

Iranian EFL Teachers' and Students' Perceptions towards the First Grade High School English Textbook (Vision1)

Farzaneh Khodabandeh^{1*}, Rahman Mombini²

*1,2. Department of Linguistics and Language Teaching, Payame Noor University,
Tehran, Iran*

*Corresponding author: f.khodabandeh@pnu.ac.ir

Received: 2017.12.21

Accepted: 2018.4.27

Online publication: 2018.7.1

Abstract

In countries where textbooks are considered as the main source of teaching/learning process, textbook evaluation seems to be inevitable and necessary. The current study aimed at evaluating the new English textbook entitled “Vision 1”, developed for the Iranian first grade high school students. To achieve this goal, two groups of participants took part in the study. They consisted of 30 teachers teaching this book in Baghmalek in Khuzestan province and 70 students studying in the first grade high school in the city mentioned. The quantitative data were collected through two questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed to evaluate the book in terms of seven criteria namely, practical considerations, layout and design, activities, skills, language type, subject and content and cultural considerations. The findings showed that teachers and students were interested in the book in all criteria except cultural considerations. The results also showed no significant difference between Iranian teachers' and students' perceptions towards the book. It can be concluded that the book needs to be modified to include some aspects of cultural values to open a window into learning about the target language culture.

Keywords: evaluation, textbooks, Vision 1

Introduction

In the realm of education, generally and in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) specifically, there are various factors in teaching and learning such as teachers, students, the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities. However, there is an agreed upon the idea that textbooks that are often used by language instructors play one of the most crucial roles in achieving the curriculum goals. This can be justified through several pedagogical reasons. For example, Riazi (2003) refers to textbooks as one of the most important factors in the process of language learning and teaching be it a second or foreign language. According to Mares (2003), textbooks specify language-based activities, and in this way they bring cohesion into the classroom environment. Nunan (1999) emphasizes on the importance of textbooks by mentioning that a classroom bereft of them is unimaginable. Cunningsworth (1995) considers multiple roles for English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks: (a) they can provide the students with written and spoken materials, (b) they put activities at the students' disposals. (c) they can develop communication through interaction, (d) they can be used as a reference to learn vocabulary items and grammatical points by the learners, (e) they can be employed as a source from which different classroom activities could be derived, and finally (f) they can serve as a syllabus from which students can conduct the process of language learning autonomously. To Richards (2001a) textbooks provide teachers with instructional designs based on the latest research and teaching strategies, and students with comprehensive sequence of teaching procedures for presenting the subject matter. Razmjoo (2007) believes that by using textbooks, students feel confident, and their progress in achieving the curriculum goals is accelerated.

Teaching methodology is a determining factor in designing the textbooks. In the past two decades, with the global spread of English as an International Language (EIL), an urgent need for English Foreign Language (EFL) students to communicate in English was felt since "the traditional approach was seen no longer as serving the needs of EFL learners" (Vongxay, 2013, p. 11). As a result of this, ELT moved from structural approach (e.g., Grammar translation method, audio-lingual method) towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. In our country, Iran, as a developing country in which textbooks are considered as the major source of teaching/learning process in

educational settings, this need was felt and met too. Since 2013, Ministry of Education, as the main organization for producing instructional materials, has decided to remedy the pitfalls of English textbooks used in Iranian schools. The decision was also reinforced by complains about the shortcomings of the textbooks on the part of teachers, students, families, and researchers.

The change has begun by developing a six-volume textbook collection written by Alavimoghadam, Kheirabadi, Rahimi, and Davari (2014-2016) under the title of "English for Schools". The collection, as a continuum, includes two three-volume subsets called "Prospect" for junior high schools and "Vision" for senior high schools. All these books are based on CLT approach. In the introductory part of the book (Vision1), Alavimoghadam et al. (2016) mention that the general principles governing the spirit of the book series are as follows: paying attention to all four language skills, using a variety of learning activities in the language learning process, emphasizing on language learning through experience, using rich, meaningful and understandable materials in the development of educational content, promoting language learning in the spirit of partnership and through cooperation and collaboration in the classroom, providing appropriate corrective feedback to learners' errors, and paying attention to the emotional aspects and their role in the process of language learning.

With the introduction of the junior high schools' new English textbooks, that is, "Prospect" in 2014, they have been under the evaluation of the researchers (Salehi & Amini, 2016; Arablo, 2015; Alipour, Mohebzadeh, Gholamhosseinzadeh, and Mirzapour, 2016; Kia-Ahmadi & Arabmofrad, 2015). Through their evaluation, these researchers tried to deal with the strengths and weaknesses of those textbooks and reveal whether they have been successful in attaining the predetermined goals or not.

In 2016, the new English textbook for the first grade in senior high school entitled "Vision1" was developed, which is now taught in Iranian schools. Teachers and students all over the country may have different attitudes towards it. Some researchers put the book under their analyses (Pouranshirvani, 2017a, 2017b & Ajideh, 2016). In their studies, they tried to evaluate and analyze the book only from teacher's perspectives. The significant point of the current study is that the researcher investigated the advantages and disadvantages of this

newly developed textbook by focusing on identifying the EFL teachers' as well as students' perceptions towards it.

