2 nominal groups had the highest, while Type 3 had the lowest frequency in both groups of textbooks. The results of Chi-square tests of all types reveal that there are significant differences between the types across the books of IBs and VTs for different levels. The table roughly, with trivial exceptions, shows an increasing frequency of nominal groups from Vision 1 to Vision 3, which is almost similarly seen from Interchange Intro to 3. The interesting and expected pattern of increase reveals that the authors of both series paid equal and plausible attention to the sequencing concerns for low to high proficiency learners. There is congruence between the results of this study with a study by Shahrokhi and Moradmand (2014) who compared and contrasted the American English File series with Iranian high school textbooks in terms of frequency and type of collocation. The findings of the study revealed that both grammatical and lexical collocations were presented more in American English File Book 2 than high school English Text Book 3.

As seen in the table, Type 2 is followed by Type 1, 9, 4, 7, 5, 8, 6, and finally 3 in frequency in VTs. As for the IBs, it appeared that they were ranked almost similar to the VTs in the following order: Type 2, 1, 4, 9, 7, 5, 8, 6, and finally 3. The more or less similar pattern in the order can be attributed to the syntactic and semantic versatility of the types, equally considered by the authors of both series.

In the qualitative section of the examination of the two series, one general question is raised which focuses on comparing the quality of the nominal groups across series. We decided to compare Type 9, 2 and 4 nominal groups. During the real-time qualitative reviewing of the series, it was made clear that these types lend themselves for a potentially valuable consideration. In the meantime, a further reason for this comparison was based on the premise that semantically and syntactically complex combinations are usually evidence of more qualified phrases.

As noted in Table 1, Type 9 refers to a group of nominals formed by combining the other eight types in one way or another. Some are constructed by combining two types, while others involve the combination of more than two types. From a lexical richness perspective, it is assumed that nominals containing a greater number of types enjoy a higher quality. Selected examples of Type 9 nominal group appear in Table 4 below. A total of ten most elaborate sentences were selected from both series which were coded so while reviewing.

Table 4. *Examples of Type 9 Nominal Group in IBs and VTs*

| IBs | word count | VTs | word count |
|---|------------|--|------------|
| 1. <i>Some extraordinary things people can buy online</i> | 7 | 1. <i>The natural home of the Iranian Cheetah</i> | 7 |
| 2. <i>A way of understanding how other people see us</i> | 9 | 2. <i>The black bear which lives in a few parts of the country</i> | 12 |

| | | | |
|--|----|---|----|
| 3. <i>Some visitors who come from countries where tipping isn't customary</i> | 11 | 3. <i>A Spanish tourist who planning for his summer vacation</i> | 9 |
| 4. <i>A successful manager of an organic food company in Ireland</i> | 10 | 4. <i>An amazing means of communication</i> | 5 |
| 5. <i>Three people who talk about things they wish they could change</i> | 10 | 5. <i>The most famous handicrafts of your city</i> | 7 |
| 6. <i>Two very lazy friends who discovered a time machine</i> | 9 | 6. <i>A young Iranian girl who weaves a beautiful silk carpet</i> | 10 |
| 7. <i>Four rules that you feel would be a good idea</i> | 10 | 7. <i>The most famous Persian poets of all time</i> | 8 |
| 8. <i>Its own web-based video channel that features programs about efforts to improve people's lives</i> | 14 | 8. <i>A special type of poetry that is called Ghazal</i> | 9 |
| 9. <i>A true lover of sport who simply wanted a chance to compete for British Sky jumpers</i> | 9 | 9. <i>A general idea of what it is about</i> | 8 |
| 10. <i>An enthusiastic downhill skier whose dream was to compete for Britain</i> | 7 | 10. <i>This technique which is also known as word attack</i> | 9 |

According to Table 4 above, among the 10 examples from the VTs, two examples feature groups with more than two types of nominals. In the meantime, the IBs include five nominals made through combining more than two types of other nominal groups.

Let's have a closer look on some combinations. Consider example 8 of IBs appearing in the Table 4 above and Table 5 below. It is made up of Types 2 (its own web-based ... channel), 4 (video channel and people's lives), 5 (programs about ...), 6 (channel that features ...) and yet another type (i.e., efforts to ... which is Head Noun plus Infinitives) we have not included in our list as it was not a widely used one. This 5-constituent nominal group is an interesting example of combination exposing learners to a great syntactic and semantic potential of English. Example 6 of the VTs, on the other hand, is made up of Type 2 (a young Iranian girl and a beautiful carpet), 4 (silk carpet) and 6 (who weaves ...), which shows a 3-constituent nominal combination.

