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Investigating English Textbooks in Iran’s Schools in Terms of Inclusion of the Elements of Spoken Grammar of English (SGE)



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ABSTRACT

The new findings of corpus linguistics clearly attest to the uniqueness of some elements of the spoken grammar of English and their distinction from those of the written variety. Mixing the two or adopting a hegemonic perspective to the written variety in language education, especially in the field of materials development, is likely to yield an imbalanced or even distorted view of the entirety of the language being learned so that it could color the subsequent teaching and assessment. With this in mind, this investigation has adopted a content analytic procedure and applied the models proposed by Cullen and Kuo’s (2007) to the dialogs and Timmis’s (2005) to the tasks of the English school textbooks in Iran, namely the Prospect and Vision series to reveal to what extent, if any, the series have availed themselves of the properties of the spoken grammar in their student books, workbooks and teacher guides. The findings revealed that the majority of the characteristics of the spoken grammar, as used in the textbooks, belong to the fixed lexicogrammatical elements of Category II of Cullen and Kuo’s framework, and that the instances of Category I, that is, those forms which undergo change as a function of the context in which they occur, are relatively uncommon. Additionally, the realizations of Category III, that is, those structures which are deemed ungrammatical via adoption of a prescriptive outlook but are still commonly found in the spoken English, were non-existent in the series. The analysis of the tasks based on Timmis’ (2005) also revealed that only some “global understanding” and very few instances of “language discussion task” were present and focused on in the materials investigated, leaving the two other principles unattended. Suggestions are ultimately made as to how to redress the imbalance found

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Introduction

The branch of applied linguistics known as materials development, and in particular its sub-branch of materials evaluation, has reached a stage of growth and maturity, where the investigation and assessment of various resources, especially English language textbooks, have been carried out from different form and content dimensions. This has enabled language teachers to have a better understanding of the functional mechanism of such resources in their teaching-learning process.

Textbooks, “the visible heart of any ELT program” (Sheldon, 1988, p. 237), have been evaluated, not only from the standpoint of marginalized groups in society such as women (Ariyano, 2018; Dahmarde & Mohammadi, 2023; Selvi & Kocaman, 2021), the elderly (Alter, 2020; Rajabi, Aghaei, & Daniali, forthcoming), and the disabled (Cheng & Beigi, 2011; Gulya & Féhervári, 2023; Hodgkinson, 2012), but also in terms of the inclusion or exclusion of language (quasi-)skills and the way they are presented to the audience (Biglerbigi, Qajareh, Salami, & Mohammadi, 2023; Collins, 2006).

Since textbooks, as obvious manifestations of educational resources in different schools and institutions, are not free from defects, they should be carefully evaluated from various stances so that with the help of the findings of such evaluations, they can be adapted in the form of principles such as addition, deletion, modification, simplification, or restructuring of resources (McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013; Rasti 1400; Abdulahi Gilani 1401). “The ability to

evaluate teaching materials effectively” is considered an “important professional activity” for all English language teachers (McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013, p. 50), both at the national level and in international arena, due to the unprecedented amount of resources developed every day. However, it seems that the topic of textbook analysis in some studies has suffered from imprecise assumptions. For example, for a long time, researchers have studied and analyzed the Spoken Grammar of English (SGE) as if basically the spoken and written grammar are not distinct from each other (Rühlemann, 2006).

The recent findings of linguistics, and especially computational linguistics (Leech, 2000), have gradually revealed the fact that there are many differences between the grammar of spoken language and its written form (Gavala, 2015). The differences are rooted in the nature of the spoken language and entail features such as high repetition, high syntactic flexibility, false starts, and floor keeping. Examining such inherent features of SGE in textbooks and other language teaching resources has been gradually favored by researchers in the field of textbook analysis (McCarthy & Carter, 1995; O'Keefe, McCarthy, & Carter, 2007; Torres-Martinez, 2014). However, it seems that this field is still at the beginning of its journey, and especially with respect to the applications of these findings, there is a relatively long way for them to be included in the educational approach of teachers.

