

Research Article

IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' NEEDS AND COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING : A FOCUS ON 8TH-GRADE ENGLISH TEXTBOOK CONTENT

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ABSTRACT

The content of textbooks should be in accordance with the needs of learners, and the 8th-grade English textbook is no exception. This descriptive study, conducted in two phases, aimed to explore 8th-grade students' needs using a Needs Analysis Questionnaire (Nunan, 2001). Seventy-three female high school students in the 8 grade, around 15 years old, with different English language and learning backgrounds, participated in the study. They were selected based on convenience sampling. The results of students' responses, reported in percentages, showed that the book, to some extent, meets students' needs. The researcher also performed a content analysis of the textbook. The results showed that the book, in general, is a move forward to meet the students' communicative needs. Most of the participants in almost all questionnaire items opted for communicative needs. The textbook needs some additions and revisions to cover the basic communication needs. Functional and communicative tasks should be added to the book. The study has implications for syllabus designers, textbook writers, policymakers, and English high school teachers.

Keywords: CLT, 8th Graders, High school students, Needs Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) should focus on learners' needs and enable them to communicate in various situations to improve their position in several roles they may have in life. A myriad of research has clarified the importance of needs analysis. Almost all have concluded that it is vital to start a course procedure by examining the target groups' needs, expectations, and viewpoints (Rashtchi and JozeRamezani, 2020). Many problems in L2 classes result from teachers not paying attention to learners' interests and disregarding students as a source of the necessary information. General English courses usually neglect learners' needs and do not design their techniques to enable learners to communicate in academic or vocational settings (Belcher *et al.*, 2011).

The spread of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has cultivated learner-centered instruction in EFL/ESL settings. Therefore, needs analysis has received substantial attention in English Language Teaching methodology. Learners are valuable sources of information in needs analysis, particularly for teachers. Therefore, student analysis might be a more comprehensive term than needs analysis. Student analysis can give information about their current level of English, motivation, and L2 learning preferences. Needs analysis, according to Hyland (2006), refers to the "techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design" to provide information regarding what should be taught (p.73). Collecting information in needs analysis is an area that can provide insights into the most helpful methods and help teachers learn about students' previous experiences. Such data can be collected through questionnaires, surveys, group discussions, and individual talks. However, data gathered from students' answers to questionnaires should not be overvalued, especially at lower levels, since they are unaware of their needs; what they express requires teachers'

interpretation. Several factors, such as curriculum, institutional guidelines, and calibration, cannot be overlooked. However, student analysis will help teachers bring together the required information in formulating goals and objectives, conceptualizing the content of the course, selecting teaching materials, and course evaluation (Robinson, 1991).

Most studies on needs analysis focus on learners (Rashtchi and JozeRamezani, 2020) and delve into implementing different learning strategies and applying various skills. Focusing on learners' needs is as essential as the methods employed to convey linguistic knowledge. Designing detailed courses to meet individuals' needs is a natural extension of this rationale and contributes to the formation of learners' future identities (Rashtchi and Porkar, 2020). As a result, learner-centeredness, which results from the needs analysis perspective, should dominate EFL/ESL classes. The problem encountered in Iran is a gap between what students need concerning learning English and what textbooks provide. The break is sometimes among policymakers, textbook writers, teachers, University Entrance Examinations test makers, high school final exam developers, and students, leading to boredom and failure in attaining educational goals. Therefore, the content of textbooks should accord with learners' needs, which can facilitate teachers' instruction in high school English classes. Another problem arises when teachers want to develop tests and quizzes. They do not know what to follow, the textbook content, the theories of CLT, or students' needs. By comparing the 8th-grade English textbooks and high schoolers' needs, the present study attempted to examine to what extent the two sides of education are related.

