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The Correspondence between Teachers' Guide Recommendations and Actual Teaching of Iranian English Teachers: *Vision Series* in Focus

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Abstract

New generation of English textbooks, *Vision Series*, has been introduced and taught in Iranian high schools since 2017. This study aimed to scrutinize the correspondence between the recommendations suggested in the English teachers' guides (TGs) of *Vision Series* and the actual teaching practices of Iranian high school English teachers. It follows a descriptive and correlational design, enjoying both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Participants of the present study included three groups: English teachers, high school students, and supervisors of English teachers in Iranian Ministry of Education. A total number of 100 high school English teachers, teaching in Sistan and Balouchestan Province, filled out a researcher-made piloted questionnaire. Out of them, 3 male and 3 female English teachers were later invited for an oral semi-structured interview. The second group of participants were 48 high school students. The last group of participants were 2 supervisors of English teachers in Iranian Ministry of Education. The researchers also participated in and observed two female teachers' English classes. By and large, the results of supervisors' interviews and class observations were negative about the correspondence between actual teaching of *Vision Series* and recommendations of TG for most sections of the book. By contrast, the results of teachers' and students' questionnaires demonstrated that English teachers' teaching was perceived to be consistent with the recommendations of TG in more than half of the cases. The interviews with teachers indicated that half of the interviewees believed that they followed the suggestions of the TG. The implications of findings, especially for English teachers, are also discussed.

Keywords: Correspondence, English teachers, Localized textbooks, Teachers' guide, *Vision Series*

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1. Introduction

During the last two decades, profession of English language teaching has witnessed a number of drastic changes and evolving perspectives (Akbari, 2011). Among these changes stand the dissatisfaction with and disappearance of the limited concept of *Method* (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, a) and suggestion of the post-method concept. Within this framework, Kumaravadivelu (2012, b) visualized a three-dimensional system of parameters including particularity, practicality, and possibility. As for the parameter of particularity, he encouraged the development of a teaching method sensitive to and suitable for a specific context, resulting from a deep understanding of the local linguistic, socio-cultural, and political needs and realities (Kumaravadivelu, 1994). In other words, the pedagogic parameter of particularity requires an instructional practice be responsive to the features of particular learners, particular context, and particular instructional system. Local contingencies should be considerably taken into account in order to meet the parameter of particularity (Bacus, 2021; Chen, 2014).

As one of the main pillars of language teaching, English textbooks are one of the areas where the principle of particularity must be applied. As Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) prudently stated textbooks are a vital element for even the experienced teachers because most of these books follow an eclectic approach and are designed in accordance with the latest teaching theories. Many EFL teachers became disillusioned with and rejected the imported stereotyped native English books (Mishra & Bradhan, 2010) because they were not suitable for teaching English in foreign language contexts. As a result, the demand for contextualized and localized books in the process of English language teaching and learning has been on the rise. That is to say, localized textbooks in which cultural values and experiential knowledge of the EFL learners are addressed have been enthusiastically welcome and embraced. Even EFL learners have welcomed contextualized textbook and expressed positive attitudes towards them (Chen et al., 2020). Contextualization of EFL textbooks has been implemented in several countries including France (Walz, 1989), Spain (Jerez, 2017), Pakistan (Ranjha, et al. 2019), Turkey (Gok, 2015), and Iran (Barzan & Sayyadi, 2023; Ghaderinezhad et al, 2021).

One of the ways in which teachers can localize their teaching and adapt their techniques is the degree to which they follow the practices proposed by local TGs. TGs are defined as manuals full of points and tips about organizing one's real teaching practice in the classrooms (Harmer, 2007). According to UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa (2020), publication of

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local TGs must be prioritized, when possible. Cunningsworth (1995) also believed that TGs should be flexible and adaptable in varying contexts so as to satisfy teachers' needs. Consequently, it seems that the existence of an accompanying TG is a necessity for newly-developed localized books such as *Vision Series*, the textbooks recently taught in Iranian high schools, so as to familiarize the teachers with ways and methods of teaching various sections of the books.

There exist two opposing views in language teaching regarding the use of TGs. Some teachers believe that such books should be seen as a jumping-off point to help teachers teach more creatively (Cunningsworth, 1995; Richard, 2020). That is to say, the general information provided in TGs should be adapted to the practical realities and needs of particular educational context (UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa, 2020). Others believe that TGs should be considered as a straight-jacket which play a crucial role in defining classroom activities (Nazari, 2011).

