



Intercultural Communicative Competence in High School English Textbooks of Iran and India: A Comparative Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 27 September 2020 Revised: 10 October 2020 Accepted: 18 October 2020 Online: 08 November 2020</p>	<p>It seems that the current English textbook developers are not only interested in developing their audience's communicative competence but also willing to improve the learners' intercultural competence. This shift in instructional goals is in line with the emerging shift in the learners' need to use English as an international language rather than a second or a foreign language. Having noticed the weighty contributions of the locally developed textbooks in Iran and India regarding their expansive distribution and use among English learners, the researcher investigated Iranian high school textbooks (<i>Prospect and Vision</i>) and the official high school textbooks in India (<i>Standard English</i>) from a comparative perspective based on intercultural communicative competence emphasizing critical awareness, and discovery and interaction skills as its defining criteria. Through content analysis, the whole content of the Iranian and Indian high school English textbooks, 12 volumes in all, were analyzed and the instances of the intercultural communicative competence were quantitatively recorded, classified and discussed. The results revealed that, Standard English, the textbook developed in the outer circle in India, to a little extent, included intercultural communicative competence, especially, critical cultural awareness. It was also indicated that the Iranian high school English textbooks were deprived of intercultural communicative competence components.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>Comparative Analysis Intercultural Communicative Competence Iran India</p>	

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1. Introduction

It seems that the current trend in teaching English as a second or a foreign language, especially in Asian and the Middle East countries is shifting from investing communicative competence to developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Baker, 2015; Cheng, 2012; Gu, 2016; Ho, 2009; Ishii, 2009; Tian, 2013; Xiaohui, & Li, 2011; Zhang & Zhou, 2019). Developing ICC seems to be essential in English language teaching (ELT) since English is a lingua franca now. From ICC perspective, culture is not considered to be only an L2 community's national culture concept as stated by Risager (2007), but seen as a continuum of cultural variety or a system of sub-cultures (Weninger & Kiss, 2013) or hybrid representations of cultures (Kiss & Weninger, 2017).

Considering the role of textbooks as the main means of instruction (Tomlinson, 2003), it can be expected that ICC has to be derived from the learning activities tasks or embedded in textbooks, as stated by Tomalin and Stempleski (1994). This may be due to the fact that textbooks offer a more fruitful context, which activates learning processes in the learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Edwards & Willis, 2005). However, it would be a simplistic view to consider this to be true for all textbooks and language teaching materials.

According to Kachru (1985), English users are (1) in inner circle nations, such as UK, using it in their traditional cultural and linguistic communication, (2) outer circle nations such as India, using English for educational, or official purposes or (3) expanding circle, such as Iran, using English for more specific purposes, take academic needs for example. Accordingly, with regard to developing English learners' ICC, it is worth knowing if the learners in the expanding and outer circles have enough opportunities to develop their ICC. Since textbooks are essential sources of language learning among the learners in expanding and outer circles, it would be technically informative to know about the extent to which the textbooks developed and used in the expanding and outer circle nations are potentially able to develop English learners' ICC.

For the purpose of textbook analysis, either an absolute perspective or a comparative approach may be adopted (Shirvani, 2014). While the former takes account of a textbook with reference a given theoretical basis for in-depth analysis, the latter deviates from a perfectionist view and counts on a pragmatic approach to textbook analysis and considers a theoretically defined construct to be partially and relatively present in a given textbook (Shirvani, 2014). Accordingly, it is expected that a comparative approach to textbook evaluation provides us with a more practical, down-to-earth analysis of textbooks which paves the way for further feasible modifications of the textbooks. Although there have been several studies in Iran using a comparative approach

(Alimorad, 2014; Moradi, Karbalaei, & Afraz, 2013 and Soleimani, & Ghaderi, 2013), ICC has not been fully focused by them. This may be due to the fact that ICC is an emerging trend in English teaching, especially in Asian and the Middle East contexts and the researchers are focusing on local textbooks using an absolute approach, as did by Gholami Pasand and Ghasemi (2018) who focused on Iranian textbooks only.

In line with previous studies on the interconnectedness of textbooks and culture instruction in terms of beliefs, practices, systems, and values, among various aspects of cultures in the realm of L2 teaching, textbooks are seen to feature an essential role in developing ICC nowadays. Therefore, this research was done on a comparative framework of textbook analysis to investigate the tasks in the high school English textbook officially distributed in India and Iran in terms of including ICC components. Accordingly, the following research question was investigated:

To what extent are ICC elements included in Indian high school textbooks (*Standard English*) and Iranian high school English textbooks (*Prospect and Vision*)?