The definitions for evaluation are different. Hutchinson and Waters (1993) define evaluation as a matter to decide about the suitability of something for a particular purpose. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (2005), in the process of evaluation we need to know what sort of information is necessary to collect and how it leads to changes in current situations. For Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992, p. 130) "evaluation is the systematic gathering of information for purposes of decision making".

Tomlinson (2011) considers materials evaluation as "the systematic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives and to the objectives of the learners using them" (p. xiv). Sheldon (1988, p. 245) defines material evaluation as "a dynamic process which is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity where no neat formula, grid, or system will ever provide a definitive yardstick". In order to judge the appropriateness of a material and to assess how well its instructional design supports the attainment of the specified goals, evaluation seems to be inevitable and necessary. As Williams (1983) declares, there is no perfect book. This declaration makes it clear that every material needs to be assessed and evaluated to find its merits and demerits. This will help to make an informed decision which increases students' achievement and yields success in educational program. According to Littlejohn (2011), by means of materials evaluation, we are able to look inside the materials and take more control over their design and use. McGrath (2002) argues that in order to develop and administrate language teaching programs textbooks need to be evaluated.

There has been a considerable amount of literature published in the field of textbook evaluation in different contexts. In a study, Litz (2005) put a textbook named as "English Firsthand 2" (EF2) under his investigation at Sung kyun Kawn University in South Korea. Based on his conclusion, the book is well organized and perfect in integrating four skills without ignoring sub-skills. Litz also found that contrary to its strong points EF2 suffers from repetitive activities that do not yield in meaningful practices and realistic discourse.

Tok (2010) carried out an evaluation on the "Spot on" textbook in Turkey. He concluded that the book has some positive features such as teacher's book containing guides about how to use textbook with highest advantage, the

content being realistic, challenging and motivating and activities incorporating pair and group work. Tok also considered some negative characteristics for the book like its layout and design aspects which are not attractive to the respondents. He claimed that the activities of the book do not encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practices.

In a similar vein, Kırkgöz (2009) conducted a study in which she evaluated the three English textbooks prescribed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education for use in grade four in state primary schools. She asked teachers and students to express their perceptions towards the textbooks. The findings led her to conclude that the contents of the textbooks are acceptable for both groups of participants and that they are well designed to meet the students' needs and interests.

In line with the trend mentioned in the previous paragraph, textbook evaluation in EFL contexts has attracted the attention of several researchers in Iran. Many of them investigated the old textbooks which were based on traditional teaching methods.

Yarmohammadi (2002) investigated the senior high school English textbooks using an adapted version of Tucker's (1975) model. He found three main pitfalls with the textbooks such as not being authentic, using English and Persian names interchangeably and ignoring oral skills.

In a similar study, Riazi and Aryashokouh (2007) analyzed the English lexis used in the Iranian four high school and pre-university English textbooks. At the end of their study, they suggested the exercises be consciousness-raising, a feature completely absent in the books. They also suggested that the exercises should help students learn meanings of words in context not in isolation.

In the same way, another study was conducted by Jahangard (2007) who examined the English textbooks used in the Iranian educational system. He employed an assessment form including 13 criteria to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the textbooks. He concluded that Book Four is of a superior status to the three other books.

Moreover, Azizifar (2009) carried out an evaluation on two series of Iranian high schools English textbooks employing Tucker's (1975) textbook evaluation model. He came to the conclusion that in achieving the curriculum goals, textbooks are of a significant importance, therefore the content of the

textbooks should provide students with activities that reinforce communication while learning the language.

Elsewhere, Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) evaluated the Iranian three high school English textbooks from the teachers' point of view. Fifty teachers filled out the questionnaire designed to assess the textbooks in terms of some criteria including reading comprehension, lexical items and word formation, language use in context, grammatical points, and phonological points, practical concerns, and physical layout. Their responses revealed that they are not in favor of the textbooks regarding all factors under investigation.

Yet, Zohrabi et al. (2012) conducted a comparative study to evaluate two English textbooks, *Interchange 1* (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 2005) and *English Book 1* (Birjandi, Soheili, Nowroozi, & Mahmoodi, 2011). They made this comparison considering the content, vocabulary, grammar, reading exercises and activities, pronunciation practice, physical makeup, and language functions of the textbooks. They generally found that *English Book 1* is based on CLT approach, and suffers from some shortcomings such as relying more on grammar and accuracy than fluency, and failing to have authentic texts.

Finally, Alimorad (2014) conducted a critical evaluation comparing two English textbooks series, *Right Path to English (RPE)* (Birjandi, et al., 2011), and *Cambridge English for Schools (CES)* (Littlejohn, & Hicks, 1996), concerning the identity options they present for their learners. She employed Fairclough's (1995) *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* framework as the basis for her study, and at the end, she concluded that while RPE does not make the learners familiar with a wide range of native speakers' identity options, CES gives opportunities to the learners to get informed of a variant range of native speakers' identity options. Recently a number of works were carried out on the evaluation of the newly developed textbooks for junior and senior high schools (*Prospect & Vision*).

