

EFL Teachers' and Students' Evaluation of Prospect3 in the Light of Cisar's Communicative Model

Fatemeh Kaffash, Elham Yazdanmehr*, Afsaneh Ghanizadeh

Imam Reza University of Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi, Iran

Corresponding Author: Elham Yazdanmehr, E-mail: el_yazdanemehr@hotmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: October 23, 2017

Accepted: January 16, 2018

Published: May 01, 2018

Volume: 7 Issue: 3

Advance access: March 2018

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

ABSTRACT

The significance of ELT materials has been emphasized by many researchers including Williams (1983). A body of research was conducted in Iran on English textbooks in general and *Prospect* series in particular. However, *Prospect3* which is newly introduced to the public education has been scarcely investigated. The alleged communicative approach in this textbook was evaluated in the present research. To this aim, Cisar's standard-based evaluation scale was used for the analysis based on five communicative goals proposed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1996). The evaluation was done by 200 Iranian EFL students and 30 EFL teachers along the five standards-based communicative goals: communication, cultures, connections, communities and comparisons. The Persian translated version of the scale was used and checked for reliability and validity. The overall scale showed to enjoy a high reliability (.91). Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the five components and their indicators within the communicative model. The mean scores of EFL students' and teachers' rating of each communicative component were compared through an independent-samples T-test via SPSS 21. Both teachers' and students' ratings showed that all communicative goals of the textbook were less than partially acceptable (Mean < 2). *Prospect3* failed to achieve its claimed communicative goals, as perceived by EFL teachers and students. The present findings make an evidence-based criticism of the alleged communicative promises of the newly-developed EFL textbook, *Prospect3*. It hopes to raise Iranian ELT material developers' awareness of the true gist of the communicative approach and hopes to help them revise the target textbook accordingly.

Keywords: Cisar's Model, Communication, EFL, *Prospect3*, Standards, Textbook Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Textbooks play a key role in an EFL classroom and teachers must equip themselves with the knowledge of textbook evaluation (Williams, 1983). ELT material evaluation or particularly textbook evaluation entails measuring the value or potential value of a series of learning materials (textbooks) by judging the effect of these materials/textbooks on the target users (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

As pinpointed by Alemi and Mesbah (2013), in an EFL context like Iran, EFL learners have scarce access to native speakers. Thus, teachers mediate between the learner and the text. Therefore, textbooks play a key role in such a context and textbook evaluation is, consequently, essential. Guilani, Yasin and Hua (2011) also drew attention to the fact that for EFL learners in such countries as Iran, a textbook becomes the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the input provided by the teacher.

This indicates why Iranian EFL textbooks severely require evaluation.

According to Khansir and Mahammadifard (2015), similar to many other foreign language countries in recent years, Iran has attempted to provide a series of English textbooks for schools based on a popular approach to language learning/teaching known as the communicative approach. One significant issue in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as stated by Johnson and Johnson (1999), is the authenticity of materials and ensuring that class teaching benefits from natural language behavior with a content guided by a need-analysis of students (as cited in Guilani et al., 2011). A textbook which is claimed to be designed to serve a communicative purpose, thus, needs to be tinted with certain socially/culturally and internationally effective content. Text, images, tasks and activities are included within the given content. Such claims need to be tested for truth. Evaluation seems to necessary to fshed light on the practical aspects of these attempts. However, this seems to be lacking in EFL textbooks taught at the public education system of Iran.

Purpose of the Study

In the light of the existing gap in the context of Iran, the present research intended to evaluate the communicative aspects of the new English book developed for the 9th grade of junior high school in the public education system of Iran is Prospect3. This book was developed to meet national, cultural, social and local needs of Iranian students. Previously, mention was made of three categories of evaluating textbooks: pre-use, in-use and post-use. Due to the new advent of Prospect3, none of the three forms of academic evaluation have been performed on this textbook especially on its communicative and cultural aspects. There is no need to emphasize the wide national influence of this textbook on students' learning (in the public sector). The existing gap motivated the present study to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of this textbook in a communicative framework. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed here:

RQ1: How do Iranian EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differ in terms of developing effective communication?