More precisely, the current research examines SGE from two different aspects: firstly, the extent the Spoken Grammar of

English (SGE) has been reflected in the dialogues of these two series, and, secondly, the amount of emphasis on the teaching of SGE realizations through the tasks and activities which introduce, practice and explanation of instances of SGE in the textbooks. As such, employing the two frameworks mentioned earlier, the following questions guide this study:

Literature review

In recent years and as a result of the technological innovations in the field of (applied) linguistics, especially the field of computational linguistics, very important findings regarding the mechanism of language performance have been obtained, which in turn has modified the educators' views regarding the teaching of language forms and functions. As mentioned in the introduction, part of these findings, and thanks to the comparison of similar constructions in the spoken and written form of the English language, are related to the difference in grammatical constructions used by language users in speech and writing. Such innovations have even led to the publication of grammar books in the field of spoken English language (Biber, 2010; Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

Spoken Grammar of English (SGE), in this research paper, along with other similar studies (Cullen & Kuo, 2007), is considered equivalent to the term *Conversational grammar*, which is informal, and is different from the formal language used in debate and formal speech. SGE has features such as gradual staging of information, avoidance of syntactic elaboration, more flexibility in the positioning of constituents, and the use of

vague language (Cullen & Kuo, 2007). Mumford (2009) presented three approaches with regard to SGE. The first approach contends that given the diverse dialects and version of English spoken around the globe, there is no take native speakers' speaking norms into consideration and teach SGE. Hence, the overall comprehension would suffice and there is not necessary to consider the native speakers' use of language in teaching English. The second approach, on the other hand, believes that an overall comprehension of the language spoken is not adequate and learners need to get familiar with spoken grammar of the language, yet no emphasis is put on empowering learners in their production with respect to integrating SGE features in the oral production. In line with this, Timmis (2005) presented a framework to raise the awareness of learners with respect to SGE and not necessarily requiring them to use them in their speaking. Contrary to the two previous approaches, there is a third approach which necessitates learners to go beyond a mere familiarity with SGE and requires teachers to help them to use these features in their speaking. This approach is based on the notion that they will face problem communicating with native speakers if they are not deliberately assisted to incorporate SGE features in their speaking.

Spoken Grammar of English has always faced challenges such as clarifying the needs, determining the components, and putting it into practice. Few efforts have been made to answer the above challenges. One of the most prominent attempts aiming at organizing the somewhat scattered findings related to the components of Spoken Grammar of English

is the framework proposed by Cullen and Kuo (2007), which was designed for analytical purposes and tried to classify SGE components in three categories as follows:

The first category includes “productive grammatical constructions, that is, constructions which involve a degree of grammatical encoding in their production or grammatical decoding in their interpretation” (Cullen & Kuo, 2007, p. 365). For instance, tag questions change with respect to the subject and verb of a sentence.

The second category includes “fixed lexico-grammatical units which do not undergo morphological change and are inserted typically

... to modify a constituent in the utterance” (p. 365). As an example, hedges like sort of/kind of, which often appear in speech and serve to reduce the certainty of a proposition.

The third category ‘consists of a small set of grammatical features associated with prescriptive and proscriptive attitudes to grammatical acceptability, in that they appear to violate a surface-level rule of grammar” (p. 365). For example, we can refer to the use of *was* in conditional sentences of the second type after the first/third person singular subjects. These categories are exemplified in Table 1 below:

Table 1- SGE features (adapted from Cullen & Kuo, 2007) .I

Categories	Subcategory	Examples
Category One	1- heads 2- tails 3- ellipsis a. Initial ellipsis b. clausal ellipsis c. non-clausal ellipsis 4. quoting verbs in past progressive form 5- others (unfinished conditional sentences, tag questions, etc.)	- <i>This little shop</i> -it's lovely..II - He's a real problem <i>is Jeff</i> ..III Got a minute?.IV - Because I didn't work hard..V - How about that?.VI .VII .VIII .IX - and this man <i>was telling</i> me I had to quit my .X job. - If you could talk to her
Category Two	1- Stance Adverbials 2- Vocatives 3- Contractions 4- Hedges 5- Politeness expressions 6- Responses	well/ anyway/ really - Mom! - aren't - sort of/ kind of - please - Yes.

