

Original Article

Reflection of Pragmatic Knowledge in Iranian High School English Textbooks (*Vision Series*)

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Submission date: 17-06-2022

Acceptance date: 27-11-2022

Abstract

Pragmatic competence is an essential language pedagogy component represented in English textbooks. The paper attempts to examine the extent to which pragmatic knowledge was reflected in Iranian high school English textbooks (*Vision series*). Hence, Halliday's (1973) model and Halliday, et al.'s (1964) model were used to investigate subcategories of functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. The data was described by descriptive statistics. The findings revealed the Iranian culture-deprived representation (e.g., traditional customs, and ceremonies such as Nowruz, Chaharshanbesori, and Yalda). Moreover, the results highlighted only a limited number of pragmatic components implicitly introduced in the *Vision series*, and attention was given to their representation and problematic distribution. Furthermore, the English sociocultural patterns were limited and attempts were made to reflect the Iranian culture and convection of daily communication. Thus, some pedagogical implications were offered to improve the *Vision series*, using authentic pragmatic content instead of proclaiming the fictitious prescription of its authors.

Keywords: Halliday's (1973) model, Iranian culture, Iranian high school English textbooks, Pragmatic knowledge, Sociocultural knowledge, Vision Series.

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1. Introduction

Following the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE), the Iranian authors have collaborated with Iranian publishers to produce *Vision series* for Iranian high school students from Grade 11 to Grade 13. The series was depicted as fostering communicative competence. In the early 1970s, the construct of communicative competence was introduced in discussions of second/foreign language proficiency (Savignon, 2018). If the aim of language study is language use, the learner's ability to communicate is an indicator of the improvement of language proficiency (Savignon, 2018). "In naturalistic (non-classroom) settings", human language communication happens in oral and written forms and expands in "one or more languages where social interaction takes place" (Savignon, 2018; p. 714). In every community, learners need to meet their needs through interaction. Therefore, communication is an important factor to help them. Communication is something beyond joining vocabularies to create a phrase or a sentence in different contexts. When "the linguistic theory" is to be incorporated with the communication and culture theory, there are fourfold distinctions in a general way (Hymes, 1971).

Hymes (1971) stated four questions for language use or other forms of communication: To what degree something is possible in a formal system from grammatical, cultural, on occasion, or communicative aspects; The second question is to what degree something is feasible in implementing acceptability; The third question refers to whether something is appropriate and matches up with its context; The fourth one is whether something is performed actually. Holiday's functional account of language use is another linguistic theory of communication that supplements Hyme's view of communicative competence. He explained the instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, and representational functions. They are seven basic functions that language performs for learning the first language in childhood period.

Malmir and Derakhshan (2020) defined pragmatic competence as the knowledge of using linguistic forms to obtain communicative goals based on the context. According to Tran and Yeh (2020), English pragmatic competence is a key challenge for learners of a second language because of limited exposure to the culture of the target language. Based on their statement, there is a big gap between real-life communication and classroom knowledge that leads to lower awareness of pragmatic knowledge. Tran and Yeh stated that English textbooks should expose EFL learners to pragmatic interactions in real-life situations. They

emphasized the representation of pragmatic knowledge in English textbooks and its gap in empirical research. They conducted a content analysis and found the representation of various speech acts in Vietnamese English textbooks. They pointed to the sequence and distribution of such speech acts. However, they believed that Vietnamese English textbooks should include more linguistic patterns by contextualizing pragmatic elements.

According to Hamdani (2019), language can be considered a basic and important aspect of communication. Using language to achieve a variety of purposes depends on the conditions of society. Conditions govern the conversation between two interlocutors. Pragmatics has facilitated understanding of language better because they investigate using language in context, combining language functions and forms based on negotiating. Hamdani (2019) emphasized that language learners should expand declarative knowledge, obtain procedural knowledge for becoming aware of the way of acting and using the language, and have the skill to utilize pragmatic knowledge in a sociocultural context.

Kasper (1996) emphasized the relevant input and believed that learners require sufficient opportunities to promote their pragmatic knowledge. Because of the importance of textbooks as prior language input for pupils' interaction activities in the classroom or in the other environment, pragmatic knowledge should be fundamentally demonstrated in English textbooks (Lee, 2013; Nguyen, 2011). Tran and Yeh (2020) highlighted the importance of incorporating three factors such as contextual meaning, pragmatic topics, and relevant activities that should receive more attention in textbooks. Learners should know about the language's contextual meaning to assess a reaction pertinent to the interaction in social contexts. Pragmatic topics should be ordered based on the learners' needs and their language proficiency level. Role-play and interactive discussion as pragmatic activities can foster learners' pragmatic awareness.

However, the *Vision series* as the major resource for Iranian high school students should acquaint them with the nature of English-based communication to facilitate their international communication. Thus, to do so, this study seeks to reflect the representation of pragmatic knowledge in Iranian high school English textbooks. Bachman and Palmer (2010) categorized sociolinguistic knowledge into the knowledge of dialects, knowledge of the genre, knowledge of register, knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions, and knowledge

of cultural references and figures of speech. The same categorization was used in this study to analyze sociolinguistic knowledge.

