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Research Paper

## A Postcolonial Perspective towards Prefaces of Iranian English Language Textbooks: The Cases of *Graded*, *Right Path to English*, and *Prospect/Vision* Series

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### Abstract

Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there have been three packages used in the state-controlled schools of the country, namely, *Graded*, *Right Path to English*, and *Prospect/Vision* series. These textbooks all include prefaces to indicate the general philosophy of language teaching and education, and how the agents (learners and teachers) have to play roles in the system. This article aims to have a postcolonial reading of the Islamic post-revolutionary English language textbooks published in Iran. To this aim, the prefaces are critically content-analyzed and explained taking into consideration the key concepts of postcolonialism. After developing the table of themes in relation to postcolonial issues, the findings indicate that the resistance prevalent in the prefaces is particularly hybrid, anxious, and unstable of the Iranian type due to the socio-politico-cultural background of the country. This resistance, thus, is a tragic attempt for developing a firm background for developing language learners' knowledge.

**Keywords:** Postcolonialism, Graded, Right Path to English, Prospect, Vision, Resistance, Bhabha

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What is currently known as postcolonialism is a state of mind for the interpretation of and resistance towards the era in which West's hegemony remains to have control over most parts of the world (Young, 2016). The prefix 'post' in postcolonialism has sometimes been referred to the world after the demise of colonialism. However, since there is no colonized territory in its traditional sense of the word and most nations have gained their independence, it could be argued that there is no need to discuss postcolonialism. But this term is not attributed to the geographical exploitation of other lands, and as Hardt and Negri (2000) and Harvey (2003) have indicated. It is a new form of imperialism the centers of which are scattered and difficult to pin-point for the sake of controlling other societies in sociocultural, if not only political and economic, aspects.

Since the emergence of modern concepts in Iran and following the political changes after the constitutional revolution, Iran has been constantly under the influence of western cultural and social presumptions (Zarshenas, 2015). Borjian (2013) conducted a study indicating that both before and after the Islamic revolution, the governing system was to some extent resisting western influence. It was true that in Pahlavi's regime the system emphasized the Iranian historical root for empowering the society (combating against Marxism), it was the Islamic ideology that played this role after the revolution. Resisting linguistic imperialism, one of the main explicit underpinnings of the Islamic revolution was to re-construct the cultural products (textbooks in particular) through organizations such as the Committee of Sketching and Planning Foreign Languages directed by Tahereh Saffarzadeh, or the SAMT publication center (*ibid*). Zarshenas (2015) argues within the same line that the liberal and neoliberal attitudes both within the pre-Islamic and post-Islamic states were either affiliated with the western-oriented secular system of Pahlavi, or embedded in the resisting Islamic state of the post-revolution

era. He, further, suggests some resistance resolution in empowering the Islamic/Iranian roots in cultural terms on the one hand, and economic resistance on the other (following the recent general policies) to combat against such as a debilitating hegemony.

In the area of applied linguistics and textbook analysis issues, it could be argued that the textbook evaluation research domain has mostly been dominated by borrowing a checklist evaluation (e.g. Shahmohammadi, 2018; Azizifar, 2009) or comparative studies of the English language textbooks (e.g. Sarraf Bank and Sharifi Haratmeh, 2018; Razmjoo, 2007). Some studies have tried to do content analysis of different aspects such as the cultural issues (Asakereh, Yousofi, and Weisi, 2019; Saeedi and Shahrokhi, 2019). However, no focused study was dedicated to the evaluation of the textbooks considering the postcolonial interpretive outlooks and the sociocultural and political conditions of Iran. To fill this significant gap, this study aims to content analyze the prefaces of the English language textbooks used at Iranian schools through postcolonial interpretive concepts. The prefaces are sections in which the writers and authorities reveal their theoretical background, the structure of the textbook, and their general aims. Since most of the postcolonial analysis is concept-based, the study focused on perspectives put forth by Homi Bhabha, but is not limited to him, as issues of power and knowledge, as well as imperial attitudes, are also suggested by Said and Foucault as well.

## Review of Literature

### Theoretical Concepts

In one sense, postcolonialism could be the study of the legacy of the colonialism, most notably the resistance of the new people who have detached themselves from the foreign enemy, the struggle they have in their new nation-building, and the social-cultural as well as the psychological states they need

to deal with (Young, 2016). However, some people such as de Alva (1995) and Loomba (2005) believe that postcolonialism is a state of mind. It is actually an existential state of the hegemony that the western tradition of philosophical thought has had over other cultures and ideologies of the world, changing them from inside and outside, and in most cases have defined them according to their own particular tradition.

The above-mentioned understanding of postcolonialism has taken the concept not to the material world, but to the psychological one, too. The colonization of the mind, in this regard, is a metaphor to highlight the intrusion of an external force into the mental sphere of the other individual (colonized), de-structuring or rather restructuring the mental mode and content, reserving the effect to be stable and difficult to remove, establishing a hierarchy of power with the colonizing world, an awareness of the difference of mental and material status and the in/voluntary participation of the two parties with this power relationship (Dascal, n.d.). In this sense, society does not need to be colonized (as in the classic example of India) to be postcolonial.

This takes us to another dimension of postcolonialism in that the histories that West has narrated to the other cultures have to be re-narrated (Bhabha, 1994). The reinterpretation of histories and raising the voice of the poorest and lowest class of the society (known as Subaltern) is also a particular line of study followed by the *Subaltern Studies* group and Spivak (1996) (who is a strong critic of this field too). Therefore, in this sense of postcolonialism, the field focuses on the oppressed people. It tries to permeate into the discourse that has been constructed and is being continuously reconstructed by the Western history of thought and supports the resisting voice of the dissent in confronting such a hegemonic power (Spivak, 1988).

This hegemonic discourse was academically analyzed by Said (1979) in the classic work of *Orientalism*. Said tried to investigate the way West has

constructed images of East<sup>2</sup> through pilgrim writings, stories, novels, and myths. West attempted to recognize this exotic East despite the fact that, as Said shows, these non-Muslims were at risk if their true identity was revealed. This impenetrability into the eastern world gave it a halo of exoticism to imagine East, as it is evident in the pictures and stories of East traced in *Orientalism* (*ibid*)<sup>3</sup>.

