Research Article

A Comparative Study on the Potentiality of ILI Books and Rise and Shine Series in Terms of Intercultural Competence Development

Fatemeh Mirzapour

Department of English, Sofian Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sofian, Iran
E-mail: f.mirzapour@iaus.ac.ir
(Received: 2020/4/5; Accepted: 2020/8/18)

Online publication: 2020/9/10

Abstract

Materials are the most noticeable components of every language-learning context. One of these materials is the specific textbooks being used by English language academies; they are crucial in directing EFL teachers and learners and guiding them through the route of language learning. The present study attempts to compare the cultural content of two course books being used currently in Iran called ILI and Rise and Shine series in order to see which one is more useful in developing the intercultural competence of EFL learners. The participants of this study include 30 EFL teachers (15 teachers in ILI who teach advanced level books and 15 teachers in Chitsazan academy who teach advanced level books). The instrument of this study includes a questionnaire adapted from (Ahmadi Safa, Moradi et al. 2015) that consists of 38 questions designed based on Likert scale. The collected date were analyzed by an independent t-test. The obtained results revealed that Rise and Shine series include more intercultural features than ILI series and they are more applicable in improving the intercultural competence of EFL learners.

Keywords: course book evaluation, intercultural competence, ILI books, Rise and Shine

Introduction

Nowadays, English has extensively spread across the world and become as an international language for scientific, economic, political, social, and technological purposes. When the goal of learning English is recognized as communicating with different people across the world, the native-like communicative competence model that has been recommended in English teaching profession for many years seems to become unrealistic (Alptekin, 2002).

Communicative competence, grammatical competence, cultural competence, and language proficiency are the goal of foreign language learning. Cultural competence consists of the knowledge of conventions, beliefs, the customs, and meaning system of another country. Language and culture cannot be separated. Culture is the basis of communication. Language has no meaning without the cultural context in which it is spoken. Much attention should be paid to the target language culture teaching as well as to linguistic knowledge teaching in EFL teaching in order that learners' intercultural competence (IC) can be developed.

As Allen stated, back to 1985, in the last century, in order for the learners to get familiar with the enormous corpse of literary masterworks of civilization second language learning was created. The learners experienced the target language cultural experiences. According to Nostrand (1997), cross-cultural communication and comprehension were motives for second language learning in the 1960s. Steele (1989) mentioned that culture become an important concept for both studying the literature of civilization and language learning.

A growing need for the intercultural communication competence (ICC) development, an extension of communicative competence (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Lazar, 2007), has been playing an influential role during English learning and interpersonal communication. Over 25-year studies of intercultural communication in North America and East Asia, Scollon and Scollon (1995) concluded that "effective communication is based on sharing as much as possible the assumptions we make about what others mean" (p. 12).

It is worth noting that foreign language teachers should teach culture too. Learners learn culture through learning language, and by learning to use a new language, they learn about culture; so, they learn to communicate with other people from a different culture. The point is that grammar and vocabulary learning does not necessarily constitute a person's communicative competence. Lack of cultural awareness leads to misunderstandings, disagreement, and even communication conflicts. Successful communication with native speakers leads both to improved language skills and cultural habits and expectations. In the global communication century, EFL teaching goal has to be changed to the cultivation of IC.

Teachers and researchers are all concerned about the intercultural aspects in foreign languages teaching. Both social psychology and intercultural communication studies have provided information about the social skills, linguistic knowledge, and attitudes needed to communicate appropriately and effectively in intercultural contexts. Wiseman and Koster (1993) discussed that effective cross-cultural communication was emphasized by the intercultural aspects in foreign languages on the basis of different factors involved in a set of competence learning : skills of interpreting and relating , political education including cultural awareness, attitudes, skills of interaction and discovery.

Byram (1997) also believed that successful communication cannot be possible by the linguistic competence development, and misunderstandings often happen among interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds. In other words, internalization of native speakers' cultural norms should not be expected by English language learners. Instead, they are encouraged to develop both intercultural competence and communicative competence for efficient intercultural communication.

As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) stated, three types of cultural information are suggested to be included in (English) language textbooks: 1) target culture materials, 2) local culture materials, and 3) international culture materials. Learners in EFL/EIL contexts should be provided with various opportunities such as the help of well design English textbooks to effectively develop their Intercultural communicative competence (Chao, 2009).

In this regard, Sinicrope, Norris and Watanabe (2007) mentioned that intercultural competence development is necessary for learners' communicative competence improvement. They also believed that foreign language programs and colleges have an important role in developing learners' intercultural competence.

According to Canale and Swain (1980), introducing the communicative approach to language teaching, the culture importance was even more emphasized with enhanced culture and language incorporation. Stern (1983) believed that the cultural dimension of TESL and TEFL can be seen in a three-level scheme. The foundational level as the first level includes linguistics, education, sociology, anthropology and sociolinguistics theories. The second level encompasses cultural or ethnographical display of the target language. The third level includes the target language socio-cultural elements. In this conceptual skeleton, culture, language, and communication are regarded as equal concepts for society. The plan highlighted the culture to be included within ESL and EFL education.

Byram, Zarate and Neuner (1997) discriminated Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User as three intercultural competence levels. This discrimination is better for the definition and description of different language proficiency levels. However, some scholars and researchers disagree and they are of the opinion that it is not suitable for intercultural competence description. For example, Fitz Gerald (2003) proclaimed that being interculturally competent is dynamic; it is a belief that is regularly changing under the context effect. Thus, it is more recommended to define intercultural competence facets, not its levels.