RQ2: How do Iranian EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differ in terms of developing effective cultural competence?

RQ3: How do Iranian EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differ in terms of making connections with other disciplines?

RQ4: How do Iranian EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differ in terms of making language and cultural comparisons?

RQ5: How do Iranian EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differ in terms of in-school and outside-school community formation?

RQ6: What is the contribution of each standard to students' overall evaluation of communicative goals pursued by prospect3?

Each of the first five questions listed above addresses one communicative goal. The sixth question aims to investigate the contribution of each communicative goal to the overall communicative aspect of the textbook.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In the Iranian context, teachers' attitudes towards Prospect series were explored in a body of research. Many studies were carried out in this field by Iranian researchers who evaluated textbooks taught at junior high schools. Among them were studies carried out by Ranalli (2002), Ansary (2004), Soodmand (2008), Kayapinar (2009), Golpour (2012) and Ahour et.al. (2014).

Alipour, Mohebzadeh, Gholamhosseinzadeh and Mirzapour (2016) indicated that according to teachers' point of view, previous Junior high school textbooks were not reasonable and appropriate and did not meet their expectations. Safa and Farahani (2015) investigated teachers' perspectives about *Prospect 1* intercultural competence development. They found that the target textbook was unable to develop the required intercultural competence among learners. The book showed to lack intercultural goals. Even in students'

perspective, the target textbook lacked cultural and intercultural characteristics. The tasks and activities in this textbook showed to lack any capability of improving learners' intercultural awareness. Total omission of foreign cultures within this textbook was another point seriously criticized by these researchers.

In the same context, Afshar (2015) evaluated Prospect 1 with a focus on critical discourse analytic features. He analyzed the representation of gender and power relations in this textbook. Among the weaknesses found were a lack of authenticity, biased representation of cultural issues, monotony of many sections of the book and limited contextual and situational scope of the book. In a similar vein, Ahour and Golpour (2013) evaluated the new version of Iranian EFL junior high school textbook i.e. Prospect1 from different aspects. Part of their findings was that the book was full of cultural biases and failed to develop the desired level of cultural competence in learners.

In a similar fashion, the culture-related content in Vision series was investigated by Ajideh and Panahi (2016). The aim of their study was to explore ELT textbook contribution to the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. The result of their study showed that the Vision series was mostly based on the source culture which does not seem to be helpful in promoting intercultural competence understanding.

Communicative aspects of Iranian EFL textbooks were investigated in other studies too. As an instance, Kamyabi Gol and Baghaeeyan (2014) evaluated Prospect 1 which claimed to develop learners' communicative competence as one of its main goals. This study enquired about teachers' and learners' perspectives and found that the textbook managed to partially satisfy the raters' communicative needs. What Baghermousavi and Nabifar (2015) found about the English textbook of the second grade of junior high school was that the communicative goal was not reflected in the visual clues of the target textbook either.

Overall, the textbooks preceding Prospect3 seem to have failed to achieve the communicative goal to a large extent, besides suffering from other weaknesses. It can be, therefore, interesting to see what the stance of Prospect3 is with this regard. To this aim, this study explored Iranian EFL students' and teacher's perspectives towards the communicative aspects of the target book.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in this study consisted firstly of 200 Iranian EFL learners at the ninth grade of school in Khorasan Razavi and more specifically in Mashhad. They were of both sexes. The sampling method was convenient as well as the snowball. The student participants all shared Iranian nationality and Persian as their first language. For them all, English was considered a foreign language to learn. Secondly, 30 Iranian EFL teachers participated in the research. Both sexes were included. Their age ranged from 25 to 50 years, and had 5 to 25 years of teaching experience (Mean=15 years). They

were selected through convenient and snowball sampling methods.