Said's analysis (*ibid*) rests to some extent on Foucault's theory (1975, 1976) of discourse in that in each era there are certain epistemes representing the truth, knowledge, and power of the institutions in the society. However, truth, power, and knowledge built the three main pillars of what can be considered as 'discourse' in its social conception of influencing the representation of the norm. In that sense of discourse, Said (1979) tried to investigate how the West represented the East for the West and the rest of the world. This gave a superior condition to the West. It actually comes from the western post-Cartesian tradition of thought to understand and control the world (Shayegan, 2001), and to realize the rules of the universe so that the human can bring about a better life and prosperity for the human as the subject of the world (The humanist theory). This dominance in its socio-political sense of the word is the cultural-hegemonic power of the West (Gramsci, 2004). Said maintains that:

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony* ... the major component in the European culture is precisely

<sup>2</sup> By "East", with capital letter and without any in/definite article, we mean not the geographic sense of the word, but that of the periphery dominated hegemonized conceptualization of the eastern state of being and living.

<sup>3</sup> For a critical analysis of Said's theory of orientalism see Macfie (2000).

what made that cultural hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures (1979, p.7). (italic original)

Ahmad (1992), a known critic of the postcolonial studies, shows that even in the postcolonial field of study, taken as an approach toward literary, cultural, and historical (to name but a few) interpretations, assuming the sameness of resistance, is an illusion of the theoreticians. Bhabha (1994) particularly criticizes the discourse of the West and its paradigm of modernity, in that the postcolonial author deconstructs the meaning and representation of the hegemony of modernity over the rest of the world. In *Nation and Narration*, for example, Bhabha (1990) questions the construction of the nation-state as a modern concept believing that the experience and culture of the most other non-Western people are narrated by what the Western modern mind considers to be the reality of the experience. Here, the Western discourse of history homogenizes a huge amount of experience of the other (non-Western), so as to make it comprehensible for itself. The idea of a nation here is a homogenizing concept. In his peculiar concept of *DissemiNation*, Bhabha actually tries to challenge the modern narrative of the nation indicating that nation produces certain categories as 'sexuality, class affiliation, territorial paranoia, or cultural difference' (p. 140). This is because the West needs its counter "other" to establish its own sense of superior identity, otherwise, there is no reference point to prove to be ahead of the history as the enlightenment universal ideals have suggested (Chatterjee, 1986).

In psychiatric terms, the constant state of flux, i.e. not being able to be modern West, nor the traditional self of the pre-modernity contact, has put the third world man (what also Young (2016) defines as the three-continental world) in a constant state of in-betweenness. Bhabha (1994) focuses on this

concept as a cultural and psychological state of being and seeing. Since the new man after the experience of colonization as well as those who are in the postcolonial state of Western modern hegemony cannot return to their roots of being, they stay in a purgatory world. The new spheres of the world, or rather the consciousness of the other world, this being on the other continuum of the western modern world, has made this 'Other' to move away from its roots, not being able to return to the previous status, nor achieving the ideas of modernity, and thus gets trapped in a schizophrenic world (Shayegan, 2001).

Considering this line of psychological state, Bhabha (1994) introduces some psychoanalytical concepts. One borrowed from Freud is the concept of the uncanny. Uncanniness is the repressed experience of a postcolonial man who has to hide but he knows it is there; however, this feeling disrupts its psychological being. "All the institutions, uncertainties, and ambivalences with colonial authority and its figures are imbued ones, characterized in terms of the uncanny" (Huddart, 2006, p. 54). Applied to countries like Iran, the uncanny is the unhomely situation of mind, in which the mind is the migrant, not situated in one place, neither home nor the other migrated space and time. That means that the migrations of the mind (or the colonized mind) is constantly relocated and de-located in its dynamic being so it becomes disruptive for the individual and his desire for the stable identity he likes to construct for himself (*ibid*). In other words, the identity and the self of the person become split internally. This splitting self makes it problematic for the national identity to come into terms with a static conception since being uncanny in the postcolonial world turns it into an open, dynamic, changing conception in that the uncanny mind cannot adhere to its own self-identity due to the anxiety the uncanny, colonized, constantly migrating mind

exterminates. This condition, or rather state of mind; however, does not mean that the postcolonial individual is a passive non-resistant person in the world.

Following uncanniness, the other challenging concept Bhabha (1994) introduces is mimicry. In *Sly Civility*, Bhabha indicates that "mimicry represents an ironic compromise" (*ibid*, p. 86) between ideas that are constant and those that are constantly changing. In more specific terms:

...colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other as *a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite*, which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. (p. 86) (italic original)

In other words, the postcolonial person takes the devices of the Western modern tradition of thought and becomes an agent of change, very similar to the Western individual but not exactly the same; he filters the other culture with that of his own to make a new representation of the tradition he has mimicked since the person carries the tradition of his own within. However, it is not quite clear what the outcome of this re-presentation and mimicry will be because the Western discourse of humanity may not merely be ruptured but rather transformed into uncertainties and this is the source of anxiety for the colonizing world. Bhabha (1994) in this regard believes that mimicry, as a semi-conscious/subconscious strategy, is a mode of writing representation and marginalization. Mimicry actually mocks the model of the powers showing that the colonizing center's position is not as inaccessible and superior as it seems since it is an imitable model. So when a colonized person writes, he is trying to make a presence of self (even if partial) and representation, and it derives the colonizer of the fixation of the colonized.

One has to consider the idea that the West had drawn the map of the development of the three-continental world and being historically conscious, it has defined and constructed the linear image of the history, putting culture and civilization in chronological order of development. Despite the contribution Western countries' presence had for the world, many theoretical interpretations of the world all paved the way for both the Western's right to impose the righteousness of its path and the rest accepting such a concept of the world's rule of living. Some examples are Hegel's theory of history, Marx's description of the economy and dialectics of history, Durkheim's conception of sociology, and Darwin's genealogy of mankind. In this line of argument, we may have a reference to the linguistic argumentation of imperialism, or what is generally known in the field as linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 1992).