Table 5. *The Constituent Types Used in the Examples of Type 9 in Table 4*

| Interchange series | Vision books |
|--|--|
| Number of types in Example 1: 2 A. Type 2: Some extraordinary things B. Type 6: Things people can buy online | Number of types in Example 1: 2 A. Type 2: The natural home B. Type 5: Home of Iranian Cheetah |
| Number of types in Example 2: 2 A. Type 5: A way of understanding B. Type 8: How other people see us | Number of types in Example 2: 3 A. Type 2: The black bear B. Type 6: Bear which lives in C. Type 5: A few parts of the country |
| Number of types in Example 3: 3 A. Type 2: Some visitors B. Type 8: Visitors who come from C. Type 8: Countries where tipping isn't customary | Number of types in Example 3: 2 A. Type 2: A Spanish tourist B. Type 8: Who planning for his summer vacation |
| Number of types in Example 4: 2 A. Type 2: A successful manager B. Type 5: Manager of an organic food company in Ireland | Number of types in Example 4: 2 A. Type 2: An amazing means B. Type 5: Means of communication |
| Number of types in Example 5: 4 A. Type 2: Three people B. Type 6: People who talk about C. Type 6: Things they wish D. Type 6: Things they could change | Number of types in Example 5: 2 A. Type 2: The most famous handicrafts B. Type 5: Handicrafts of your city |
| Number of types in Example 6: 3 A. Type 2: Two lazy friends B. Type 3: Very lazy friends C. Type 6: Who discovered a time machine | Number of types in Example 6: 3 A. Type 2: A young Iranian girl, beautiful carpet B. Type 4: Silk carpet C. Type 6: Who weaves a beautiful Skill carpet |
| Number of types in Example 7: 2 D. Type 2: Four rules E. Type 6: Rules that you feel would be a good idea | Number of types in Example 7: 2 A. Type 2: The most famous Persian poets B. Type 5: Poets of all time |
| Number of types in Example 8: 5 A. Type 2: Its own web-based channel B. Type 4: Video channel C. Type 6: Channel that features D. Type 5: Programs about E. Infinitive: Efforts to improve people's lives | Number of types in Example 8: 3 A. Type 2: A special type B. Type 5: Type of poetry C. Type 6: Poetry that is called Ghazal |
| Number of types in Example 9: 3 A. Type 2: A true lover B. Type 5: Lover of sport C. Type 8: Who simply wanted a chance to compete for British Sky jumpers | Number of types in Example 9: 3 A. Type 2: A general idea B. Type 5: Idea of what it is about C. Type 7: What it is about |
| Number of types in Example 10: 3 A. Type 2: An enthusiastic skier B. Type 4: Downhill skier C. Type 8: Whose dream was to compete for Britain | Number of types in Example 10: 2 A. Type 2: This technique B. Type 6: Technique which is also known as word attack |

Examples like "A true lover of sport who simply wanted a chance to compete for British Sky jumpers," and "An enthusiastic downhill skier whose dream was to compete for Britain" in the IBs and "A general idea of what it is about" and "A special type of poetry that is called Ghazal" in the VTs show that, though notably differently, both series writers took advantage of English language potential to make nominals through a variety of combinations. Table 4

also provides the word count of the selected nominals. As can be seen, the IBs contain nominals with 14 or 16 words, whereas the longest sentence in the VTs consists of 11 words. Furthermore, while only two sentences in the VTs exceed 10 words, the selected nominals in the IBs list each have an average of 10 words. Table 5 provides a full analysis of all Type 9 examples and provides the constituent parts. The table shows the higher complexity of nominal groups in the IBs as compared to the VTs. Such a difference is acknowledged by teachers as reported in Riasati and Zare (2010) and is contrasted with the findings of Litz (2005) who reported much similarity between their domestic and international textbooks.

The other types of nominal groups which we can find potential grounds for comparison are Type 2 and 4. Based on the given structures, the head noun has the potential to accommodate multiple and limitless pre-modifiers (Simatupang and Dahlia, 2018). The type and number of these pre-modifiers can indeed influence the quality of the phrases. The careful selection and arrangement of pre-modifiers can contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the expression. Table 6 below shows 20 examples we coded and selected while reviewing both series to be considered for this quality comparison purpose.

Table 6. *Examples of Type 2 and 4 Nominal groups in IBs and VTs*

| | IBs | VTs |
|--------|---|--|
| Type 2 | 1. <i>Any specialized social networking sites</i> | 1. <i>An endangered animal</i> |
| | 2. <i>The three most needed improvements</i> | 2. <i>The first Persian dictionary</i> |
| | 3. <i>Tricky social situations</i> | 3. <i>Three common fossil fuels</i> |
| | 4. <i>Three developed technologies</i> | 4. <i>Tiny hand-size computers</i> |
| | 5. <i>Hypothetical situation</i> | 5. <i>Some Iranian handicrafts</i> |
| Type 4 | 1. <i>The cancellation fee</i> | 1. <i>Air conditioner</i> |
| | 2. <i>Government corruption</i> | 2. <i>Highway signs</i> |
| | 3. <i>A Gourmet supermarket</i> | 3. <i>The traffic rules</i> |
| | 4. <i>Assurance analyst</i> | 4. <i>Mother tongue</i> |
| | 5. <i>A gossip columnist</i> | 5. <i>The human body</i> |

