A Comparative Evaluation of Four Corners Series and Vision Series from a Communicative Perspective: A Mixed-Methods Study

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ABSTRACT

Given the fundamental importance of textbooks and their impact on the learning process in today's world, this study aims to compare the Four Corners series textbooks with the Vision series senior Vision English textbooks from a communicative standpoint. By utilizing a mixed-methods design, the study consisted of two stages: a theoretical assessment based on a communicative language teaching framework and an empirical assessment based on data collected from 16 university professors through questionnaires. The evaluation aimed to gather feedback from experts to be merged. To analyze the quantitative data descriptive statistics were employed and for the qualitative data content analysis was employed. The results indicated that, compared to the Four Corners series, the Vision series seems to be more communicative across all language skills as well as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The findings can help teachers in selecting appropriate textbooks. Moreover, curriculum developers and intercultural communicative competence experts can benefit from the present study. The findings of the current investigation hold substantial implications for multiple stakeholders in the field of language education.

1. Introduction

Within the realm of communication, the English language possesses a unique importance (Badpa, et al., 2023). English holds a significant position within the educational curriculum. Consequently, the

country has implemented English language instruction across various educational levels, including primary, junior high, and senior visions. To support educators in delivering lessons and meeting educational objectives, a variety of instructional materials can be utilized for teaching and learning activities in the classroom including printed materials as well as non-printed materials and resources available on the internet and through computer-based platforms. Among these, textbooks are among the most frequently utilized resources (Zohoorian, et al., 2018). The communicative language teaching approach emphasizes that Iranian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) are instructed in English to engage actively with the global community (Alavi Moghaddam et al., 2018).

According to Richards (2001), instructional materials are a crucial aspect of language programs, providing the primary input for learners during language instruction in classrooms. One of such instructional materials include textbooks which hold significant importance for both teachers and students. They serve as a guide for teachers and provide essential explanations and activities while influencing the attitudes and performance of learners (McGrath, 2013; 2016). When students have positive attitudes toward their textbooks, they actively engage in the classroom activities, making it essential for teachers to involve learners with the content (Rahimi & Hassani, 2012). Textbook can also offer learners an excellent chance to communicate in English during classroom activities (Harmer, 2007). According to Genesee (2001), the evaluation process in language teaching environments involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. He contends that this systematic approach allows educators and materials developers to make informed decisions, ultimately enhancing student achievement and improving the overall effectiveness of educational programs. While the development of English usage in education, trade, and diplomacy has been observed (Ariawan et al., 2022; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2021), Richards and Rodgers (2014), the proficiency of the workforce in essential economic sectors and the accessibility of educational and technical resources are closely tied to English proficiency, highlighting the importance of catering educational materials to societal needs. Moreover, as far as language programs effectiveness is concerned, Surtikanti (2020) highlights the significance of their course book quality.

Several characteristics have been introduced for effective language instructional materials, including contextualized and functional language use, promoting learner engagement (Richards & Renandya, 2014), being realistic and authentic (Zohoorian & Rahimi, 2016), promoting learner autonomy, being flexible to accommodate individual and contextual differences (Michel & Kouadio, 2018).

There have been a myriad of studies focusing on the evaluation of instructional materials around the globe and in Iran. Also, some studies have focused on developing checklists. For example, Demir and Ertas (2014) conducted a comprehensive literature review to develop a diverse checklist by combining items from existing instruments. The checklist comprises elements from twenty checklists and additional items created by the researchers, divided into four categories of subject and content, skills and sub-skills, layout and physical structure, and practical considerations.

Yasemin (2009) assessed three English books used in 4th-grade classes in state schools in Turkey. Teachers and students shared their views on the books through the 37-item Smiley questionnaire to achieve the study objectives. Additionally, interviews were conducted to gain more

insight into how teachers and students perceived the books. The findings indicated the suitability for young learners.

Ruben's study (2010), thorough examination of Dutch early childhood teacher education, revealed that the selected textbooks aligned with the curriculum's goals and objectives. The study also found that while the textbooks adequately address the content standards of the teacher's professional profile and the educational profile, some aspects of the primary work process with less depth, such as the need for strategy planning, reflection, and evaluation, the development of educational policy, and collaboration with practitioners from other fields and disciplines. The findings indicated a need to modernize the textbooks used.

Alnajjar and Cinkara (2024) conducted a research study to examine the views of English language instructors. The material of concern was the Self-Learning Program English Textbooks which were adopted. The main concerns were the effectiveness and relevance as far as non-formal and educational environments were concerned. A total of 106 English language teachers participated, comprising females (43) and males (63). Through a mixed-methods approach and by utilizing a questionnaire containing 49 items five structured categories were found. They included layout and design, textbook objectives, teaching methodologies and activities, and language competencies. Furthermore, the qualitative data of the interviews were analyzed. More than 60% of the educators suggested that the adapted textbooks were suitable.

In the Iranian context several researchers have made attempts to evaluate materials and textbooks. In a research study conducted by Nasiri and Ahmadi (2011) the textbook Summit 2B was evaluated to find out if it was appropriate for university students, focusing on subject matter and vocabulary/structure. The study involved ten teachers and 150 students who completed a checklist created by Doaud and Celce Murcia (1979). Additionally, the researchers interviewed the teachers to gather qualitative data on their opinions about the textbook. The findings indicated that Summit 2B is adequate for its intended students.