2. Review of the Related Literature

Almost half a century ago, Sacks (1975) explained communication as an intricate process of exchanging meaning in a sufficiently clear and socially expected manner. According to Carey (1989) such an exchange is successful when conversational partners share a common cultural background, in addition to their shared linguistic codes. Therefore, as Shohamy (2006) stated, when partners are from different (sub) cultures, language turns into the social process through which meanings are adapted, compromised, and negotiated. Accordingly, it can be argued that teaching English for communication implies recognizing culture as a dynamic and hybrid phenomenon which is getting more intensified as humans are living in a more globalized world with increasing mobility (Kiss & Weninger, 2017). Given this fact, it can be stated that a language teaching program has to develop (inter)cultural knowledge (Liddicoat, 2002). Accordingly, learning English is expected to encompass raising cultural awareness and recognizing the dynamicity of culture (Norton, 2000). Therefore, English teaching is partly to help learners understand how language forms and cultural meanings are related (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013).

In line with the aforementioned argument, the term intercultural competence (IC) was introduced as the significant component of L2 instruction along with developing communicative competence of English learners. However, there is not a strong consensus with regard to its definition (Deardorff, 2006). IC or cross-cultural competence, the terms that are sometimes used

interchangeably, is defined differently by various experts such as Gudykunst and Kim (1984) and Hill (2006) to name a few. For example, relying on Byram's model of IC (1997b) consisting attitudes, knowledge, and skills as the pillars of critical cultural awareness, Deardorff (2006b) defined it as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes" (p. 248). Byram (1997b) introduced his IC model after criticizing communicative competence schemes put forward by Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980) considering communicative competence to encompass several components: grammatical, strategic, discourse, and sociolinguistic competences. Byram (1997a; 1997b) specifically criticized sociolinguistic component in these models to account for a specific socio-cultural context, and to be dependent on a shared context. Therefore, as Byram (1997a; 1997b) argued, these communicative competence schemes do not take intercultural conversations in which speakers construe communicative acts within their own cultural frames. Hence, he recognized attitudes, knowledge, and skills to be essential for fruitful intercultural communication.

In terms of intercultural attitude, L2 instruction needs to include tasks and materials enabling the learners "to relinquish ethnocentric attitudes towards and perceptions of otherness and a cognitive ability to establish and maintain a relationship between" (p. 60) their own culture and the foreign one. In terms of intercultural skills, teachers are responsible to teach the strategies facilitating the acquisition of an "interpretative system with which learners can gain insight into hitherto unknown cultural meanings, beliefs and practices" (p. 60) and as discussed by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), to provide opportunities in which L2 learners are engaged in authentic communicative tasks. In terms of intercultural knowledge, L2 instruction needs to develop resources and strategies in learners so that they develop a "system of cultural references which structures the implicit and explicit knowledge acquired in the course of linguistic and cultural learning" (p. 60). According to Byram et al. (2002), L2 learners need to "understand what it means to know something about other people with other multiple identities" (p. 8). Consequently, as concluded by Byram, et al. (2002), through developing their intercultural competence L2 learners possess sufficient resources and strategies "to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own" (p. 8). In sum, L2 instruction is responsible for raising L2 learners' cultural awareness, defined as critical analysis, interpretation and evaluation of cultural practices, and products, which is achieved by engaging with a cultural phenomenon objectively, no matter it is from their own culture or a different one. It can be argued that from Byram's (2003) perspective, L2 learners are seen as mediators between cultures, negotiating and keeping their minds open to integrate cultures.

From this perspective, many English teaching textbooks may be criticized for not helping learners' master intercultural communication and presenting a distorted picture of intercultural communication. Several critics such as Canagarajah (1993), Nguyen (2011), Siegel (2006), Yuen (2011), to name a few, questioned the representation of cultural features in English textbooks, emphasized their ineffectiveness of meeting L2 learners' intercultural communicative needs and criticized English textbooks for including cultural oversimplifications and prejudices, scarce intercultural learning opportunities.