2. Literature Review

Through the understanding of different pragmatic and linguistic theories, English textbook designers can develop input activities based on constructivism theory into English textbooks to assist learners to learn more efficiently. In this regard, there are some theoretical and empirical national and international studies as follows:

According to Brown (1941), constructivism has some typical themes including interactive discourse, sociocultural variables, cooperative learning, discovery learning, construction of meaning, and interlanguage variability. Constructivism is divided into cognitive and social branches. A cognitive branch of constructivism focuses on the learners' ability to construct their real representation. It emphasizes that "learners must discover and transform complex information if they are to make its own, [suggesting] a more active role for students in their own learning than is typical in many classrooms" (Slavin, 2003, pp. 257-258 as cited in Brown, 1941). Social constructivism is another branch that accentuates the importance of cooperative learning and social interaction in making images of reality both cognitively and emotionally (Brown, 1941).

According to VanPatten and Benati (2010), the sociocultural theory by Vygotsky is a non-linguistic theory that focuses on context-bound learning. The vital construct in this theory is mediation. It refers to the idea that individuals have special cultural tools including language, literacy, and other tools they intentionally utilize to communicate with their environment. VanPatten and Benati (2010) mentioned that "these tools can mediate between individuals and the situations" (p.83) in which they find themselves. Moreover, they restrict people to use them in only specific ways. They believe that Learning or development happens when individuals take part in culturally formed setting such as schools, family life, peer groups, workplaces, etc.

According to VanPatten and Benati (2010), another important construct of sociocultural theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is a metaphor to describe the gap between a learner's current ability to use mediation tools and the level of

his potential development. ZPD indicated tasks that a student "has not yet learned ", however, he is "capable of learning with appropriate stimuli" (Brown, 1941, p. 13).

Eslami-Rasekh (2005) believed that ESL teaching methodology courses did not give careful consideration to pragmatic issues in materials and training. She believed that awareness-raising activities evolve the consciousness of appropriate use of language forms in context; such activities helped students acquire pragmatic knowledge like a comparison between kinds of apologizing strategies in their L1 and L2. Language learners should consciously be informed about dissimilarities in speech acts of the native and target language (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005).

Tran and Yeh (2020) believed that English textbooks should include real-life pragmatic interactions. They conducted a content analysis study to explore cross-culturally written Vietnamese EFL textbooks. They scrutinized speech acts, meta-pragmatic information, and the appropriateness and authenticity of such pragmatic representations. They highlighted using different speech acts and their problematic distribution in Vietnamese EFL textbooks. The findings revealed decontextualized and oversimplified meta-pragmatic content. Moreover, the results indicated inappropriate linguistic expressions in the real-social interactions utilized in the ELT textbooks. They suggested that authentic social interactions should be reflected in ELT textbooks.

McConachy (2018) focused his attention on intercultural language teaching, the need for language learners, to promote the ability to actively interpret cultural meanings. He believed that cultural representations incorporated in language textbooks can be considered a useful resource to promote their capacities for critical interpretation. Zaferanieh and Hosseini-Maasoum (2015) investigated representations of pragmatic knowledge in Iranian high school textbooks. They revealed insufficient representation of pragmatics in these books. They pointed to inauthentic dialogues, inappropriate use of simplifications and reductions, lack of meta-pragmatic information and grading, unsystematic presentations, meta-pragmatic information, and embedding English speech acts in dialogues based on Iranian Islamic cultural norms.

Kayapinar (2009) investigated the teachers' opinions on the quality of English course book packages (starter to intermediate). He found teachers did not generally have good opinions of the coursebook packages. According to Kayapinar (2009), material developers

should revise course books in a way that met the learners' needs in the national context. The course book could not be used internationally since it was not a representation of an authentic context.

Kang-Young (2009) described two factors playing a significant role in successful communication with people from a target language society. The first factor is the level of language learners' intercultural knowledge. The second factor refers to their target socio-cultural knowledge. Lee (2009) used a content analysis method to assess 11 Korean high-school EFL conversation textbooks from cultural perspectives. The results demonstrated the textbooks disregarded the general cultural aspects of language. She believed that the 11 EFL textbooks in Korea did not promote their learners' intercultural communicative competence or culture-specific competence. Lee (2009) pointed to the insufficient use of authentic materials as textbooks' weakness.

Salehi and Khosravi (2017) investigated the perceptions of teachers and students toward the newly developed Iranian English textbook (*Vision 1*). They emphasized the need for investigation of the textbook developers' claim. Textbook developers utilized one special criterion while other factors and research-based criteria could help them develop a textbook. However EFL teachers disapproved of the content of *Vision 1*, they highlighted the importance of the revised movement. Conversely, stakeholders and students approved the content of newly developed books.

Besides, Khajavi and Abbasian (2011) investigated the cultural pattern of Iranian English high school textbooks and found that these textbooks overlooked the cultural matters of the target language. The contents of the textbooks were about scientific materials; these textbooks did not point to the ancient history of the country. They believed that Iranian English textbooks did not support learners with cultural issues of other countries. These textbooks disregarded the role of cultural materials. Therefore, this weak point prevented promoting students' cultural competence. They pointed to the need for revision to develop textbooks promoting intercultural knowledge and investigate its effects on helping students tolerate cultural differences. They also drew policymakers' and textbook authors' attention to the revision of the textbooks. Xiao (2015) combined cross-sectional studies of the role of proficiency in promoting L2 pragmatic competence. She stated that proficiency has a positive effect on pragmatic competence, high proficient learners have highly proficient

pragmatic competence. Khomeijani Farahani et al. (2021) investigated macro and micro politeness Strategies in Iranian English Textbooks and pointed to the use of all types of macro politeness strategies in high school English textbooks. They highlighted different frequencies of the macro and micro politeness strategies. Rostami (2021) compared the cultural aspects of Iranian high school English textbooks with native institutes' English textbooks. He divided culture into two categories of culture beginning with 'c' and 'C'. The findings revealed that the Iranian English textbooks included fewer English cultural elements than the native English textbooks. Moreover, both English textbooks included highly frequent themes of big 'C' interpretations of culture.