TGs are particularly suggested for nonnative teachers (Gearing, 1999) and novice English teachers (Al-Maali & Siddiek, 2022) to help them fill the gap of teacher training while implementing new instructional methodologies (Piper et al. 2018; Shkedi,1995; Stockard, et al., 2018). Additionally, the effectiveness of these books is measured via the extent of their use by the teachers (Ranjha et al., 2019). Bearing these two facts in mind, it sounds justifiable that it is better that teachers follow the recommendations of TGs for a while until they gain enough and due experience with the newly-published books in contexts such as Iran, where *Prospect Series* have taught in secondary schools for almost 8 years and *Vision Series* in high schools for 5 years. In the light of the foregoing, this study aims to scrutinize the degree of correspondence between the recommendations of TGs of *Vision Series* and the actual practices of Iranian EFL teachers teaching these books at Iranian high schools. It is anticipated that the findings of the present study contribute to the uptrend of this initiative, i.e. *Vision Series* in Iran. Furthermore, the findings will be of use for material developers whereby informing them of the actual practice of EFL teachers. In this way, they can adapt novel textbooks to adjust the realities of English classes in Iranian high schools.

2. Review of the Literature

Teachers' guide is "a set of educational materials that are prepared by the curriculum developers and presented to teachers, to help them during the teaching practice, and to easily communicate the goals that the student should attain" (Al-Maali & Siddiek, 2022, p. 3). It

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stands between curriculum planning and curriculum implementation and is of complementary rapport with students' textbook (Al-Maali & Siddiek, 2022). According to Lea and Hauptman (2012), such books provide a linkage between learning process of the teacher and his/her teaching process. Ellis (2013) differentiated between TG as pedagogic discourse and published studies in language learning as research-based discourse. Various terminology is utilized addressing such kind of teaching aid. Among them, teacher's book, teachers' guide, and teacher's manual are the most common phrases (Al-Maali & Siddiek, 2022), but the phrase "*teachers' guide"* is used throughout the current study.

Based on the studies done by Barr and Sadow (1989) and Durkin (1984), there exist three groups of teachers with regard to utilizing the recommendations provided in TG. Some of them follow the recommendations rigidly and blindly, others take the generals guidelines and devise their instruction in line with local needs, and the last group hardly bother themselves to look at recommendations of guides and practice their own way of teaching regardless of these suggestions.

Piper et al. (2018) classified TGs into two subcategories: fully scripted TGs and structured TGs. The first one refers to guides which detail all the steps teachers must take in each session. The structured TG might in some cases include scripted lessons, but fully scripted lessons do not necessarily exist for all the parts. Taking this classification into account, it is almost clear that TGs of *Vision Series* is a fully scripted TG. In another classification, Al-Maali and Siddiek (2022) divided TGs into prescriptive and advisory ones. They believed that some of the teacher guides are very structured, detailed, and prescriptive; while other guides enjoy flexibility and mostly offer practical advice

TGs serve a number of functions**,** nurturing the independence and professional skills of the teacher (Al-Maali & Siddiek, 2022). Offering a wide variety of open-ended choices for teachers to choose from is another necessity for TG, hence good for teachers' decision making ability and professional development (Kigen, 2000). Sparking the ideas of teachers to design and implement extra exercises in the classroom is mentioned by Hollenweger (2018) as another requirement for this manual.

In order to be considered as effective books, TGs need to meet a number of criteria such as providing regular tests for evaluating the learners' progress (Cunningsworth, 1995), offering assignment with an appropriate level of challenge (Zabihi & Tabataba'ian, 2011), laying out some procedures for using the book (Richard, 2020), presenting a variety of materials (Zabihi

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& Tabataba'ian, 2011), and being in alignment with curriculum and classroom realities (IBE-UNESCO, 2014). Among other features of TGs are creating a successful lesson plan (Rodríguez, 2018), meeting teachers' need for learning and supporting their enactment of aims (Lin et al., 2011), hence contributing positively to the learner's motivation (Zabihi & Tabataba'ian, 2011).

In spite of the benefits of TGs, some scholars believe that TGs deskill and deprofionalize the teachers and stifle their creativity (Richards, 1993; Richards & Renandya, 2002). That is to say, teachers use TGs as the basis for most of their decisions, which stifles the teachers' creativity. On the contrary, Hemsley (1997) contends that although TGs may deskill experienced teachers, they empower novice and nonnative teachers, doing more good than harm. Al-Maali and Siddiek (2022) also praised TG as the best companion for novice teachers in teaching career and as a source of knowledge and skills.

Conducting studies outside Iran, Coleman (1985), Skierso (1991), Cunningsworth (1995), Hemsley (1997), Gearing (1999) and Gok (2015) evaluated TGs mostly via checklist. These researchers were concerned either with developing a new checklist or adapting the previously-developed checklist. Other groups of researchers developed a manual for teacher's guidance (Hollenweger, 2018), reviewed the literature on TG (Al-Maali & Siddiek, 2022), explored teachers' opinion regarding this manual (Kim, 2015; Piper et al, 2018) or compared the use of TGs across several disciplines (Shkedi, 1995).

Few studies focused on the extent to which teachers follow the suggestions offered in the teacher 's guide (Barr & Sadow, 1989; Durkin,1984). Barr and Sadow (1989) were concerned with rereading and post-reading activities. Their results indicated that teachers varied in their use of TGs with few of them following all of the suggested activities. Durkin (1984) scrutinized the differences in how teachers use TGs at different grade levels. His study showed various patterns of use by the teachers. While some use the suggestions generously, others took only minor influence from this manual. However, it must be mentioned that these studies were conducted years ago and in another context.