Salehi and Amini (2016) evaluated "*Prospect 1*" (Alavimoghadam, et al., 2014) from the viewpoints of teachers and students. This English textbook was developed for the students in the first grade junior high schools. They selected eight criteria (layout and physical appearance, language type, content, activities and tasks, objectives, skills, teacher's needs, and cultural considerations) to evaluate the book. The results of their study revealed that the

book is mostly favored by the teachers and students in terms of the criteria of the study.

Arabloo (2015) evaluated and analyzed the teachers' attitudes towards the English textbook named as "Prospect 2" (Alavimoghadam, et al., 2015). In her study, eighteen male and female teachers from some cities in Iran were interviewed. On the basis of the findings of her study, most teachers have positive attitudes towards "Prospect 2". The same study was conducted by Alipour, et al. (2016) on the third grade junior high schools' English textbook "Prospect 3" (Alavimoghadam, et al., 2016). They evaluated the book from the teachers' perspectives in terms of some aspects including grammar and lexis, general content, physical characteristics, dialogues, activities, and supplementary materials. Their participants included some EFL teachers. Their findings showed that most teachers are in favor of the general content, physical characteristics, and supplementary materials, while 50% of them are not interested in the dialogues, lexis, grammar, and activities.

In a similar vein, Beydokhtinezhad, Azarnoosh, and Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2015) examined "Prospect 1 and 2" based on teachers' perspectives. They held interviews with ten male and female teachers to know about their attitudes towards the books. They found that the books are based on CLT approach and their activities provide opportunities for integrated language use. They also criticized the time allocated to the book in curriculum program and the exercises related to reading and writing skills for being insufficient.

In a more recent study, Javadi and Azizinejad (2017) evaluated and compared "Prospect1" with "Four Corners" (Richards & Bohlke, 2012). A group of 103 male and female junior high school teachers responded to their questions posed in form of a questionnaire. In the light of the results of their study, they came to the conclusion that the two textbooks are similar in terms of layout, language type and whole aspects, while they show differences in the aspects of activities, skills and content.

Pouranshirvani (2017a) also conducted an external evaluation on "Vision1" from teachers' viewpoints. In her study, she asked 25 senior high school teachers to fill out the questionnaires and express their perceptions towards the book in terms of physical characteristics, objectives and supplementary materials. The results of the study made it clear that teachers are

satisfied with the physical characteristics and objectives of the book, while they are not completely happy with the supplementary aids.

In a similar study, Pouranshirvani (2017b) carried out an internal evaluation on “Vision1”. This time she focused on the internal properties of the book such as the language - teaching contents and language skills. 30 teachers took part in the study. According to the findings, though teachers showed a sense of dissatisfaction in some areas such as socio- cultural contexts, they are totally pleased with the contents and skills.

Finally, Ajideh (2016) put “Prospect” and “Vision” series under investigation (only “Vision1” was considered). He tried to examine how much the developers of these textbooks dealt with the role of culture in language teaching and language learning. He employed a version of Ramirez and Hall (1990) model to analyze the cultural representation of the books. The results guided him to conclude that by adhering to the source culture, the developers of both textbooks series neglected to deal with target culture sufficiently, hence preventing learners to boost their intercultural communicative competence.

Based on the gap in the literature, the researcher tried to conduct the current study to address the following questions:

- What is the Iranian EFL teachers’ perception towards Vision 1?
- What is the Iranian EFL students’ perception towards Vision 1?
- Is there any significant difference between Iranian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards Vision 1?

Method

Participants

Two groups of participants took part in the present study: a group of 30 male and female teachers teaching the first grade high school textbook (Vision 1) in Baghmalek in Khuzestan province with the teaching experience ranging from 5 to 29 years, and another group including 70 male and female students studying in the first grade high school in the same city. Teachers were chosen purposely because of the availability of the numbers of teachers teaching the book and students in grade tenth were chosen randomly.

Instrumentation

The instruments applied to collect the data were two questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the students. The questionnaires were adapted from Litz's (2005) evaluation checklist in terms of seven criteria, namely, practical considerations, layout and design, activities, skills, language type, subject and content and cultural considerations. It should be mentioned that some of the items in the Litz's checklist were adapted and modified for the sake of making the questionnaires suitable and applicable for the Iranian EFL context. In the teachers' questionnaire items 8 and 9 in Part B were added, in the students' questionnaire items 1 and 4 in Part A and items 6, 7 and 9 in Part B were added, and Part G and its corresponding items were added to both questionnaires. Moreover, all the items in both questionnaires were designed on Likert scale with five points (Completely Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, No idea = 3, Agree = 4, Completely Agree = 5). The teachers' questionnaire was in the target language. The students' questionnaire was translated into Persian to make the items more understandable and clear for the participants. The translation was checked by two experts in the field of translation and necessary changes were applied. For the content validity, the questionnaires were piloted by two experts and necessary changes were made according to their viewpoints. The reliability of the questionnaires was attained by piloting them before the main study and calculating their Cronbach Alpha coefficients. The amount of coefficient was 0.911 for the teachers' questionnaire and 0.855 for the students' one which proved high internal reliability of both questionnaires.