Taylor (1994) tried to show a crucial link between intercultural competency and the transformative learning theory in a seminal effort to make clear interculturally competent learning processes. He asserted that the world is moving toward interdependence while the countries are making effort to share their limited assets and work together. He added that interculturally competent individuals are needed for this interdependent world, those who are able to live with different people of different cultures successfully.

English language is now an international language. English skills are needed for students to take part in international interaction. So, multilingual individuals can be successful in the continuing trend of globalization. New opportunities for learners can be provided by teaching English in the future. Hence, course books carry on an important function in educational practices, and their evaluation, is so crucial that its pedagogical offering to the learning and teaching process can be convinced.

English is a foreign language taught as a subject at Iranian high schools. Yet, in most of the cases, students prefer to take language courses at language institutes. Due to the limited access to target-language speakers and lack of opportunities to practice English, learning English has always been a great challenge for Iranian students. Therefore, course books are the main sources of linguistic and cultural information.

Foreign language educational researchers have recently paid attention to intercultural competence (IC) (Dervin, 2009). Lange (2011) maintained that anticipation of the intercultural competence approach integration in second language teaching can be made by investigation on intercultural competence, and that it is a true substitute to the communicative approach. However, interculturality does not still seem to be completely incorporated into second language learning and teaching (Dervin 2010).

Moreover, as Jaeger (1995) stated, the philological conventions besides academic freedom requirements, which contribute to the fact that important decisions regarding the curricula and instructors to be made by organizations, have hindered a critical conception of interculturality to be developed and the growth of intercultural competence has been declined. On the basis of the abovementioned reasoning, (Kalsbeek 2015) concluded that learners must be interculturally competent in order not to face any problems while contacting with people of different cultures.

Textbook evaluation studies have gained prominence in ESL and EFL contexts. According to (Sheldon 1988), textbooks must be evaluated for two reasons; first, suitable textbook can be selected by the teacher or program developer by evaluation. Also, weak and strong points of a textbook will be made clear by evaluation; it also helps to investigate EFL students' needs analysis. So, suitable adaptations to the materials can be made by teachers.

O'Neill (1982) provided four rational proofs for the textbooks use. Firstly, many textbook materials can be suitable for the students' needs, even though not exactly programmed for them. Secondly, textbooks permit students recharge themselves with past lessons, or think about future. They omit disbelief factor in the expectation of students. Thirdly, textbooks have the specific characteristic of presenting reasonably well-organized material. Finally, well organized textbooks allow the teacher to manage and alternate, as well as unorganized interactions in the classrooms to be organized by students. O'Neill (1982) believed that because language is an instrument for providing what people want to say naturally and need, relying on inventive, natural dealings in the classroom is emphasized. Students should have access to textbooks, irrespective of learning goals of the textbooks.

Hutchinson and Torres (1994) maintain that the textbook is a main part of English language teaching and learning- teaching situation becomes comprehensive if it has its suitable textbook. Textbooks play the manifold roles in ELT. Cunningsworth (1995) believed that a textbook can be seen as a resource for learners to do the practices. Textbooks are as a reference source on grammatical structures, lexical items and pronunciation; they also are as a self-study resource and a syllabus for learners. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) have stated that the textbook plays a key role in English teaching and learning. Textbooks can give goals to the learners; learners would not consider their learning actively if no textbook exists.

However, some negative matters about textbooks usage in EFL classrooms must be considered. No textbook can be suitable for different students with different needs since we cannot assure that topics can be interesting for EFL students and be in accordance with their needs.Moreover, a textbook diminishes the teacher's motivation and creativity to create something more interesting and new for their learners. Moreover, the learner's factors such as purposes, interests, age, and cultural background should be taken into account. To select a useful book the EFL students' purposes and needs should be taken in consideration. In summary, experts believe that students, teachers, institutes and schools are textbooks consumers who have different ideas about a standard and suitable textbook. Riazi (2003) argued that textbooks carry on a very important role in

language teaching and learning and are important elements in the second/foreign language classroom after the teacher. The textbook is a device in the teacher's hands, and the teacher must know both how to use it and how useful it can be.

The most outstanding cultural aspects were examined by Abdullah and Chandran (2009) that are depicted in four English language textbooks commonly used in Malaysian ESL classrooms. Their findings showed that the textbooks emphasize local culture which shows different ethnic groups' culture in Malaysia. In addition, it was revealed that these textbooks are culturally determined toward the source cultures in which native culture is straightly and clearly included. It was also revealed that intercultural behavior and communication were not covered, and finally, no attempt was made to compare western cultures.

Ahmadi Safa, Moradi, and Hamzavi (2015) investigated the quality of EFL learners' and teachers' outlooks on the EFL textbook intercultural competence potentiality, namely, *Top Notch Series*, used extensively in Iranian EFL context. The Frequency analyses results showed that the overall intercultural competence potentiality of the textbook satisfied both EFL teachers and learner. However, MANOVA analyses indicated that there were differences among EFL teachers and learners about the textbooks potentiality for creating cultural knowledge, cultural awareness, attitude, cross-cultural understanding, and intercultural skills. The EFL learners were of the opinion that the abovementioned factors were well covered enough by the textbook whereas the teachers believed that it does not pay enough attention to the factors.

Five chosen English language course books were examined and evaluated from the teaching techniques and vocabulary selection aspects they use in Turkey by Hamiloglu and Karliova (2009). Content-analysis was used in this study as an examination and evaluation method. The results indicated that lexis were integrated into the syllabuses of all selected course books, and that word knowledge was emphasized by individual headings and additional sub-headings, such as Easily Confused Words, Word Building, Vocabulary, Word Formation, Near-synonyms , and Synonyms Keyword Transformation,.