Regarding Iranian textbooks, *Prospect* and *Vision*, there have been a number of studies, most which criticized the textbooks for their shortcomings, especially, in terms of the cultural content. For instance, Asadi, Kiany, Akbari, and Samar (2016) criticized the developed textbooks in Iran for its pitfalls in terms of cultural literacy instruction such as over-localizing textbook content. Similarly, according to Zohrabi, Sabouri, and Behroozian (2012), to meet the students' needs, the communicative tasks should be included in the English textbooks. Salehi and Amini (2016) also found that, as mentioned by the participants of their study, Iranian high school English textbooks have to include some examples of cultural values which improve learning target culture. In the same line, adopting a semiotic analysis approach, Baghermousvai and Nabifar (2016) showed that *Prospect* and *Vision* utilize Iranian cultural elements such as attire, and Islamic concepts and traditions whereas they evidently ignore the target culture. Ghiyasiyan, Seraj and Bahreini (2017), adopting a content analysis approach based on the analyses of vocabulary and visual themes concluded that about 74 percent of the instances in *Prospect 3* were including instances of Iranian-Islamic culture and identity and there was no room for introducing "otherness" in this textbook. Ahamdpour and Kuhi (2019), investigating high school teachers' attitudes toward *Prospect* and *Vision* concluded that they hold negative attitudes to the way both Iranian and target cultures are presented in these textbooks. Khodabandeh and Mombini (2018), probing Iranian teachers' attitudes toward *Vision 1*, argued that the participants were desirably satisfied with different aspects of the textbook except its cultural dimension and criticized the book for lacking target cultural values.

Furthermore, the current status of English as a lingua franca and modern perspectives to teaching culture, discussed above, focusing on 'target' culture is insensible. L2 teaching materials are expected to prepare competent L2 learners for global communication or as Byram (2011) stated, "Intercultural citizenship". This perspective echoes Kumaravadivelu's (2008, p. 189) stating that "the task of promoting global cultural consciousness in the classroom can hardly be

accomplished unless a concerted effort is made to [...] prompt learners to confront some of the taken-for granted cultural beliefs about the Self and the Other". This objective is accomplished via using L2 textbooks and instructional materials supporting the acquisition of the attitudes, knowledge, and skills learners need to be proficient intercultural speakers. Accordingly, it can be argued that ELT textbooks has to provide a positive attitude toward using English as a means of communication and negotiation of meaning among speakers from different cultures rather than between mere native speakers and nonnative speakers. Furthermore, the learners are expected to be equipped with critical thinking skills in terms of critically examining their own and various cultures they are facing when using English as an international language. ELT textbooks also need to provide the learners with enough information on the variety of international cultures and cultural literacy in terms of everyday lifestyles, clothing, foods, and rituals among other necessary values.

3. Method

3.1. Materials

The materials were taken from the Indian high school English textbook (*Standard English*) and Iranian high school English textbooks entitled *Prospect* (for grades 7-9) and *Vision* (for grades 10-12). These textbooks are published annually by the ministries of education in Iran and India to be distributed in the high schools nationwide. These textbooks were chosen since they are officially used in high schools and reflect the educational and pedagogical priorities of the English curriculum and educational systems of these two countries. The latest edition of these textbooks as used in 2019-2020 academic year was analyzed in this study. It is worth noting that both textbooks are written by a board of authors who are experts in teaching English. *Standard English* series include six textbooks each of which includes three units that come in from 20 to 25 pages. *Prospect* series include three couples of student books and work books. *Prospect* 1, 2 and 3 include 8, 7 and 6 units, respectively. *Vision* series encompass three couples of student books and work books each of which includes four units of 22 to 27 pages. However, *Vision* 1 is an exception that includes 4 units.

3.2. Data Collection and Procedure

This study was a qualitative research outlined into a content analysis of the Iranian and Indian high school English textbooks. As stated earlier, the purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which the learning tasks in the Indian and Iranian high school textbooks promote intercultural communicative competence. In order to achieve this goal, first, all units in these textbooks were

reviewed to classify the tasks. Next, the tasks were categorized into (1) communicative, (2) intercultural, or (3) non-intercultural using the checklist based on the models suggested by Byram (1997a; 1997b) and Murcia (2008). The former was incorporated because it is the most compatible ICC model with English teaching (Deardorff, 2006b) and the latter was selected since it is the latest model of communicative competence discussed in the related literature. While Byram's (1997a; 1997b) model accounted for the intercultural competence elements in the textbooks, Murcia's (2008) model included the elements of communicative competence. It was assumed that the blending of these two models could account for ICC. Using checklists in material and textbook evaluation is strongly supported due to the fact that they promote the systematicity, objectivity and reliability of analysis (McGrath, 2002). In addition, to further investigate the components of ICC in these textbooks, further classification of the tasks in these textbooks were accomplished based on Byram's (1997a; 1997b) model.