As Naseri *et al.*, (2009) stated, policymakers assume that scientific hunches about pedagogy suffice in Iran, leaving little room for field experts. They believe that the primary need in EFL learning settings in Iran is reading skills, which seems not true regarding student needs. Language teachers are also working toward university entrance exams, assuming that knowledge of the language in the sense of language for communication is not going to be tested and required in students' future careers, and spending time on that is a

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waste of time. Most students and teachers believe that focusing on grammar and reading wastes time and energy since few students find reading and grammar as required skills in their future professions. On the other hand, textbook writers are obliged to consider the limited class time, teachers' lack of adequate language proficiency, lack of facilities for running aural/oral materials, and the traditional anti-communication needs of the university entrance exams when composing high school textbooks. Attention to such issues reduces the quality of the textbooks to what can be managed in the classroom; that is, focus on reading and grammar. Instead of paying attention to students' present situation and future needs, the books are tuned to issues related to practicality and feasibility. Teachers used explicit grammar instruction even within the CLT framework to help learners understand the language or pass exams (Karim, 2004; Roeder *et al.*, 2020). Besides, many studies showed that teachers struggle to cope with group work for large-size classes (Liao, 2004; Karim, 2004). In some studies, EFL and ESL teachers had problems incorporating cultural aspects into their courses due to a lack of experience in English-speaking countries (Liao, 2000). Students' heterogeneity regarding language proficiency level and crowded classes also hinder teachers' CLT practices in English classes (Whitehead, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several scholars have defined needs analysis, as it has been the focus of research studies since Coleman's Reading method (Rashtchi and Keyvanfar, 2007). According to Boshier and Smalkowski (2012), needs analysis is a specific ground for the future development of the school activities of a particular group of students. The notion of needs analysis has several definitions, where the scholars try to present their vision of the issue. Focusing on language-associated needs in terms of language programs and clarifying the needs analysis is the basis of curriculum development. Rashtchi *et al.*, (2021) found that needs analysis associates learners' wants (the purposes and expectations students have) and their needs. Brindley (2011) pulled all types of needs analysis under two specific notions, objective and subjective needs. Learners' needs may depend on the contexts in which learning occurs and the behaviors learners intend to develop. Paying attention to such factors can improve learning conditions and develop the educational system of a country (Rashtchi and Porkar, 2020). Kosimov and Nozimakhon (2022) argued that needs analysis is a rich source of information about a country's political, cultural, and religious characteristics. Such data can cause improvement in the viewpoints policymakers have regarding education, language learning, and culture-specific issues. In a seminal study, Chaudron *et al.*, (2005) concentrated on target needs to develop a model for task-based instruction. As a result, Korean Task-Based Language Teaching modules were designed and developed. According to Chaudron *et al.*, (2005), six program design, implementation, and evaluation modules include needs analysis, syllabus design, materials development, methodology and pedagogy, testing, and evaluation.

Needs analysis is an essential factor in textbook development. Several researchers have conducted needs analysis surveys before developing textbooks. For example, after completing a needs analysis questionnaire, Rashidi and Kehtarfard (2014) evaluated the third-grade high school English textbook utilized in Iranian high schools. The results showed that the book did not meet students' needs in learning English language skills. In another study, Azadsarv *et al.*, (2021) examined the usefulness of a newly-developed course book on cadets' ESP knowledge. The results showed that the experimental group exposed to the new needs-analysis-based textbook could outperform the control group in Maritime English necessary for

cadets. Rimkeeratikul (2022) also explored the needs of MA students to design a course book for international business that could fulfill their needs. Understanding language learners' needs is the first and foremost step in materials development. The present study attempted to determine Iranian 8th graders' language needs and compare them with the 8th-grade textbook's content with the CLT standards. The purpose was to shed some light on the critical features of English language learning and how to deal with what Iranian students need. This study elaborated on the possible proximity or distinction between CLT principles and students' needs. Furthermore, discrepancies (if any) found when comparing the textbook content and CLT needs require textbook writers and policymakers to bridge the gap by reconsidering CLT-based needs. Thus, the researcher proposed the following research questions:

Major RQ: What are Iranian high school students' needs regarding English learning?

Further questions in line with the central question were developed as follows:

RQ1. What are Iranian EFL learners' priorities regarding language sub-skills and tasks?

RQ1. Is the content of the 8th-grade English textbook in accordance with the main principles of CLT?

RQ3. Are Iranian EFL learners' needs compatible with the 8th-grade English textbook?