Previous studies focused on the general representation of the English cultural aspects in Iranian High school English. They didn't specifically scrutinize the reflection of functional and sociocultural aspects of the English language in the *Vision series*. The current study aimed to respond to the subsequent research questions to scrutinize the pragmatic knowledge reflection in the Iranian high school textbooks (*Vision series*).

1. To what extent were principles of functional knowledge observed in the *Vision series*?
2. To what extent were principles of sociolinguistic knowledge observed in the *Vision series*?

3. Methodology

A content analysis of the *Vision series* as an Iranian high school English textbook was conducted to evaluate to what extent pragmatic knowledge is represented in the *Vision series*. Not only did the researchers identify the extent to which functional knowledge was covered in the *Vision series* but they also scrutinized the extent to which sociolinguistic aspects were reflected in the *Vision series*.

As the continuous non-periodic collection, The *Vision series* was selected as the corpus of this study. It was designed based on FRDE (2011) and planned to be extensively used for 16 to 18 years old students in high school. The *Vision series* includes *Vision 1 (Volume 1)* for the first high-school year, *Vision 2 (Volume 2)* for the second-high school year, and *Vision 3 (Volume 3)* for the third high-school year. Each volume consists of three to four

units, claimed to authenticate principles of communicative language learning. With regards to the components of the textbooks, all nine headings (i.e., Getting Ready, Conversation, New Words and Expression, Reading, Vocabulary Development, Grammar, Listening and Speaking, Pronunciation, Writing, and What You Learned) incorporate a coherent outline for each unit.

Halliday's (1973) model was used to investigate functional knowledge as a subcategory of pragmatic knowledge including ideational function, manipulative function, heuristic function, imaginative function, and interactional function. Halliday et al.'s (1964) model was used to investigate written genres, dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech as subcategories of sociolinguistic knowledge. The analysis of the content reflects the data in words and themes to interpret the results. This analysis includes different steps. After determining the research questions, the set of categories consisting of objective characteristics or more conceptual ones were defined for coding. Coding facilitated organizing the meaning units into the previously determined categories.

More conceptual categories facilitated clarifying the rules for what would and would not be included to make sure that all texts were consistently coded. Materials were divided into shorter units. Themes as the analysis unit was the main entity analyzed in this study. Components of pragmatic knowledge were used to arrange the content in categories or themes as a word, phrase, or sentence in a way that the unit or themes were in line with the research objectives. Each item was indexed and classified to explain what it was about. This study aimed to recognize whether the categories were connected in any manner, then they were listed as prime or subordinate classifications. The categories were gathered to be scrutinized and to be checked whether they fit. Then, all relevant data in the appropriate categories were extracted and recorded for each text. Subordinate categories of the model were analyzed.

In this article, Halliday's (1973) functional model was used to check the following language functions. Then the ideational functions, expressing meaning based on experiences of the real world, were scrutinized in the *Vision* series. By analyzing all sentences of each chapter, the frequency of manipulative functions was also determined in the *Vision* series. The interactional functions and the heuristic function were scrutinized in the *Vision* series. The imaginative functions were examined to determine to what extent students can expand their surroundings for humorous goals like telling jokes. Their frequency ranking was

indicated in tables to represent their distribution in the *Vision* series. Halliday et al.'s (1964) model was used to investigate written genre, dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech to assess how the *Vision series* presents different levels of style including frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. All sentences were analyzed to count the number of register representations.

Finally, the results were analyzed to draw conclusions. Once coding was complete, the collected data were scrutinized to seek patterns and extract conclusions from the research questions. Statistical analysis was used to find the frequency of vocabulary items and pragmatic items. Then, the results were interpreted, and inferences were made about the creators, context, and audiences.

4. Results

The following tables indicated the representation of two categories of pragmatic knowledge including functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge.

4.1. Functional knowledge

Table 1 indicates 24.29% of heuristic functions (e.g., Excuse me, what is it? Is it a leopard?) in the first lesson, 25% in the second lesson, 25.23% in the third lesson, and 25.46% in the fourth lesson. The findings showed 21.33% of interactional functions (e.g., What are you going to do this weekend?) in the first lesson, 29.33% in the second lesson two, 32% in the third lesson, and 17.33% in the fourth lesson.

Table 1.

The Role of Language Function in the Vision 1

	Ideational function	Manipulative Function		Heuristic function	Imaginative function	Interactional function
		instrumental	regulatory			
Lesson 1						
Frequency	0	0	0	104	0	16
Percentage	0	0	0	24.29	0	21.33

Lesson2						
Frequency	0	0	0	107	0	22
Percentage						
	0	0	0	25.00	0	29.33
Lesson 3						
Frequency	0	0	0	108	0	24
Percentage						
	0	0	0	25.23	0	32.00
Lesson 4						
Frequency	0	0	0	109	0	13
Percentage						
	0	0	0	25.46	0	17.33
Book (total)	0	0	0	428	0	75

The results highlighted the use of heuristic and interactional functions in *Vision 1*. Thus, functional knowledge was not equally represented in the four lessons of *Vision 1*. They were implicitly used to represent the textbook content rather than explicit teaching of functional knowledge to high school students. The obtained results are also graphically represented in Figure 1:

Figure 1.