Addressing the use of TGs in Iran, Zabihi and Tabataba'ian (2011) evaluated teachers' use and ideas regarding the TG. Nonetheless, they focused on *Interchange* (Third Edition), *Rising Star*, and *ready for FCE* which are international books of teaching English, not the localized one. Furthermore, the setting was an English institute which is an informal setting for teaching and learning English in Iran, not the formal setting of Iranian high schools. In another study,

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Nazari (2011) was concerned with description, analysis, and interpretation of TGs written for English books taught in Iranian high schools. In fact, it was a telling case. Nonetheless, he analyzed the previous English books which are not taught in Iranian high schools anymore. He pointed to the pros and cons of the aforementioned book and found marginalization of sociocultural competence of the learners in such books.

On the whole, reviewing and examining different aspects of existing TGs are essential to make sure they are apt and germane to the context (Smith, 2013). To our dismay, TG remains an underexplored area in the studies conducted in Iranian EFL context. In fact, they have been ignored and little attention has been paid to them despite their great role (Al- Maali & Siddiek, 2022; Coleman, 1985; Gok, 2015; Zabihi & Tabataba'ian, 2011), especially localized ones. The scant attention that such manuals received was on the domains such as evaluations of such books via checklists (Gok, 2015), developing TG (Hollenweger et al., 2018) and evaluation of teachers' idea and use of TG (Zabihi & Tabataba'ian, 2012). In an attempt to fill this recognized lacuna in the literature of TGs, the current study set out to scrutinize the correspondence between the recommendations suggested in TGs of *Vision Series* taught in Iranian high schools and the actual practice of English teachers.

3. Method

3.1.Design and Participants

The current study follows a descriptive and correlational design, enjoying both qualitative and quantitative data. The participants were selected via convenient non-random sampling (Ary et al, 2017). Nowadays, conducting mixed-methods studies is preferable because they provide better information to understand a particular phenomenon under investigation (Ary et al, 2017). Participants of the present study were three groups: English teachers, high school students and supervisors of English teachers working in the Iranian Ministry of Education. A total number of 100 high school English teachers, including 64 females and 36 males, filled out a researcher-made questionnaire; all of them teaching English in Sistan and Balouchestan Province. Out of them, 3 male and 3 female English teachers were chosen for oral semi-structured interview. The second group of participants were 48 high school students (43 females and 5 males), 15-18-years old. The last group of participants were 2 supervisors of English department in Sistan and Balouchestan Province. The researchers also participated in and observed four teachers' English classes.

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3.2. Materials

Vision Series is published annually by Iranian Ministry of Education to be taught in high schools since 2016-2017 educational year. They were written and developed by OERP (Organization for Educational Research and Planning).

Vision Series include Student Book, Work Book, Teachers' Guides, Flash Cards, CD for listening part, and CD for training English teachers. Recommendations offered in these TGs concern teaching of the Student Book. The focus of this study is on the three TGs of this series, teachers' guides for *Vision 1*, *Vision 2*, and *Vision 3*. They have identical recommendations for teaching the various sections of *Vision Series*, which are identical in each lesson. Each lesson in these books consists of Impact Page, Get Ready, Conversation, New Words and Expressions, Reading, Grammar, See Also, Speaking and Listening, Pronunciation and Writing, and What You Learned Part. In TGs, various recommendations are suggested for teaching each section of the student book. For instance, it is mentioned that conversation is a listening activity in essence. Teachers must follow the three-step procedure of pre-listening, listening, and post-listening for teaching this section. The suggested techniques in TG are the same for all lessons regardless of their contents. Some techniques are depicted as examples for starting pre-listening phase. Listening and post-listening phases also enjoys an exact description for their teaching. Content, objectives, and teaching procedure for teaching each section of the book are clarified in teachers' guide. Some optional extra activities are also offered for interested English teachers. These points were taken into consideration in designing the questionnaires of the current study.

Instrumentation

This research made use of 5 data collection tools. These include teachers' questionnaire (n=100), teachers' interview (n=6), supervisors interview (n=2), class observation (n=4) and students' questionnaire (n=48).