In another study, Torki and Chalak (2017) sought to examine the perspectives of teachers and students regarding English textbooks taught in visions in Iran. To achieve this goal, 150 male and female students responded to a questionnaire of 45 items crafted by Karavas-Doukas (1996). The analysis of the collected data indicated that a significant portion of the survey participants believe that the textbooks adequately embody the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). However, this does not negate the perceived requirement for further enhancement and revision in textbook analysis.

Alavinia and Siyadat (2013) investigated the characteristics of four series of textbooks utilized in various educational institutions across Iran, employing a checklist developed by Cunningsworth (1995). In the data collection process, 320 male students from West Azerbaijan were asked to evaluate the textbooks: American English File 1, American Cutting Edge 1, American Headway 1, and New Interchange 1. The results indicated that American English File 1 was more effective than the other three textbooks, attributed to its contemporary materials, engaging content, appealing illustrations, and well-designed website.

In a recent study conducted by Derakhshan, (2024), focused on the representation of culture in language textbooks through a semiotic approach. The qualitative study used the Peircean semiotic theory to find the relationships among text, image, as well as tasks. This study investigated how such elements can contribute to both the construction as well as reconstruction of culture understanding. The Vision 1 book was evaluated through the viewpoints of Iranian EFL students, their teachers, and the teacher educators. The data related to the interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings suggested that the recent localized Iranian textbook provides minor opportunity for its readers to advance cultural awareness.

In the Iranian context, following the prevalence of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the recently published vision English textbooks by the Ministry of Education, currently in use in visions, are publicized as communicative which assume to employ communicative language teaching as their methodology and framework. However, after several years of implementation within the Iranian educational system, these new textbooks including the vision series have not achieved the objectives mentioned earlier. This study seeks to evaluate the presentation of these objectives in the textbook series vision and compare them with Four Corners series, one of the latest book series from international publishers that endorse communicative language teaching as their methodological framework. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research questions.

To what extent do textbooks help students develop Communication Skills?

Do the textbooks facilitate authentic language use and promote interaction in the classroom?

Has proportionate attention been given to the integrative teaching of the four language skills and language areas of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation?

How do teachers assess the quality of the textbooks according to the Communicative Approach?

2. Methodology

The study sought to evaluate the two series of textbooks based on the communicative approach. It employed a mixed methods of the type parallel convergent (De Vaus). Both the analysis of the textbooks' activities by the researchers as well as quantitative data of the questionnaire were mixed to answer the research questions. The qualitative phase included content analysis of the textbooks. Content analysis entails a research method which is used to systematically analyze the content including texts, images, or videos. This is done to discover patterns, themes, as well as insights (Krippendorff, 2018). It can be either qualitative or quantitative. In the context of the present study, the researchers have employed the qualitative type of content analysis.

2.1 Participants and Setting

For the first phase of the study the researchers conducted content analysis based on communicative language teaching criteria (McDonough & Shaw, 2013). The three analysts were all applied linguists having over 5 years of language education experience. Participants for the quantitative phase included 16 university professors selected from diverse geographical regions based on convenience sampling,

including Tehran, Khorasan, Hormozgan, Kerman, and various cities in Sistan and Baluchistan. To collect data, some participants were provided with books to review and complete the questionnaires on-line, while others were personally met and given the questionnaire. The gender representation encompassed a balanced combination of male and female. The study included a range of educators with at least three years of teaching experience to holding MA and PhD degrees. The age of the participants varied from 24 to 52 years. In total, sixteen questionnaires were completed for each of the two series of textbooks, namely Four Corners and Vision.

2.2 Instrumentation

To conduct the study, the researcher-made framework was employed which was based on McDonough and Shaw (2013). It focused on the analysis of different language skills and language areas as well as activities presented in the two textbook series. Based on the same framework, the researchers developed a questionnaire including 25 items. The items focused on characteristic features, language skills, language areas, and Organization and Structure. The items were given to three experts for face and content validity evaluation. Modifications, reductions, and additions were made to the items based on the comments. Through a pilot study with 25 teacher participants' data was collected to ensure the reliability. A reliability index of 0.68 was achieved which is, though low, considered acceptable.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected during the academic year of 2024. Consent was taken from the participants to voluntarily participate in the study. The three researchers of the study conducted content analysis to ensure inter-rater agreement or reliability (Brennan & Prediger, 2021). The three observers who evaluated the textbooks agreed upon the evaluations. As the next phase of the study, the quantitative data were collected seeking participation of university professors. The questionnaire as well as a copy of the textbooks were sent to the participants to evaluate the two book series based on CLT criteria. The data collected through the completed questionnaires were later analyzed. Then, the data were analyzed through descriptive analysis. Finally employing a convergent method, the data of the quantitative phase and the qualitative phase were merged (Creswell, 2014) for achieving conclusions.

3. Data Analysis

This section presents the content analysis of English textbooks of Iranian visions, the Vision as well as the Four Corners series and an analysis of the teacher's views collected through the questionnaire.

3.1 Content Analysis of the Textbooks

Content analysis of the Four Corners series and the textbooks about their compatibility with the communicative approach in teaching language skills and areas of grammar and vocabulary is given below.

3.1.1 Four Corner Series

The analysis of the Four Corners is presented in two parts: the first part discusses the organization of each unit of the books and the second part deals with their teaching of language skills and areas.