Riazi and Aryasholouh (2007) examined the pre-university and four high school English textbooks from the aspect of consciousness-raising of vocabulary activities. They realized that only 1% of activities could be classified as consciousness-raising. The researchers also concluded that individual word meanings are more important for students than the combination of words. Also, Iranian EFL teachers' viewpoints about the overall pedagogical suitability and value of the *Interchange* series were examined by Riasati and Zare (2010). The results demonstrated that most teachers had positive views about the effectiveness and suitability of the series.

In a similar vein, Otlowski (2003) investigated the gender portrayal and the various ethnic groups representation in the Expressway A series. The textbook is evaluated for (1) gender inclination – the women's depiction in stereotypical functions, and (2) ethnic group portrayal- the depiction and visibility of ethnic groups in the text. The illustrations and conversations in each chapter were evaluated on the basis of the above mentioned criteria. The findings revealed that although Expressway A is better than many earlier EFL texts, it still illustrates women in roles that no longer properly depict their function in society.

Vellenga (2004) compared ESL and EFL textbooks. She believed that enough information is not provided for learners to successful pragmatic competence learning. The findings demonstrated that the textbooks involve a lack of explicit meta-pragmatic, and meta-linguistic information, and comparing ESL and EFL textbooks shows that although the percentage of pragmatic information is not enough in all texts, a larger amount of EFL texts include pragmatic information.

Chao (2011) examined the hidden curriculum and cultural content of *New American Inside Out* (elementary level/2008), as one popular internationally published ELT textbook. The content analysis method, on the basis of two coding plans: *The Five Dimensions of Culture* and the *Categories of Culture*, was used to codify the content. The findings indicate that this textbook helped different aspects of culture focusing on products, western persons, and perspectives introduction; A lot of linguistic exercises were not particular to any country or culture. However, the reading texts and listening

scripts showed the bias in favor of Target Culture (English-speaking countries); Local and Asian cultures were not presented with high frequency; Speaking activities were about intercultural issues but centered on sharing personal experiences instead of doing intercultural awareness and reflection. Finally, it was proposed that suitable ELT textbooks to meet EFL/EIL learners' real needs in the global village must be developed.

Farsi, Rad, and Tondar (2013) studied culture impact on EFL learners and explored the learners' differences studying special English textbooks with cultural attentions and those who had not studied the same books. The results showed studying textbooks with cultural points promoted the learners' cultural awareness because the world and culture are conceptualize as presented in the studied textbooks.

Ahour, Towhidian and Saeidi (2013) studied the teachers' views about the suitability of English Textbook 2 for Iranian EFL second grade high school students. Litz's (2005) proposed checklist was used to analyze the textbook. The checklist was a 5-point Likert scale and three criteria including activities, subject, content, and skills out of seven criteria in Litz's (2005) checklist were selected for this study. Twenty five teachers from different high schools in Boukan, Iran participated in this study. This book has some disadvantages from teachers' perception; the students' concerns, needs, and interest were not attracted by the textbook subject and content; sufficient meaningful and communicative practices were not included in the activities of the textbook; and only the reading skill was emphasized. Finally, teachers believed that English textbook 2 is not appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of activities, content, skills, and subject.

Byram (1997) suggested making foreign language (FL) learners as intercultural speakers as a main end in FL education. Several studies reveal that immersion experiences such as study-abroad programs which permit real-time interactions and intensive intercultural exposure, can help promote FL learners' IC effectively (Belz, 2007; Byram, 1997; Lazar, 2015). However, the purposes for 'real-time interactions' for intercultural learning proposed by Byram (1997) are criticized as unattainable and ambitious in the FL context since all of FL learners have fewer chances to have comprehensive contact with target languages speakers (i.e., face-to-face interaction) in the 'in-country' context (i.e., EFL classroom) (Schulz, 2007).

A growing need of the intercultural communication competence (ICC) development, an extension of communicative competence, has been playing an influential role during English learning and interpersonal communication. Over 25-year studies of intercultural communication in North America and East Asia, Scollon and Scollon (1995) conclude that "effective communication is based on sharing as much as possible the assumptions we make about what others mean" (p. 12).

Based on the previously mentioned points about the importance of cultural considerations in EFL context it seems that cultural awareness can help learners to improve their intercultural competence since textbooks that include various subjects with special design and planning can foster cultural familiarity of the learners. In Iranian EFL context, English is a foreign language taught as an obligatory subject at Iranian high schools. Yet, in most of the cases, students prefer to take language courses at EFL institutes. Due to the limited access to target-language speakers and lack of opportunities to practice English, learning English has always been a great challenge for Iranian students. Therefore, course books are the main sources of linguistic and cultural information. Accordingly, the present study is an attempt to explore and compare Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions about the potentiality of ILI and Rise and Shine series for intercultural competence development.

Based on the above mentioned goal, the following research question was posed:

RQ: Is there any significant difference between teachers' viewpoints toward the intercultural content of ILI and Rise and Shine textbooks?

Method

Participants

The participants of this study included 30 EFL teachers (15 teachers in ILI teaching advanced level books and 15 teachers in Chitsazan academy teaching advanced level books). The teachers were in the age group of 25-40. Moreover, they held B.A., M.A., and PhD degrees of ELT major and other majors who have been teaching English for at least 2 years. The

participants were mostly from Tabriz city with Azeri language as their mother tongue.