### **Language-Related Issues**

Philipson (1992) quotes a report from *Guardian Weekly* newspaper (1984) indicating that 'there is no corner of the world so remote, no nation so insignificant, that it does not represent a vital interest of the United States', to imply the superior English language and image of the developed country. This imperialistic view is not limited to the journalistic community but was also evident previously in the ELT community, as there seem to be several concerns for the expansion of ELT and English language status. For example, Widdowson (2013) criticizes the British Council's policy of English schemes and plans for India, believing that it seriously can bring along linguistic and cultural genocide. Rogers (1982) is concerned with the illusionary expectation that the development image can bring via the acquisition of English. Hayes (1983) focuses on textbook writing of the center countries (Western Europe, American, and Australia) and mentions the irrelevance of the content of the

instructional books for the other ESL/EFL contexts. The practice of ELT as directed by the center countries' experts and the attitude it carries with for the other affiliated community to the teaching of English is nicely put by Philipson (1992) in the following:

Anglo-centrism and professionalism legitimate English as the dominant language by rationalizing activities and beliefs which contribute to the structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. The professional discourse around ELT *disconnects* culture from structure by limiting the focus in language pedagogy to technical matters, that is, language and education in a narrow sense, to the exclusion of social, economic and political matters. (p. 48) (Italic in original)

Howat (1984) maintains that, in general, the field of ELT has kept its 'ethnocentric' nature, in that most of what we currently take for granted as the knowledge of language teaching was born from Europe as the mother of the teaching practice, despite the fact that much of the raw materials of the theories was taken from the other periphery countries.

Pennycook (1998) also traces the discourse of colonialism and the impact of the English language. Although most of the direct effort for changing the mind and the spirit of the 'Other' (a concept of rather much debate) into English has been erased from the recent documents of the linguistic policies of the West, the legacies are still with us. The capitalistic economy only replaces the direct colonization of the world. This, in language-related issues, means that "the linguistic ideas that evolved at the accretion of empires led by Britain and the United States have not changed as economic colonialism has replaced the directly political management of the third world nations. English is still believed to be the inevitable world language" (Bailey, 1991, p. 121).

There are very few studies on the relationship between textbook analysis and postcolonialism. Olsson (2006) had a postcolonial reading on the ethnicity and national identity of the English language textbooks used in Swedish schools. The study aimed to derive the cultural representations of the English speaking nations so far as ethnicity and identity were concerned. The findings suggested that there are no biased stereotypes in the textbooks and there is a balanced manifestation of life and culture. But as the author claims, the study is only limited to the West and the cultural diversity is not very much focused. Despite the claim of the study to be a postcolonial reading of the textbooks, it does not address the identity issues and the psychological narratives of the content of the textbooks. Moreover, the study ignores most of the mainstream of the postcolonial studies and is limited only to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) and Loomba (2005). In a sense, it seems that the study is rather a general cultural analysis of the images of the textbooks.

Saad Mohamed (2014) conducted a study trying to sketch how the orient is represented in the English language textbooks of Libya. The study borrows Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework and critical image analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The findings showed that there is a "substantial degree of cultural betrayal, stereotypical images and structures of no-western cultures, particularly in regard to the 'Orient'" (p. i), concluding that the orient is misrepresented. This study (Saad Mohamed, 2014) is similar to the discourse analysis done by Said (1979).

In the context of Iran, Karimi (2016) presents the relationship between postcolonial interpretation and Kurdology, giving a sketch of how the issues of cultural representation have changed and fixated the Kurdish culture, and to some extent has given a distorted representation of their customs and traditions. More related to English language teaching is the book-length study conducted by Borjian (2013) in which a historical analysis of the conditions

of English language teaching in Iran has been given, starting from the early Pahlavi period up to the early years of the third millennium. Many issues are investigated in this study such as the changing attitudes of policymakers in terms of their reaction to the western hegemony and socio-economic plans (in the case of world bank and the United Nations), the roles of the textbooks in presenting the national/foreign/Islamic ideologies (in different periods of time, i.e. from pre-Islamic to post-Islamic revolution eras), the economic plans of neoliberal societies and its implementation in Iran, and the idea of globalization. There is even a section on resisting linguistic imperialism, assuming that the society has always been engaged in a constant state of postcolonialism. The effect and resistance towards the changing plans for teaching/learning the English language from both above (the ruling elite) and below (the people in their daily life) are some other key points of this study. However, neither Karimi (2016) nor Borjian (2013) address the policies or philosophies of the textbooks in relation to the actual data of the textbooks as their unit of analysis.

The current study aims to have a postcolonial eclectic reading of the prefaces of the three English language teaching packages produced in post-Islamic revolutionary Iran, namely, *Graded series*, *Right Path to English*, and *English for Schools* series. The potential areas of postcolonial analysis and interpretation will be extracted from the prefaces and discussed accordingly. It should be noted in the end, that the current study is not a textbook analysis per se, as it could be observed in other studies, but is actually an interpretation (from the perspective of postcolonialism) on the prefaces of the textbook in which the general policies, aims, and educational philosophies of the textbooks developers are mentioned.

### Method

The analysis of the prefaces follows a diachronic approach, meaning that it starts with the first internally produced textbooks' prefaces *Graded* series (firstly published in 1968, however, the version used in this study has been published in the post-revolutionary Iran period). This package was produced by Manuchehri and Pazargadi, and advised by Rolland Hyndmarch in 1968. The content included of 2653 words (considering only the genuine materials, ignoring the repetitions). Then, it goes through the *Right Path to English* (1991), written by Birjandi and Soheili. The word count of the prefaces was 3420 words. Finally, the lately published series *Prospect/Vision* (2012), written by Alavi Moghadam, Kheirabadi, and Rahimi (as the main authors) with the cooperation of others. This package's word count of the prefaces was 2574 words.

The sample of the prefaces will be provided in the appendices for the ease of references. Each package may have several prefaces for different textbook levels, however, some of them are identical, thus, they do not need re-analysis. All the prefaces are firstly content-analyzed. In the course of the data analysis, conceptualized under the postcolonial perspective, only those parts which are of value for the perspective of the study will be focused. In the course of analyzing the data, the themes and concepts related to the postcolonial paradigm were extracted (see the tables in the following section), then, they were reviewed, randomly, by another rater, and areas of conflicts were discussed on a separate session. No significant conflict of interpretation was noted.