Teachers' questionnaire (n=100)

This questionnaire consisted of 60 items, addressing the instructional options offered for teaching the 11 sections of *Vision Series*. It collected data about the techniques and methods teachers use while teaching various parts of *Vision Series*. The researchers constructed the teachers' questionnaire (Appendix 1) and gave it to two experts. They had PhD in TEFL and had 30-year and 15-year experience in teaching English. They were asked to check its wording and validity for the intended purpose. The researchers also piloted the questionnaire before the

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onset of the study with participants in the same situation as the final participants. 20 English teachers teaching in Sistan and Balouchestan Province filled out the questionnaire. They were selected via convenience sampling. Reliability of the instrument was checked via test-retest method with two-week interval. Reliability index was 0.9. Measures of reliability of 0.9 for teacher questionnaire seem acceptable figure for making a questionnaire reliable. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, namely, always, usually, sometimes, almost never, and never. Teachers were asked to show their answers by ticking one of the said options. They were not required to write their names. Demographic information of the respondents is tabulated in table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic information of the teachers answering teachers' questionnaire*

	Age			gender		Years of teaching					Education		
	20-30	30-40	Above 40	Male	female	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	B.A.	M.A	Ph.D
Percent	15.3	53.1	31.6	36.1	63.9	27	14	15	19	25	32	57	11

Teachers' interview (n=6)

Following the procedure of semi-structured or partially-structured interview (Ary, 2017), one of the researchers interviewed six randomly-selected participants, three male and three female teachers. This was done to gain a better understanding of the teachers' responses on the questionnaire. The interviews took 15-20 minutes and were mobile-recorded for further analysis. The questions of the interview followed this pattern, and it was repeated for all the sections of the book.

How do you teach this section of Vision (for example Grammar and See Also)?

Do you follow the suggestions of TG while teaching this section?

If not, why don't you follow the recommendation of TG?

Class observation (n=4)

Researchers participated in at least two English classes of each 4 teachers teaching in Zahedan and Iranshahr when a new lesson was to be taught. The total number of observations was 10. Choosing this data collection tool, the researchers had to deal with experimenter effect (Ary, et al. 2017). With the intention of mitigating the influence of observer on teacher's teaching, the observers took part in one/two session(s) earlier than the actual observation. In an attempt

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to diminish the biased action of the teachers, the researchers made use of passive deception (Ary, et al, 2017). The teachers were initially told that the aim of the observation was to see how interaction between teacher and students and between students proceeded in each session. At the end of the observation, the goals of the study were clarified to them. Taking the questionnaires items and steps suggested for each section in TG, the researcher took notes on how much the teachers followed the recommendations of the TG.

Student questionnaire (n=48)

Some 48 students agreed to fill out the students' questionnaire. Corresponding to teachers' questionnaire, this questionnaire included 60 items. However, it explored the students' opinions about the ways their teachers taught various parts of *Vision Series*. The students were required to answer on a three-point scale, i.e. always, sometimes, never. Questionnaire was developed in Persian, and the students did not have to mention their names. It should be mentioned that the type of questions was as follow:

Does your English teacher ask you to read 'reading' section of your English book silently?

Does your English teacher translate every sentence of 'reading ' section?

Based on students' answer to questionnaire items, the researchers made correspondence between English teachers' teaching and TG recommendations. For instance, it is recommended in TG that teachers should teach Reading silently. If students answered that their teacher never asked them to do so in Reading, the researchers concluded that the teacher did not teach in accordance with TG suggestions. Therefore, the questions did not presuppose students' familiarity with the guidelines. In addition, the questions were written in a way the students' replies are dependable.

What's more, the measures of internal consistency of 0.88 for student questionnaires seem acceptable figures for making a questionnaire reliable. The validity of the instrument was ensured via asking two experts in the field of teaching English to check the suitability of the instrument for the intended purpose. The questionnaire was piloted with 8 students before its main administration and the researchers talked with students about their perceptions of what each question meant. Some questions which were misperceived by students were revised before main application of students' questionnaire. Demographics of the respondents to students' questionnaire is summarized in the following table.

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Table 2. Demographic information of the students answering students' questionnaire

	age				Gender	
	15	16	17	18	male	Female
Percent	6.4	28.3	37	28.3	6	94

Supervisors' interview (n=2)

Interviews with the supervisors of English teachers was also used to corroborate the findings gained from other data collection tools. As part of their job in Iranian Ministry of Education, supervisors must observe English teachers' actual teaching practice periodically. Ergo, it was due to include them in this study in order to scrutinize their viewpoints about the degree of correspondence existing between teachers' teaching of English and the recommendations of the TG. Two supervisors were interviewed by the researchers, each one 10 minutes approximately, and the researchers took notes during the interview.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were gathered through interviews from teachers and supervisors of English group, and class observation. The data of this part were recorded, transcribed, and coded. The transcribed text was read two to three times. Then, the categories were derived from codes in the next step. This process was done by both researchers of the study separately. They discussed the discrepancies in codes and resolved them. The inter-rater and intra-rater reliability were calculated to be .86 and .88 respectively. Quantitative data were assembled from questionnaires of teachers and students and were analyzed through descriptive statistics.

4. Results

4.1.Quantitative Results

The results of the quantitative part of the study, i.e. teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire, are discussed here. After all of the participants responded to the questionnaires, the percentage of their answers to each item of the questionnaire was calculated and then tabulated in the following table.