Percentage of Using Knowledge of Function in the Vision1

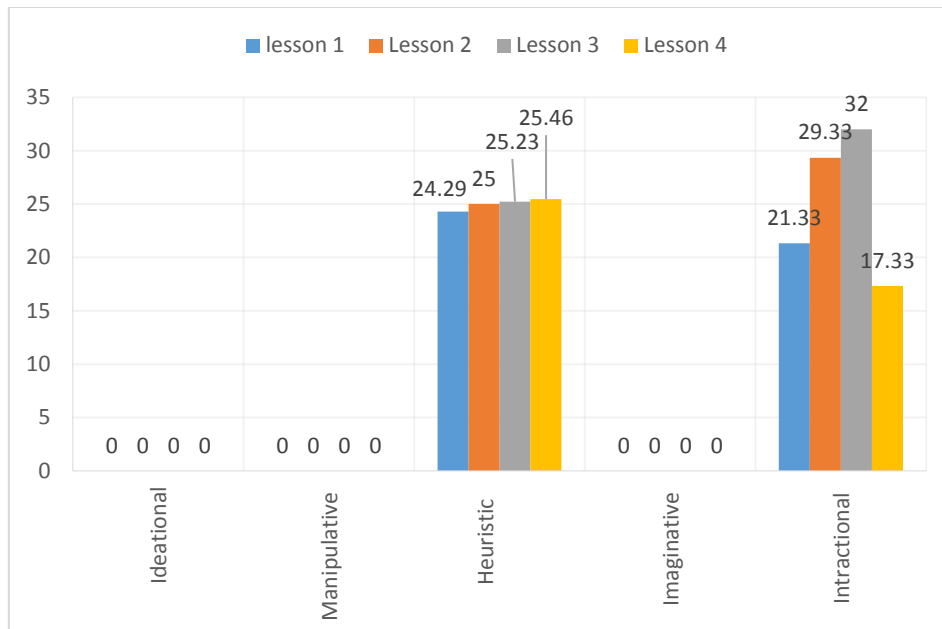


Table 2 highlights the use of heuristic and interactional functions. The results indicate 28.57% of heuristic functions (e.g., Does water really exist on Mars?) in the first lesson, 41.12% in the second lesson, and 30.30 % in the third lesson. The findings of this study showed 33.33% of interactional functions (e.g., May I help you?/ How is it going?) in the first lesson, 27.27% in the second lesson, and 39.39% in the third lesson.

Table 2.

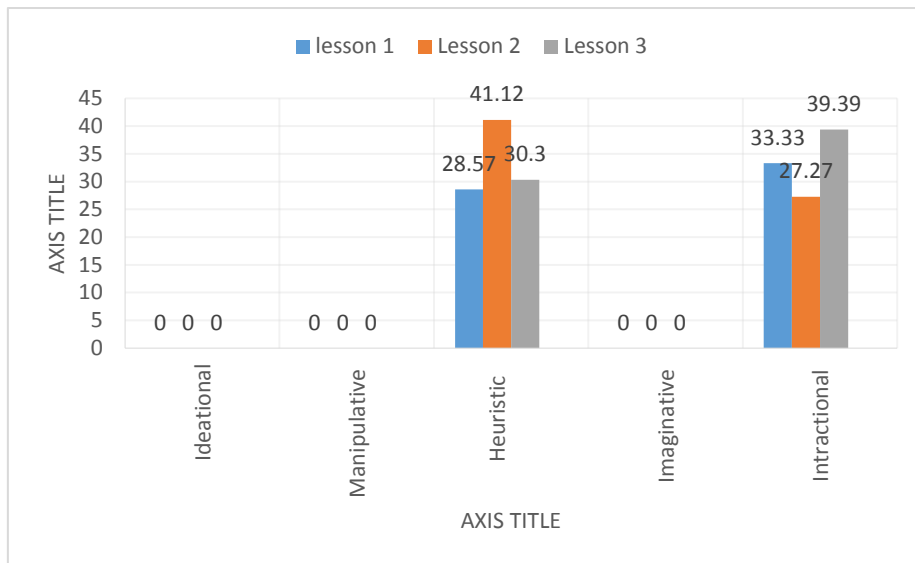
The Role of Language Function in the Vision 2

	Ideational function	Manipulative function	Instrumental	Regulatory	Heuristic Function	Imaginative function	Interactional function
Lesson1							
F	0	0	0	0	132	0	22
P	0	0	0	0	28.57	0	33.33
Lesson 2							
F	0	0	0	0	190	0	18
P	0	0	0	0	41.12	0	27.27
Lesson 3							
F	0	0	0	0	140	0	26
P	0	0	0	0	30.30	0	39.39
Book (total)	0	0	0	0	462	0	66

Heuristic and interactional functions as the most frequent kinds of functional knowledge were represented in *Vision 2*. Therefore, functional knowledge was unequally presented in the fourth lesson in *Vision 2*. The implicit representation of the contents rather than the explicit teaching of functional knowledge to high school students was observed in *Vision 2*. The obtained results are also graphically represented in Figure 2:

Figure 2.

Percentage of Using Knowledge of Function in the Vision2



In *Vision3*, heuristic and interactional functions were frequently presented to convey the instructional content. Table 3 indicates 28.00% of heuristic functions (e.g., Asia is the largest continent of the world) in the first lesson, 37.27% in the second one, and 33.71% in the third lesson. The findings of this study showed 27.16% of interactional functions (e.g., What languages do you know?) in the first lesson, 41.97% in the second lesson, and 30.86% in the third lesson.

Table 3.