Procedure

The current study was a descriptive one and the quantitative data was collected through two teacher made questionnaires. After receiving Educational Officials' permission, the researcher attended the EFL classrooms and informed the participants (both teachers and students) of the research objectives and asked them to fill out the questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed through Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0. Then to find the answers of the research questions, descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated. It is worth noting that the third objective of the study that is, determining the difference between teachers' and students'

attitude towards the textbook, was attained through analyzing the inferential statistics using independent - samples t-test.

Results

Teachers' perceptions towards "Vision1"

To achieve the first objective of the current study, that is, teachers' perceptions of "Vision1", one sample t-test was employed. The amount of test value was three (3). Each of the seven criteria in the teachers' questionnaire was analyzed separately. Table 1 shows the findings.

Table 1
Teachers' Perceptions of (Vision1)

Variables	Test Value = 3		
	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Practical Considerations	11.6	.000	1.04
Layout and Design	4.5	.000	.508
Activities	7.0	.000	.689
Skills	6.8	.000	.82
Language Type	5.0	.000	.560
Subject and Content	5.2	.000	.707
Cultural Considerations	-.32	.751	-.028

As can be seen in Table 1, teachers were in agreement with the book in terms of practical considerations ($P < 0.001$), layout and design ($P < 0.001$), activities ($P < 0.001$), skills ($P < 0.001$), language type ($P < 0.001$), subject and content ($P < 0.001$) however, they were not in favor of the book in the area of cultural considerations ($P > 0.05$).

Students' perceptions towards "Vision1"

To know about the second objective of the study i.e. students' perception towards the first grade high school English textbook (Vision1), one sample t-test was applied. The amount considered for test value was three (3). The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Students' Perceptions of (Vision1)

Variables	Test Value = 3		
	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Practical Considerations	9.1	.000	.82
Layout and Design	8.7	.000	.70
Activities	5.0	.000	.46
Skills	8.0	.000	.72
Language Type	6.3	.000	.500
Subject and Content	6.3	.000	.460
Cultural Considerations	-.76	.448	-.100

As shown in Table 2, while the book attracted students' interest in terms of practical considerations ($P < 0.001$), layout and design ($P < 0.001$), activities ($P < 0.001$), skills ($P < 0.001$), language type ($P < 0.001$), subject and content ($P < 0.001$), it was of little interest on the part of students in terms of cultural considerations ($P > 0.05$).

Analyzing the difference between Iranian EFL teachers' and students' perceptions towards "Vision1"

To meet the third objective of the study that is, determining the difference between teachers' and students' attitude towards "Vision1", the independent t-test was applied. The results are illustrated in Table3.

Table 3
The Difference between Teachers' and Students' Attitude toward (Vision1)

Variables	Participants	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Practical Considerations	teacher	4.0	.53	1.5	.117
	student	3.8	.75		
Layout and Design	teacher	3.5	.65	-1.4	.163
	student	3.7	.67		
Activities	teacher	3.6	.58	1.4	.139
	student	3.4	.77		
Skills	teacher	3.8	.70	.64	.519
	student	3.7	.75		
Language Type	teacher	3.5	.65	.44	.661
	student	3.5	.65		
Subject and Content	teacher	3.7	.79	1.71	.078
	student	3.4	.60		
Cultural Considerations	teacher	2.9	.52	.36	.716
	student	2.9	1.09		

As presented in Table 3, teachers and students have the same perceptions towards the book in all the criteria used to evaluate it. In other words, there is no significant ($P > 0.05$) difference between their attitudes towards the book in terms of seven criteria based on which it was evaluated.

Discussion

This research aimed at evaluating the newly developed English textbook named as "Vision1" (Alavimoghadam, et al., 2016) for the Iranian first grade high schools. To this end, the researcher considered three questions two of which dealt with the teachers' and students' perceptions towards the book and the third one was to determine the difference between their perceptions. It is worth mentioning that as the results show, interestingly, both groups had the same idea about all aspects of the book, and therefore for the sake of preventing repetitions and redundancy the results related to the first two questions are discussed simultaneously.

To find the answer of the first two questions of the study, the book was investigated in seven criteria (see Tables 1 & 2). One of the most important starting points in evaluating any textbook is analyzing its practical considerations. In regard to the importance of this aspect, Gibson (2011) states that even when students are provided with books that satisfy their interests, the final decision to read a book relies on visual appeal. In the light of the results of the current study concerning this aspect, it can be claimed that “Vision1” removes the deficiency that Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) realized in the old book. This fact is in line with what Pouranshirvani (2017a) concluded about the physical characteristics of the book. Both groups of participants were interested in this aspect of the book. They mostly agreed with the novelty of the book since it is really of a recent publication. They also believed that the book is easily accessible and accompanied by teachers’ guide, workbook and audio-CD. In their view, the book also had a reasonable price. This is in line with what Němcová (2012) mentions that the price of the book should be as low as possible so that the students could afford to pay for it.

The second part of the questionnaires dealt with layout and design of the book. The result of the teacher/student evaluation survey demonstrated that despite some grammatical and spelling errors, most of participants responded to these aspects positively. They believed in the existence of enough visual aids that help the students understand the information better. They also agreed that the materials objectives were apparent to both teachers and students and the language items and activities were well presented and organized. It can be claimed that their answers are in accordance with Garinger (2002) who holds that teachers and students both want visually stimulating material that is well organized and easy to follow, so layout, design, and organization should be considered. The results concerning this property are well confirmed by Pouranshirvani (2017a).