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Table 3. *The Results of Teacher's Questionnaire and Students' Questionnaire*

Number	Section	Teachers' answers					Students' answers		
		Always	Usually	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Title Page	21.66	28.1	38.4	8.68	3.16	54.8	35.88	9. 32
2	Impact Page	26.42	25.44	27.92	8.36	11.86	30.88	41.68	27.44
3	Get Ready	31.06	29.73	32.76	4.73	1.72	32.56	49.6	17.84
4	Conversation	26.85	27.26	51.90	7.83	13.84	46.2	33.33	20.47
5	New words	23.48	25.9	32.35	8.6	9.6	38.4	38.97	22.63
6	Reading	35.42	29.58	26.3	5.3	3.4	54.52	32.94	12.54
7	Vocabulary Development	33.56	30.83	32.8	1.6	1.21	53.43	43.26	3.31
8	Grammar & See Also	34.81	32.8	28.2	1.28	2.91	52.21	39.84	7.95
9	Speaking & listening	36.48	24.81	31.42	3.9	3.42	37.61	41.24	21.15
10	Writing	27.36	29.43	35.26	6.83	1.12	47.3	37.96	14.74
11	What You Learned	37.3	24.2	26.3	5.8	9.4	27.63	29	43.37
12	Total	30.4	28.0	33.0	5.7	11.0	38.93	38.51	18.25

Results of the teachers' questionnaire

At first, it should be highlighted that the answers to teachers' questionnaire were claimed practices of the teachers which were not necessarily actual practices. As displayed in Table 1, for almost all sections of *Vision Series*, roughly 50% of the respondents claimed that they always/usually made use of TG recommendations in their actual teaching. About 30% of the respondents claimed that they sometimes applied the suggestions of TG; and the remaining part

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of the English teachers (below 20%) stated that they almost never/never applied the recommendations. Viewing from another lens, the responses of teachers to the questionnaire indicated that teaching most sections of *Vision Series* including Get Ready, Reading, Vocabulary Development, Grammar and See Also, Speaking and Listening, and What You Learned, was in congruence with recommendations of TG. Impact page, Conversation and Writing stand in the middle, indicating that teachers averagely followed the suggestions of TG while teaching these parts. At last, New Word and Title Page sections were the sections in which teachers did not follow the recommendations of TG.

Results of students' questionnaire

It should be highlighted again that the answers to students' questionnaire were claimed practices of the English teachers based on students' responses which were not necessarily actual practices of those teachers. Roughly 40% of the students believed that their teachers taught in the way TG suggested, about 40% claimed their teachers sometimes applied those suggestions, and below 20% believed that their teachers never made use of suggestions. Only for *What You Learned* section, remarkably different results were obtained, showing that about 44% of the respondents stated that their teachers never applied the suggestions. One reason for the opposing results in this section can be the fact that teaching of What You Learned section is not obligatory in the class, and this part is not used in final examinations. Students' questionnaire revealed that in teaching most sections of the book including Title Page, Conversation, Reading, Vocabulary Development, Grammar and See Also, and Writing, the English teachers acted in harmony with recommendations of TG. *New Words and Expressions* and *Speaking and Listening* were the sections where the teachers followed TG averagely. While teaching Impact Page, Get Ready, and What You Learned sections, the teachers' teaching and recommendations of TG were not in agreement.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative data were obtained from Interview with teachers, class observation, and interview with supervisors, which will be discussed below.

Interview with teachers

The results revealed that three out of the six interviewees did not follow the recommendations of TG for almost all sections of *Vision Series* including *Title Page, Get Ready, Conversation, New Words and Expressions, Reading, Grammar, See Also,* and *What You Learned*. However, in teaching *Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Impact Page,* they mostly tried to observe the

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recommendations. For instance, they stated that they did not regard *Conversation* as a listening activity, whereby pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening cycle should be observed. Or, they stated that they resorted to translation as the first strategy for teaching *New Words and Expression* section. They made use of giving synonyms, antonyms and definition partially and did not use them as the main strategy of teaching this part. One teacher stated that he acted in accordance with suggestions of TG in schools for gifted students while teaching *New Words and Expression* section, whereas in normal schools he taught according to the level of proficiency of his students which necessitated making use of Grammar-Translation methods for teaching this part.

On the other hand, the other two interviewees stated they followed the suggestions of TG while teaching all parts of the English book except for the extra activities. When asked for the reason, they stated they did not have enough time to deal with optional activities offered in TG book. To put it in a nutshell, 4 interviewees said that their teachings were confined only to translation and deductive teaching of grammar, a method which opposes what has been offered in TG (in normal schools). On the other hand, two teachers stated their teachings were in complete congruence with TG suggestions. The results of teacher interview, by and large, revealed different and opposing tendencies, where some teachers believed they followed the recommendations fully, while others taught in a traditional fashion, not caring much about what is mentioned in TG.