3.1.1.1 Four Corner Series Language Skills

Textbooks' evaluation of the inclusion of the language skills based on CLT is presented below:

Listening

Some listening activities require the student to listen and circle the correct answer among two options to identify the correct answer among the other two or three options. Listening and writing the answers, listening and writing true or false next to the sentences and listening, and correcting the false information are among the other activities included in listening to the textbooks. Figure 1 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Figure 1 A sample of the listening activities in Four Corner Series

Speaking

Speaking activities are categorized into Pair work/ Interviewing a partner/ Telling the other classmate about your partner's answers/ Looking at a picture and talking about the people in it/ Roleplaying and changing the roles/ Interviewing and taking notes, or completing charts/ Playing games/ Group work and sharing ideas. Figure 2 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Figure 2 A sample of the speaking activities in Four Corner Series

Reading

The reading passages of the textbooks are about a wide variety of topics such as free time, sports, music, food, internet, movies, work, studying, giving advice, nature, interests, fashion, experiences, etc. All the reading passages start with warm-up questions asking students to look at the pictures in the texts asking questions about the topic to make them interested and prepared for the topic. The new vocabulary is in bold letters, and the text is followed by pair work in which students talk about topics related to the reading. Figure 3 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Figure 3 A sample of the reading activities in Four Corner Series

Writing

The writing activities of the textbooks are integrated with reading and speaking and include a variety of writing tasks such as favorite thing, my abilities, a blog post, a postcard, an email to a friend, a description of yourself, a music review, a natural wonder etc. The writing is a combination of product and process models first there are some questions to answer about the topic then there is a writing model. According to the model of writing and the answers the students are asked to write their draft. Figure 4 presents a sample taken from the textbook.
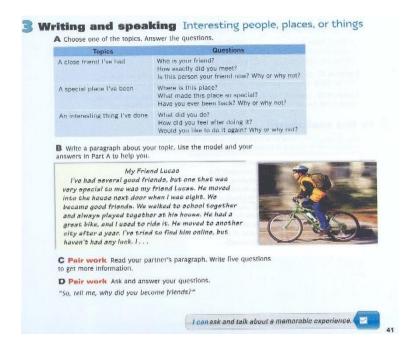
Figure 4 A sample of the writing activities in Four Corner Series

3.1.1.2 Four Corner Series Language Areas

Textbooks' evaluation of the inclusion of the language areas based on CLT is presented below.

Grammar

In the Four Corners textbooks, the Grammar is presented inductively with sentence examples. In each unit, there are two Grammar parts. The Grammar activities require students to circle the correct words, complete the blanks with appropriate words, match the questions and answers, complete the conversation with proper words, fill in the blanks with the accurate form of the words in parentheses and write sentences and ask and answer questions. Figure 5 presents a sample taken from the textbook.
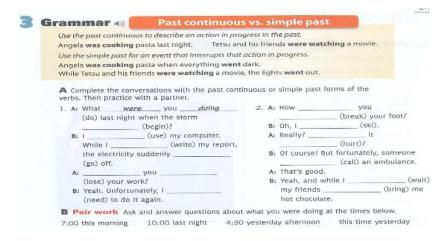

Figure 5 A sample of the grammar activities in Four Corner Series

Vocabulary

Vocabulary topics include jobs, names, clothes and colors, food, vacations, sports and activities, music and movies, environment, fashion, experiences, etc. Each vocabulary item is written under its related picture. The activities used for teaching vocabulary are matching the words with images, matching words with their definition, antonyms, completing the phrasal verbs, filling in the blanks and talking about them in pairs and discussing the ideas. Figure 6 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Figure 6 A sample of the vocabulary activities in Four Corner Series

Pronunciation

In every unit of the textbooks, there is a heading titled pronunciation which makes students aware of the correct pronunciation of words and syllables and includes the proper pronunciation of contraction forms, word stress, plurals, the stress in numbers, ending 'ed', linked sounds, article 'the' before the vowel and consonant sounds, falling and rising intonation in sentences, sentence stress, stress shift, the intonation of tag questions, etc. It contains activities such as: listening and repeating the correct pronunciation, listening and writing the words, showing the stressed syllable and showing falling and rising intonations, and showing the links between the consonants and vowels are among activities included in pronunciation section. Figure 7 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Figure 7 A sample of the pronunciation activities in Four Corner Series

3.1.2 Vision Series

The analysis of senior vision textbooks named 'Vision Series' is presented. This section entails the four language skills and areas.

3.1.2.1 Vision Series Language Skills

Textbooks' evaluation of the inclusion of the language skills based on CLT is presented below.

Listening

Listening activities only include the listening to a conversation to answer question. It seems that integration of the skills is not followed except writing. The do not prepare students for real listening tasks. Figure 8 presents a sample taken from the textbook.
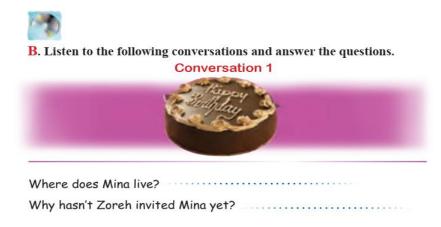

Figure 8 A sample of the listening activities in vision Series

Speaking

Speaking activities include answering the questions related to the conversation orally after the talk, reading the sentences as a kind of accuracy practice, asking and answering according to the patterns presented and implemented in a discussion about different topics, paring up and asking and answering from a partner after listening to a conversation. Figure 9 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Figure 9 A sample of the speaking activities in vision Series