Instruments

The instrument of this study included a questionnaire adapted from Ahmadi Safa Moradi et al. (2015) that consists of 38 questions designed based on Likert scale. Byram's model of intercultural competence (Byram 1997),which was primarily developed for the purpose of assessing four factors ,was the basis of this questionnaire. Four factors include A) cultural awareness (10 items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 14, 30, 33), B) cultural attitude and knowledge (13 items: 13, 15, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38), C) intercultural skills (6 items:7, 8, 16, 25, 31, 32), and D) cross-cultural understanding (9 items: 6,10, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21,24, 28). In addition to Byram (1997), the theoretical frameworks of Chen, Starosta et al. (1998), Deardorff (2006) and Fantini (2000) were also considered for developing the questionnaire. Experts' judgments were used to refine the questionnaire, and a pilot study was carried out to finalize it. The experts in the field confirmed the content and face validity of the questionnaire and the reliability was ensured through Cronbach's alpha.

Procedure

Initially, through conducting an interview, 10 experienced EFL teachers and experts in teaching advanced levels were requested to examine the proposed questionnaire and add extra questions and indexes that were not included in the questionnaire related to cultural content of the studied textbooks. After gathering their answers, the revised questionnaire was finalized through a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted among five teachers through which the validity and reliability of the proposed questionnaire was ensured. The finalized questionnaire was distributed among EFL teachers in ILI and Chitsazan language academies. In order to examine the normal distribution Smirnov-Kolmogorov test was administered. The collected data was analyzed through an independent t-test.

The results obtained from the interview revealed that intercultural competence includes the following components based on the ideas of the interviewed teachers: intercultural goals, intercultural content, intercultural materials, intercultural interactions, intercultural awareness, cultural

adaptation and social aspects, intercultural values, and intercultural diversity.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

This section deals with the descriptive statistics related to the participants' distribution in the institutes, their gender, age, and educational background. It is worth noting that the participants of this study included 30 EFL teachers (15 teachers in ILI who teach advanced level books and 15 teachers in Chitsazan academy who teach advanced level books).

Table 1 shows the information about the distribution of the teachers in the institutes who cooperated in the data collection.

Table 1
Distribution of Two Institutes

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	ILI	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Chitsazan	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

As Table 1 shows, among 30 participants of this study, 15 (50%) teachers were selected from Iran Language Institute and 15 (50%) teachers from Chitsazan language academy. Figure 1 represents this vividly.
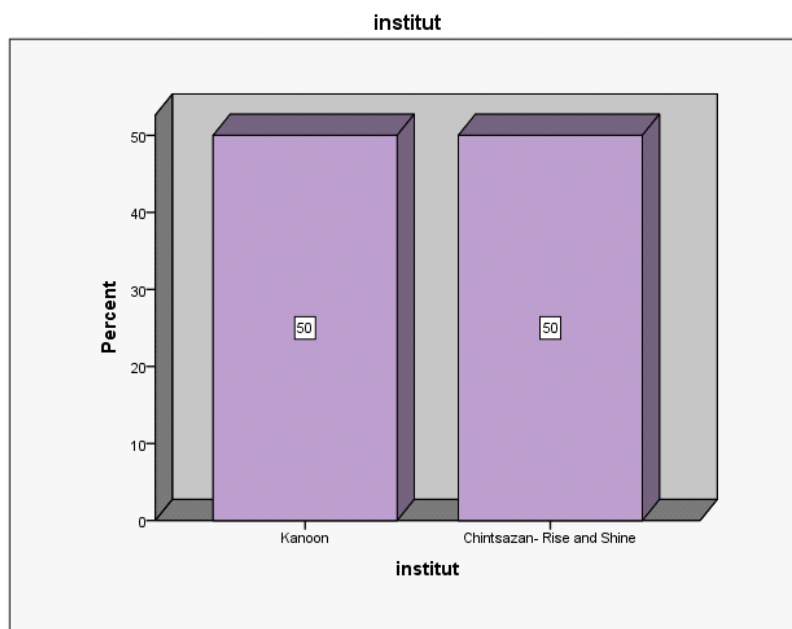
Figure 1. Distribution of Two Institutes

Gender of the Participants

Table 2 shows the information about the participants' gender.

Table 2
Gender of the Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	12	40.0	41.4	41.4
	Female	17	56.7	58.6	100.0
	Total	29	96.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.3		
Total		30	100.0		

As Table 2 shows, in this study, 12 (41.4%) teachers are male and 17 (58.6%) teachers are female. Accordingly, the number of female teachers are more than male ones. Figure 2 illustrates the point.
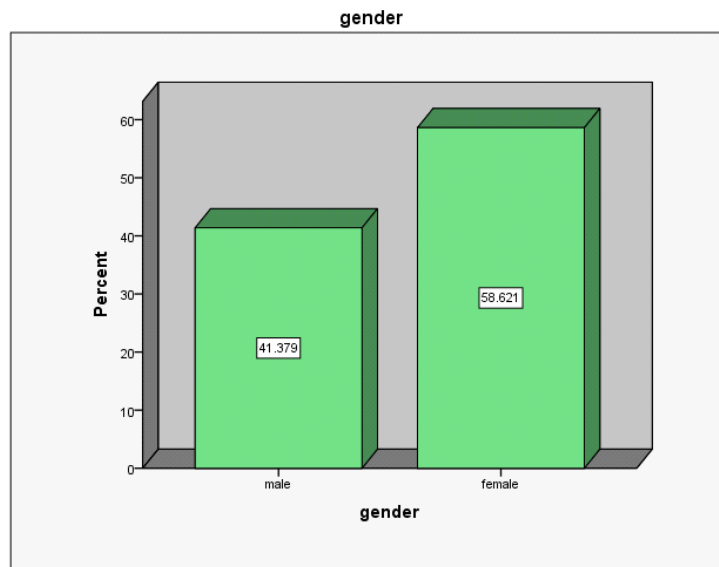
Figure 2. Distribution of the Participants' Gender

Age of the Participants

Table 3 shows the information about the participants' age.