Concerning the aforementioned models, the analyses of the textbook series covered linguistic, discourse, interactional and intercultural components. The intercultural tasks were further analyzed in terms of promoting discovery and interaction skills and raising critical cultural awareness. Accordingly, linguistic competence was described as the ability of applying the rules of Standard English to produce and interpret spoken and written English; discourse competence referred to the capability to arrange structures and utterances into meaningful spoken or written messages; the interactional competence encompassed the ability to do actional and conversational competences; and the intercultural competence was operationally defined as the ability to negotiate meaning with people with different cultural backgrounds in English with necessary attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical awareness.

In order to have a more systematic and organized analysis of the tasks and activities in these textbooks, the researcher developed taxonomy of the tasks according to each competence they serve, as shown in Figure 1. This figure shows and emphasizes the comprehensiveness of intercultural communicative competence in terms of including all various types of competences which have been identified and included in the previous approaches to ELT. That is why; this study also included analyses of the tasks focusing on teaching specific grammatical and/or lexical items as well as the pragmatic aspects of English as international language.

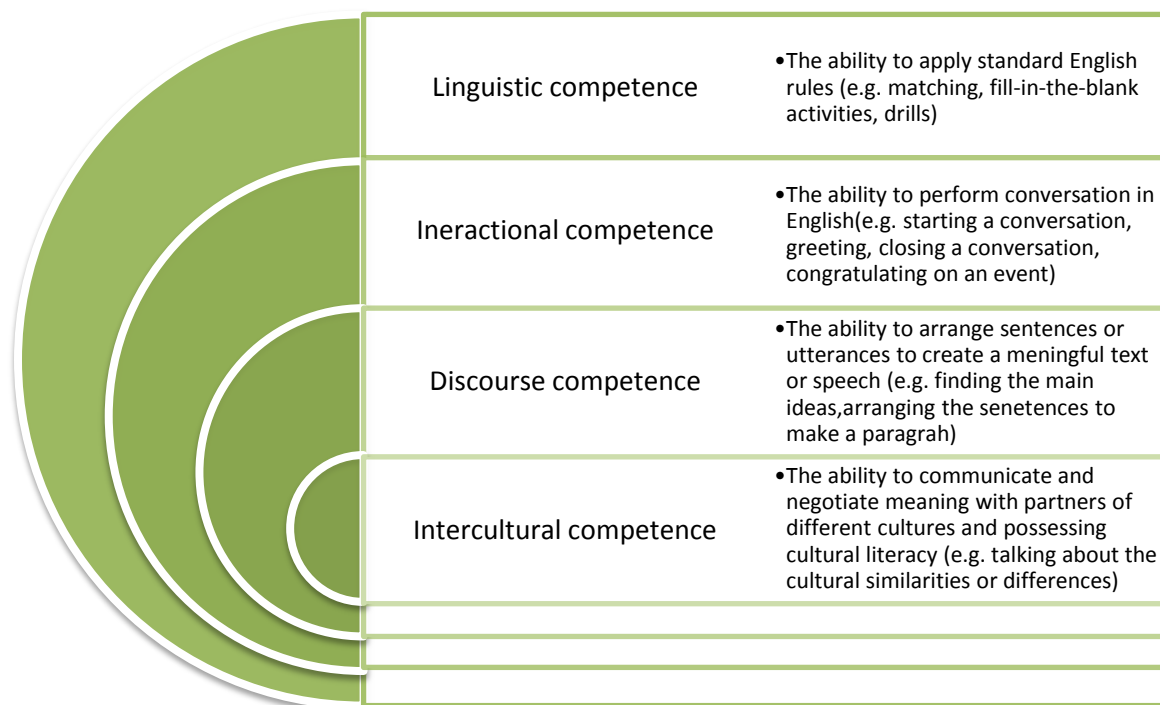


Figure 1: An overview of the tasks allocated to each type of competence in intercultural communicative competence model drawn from Byram (1997a; 1997b) and Murcia (2008)

However, to be more specific, the intercultural competence component was divided into two parts, namely, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness (Figure 2).