The activities used in different parts of “Vision1” were analyzed in the third part of the questionnaires. Long (as cited in Litz, 2005) emphasizes on the importance of this feature by arguing that student-student/social interaction will result in promoting learning. Concerning this aspect, teachers and students agreed upon the idea that “Vision1” is of a favorable status and provides a balance of variant activities that encourage students to practice communicatively. The findings are in line with the idea of Tomlinson (2003) about activities and tasks in textbooks generally and Pouranshirvani (2017b) in “Vision1” particularly.

In the fourth part of the questionnaires the variety of skills in the book was assessed. Both groups of participants showed their agreements on the existence

of an appropriate balance of four skills (receptive and productive) within different exercises. To them, the existence of such a balance of skills within the exercises provides aids for the students to practice each skill in an integrative way along with other skills, hence, promoting students' interest in learning the language. In line with Pouranshirvani's claim (2017b), the findings concerning such a feature in material development are well supported by McDonough and Shaw (2012) who advocate that instructional materials should provide students with effective use of all four skills in the forms of authentic tasks to increase their motivation. They also gain support from Harmer (2007) who believes that skills need to be taught in an integrative way since in real communication, people employ language skills not in isolation, but in tandem.

The language type of the book was examined in the fifth part of questionnaires. Under this criterion teachers and students were asked to comment on the adequacy and the authenticity of the language used in the book. With regard to language adequacy, the participants had to decide on the relevance of the material to the students' level of proficiency, and by authenticity, we mean the language used by native speakers in real life. Howard and Major (2004) insist on the authenticity as a guideline in designing ELT materials by stating that second language learners need to be regularly exposed in the classroom to real, unscripted language, that is, passages that have not been produced specifically for language learning purposes. Teachers' and students' responses in this part revealed that "Vision1" benefits from such advantages. This finding gains confirmation from Pouranshirvani (2017b) and can be considered as a sign that "Vision1" does without the shortcoming of the old book which suffered from lack of authenticity (Yarmohammadi, 2002). Their responses also made it clear that there seems to be a sequence between what the students have previously learned and what they are learning now.

Regarding the subject and content of the book, the teachers and students responded the items in the sixth part of the questionnaires favorably, that is, they agreed that the book is realistic, challenging and interesting concerning its subject and content. It provides students with sufficient variety that fulfills their needs resulting in increasing their motivation to learn the language. This finding, in line with Pouranshirvani's idea (2017b), is supported by Richards (2001b) who insists on the idea that the content of the textbooks should be sufficiently various to meet different learning styles.

The last, but by no means the least criterion was the way "Vision1" looks at the target language (L2) culture. In regard to the importance of socio-cultural factors in learning a foreign language, Williams (1994) argues that learning a foreign language is far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social

and cultural behaviors and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner. (p. 77)

Similarly, Weninger and Kiss (2015) state that the role of language education, which now often subsumes first, second and foreign language education, is being reinterpreted requiring classroom teachers to move beyond the mere teaching of language structures and vocabulary. According to Kilickaya (2004), there are many issues to be considered by the teachers when using textbooks with cultural content like socio-cultural factors, students' requirements, stereotypes, generalizations and intercultural interactions. However, the findings of the current study are well supported by Pouranshirvani (2017b) and Ajideh (2016) and reveal that the book fails to cover topics and themes related to L2 culture that both teachers and students seemed to enjoy, that is, the content of the book does not deal with those L2 socio-cultural factors that create positive attitudes towards the target language community on the part of learners to learn their language.

All in all, the findings related to the first two objectives of the study demonstrate that the teachers and students were mainly in favor of Vision 1. As the results concerning the third objective of the study indicate, the teachers and students looked positively at "Vision1" in all aspects except cultural considerations. In assessing the book in terms of cultural considerations both groups had the same negative attitudes. So we can claim that both teachers and students had the same opinions in all criteria based on which the book was evaluated, and that there is no meaningful difference between teachers' and students' perceptions towards "Vision1".

To sum up, this study examined and analyzed the Iranian first grade high school English textbook (Vision 1) from the teachers' and students' perspectives. According to what was inquired, it can be concluded that both groups were mainly satisfied with this newly published book as an appropriate movement in TEFL in Iran, though some revisions and modifications are recommended to be carried out to its content to cover target language cultural factors to open a window into learning about the target language culture. In general, "Vision1" as mentioned above is based on CLT approach and came to compensate for the deficiencies found in the previous one (English textbook1) which was structure based and overlooked the communicative role of the language in social interactions.

The current study is in the realm of English textbooks evaluation. So its findings are of use for teachers teaching this book and the Vision series, students, and pedagogical policy makers. Iranian educational material

developers can also benefit from the findings to revise the current book and to be more conscious in developing future textbooks in TEFL.