Table 3
Age of the Participants

Number	Valid	30
	Missing	0
Mean		32.4667
Std. Deviation		4.43134
Skewness		-0.128
Range		14.00
Minimum		25.00
Maximum		39.00

As it is illustrated in Table 3, the mean score of the participants' age is 32.46 with the standard deviation of 4.43 and skewness of -0.12. The youngest participant is 25 and the oldest 39 years old. Figure 3 shows this clearly.
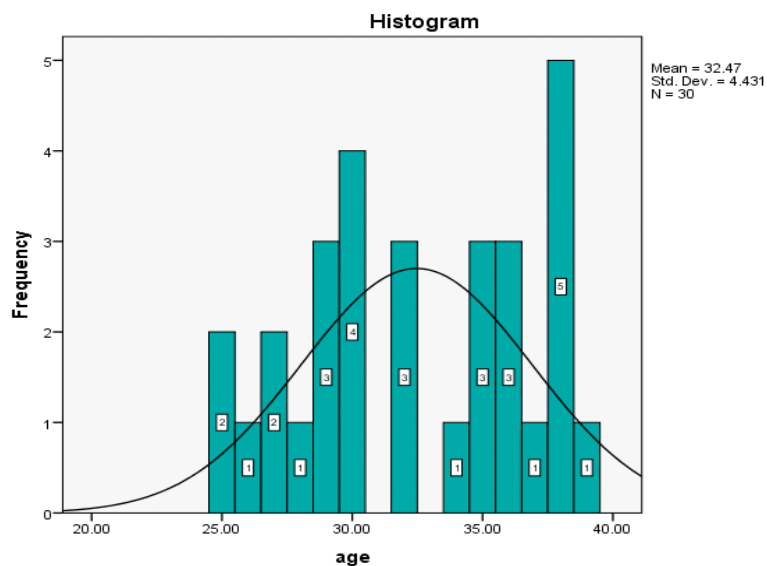
Figure 3. Distribution of the Participants' Age

Educational Background of the Participants

Table 4 shows the information about the participants' educational background.

Table 4
Educational Background of the Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	B.A.	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
	M.A.	12	40.0	40.0	86.7
	Ph.D.	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

As Table 4 illustrates, 14 (46.7%) teachers held B.A. degree, 12 (40%) teachers M.A. degree and 4 (13.3%) teachers Ph.D. degree (Figure 4).
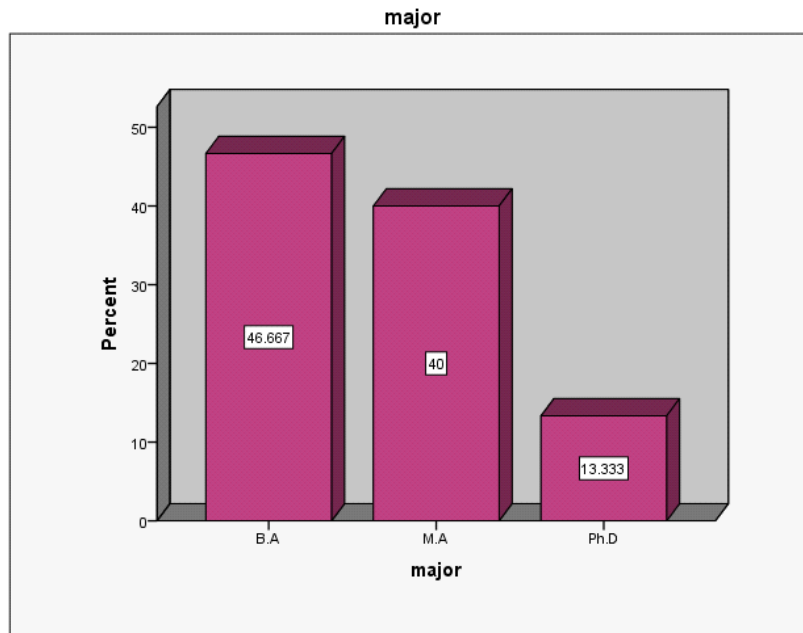
Figure 4. Educational Background of the Participants

Distribution of Intercultural Competence

Table 5 shows the information about the distribution of intercultural competence in the ILI and Rise and Shine textbooks.

Table 5
Distribution of Intercultural Competence in ILI and Rise & Shine Textbooks

		Intercultural goals	Intercultural content	Intercultural materials	Intercultural interactions	Intercultural awareness	Intercultural adaptation and social aspects	Intercultural values	Intercultural diversity	Intercultural competence
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		7.83	19.83	16.3	17.66	17.0	8.33	11.86	8.23	107.06
Std. Deviation		3.19	6.19	3.47	5.33	5.7	2.08	4.4	3.15	31.26
Skewness		0.46	-0.01	-0.1	0.12	0.09	-0.04	0.02	0.009	0.13
Range		10	19	11	17	18	8	15	11	92
Minimum		4	10	11	10	8	4	4	3	65
Maximum		14	29	22	27	26	12	19	14	157