METHOD

Research Design

This study was descriptive, and the researcher could not follow the random selection process due to practical issues. The respondents were selected based on convenience sampling from three high schools in Tehran. There was no pretest targeting the entry level of the students since the researcher did not intend to assess the entry level of the students, as they were not supposed to be compared with other groups. The purpose was to understand students' needs regarding their English language learning. The only variable in this study was the students' needs, which were investigated through a questionnaire with six subcomponents explained in the instrumentation section.

Participants

The participants comprised 73 female high school students in the 8 grade who were around 15 years old, with different backgrounds in the English language and learning. They were all students in a private school in District Two of Tehran. All 73 students had already participated in extra English courses; however, this factor was not a determining variable in this study, and the participants were not categorized based on this issue. Altogether, the participants were from four classes in the school. The participants were supposed to fill out a questionnaire on needs analysis (Nunan, 2001).

Instruments

The first instrument was a six-part questionnaire adapted from Nunan (2001). The first section had 47 questions with Likert scale responses, each having three choices: *very useful/useful/not useful*. Questions 26, 38, 39, 40, 46, and 47 were added to the main body to align the questionnaire more with the requirements of modern-day education in general and English teaching in particular. Question number 26 was about the willingness to contact others through social

networks on the internet. Question number 38 was about sending and receiving emails. Question number 39 targeted the willingness to use applications and software. Question number 40 was about the tendency to use e-Books and other e-Materials on a computer. Question 46 was about getting information from other countries, and question 47 was about giving information about Iran. The items in this section were prepared for the content analysis of the 8th-grade English textbook. After the first section of the questionnaire with 47 items, in section two, another question asked about the five most wanted items from the first section. The participants were asked to go through the first section of the questionnaire and write down the five most needed goals. Then in section three, the researcher asked about their preferences concerning what happens in the classroom. Issues included memorizing, problem-solving, collecting information through reading or listening, note taking, listening to radio, TV, or CD, written materials, from the materials on the board, from pictures or posters. The answers were binary, either yes or no.

Section four consisted of seven items about the activities the students prefer in the classroom again through binary (yes/no) choices. The seven items included playing in drama works, language games, lyrics, and poems, speaking with listening to other students, memorizing dialogues, and getting information from the guest lecturer or through field visits. The following five binary answer questions, section five, were about how the respondents preferred receiving information about their language achievements. The questions focused on the assignments, getting marks for their recorded pieces, assessing their progress through listening to their voices with precision and criticism, designing assignments for themselves or their friends, and seeing their progress in using English in different situations. The last part was about feeling satisfaction through getting marks, hearing that they have progressed in English, and feeling self-confident in situations where they felt embarrassed before. The students were required to give binary (yes/no) responses. Only in the first section of the questionnaire, the respondents had to answer with three choices on the Likert scale. The questionnaire was reviewed by two experts in the field of applied linguistics. Three English teachers with more than ten years of experience also evaluated the questions. Then the questionnaire was translated into Persian (students' L1) and back-translated to English to ensure the intended meanings were reserved. As the last step, the questionnaire was piloted with ten high school students who answered the questions to ensure the items were clear and straightforward.

The second instrument was the English textbook of the 8th-grade *Prospect 2: English for Schools* (KhadirSharabian *et al.*, 2014). The book has seven chapters: *My Nationality, My Week, My Abilities, My Health, My City, My Village, and My Hobbies*. The book was analyzed based on the main principles of CLT as implemented in the questionnaire. The content analysis of the 8th-grade English textbook was done based on the principles of CLT. Doughty and Long (2003) defined methodological principles as a list of design features that could be generally regarded as facilitative to second language acquisition. The following list, adapted from Doughty and Long (2003), is a guideline for implementing CLT practices.