Material

Prospect3 was compiled by a team of specialists in the Curriculum and Textbooks Development Office affiliated with the organization for educational research and planning in the Ministry of Education. The editor-in-chief of this textbook is Seyed Behnam Alavi Moghadam. The textbook was published by Iran Course book Print and Publication Company. The first publication of this textbook was in 2015 in Tehran. The book contains 133 (numerated) pages, 6 lessons each based on a unique theme and one or more communicative acts.

Instrumentation

Cisar's (2000) textbook evaluation checklist is based on the communicative standards set by American Council on Teaching of Foreign languages (ACTFL). This scale consists of 5 sections corresponding to the five 'C' goal areas including: communication, cultures, comparisons and communities. The instrument is rated on a 4-level Likert scale ranging from *Not at all (0)* to *Completely (4)*. The main components of the instrument are briefly introduced below.

'Communication', as the first goal of the checklist, referred to the ability to communicate in language with specific reference to student's participation in communicative acts. 'Culture' which was the second goal implied an understanding of other cultures in view of the commonly held practices and products. The third section entitled as 'Connection' shed light on the degree to which learners gained information and accordingly expanded their knowledge of other domains via foreign language learning. The fourth section 'Comparison' looked into the strength of the textbook in terms of making an association between linguistic and cultural aspects of the textbooks under the investigation. Finally, 'Community' focused on learner's participation in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

In advance to the distribution of questionnaires among the subjects, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and the structure of the questionnaire. Respondents were ensured of the confidentiality of the data they provided and were then afforded at least 30 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

The data were analyzed quantitatively via SPSS ver.21. To check the reliability of the test, Cronbach's alpha was once estimated for the whole test and once again for each of the 5 sections of the questionnaire. The factorability of the data was tested through Bartlett's test of Sphericity along with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was run to check the construct validity. Besides testing the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, independent-samples T-test was run to compare students' and teachers' rating of the five communicative aspects of the textbook. The significance level was set at $p < .05$.

RESULTS

The Persian translated version of Cisar's standard-based evaluation checklist was tested for reliability and construct validity. The results are presented below and only then followed by the answers to the six research questions.

Test Reliability

To investigate the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha was used. As maintained by Pallant (2007), values above .70 are considered acceptable and those above .80 show very good (high) internal consistency for the scale. Table 1 below reports on the reliability of the overall scale as well as its individual sub-scales.

As indicated in Table 1, the overall test enjoys a high reliability (.91). As concerns the communications and cultures subscales, both possess a high internal consistency (.80 and .84). Cultures sub-scale enjoys an acceptable internal consistency (.78). So do the other two sub-scales of the test, respectively connections (.77) and comparisons (.77).

Test Validity

To test the factorability of the data, Bartlett's test of Sphericity was used along with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. Both were significant and attested to the factorability of the data, as can be seen in Table 2.

To test the construct validity of the scale, Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was conducted and the results of the Eigen values are presented in Table 4 which follows Table 3 indicating the items within the subscales of the questionnaire.

Statistically significant factor loadings are highlighted in Table 4. In other words, items loading below .30 were considered insignificant according to the criteria set by Hair, Tatham, Anderson and Black (1998). 31 items were adequately represented by the five components within the scale.

Table 1. Reliability statistics of the overall scale and the sub-scales

Construct/Sub construct	N	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall test	32	0.918
Communications	11	0.805
Cultures (visual images)	4	0.843
Cultures (Cultures)	4	0.780
Connections	4	0.772
Comparisons	4	0.772

Table 2. KMO and bartlett's test

Kaiser-meyer-olkin Measure of sampling adequacy.		0.868
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	3106.243
	df	496
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3. Items within each subscale of the questionnaire

Subscale	Items/indicators
Communication	Q1-Q11
Cultures	Q12-Q19
Connections	Q20-Q23
Comparisons	Q24-27
Communities	Q28-31

The reliable and valid test was used to explore students' and teachers' evaluation of the textbook based on each of the five communicative goal as presented below.