Reading

Reading activities for grade X, Vision 1 contain a reading passage and reading comprehension questions like choosing the correct answer, True or False and matching two halves according to the passage. For grades XI and XII, Vision 2 and 3 after each reading passage there is a 'Reading Strategy' section explaining a reading strategy like scanning, skimming, highlighting, finding the reference words etc.... and the reading comprehension questions are according to the plan and that strategy is practiced in the reading comprehension question. Figure 10 presents a sample taken from the textbook.
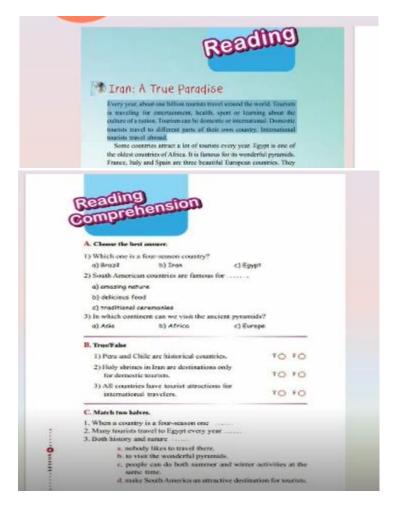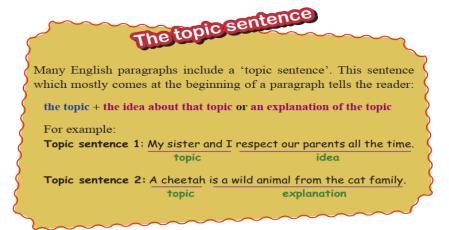
Figure 10 A sample of the reading activities in vision Series

Writing

Different activities for teaching Writing focus on common nouns and proper nouns and their correct spelling and capitalization and making them plural, places of adjectives and adverbs in sentences, finding the subject, the object, the verb, and the adverbs in sentences, rearranging the words to create correct sentences, gerunds and infinitives and their place in sentences, writing simple sentences and compound sentences using connecting words, knowing about the paragraph and different parts of the paragraph like a topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentences, and identifying them in a paragraph, and writing a paragraph. Figure 11 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

The topic sentence

Many English paragraphs include a 'topic sentence'. This sentence which mostly comes at the beginning of a paragraph tells the reader:

the topic + the idea about that topic or an explanation of the topic

For example:
Topic sentence 1: My sister and I respect our parents all the time.
                  topic   idea

Topic sentence 2: A cheetah is a wild animal from the cat family.
                  topic   explanation

B. Look at the topic sentences from paragraphs you have seen in Vision 2. Find the topic and the idea or explanation of the topic.

1) Language is a system of communication.

2) About fifty percent of the world's languages have fewer than 5000

   speakers.

3) Bad habits and addiction can be harmful to health.

4) Art is what people create with imagination and skill.

5) Handicrafts are good examples of the art and culture of a country.

Figure 11 A sample of the writing activities in vision Series

3.1.2.2 Vision Series Language Areas

Textbooks' evaluation of the inclusion of the language areas based on CLT is presented below.

Grammar

Grammar is taught inductively in the textbooks. Two texts are presented and the grammatical points of each lesson are highlighted in the texts, followed by example sentences highlighting the grammatical structures showing affirmative, negative and question forms of the structures. Figure 12 presents a sample taken from the textbook.

Comparative Adjectives		
Damavand is	taller than	Dena.
Asia is	bigger than	Europe.
Omid is	younger than	Reza.

- Karoon is longer than Atrak.
- Mars is smaller than Jupiter.

Figure 12 A sample of the grammar activities in vision Series

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is presented within sentences, highlighting the new vocabulary with the picture related to each word. Before each reading passage, some new vocabulary is presented with their definition in English and a sentence example for each new word. Vocabulary exercises in the textbooks include matching the words, to odd out the unrelated word and filling in the blanks with the appropriate words. Figure 12 presents a sample taken from the textbook.
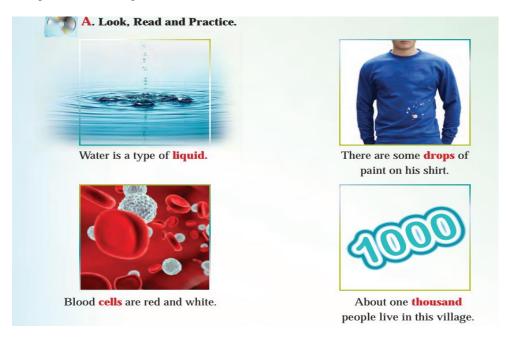

Figure 13 A sample of the vocabulary activities in vision Series

Pronunciation

In this section, learners will get familiar with the raising and falling intonation of different sentences, parts of sentences which are pronounced with more emphasis, and parts or syllables of the words which are pronounced with more stress. Figure 13 presents a sample taken from the textbook.
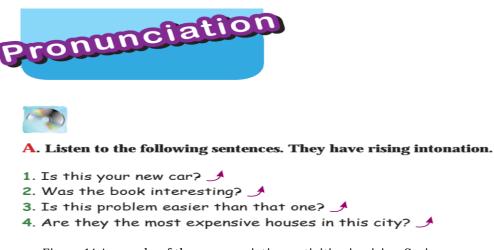

Figure 14 A sample of the pronunciation activities in vision Series

3.1.3 A Comparative Analysis of Four Corners Series and Vision

A comparative analysis of both series of textbooks is presented based on the principles representing characteristic features of CLT and teaching of four language skills and areas.

3.1.3.1 A comparison of Language Skills

Listening

-The purpose of listening has been stated clearly neither in the Four Corners Series nor in Vision English textbooks.

-There are no pre-listening activities in any of the series of textbooks.