Principle 1: Use Tasks as an Organizational Principle

Principle 2: Promote Learning by Doing

Principle 3: Input Needs to Be Rich

Principle 4: Input Needs to Be Meaningful, Comprehensible, and Elaborated

Principle 5: Promote Cooperative and Collaborative Learning

Principle 6: Focus on Form

Principle 7: Provide Error Corrective Feedback

Principle 8: Recognize and Respect Affective Factors of Learning

Procedure

A group of 8th graders with different attitudes and proficiency levels were invited to participate based on convenience sampling. In one session, the questionnaires were distributed among 73 female 8th graders concerning their English course at school. Filling out the questionnaire took about 15 minutes. Next, the content analysis of the English textbook was done based on the list of CLT principles (Doughty and Long, 2003). The questionnaire was the basis for the analysis since the content analysis of the textbook was based on its items. The five most wanted items were tallied to find the most frequent, the second most, and finally, the fifth most wanted goal.

Data Analysis

The frequencies of each item in the questionnaire were counted and compared with those in the textbook's content. The goal was to examine whether the two parts matched, namely the items of the questionnaire and the same items analyzed in the content analysis of the book. The students were informed that the first part of the questionnaire with 47 items was a Likert scale with three choices: *very useful, practical, and not useful*. The next part was designed to examine their preferences from among the 47 items in the previous part. The other remaining parts had yes/no or binary responses.

FINDINGS

Section One

This section discusses the results concerning the research questions. The main findings are discussed below regarding the questionnaire's different sections. As evident in the responses about conversation, especially in questions one to five, the participants favored talking to others about themselves, family, jobs, education, and interests. Those not considering these important ranged from a minimum of 7 percent for education and a maximum of 27 percent for family.

In line with the main principles of CLT, communicating with others was much wanted by the participants of this study. Jacobs and Farrell (2003) saw the shift toward CLT as a paradigm shift in how learners are viewed. They emphasized the need for more focus on the social nature of learning rather than on students as individuals in situations. Alongside this emphasis on the context comes the idea of connecting the school with the world beyond to promote holistic learning. Again, learning the language to use transport services across the city was eagerly wanted by 75% of the participants. Only 15% did not opt for English to find addresses around town, and about 47% found it very useful. Focusing on real-life tasks is another CLT principle (Long, 2005). A task feature can also serve as one element of a course through which general communication skills are developed, the approach described by Beglar and Hunt (2002). In question eight, 75 percent considered using English useful for shopping and business purposes. As it is a common trend among teenagers and the youth; thus, books or materials targeting users' needs should provide opportunities for learning these topics. The following three questions involved talking to landlords, real estate agents, shopkeepers, and marketers (9 to 11). On average, less than 30 percent did not want English for these purposes, and more than 70 percent considered it helpful or very useful. Question 12 (talking to friends) appears to hold an exceptional place since only 11% of the participants did not believe it to be valuable, and more than half (54%) found it very useful, meaning peer interaction was a priority.

From the early days of CLT, focusing on real-life needs has always been the cornerstone of CLT classrooms. Clarke and Silberstein (1977) argued that classroom activities should match the real world diligently since language is an implementation of communication; therefore, methods and materials should focus on the message, not the medium. In other words, CLT aims to use real-life situations that demand communication (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Among the 47 questions in the main questionnaire, only questions 5, 12, 13, 15, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 34, which make 11 questions out of 47 (almost 18 of the total questions), did the participants consider the case very useful. It would be helpful to examine the commonalities among the questions. In these questions, interests, talking on the phone, continuing education, interviews, interaction in clubs, watching TV and listening to the radio, web surfing, reading, and talking to friends—mainly English speaking friends—were of paramount importance to the participants. According to Littlewood (2007), from an early time in CLT development, European linguists recognized the need for language teachers to emphasize communicative competence rather than over-learning structures alone. Thus, except for web surfing and reading related to text-based activities, the others are interactive and communicative, implying that students need the most knowledge about engaging in communicative activities. Put differently; spoken language has priority over other language skills in the eyes of the participants. Questions 13 and 14 are very close in output as they are about talking on the phone, with about 11% lacking interest. According to van Ek and Alexander (1980), making telephone calls is a communicative event in which learners take part or wish to participate. Questions 16, 17, and 18 addressed the use of English in educational settings and had the frequencies 21 percent, 35 percent, and 33 percent for lack of interest, wherein the majority opted for these activities. This finding aligns with van Ek and Alexander, who argued that most learners needed English to use it in specific occupational or educational settings.