As Table 5 illustrates, the mean score of paying attention to Intercultural goals is 7.83 with the standard deviation of 3.19 and skewness of 0.46. Accordingly, the minimum score is 4 and the maximum score is 14. Actually, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural goals is at average level (52%). The mean score of paying attention to Intercultural content is 19.83 with the standard deviation of 6.19 and skewness of -0.01. Accordingly, the minimum score is 10 and the maximum score is 29. Actually, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural content is somehow more than average level (57%). The mean score of paying attention to Intercultural materials is 16.3 with the standard deviation of 3.47 and skewness of -0.1. Accordingly, the minimum score is 11 and the maximum score is 22. Thus, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural materials is almost at average level (54%). The mean score of paying attention to Intercultural interactions is 17.66 with the standard deviation of 5.33 and skewness of 0.12. In this case, the minimum score is 10 and the maximum score is 27. Hence, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural interactions is somehow more than average level (59%). Regarding Intercultural awareness, the mean is 17 with the standard deviation of 5.7,

and skewness of 0.09. Here, the minimum score is 8 and the maximum score is 26. So, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural awareness is almost at average level (57%). Considering Intercultural adaptation and social aspects, the mean is 8.33 with the standard deviation of 2.08 and skewness of -0.04. Accordingly, the minimum score is 4 and the maximum score is 12. Therefore, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural adaptation and social aspects is almost at average level (56%). As regards Intercultural values the mean is 11.86 with the standard deviation of 4.4 and skewness of 0.02. Moreover, the minimum score is 4 and the maximum score is 19. Thus, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural values is somehow more than average level (59%). With regard to Intercultural diversity, the mean is 8.23 with the standard deviation of 3.15 and skewness of 0.009. Here, the minimum score is 3 and the maximum score is 14. Hence, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural diversity is at average level (55%). Considering Intercultural competence in general the mean is 107.06 with the standard deviation of 31.26 and skewness of 0.13. The minimum score in this case is 65 and the maximum score is 157. Thus, the amount of paying attention to Intercultural competence is at average level (56%). Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of Intercultural Competence in ILI and Rise and Shine textbooks clearly.
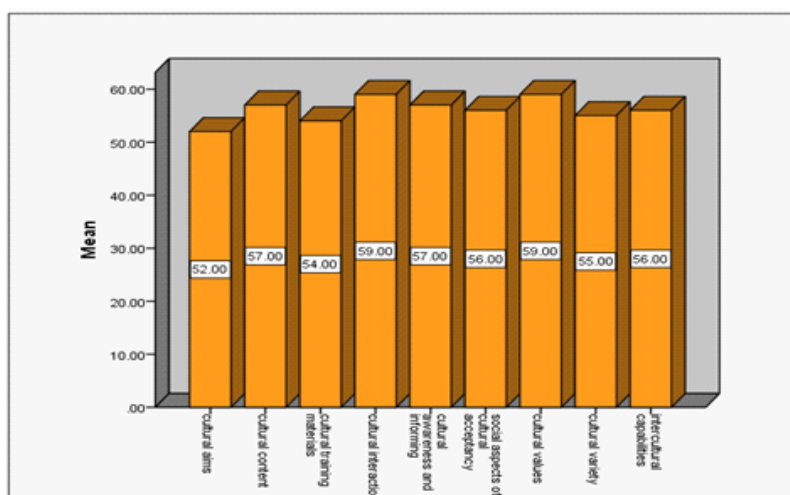

Figure 4. Distribution of Intercultural Competence in ILI and Rise and Shine Textbooks

The Results of Smirnov-Kolmogrov Test

The Smirnov-Kolmogrov test was used to assess the normal distribution of the variables. Since the significance level was more than 0.05 for all variables, the variables were distributed normally and parametric tests were appropriate to be administered in this study.

Testing the Research Null Hypothesis

HO: There is not any significant difference between teachers' viewpoints toward the intercultural content of ILI and Rise and Shine textbooks.

To verify or reject the research null hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was run, the results of which are represented in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation of Intercultural Competence Development in ILI and Rise and Shine Textbooks

	Textbooks	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intercultural goals	ILI	15	5.33	1.23
	Rise and Shine	15	10.33	2.49
Intercultural content	ILI	15	14.2	2.45
	Rise and Shine	15	25.46	2.32
Intercultural materials	ILI	15	13.26	1.79
	Rise and Shine	15	19.33	1.44
Intercultural interactions	ILI	15	13	2.13
	Rise and Shine	15	22.33	2.76
Intercultural awreness	ILI	15	11.93	2.25
	Rise and Shine	15	22.06	2.71
Intercultural adaptation and social aspects	ILI	15	6.8	1.37
	Rise and Shine	15	9.8	1.45
Intercultural values	ILI	15	8.33	2.63
	Rise and Shine	15	15.4	2.52
Intercultural diversity	ILI	15	5.53	1.64
	Rise and Shine	15	10.93	1.53
Intercultural competence	ILI	15	78.4	9.27
	Rise and Shine	15	135.73	13.34

Table 8

Results of Independent t-test of Intercultural Competence Development in ILI and Rise and Shine Textbooks

		Levene's Tests for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intercutural goals	Equal variances assumed	6.08	0.020	-6.95	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.95	20.45	0.000
Intercultural contetnt	Equal variances assumed	0.000	0.985	-12.90	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-12.90	27.91	0.000
Intercultural materials	Equal variances assumed	1.07	0.309	-10.201	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.201	26.81	0.000
Intercultural interactions	Equal variances assumed	0.29	0.592	-10.33	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.33	26.31	0.000
Intercultural awareness	Equal variances assumed	0.63	0.433	-11.13	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-11.13	27.08	0.000
Intercultural adaptation and social aspects	Equal variances assumed	0.04	0.831	-5.93	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.93	27.90	0.000
Intercultural values	Equal variances assumed	0.01	0.917	-7.49	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.49	27.95	0.000
Intercultural diversity	Equal variances assumed	0.007	0.934	-9.30	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.30	27.81	0.000
Intercultural competence	Equal variances assumed	1.85	0.184	-13.66	28	0.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-13.66	24.97	0.000