Every study has its own limitations, and the current study is not an exception. The first limitation with the study was that it was conducted with few numbers of the teachers and students in Khuzestan province which may not adequately represent the total number of population dealing with the book in Iran. Other studies can be done with larger numbers of participants. Another limitation of the study is that it is carried out on “Vision1” individually. As expressed in the introductory part of the article, the book is a part of a book series ; So, it is suggested that similar studies put this book under investigation in comparison to other books in the series.

References

- Ajideh, P., & Panahi, M. (2016). An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks for Iranian students entitled ‘Prospect’ and ‘Vision’ series. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 3(6), 87-93.
- Alavimoghadam, B., Khadirshariban, S., Kheirabadi, R., & Forouzande, E. (2014). *Prospect 1*. Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company in Iran.
- Alavimoghadam, B., Khadirshariban, S., Kheirabadi, R., & Forouzande, E. (2015). *Prospect 2*. Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company in Iran.
- Alavimoghadam, B., Khadirshariban, S., Kheirabadi, R., & Forouzande, E. (2016). *Prospect 3*. Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company in Iran.
- Alavimoghadam, B., Kheirabadi, R., Rahimi, M., & Davari, H. (2016). *Vision 1*, Tehran: Ministry of Education.
- Alimorad, Z. (2014). Examining Identity Options in Native and Nonnative Produced Textbooks Taught in Iran: A Critical Textbook Evaluation. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 95-112.
- Alipour, A. M., Mohebzadeh, G. A., Gholamhosseinzadeh, M., & Mirzapour, M. (2014). Exploring Iranian EFL Teachers’ Perspective towards the Junior High School Textbook: Prospect III. *International Journal of Research in Linguistics, Language Teaching and Testing*, 1(1), 14-19.
- Arabloo, P. (2015). The Iranian Junior High School English Textbook “Prospect 2” from the Teachers’ point of view. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 9(1), 85-91
- Azizifar, A. (2009). An analytical evaluation of Iranian high school: FLT textbooks from 1970 to 2010. *The Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 52-79
- Beydokhtinezhad, S., Azarnoosh, M., & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, S. J. (2015). The strengths and weaknesses of the Iranian junior high school English

- textbooks" PROSPECT 1 and 2" from teachers' attitude. *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL)*, 2(2), 165-17.
- Birjandi, P., Soheili, A., Nowroozi, M. & Mahmoodi, G. H. (2011). *English high school 1*. Tehran, Iran: Textbook Publisher
- Birjandi, P., Nowrozi, M., & Mahmoodi, G. H. (2002). *Right path to English book*. Tehran: Textbook Publishing Company of Iran.
- Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. G. (2005). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London/New York: Longman.
- Garinger, D. (2002). Textbook selection for the ESL classroom. *Center for Applied Linguistics Digest*. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/resources/Digest/0210garinger.html>
- Gibson, B. (2011). *The Impact of Physical Features On the Book Selection Process of Fourth and Eighth Graders*. (Electronic Thesis or Dissertation). Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Pearson Education Limited. Essex: England.
- Howard, J., & Major, J. (2004). Guidelines for designing effective English language teaching materials. *The TESOLANZ Journal*, 12, 50-58.
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1993). *English for specific purposes: A learning-centered approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jahangard, A. (2007). Evaluation of the EFL materials taught at Iranian high schools. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 9(2), 130-150.
- Javadi, M., & Azizinejad, Z. (2017). Prospect 1 and Four Corners 1 in the Spotlight: Textbook Evaluation with Some Reference to Critical Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 24(8), 221-231.
- Kia-Ahmadi, E. & Arabmofrad, A. (2015). An Analysis of First Grade Junior High Schools' English Textbooks in the light of Multiple Intelligence Theory: The comparison Between Newly Published "Prospect1" and The Old One "Right Path to English2". *International Journal of Basic Sciences & Applied Research*, 4(2), 111-120.
- Kilickaya, F. (2004). Guidelines to Evaluate Cultural Content in Textbooks. *Online Submission*, 10(12).

- Kırkgöz, Y. (2009). Evaluating the English textbooks for young learners of English at Turkish primary education. *Procedia. Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 1, 79–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SBSPRO.2009.01.016>
- Littlejohn, A., & Hicks, D. (1996). *Cambridge English for Schools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 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: Cambridge University Press.
- Litz, D. R. A. (2005). Textbook evaluation and ELT management: A South Korean case study. *Asian EFL Journal*, Retrieved November 12, 2012, from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/Litz_thesis.pdf
- Long, M. H. (1990). 'Task, Group, and Task-Group Interactions' in S. Anivan (Ed.). *Language Teaching Methodology for the Nineties*, SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Mares, C. (2003). Writing a course book. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (pp. 130 -140). London Continuum.
- McDonough, J., & Shaw, C. (2012). *Materials and Methods in ELT*. Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- McGrath, I. (2002). *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Němcová, P. (2012). *Textbook Design for Teaching Business English at Secondary School: A master thesis*. Masaryk: Masaryk University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Pouranshirvani, M. (2017a). The External Evaluation of New English Textbook "Vision1" For Tenth –Grade Students in Iranian High Schools from Teachers' Perspectives. *Science Arena Publications Specialty Journal of Language Studies and Literature*, 1(2), 11-21.
- Pouranshirvani, M. (2017b). The Internal Evaluation of New English Textbook "Vision1" For Tenth – Grade Students in Iranian High Schools from Teachers' Perspectives. *Science Arena Publications Specialty Journal of Language Studies and Literature*, 1(3), 1-14.
- Rahimpour, M & Hashemi, R. (2011). Textbook selection and evaluation in EFL context. *World Journal of Education*, 1 (2), 62-68.
- Ramirez, A. G., & Hall, J. K. (1990). Language and culture in secondary level Spanish textbooks. *The Modern Language Journal*, 74(1), 48-65.
- Razmjoo, S. A. (2007). High schools or private institutes course books? Which fulfill communicative language teaching principles in the Iranian context? *Asian EFL Journal*, 9(4), 126 - 140.