The Role of Language Function in the Vision 3

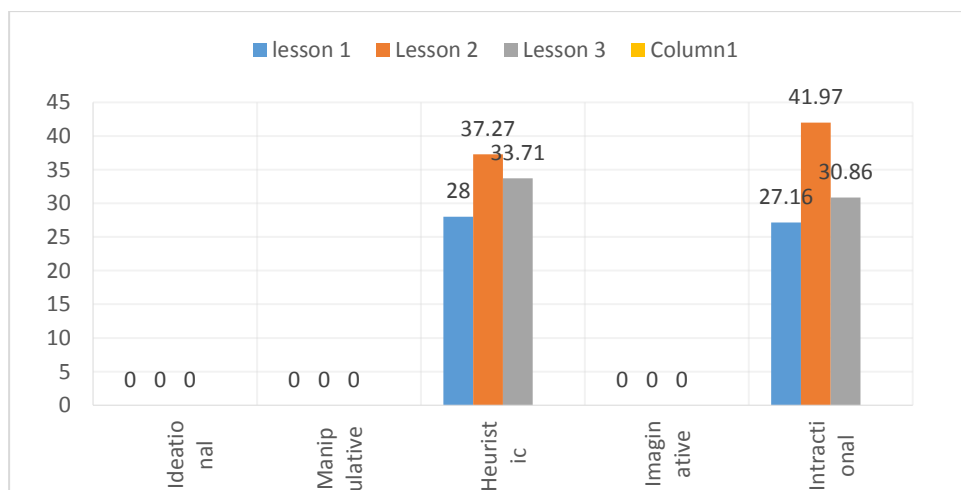
	Ideational function	Manipulative function	Instrumental	Regulatory	Heuristic Function	Imaginative function	Interactional function
Lesson 1							
F	0	0	0	0	142	0	22
P	0	0	0	0	28.00	0	27.16
Lesson 2							
F	0	0	0	0	189	0	34
P	0	0	0	0	37.27	0	41.97
Lesson 3							

F	0	0	0	176	0	25
P	0	0	0	33.71	0	30.86
Book (total)	0	0	0	507	0	81

As it is showed in Table 3, the highest frequency refers to the representation of interactional functions in the fourth lesson of *Vision 3*. The contents of the textbook focused on the implicit reflection of functional knowledge rather than its explicit teaching to high school students. By comparing the results, the same outcomes can be observed in the *Vision series*. Rather than using explicit instruction about what language functions are and how to use them in communication, The heuristic functions were implicitly used to teach English materials to students. The interactional functions which acted as a tool to enhance listening comprehension were applied to transfer information between two interlocutors. Ideational function, manipulative function, and imaginative function were not regarded in the *Vision series*. However, the explicit use of such functions could help students figure out proper clauses based on a different context. These results are depicted in Figure 3:

Figure 3.

Percentage of Using Knowledge of Function in the Vision3



4.2. Sociolinguistic Knowledge

This study focused on sociolinguistic knowledge as embedded in written information such as reading comprehension activities, new words and expressions, and conversation sections. The following tables present subcategories of sociolinguist knowledge including written genre, dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech. Table 4 indicates the

representation of 20.28% of prose (e.g., We have some plans. For example, we are going to protect their homes to make movies about their life) in the first lesson, 26.08% in the second lesson, 27.53% in the third lesson, 26.08% in the fourth lesson, and 100% of the knowledge of natural or idiomatic (e.g., God helps those who help themselves.) in the third lesson.

Vision 1 did not include knowledge of dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech. The great majority of genre knowledge in *Vision 1* was maintained by prose. Moreover, the obtained results are also graphically represented in Figure 4:

Table 4.

The Role of Sociolinguistic Knowledge in the Vision 1

	Knowledge of genre					Knowledge of register	Knowledge of Natural or idiomatic expressions	Knowledge of Cultural references and figures of speech	
	Knowledge Dialects	Poetry	Drama	Prose	Non-fiction				Fiction
Lesson 1									
F	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	
P	0	0	0	20.28	0	0	0	0	
Lesson 2									
F	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	
P	0	0	0	26.08	0	0	0	0	
Lesson 3									
F	0	0	0	19	0	0	1	0	
P	0	0	0	27.53	0	0	100	0	
Lesson4									
F	0	0	0	18	0	0	0	0	
P	0	0	0	26.08	0	0	0	0	
Book (total)	0	0	0	69	0	0	1	0	

Figure 4.