Evaluation of the 'Communication' Goal

The first research question addressed how EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differed in terms of the book's capability of developing effective communication

Table 4. Estimated factor loadings (standardized loadings) in CFA

Question/indicator	Component/factor				
	Cultures	Communities	Connections	Communication	Comparison
Q19	0.740	0.309	0.049	0.016	0.116
Q16	0.729	-0.139	0.080	0.283	0.054
Q17	0.714	0.090	-0.034	-0.020	0.385
Q18	0.687	0.294	0.065	0.065	0.248
Q12	0.678	0.334	0.069	0.207	0.106
Q14	0.675	0.186	0.124	0.171	0.081
Q13	0.653	0.116	0.149	-0.021	0.049
Q15	0.640	0.142	0.083	-0.072	0.270
Q31	0.214	0.618	0.330	0.193	0.235
Q28	-0.093	0.559	0.203	0.049	0.106
Q30	0.313	0.527	0.313	0.200	-0.085
Q29	0.168	0.463	0.312	0.189	-0.216
Q21	0.325		0.675	0.153	0.066
Q20	0.079		0.558	0.109	0.175
Q22	0.248		0.503	0.315	0.091
Q23	0.143	0.177	0.502	0.412	0.269
Q1	-0.052	0.011	0.085	0.659	0.296
Q2	0.131	0.060	0.312	0.633	0.181
Q6	0.164	0.161	0.206	0.582	-0.016
Q5	0.074	0.330	0.190	0.543	0.030
Q4	0.197	-0.071	0.524	0.436	0.401
Q7	0.035	-0.191	0.409	0.692	0.316
Q11	0.125	0.209	0.104	0.686	0.004
Q9	0.286	0.130	0.335	0.604	-0.067
Q10	0.160	0.322	0.073	0.592	-0.063
Q8	0.223	0.086	0.257	0.473	0.174
Q3	0.247	-0.128	0.365	0.450	0.127
Q24	0.079	0.112	0.023	0.103	0.728
Q25	0.301	0.015	0.065	-0.035	0.705
Q27	0.282	0.301	0.111	-0.055	0.690
Q26	0.265	0.308	0.118	0.015	0.655
	15.63	11.05	9.23	8.68	8.56

Extraction method: Principal component analysis.

Rotation method: Varimax with kaiser normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

in learners. Actually, this capability is the first goal area of Cisar's communicative model. This area was tested through 11 indicators within the questionnaire. Independent-samples T-test was run to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two research groups. Table 5 indicates the results of the independent-samples T-test.

As it can be observed in Table 5, both student and teacher respondents rated the communication aspect of the target textbook as less than partially acceptable, as the mean scores of ratings show (1.94, 1.89 respectively). Although the mean score of rating obtained from students' perspective was higher than that of teachers, this difference was not statistically significant ($\text{sig}=.691>.05$). In other words, EFL students and teachers evaluating Prospect3 had both a similar evaluation of the communication aspect of the book as both rated it 'less than partially acceptable'.

Evaluation of the 'cultures' goal

The second research question in the present study addressed how EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differed in terms of the textbook's ability to develop cultural competence in learners. Actually, this capability is the second standards-based communicative goal within Cisar's communicative model. This goal was tested through 8 indicators within the questionnaire. Independent-samples T-test was run to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two research groups with this regard. Table 6 below indicates the results of analysis.

As it can be observed in Table 6, both teacher and student respondents rated the cultures aspect of the target textbook as less than partially acceptable, as the mean scores of ratings show (.98, 1.64 respectively). The mean score of rating obtained from students' perspective was higher than that of

the teachers and this difference was statistically significant ($\text{sig}=.000<.05$).