## Results and Discussion

### *Graded series<sup>4</sup>*

The content was used after the 1979 Islamic revolution of Iran; though certain pictures were changed due to the Islamicization of the textbooks. The content, however, was kept intact and the prefaces were changed according to the new ideological paradigm of the Islamic state. Since all of the pre-revolutionary textbooks could not be accessed<sup>5</sup>, the prefaces analyzed here are related to the versions published after 1979.

There is a quotation from the leader of the Islamic revolution of Iran, indicating that "we will export our revolution to all of the world". This suggests the significance of language, particularly English, which becomes a means toward a seriously political end, i.e., expanding the ideological frontiers of the revolution to the other countries of the world. The preface claims that language is a key means for transferring the Islamic culture to the other areas, and it is a "responsibility" of the people of Iran to do just that. After that, the colonial approach of the western countries is indicated, meaning that they have exported their exploitative power against other countries through language, not only in the past, as it had been in the era of colonialism, particularly referred to the pre-second world war, but also at the time of writing the preface, which is roughly the early 1980s.

The preface demonstrates a demarcation, an Us-Them distinction. In this case, Us means the spiritual divine revolution, and Them is the "liar, false, evil-natured one". In this contrast, it is the responsibility of the people and more particularly the textbook writers to stand against this evil enemy, and

<sup>4</sup> For the sake of reference, all quotations are extracted from Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> The Organization of Supervising and Developing Materials as a national center did not have all of the pre-revolutionary English textbooks in its library, as some were destroyed or lost.

export the truths of Islam, which were supposedly manifested in the government through the Iranian Islamic revolution, to the rest of the world.

Any link to and dependency on the western world is to be neglected and the country which has recently cut its affiliation with the Pahlavi dynasty has to stand on its own feet scientifically, industrially, and economically. Nonetheless, the textbook has a dual attitude. On the one hand, it states that the western world has done what it could to replace their language with that of the natives and that is deemed a danger for the truth-seeking and historically backed countries. On the other hand, these countries need the very same language they are using to stand on their own. It is on the people of the recently independent nation of Iran to learn that language as a means of 'absolute' independency. They need to acquire the language, not as a new identity, as Them is much evil-natured and damaging to the divine character of the revolution, but only as a means to come to the state of 'complete independence'.

So far as the Islamic ideology is concerned, some words are added to the textbook as a case of change. They are "Koran, to pray, mosque, Allah, scarf, and family room" which show the Islamicization attitude of the time.

The preface, then, declares the absolute adherence to the leader of the revolution following a theological paradigm, indicating that "God is great" and that millions of people are sacrificed for the Islamic ideology. The evil-natured monarchy is noted to be thrown in "the dustbin of the history" (which is by its own account a Marxist terminology, see Patenaude, 2009). This was to put the enemy of God (assumed to be the Pahlavi) at "the firing anger of God". In other words, the terminology used is much theologically burdened, and it shows a religious conflict. This was to defeat Satan who is the real enemy of the true believers. To this aim, this revolution has been miraculous and established such a fundamental Islamic change that it is much imperative

to demolish the propagandas. Therefore, the system, in general, and the educational sector, in particular, have to resist the cultural attack, as the new system is considered to be an enemy to the western imperial and dynasty systems of the world, and thus threatening its culture. That is why the preface insists that the nation needs a cultural revolution, so that the shadows and effects of the previous system, which was much inclined towards western imperialism and its cultural path of life, should be purified.

It is deemed the responsibility of the authorities to follow this change in the educational system so that the culture would be protected and re-established based on the aims and objectives of the revolution which defines itself by its rather Islamic nature. It is claimed that "the culture is in a chaotic and devastating" (p. 1, Preface) condition, and the change is needed. There has to be a return to the real Islamic culture and anything foreign should be resisted and deleted from the cultural sphere. This is the goal of the educational system to reconstruct humans devoid of those underpinnings which might endanger the new spiritual system.

#### ***Right Path to English series<sup>6</sup>***

The preface considers language to be actually a significant component for the development of the country. Learners are expected to be much attracted to the English language and this is to be fulfilled through the teacher's language teaching method. However, the teaching method is not left to the teachers, but that they need to adhere to a predefined "goals and teaching methods". This might be in harmony with the dominant policy of hegemonic teaching all through the educational system, in that the macro system of the education implements "to select what is deemed suitable for the act of teaching". Furthermore, it is accepted presumptuously that the textbook

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<sup>6</sup> For the sake of reference, all quotations are extracted from Appendix B.

carries certain pitfalls; however, they are to be compensated by the side sources the ministry provides along with the textbook. But the general umbrella is covered for the teachers, and they are not much encouraged to solve their own day to day problems by being educated. This lack of prospects for teacher development might be explained by the fact that the system already has kept the answers, and the problems are to be solved by the very same system. The preface insists on "particular scientific procedures" such as "needs analysis as well as production and validation of the teaching materials". The preface emphasizes that studying and doing research on some "productive" points is the result of knowing English.

Secondly, it is generally accepted that the publicity of English as a world language is a fact, a means to be successful in the academy and further education, an opportunity to find a job and study deeply, and the tool for using the computer and the internet. This might suggest the overwhelming dominance and hegemonic role perceived by the producers of the materials within the higher levels of policymaking. In another part, it is claimed that the 20<sup>th</sup> century is linked to the knowledge of English by all the people. In other words, this hegemonic influence over the future of the people has been accepted, and it has to be followed. It is true that the English language is widely spread and used by different people, the economic-related factors of the English speaking countries have seriously contributed to its dominance, and general political organizations and centers are insisting on using that for intercultural communication (Pennycook, 1994). Such a policy of surrender might be taken by mistake in that the learning of other possible foreign languages is downgraded since the Reform Document in the ministry mentions that learning a foreign language (not necessarily English) is a must for all the students (Reform Document, 2011).