Class observation

Concerning class observations of English teachers' teaching, both teachers translated the important and difficult vocabulary items in each section for their students. They also taught *Grammar and See Also* deductively which is not recommended in the TG. As a matter of fact, the two observed teachers made extensive use of deductive teaching in a decontextualized manner, a technique which is strongly prohibited in the TG. Notwithstanding, teachers acted in harmony with TG as far as teaching *Impact Page, Get Ready, Speaking and Listening, Writing*, and *What You Learned* were concerned. For instance, regarding *Speaking and Listening* section, teachers played audio file of this section for the students and then asked them to do the exercises. As another example, the English teachers taught the two first parts of *What You Learned* in keeping with recommendations provided in TG, namely listening part and reading part. The last part of *What You Learned* section section which was a role play activity was ignored by the teachers. In conclusion, the results of class observation did not support the

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quantitative results of the questionnaires. To be more exact, the recommendations of TG book were not followed for most sections of *Vision Series*.

Supervisors' interview

Supervisors stated that in some cases the recommendations were ignored by English teachers. They stated that English teachers resorted to translation of sentences and stating grammatical points during teaching different sections of the book. They did not make use of optional activities or other suggestions of TG. Hence, the supervisors maintained that there was noticeable discrepancy between actual teaching of English teachers and suggestions of TG for some sections. For instance, while teaching *Conversation* section, supervisors believed that English teachers taught it in the traditional way translating the conversation line by line for the students instead of treating it as a listening activity. Or, they stated that the most widely-used strategy for teaching *New Words and Expressions* was translation which is the last strategy in TG. To give another example, the interviews revealed that teaching of *Reading* was in traditional mode, in which teachers translated the passage sentence by sentence, instead of focusing on silent reading offered by TG. Nevertheless, they believed that there was a high degree of compatibility between actual teaching of English teachers and suggestions of teacher guides in teaching of *Impact Page, Get Ready, Vocabulary Development,* and *Listening*. For example, supervisors stated that recommendations of TGs were harmonious with actual teaching in *Vocabulary Development* section in that teachers explained the idea of Definition Box first, went through examples, and finally did the exercises with the students.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to find the correspondence between TG recommendations and actual practice of Iranian English teachers with *Vision Series* in focus. As a matter of fact, it is not possible to come to a unified conclusion based on the collected data in the present study because of the discrepancies found between the results gained from various data collection means. Broadly, the results of supervisor interview and class observation were overwhelmingly negative about the correspondence between actual teaching of *Vision Series* and recommendations of TG for most sections of the book. By contrast, the results of teachers' and students' questionnaires demonstrated that English teachers' teaching was consistent with the recommendations of TG in more than half of the cases.

Half of the teachers, according to the teachers' interviews, followed the suggestions of TG while teaching most sections of the book, whereas the other half continued traditional methods

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of teaching via translating most sections of the book and conducting deductive teaching of the grammar. While the *Vision Series* is based on communicative language teaching and traditional ways of teaching English is abandoned based on TG.

Student questionnaire results were vague in that no firm conclusion can be drawn based on the data provided from this data collection means. For most sections of the books, about one-third of the respondents believed that their English teachers always followed the recommendations of TG, another one-third of the respondents believed their teachers sometimes applied the suggestions, and around 30% of the students stated that their teachers never utilized TG suggestions.

On the one hand, the results of supervisor interview, teacher interview, and class observations seemed more reliable and dependable. Supervisors have had the experience of observing professionally and talking with English teachers about their method of teaching for at least 3 years. Hence, they have gained an overall viewpoint about how teachers dealt with teaching different parts of the books. As a result, their comments in the interview as well as the results of the observations can be relied on more.

Besides, it is probable that in responding to the items of teacher questionnaire, individuals replied according to what they thought was the correct way of teaching. It is also likely that they idealized and overestimated about their own teaching, hence answering based on what they thought, not based on how they taught. The situation is the same for student questionnaires. Although it is more reliable due to the fact that students were not afraid of being judged based on the responses; something that may hinder teachers from giving exact answers to the questionnaire items. It was better to add to the data by holding interviews with the students so as to give a comprehensive picture.

Ranjha et al. (2019) found that TG was not used at optimal level. They also found that English teachers in Punjab made use of TG differently. Similar findings were found by Moulton (1994), and Zabihi and Tabataba'ian (2011). The present study confirmed the results of the aforementioned studies in that there was a difference between teachers' real teaching practice and what was mentioned and recommended in TGs.

Some of the reasons for the inconsistencies between teaching and suggestions of TG of *Vision Series* can be found in the supervisors' interview and teachers' interview. English teachers and supervisors believed that there was no speaking and listening part in University Entrance Exam and no speaking section in Final Exams. Final Exam is administered at the end

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of the educational year. The questions are the same for all of the students at grade 12 and the answers are scored namelessly. Hence, they did not focus on these skills equally, compared to reading and writing in the teaching. Thus, they did not force their students to focus on these skills as they are emphasized in different sections of the book. They also mentioned that due to the pressure of Final Exam and University Entrance Exam, especially for 12th grade, they did not devote much time of their class to optional activities offered in TG. As a substitute, they focused on exercising and practicing samples of questions of such exams. They preferred to engage their students in multiple-choice questions and types of questions which were more likely to be used in Final Exams and University Entrance Exam. To be more exact, the washback effects of final exam and university entrance exam were so noticeable. Such effects were also confirmed in a number of studies including: Bailey (2018); Ghorbani (2008); Ramazaney (2014) and Sadighi et al. (2018).