As indicated in Table 6, the examples related to Type 2 nominal groups demonstrate that the potential for allowing more modifiers is much more widely taken advantage of in the IBs as compared to VTs. However, the examples of Type 4 from both corpora consist of only two words. Meanwhile, by examining the choice of words, particularly the adjectives and nouns preceding the head noun as modifiers, one can compare the quality of expressions (Akande, 2002). As can be seen, the lexical versatility in the IBs appears much more appealing although this judgment is subjective and as such it is difficult to judge the quality in this way.

Lexical richness is a multidimensional construct in second language learning, as highlighted by Schmitt (2014). It is widely acknowledged that well-written texts are characterized by the deliberate and skillful use of vocabulary. The inclusion of diverse, accurate, and sophisticated lexical choices not only enhances the quality of writing but also serves as an indicator of the writer's proficiency (Laufer, 1995; Read, 2000; Qin & Wen, 2007). Engber (1995) and González (2017) have also emphasized the significance of lexical

contribution in constructing written texts. In the IBs, more sophisticated adjectives are utilized, while in the VTs simpler and more basic adjectives are employed. Additionally, the number of adjectives used before a noun in a sentence can contribute to the overall quality and readability of the text.

Conclusion

The study revealed significantly higher use of all nominal groups both totally and separately in the IBs as compared to VTs. Furthermore, it was made clear that the advanced books of both series accommodated more nominal types as compared to the ones prepared for lower proficiencies. As for the qualitative section, following the rule of thumb criteria of more type combinations and word counts for higher quality, the study explored a few selected examples of nominals to assess quality. In the first step, the *Type 9* nominal group in the two corpora was compared by gathering 10 best examples from each series and evaluating their quality. This comparison considered factors such as word choice and count. The results indicated that the quality of nominal groups in the IBs was much better than in VTs. Similar comparisons were made for *Type 2* and *4* of nominal groups. The results, almost similar to *Type 9* comparisons, showed that the examples from the IBs had better word choices and higher number of words.

Several studies have compared Iranian high school English textbooks with globally recognized English books. Most of them have concluded that the Iranian textbooks do not meet the standards assumingly observed in the international series (e.g., Ahangari & Zununi, 2013; Hamidi et al. 2016; Moradi et al., 2013; Razmjoo, 2007; Rezaee et al. 2015; Roohani, 2011; Shahrokhi & Moradmand, 2014; and Zohrabi et al.; 2014). These findings highlight the need for revising and refining the content of high school English textbooks to address the identified problems, improve the quality, and align them more closely with the authentic goals and needs of the learners.

It should be noted that the texts written by the authors of Iranian English books were much more tangible in terms of culture as it was supposed to be, yet in terms of word choices and the richness of the structures, they look much simpler than the ones in the IBs written by native authors. Another notable difference was the excessive use of repetitive and very simple structures in VTs, while in the IBs, specifically as the level of the books increased, the level of structures increased significantly and the variety of structures increased in the same way adding to the richness of the overall text.

The findings suggest implications for the teachers and the material developers. As noted above, informed by the findings and as a result of an awareness of the nominals versatile structure, the teachers are expected to consider the difference in their methodology and lesson plan, specifically by providing additional supplementary materials and following a deductive approach of teaching nominal groups' structures, as noted by Sadeghi et al. (2022). In the meantime, the findings provide clues for materials developers to accommodate more examples of *Type 9* nominal group and other types the exposure and practice of which could facilitate the learners' way to attain higher proficiency.