	<p>7- Greetings</p> <p>8- Vague Expressions</p> <p>9- Modifying Expressions</p> <p>10- Discourse Markers</p> <p>11- Expletives</p> <p>12- Quasi-sentential Phrases</p> <p>13- Interjections</p> <p>14- Paused fillers</p>	<p>- Hi.</p> <p>- and stuff like that</p> <p>- a little bit of</p> <p>- you know/ I mean</p> <p>- Gosh!</p> <p>- What a nice girl.</p> <p>- oh/ wow</p> <p>- Mmm ...</p>
<p>Category</p> <p>Three</p>	<p>1- noun clause+ there's</p> <p>2- noun clauses with less</p> <p>3- conditional type 2</p> <p>4- me in subject position</p>	<p>- There's few customers left.</p> <p>- I'm dealing with less people in that job.</p> <p>- If I was rich, I could get that brand-new car.</p> <p>- Me and my kid brothers used to play in the yard.</p>

As can be observed in Table 1, the above classification helps to identify and record the manifestations of each class in accordance with its role. To the authors of the current piece of research, it seems that in some cases Cullen and Kuo (2007) have presented a limited view of the categories of English grammar. Hence, some minor changes were made in the adaptation of their model by adopting a broad view. For example, while the authors of the framework consider only inter-sentential tag questions as an expression of Category I, they decided to include all examples of tag questions, regardless of their place of occurrence in the sentence, in this category as tag questions are a very frequently used construction in speech.

Prior to Cullen and Kuo (2007), Timmis (2005) in response to the challenge of how to teach the components of SGE in language teaching materials, presented a framework consisting of four types of educational tasks in a practical and systematic way. He believes that teaching of SGE is not only educationally beneficial, but it will also

represent the concerns of the sociolinguistics in the use of linguistic varieties of native speakers. The four types of tasks mentioned in this framework are summarized below:

1. Culture access tasks: These activities are concerned with creating a connection between the English culture items mentioned in the text of the book with similar items in the language learner's culture. Since the SGE reflects the practical use of the language by native speakers more than its written form, relative knowledge of the culture of the target language is necessary to understand it. Besides, drawing the attention of language learners to the shared features of their mother tongue's culture and the target languages can create a deeper understanding of the functions of SGE in them.

2. Global understanding tasks: There is a belief that in order to pay closer attention to the structure of texts, it is necessary for the language learner to first gain a global understanding of them. Therefore, such activities create the context for the language

learner's understanding and attention to the type of instruction used - spoken or written.

3. Noticing tasks: The purpose of this group of activities is to draw the attention of the language learner to the grammar of the English language. More precisely, in this category of activities, the language learner is asked to compare the speech structure that they use in a similar situation in their native language with the structure that the native speaker actually used.

4. Language discussion tasks: In this category of activities, language learners discuss and talk about the examples of spoken grammar that they noticed. Discussion questions include: How formal or informal was this expression? What is the relationship and degree of intimacy between the speakers of the text of the conversation? And, do you like to use Spoken Grammar of English structures?

Research on the Spoken Grammar of English

As mentioned earlier, the studies carried out on Spoken Grammar of English are few and far between and the volume is negligible in comparison to the findings of the written grammar. On the other hand, it seems that these findings have not yet been considered as potentially applicable in teachers' teaching process and the resources they use. In one of the first major studies conducted on spoken grammar elements, Carter and McCarthy (1995) investigated the frequency of four grammatical components in a small-scale corpus and found that some of the mentioned elements were sufficiently included in the data, with some others rarely or never included.

In another study, Mumford (2007) advocated the necessity of teaching the components of Spoken Grammar of English in the dialogues. He believes that this leads to more adherence to the language use model of native speakers, although it might be frowned upon by the proponents of World Englishes. Cullen and Kuo (2007) conducted a study on 24 English textbooks published in England between 2006-2006 and found that the elements of SGE were included in the books only to a limited extent.

Timmis (2005) presented four principles for selecting and designing activities aimed at focusing on SGE. He also examined the feedback of a group of language learners and teachers who were instructed with such texts and concluded that teaching SGE to language learners is both possible and raises awareness of authentic use of language while posing no threat to the identity of learners. Another instance of study proposing procedures to incorporate SGE components into English learning curriculum was the activities offered by Hilliard (2014). She proposed some game-like activities and tasks for learners to practice ellipsis, heads and tails as well as some worksheets to work on paused fillers.