Thirdly, the preface reveals the attitude and general philosophy of the textbook towards the process of thinking. It indicates that the learning process is not much accompanied by hardship if the learners are surrendering to the instruction provided by the teacher, and study and practice it repeatedly. The preface insists that "the text should not be translated for the students at all". In other words, it tries to dictate what should and should not be done. Although it is true that the aim of the textbook is not to teach translation, one cannot simply prohibit teachers and students from the benefit that translation can provide for a better understanding of the text, particularly in cases in which the majority of the students seem to have the same L1. On top of that, the teacher "should not expect the students to memorize the [grammatical] explanations, and do not teach students the points out of the focus of the textbook". The preface actually tries to dictate in a very precise way what the students should focus on, what the teachers should do, and moreover, from a psychological point of view, what the teachers and students will notice in the process of learning, since not all the grammatical structures have to be focused on, as the comprehension of the text is the aim.

So far as teaching skills and components are concerned, there are some indications of the audiolingual techniques of "repetition, substitution, transformation, and production", though the latter one permeates all through the first three techniques. However, one cannot derive any dialogic form of interaction in this regard. In the case of grammar, there is an abstract "correct" way of writing, reading, and speaking toward which the students need to be guided. This higher aim is stated by the teacher since the ministry's representative is the teacher, who has of course passed the ideological and technical tests of the ministry. But it could also be questioned that this right approach might impede the flourishing of the creativity of both the teacher and students.

The center for textbook production is said to have borrowed a novel approach in theory and practice from the experts in the field. Nonetheless, this novel approach has attracted the attention of the "experts of the field", meaning the experts of the country. The novel approach means the concentration of the "what, why, and how of the teaching-education activities". In addition, it is mentioned that the learners have to acquire the language "thoughtfully, rationally, and intellectually", all of which are merely mentioned, not defined. On the other hand, the authors are worried that the learners have to cater for the values, and get involved in the learning of the skills "actively and consciously". This might be a deeply layered concern that foreign language learning might change the perspective of the students who are growing within a different ideological system of education, which is for the most part different from that of the western counterpart. Although the language is claimed and aimed to be used as a resistant tool within the higher policy of the system, the materials developers seem to be concerned regarding the side and indirect effect enacted on the learners. Therefore, the learners have to be thoughtful, rational, conscious, active, and value-laden in their learning so that they would not be effected by the novel approach, which is also borrowed from the west, and the language, which is the tongue of that other world. No mention is made regarding the source of the novel approach; however, it is known that the internal experts have not made any serious attempt in changing the general approach and paradigm of language teaching.

In terms of theological issues, the preface refers to the God's mercy that materials developers could prepare the current program for the high school students since it was the main aim to revolutionize the system of education through embedding a novel theoretical and methodological approach into the materials development in general and English textbooks in particular. This, further, becomes value-laden, as it is indicated that the learners need to

approach the textbook thoughtfully, rationally, and consciously and consider the goals and the values of the skill learning.

In addition, it clarifies the values and aims of the current textbook, indicating that the innate aesthetic approach taken by the textbook focuses on the rationality and thoughtfulness as well as the independent learning within a "healthy, happy, value-laden, purposeful, active, dynamic, meaningful, interactional and effective" environment. These are all abstract concepts that could show the opposite concern that is part of the educational system. In other words, it should be asked why the authors are concerned about such general aims if they assume or feel that they lack them in the real classroom environment. This could be supported by the claims that the new planning worked on in the new textbook series caters for a scientific-epistemological, logical, and culturally correct approach which is all in all in line with the "values of the Islamic-national identity".

The textbooks also have to follow that Islamic "value-laden" approach. This Islamicity of the textbook is further emphasized indicating that the qualification of the language teaching has a monotheism attitude so far as the "aims, contents, teaching technique, [and] assessment" are concerned. When it is claimed that monotheism is the attitude of all components of the education, one might become aware that the other could mean non-monotheistic, or rather a secular approach. This is another force of resistance, hidden within the lower layers of the perspective provided in this section as if the approach borrowed lacks monotheism as an attitude so that when imported, it has to pass through such a filter.

In relation to the learners' roles, they are expected to be active members of the learning process. They are not merely to memorize the content of the textbook but actually be the users of the information they gain and analyze and criticize the educational content. They have to contribute to the increase

of knowledge and spiritual activities. In addition, the theoretical approach to language teaching is linked to the theological conceptualization of a proper individual in the Islamic society. It is claimed that the qualitative learning of language and skills means the enrichment of productive skills such as speaking and writing and this has to be in line with the question raising and responsive spirit of the learners. This spirit is much advised and encouraged from the Quranic perspective, that the Muslims need to be thinkers, rational, scientific, believers in God, and correct doers and moralists. The idea of a foreign identity has to be domesticated in its Islamic form so that meaningful learning would be realized as "a constant and consistent divine behavior". This is not to push the learners away due to such a spiritual manner of theory and practice would be prevalent across the textbooks, but that it is put forth in a scientific, culturally acceptable, and educationally sound content. This means that the theological claims and objectives set forth are to be meaningful and entertaining for the learners, so that the form and content are in alignment with the "productive cultural manifestation", meaning that proper cultural behaviors and axioms are to be introduced to the learners.

The learners are not assumed to be passive receivers of the knowledge, but producers and critical thinkers of the content of the materials provided in the textbook. Learners are not only scientifically involved but are claimed to be spiritually active in the tasks of the class. The dangers of encountering a secular world from which the English language emerges is countered through the spiritual involvement and encouragement from the policy-makers.

The Iranian materials developers and policy-makers deem it appropriate that they have to respond and write back in order to play a contributive and active role against the knowledge they have imported. They have to reflect, and also criticize and analyze the contents so that they can make a scientific and spiritual contribution to the process of learning. The learner has to be a

questioner, he has to be responsible in his answers, not because this is the idea and the research result of an effective learning process borrowed from the novel approach from the west, but because the holy script of the Muslims, the Quran, believes that. The man in such a theological paradigm should be made no matter what the means are, whether the English language of the west or any other course. This is the umbrella philosophy of the whole language education, but it becomes more evident in the case of learning English because the language, in its general sense, is the main tool of the Quran, and English at the same time is the language of the wider communication, as believed by the materials developers, and the language of the western imperialism. So, if Muslim believers are to acquire the means of the west, they do not have to diverge to the path of their understanding, but actually keep God's path ahead. They have to realize that it is not just a matter of learning knowledge, but a type of understanding and human making which is happening through language in this case. The idea of culture comes with the adjective "positive", to indirectly emphasize the negative side of the concept, since learning the language means learning the foreign culture as well. But it should be stated that the textbook tries so much to inject the "Islamic-national" conceptualization within the contents of the textbook, as stated previously, that the culture of the content is considered in its ideologically appropriate manner. This is not only an educational resistance but also a cultural one, for the learner has to be in line with Islamic spirituality. The interaction has to be independent relying on the domestic values of the country, not much related to what the liberal universalism claims. This is another type of resistance on its ideological, linguistic, cultural, and spiritual levels.