- Riazi, A. M., & Aryashokouh, A. (2007). Lexis in English textbooks in Iran: Analysis of exercises and proposals for consciousness- raising activities. *Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 17-34.
- Riazi, A. M. (2003). What textbook evaluation schemes tell us? A study of the textbook evaluation schemes of three decades. In W. A. Renandya. (Ed.), *Methodology and materials design in language teaching* (pp. 52-68). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Center.
- Richards, J. C., Platt, J., & Platt, H. (1992). *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. London: Longman.
- Richards, J. C. (2001a). *The role of textbooks in a language program*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C. (2001b). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., Hull, J. & Proctor, S. (2005). *Interchange 1* (3rd ed.). Cambridge: CUP.
- Richards, J. C., & Bohlke, D. (2012). *Four Corners 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Salehi, H & Amini, M. (2016). Critical Analysis of a New English Textbook Used in Iranian Junior High Schools. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 3(3), 42-54.
- Sheldon, L. (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. (Ed.). (2003). *Developing materials for language teaching*. London: continuum.
- Tomlinson, B. (2011). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tucker, C. A. (1975). Evaluating beginning textbooks. *English Teaching Forum*, 13(3), 335-361.
- Vongxay, H. (2013). *The implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) in an English department in a Lao higher educational institution: a case study* (Master's thesis).
- Weninger, C., & Kiss, T. (2015). Analyzing culture in foreign/second language textbooks. In Curdt-Christiansen, X., Weninger, C. (Eds.), *Language, ideology and education: The politics of textbooks in language education* (pp. 50-66). London, England: Routledge.
- Williams, D. (1983). Developing criteria for coursebook evaluation. *ELT Journal*, 37(3), 251-255. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/37.3.251>

Williams, M. (1994). Motivation in foreign and second language learning: an interactive perspective. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 11, 77-84

Yarmohammadi, L. (2002). The evaluation of pre-university text books. *The Newsletter of the Iranian Academy of Science*, 18(7), 70-87.

Appendixes

Appendix I

Teachers' textbook evaluation questionnaire

<i>A/ Practical Considerations:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree
1. The price of the textbook is reasonable.					
2. The textbook is easily accessible.					
3. The textbook is a recent publication.					
4. A teacher's guide, workbook, and audio-tapes accompany the textbook.					
5. The author's views on language and methodology are comparable to mine. (Note: Refer to the 'blurb' on the back of the textbook).					
<i>B/ Layout and Design:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree
6. The textbook includes a detailed overview of the functions, structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit.					
7. The layout and design is appropriate and clear.					
8. There is no grammatical and spelling error within the texts of the book.					
9. The printing of the book is of high quality.					
10. The textbook is organized effectively.					
11. An adequate vocabulary list or glossary is included.					
12. Adequate review sections and exercises are included.					

13. An adequate set of evaluation quizzes or testing suggestions is included.					
14. The teacher's book contains guidance about how the textbook can be used to the utmost advantage.					
15. The materials objectives are apparent to both the teacher and the student.					
<i>C/ Activities:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree
16. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).					
17. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.					
18. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.					
19. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.					
20. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.					
21. The tasks are conducive to the internalization of newly introduced language.					
22. The textbook's activities can be modified or supplemented easily.					
<i>D/ Skills:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree

23. The materials include and focus on the skills that I/my students need to practice.					
24. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.					
25. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills (grammar, vocabulary, etc.)					
26. The textbook highlights and practices natural pronunciation (i.e. stress and intonation).					
27. The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.					
<i>E/ Language Type:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree
28. The language used in the textbook is authentic i.e. like real-life English.					
29. The language used is at the right level for my (students') current English ability.					
30. The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.					
31. The grammar points are presented with brief and easy examples and explanations.					
32. The language functions exemplify English that I/my students will be likely to use.					
<i>F/ Subject and Content:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree
33. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my (students') needs as an English language learner(s).					
34. The subject and content of the					

textbook is generally realistic.					
35. The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.					
36. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.					
<i>G/ cultural considerations:</i>					
Items	Completely disagree	disagree	No idea	agree	Completely agree
37. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.					
38. The content serves as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British etc.)					
39. The content deal with L2 socio-cultural factors that increase motivation to learn target language.					
40. The content deals with both L1 and L2 socio-cultural factors indiscriminately.					