The teachers' experience as a learner can be another rationale behind sticking to traditional methods of teaching. This so-called apprenticeship of observation is documented in a number of studies including Channa (2020), and Taylor et al. (2022). In teacher interview, one of the teachers expressed that she taught in the way that her English teachers taught English in high school. Yet, some other interviewees stated that they studied the TG, but they were forced to adapt their teaching to the level of their students' proficiency. They believed that if they had based their teaching on the suggestions of TG, their students would have not been able to take advantage of such a teaching method or comprehend the lesson. In fact, this shows that the realities of the classroom should determine the extent to which the teachers follow the TG since these books might have been written with those students in mind who live in big cities and have taken several conversation classes in private language institutes.

The other reason which teachers pointed out was lack of enough training courses especially practical ones which was found by Goller and Rieckman (2022), Vogt et al. (2020), Winje, and Londal (2021) and Zarabi et al. (2023), as well. The English teachers in the current study stated that there was a need for such short-term teacher training courses so as to better equip them with the theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching *Vision Series.* They also mentioned that their students were not eager to participate in these activities, especially *Speaking* activities. Hence, they were forced to change or skip some sections of the books to meet their students' interests. Supervisors also mentioned that the experienced English teachers were accustomed to traditional way of teaching English, and it was hardly ever possible for them to change their methods according to the dynamics of the classroom and requirements of newly-

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developed books. Another problem was that the experienced teachers thought that their method of teaching was an all-encompassing one, and there was no need and use in changing it. Supervisors also pointed out that the easiest way for teaching English was translating and giving grammatical explanations. Hence, they did not see it necessary to try other methods of teaching English which put much burden on them.

The most important implications of these findings are for material developers of localized books such as *Vision Series*. The findings imply that there is a need for an exact follow-up evaluation study as a complement for material development process. This way, the strengths and weaknesses of such newly-developed books can be recognized and remedial actions be undertaken to make up for the possible shortcomings. Such follow-up evaluation should include close observation of teaching and determining the degree of correspondence between what authors of such books have in mind and how teachers actually teach such books. Regular meeting between material developers and English teachers will be of assistance, as well. This call for more ethnography of material use is also reported in studies like Ahmadi Safa and Karampour (2020).

English teachers can also benefit from the results of this study. They are encouraged to find the pros and cons of their teaching. They can self-evaluate how much their teaching corresponds to the recommendations of TG and how they can improve their teaching to achieve the desired goals. Teacher mentoring can also assist novice teachers and alumni to find degree of correspondence between their real teaching and recommendations of TG and make necessary adjustments based on particularities of their teaching contexts.

One of the main strengths of the current study was the triangulation of data, whereby the researchers made use of multiple data collection means so that the findings from one data collection tool fortify the findings from other data collection tools. The procedure was an inclusive one whereby information was collected from a variety of participants including English teachers, high school students and supervisors of English department. Besides these, a variety of data collection tools were collected containing teacher questionnaire, teaching observation, teachers' interview, students questionnaire and supervisors of English group interview. Teacher interviews provided the respondents with a relaxed atmosphere, freely talking about their teaching of various parts of the book. Students questionnaire, on the other hand, was of merit for the current study because it yielded data from the viewpoint of the students; the population for which teaching is targeted and designed.

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This study is not devoid of limitations and shortcomings. On the one hand, possible differences between students' and teachers' understanding of notions such as optional activities and exemplification might have affected the data of the questionnaires. Besides this, the researchers did not interview the students because it was beyond the scope of the current study. Notwithstanding, this missing element is indeed an essential one for further development of the data collection process. Other suggestions for future research are:

- Collecting questionnaire from more students
- Making student questionnaire via ethnographic study
- Interviewing larger number of teachers
- Collecting data via essay in the form of self-report about one's way of teaching
- Adding observation from alumni to the data pool
- Extensive replication and enhancement of the current study in other parts of Iran where *Vision Series* are taught so as firm conclusion can be drawn
- Adapting similar studies with other localized and contextualized books of teaching English as a foreign language
- Collecting data from pre-service teachers' opinions about the suggestions of TG
- Collecting data from pre-service teachers about the ways they are going to teach *Vision series*
- Observing sample teaching of pre-service teachers and finding its consistency with TG recommendations

What is more, the last three suggestions were emerged when the researchers further reflected upon the class observation and supervisors' interview. While the other suggestions were not undertaken in this study due to lack of time and lack of access to alumni and more students.