There are other theoretical underpinnings between the lines. For example, at the end of the preface, it is claimed that "the human innateness (which is a religious and spiritual one in the underlying conceptualization of the general

educational system), the general aesthetic innateness, and the state and place of science and epistemology" are all within the 20-year prospect of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, the learning of a foreign language, in particular English, which is the language of the world is to initiate the communication of values to be "meaningful, effective, productive, and self-reliant".

The first supreme leader's saying, a fixed part in almost all of the textbooks, indicate that "the learning of a foreign language was not needed previously, while today it is a must", so that the ideologies of the Islamic revolution could be spread throughout the world. In other words, the English language is taken as a means to export the values and ideals of the ideology of the Islamic government.

#### *Prospect/ Vision series<sup>7</sup>*

The preface focuses on God, and the twelfth Imam, who is peculiar to a particular sect of the Muslim society, the one very populated in Iran, and the governing and ideological system of which supports that firmly. The preface moves on to the nationality of the Muslims since Iran is an Islamic country. Iran introduced by the text, is a "powerful and integrated" one, having loads of achievements in the international community so far as science, culture, and research are concerned. Therefore, it is believed that the country has loads of resources, which need to export them, and one of the very serious and significant means of doing so is to learn the international language of the time, i.e. English.

A similar religious attitude is observed in the *Vision's* preface, firstly thanksgiving God and the survivor of the Shia faith of Islam, the generosity of both of which could provide the new series of English language textbooks to be used by the students and teachers. The paragraph mentions the

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<sup>7</sup> For the sake of reference, all quotations are extracted from Appendix C.

importance that the national curriculum has put in learning a foreign language in general, and the English language in particular. In other words, the foreignness of the language is mostly associated with the English language. This is true for the foreign culture, more particularly English, or those countries associated with the language.

Not only is the textbook one of the achievements of the country, but it is supposed to introduce the achievements to the rest of the world. The educational system in general, and the current textbook in particular, are supposed to open up the horizons of development for all the coming generations of the country, i.e. the students who are studying such textbooks. This is much to refer to the self-awareness of the people who have produced and who are supposed to use the textbook (the students and the teachers).

So far as the approach toward language is concerned, the prefaces consider language, not a cultural practice, but a means, a material one, to exchange ideas and products, most particularly the scientific, cultural, and research outcomes of the country. Two words are significant in this regard: "interaction and understanding". In a way, the orientation is to align with the international community, to interact, and come into terms with the other nations. This can be achieved through the English language as the text claims. However, it also assumes that the language of the wider community of the world is English while we know that there are many major nations and economic giants like China, and Japan, which are reinforcing their own language. But the point is that the western countries, i.e. western Europe and most dominantly the United States use the English language for interaction and understanding and they are doing so at the expense of other languages, making a hegemony of language (Pennycook, 1998), or what is particularly known in the literature as linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 1992). In a way, it could be said that there is a hybrid give and take within the preface. On the

one hand, the paragraph focuses on the religious identity, the Islamicity of the country, and its great manifestations, and on the other, it relies on the language of the empire to export such achievements.

In terms of language teaching issues, the general paradigm of the teaching philosophy is claimed to be communicative, via a self-believing nature. However, one can realize that despite the fact that the textbook relies on the domestic scientific research and their findings in language teaching and textbook production, there is still the shades of foreign, and mostly western style of textbook production, since being communicative, before being worldwide, is a production of the western community of language teaching industry. There is no mention of language teaching methods in the history of Iran's scientific community, let alone that this current textbook can benefit from the Islamic and/or Iranian one. Thus, the resistance toward the foreign methods of teaching, as the preface suggests to be indicated in the general educational document of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is merely a general attitude of resistance, not a practical one. This latter argument is explicitly mentioned "as the communitive approach dominating the first-grade high school textbook does not necessarily indicate borrowing from the opinions of the western researchers in communication approaches and methods" (p. 1, Prospect, 1). One might be tempted to think that whether there really is any other alternative to do so. In fact, if being communicative is not a western production of approach and method, what it is then. Indeed, there is a serious conflict over the identity of the textbook as a means for the educational system to educate learners, to make the future Islamic-Iranian citizens of the country capable of speaking a foreign language, but without being integrated to the foreign (western) way of thinking, approaches, and methods. Since the approaches and methods can bring about speakers with that communicative orientation, as what some would put under communicative imperialism (see

Siu-Nam Lee, 1988), that is, the way the speakers interact following the way the empire interacts. In other words, communicative imperialism brings about a framework of interaction for others, to suggest that what communicative behaviors are accepted in the wider context of interaction, being on its own account in line with the linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 1992) and enforcement of their nature of being and doing on others. What the textbook writers focus on is the cultural and diverse paths of life prevailing in the country. The textbook tries to avoid falling into the trap of being English, both in the teaching and learning of language. As a result, it tries to be communitive, not in a way of the western type, and embed the Islamic-Iranian culture, not to be merged into the Englishness of language it brings along.

The same core argument discussed above is true for teaching the alphabet. The orientation of the preface seems to ignore the achievements of the past; however, when it comes to the real practice of teaching, the preface admits that it should borrow from the "modern" techniques of teaching the alphabet. But this admission is a hybrid and ambivalent reaction to what can be acceptable and educationally sound. This is because, the preface reacts negatively to the "modern" techniques, insisting that what it means by modern does not necessarily mean western, since the co-text indicates that the west is not acceptable, and the Islamic and Iranian cultural practice should be kept intact.