Evaluation of the 'connections' goal

The third research question in the present study addressed how EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differed in terms of the textbook's ability to make connections with other disciplines and information. This capability stands as the third standards-based goal area of Cisar's communicative model. This area was tested through 4 indicators within the questionnaire answered by the two groups. Independent-samples T-test was run to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two ratings of this aspect. Table 7 below indicates the results:

As it can be observed in Table 7, both student and teacher respondents rated the connections aspect of the target textbook as less than partially acceptable as the mean scores of ratings show (1.63, .90 respectively). The mean score of rating obtained from students' perspective was higher than that of the teachers and this difference was statistically significant ($\text{sig}=.000<.05$). In other words, though the overall rating of the connections aspect of Prospect3 was low by all participants, students' rating of this aspect was significantly higher than that of the teachers.

Evaluation of the 'comparisons' goal

The fourth research question in the present study addressed how EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differed in terms of the textbook's capability of making language and cultural comparisons. This capability is entitled as comparisons and is the fourth standards-based goal area of Cisar's communicative model. This goal was tested through 4 indicators within the questionnaire. Independent-sam-

Table 5. Independent-samples t-test results of EFL students' and teachers' ratings of the communication aspect of prospect3

Group statistics							
Communication	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	sig
	Students	204	1.9481	0.66547	0.04659	0.397	0.691
	Teachers	30	1.8970	0.60242	0.10999		

Table 6. Independent-samples t-test results of EFL students' and teachers' ratings of the cultures aspect of prospect3

Group statistics							
Cultures	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	sig
	Students	201	1.6414	0.06092	0.04659	3.984	0.000
	Teachers	30	0.9833	0.12653	0.10999		

Table 7. Independent-samples t-test results of EFL students' and teachers' ratings of the connections aspect of Prospect3

Group statistics							
Connections	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	sig
	Students	203	1.6355	0.94101	0.06605	5.982	0.000
	Teachers	30	0.9083	0.55895	0.10205		

ples T-test was run to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups with this regard. Table 8 below indicates the results:

As it can be observed in Table 8, both teacher and student respondents rated the comparisons aspect of the target textbook as less than partially acceptable as the mean scores of ratings show (1.09, 1.98 respectively). The mean score of rating obtained from students' perspective was higher than that of the teachers and this difference was statistically significant ($\text{sig}=.000<.05$).

Evaluation of the 'communities' goal

The fifth research question in the present study addressed how EFL students' and teachers' evaluations of Prospect3 differed in terms of the textbook's ability to prepare learners to communicate and interact with cultural competence and participate in multi-lingual communities at home or around the world. This capability of a textbook called communities is the fifth standards-based communicative goal of Cisar's communicative model. This goal area was tested through 4 indicators within the questionnaire. Independent-sample t-test was run to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' and teachers' evaluations. Table 9 below indicates the relevant results:

As indicated in Table 9, both teacher and student respondents rated the communities aspect of the target textbook as less than partially acceptable as the mean scores of ratings show (1.12, 1.70 respectively). The mean score of rating obtained from students' perspective was higher than that of the teachers and this difference was statistically significant ($\text{sig}=.000<.05$). In other words, though the overall rating of the communities aspect of Prospect3 was low by the two groups, students' rating of this aspect was significantly higher than that of the teachers.

Contribution of each communicative goal

The sixth research question enquired about the contribution of each goal explored individually to the overall communicative face of the textbook. The five sub-scales are not expected to be necessarily of the same value in contributing to the overall communicative nature of the textbook. Therefore, here the contribution of each component/factor was estimated and presented within Table 10.

Extraction Method: Principle Component Analysis

The table shows both the percentage of variance explained by each component as well as the cumulative variance of the components which finally makes a 100 percent of variance. The contribution of each component to the overall communicative goal can also be observed in a pie chart in Figure 1.

The component that showed to make the highest contribution was connections which explained 21.81% of the total variance. The next component was comparisons which explained 21.64% of the total variance. These two components together explained nearly half of the total variance. The next half was shared between communities, cultures and communication respectively.