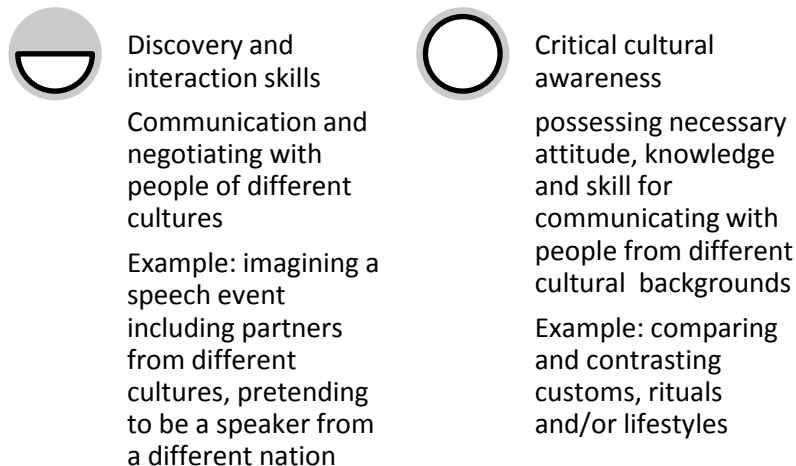


Figure 2: Overview of the components of intercultural competence component in intercultural communicative competence model drawn from Byram (1997a; 1997b) and Murcia (2008)

4. Results

In order to have an orderly presentation of the results, the ICC instances of each textbook series are presented separately according to the task types covered in each unit. The results are depicted in the following tables in terms of linguistic, discourse, interactional, and intercultural competences. Sociocultural competence embedded in the communicative model was replaced by the more relevant concept of intercultural competence. For the sake of presenting more relevant data and avoiding crammed representation of irrelevant data, a more simplified classification of learning tasks was employed, so that formulaic competence tasks classified under discourse competence and strategic competence was categorized under interactional competence.

Table 1: ICC tasks presented in Standard English 1-6

Components	Book 1 units			Book 2 units			Book 3 units			Book 4 units			Book 5 units		Book 6 units		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3
Linguistic	11	12	11	12	11	10	12	12	11	12	11	10	10	10	12	12	11
Discourse				3	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	6	4	4	5	5	6
Interactional	2	2	3		3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	3	4	3
Intercultural													1				1
Discovery and interaction skills																	
Critical awareness							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

As shown in Table 1, it is deduced that linguistic and interactional competences are predominantly presented in the learning tasks in *English Standard* series. In addition, discourse competence is covered in all books, except Book 1. However, with regard to intercultural competence, discovery and interaction skills as the key components of ICC are not seriously promoted but presented in the upper levels of the textbook series, that is, Book 5 and Book 6. It seems that the official curriculum of language teaching in India promotes Indian culture at the price of neglecting the target or even international cultures. However, critical thinking tasks, as the second component of ICC is seriously promoted in Books 3, 4, 5 and 6 whereas it is totally absent in Books 1 and 2. The following table depicts the findings of ICC components promoted in *Prospect*. According to Table 1, it can be argued that with regard to the distribution of discovery and interaction skills, attitude, knowledge, and skills of cultural relation and interpretation are poorly covered in *Standard English* series. Accordingly, it can be concluded that this textbook series relatively fails to promote the learners' ICC. More ICC tasks are needed to be included so that the learners do not be rehearsed in terms of their communicative competence only.

As shown in Figure 3, in addition to exercises, the graphic and visual components of the book are also selected in line with local priorities and include examples from Indian life styles, persona and stereotypes. The material lacks any intercultural references in terms of the characters as shown in (1) and partners, as shown in (2) and even visual references for the new words to be learnt, as shown in (3). It seems that Standard English is ignoring intercultural components at the cost of promoting local values and cultural issues.