The active communicative approach as well as the self-awareness perspective toward teaching and learning of English for the series means not to look at other western approaches of the kind for their teaching methodology, but rather they stand on their own feet. This is particularly evident in the higher education documents published by the ministry of education (Reform document, 2011), to inform the whole bodies of the educationalist that the Islamic Republic of Iran does not need nor is it

necessary to borrow any liberal kinds of education. This might not be clearly mentioned but is assumed underlying the texture of the documents as well as the prefaces. This self-awareness that the prefaces insist on suggests a serious resisting approach toward what is happening on the other side of the globe and academic spheres. Since most of what we know about language teaching comes from the liberal, and western centers of academics (Pennycook, 1994), the philosophical underpinnings of the education in general and the English textbook (the language being the language of the west) in particular rejects the idea of being entrapped in the system. The textbook producers and the educationalist need to be aware so that they can follow their own path. The communication needs to be active so that they play the role of the agents of the communication, not passive receivers of what the procedure of language teaching and learning is provided by the western (rather imperial) approaches of language teaching. But what seems to be ambivalent in the text is the mere idea that the understanding we have on being communicative comes from the western side. We have become aware of the self, or merely we have been triggered to be aware because of the existence of the other (Boroujerdi, 1996). There is this imperial other, this western alternative that has made the resistance active. We need to be active because there is the activity in our supposed "other". Otherwise, we would not challenge the other, or being forced to react. This feeling of anxiety of insisting on their own identity, that we are following not the western approach but our own particular active communicative, and self-aware approach shows our critical condition both within our being and the educational system.

The preface claims that "effective and correct teaching of the current textbook cannot be possible without studying the teacher's book". This is a hegemonic approach toward practicing the content of the textbook in class.

The instructors of the course are pushed to have a harmonious and coherent realization of teaching and learning the current package.

There is a reference to the teacher's book and the audio CD, specifically a section titled "over the sky", which gives a sense of general understanding of the land below. This metaphor, given that the land could be understood as the textbook, gives a strong omniscient power to the teacher who has to master the appropriate and necessary knowledge in order to take control of the land/textbook, and more likely the English class.

In relation to learners' roles and language learning issues, the general goal for students is to read the English sentences with an English, "correct intonation", as claimed by the preface. One finds a hybrid, though, ambivalent attitude toward the expression of English. Intonation, as we know it, is very deeply seated in the language (Speer and Ito, 2009), the very essence of language. As the studies on first language acquisition suggest (*ibid*), the very first aspect of language that children learn is the intonation of the language, suggesting that it is prevalent and is a sign of the core aspects of the language. Part of the meaning and form of the language is embedded in the intonation (Ohala, 1984; Gussenhoven, 2002). Now, given that the users of the *Prospect* series are second language learners, it seems that the orientation toward sounding English tries to enforce an English intonation and accent on the learners. But the learners of the current textbook are supposed to resist that, keeping their own identity intact, they can very confidently reproduce a Persian, indeed Iranian intonation contours, however strange it might be. This is commonly found in other types of Englishes, like those of Indian, African, and so on (Schneider, 2007). However, the surface resistance of the general language approach is contrasted with the deep-seated reaction to the technicality of the language acquisition.

Furthermore, the text focuses on the instrumental aspect of language learning as a resisting reaction and program, since there are several indications regarding the Iranian and Islamic identity of the Iranians, which need to be protected and promoted. This is so because not only the nature of the identity is Islamic and then Iranian, but also its future should be so. In other words, the language learning, here English, should not orient toward integrational learning into the foreign language and culture, but only that it should export the achievements and increase the practical abilities of the people.

#### ***All packages in one***

The analysis of the prefaces of the three packages could put forth several themes. In the following tables the themes are extracted and the areas of change for the eclectic postcolonial analysis, as described in the literature review, will be discussed. There are four different themes categorized based on 1. Identity, resistance, and cultural issues, 2. The conceptualization of language and textbooks' theological aspect, 3. Teachers' and learners' roles, 4. The role of textbooks.

In the first table, the themes in the three series regarding identity, resistance, and cultural issues are sketched.

Table 1.

#### *Identity, Resistance, and Cultural Issues*

<b><i>Graded series</i></b>	<b><i>Right Path to English</i></b>	<b><i>Prospect/Vision</i></b>
The export of the political achievement of the revolution	The inter-cultural and economic relations tied to English	Focus on national and Islamic identity
Colonialism's pressure on the country	The positive sides of the west being acquired and the negatives washed away	Iran is a powerful and integrated country with scientific and cultural achievements

## A POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS PREFACES OF IRANIAN

<b>Graded series</b>	<b>Right Path to English</b>	<b>Prospect/Vision</b>
Cultural attack and the corresponding resistance	The correct culture and Islamic ideology to be spread	The goal of education is to export the achievements of the country
The duality of Us (truth) and Them (Evil)	Worries about the side effects of learning the language	A hidden cultural attack embedded throughout the textbook
Independence and cutting ties with the West		Modernity not equivalent to western, but that the Islamic identity to be kept intact
Crying for the western language but avoiding its culture		Domestication of the scientific findings to wash away the western negative consequences
Resistance against western culture and emphasis on the Islamic one		Emphasis on the identity due to the anxiety raised by the Other
Return to the pure Islam and omitting anything foreign		Interaction with the rest of the world but keeping the Iranian-Islamic identity
		The achievements of the holy country to be exported to the rest of the world

It seems that at the beginning of the textbook production, under the Islamic Republic of Iran's government, the textbooks seem to be in direct opposition with western imperialism, and more particularly colonialism. The *Graded* textbooks, published in the post-revolution period, aim to cut their ties with the western hegemony. Moreover, this contradiction is instituted through establishing a dual Us-Them dichotomy (in the case of reversed colonialism, Arata, 1990) to define the status of each within the educational sphere. One needs to realize that the new conceptualization is against the previous monarchy system and the new textbooks aimed to be spiritual and Islamic. The themes of the forgotten Islam have to be resurrected (as generally