-Listening activities of the two textbooks contain activities that require students to listen for specific information in a listening task like listening and filling in blanks, or checking some information.

-Both series of textbooks lack listening activities requiring students to make inferences.

-In Four Corners textbooks the listening activities contain activities such as note-taking, summarizing and using prior knowledge to predict as the listening's are about a wide range of topics. These elements are absent in vision textbooks.

Speaking

-In Four Corners textbooks students are not bound to use specific patterns, they can use the language for crossing meaning through different forms and patterns and different kinds of activities in vision textbooks, in speaking parts, there are some patterns and students are told that they could use the following patterns for diverse functions.

-In both series of the textbooks speaking practice involves pair-work and group-work but the number and range of activities for pair and group work in Four Corners Series are more than those in vision textbooks.

-Using target language in pair work, group work, and different kinds of activities, the class plays the role of social context, and speaking is the vehicle for interaction in the classroom.

Reading

-Reading passages of Four Corners provide a model and topic for writing and speaking so that the other two skills are about the same subject, but the reading passages of vision textbooks do not play such a role.

-The Reading passages of the Four Corners Series are authentic. However, reading passages from vision textbooks cover a small range of issues and are not as authentic as those.

-Reading passages of vision textbooks are short but Four Corners reading passages are not. Reading passages from Four Corners are exciting.

-Reading passages of vision textbooks are good for intensive reading and do not provide an opportunity for extensive reading since they are short. Four Corners reading passages are suitable for both intensive and extensive reading since they provide supplementary reading through the website and workbook.

-Both Skimming and Scanning strategies in reading have been included in vision textbooks, and they have been explained before the related activities. But in the Four Corners Series, they have not been referred to.

Writing

-Mechanics of writing have been explained, especially in Vision 3 for grade XII of vision textbooks and there are some explanations and activities regarding that. In Four Corners, there are not any explanations about the mechanics of writing.

-In the Four Corners Series after writing tasks students ask and answer and share ideas about their writing task and they are about real-life situations but vision textbooks do not have these characteristics.

-Writing as a process to write, plan, anticipate and review has not completely been referred to in both series of books. However, in the writing section of Four Corners, there are first some questions to answer then there is a model to write and finally sharing ideas with classmates.

-Writings of Four Corners are integrated with other skills like reading, speaking and listening each skill reinforces the other in Four Corners, but the writings of vision textbooks are not integrated with others.

3.1.3.2 A comparison of Language Skills

Grammar

-Grammatical explanations are simple and easy to understand in the Four Corners series. The grammar parts of vision textbooks is more comprehensive and gives more examples.

-Tables show the affirmative, negative and interrogative tenses in vision textbooks, but lack of tables in the Four Corners series is observable.

-Grammatical explanations are short in the Four Corners Series and there are more examples in vision textbooks.

-Grammar is embedded into a general language course and is not presented as a discrete skill in a separate course.

-The grammar is presented in Reading, Speaking and Conversation in both series of textbooks.

Vocabulary

Both series of textbooks present vocabulary in textual context. There is a list of irregular verbs and their past and past participles at the end of both series of textbooks. Both Four Corners and Vision textbooks provide different kinds of activities for vocabulary practice

Pronunciation

Due attention has been given to pronunciation in the Four Corners Series. Both segmental and supra-segmental features have been covered in the books. Word stress, sentence stress, contractions, consonant-vowel links, falling and raising intonation, emphatic pronunciation etc., all have been covered in the Four Corners series

3.2 Analysis of the Quantitative Data

The questionnaire findings are presented in this section.

3.2.1 Four Corners Analysis

Data from the questionnaire on teachers' evaluation of the Four Corners series is given below.

3.2.1.1 Characteristic Features of CLT

The items on characteristic features of CLT included 7 items and the results are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Four Corners Evaluation on Characteristic Features of CLT (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
1. The books pay balanced attention to language skills and areas.	6 (37.5%)	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.75%)	1 (6.25%)
2. Translation into the mother tongue is neither presented nor required in the books.	4 (25%)	5 (31.25%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)
3. The books contain sufficient authentic tasks and activities.	2 (12.5%)	12 (75%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)
4. The culture of the speakers of the target language has been presented in the books.	5	6	3	2

	(31.25%)	(37.5%)	(18.75%)	(12.5%)
5. Content is relevant, engaging and interesting.	7	5	4	0
	(43.75%)	(31.25%)	(25%)	(0%)
6. The teaching of language skills is integrated.	3	9	2	2
	(18.75%)	(56.25%)	(12.5%)	(12.5%)
7. The books contain information gap activities.	3	7	5	1
	(18.75%)	(43.75%)	(31.25%)	(6.25%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

Analysis of data showed that 75% of the respondents believed that the books paid balanced attention to language skills and areas (37.5% fully evident, 37.5% mostly evident), 56.25% agreed that translation into mother tongue is neither presented nor required in the textbooks (25% fully evident, 31.25% mostly evident), and 87.5% of the respondents believed that the books contain sufficient authentic tasks and activities (12.5% fully evident, 75% mostly evident). 68.75% believed that the culture of the speakers of the target language has been presented in the textbooks (31.25% fully evident, 37.5% mostly evident). 75% of the respondents agreed that the content of the textbooks is relevant, engaging and interesting (43.75% fully evident, 31.25% mostly evident). In response to the question of whether the teaching of language skills is integrated, 75% of respondents believed that it was integrated (18.75% fully evident, 56.25% mostly evident). 62.5% of the respondents believed that the books contain information gap activities (18.75% fully evident, 43.75% mostly evident).