Percentage of Sociolinguistic Knowledge Using in the Vision 1

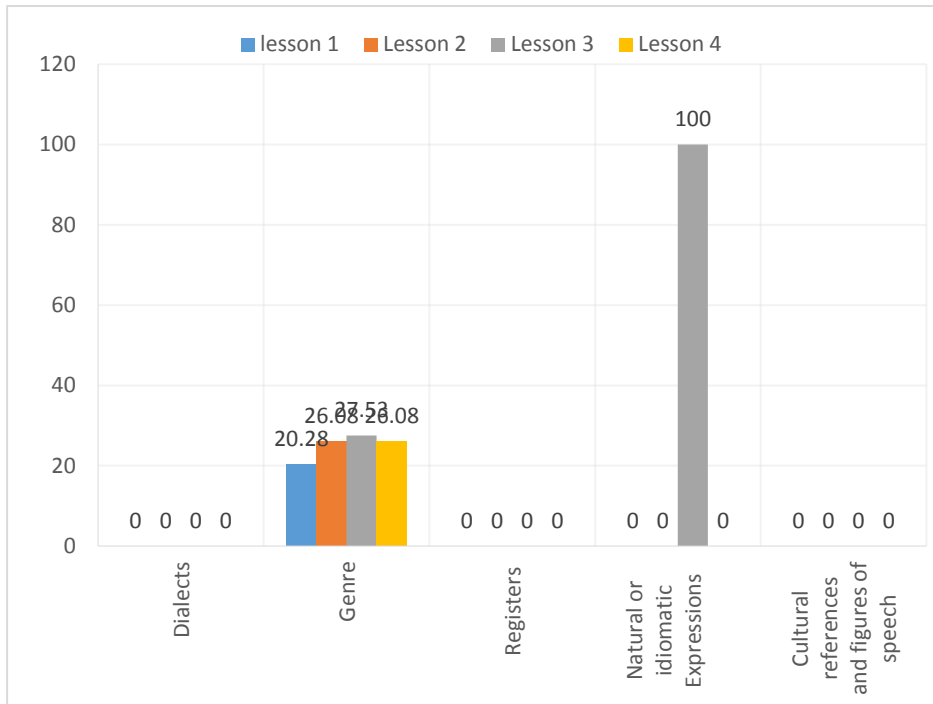


Table 5 presents the great majority of genre knowledge in *Vision 2* was retained by prose (e.g., to be honest, I enjoy using them all, but my favorite language is absolutely my mother tongue). Table 5 shows the presentation of 32.81% of prose in the first lesson, 37.5% in the second lesson, and 29.68% in the third lesson.

Table 5.

The Role of Sociolinguistic Knowledge in the Vision 2

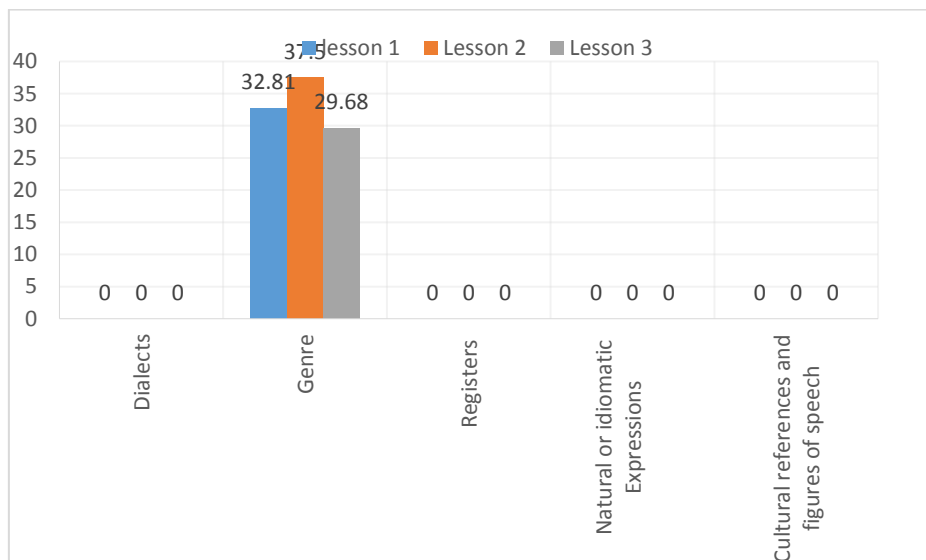
	Knowledge Dialects	Knowledge of genre					Knowledge of registers	Knowledge of Natural or idiomatic expressions	Knowledge of Cultural references and figures
		Poetry	Drama	Prose	Non-fiction	Fiction			
Lesson1									
Frequency	0	0	0	21	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	0	32.81	0	0	0	0	0
Lesson2									
Frequency	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0

Percentage	0	0	0	37.5	0	0	0	0	0
Lesson3									
Frequency	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	0	29.68	0	0	0	0	0
Book (total)	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	0	0

It would be better to consider the implication of other subcategories such as dialects, register, natural or idiomatic expressions, and cultural references and figures of speech in *Vision2*. Figure 5 indicated the obtained findings graphically:

Figure 5.

Percentage of Sociolinguistic Knowledge Using in the Vision 2



As Table 6 presents, the prose is the great majority of written genre knowledge in *Vision 3* (e.g., Dr. Gharib was born in Thran in 1288. After receiving his diploma, he went abroad to study medicine). It also indicates the presentation of 31.94% of prose in the first lesson, 33.33% in the second lesson, 34.72% in the third lesson, and 100% of the knowledge of natural or idiomatic in the third lesson. The findings can be graphically seen in Figure 6:

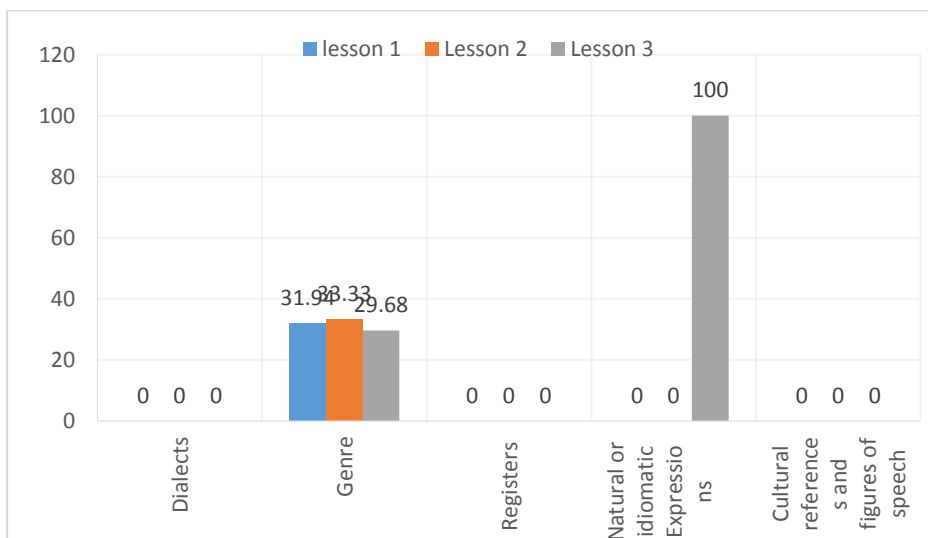
Table 6.