DISCUSSION

As the results showed, none of the communication, cultures, comparisons, communities and connections goals were achieved even to a partially acceptable degree, according to EFL teachers' and students' perspectives. These findings could be related to those of similar studies previously done by other researchers in the Iranian context.

As previously mentioned, Ansary (2004) evaluated Iranian old high school textbooks and found that they lacked the ability to make connections with students' background knowledge, which is subsumed under the *connections* goal of the communicative approach. This finding is similar to the present finding that showed the failure of Prospect3 to meet the *connections* goal too, though it is generally expected that newly developed materials compensate for the limitations and problems of their former versions.

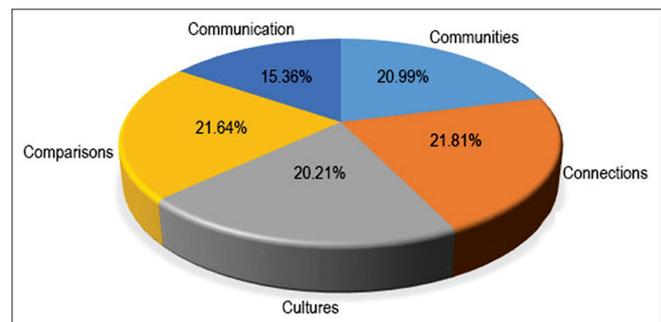


Figure 1. Contribution of Each Component in Cisar's Communicative Model

Table 8. Independent-samples t-test results of EFL students' and teachers' ratings of the comparisons aspect of Prospect3

Group statistics							
Comparisons	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	sig
	Students	203	1.9893	0.90152	0.06327	5.203	0.000
	Teachers	30	1.0917	0.73251	0.13374		

Table 9. Independent-sample t-test results of EFL students' and teachers' ratings of the communities aspect of Prospect3

Group statistics							
Communities	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	sig
	Students	193	1.7077	0.92379	0.06650	4.666	0.000
	Teachers	30	1.1250	0.57890	0.10569		

Table 10. Total variance explained by components of communicative goals in Cisar's model

Component/factor	Initial eigenvalues	
	% of variance	Cumulative variance
Connections	21.81	21.81
Comparisons	21.64	43.45
Communities	20.99	64.44
Cultures	20.21	84.65
Communication	15.36	100
Total	100	--

It can be interesting to cite another work of research here which is actually the most recent study found in the literature with an overall evaluation of Prospect3 by students. In this research, Alipour et al. (2016) compared students' evaluation of Prospect 1, 2 and 3 in general and found that though Prospect3 showed to contain more appropriate grammar and vocabulary, it was perceived as less attractive and less enjoyable to students. This overall negative evaluation of the textbook by students was not attributed to any single factor in Alipour's research. However, as the present results showed, the book failed to meet all communicative standards which could be one reason why students, in Alipour's study, did not show to enjoy the book.

The cultural aspect of the Prospect series has been investigated in a body of research too. It needs to be reminded that *cultures* is taken as another communicative goal. Concerning this, Safa and Farahani (2015) found that Prospect 1 was unable to develop the right level of intercultural competence in students. Afshar (2015) also evaluated Prospect 1 and reported a biased representation of cultural issues in the book. In a similar vein, the present findings showed that Prospect3, like Prospect 1, was unable to make proper hints at the cultural issues. These findings also confirm what Ahour and Golpour (2013) reported in their evaluation of Prospect1 from different aspects. Part of their findings was that the book was full of cultural biases and failed to develop the desired level of cultural competence in learners. In a similar fashion, the culture-related content in Vision series was investigated by Ajideh and Panahi (2016). This finding was ratified by what the present study found with the case of the Prospect textbook.