3.2.1.1 Analysis of Language Skills

The results of the teachers' evaluation of language skills are given in table 2.

Table 2

Teachers' Evaluation of Language Skills in Four Corners (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
8. A variety of real-life listening activities such as note-taking, summarizing, and listening for the main idea and specific information are presented in the books.	2 (12.5%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)
9. The books provide students with sufficient opportunities to practice speaking through pair work and group work.	8 (50%)	4 (25%)	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)
10. Informal expressions are included in the books.	3 (18.75%)	4 (25%)	7 (43.75%)	2 (12.5%)
11. The reading of the books can provide a model and topic for writing and speaking.	4 (25%)	8 (50%)	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)
12. The books present scanning and skimming in reading exercises.	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.75%)	5 (31.25%)	2 (12.5%)
13. The books require students to write: narrative, descriptive, application, letter of complaint, appreciation and invitation letter.	4 (25%)	0 (0%)	10 (62.5%)	2 (12.5%)
14. The process of writing (brainstorming, drafting, revising, anticipating and reviewing) is presented in the books.	2 (12.5%)	7 (43.75%)	3 (18.25%)	4 (25%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

In response to the question on listening skills, 62.5% of the respondents believed that the books contained a variety of real-life listening activities like note-taking, summarizing, and listening for the main idea and specific information (12.5% fully evident, 50% mostly evident). In response to the question on speaking activity 75% of the respondents believed that the books provided sufficient opportunities for students to practice speaking through pair work and group work (50% fully evident, 25% mostly evident), but only 44% believed that informal expressions were included in the books. Regarding reading skills, 75% of the respondents believed that the readings of the books provided a model and topic for speaking and writing (25% fully evident, 50% mostly evident) and 56.25% believed that readings of the books included skimming and scanning exercises (37.5% fully evident, 18.75% mostly evident). In response to the question on writing the books require students to write narrative,

descriptive, application, letter of complaint, appreciation and invitation letters, only 25% of the respondents believed that the books required students to write such writings. However, 56.25% believed that the process of writing: brainstorming, drafting, revising, anticipating and reviewing were presented in the books (12.5% fully evident, 43.75% mostly evident).

3.2.1.2 Analysis of Language Areas

Regarding language areas of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation six questions were designed and the results of teachers' evaluation of language areas is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Teachers' Evaluation of Language Areas in Four Corners (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
15. The books do not present words as discrete units, but they are presented in context.	4 (25%)	6 (37.5%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.25%)
16. A wide range of topics and diverse vocabulary are presented in the books.	6 (37.5%)	7 (43.75%)	0 (0%)	3 (18.75%)
17. Grammatical explanations are brief, simple and comprehensive.	7 (43.75%)	7 (43.75%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)
18. One item is explained at one time. Rules and exceptions are not given at the same time.	2 (12.5%)	6 (37.5%)	5 (31.25%)	3 (18.75%)
19. Grammar is contextualized in meaningful language use.	3 (18.75%)	8 (50%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5%)
20. Both segmental and supra segmental features are presented in appropriate contexts.	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.75%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

As is shown in Table 3, the first question related to vocabulary on not presenting words as a discrete unit, and presenting them in the context received a positive response with 62.5% agreeing (25% fully evident, 37.5% mostly evident) and the other question on presenting a wide range of topics and vocabulary in the books received a very positive response with 81.25% agreeing (37.5% fully

evident, 43.75% mostly evident). As can be seen in Table 3 on item 17 the teachers strongly believed that the grammatical explanations were brief, simple and comprehensive in the textbooks with 87.5% agreeing (43.75% fully evident, 43.75% mostly evident). In response to item 18 on grammar when one item is explained at one time and rules and exceptions are not given at the same time 50% agreed and the other half of the respondents disagreed with this item. However, 68.75% believed that grammar is contextualized in meaningful language use (18.75% fully evident, 50% mostly evident). An item which had the least positive responses was the last item on presenting both segmental and suprasegmental features in appropriate context which only 43.75% responded positively.

3.2.1.3 Organization and Structure

Regarding the organization and structure of the books, five items were designed in the questionnaire for teachers to evaluate. The results of the teacher's evaluation of the organization and structure of the books is given in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Teachers' Evaluation of Organization and Structure

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
21. The books can play a motivational and instructional role.	6 (37.5%)	4 (25%)	5 (31.25%)	1 (6.25%)
22. The content and language are further practiced at the end of each lesson.	4 (25%)	8 (50%)	3 (18.75%)	1 (6.25%)
23. New structures and words are presented in interesting situations and recycled throughout the books.	3 (18.75%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)	1 (6.25%)
24. The books have a clear and consistent unit structure.	7 (43.75%)	4 (25%)	5 (31.25%)	0 (0%)
25. Content and exercises are graded.	7 (43.75%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.75%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

As can be seen in Table 4, 62.5% of the participants believed that the books can play motivational and instructional roles (37.5% fully evident, 25% mostly evident) and 75% of the

respondents believed that the content and language material are further practiced at the end of each lesson (25% fully evident, 50% mostly evident). The last three items of the questionnaire received the same number of positive responses 68.75% respectively, item 23 on the new structure and words are presented in an interesting situation and recycled throughout the books (18.75% fully evident, 50% mostly evident). Item 24 on the books has a clear and consistent unit structure (43.75% fully evident, 25% mostly evident) and item 25 on content and exercises are graded (43.75% fully evident, 25% mostly evident).