Table 6 and 7 illustrate the results related to the mean score and standard deviation of intercultural competence development in ILI and Rise and Shine textbooks along with the results of the independent samples t-test. As

illustrated in Table 7, the amount of attending to Intercultural goals in the Rise and Shine books is 10.33, which is more than the ILI books with the mean of 5.33. The amount of attending to Intercultural content in the Rise and Shine books is 25.46, which is more than the ILI books with 14.2. The amount of attending to Intercultural materials in the Rise and Shine books is 19.33, which is more than the ILI books with 13.26. The amount of attending to Intercultural interactions in the Rise and Shine books is 22.33, which is more than the ILI books with 13. The amount of attending to Intercultural awareness in the Rise and Shine books is 22.06, which is more than the ILI books with 11.93. The amount of attending to Intercultural adaptation and social aspects in the Rise and Shine books is 9.86, which is more than the ILI books with 6.8. The amount of attending to Intercultural values in the Rise and Shine books is 15.4, which is more than the ILI books with 8.33. The amount of attending to Intercultural diversity in the Rise and Shine books is 10.93, which is more than the ILI books with 5.53. Generally, the amount of Intercultural competence development and attending to intercultural content in the Rise and Shine books is 135.73, which is more than the ILI books with 78.4. The results of the independent t-test show that there is a significant difference ($p<0.05$) between intercultural competency development and its components in the ILI and Rise and Shine textbooks.

Discussion

The present study explored and compared the intercultural content of two popular course books that are currently being used in two language institutes in Tabriz-Iran, namely the ILI and Rise and Shine books. In the present study, ten experienced EFL teachers were interviewed by the researcher in order to find out their opinions regarding the elements they consider in improving intercultural competence of the learners through course books. The results obtained from the interview revealed that intercultural competence includes the following components based on the ideas of the interviewed teachers: intercultural goals, intercultural content, intercultural materials, intercultural interactions, intercultural awareness, cultural adaptation and social aspects, intercultural values, and intercultural diversity.

Later, the finding achieved from the data analysis revealed that the Rise and Shine series are more useful in teaching intercultural variations and help learners get familiar with how the cultures of English speaking countries are different from Iranian culture. On the other hand, the ILI books that are being used in Iran Language Institute, which is a governmental language academy, are not very rich in intercultural aspects and the learners are more focused on grammatical points. These books are mostly developed based on national needs of the learners and they lack international dimension of foreign culture. Considering each component of intercultural competence of this study (intercultural goals, intercultural content, intercultural materials, intercultural interactions, intercultural awareness, cultural adaptation and social aspects, intercultural values, and intercultural diversity) the results demonstrated that all of the components are more dominant and noticeable in the Rise and Shine textbooks comparing to the ILI books. Therefore, the Rise and Shine textbooks seem to be more useful in developing EFL learners' intercultural competence.

Developing foreign language learners' intercultural competence can make them 'intercultural speakers' that is considered as a major goal in FL education (Byram, 1997). Ahour and Ahmadi (2012) believe that suitable cultural knowledge can be given to the learners by textbooks. So, textbook evaluation is needed to select an applicable textbook that is suitable to the learners' cultures. However, the evaluation from cultural perspective can shed more light on the quality and applicability of the textbooks being used by the teachers and learners in the EFL contexts. Most of the books that are being used currently have been selected based on learners' linguistic and structural needs; however, cultural aspects and the cultural variations between local and foreign languages are required to be emphasized. Therefore, the major problem of this study is related to the fact that intercultural awareness is frequently ignored in our textbooks and learners are mostly unaware of specific cultural routines and habits in foreign daily life; this may create misunderstandings and difficulties during communication and learning.

It is assumed that by applying a suitable textbook we can facilitate learners' knowledge intake and satisfy their educational and professional

needs. In this regard, Tomlinson (2003) maintained that language teaching materials need to be humanizing, taking into account learners' life experience, their interests and enthusiasms, their opinions, attitudes and feelings and, above all, their capacity to make meaningful connections in their minds. That is to say, textbooks should be designed, developed and selected according to needs and interests of the targeted EFL learners.

In this regard, Toofal and Nasrollahi (2018) asserted that many national course books as a material in schools are not attempting to multidimensional approaches to English language learning, and they do not engage learners' intellectual aspect in learning process, which is the most important deficiency, or demerit of national schools besides the content of course books.

The finding of the present study is also in line with some studies that compared ILI textbooks and other textbooks that are being used in private institutes. For instance, using a checklist based on the standards of American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Zare-Behtash and Banaruee (2017) assessed the New Headway Advanced Series (2015) and the Iran Language Institute (ILI) Advanced1 (2008). From the aspect of design and organization, authenticity, attractiveness, functionality, and practicality, New Headway Series were more practical than ILI Advanced1. They found that since ILI books mainly concentrated on reading and writing, they cannot help leaners to improve interactional, transactional and communicative needs.

In a similar vein, Shahheidaripour (1998) stated that the ILI series in these levels (4-7) lack room and time for teachers' flexibility and modifications, authentic conversations, specifications as target age, range, culture, introductory section and authors' names, availability in the public market, a clear objective, probable learning preferences, use of graphics and pictures, phonetic transcription and complete and easy-to-understand definitions, target cultural effect.

Declaration of interest: none

References

Abdullah, N. (2009). *Cultural Elements in a Malaysian English Language Textbook*. Retrieved from ddms.usim.edu.my/bitstream/handle.