The Role of Sociolinguistic Knowledge in the Vision 3

	Knowledge Dialects	Knowledge of genre					Knowledge registers	Knowledge of Natural or idiomatic expressions	Knowledge of Cultural references and figures
		Poetry	Drama	Prose	Non-fiction	Fiction			
Lesson 1									
Frequency	0	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	0	31.94	0	0	0	0	0
Lesson 2									
Frequency	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	0	33.33	0	0	0	0	0
Lesson 3									
Frequency	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	10	0
Percentage	0	0	0	34.72	0	0	0	100	0
Book (total)	0	0	0	72	0	0	0	10	0

Figure 6.

Percentage of Sociolinguistic Knowledge Reflected in the Vision 3



Vision 3 didn't imply the knowledge of dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech.

5. Discussion

The present study confirmed the findings about the reflection of Iranian culture in the *Vision series* as other researchers such as Gheitasi, Aliakbari, and Yousofi (2020) pointed to. This study aimed to answer the main question sought to determine to what extent principles of pragmatic knowledge were observed in the *Vision series*. To answer this question, the present researchers explored whether the principles of functional and sociolinguistic knowledge were observed in the *Vision series*. From the short review above, key findings emerge: The results showed heuristic and interactional functions as the most common functional knowledge used in the *Vision series*. Thus, functional knowledge was not equally presented in the *Vision series*.

The heuristic functions were implicitly used to teach English materials to students rather than explicit instruction about what language functions are and how to use them in communications. The interactional functions were used to convey English information between two interlocutors. The implicit use of interactional functions acted as a tool to promote listening comprehension. As mentioned before, while the vision series did not include an ideational function, manipulative function, and imaginative function, the explicit application of such functions could guide students to recognize appropriate sentences based on different contexts. The pragmatic knowledge was not well represented in textbooks especially when it comes to speech acts (Aksoyalp & Toprak, 2015). However, in line with the ideas of Aksoyalp and Toprak (2015), it can be concluded that the *Vision series* need serious revision. Overall, these findings are in accordance with findings reported by Tran and Yeh (2020) who believed that English textbooks should include real-life pragmatic interactions. Their suggestion was the reflection of authentic social interactions in ELT textbooks.

This is in consistent with what has been found in a previous study by Zaferanieh and Hosseini-Maasoum (2015) who highlighted insufficient representation of pragmatic knowledge in Iranian high school textbooks. Moreover, Hussein and Albakri (2019) stated only vocabulary or grammatical knowledge cannot help a language student in social or academic communication. Enhancing both language knowledge and pragmatic competence enabled language learners to communicate with native speakers. In addition, Eslami-Rasekh (2005) believed that ESL teaching methodology courses did not give careful consideration

to pragmatic issues in materials and training. She believed that awareness-raising activities evolve the consciousness of appropriate use of language forms in context. Such activities helped students acquire pragmatic knowledge like a comparison between kinds of apologizing strategies in their L1 and L2c (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). As the final point, an important skill for language learners is to develop rules of pragmatics and sociolinguistics in using language (Thomas, 1983). Understanding and creating an appropriate language for different situations as well as learning its functions are necessary and important (Thomas, 1983). Failure to do so could lead to misunderstanding in a way that key points would be missed in mutual communication. It may also cause a total communication breakdown (Thomas, 1983).

Kang-Young (2009) highlighted the level of language learners' intercultural knowledge and their target socio-cultural knowledge as two factors playing a significant role in successful communication with people from a target language society. Lee (2009) did a cultural content analysis of 11 Korean high-school EFL conversation textbooks and found all of the textbooks disregarded the general cultural aspects of language. She believed that the 11 EFL textbooks in Korea did not promote their learners' 'intercultural communicative competence' or 'culture-specific competence'. Kang-Young (2009) pointed to the insufficient use of authentic materials as the weakness of the textbooks.

In line with previous studies, the current findings indicated that the *Vision* series disregarded the implication of knowledge of dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech. The prose is the only representation of written genre knowledge in the *Vision* series. The *Vision* series should represent discourse in content to guide and inform high school students about the target language and its communicative and cultural norms. The *Vision* series convey the translation of a limited number of Iranian cultural elements in a partial or unfinished manner.

The findings also pointed to the insufficient representation of Iranian cultural elements in the *Vision series*. There are general and ordinary topics for each lesson such as *understanding people, a healthy lifestyle, the value of knowledge art, and culture, traveling around the world, a sense of appreciation, and renewable energy* without mentioning the concepts of rich Iranian culture. Neither did chapters of the *Vision* series depict the values and norms of Iranian society, nor did they demonstrate and introduce knowledge, beliefs,

arts, laws, customs, abilities, and habits. To take a closer look at the topic, an example is given below:

Mr. Razavi: An Iranian Cheetah is an endangered animal.

Maryam: I know. I heard around 70 of them are alive. Yes?

Mr. Razavi: Right, but the number will increase.

Maryam: Really? How?