According to the results, the participants were almost equally divided about their choice of using English to help children with their homework. Questions 20, 21, and 22 regarding jobs with an average 32% lack of interest came next. Compared to more interactive tasks, fewer students wanted to talk about jobs. Usually, talking about jobs is not a field of interest for children in real life, which is reflected in their CLT needs. The following two questions were exceptional, as mentioned earlier, in the sense that most participants selected the option of *very useful* for interviews and participation in clubs or group activities. They are interested in activities that are more communicative in nature. Thus, books and materials are most welcome if they focus on these tasks. Questions 25 and 26 are very similar, with only about 32% lacking interest. As can be inferred from the results, face-to-face or virtual group interaction is crucial for the participants. The participants preferred television, Radio, and the Internet, with almost 80% interest (useful and very useful). Additionally, reading is of utmost significance, with 87% of the students interested in it. CLT necessitates more than sole attention to strategies for presenting sentence structure and language functions. Furthermore, it requires more participation on the side of the students in a dynamic and interactive communication process (Savignon, 2008). Inviting others and accepting or rejecting invitations by others, and arranging foreign trips were both equal in terms of lack of interest (18%). Questions 33 and 34 regarding talking with teachers and English-speaking friends seemed unique in that only 14 percent, and 10 percent of the participants did not show interest in them. As the findings show, the most significant point is interaction with peers and teachers (Savignon, 2008).

Lack of interest was significantly low for the need to talk about one's education in question four (7%), talking about interests in question five and talking to English-speaking friends in question 34 (both 10%),

talking to friends (question 12) and participation in sports and social clubs (question 24) (both 11%) and making telephone calls (question 14) with 12 percent. As seen, talking and participation are the two keywords in almost all activities that the participants desire.

Moreover, asking for information about products and services (Question 35), complaining about products, and asking for a refund (question 36) were similar to parallel results, and a little less than 28% of the students were very interested in those activities. Compared with the previous two tasks, an insignificant increase was seen in the interest for bank transactions (question 37), which could be due to the age range of the participants, who have a weak tendency toward financial transactions. The participants seem to view themselves as the center of the world, but a fundamental matter of needs analysis lies beneath this fact. The participants consider the world through their own immediate needs with no further outlook. The question at this point is whether there is conformity between students' needs and the topics teachers and policymakers consider when designing classroom activities. Thus, the generation gap may be a factor when developing materials. Questions 38, 39, and 40 that target the internet, similar to questions 26 and 29 about virtual groups and web surfing, attracted the most incredible attention compared to the other activities mentioned in the questionnaire. Hence, the internet and web-based activities should be included in the materials developed for teenagers. According to Willis (1996), real-world tasks reflect authentic language uses and provide practice for the activities learners encounter in real situations. This study showed that the internet has provided relatively new tasks and is very attractive to young learners. Talking to other groups of people (questions 41 to 45) attracted about 75 percent of the participants, with 17 percent lacking interest in talking to managers and colleagues and 32 percent lacking interest in interacting with government officials. The justification is that, since the participants were very young - they did not consider these interactions significant. This lack of interest also held true for banking transactions. However, it is worth mentioning that alternative results can be obtained with different respondents as subjects under study. Willis (1996) believed that sharing personal experiences is one of the crucial tasks in task-based learning and teaching. Thus, since the participants of this study had little in common with government officials, they were not interested in the relevant activities.

About 75 percent of the participants were interested in getting and giving information about countries (question 46). Thus, fun-based activities like talking about general issues with friends who speak English and Persian (the participants' L1) were favored by the participants. Countries and topics related to those countries are ideal themes of conversation as these themes are associated with journeys and relevant activities, which is quite natural when considering their age. As expected, they preferred to be active participants in social activities. Jacobs and Farrell (2003) asserted that along with a focus on context, CLT implies the idea of connecting the school with the world beyond to stimulate holistic learning.