Communication was another communicative goal addressed in the present research. Kamyabi Gol and Baghaeeyan (2014) evaluated Prospect 1 which claimed to develop learners' communicative competence as one of its main goals. Similar to the present research, these two researchers enquired about teachers' and learners' perspectives and found that the textbook managed to partially satisfy the raters' communicative needs.

CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of the study was to evaluate the communicative aspects of Prospect3 as perceived by Iranian EFL teachers and students. In the light of the present findings as well as the related literature in the Iranian context, it can be concluded that the communicative approach which has affected ELT teaching and material

development in Iran for the past decade has not achieved its goals to a great extent. In the present research, both students' and teachers' evaluation showed that the book did not promote intercultural competence, communicative competence, connections to other disciplines and information sources, and learners' interaction with real world outside classroom.

It might be interesting to know why it has been so. Maftoon (2002) questioned the feasibility of adopting CLT in Iran. He drew attention to a number of limitations: class size, amount of exposure to authentic language and availability of resources. Maftoon added school culture which focused on repetition, memorization and the negative wash back effect of the university entrance exam which focused on grammar and vocabulary, as another limitation. Therefore, it seems that recent efforts to dominate a communicative approach over EFL materials taught at schools have not been capable of satisfying EFL teachers' and students' true communicative needs in Iran. Even the most recently developed high school EFL textbook, Prospect3, did not show to meet the main five standards-based communicative goals much like its predecessors (in publication) including Prospect1 and 2 as well as the Vision series, as reported in the body of research just reviewed. This calls for a comprehensive revision not of the communicative approach itself but of the adherence to its main goals and standards in the realm of ELT material development in Iran. Sometimes, a textbook truly advocates a communicative approach but its goals are not achieved due to teacher's inefficiency in teaching communicatively. As this latter issue was not the focus of the present research, the present findings cannot be an evidence for teacher's inefficiency. However, teachers' low rating of all the five standards-based communicative goals of the target textbook shows they were incapable of adapting themselves to the new material.

The present findings have implications for ELT material development in Iran. Iranian public school material developers in general and those of the Prospect series in particular are made aware of certain issues:

- Iranian EFL students and teachers in the public sector who are the main beneficiaries of the textbook were not adequately satisfied with the overall communicative level of the textbook.
 - The textbook showed to suffer a less than partially acceptable level of developing intercultural competence, communicative competence, connections to other disciplines, cross-cultural comparisons and outside-class effective interaction.
- According to the aforementioned issues, the communicative claims in the development of this textbook are questionable and require serious reconsideration and revision. Here are a number of suggestions which can help to promote the communicative nature of the book:
- More tasks and activities can be incorporated within the textbook that allow for knowledge personalization. These activities need to be set in contexts more familiar to students and their personal and school life.
 - The textbook content needs to incorporate more aspects of the target culture rather than an excessive adherence to the culture of the source language.
 - The content needs to touch upon other disciplines especially art and literature which are commonly to the general interest of both teachers and students.

- The content can be accompanied by musical input such as English songs which elicit learners' interest and also enhance the *connections* communicative goal.
- The content can occasionally allow for certain comparisons of the similarities and differences between students' source and target languages which can not only be interesting to students but can also make their knowledge better retrievable.
- Authors need to get ensured of the authenticity of the texts they choose to include within the textbook. These texts should make sense to learners as well as teachers and should be able to involve them mentally. The texts should engage learners with practical hints applicable to the real world outside the classroom.

It is evident that almost all the above-mentioned issues have implications for ELT material development in Iran. The present research has theoretical implications too as it questions the underlying so-called communicative claims the textbook made. As the results indicated, none of the main five communicative goals were met to even a partially acceptable level in the textbook design. Therefore, how can such a book follow any alleged communicative approach? Are Iranian ELT material developers redefining CLT? These are the questions that the present research tends to ask the authorities involved in developing these textbooks. Major revisions and reconsiderations are expected to be made of both the underlying approach and its manifestations in the book. In other words, Iranian ELT material developers are expected either to modify the alleged approach or if they wish to adhere to the communicative approach, they are harshly expected to abide by the underlying standards.