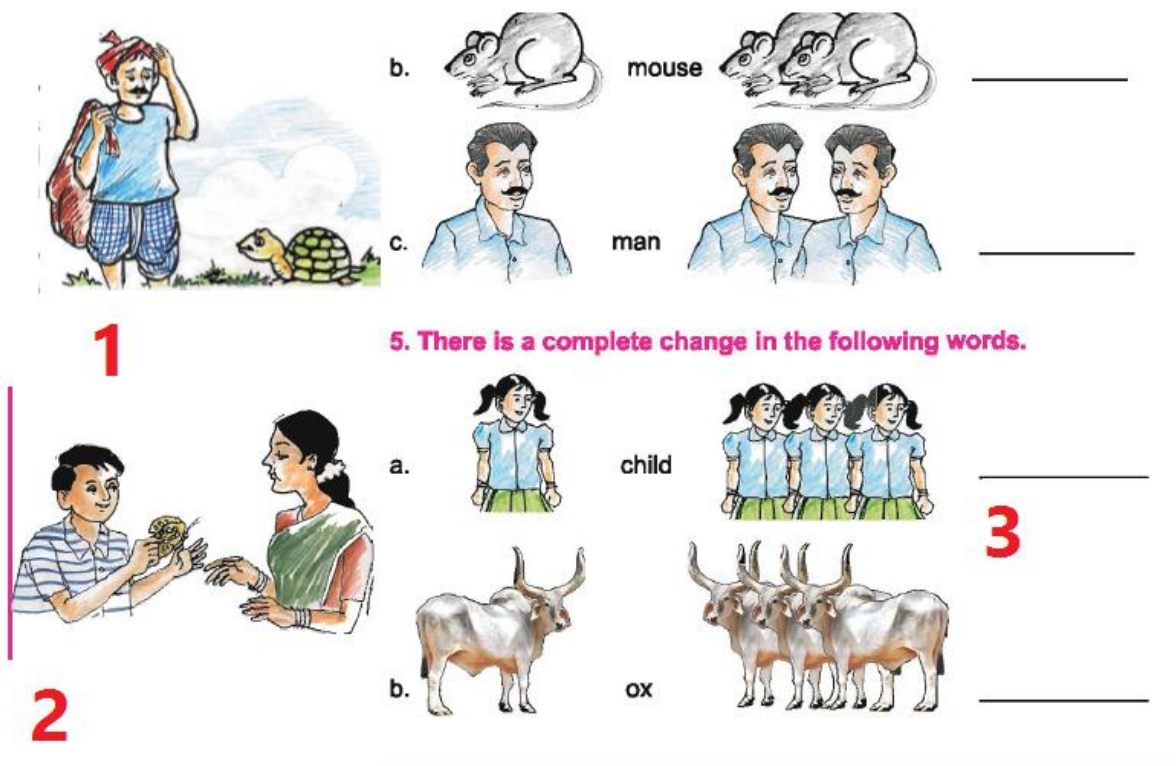


Figure 3: Presentation of (inter)cultural components in Standard English series

Table 2: ICC tasks presented in Prospect 1-3

Components	Book 1 units								Book 2 units							Book 3 units					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6
Linguistic	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	7	7	7	7	8	8
Discourse																					
Interactional	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	6	6	5	5
Intercultural																					
Discovery and interaction skills																					
Critical awareness																					

Based on the results shown in Table 2, it can be argued that Prospect series are monotonous in terms of presenting the components of ICC. Besides linguistic component which has to be inevitably presented in all lessons, interactional component is also presented in all books and units. This is mainly due to the fact that in Prospect series, oral skills are emphasized. However, as shown in Table 2, none of the aspects of the intercultural component is presented in Prospect series. It

seems that neither discovery and interaction skills nor critical cultural awareness is listed as the objectives of language curriculum in Iran. Concerning the findings, it can be argued that Prospect series is poor in terms of helping learners accomplish communicative goals, as defined with regard to Murcia's (2008) communicative competences. A glance at the table above shows that a rather imbalanced representation of communicative competences is represented in Prospect series.

As shown in Figure 4, Prospect series is mobbed with Iranian-Islamic cultural examples, as previously emphasized by Ghiyasiyan, Seraj and Bahreini (2017). The instances of graphic and visual elements included in these textbook series, as shown in (1) and (2) are speaking louder than the facts and figures presented in the Table 2. That is, the textbook is merely improving local values while ignoring not only the target culture, as emphasized by Khodabandeh and Mombini (2018) and Salehi and Amini (2016), but also the international culture which is the aim of embedding intercultural communicative competence components in the textbooks. The poor representation of the international culture is also evident in teaching new words as shown in (3).



Figure 4: Presentation of (inter)cultural components in Prospect series

Table 3: ICC tasks presented in Vision 1-3

Components		Book 1 units				Book 2 units			Book 3 units		
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3
Linguistic		9	10	9	10	10	11	11	11	12	11
Discourse		4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5
Interactional		4	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	4	5
Intercultural	Discovery and interaction skills										
	Critical awareness										

Based on the results shown in Table 3, it can be argued that similar to *Prospect* series, *Vision* series is monotonous in terms of presenting the components of ICC, namely, linguistic, discourse and interactional competences; however, discourse competence is seriously attended in all units, unlike *Prospect* series. This may be partly due to the fact that the learners are thought to be linguistically proficient enough to be engaged in reading tasks and more demanding strategic processing. However, as shown in Table 3, similar to what was observed regarding *Prospect* series, none of the aspects of the intercultural component is presented in *Vision* series. It seems that neither discovery and interaction skills nor critical cultural awareness is attended in the language curriculum in Iran at all levels. A closer look at Table 3 shows that a rather deficient representation of ICC is represented in *Vision* series.