In the same line, Karaata and Soruç (2015) evaluated English textbooks taught in Turkish primary and high schools in terms of presence of spoken grammar features. They examined 18 textbooks with the help of a using a checklist, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings indicated that the overall representation of SGE features were limited with the exception of ellipsis and lexico-grammatical units. The authors believed this inadequate reflection of SGE

components could lead to a lack of proficiency of English learners in communicating with native speakers as they had mostly encountered written grammar forms in their textbooks.

Al-Wossabi (2014) made a comparison between a grammar reference book with a prescriptive perspective with another of a descriptive perspective with regard to their approach toward 'direct and indirect speech'. It was found that the spoken form of English was very scarce in the grammar reference book with a prescriptive stance. The researcher concluded that learners should be encouraged to use the language frequently and not be hindered by their errors.

In a recent study, Ji (2022) proposed tasks and activities for learners of different levels of proficiency. He proposed filling and reverse passage for elementary level; beginning and end activities for learners of intermediate level and oral grammar activity unit for learners of advanced proficiency level. He recommended that language teachers could benefit from combining traditional language-based methods with oral grammar concepts so that their learners might improve in terms of oral use of English.

Studies Conducted in the Context of Iran

Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2012) attempted to identify the frequency of features of SGE in four English teaching textbooks taught globally, employing McCarthy and Carter (2002) taxonomy. They based their analyses on three categories of word, clause, and sentence in their analysis of the dialogues and audio files. Their analyses revealed that the SGE features that had been

represented in the textbooks were not distributed evenly. Moreover, they found that about 40 % of the SGE features had been reflected in the words, 35% in the clause and 24% at the sentence level.

Zareie and Rahozar (2019) was one of the rare studies focusing on the possibility of teaching SGE components in Iran curriculum. The researchers investigated the effect of collaborative and competitive teaching in teaching SGE features such as heads, tails, and ellipsis to Iranian learners, prior to the study, receiving explicit and task-based instructions. They concluded that both approaches to teaching SGE features were equally effective and proved helpful in raising learners' awareness of spoken grammar features.

To the best knowledge of the authors of this study, there is no study investigating the nature and application of elements specific to SGE in Iran's English textbooks of schools. Thus, this investigation can double the importance of this issue in the context of language education in Iran and pave the way for further studies.

Method

The data of the current research is based on the analysis of dialogues and tasks of Prospect and Vision series. Prospect and Vision series are taught at the first and second secondary programs for the ages of 13-16, and 16-19, respectively. Each of these two series has a student's book, a workbook, and a teacher's guide. The teaching approach of both sets, as mentioned in the introduction to these textbooks with reference to the official curriculum documents of the Iranian education system, is the so-called

communicative approach, which emphasizes the integration of all skills. There are two conversations in each lesson: one under the title of Conversation at the beginning of the

lesson and another under the listening and speaking section. Only in Lesson Three of Vision 1 Student Book, there is a narrative text instead of dialogue.

Table 2- Prospect and Vision Series Features

Book	Program	Publication date	Number of the pages	Number of lessons	Number of dialogues
Prospect 1 Student Book	First secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	88	8	16
Prospect 1 Workbook	First secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	72	8	0
Prospect 2 Student Book	First secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	96	7	14
Prospect 2 Workbook	First secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	56	7	0
Prospect 3 Student Book	First secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	136	6	13
Prospect 3 Workbook	First secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	96	6	2
Vision 1 Student Book	Second secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	128	4	7
Vision 1 Workbook	Second secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	80	4	0
Vision 2 Student Book	Second secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	112	3	6
Vision 2 Workbook	Second secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	64	3	0
Vision 3 Student Book	Second secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	104	3	6
Vision 3 Workbook	Second secondary	1402- Eleventh edition	64	3	0

Data Collection

Two checklists were used in order to collect data related to the instances of SGE and also the activities dedicated to teaching them in the above-mentioned books. The first checklist which was based on the analytical

framework of Cullen and Kuo (2007) was used to identify, record, and count the frequency of instances of Spoken Grammar of English in the dialogues of the two series. The second checklist was used in order to check the extent of attention paid to the

teaching of these components in the English language teaching materials of Iranian schools. This was examined from the point of view of the theoretical framework provided

by Timmis (2005). Table 3 provides a schematic view of the steps taken for the data collection for the current research:

Table 3. Specification of tools used to collect data

Framework	Purpose	Materials analyzed
Cullen & Kuo (2007)	The frequency of inclusion of SGE components	Dialogues of Prospect and Vision series
Timmis (2005)	The extent of attention to Teaching of SGE	Tasks of Prospect and Vision series

Data Analysis

In order to answer the two research questions, two sets of the content related to Prospect and Vision series were analysed. In order to identify the frequency of SGE features in the textbooks (the first research question), the dialogues of these textbooks were analyzed. In order to understand the extent teaching SGE features have been reflected in the textbooks, task and activities along with the explanations of teacher guide accompanying the textbooks were analyzed. The two researchers independently analyzed and coded instances of SGE components and compared the results to ensure that no examples were missing. The few ambiguous cases such as “Right” and “Interesting” at the

beginning of sentences, like the one presented below, were also disambiguated.

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

Mr. Razavi: Right, but the number will increase. (Vision 1 Student Book, p. 19)

Results and Discussion

4.1 The Extent of Inclusion of SGE in the Dialogues of Prospect and Vision Series

The findings from the analyses of these two textbook series clearly indicate that there is a relatively thorough coverage of the first and second categories of Cullen and Kuo’s (2007) framework as well as a lack of inclusion of examples of the last category. Similar results were found in the study carried out by Cullen and Kuo (2007). Table 3 provides further details in this regard:

Table 3. Frequency of SGE Components in Prospect Series

Categories	Subcategories	Frequencies
One	1- heads	0.XII
	2- tails	0
	3-ellipsis	0
	d. Initial ellipsis	47
	e. b. clausal ellipsis	2
	f. non-clausal ellipsis	9

	4. past progressive verb	0
	5- tag questions	5
	5- others	17
	Total	75.XV
Two	15- Stance Adverbials	33
	16- Vocatives	31
	17- Contractions	88
	18- Hedges	0
	19- Politeness Expressions	48
	20- Responses	42
	21- Greetings	8
	22- Vague Expressions	0
	23- Modifying Expressions	0
	24- Discourse Markers	1
	25- Expletives	0
	26- Quasi-sentential Phrases	0
	27- Interjections	13
	28- Paused fillers	2
	Total	266
Three	1- there's+ plural noun phrase	0
	2- Less+ plural noun phrase	0
	3- Was in conditional type 2	0
	4- me in subject position	2
	Total	2

As demonstrated in Table 3, the instances of inclusion of the second category of Cullen and Kuo's (2007) classification constitutes about three quarters of the total components of SGE. Below some examples of such components in the aforementioned data are presented:

Phanindra: *Morteza*, (vocative) tell me about Isfahan. Where is it?

Morteza: *Well*, (stance adverbial) *Isfahan's* (contraction) an old city in the

center of Iran. (Prospect 2, Student Book, p. 42)

Ali: *Welcome to our school*. (politeness expression)

Erfan: *Thank you*. (politeness expression) (Prospect 1, Student Book, p. 10)

Ehsan: I like that. Can you give me some advice?

Reza: *Sure!* (response) (Prospect 3, Student Book, p. 96)

Moreover, the components of the first category include about a quarter of the rest, especially in cases such as initial ellipsis. However, almost no instance of the of the third category (with the exception of a similar construction of its sub-category 4, i.e. using me in the subject position, is found in the data related to 3 student books and 3 workbooks of the Prospect series.

(Hotel) **Receptionist:** Thank you. This is your key. It's room 213. *Hope* (initial ellipsis) you enjoy your stay in Tehran. (Prospect 3, Student Book, P. 30)

Student 1: Look, it's enough. I'm hungry. *How about you* (non-clausal ellipsis)?

Student 2: Me, too. Let's have some cake and milk. (Prospect 1, Student Book, p. 42)

Elham: I just love New Year holidays!