REFERENCES

- Afshar, H. S. (2015). Evaluation of the English book (Prospect 1) for first-grade junior secondary school focusing on critical discourse analysis features: representation of gender and power relations. *Critical Studies in Text and Programs of Human Science*, 15(36). 105-132.
- Ahour, T. & Golpour, F. (2013). Iranian new junior high school book (Prospect 1) weighted against material evaluation checklist from teachers' perspective. *Journal of English Language Pedagogy and Practice*, 6(13). 16-35.
- 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), 150-159.
- Ajideh, P. & Panahi, M. (2016). An analysis of culture-related content in English textbooks for Iranian students entitled Prospect and Vision series. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 3(6). 87-93.
- Alemi, M., & Mesbah, Z. (2013). Textbook evaluation on the ACTFL standards. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 9(1). 162-171.
- Alipour, A.M., Mohebzadeh, G.A., Gholamhosseinzadeh, M. & Mirzapour, M. (2016). Exploring EFL teachers' perspective towards the junior high school textbook: Prospect III. *IJRLTT*, 1(1). 14-19.
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (1996). Standards for foreign language learning: preparing for the 21st century. Retrieved September 1, 2017 from <https://www.actfl.org/publications/all/world-readiness-standards-learning-languages>
- Ansary, T. (2004). *An analytic look at high school English textbook and introducing a sample lesson based on communicative syllabus design* (Unpublished master's thesis). Islamic Azad University-Tabriz Branch, Iran.
- Baghermousavi, S., & Nabifar, N. (2015). Social semiotics evaluation of English one by gender. *Studies in English Language and Education Journal*, 2(2), 84-98.
- Ellis, R. (1997). The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials. *ELT Journal*, 51(1). 36-42.
- Golpour, F. (2012). Iranian junior high school English book series (Right Path to English) weighted against material evaluation checklists. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 1(7). 170-1.
- Grant, N. (1987). *Making the Most of Your Textbook*. Hong Kong: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Guilani, M. A., Yasin, M. S. M., & Hua, T. K. (2011). Authenticity of Iranian English textbooks for schools. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 1(2). 25-30.
- Hair, J. F., Tatham, R. L., Anderson, R. E. & Black, W. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis* (5th ed.) London: Prentice-Hall.
- Kamyabi Gol, A. & Baghaeeyan, J. (2014). A critical evaluation of prospect one: Iranian junior high school English book. The First Regional Conference on New English Language Course Book. Retrieved June 15, 2017 from <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=nZHfHq-cAAAAJ&hl=en>
- Kayapinar, U. (2009). Course book evaluation by English teachers. *Inonu University Journal of the Faculty of Education*, 10(1), 69-78.
- Khansir, A. A., & Mahammadifard, E. (2015). An evaluation of Prospect book (Prospect 1). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(3). 485-492.
- Maftoon, P. (2002). Universal relevance of communicative language teaching: some reservations. *The International Journal of Humanities*, 9(2), 49-54.
- Mukundan, J. (2007). Evaluation of English language textbooks: some important issues for consideration. *Journal of NELTA*, 12(1&2). 80-4.
- Ranalli, J. C. (2002). An evaluation of New Headway Upper-Intermediate. Retrieved June 15, 2017 from <http://www.cels.bham.ac.uk/resources/essays/Ranalli3.pdf>
- Safa, M.A., & Farahani, M. (2015). Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives about Prospect One's intercultural competence development. *Critical Studies in Text and Programs of Human Science*, 15(36). 1-24.
- Soodmand, A. (2008). Interchange weighted against a checklist. Unpublished article.
- Tomlinson, B. & Masuhara, H. (2004). *Developing Language Course Materials*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- Williams, D. (1983). Developing criteria for textbook evaluation. *ELT Journal*, 37(3). 251-255.