Section Two

In this section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked about their primary interests in the realm of the foreign language. Favoring English for continuing education with 37 tallies topped the list. Watching TV (35 counts), talking to English-speaking friends (18 counts), participating in English interviews, and using applications and software (both with 16 counts) were next on the list; applying for a job (15 tallies) was the last. As the preferred themes showed, education and communicative tasks such as watching TV, talking to friends, or participating in interviews, on the one hand, and modern needs, such as applying English for applications and software, stood

out, on the other hand. The last choice, a practical life necessity, using English for applying for a job, was the least wanted option. Considering the age of the participants, being indifferent about jobs seems logical. The information gained from the analysis of the first section is in line with this section. The researcher further observed that older techniques and tasks are out of fashion, and more interactive tasks relevant to students' age were favored. However, as discussed later, the textbook is insufficient to meet these needs.

Section Three

As mentioned earlier, in the third section of the questionnaire with 32 items, two traditional activities, memorizing and writing information on the board, received the lowest attention. The students were interested in discussing what happened in their real lives. Watching TV, reading, and even repeating what was already listened to were much desired, which is not strange regarding the importance of proximity between life and study, matching with the principles of CLT (Willis, 1996). The eye-catching point was the significance of utilizing almost all types of mass media tools, including TV, radio, and CDs, among the most preferred items. New technology, such as MP3 players and music devices on mobiles, tablets, and computers, have changed the new generation's educational perspective. These tools provide excellent examples of communicative activities with the maximum information gap between source data and recipients. Communicative activities refer to classroom activities that give a genuine information gap and allow language learners to communicate with the target language in CLT approaches (Liao, 2004). Regarding the age of the participants, it is easy to realize why they were interested in listening-based activities so much. Listening is a part of every genuine human interaction. For adolescents, it is part of the daily bilateral communication and the mode in which they listen to music and watch films.

Section Four

In the fourth section of the questionnaire, as the researcher observed, among the seven activities, the most wanted activities were talking and listening to peers, language games, and working with songs and lyrics. Llach and Catalan (2007) defined content-based instruction as a form of CLT that teaches content or knowledge in the target language with little or no direct or overt effort. In games, songs, lyrics, and other entertaining activities, the least attention is paid to the language structures and forms, while the content is the main target. Getting information through planned visits and guest speakers was the next on the list, with 40 and 45 participants wanting them, respectively (In this section, the number of the participants. These are activities that are often not seen in the 8th-grade English textbook and the usual class activities. As the researcher is a language teacher at school, she is aware that it is a common trend that teachers or policymakers are unwilling to deal with interactive tasks much desired by the students and that these tasks are not dealt with in the classroom and English textbooks.

Social activities where students are involved appear in the list of needs. However, most teachers are trained to run single-student activities such as classroom exercises and home assignments where peer work is unnecessary. Teachers and students in school exams also require this kind of activity. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), students in traditional approaches first hear a typical dialog (either read by the teacher or on tape) with key structures that are the lesson's focus. Then they repeat each line of the dialog, individually and in groups. Meanwhile, the teacher focuses on pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Comparing the elements of CLT with the 8th grade English textbook shows that the book, to a great extent, fails to

target many of the principles of CLT—no identifiable teachers' manuals instructing teachers how to run peer works and group activities. Hence, teachers are not led toward CLT-oriented teaching methods (Rashtchi and Sabri, 2020).

Section Five

In the fifth section of the questionnaire containing five items, the participants provided their preference for receiving information on their progress. As apparent, traditional methods like written notes were the least wanted forms. Other forms were also disliked, like receiving marks from friends and marking one's own work. In comparison, 88% of the participants favored seeing their progress in real situations. When the results of this part are combined with those attained in the previous sections of the present study, it can be concluded that the activities implemented in a typical classroom in Iran are often far from the main principles of CLT. However, further observations should be conducted to explore the extent to which English classes in Iran conform to the basic tenets of CLT.

Section Six

In section six, three items deal with how the respondents felt satisfied with their school work. Likewise, the traditional score-based method (which is teacher-centered) received the least attention. The teacher's encouragement and positive feedback in the process were expected by 85 percent of the participants; 82 percent wanted to see their progress in a real-life situation. This finding implies that participants are implicitly aware of their problems and prefer newer methods for dealing with those pitfalls. They know that the traditional scoring method can not affect their learning and adds to their worries in the classroom. Passive learning and teacher-fronted classrooms are outdated, and it seems that it is time for teachers to employ new techniques to encourage student learning. Teachers should reconsider using the scoring system. The disadvantages of the scoring system are more significant than its advantages for students.