3.2.2 Vision Series Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaire data related to the vision series is presented n this section.

3.2.2.1 Characteristic Features of CLT

As is shown in Table 5, the teachers' analysis of vision textbooks on the characteristic features of CLT, the majority of the responses to the questions are negative. On item one about paying balanced attention to language skills and areas only 25% of the respondents believed that there is balanced attention to language skills and areas in the books and 75% disagreed (50% partially evident, 25% little or no evident). In response to the question on translation into the mother tongue is neither presented nor required in the textbooks only 18.75% had a positive response and 81.25% disagreed (31.25 partially evident, 50% little or no evident). One item which had the least positive responses was number 3 on containing sufficient authentic tasks and activities in the books which only 6.25% agreed and 93.75% believed that there weren't sufficient authentic tasks and activities in the books. Only 31.25% believed that the culture of the speakers of the target language has been presented in the books and the other 68.75% did not agree. 75% of the respondents believed that the content of the books is not relevant, engaging and interesting and only 6.25% of the respondents agreed that the teaching of language skills is integrated and a great percentage of 93.75% disagreed. In response to item number seven 37.5% believed that the books contain information gap activities.

Table 5

The Results of Teachers' Evaluation of Characteristic Features of CLT in Vision (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
1. The books pay balanced attention to language Skills and areas.	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)
2. Translation into the mother tongue is neither presented nor required in the books.	1 (6.25%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	8 (50%)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
3. the books contain sufficient authentic tasks and activities.	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)	12 (75%)
4. The culture of the speakers of the target language has been presented in the books.	3 (25%)	1 (6.25%)	0 (0%)	11 (68.75%)
5. Content is relevant, engaging and interesting.	1 (6.25%)	3 (18.75%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)
6. The teaching of language skills is integrated.	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)	7 (43.75%)	8 (50%)
7. The books contain information gap activities.	2 (12.5%)	4 (25%)	5 (31.25%)	10 (31.25%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

3.2.2.2 Analysis of Language Skills

The majority of responses to the questions on language skills were negative as it is shown in table 6. In response to the question about listening skills, only 6.25% believed that a variety of listening activities such as note-taking, summarizing, and listening for the main idea and specific information are presented in the books, the large percentage of 93.75% believed that the books lack such listening activities and only 18.75% agreed that the books provide sufficient opportunities for the student to practice speaking through pair work and group work. In response to the question that the books contain informal expressions only 25% believed and the majority of 75% did not agree. Again only 25% of the respondents agreed that the readings of the books can provide a model and topic for listening and speaking. The only item that had the most positive responses was number 12 which 68.75% believed that the books present skimming and scanning in reading exercises. The item which was very poorly responded to was number 13 that 0% of the respondents believed that the books require students to write narrative, descriptive, application, letter of complaint, appreciation and invitation letters and the other question about writing also had a considerable negative response and only 6.25% believed that the process of writing: brainstorming, drafting, revising, anticipating and reviewing are presented in the books.

Table 6

Teachers' Evaluation of Language Skills (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
8. A variety of real-life listening activities such as note-taking, summarizing, and listening for the main idea and specific information are presented in the books.	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)	5 (31.25%)	10 (62.5%)
9. The books provide students with sufficient opportunities to practice speaking through pair work and group work.	0 (0%)	3 (18.75%)	5 (31.25%)	8 (50%)
10. Informal expressions are included in the books.	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	10 (62.5%)
11. The reading of the books can provide a model and topic for writing and speaking.	1 (6.25%)	5 (18.75%)	4 (25%)	6 (37.5%)
12. The books present scanning and skimming in reading exercises.	5 (31.25%)	6 (37.5%)	4 (25%)	1 (6.25%)
13. The books require students to write: narrative, descriptive, application, letter of complaint, appreciation and invitation letter.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)	15 (93.75%)
14. The process of writing: brainstorming, drafting, revising, anticipating and reviewing are presented in the books.	1 (6.25%)	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	13 (81.25%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

3.2.2.3 Analysis of Language Areas

As is shown in Table 7, the number of negative responses is less than in the previous table about language areas. 56.25% believed that the books did not present words as discrete units but they are presented in context (25% fully evident, 31.25% mostly evident) but only 43.75% believed that a wide range of topics and diverse vocabulary are presented in the books. On grammar, only 43.75% of the respondents believed that grammatical explanations were brief, simple and comprehensive and the other higher percentage did not agree. Item 18 received the most positive responses in the language areas section and 62.5% agreed that in grammatical explanations one item is given at one time and rules and exceptions are not given at the same time (37.5% fully evident, 25% mostly evident). Also,

56.25% agreed that grammar was contextualized in meaningful language use (12.5% fully evident, 43.75% mostly evident). The least positive response in this section was on item 20 which only 12.5% believed that both segmental and supra-segmental features are presented in appropriate context.