Nasrin: Oh, yes, *me too*. It's really great. (Prospect 3, Student Book, p. 50)

Another noteworthy finding related to Prospect series is the non-inclusion of instances related to the first two categories of the second category, that is, heads and tails (redundant), which have been elaborated on and emphasized by Leech (2000) and Carter and McCarthy (1995) in detail. On the other hand, despite the wide presence of the second category instances in the data extracted from the books, the lack of inclusion of items such as ambiguities, hedging expressions such as kind of, and modifiers that are very frequent in SGE are against expectations.

The patterns of inclusion or non-inclusion of instances of SGE components in Vision series are depicted in Table 4, which are, to some extent, similar to the findings related to the Prospect series:

Table 4. Frequency of SGE Components in Vision Series

Categories	Subcategories	Frequencies
One	1- heads	0
	2- tails	0
	3-ellipsis	0
	.XV	
	g. Initial ellipsis	18
	h. b. clausal ellipsis	5
	i. non-clausal ellipsis	5
.XV		
	4. past progressive verb	3
	5- others	8
	Total	39 .XVIII
Two	29- Stance Adverbials	38
	30- Vocatives	8
	31- Contractions	43
	32- Hedges	0

	33- Politeness Expressions	13
	34- Responses	33
	35- Greetings	3
	36- Vague Expressions	0
	37- Modifying Expressions	0
	38- Discourse Markers	1
	39- Expletives	0
	40- Quasi-sentential phrases	4
	41- Interjections	14
	42- Paused fillers	6
	Total	163
Three	1- there's+ plural noun phrase	0
	2- Less+ plural noun phrase	0
	3- Was in conditional type 2	0
	4- me in subject position	0
	Total	0

As demonstrated, the analysis of Vision books revealed the same pattern in terms of inclusion of SGE components as that of Prospect series. The only difference is that there is a noticeable decrease in the frequency of some categories such as vocatives, contractions, politeness expressions, and initial ellipsis. Probably, this can partly be attributed to the fact that in Vision series, the emphasis is more on transactional functions of language (that is, the transfer of information) use and not on interactional functions.

It can be observed that whenever the authors have opted to write sentences of their own and not use authentic texts used by native speakers, they have either turned toward the written grammar of English or have inadvertently used written sentences and dialogue texts which resemble Farsi structures. In either case such texts, which are not adapted from authentic language forms

used by native speakers, lack the features of SGE. Therefore, using such phrases frequently and not including instances of SGE in textbooks, as mentioned earlier, will result in the creation of bookish and washed-up texts that have little resemblance to the type of grammar used by native speakers.

Below, there is an excerpt from a dialogue of Vision series mainly containing transactional function of language and lacking room for interactive use of language.

Emad: I know electricity can be produced from water and sunlight. How might it be generated from wind?

Father: Well, a wind turbine works the opposite of a fan. Instead of using electricity to make wind, a turbine uses wind to make electricity. It is a type of clean energy.

Emad: These wind turbines remind me of what I read about using wind power in Yazd's buildings. (Vision 3 Student Book, p. 75)

Nurse: Dr. Gharib was a famous physician.

Sara: Oh, ... can you tell me a little about his life?

Nurse: Dr. Gharib was born in Tehran in 1288. After receiving his diploma, he went abroad to study medicine. In 1316 he became a physician and then came back to his homeland. In 1347 this center was founded by Dr. Gharib and one of his close friends. (Vision 2 Student Book, p. 19)

Another point that stands out in the analysis of Table 4 is the very low frequency of tag questions, which is one of the components SGE, in the dialogues of the Vision series (with only three occurrences in the Vision book 3) compared to other components of SGE.

- It isn't something serious, *is it?*

- I hope not. (Vision 3 Student Book, p. 32)

The final important justification regarding the approximate non-inclusion of the third category of the analytical framework in the above two textbook series is the possibility that the authors consciously have avoided SGE structures which are different from standard written forms so as not to expose learners to constructions that are defective in terms of written grammar and to prevent error fossilization in their minds. What is certain is that despite the praiseworthy efforts of the compilers in filling the gaps, there are still important and frequent elements in SGE which are either not included in the textbook series or mentioned only with low frequency. This shortcoming can be resolved by teachers as suggested in the conclusion section of the study.