As shown in Figure 5, the graphic and visual presentation in *Vision* series are on line with those of *Prospect* series and pursues the same instructional objectives in terms of introducing (inter)cultural elements. It seems what teachers as the main users of these textbooks are criticizing these local textbooks for (Ahamdpour & Kuhi, 2019; Ghiyasiyan, Seraj & Bahreini, 2017; Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2018) is confirmed by the selection of visual elements in Figure 5. It is evident that the Iranian local textbooks are intentionally neglect the "otherness" of foreign culture while presenting English forms, as shown in (1), and notions, as shown in (2) and (3).

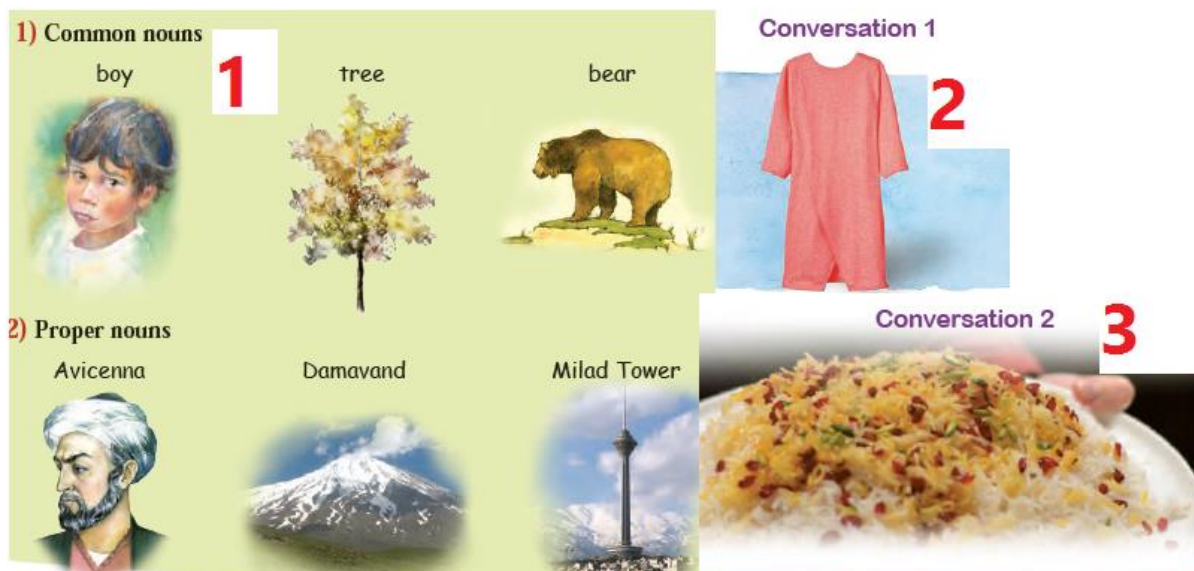


Figure 5: Presentation of (inter)cultural components in *Vision* series

5. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it can be claimed that all four competences are covered in *Standard English* (Indian high school textbooks) while *Prospect* series and *Vision* series include two and three competences, respectively. *Standard English* series, unlike *Prospect* and *Vision* series, goes beyond linguistic, discourse, and interactional competences to partially touch intercultural competence. If we accept the premise that all competences have to be included in a textbook so that L2 learners can acquire ICC in their classrooms, it can be concluded that Iranian textbook series, *Prospect* series in particular, certainly fails to do so. The findings of the study is line with the results of the previous studies investigating cultural components in Iranian textbooks such as Ahamdpour and Kuhi (2019), Asadi, Kiany, Akbari, and Samar (2016), Baghermousvai and Nabifar (2016), Ghiyasiyan, Seraj and Bahreini (2017), Khodabandeh and Mombini (2018), Salehi and Amini (2016), Zohrabi, Sabouri, and Behroozian (2012) who collectively criticize the newly textbooks for ignoring the cultural component. However, it has to be noted that the results of the present study go beyond the findings of the previous ones in that, accordingly, the current local textbooks developed by Iranian writers in Iran for Iranian learners in high schools are strongly criticized for neglecting the intercultural competence in all units of the textbooks so that not even a single example of a task can be found to touch ICC.