Appendix II

Students' textbook evaluation questionnaire

الف: ملاحظات عملی					
کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	ویژگیها
					۱. کتاب به روز می باشد طی ۱۰ سال گذشته تألیف گردیده است)
					۲. قیمت کتاب معقول است.
					۳. کتاب به راحتی در دسترس است.
					۴. کتاب دارای مواد آموزشی تکمیلی (کتاب کار ، cd و ..) می باشد.

ب. طرح و چیدمان					
ویژگیها	كاملا مخالفم	مخالص	نظري ندارم	موافقم	كاملا موافقم
۵. طرح و طراحی كتاب مناسب و روشن است.					
۶. چاپ كتاب از کیفیت بالایی برخوردار می باشد.					
۷. اندازه فونت نوشته های كتاب در حد مطلوب است.					
۸. كتاب درسی است به طور مؤثر سازماندهی شده است.					
۹. كتاب دارای تصاویر، نمودارها و جداول کافی است که در درک متن مفید می باشند.					
پ: فعاليتها					
ویژگیها	كاملا مخالفم	مخالص	نظري ندارم	موافقم	كاملا موافقم
۱۰. بین فعاليتهاي كتاب تعادل وجود دارد. (مثلا تمرین ها و تکالیف زیر نظر دبیر در مقایسه با تمرین ها و تکالیف آزاد که بر مهارت های گفتاری و نوشتاری دقیق و روان متمرکز هستند، به طور یکسان وجود دارند.)					
۱۱. فعاليتهاي كتاب رفتارهای ارتباطی و معنادار را به میزان کافی تقویت می بخشند.					
۱۲. فعاليتهاي كتاب امکان انجام کارهای فردی، دو نفره و گروهی را میسر می سازند.					
۱۳. نکات دستوری و واژگان در یک بافت واقعی ارائه شده اند و در من ایجاد انگیزه می کند.					
۱۴. فعاليتها به گونه ای هستند که من می توانم خلاقانه و آزادانه به سوالات پاسخ دهم.					

ج: مهارت‌ها					
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ویژگیها
					۱۵. مطالب کتاب بر مهارتهایی تأکید دارند که من به آنها نیاز دارم.
					۱۶. در مطالب کتاب توازن لازم از هر چهار مهارت زبان (خواندن، گوش دادن، نوشتن و صحبت کردن) وجود دارد.
					۱۷. کتاب به مهارتهای فرعی (افزایش واژگان، دستور زبان، تلفظ و ...) توجه نموده است.
د: نوع زبان					
کاملا موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملا مخالفم	ویژگیها
					۱۸. در کتاب از زبان معتبر (انگلیسی در زندگی واقعی) استفاده شده است.
					۱۹. جملات، عبارات و اصطلاحات کتاب با سطح توانایی کنونی من در انگلیسی متناسب است.
					۲۰. در ارائه نکات دستوری و واژگان کتاب از یک درس به درس دیگر پیوستگی لازم وجود دارد.
					۲۱. نکات دستوری بوسیله مثال های آسان و توضیحات مختصر و گویا ارائه شده‌اند.
					۲۲. کاربردهای زبان در کتاب، نمونه زبان انگلیسی است که من در آینده از آن استفاده خواهم کرد.
و: موضوع و محتوی					

کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	ویژگیها
					۲۳. موضوع و محتوای کتاب جدید و مرتبط با نیاز من به عنوان یک یادگیرنده زبان انگلیسی است.
					۲۴. به طور کلی در کتاب از موضوع و محتوای واقعی استفاده شده است.
					۲۵. موضوع و محتوای مطالب کتاب جالب توجه بوده، در من ایجاد انگیزه کرده و به فعالیت وا می- دارد.
					۲۶. در موضوع و محتوای کتاب تنوع کافی وجود دارد.
					۲۷. محتوای کتاب من را با فرهنگ مردم انگلیسی زبان آشنا می-سازد.
					۲۸. محتوای کتاب به سن، نژاد، قوم، جنس و یا گروهی خاص وابسته نیست.
۵. ملاحظات فرهنگی					
کاملاً موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	کاملاً مخالفم	ویژگیها
					۲۹. مطالب کتاب به فرهنگ خاصی وابستگی نداشته و فاقد کلیشه منفی است.
					۳۰. محتوای کتاب راه را برای آشنا ساختن من با فرهنگ زبان هدف (آمریکا، انگلستان) می-گشاید.
					۳۱. محتوای کتاب به فاکتورهای اجتماعی- فرهنگی زبان انگلیسی پرداخته است و انگیزه من برای یادگیری این زبان را افزایش می-دهد.
					۳۲. محتوای کتاب به فاکتورهای اجتماعی- فرهنگی زبان فارسی و زبان انگلیسی به طور یکسان پرداخته است.

Biodata

Farzaneh Khodabandeh holds Ph.D. in TEFL, MA in TEFL, and BA in English literature. She is the author of six academic textbooks. She has presented papers in more than 20 international conferences and published in various journals. She has 20 years of experience in teaching English and 12 years of teaching and research in distance education. She has been the advisor and reader to over 10 post-graduate theses and dissertations.

Rahman Mombini holds an MA in TEFL from Payame Noor University, Iran. He is an English teacher.