This non-uniform distribution of SGE components reflected in the Prospect and Vision series has also been reported in case of other textbooks analyzed in this respect (e.g., Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cullen & Kuo, 2007). This can be attributed to the fact that the textbook developers might be unaware of the distinction between spoken and written grammar and have reflected SGE insufficiently in the textbooks developed.

4. 2. The Extent of Inclusion of SGE in the Tasks and Activities of Prospect and Vision Series

Examining the tasks activities of the Vision and Prospect textbook series along with their teaching guides based on the theoretical framework of Timmis (2005) revealed that out of the four categories of activities suggested for teaching SGE, only two categories as elaborated below:

A) Global understanding tasks: This kind of task was frequently used throughout all the textbooks and their workbooks. Sufficient attention has been paid to the general understanding of the text read or the audio heard - often in the form of post-reading and listening comprehension activities. Nevertheless, the significant point is that this attention and control of general understanding was not done with the aim of introducing, emphasizing, or focusing on the SGE, but rather with the aim of students' understanding of phrases and sentences in terms of lexical and grammatical aspects.

b) Cultural access tasks: This type of task was not available in any of the textbooks or their workbooks.

C) Noticing tasks: This type of task was not available in any of the textbooks or their workbooks.

d) Discussions about language tasks: The only instance of such task was mentioned in the teacher guide of Prospect One. Before the dialogue of each lesson a set of questions have been suggested to the teachers to be asked by the students in Farsi. The questions focus on the differences of the two languages (English and Farsi) with regard to the formality level of the sentences. Questions such as: How do you express the same idea in Farsi? How intimate do you guess the interlocutors are?

Conclusion

The current research attempted to evaluate SGE components' inclusion in Iran schools' English textbooks. This important issue was analyzed from two perspectives, the extent of inclusion of SGE components accompanied with the extent of emphasis put on teaching them, using two analytical frameworks of SGE devised by Cullen and Kuo (2007) and Timmis (2005). With regard to the first research question, the findings of the research clearly indicated an unbalanced distribution of the subcategories of the three categories of Cullen and Kuo's model. Some components of the second category were noticeable in the dialogues of the textbooks analyzed, but the other two categories, i.e. the first and third categories, either had a relatively low frequency or were almost unavailable.

The second phase of the analysis regarding teaching the SGE components revealed that, in general, little attention is paid by the curriculum planners and textbook authors to the teaching of this type of

grammatical structure as only one case out of 4 types of suggested activities by Timmis (2005) were regularly present in books and only one instance of other types was mentioned in the teaching guide of one of these textbooks. These pieces of findings clearly indicate a deficiency in the textbooks with respect to SGE teaching, which should be resolved by including a diverse range of SGE components in the teaching materials, including (more) instances of SGE in the school curriculum; hence, creating a positive sensitivity in the learners toward the distinction between the written and spoken form of English grammar and preventing the one-sided and unbalanced development of the English knowledge of learners.

It seems that, in addition to a lack of adequate reflection of SGE in the textbooks, teachers also often are not aware of the difference between the spoken and written grammar. This leads to the fact that even if more SGE instances are included in the teaching materials, teachers will still ignore this distinction and still focus on the written form of English grammar. The main reason might be that the teaching of the written English grammar is more fixed, well-established, and accessible. In addition, teachers may consider written grammar to be preferable to spoken grammar, despite the sufficient inclusion of SGE components.

Some suggestions can be made to prevent such pitfalls. First, offering in-service courses is necessary to draw the attention of teachers to the inherent distinction between the written and spoken grammar of English and their many manifestations. The findings of research such as the current study can

prove helpful. Second, helping teachers to know a professional source for adapting teaching materials such as McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013) and helping them put their knowledge into practice in the face of the possible content deficiencies of the textbooks could be of use.

The policy makers and top decision makers can also benefit from the findings similar to the current study in case they need to have some revisions in their educational assumptions or if their ideas contradict the research findings of the field of materials evaluation.

Future researches can achieve a deeper understanding of teachers' approach to the significant issue of SGE accompanied with methods such as observing or monitoring teachers' teaching and conducting interviews. Besides, the same issue can be investigated in the textbooks used in language institutes and the learners' perceptions of SGE and the results be compared with learners of schools in Iran.

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