In terms of linguistic competence realized in vocabulary and grammar as well as pronunciation tasks (Canale & Swain, 1980; Murcia, 2008), all three series seem to satisfactorily meet the demands of ICC. They provide learners with content related to both language usage and language use. A variety of activities such as matching, making lists, sentence completion, and sentence making are offered. Meanwhile, developing communicative competence still may be questioned, as highlighted by Alimorad (2014) and Gholami Pasand and Ghasemi (2018), since learners may not apply the *Standard English* in context. *Standard English* series is developed in outer circle and *Prospect* and *Vision* series are developed in expanding circle. The interesting point is that they both promote local culture and topic at the cost of either target or international cultures. The lack of emphasis on ICC in *Standard English* may be justified by the role of English in outer circle countries, as mentioned by Kachru (1985), which is mainly for communicating official matters within the Indian context (Canagarajah, 1993). However, with regard to the role of English as a foreign language in the Iranian context, which is classified as an expanding circle community according to Kachru's (1985) definition, the exclusion of tasks which can help learners acquire intercultural competence is hard, if not impossible, to justify. That is, what possible needs of Iranian EFL learners are going to be met with the current contents of *Prospect* and *Vision* series, taking current ICC models of language learning/teaching into account (Alimorad, 2014; Asadi, Kiany, Akbari, & Samar, 2016; Soleimani, & Ghaderi, 2013; Moradi, Karbalaeei, & Afraz, 2013; Zohrabi, Sabouri, & Behroozian, 2012).

Regarding discourse competence, it can be argued that while *Standard English* series and *Vision* series, unlike *Prospect* series, provide sufficient stances of such tasks. They mostly focus on text comprehension and composition (description and narration); however, the latter is more common in *Standard English* than *Vision*. Actional, conversational and paralinguistic competences are dominantly presented in all textbooks series which may be due to the fact that speaking skills are relatively more emphasized in Iran's revised language curriculum and in Indian outer-circle context of language use. Performing common speech acts are covered so that the learners might be able to express feelings or thoughts.

Intercultural competence is rarely presented in learning tasks in *Standard English* and is totally absent in *Prospect* and *Vision* series. These textbooks are poor in terms of helping the learners compare or contrast between local and global cultures or even local cultures. Considering the ongoing shift from communicative English teaching to ELT based on ICC, it can be argued that learners' possible future misunderstandings may not merely be due to their poor linguistic

competence or even communicative competence but their deficient IC since communicative competence per se does not promise future successful communication with international speakers. While it is narrowly covered in Indian textbooks, it is completely ignored in Iranian high school textbooks, as if the learners are not going to meet or converse international speakers of English.

6. Conclusion

Culture and language are so intertwined that learners are doomed to develop the cultural awareness while learning English. Accordingly, textbooks as the main resource of English instruction should inevitably encompass tasks which promote cultural awareness as discussed under the term ICC. The results of the analyses showed that the learning tasks in these textbooks do not promote ICC. Although linguistic and interactional as well as discourse competences are predominantly included in all three textbooks, except for *Prospect* series which lacks it, it was shown that IC is neglected, possibly since the governments concern on local cultures or possibly consider the foreign or international culture familiarity as a type of hegemony or even imperialism.

This study had two main findings; (1) the current high school textbooks are minimally developing the learners' ICC, and (2) the current textbooks tasks are not of great help for the learners to notice and learn attitudes, skills, and knowledge that make them intercultural competent citizens (Byram, 2011). Accordingly, it has to be noted that including texts or visuals would not lead to their cultural awareness unless there are tasks requiring them to notice and negotiate content. That is, even culturally rich material does not cover learning ICC. Availability of culturally rich material seems to be a precondition, and tasks seem to have a complementing role so that they help learners with their cultural discovery or meaning making. According to Weninger and Kiss (2013), language textbooks are vulnerable to using guided semiosis; in other words, they either hinder or limit learners' meaning making opportunities. Hence, it is naive to assume that learners notice and learn from textbooks if cultural content is presented implicitly.

Considering the fact that Iranian high school textbooks lack intercultural content, let alone ICC tasks to direct the learners' attention to intercultural learning, it is necessary to either adapt or supplement teachers by adequate ICC material. It is worth mentioning that such modifications will not be successful unless individual teachers are updated. In addition, in an exam-centered contexts, including Iran (Gholami Pasand & Ghasemi, 2018), it seems unlikely to attract teachers to ICC development. However, with regard to the fact that ICC emphasizes learners' readiness to comprehend a variety of cultures rather than a single target culture or a limited number of cultures,

it is suggested that the textbooks present more intercultural learning opportunities to promote learners' ICC as the latest trend in English teaching. Teachers are suggested to develop learning tasks or find references of learning activities to promote ICC in their classrooms, especially discovery and interaction skills. They need to emphasize both communicative competence and IC through intergrated learning tasks.

Yet, further studies are needed to uncover the impacts of using different types of tasks on learning ICC. Also, further systematic classroom observation studies are required to help us discover the way ICC material is employed in actual English classrooms. Further research is needed to survey teachers and learners' attitudes and beliefs about learning ICC.

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