References

- Akande, A. T. (2002). Structural complexity and the acquisition of the hq (headword/qualifier) nominal group type in English. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11(2), 236–248.
- Ahangari, S., & Zununi V. F. (2013). Collocation types in Interchange Series and high school books. *Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 3(2), 367–374.
- Bagheri N. R., & Moghadasi, A. (2020). Content analysis of Iranian high school English textbooks in terms of politeness markers, speech acts, and language Functions. *Issues in Language Teaching*, 9(2), 155–184. <https://doi.org/10.22054/ilt.2021.54493.529>
- Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your course book*. Oxford Press.
- Engber, C. A. (1995). The relationship of lexical proficiency to the quality of ESL compositions. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4, 139–155. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1060-3743\(95\)90004-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/1060-3743(95)90004-7)
- González, M. C. (2017). The contribution of lexical variation to college-level writing. *TESOL Journal*, 8(4), 899–819. doi: 10.1002/tesj.342
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. Edward Arnold.
- Hamidi, H., Bagheri, M., Sarinavaee, M., & Seyyedpour, A. (2016). Evaluation of two general English textbooks: New Interchange 2 vs. Four Corners 3. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 7(2), 345–351. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0702.13>
- Laufer, B. (1995). Beyond 2000. A measure of productive lexicon in a second language. In L. Eubank, L. Selinker and M. Sharwood Smith (Eds), *The current state of Interlanguage. Studies in honor of William E. Rutherford* (pp. 265–272). John Benjamins.
- Litz, D. R. A. (2005). Textbook evaluation and ELT management: A South Korean case study. *Asian EFL Journal*, 48(4), 1-53.
- Luo, W. H. (2023). Analysis of English textbooks used in Taiwan: A perspective of English as a Lingua Franca. *Sustainability*, 15(5), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15054447>
- McDonough, J., & Shaw, C. (2003). *Materials and methods in ELT: A teacher's guide*. John Wiley.
- Moradi, A., Karbalaei, A., & Afraz, S. (2013). A textbook evaluation of speech acts and language functions in high school English textbooks (I, II and III) and Interchange series, books I, II, And III. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences: Proceedings*, 2(2), pp. 323–335.
- Nordquist, R. (2023, April 5). *Nominal: Definition and examples in grammar*. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/nominal-in-grammar-1691431>
- Papi, Z. (2015). Evaluation of Prospect 1 in terms of task types. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 238–244.
- Pouranshirvani, M. (2017). The internal evaluation of new English textbook "Vision 1" for tenth grade students in Iranian high schools from teachers' perspectives. *Specialty Journal of Language Studies and Literature*, 1(1), 38–51.
- Qin, X. Q., and Wen, Q. F. (2007). *EFL writing of college English majors in China: A developmental perspective*. China Social Sciences Press.

- Raseks, A. E., Esmaeli, S., Ghavamnia, M., & Rajabi, S. (2010). Don't judge a book by its cover: Textbook evaluation in the EFL settings. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 3(14), 448–461.
- Razmjoo, S. A. (2007). High schools or private institutes' textbooks? Which fulfill communicative language teaching principles in the Iranian context. *Asian EFL journal*, 9(4), 126–140.
- Read, J. (2000). *Assessing vocabulary*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rezaee, A. A., Kouhpaenejad, M. H., & Mohammadi, A. (2015). Iranian EFL learners' perspectives on new Interchange series and Top-Notch Series: A comparative study. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 827–840. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.128>
- Riasati, M. J., & Zare, P. (2010). Textbook evaluation: EFL teachers' perspectives on "New Interchange". *Studies in Literature and Language*, 1(8), 54.
- Roohani, A. (2011). Collocations in high school and pre-university English textbooks versus new interchange book series. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 8(3), 55–81.
- Sadeghi, S., Aliakbari, M., & Yasini, A. (2022). A model of EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge: A data-driven approach. *Teaching English as a Second Language Quarterly (Formerly Journal of Teaching Language Skills)*, 41(2), 205–243.
- Sahragard, R., Rahimi, A., & Zaremoayeddi, I. (2009). An in-depth evaluation of Interchange Series (3rd ed.). *Porta Linguarum*, 12, 37–54.
- Schmitt, N. (2014). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Shahrokhi, M., & Moradmand, S. (2014). A comparative study of the use of collocation in Iranian high school textbooks and American English File books. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 3(3), 58–64. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.3p.58>
- Simatupang, E. C., & Dahlia, A. (2018). Noun as modifier in nominal group: A functional grammar approach. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(4.34), 331–335.
- Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2018). *The complete guide to the theory and practice of material development for language learning*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Yok, H. (2010). TEFL textbook evaluation: From teachers' perspectives. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 5(9), 508–517.
- Zohrabi, M., Sabouri, H., & Kheradmand, M. (2014). Comparative study of Interchange 1 and English book1 of Iranian high schools. *Education International Journal of English*, 3(2), 95–10.

Appendix

Textbooks selected for analysis:

Alavi-Moghadam, S. B., Kheirabadi, R., Rahimi, M., & Davari, H. (2020). *Vision 1. English for Schools*. Iran's Textbook Publishing Company.

Alavi-Moghadam, S. B., Kheirabadi, R., Rahimi, M., & Davari, H. (2020). *Vision 2. English for Schools*. Iran's Textbook Publishing Company.

Alavi-Moghadam, S. B., Kheirabadi, R., Rahimi, M., & Davari, H. (2020). *Vision 3. English for Schools*. Iran's Textbook Publishing Company.

Richards, J. C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2017). *New interchange Intro: English for International Communication*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2017). *New interchange 1: English for International Communication*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2017). *New interchange 2: English for International Communication*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., Hull, J., & Proctor, S. (2017). *New interchange 3: English for International Communication*. Cambridge University Press.