Analysis of the 8th Grade English Textbook

The seven lessons of the book cover seven essential communicative means mentioned in the table of contents: *my nationality, my week, my abilities, my health, my city, my village, and my hobbies*. The themes seem reasonable in targeting communicative needs. The authors call these themes and functions, so the textbook is theme-based. According to Rashtchi and Keyvanfar (2007), grammar-based methodologies such as the presentation-practice-production have given way to functional and skills-based instruction under the influence of the CLT approach. The shift from activities that support grammatical accuracy (e.g., drills and exercises) to fluency is quite conspicuous.

Lesson one starts with a conversation on nationality. Then it introduces nationalities. Lesson two is about spending the week on different activities through a conversation. Here and there, Persian words appear to help the students find the L2 equivalents. Here, the first review covering lessons one and two is presented. Lesson three starts with a dialogue on abilities such as drawing and photography. Later on, other skills like storytelling are introduced. Lesson four is about health; as usual, it starts with a conversation on health problems. Some health problems are introduced and practiced in the lesson. Pieces of advice are given on special problems mentioned in the book. After the review of lessons three and four, the book continues with lesson five. This lesson is about urban life and talks about Isfahan and its features. Other cities are introduced afterward, and special features useful for urban life description are given. Lesson six is very similar to lesson five as it again discusses life in

the village. It is not clear why among so many topics; two out of seven lessons revolve around places like cities and villages. The dialogue is about a village, its pleasant features, and its weather. Famous places and landmarks are also introduced. The last lesson is on hobbies. The conversation and the following readings and spelling/writing exercises introduce TV, sports, the internet, the gym, the radio, reading, walking, computer games, shopping, horse riding, web browsing, jogging, sailing, painting, and other topics. Only relevant vocabulary is presented, sometimes with and sometimes without short phrases. The third review of lessons five to seven follows.

Later, a set of cards is given to the students to complete, and a photo mini dictionary is presented in the lessons. Simple words or phrases introduce hobbies and activities. Few social and communicative activities are advanced.

Comparing the Results of the Questionnaire and the Content of the Book

Regarding one's education, question number four of the questionnaire, which has an 87 percent interest, is almost missing. Most students prefer talking with others about issues of interest (or very useful). Only the names of some hobbies are presented through a few phrases. Questions and relevant topics, namely, questions 6 to 22, 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 42, and 43, are either missing in the book or are dealt with marginally or minimally. Little emphasis is laid upon them by merely introducing the words in the lessons or the photo dictionary. The authors probably supposed that the teachers would practice them with more sentences, although there is no guarantee. A book can never cover all the mentioned themes in the questionnaire used in this study or similar ones, as language learning is a process, and bits of information should be presented in due time. However, the point is that more significant and distinct emphasis could be laid on items like sports, likes and dislikes, transport services, money, purchasing, home, food, travel, the New Year, games, songs, and clothes as they are most preferred with different degrees in the questionnaire.

CONCLUSIONS

The results show that the textbook is an acceptable attempt to bridge the gap between students' communicative needs and CLT principles. All items in Prospect 2 are communication-oriented. However, more communicative tasks of a wider variety could be included. For example, having two lessons on urban and rural life is too much. A variety of topics could have been selected to give variety to the book. Few exercises and dialogues are presented targeting communicative events, even for those appearing in the textbook. As mentioned earlier, the most significant motives for learning English focus on communicative issues. The low percentage of "not useful" choices for further education (7%), talking about interests and talking to English-speaking friends (both 10%), talking to friends and participation in sports and social clubs (both 11%), and making telephone calls (12%) shows how students' needs should be incorporated into the textbook. The focus on new global needs, the internet, and technology much wanted by the participants is missing in the book. The gap between what learners need and what is presented to them is not justifiable.

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