Table 7

Teachers' Evaluation of Language Areas (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
15. The books do not present words as discrete units, but they are presented in context.	4 (25%)	5 (31.25%)	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)
16. A wide range of topics and diverse vocabulary are presented in the books.	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	2 (12.5%)	7 (43.75%)
17. Grammatical explanations are brief, simple and comprehensive.	1 (6.25%)	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.75%)	6 (37.5%)
18. One item is explained at one time. Rules and exceptions are not given at the same time.	6 (37.5%)	4 (25%)	3 (18.75%)	3 (18.75%)
19. Grammar is contextualized in meaningful language use.	2 (12.5%)	7 (43.75%)	4 (25%)	3 (18.75%)
20. Both segmental and supra-segmental features are presented in appropriate contexts.	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	6 (37.5%)	8 (50%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

3.2.2.3 Analysis of Organization and Structure

Only 25% believed that vision books can play instructional and motivational roles (0% fully evident, 25% mostly evident). Only 18.75% of the respondents agreed that the content and language material were further practiced at the end of each lesson (0% fully evident, 18.75% fully evident). In response to question number 23, 62.5% believed that new structure and words are not presented in interesting situations and not recycled throughout the books and just 43.75% agreed that the books had a clear and consistent unit structure (12.5% fully evident, 31.25% mostly evident). And in response to the last item again the number of negative responses was more than positive ones only 37.5% believed that content and exercises were graded (6.25% fully evident, 31.25% mostly evident).

Table 8

Teachers' Evaluation of Organization and Structure (N=16)

	FE	ME	PE	LNE
21. The books can play a motivational and instructional role.	0 (0%)	4 (25%)	4 (25%)	8 (50%)
22. the content and language material are further practiced at the end of each lesson	0 (0%)	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)	6 (37.5%)
23. new structure and words are presented in interesting situations and recycled throughout the books	0 (0%)	6 (37.5%)	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)
24. The books have a clear and consistent unit structure.	2 (12.5%)	5 (31.25%)	5 (31.25%)	4 (25%)
25. Content and exercise are graded.	1 (6.25%)	5 (31.25%)	3 (18.75%)	7 (43.75%)

*FE: fully evident; ME: mostly evident; PE: partially evident; LNE: little or no evident

4 Discussion & Conclusion

The study was an attempt to evaluate the two textbook series Vision and Four Corners base don CLT frameworks. It was conducted through a parallel mixed methods of the type convergent. Content Analysis was done by the three researchers as the qualitative phase of the study. Also, a questionnaire was developed to evaluate the textbooks based on the experts' ideas.

Based on the findings of the content analysis it can be concluded that the Four Corners series involve a robust implementation of CLT features. For example, for listening activities, it is observed that there are diverse tasks such as listening for answers, true/false statements, and note-taking. Another important point relates to the audio files. They are recorded by native speakers through which authenticity of the listening experience is guaranteed. As for the speaking activities, it can be concluded that the series promotes interaction. There are discussions in the form of pair and group activities as well as role playing and interviews which simulate real-life sorts of communication. As for the reading skill, a wide range and array of topics are covered. Discussion is stimulated through comprehension questions. Noticing is provided through highlighted vocabularies. In the same vein, a variety of writing activities are presented including blog posts or letters which integrate reading and

speaking in an efficient way. The grammar is presented inductively through varying examples to reinforce learning. For vocabulary, visual aids are used which present them thematically. The vocabulary items seem to be in accordance with the students' interest. And finally for pronunciation, the series address different segmental and suprasegmental features.

Based on the experts' evaluations, Four Corners was rated positively based on its adherence to CLT. Others researcher also mention its title as reliable textbooks to be safely used for language education (Chegeni, et al., 2016). A majority of the participants believed that a balanced attention is devoted to language skills through authentic tasks. However, some areas for improvement were also noted. They included including more informal expressions as well as narrative writing tasks. Other scholars (Hamidi, et al., 2016) also state the books series is superior to interchange series. As for addressing the students' needs also, the teachers in Najafi Sarem's (2017) study were satisfied with Four Corners.

Based on the findings of the content analysis it can be concluded that contrary to Four Corners, Vision series falls short in several key areas. For example, though the listening activities audio materials are designated as native-like, they are not authentic. This can hinder comprehension. Moreover, listening tasks lack variety if compared to Four Corners. As for the speaking activities, they are limited in scope and real-life interaction and communication are not encouraged. For the reading skill, the passages are short and there is not a wide coverage of topics. Also, a lack of pre-reading activities seems evident which can enhance engagement. And finally for the writing skills, there is focus on basic sentence structure and functions and applications for real-life are no considered. For the language area of grammar, inductive teaching is prevalent. However, there is lack of contextualization. Also, rules and examples are not integrated. For vocabulary, there is not a broad range as far as topics are concerned. Language use exposure is also limited. For pronunciation, there is inconsistency across the different levels. This is in line with the findings of other scholars (Jamshidian, et al., 2024) who maintain that "Generally, the Vision series did not follow CLT principles to promote language learners' ability to communicate" (p.1).

The feedback received from teachers regarding the Vision series was primarily negative as far as its alignment with CLT principles was concerned. Many of the respondents believed that the textbooks did not adequately integrate language skills. Also, they stated that it does not provide engaging content. A significant number of participants showed their concerns related to the lack of authentic tasks. Moreover, the absence of cultural representation was also emphasized in the data. Other researchers have also expressed their concerns regarding this by mentioning that target language culture is absent (Gheitasi, et al., 2022).

Based on the analysis of the two textbook series, though they both exhibit strengths and weaknesses, it can be recommended for Four Corners to enhance its vocabulary review sections .For Vision, substantial revisions seem to be necessary if alignment with the CLT principles is the target. To improve the vision book series diversifying listening task and employing native audio are recommended. As for the speaking skill, games and role plays can be enhanced to foster student's engagement. Variety and length of reading passages were problematic and need attention along with the inclusion of pre-reading tasks. More real-life writing tasks are needed for the students' practical

communication needs. Vocabulary needs to be expanded and pronunciation tasks must ensure a comprehensive coverage for all phonetic features.

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