Ahmadi Safa, M., Moradi, M., & Hamzavi, R. (2015). Iranian EFL Teachers and Learners Perspective on Potentiality of Top Notch Series for Intercultural Competence Development. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 3*(2), 47-66.

Ahour, T, & Ahmadi, E. (2012). Retrospective evaluation of textbook "Summit 2B" for its suitability for EFL undergraduate students. *Journal of Educational and Social Research, 2*(5), 195-202.

Ahour, T., Towhidiyan, B., & Saeidi, M. (2014). The Evaluation of" English Textbook 2" Taught in Iranian High Schools from Teachers' Perspectives. *English Language Teaching, 7*(3), 150-158.

Belz, J. A. (2007). The development of intercultural communicative competence in telecollaborative partnerships. *Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, 15*, 127.

Block, D. (1991). Some thoughts on DIY materials design. *ELT Journal, 45,* 211-217

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M., Zarate, G,, & Neuner, G. (1997). *Sociocultural competence in language learning and teaching: Studies towards a common European framework of reference for language learning and teaching*. Manhattan Publication

Chen, G. M., Starosta, W. J., Lin, D., & You, Z. (1998). *Foundations of intercultural communication*: Allyn and Bacon Boston.

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Heinemann.

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of studies in international education, 10*(3), 241-266.

Dervin, F. (2010). Assessing intercultural competence in language learning and teaching: A critical review of current efforts. *New Approaches to Assessment in Higher Education, 5*, 155-172.

Fantini, A. E. (2006). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence. Retrieved from http:// www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil_research_report.pdf

Farsi, M, Rad, P., & Tondar, S. (2013). The cultural effects on L2 learners (Iranian). *Indian Journal of Arts, 3*(8), 4-6.

Fitzgerald, H. (2003). *How different are we? Spoken discourse in intercultural communication: the significance of the situational context* (Vol. 4). Multilingual matters.

Hamiloğlu, K., & Karlıova, H. (2009). A content analysis on the vocabulary presentation in EFL course books. *Ozean Journal of Social Sciences, 2*(1), 132-133.

Hutchinson, T, & Torres, E. (1994). The textbook as agent of change.

Jaeger, K. (1995). Teaching intercultural competence to university students. A. A. Jensen, K. Jæger & A. Lorentsen (Eds.), *Intercultural competence. A new challenge for language teachers and trainers in Europe (pp.* 265-285). Aalborg: Centre for languages and intercultural studies, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Kalsbeek, A. van (2008). Intercultural competences for Foreign Language Teachers. *Intercultural Competence Assessment* (INCA online). Retrieved from http://www.incaproject.org.

Litz, D. R. A. (2005). Textbook evaluation and ELT management: A South Korean case study. *Asian EFL journal, 48*(1), 1-53.

Otlowski, M. (2003). Ethnic diversity and gender bias in EFL textbooks. *Asian EFL Journal, 5*(2), 1-15.

Oz, H. (2015). Ideal L2 self as a predictor of intercultural communicative competence. *The Anthropologist, 19*(1), 41-53.

Riasati, M. J., & Zare, P. (2011). Textbook evaluation: EFL teachers' perspectives on "New Interchange". *Studies in Literature and Language, 1*(8), 54-60.

Riazi, A. M. (2003). What do textbook evaluation schemes tell us?: A study of the textbook evaluation schemes of three decades *Methodology and materials design in language teaching: Current perceptions and practices and their implications* (pp. 52-69): SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.

Riazi, A., & Aryashokouh, A. (2007). Lexis in English Textbooks in Iran: Analysis of Exercises and Proposals for Consciousness-Raising Activities. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 11*(1).

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (1995). Interpersonal politeness and power. *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach. Oxford: Blackwell*, 33-49.

Shahheidaripour, G. (1998). An Evaluative Review of a Course in English, Book# 4. *Online Submission*.

Sheldon, L. E. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *ELT journal, 42*(4), 237-246.

Sinicrope, C., Norris, J., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and assessing intercultural competence: A summary of theory, research, and

practice (technical report for the foreign language program evaluation project). *University of Hawai'I Second Langauge Studies Paper 26 (1)*.

Steele, R. (1989). Teaching language and culture: Old problems and new approaches. *Georgetown University roundtable on languages and linguistics*, 153-162.

Stern, H., Tarone, E. Stern, Hans H., Yule, G., & Stern, H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching: Historical and interdisciplinary perspectives on applied linguistic research*: Oxford university press.

Taylor, E. W. (1994). A learning model for becoming interculturally competent. *International journal of intercultural relations, 18*(3), 389-408.

Tomlinson, B. (2003). Humanizing the coursebook. *Developing materials for language teaching*, 162-173.

Van Nostrand, A. D. (1999). Fundable knowledge: the marketing of defense technology. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, 42*(2), 143-144.

Vellenga, H. (2004). Learning Pragmatics from ESL & EFL Textbooks: How Likely? *Tesl-Ej, 8*(2), n2.

Wiseman, R. L., & Koester, J. (1993). *Intercultural communication competence*: Sage Newbury Park, CA.

Zare-Behtash, E., & Banaruee, H. (2017). Critical Evaluation of the New Headway Advanced and the ILI Advanced Series: A comparison of curricular components and CLT objectives based on ACTFL. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature,6(5),* 182-190.

Zare Toofal. Z., & Nasrollahi, A. (2018). American English File Book Evaluation. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research, 5*(2), 207-213.

Biodata

Fatemeh Mirzapour is an assistant professor at Sofiyan Branch, Islamic Azad University. She is holding Ph.D. in English Language Teaching. Her main interests are language teaching and discourse analysis.