Mr. Razavi: Well, we have some plans. For example, we are going to protect their homes, to make movies about their life, and to teach people how to take more care of them.

As this example shows, this conversation is about an Iranian animal, Cheetah, and it lacks elements of Iranian culture and customs. In addition, the first point that should be considered is that It's not possible to separate a language from its cultural elements because vocabulary items originally transfer the cultural background of the language. The localization and preservation of Iranian identity can be kept if English high school textbooks develop and promote the critical thinking of high school students. This aim is unachievable unless the *Vision series* was enriched with sociolinguistic perspectives. The results of this study agree with the findings of the following studies in which Iranian English textbooks were regarded as insufficient language learning sources to promote sociocultural knowledge.

Salehi and Khosravi (2017) tried to reveal the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the newly developed Iranian English textbook (*vision1*). Textbook developers made use of one particular criterion; however, other elements and research-based criteria could be beneficial to the development of a textbook. EFL instructors were not the supporters of the content of *Vision1*; however, they emphasized the significance of the revised movement. Conversely, stakeholders and students supported the content of newly developed books.

Moreover, Khajavi and Abbasian (2011) checked the cultural pattern of Iranian English high school textbooks and reported that these textbooks ignored the cultural elements of the target language. The content of textbooks was mostly about scientific issues. These textbooks did not point to the ancient history of the country. Khajavi and Abbasian (2011) believed that Iranian English textbooks did not support learners with cultural issues

of other countries. These textbooks disregarded the role of cultural materials. Therefore, this weak point prevented promoting students' cultural competence. Khajavi and Abrasion (2011) pointed to the need for revision for developing textbooks promoting intercultural knowledge and its effects on helping students tolerate cultural differences. They also drew policymakers' and textbook authors' attention to the revision of the textbooks. Therefore, there are considerable discussions among researchers to emphasize the importance of applying major revisions in ELT textbooks to promote pragmatics knowledge.

6. Conclusion and Implication

This study examined the extent to which pragmatic knowledge was presented in Iranian high school English textbooks (Vision Series). The results revealed the content of the *Vision series* did not acquaint students with pragmatic knowledge efficiently. The results of this study uncovered the insufficient representation of pragmatics. limited representation of pragmatic knowledge was superficially represented in the *Vision series*. Therefore, teachers and learners experience unpredictability and confusion about how to promote their pragmatic knowledge. The results of this study highlighted the importance of incorporating pragmatic knowledge in the *Vision* textbooks. To conclude, the *Vision series* should be modified.

However, by taking a glance at the *Vision series*, its weaknesses are evident in the structure of the books. Therefore, the present study created an opportunity to diagnose the significant pragmatic gaps in the content of the *Vision series*. The following suggestions may help material developers enrich the *Vision series*: It would be better to incorporate interesting and attractive English stories such as Pinocchio, The Elves and the Shoemaker, Sindbad, and Snow White to draw learners' attention to natural or idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and figures of speech. They should introduce the ideational function, manipulative function, and imaginative function in an excited manner. Cultural elements of Persian and English languages should be incorporated in these textbooks simultaneously.

If some pictures with cultural elements added to the content, high school students would better become familiar with a variety of cultural and regional elements such as the way the women dress from different religions such as Islam and Christianity like Ilhan Omar (American politician) and Nancy Pelosi (American politician). Although they are both

American women, the way they dress is completely different because Ilhan Omar is a Muslim woman and Nancy Pelosi is a Christian woman.

The content of High school textbooks should make students aware of a wide variety of religions and languages in the globe they live in. In addition, there are some cultural boundaries of western countries, similarities between western cultures and Iranian culture rather than their differences that should be highlighted in the content of the *Vision series*. Different dialects and social levels related to language should be introduced to students. For example, students should know the polite or impolite aspects of language speech. They should know that even educated high-class American students try to use appropriate and polite words in their speech.

Acquainting students with written genres, dialects, registers, cultural references, and figures of speech can facilitate their performances to decide where to say, what to say and how to say corresponding to the appropriate context. They should have enough information about the correct pronunciation of the word and some phonological elements such as th, ph, sh, etc... . In conclusion, the *Vision series* should be modified to include pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, students can overcome obstacles faced in language communication. They should strictly be associated with real exercises, tasks, and texts in terms of preparing communicative opportunities. Further content analysis is necessary to scrutinize the components of pragmatic knowledge presented in the student textbooks and the teacher textbooks of the *Vision series* for upcoming research.

For upcoming research, additional content analysis is required to determine how to incorporate other significant components of pragmatic competence such as ideational function, manipulative function, and imaginative function in the *Vision series*. Further research should be carried out to establish genre knowledge consisting of poetry, drama, non-fiction, and fiction associated with both Persian and the target language culture. The same study can be used to examine to what extent pragmatic knowledge was reflected in the *Prospect series* as the corpus.

Teachers can benefit from the suggestion of this paper to supplement the *Vision series* to improve students' performance pragmatically. Acquainting authors with the shortcomings of the *Vision series* makes authors enhance the use of all pragmatic elements, especially, intercultural competence to enrich the English textbooks. Implementing the current study, syllabus designers and curriculum planners should consider an appropriate schedule for

teaching pragmatic and cultural information in high school and preparing students to fit in. The findings of this study help teachers focus on better and more communicative activities in the natural part. The findings can also clear teachers' minds to use a sufficient balance of activities to promote communicative and meaningful practices. For example, they can select attractive pieces of English stories to introduce pragmatic and intercultural aspects of language. As a shortcoming, this study might exaggerate the findings as more significant than is suggested from other data.

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