The present study was an attempt to provide an account of the degree of correspondence between recommendations presented in teachers' TG and actual teaching of Iranian high school English teachers teaching *Vision Series*. All things considered, officials in English Department of Ministry of Education are recommended to have a built-in procedure for regular evaluation of teachers' teaching. The researchers hope that what has been mentioned here paves the path for better application of localized English books and facilitates improvement of such books.

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Appendix 1

Teachers' questionnaire

Age:

Gender:

City of teaching:

Education:

Years of teaching:

1. How often do you ask your students to read the sentences of *Title Page* one by one?
2. How often do you teach *Title Page* via translation?
3. How often do you ask your students to discuss the topic of *Title Page* after you have given them some minutes for thinking?
4. How often do you explain grammatical points and define new words while teaching *Title Page*?
5. How often do you use extra options offered in teachers' guide book for teaching *Title Page?*
6. How often do you ask students to look at pictures and think about them while teaching *Impact Page*?
7. How often do you teach *Impact Page* via teaching new words that the pictures suggest?
8. How often do you ignore *Impact Page* completely?
9. How often do you teach *Impact Page* via conducting discussion with students about the themes of the pictures?
10. How often do you use optional activities to teach *Impact Page*?
11. How often do you allow students to look at pictures of *Get Ready* and think about them?
12. How often do you ask some questions related to the pictures of *Get Ready*?
13. How often do you use optional activities suggested in guide book while teaching *Get Ready* section?
14. How often do you teach words in *Word Bank* via translation?
15. How often do you teach words in *Word Bank* via using realia, showing pictures or using gestures?
16. How often do you teach words in *Word Bank* via definitions, giving synonym or exemplification?

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17. How often do you use optional activities suggested in guidebook for teaching *Conversation*?
18. How often do you use pre-listening phase while teaching *Conversation*, reading the introduction of Conversation to guess the topic, brainstorming, researching, reading?
19. How often do you translate *Conversation* for students?
20. How often do you play audio file of *Conversation* in the class?
21. How often do you play audio file of *Conversation* twice for the students?
22. How often do you ask students to close their books while listening to audio file of *Conversation*?
23. How often do you write some questions on the board and ask students to find their answers while listening to the audio file of *Conversation*?
24. How often do you do listening phase while teaching *Conversation*?
25. How often do you teach concrete words in *New Words and Expression* via translation?
26. How often do you teach concrete words in *New Words and Expressions* via acting out, collocations and exemplification?
27. How often do you teach abstract words in *New Words and Expression* via translation?
28. How often do you teach abstract words in *New Words and Expressions* via definition and illustrative sentences?
29. How often do you play audio file of *New Words and Expressions* in the class?
30. How often do you ask students to pay attention to the pronunciation of words and intonation of sentences while listening to the audio file of *New Words and Expressions*?
31. How often do you use power point slide presentation for teaching *New Words and Expressions*?
32. How often do you apply word game in the class?
33. How often do you apply while-reading activities suggested in the guidebook?
34. How often do you play audio file of the *Reading* in the class?
35. How often do you emphasize on oral reading in *Reading*?
36. How often do you use post-reading activities presented in *Reading Comprehension*?
37. How often do you ask your students to use reading strategies such as scanning, skimming, etc.?
38. How often do you go through definition box in *Vocabulary Development*?
39. How often do you ask students to practice the examples provided in definition box in *Vocabulary Development*?

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40. How often do you ask students to do the activities presented after definition box of *Vocabulary Development*?
41. How often do you introduce the targeted grammatical structures which is introduced in *Grammar and See Also*?
42. How often do you explain the meanings of targeted grammatical structures which is introduced in *Grammar and See Also*?
43. How often do you explain the use of targeted grammatical structure while teaching *Grammar and See Also*?
44. How often do you direct your students' attentions to grammatical structures which are bold in to texts?
45. How often do you ask students to deduce grammatical rules from contextualized part in *Grammar*?
46. How often do you ask students to go back to previous sections of book and find examples of targeted grammatical structures?
47. How often do you ask students to do grammatical activities presented in the book?
48. How often do you emphasize function of grammatical structure and its use in spoken language while teaching *Speaking*?
49. How often do you pair students up and ask them to personalize the short dialogue of *Speaking?*
50. How often do you explain speaking strategies introduced in *Speaking*?
51. How often do you ask students to answer questions in *Listening* part based on audio file?
52. How often do you engage students in role play and pair activities required in *Listening*?
53. How often do you play audio of *Speaking and Listening*?
54. How often do you ask students to follow the lines while listening to the audio file of *Speaking?*
55. How often do you first present the definitions and information provided in *Writing* and then do exercises?
56. How often do you do optional activities suggested in guide book while teaching *Writing*?
57. How often do you go through each section while teaching *Writing*?
58. How often do you ask students to listen to audio file in *What You Learned?*
59. How often do you ask students to do reading task in *What You Learned*?

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60. How often do you engage the students in role play and pair activities suggested in *What You Learned*?

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