suggested by ideologues of Iran like Shariati, 2009), and there has to be a serious attempt at returning to pure Islam. It goes without saying that the first series assumed that the holy system is under direct attack from the western cultural hegemony, and this resistance has to be established through acquiring the language of the very west but keeping the Islamic identity firm in place through exporting the political achievements of the new revolutionary system of governing. In other words, there is a quick political response toward the west; however, note that in general, the textbook is basically constructed before the Islamic revolution. In the late 1990s (the second series) this direct opposition changes its nature, as it focuses more on the cultural conflict. There is constant anxiety underlying the texture of the textbook as it is aimed to have intercultural and economic relations with the wider world community, but it should be cautiously approached since there is the possible danger of cultural intervention through language. There is a constant emphasis on the Islamic ideology, through Islamicization of the textbooks and the reliance on the internal sources and ideology, being at risk under the western hegemony and this is sensed to happen through learning the foreign language. In the last case scenario of the textbook, *Prospect/Vision*, this opposition becomes more hidden. There is constant cultural anxiety between the country and the west; however, one comes to this idea that the country feels more confident in its scientific and cultural power and these are to be exported to the world through the English language. It is an accepted belief that the country needs relation with the world, but the Iranian-Islamic identity still has to be kept intact, as there is much anxiety of influence over the identity of the learners; though, through domestication of the knowledge and science of the west, it is expected to stand against the hegemony. This is a peculiar form of in-betweenness (Bhabha, 1994), neither the same nor particular to the own initiation.

Table 2 of the themes concerns the conceptualization the textbooks have regarding the language they are presenting and their theological concerns.

Table 2.

*The Conception of Language and its Theological Aspect in the Textbooks' Prefaces*

<b>Graded series</b>	<b>Right Path to English</b>	<b>Prospect/Vision</b>
The centrality of God and the axis of religion	Language is the means of social and economic success	Language is a means for interaction with and understanding of the wider world community
	English is the requirement for entering higher education	Focus on the four skills
	Learning the language is not for the sake of the language per se but for making spiritual Muslim humans	The language should be English but the identity Iranian-Islamic
	The centrality of God and the language is understood under a religious perspective	The centrality of God and the survivor

The *Graded Series* does not mention anything regarding their conceptualization of the nature of language; however, in the second series, language is taken as a means of social and economic success. The English language is the door toward success and prosperity, despite the fact that it should be catered for by filtering its cultural influence, that is, the text takes the general regime of truth (Foucault, 1975) established by the general discourse of linguistic imperialism (Philipson, 1992) to make a belief-truth case scenario for the idealization of the English language as the source of success and prosperity (Pennycook, 1994). This follows the same sources of

anxiety the whole educational system has for the possible effect the language could bring about for the learners. In such a line of conceptualization, learners' identity has to be protected, and their Islamic nature is nurtured. The functional aspect of language is further emphasized in the last series, indicating that the language could open the doors for wider communication and merging within the world community, but the system should further focus on the Iranian-Islamic identity of the learners. The educational system knows uncannily (Bhabha, 1994) that the condition for prosperity is there to learn English but it is running away from that as it aims to establish an independent identity. However, one cannot ignore that the discourse in which English imperialism has spread colonizes the mind (Dascal, n.d). It gives the sense of entrapment for both the authorities and learners to be colonized. However, the attempts made through the packages mean that the textbooks as cultural products are not merely in the delayed historical time (colonialism) but play role in the resistant (postcolonial) era, whatever their power of impact might be.

As the community is deemed to be standing on a theological policy of control, it is the centrality of God and Islam which controls the whole system of education. This resistance permeating all through the textbook is not raising at its very deep layer on a scientific ground but actually relies on the spirituality of Islam. Given that there is a sense of cultural attack between the Islamic nation and the west, it is the spiritualism of the religion, at least in its theoretical foundation, that keeps the agents of change (the textbook) to resist. This is a teleological conception since this constant struggle with the west is promised according to this theological interpretation to be won by the Muslims; therefore, when it comes to the attempt by the Islamic nation to respond to a world of hegemony, and use the means of human making and nurturing for the sake of developing agents (learners) of resistance, it is the

centrality of God, and in its narrower conception, the Shia's version of the religion which needs further emphasis. This is true in all the three series; however, while the early *Graded* series generally mentions the case of God, the last *Prospect/Vision* series defines it in narrower terms of Shia't's version, since there is a direct mentioning of the survivor, who deems the west as the Evil and itself as the holy. This latter demarcation is a distinction of Us/Them in its theological figuration. It can be claimed that this type of resistance is actually relying on its source of power of identity. As Rajayi (2017) also indicates the national and religious bases are two of the fundamentals of Iranian history which have been beneficial for resisting different types of cultural and material attacks. Thus, as the dominant ideology is the Shia's version of Islam for the system (see Bashirie, 2013), it bolds the theological manifestation in its cultural production of textbooks.

Table 3 focuses on the themes related to the roles teachers and learners need to play within the educational system and/or the textbooks.

Table 3.

*The Role of the Teacher and Learner in the Textbooks' Prefaces*

<b>Graded series</b>	<b>Right Path to English</b>	<b>Prospect/Vision</b>
Teachers are the agents of change on their own	Reliance on the teacher. Failure is attributed to learners' lack of perseverance	Teachers have to be educated for the novel approach administered by the ministry
	Teachers' need to adhere to the principles set by the ministry	Homogeneity among all the teachers
	The teacher asks, the learner responds	Teachers are omniscient of the language but they have to be guided by the ministry
	The teacher controls the materials and information	Learners have to be aware and agentive

<i>Graded series</i>	<i>Right Path to English</i>	<i>Prospect/Vision</i>
	Learners' must acquire English for their future	
	If learners aim to be productive, they need to acquire English	
	Learners need to be aware due to certain implied dangers	
	Learners need to be critical analysts, aware, and askers.	
	Learners need to be believers in Islam and spiritualism	
	Learners have to write back to the west	
	The agency of the learners is not for the scientific base of the education but the spirituality of Islam	

In the *Graded series*, the teacher is assumed to be an independent agent of change and implementation of the ideologies of the system. It is the individual teacher's ability and being competent in conveying the ideals of the system to the learners; but as the other series are produced, teachers become more reliant on the central educational principles, controlled from the higher offices to practice what they preach. The teacher, moreover, is the all-knowing person, the one who controls everything, not only the true answers and the information are held by the teacher, but also s/he is the one who asks questions. Even if there is a mistake, it is not to the teachers, as representatives of the system, but the learners who are responsible for their failure. This is true for the *Prospect/Vision* series, in shaping a homogenous teaching methodology. The ministry is responsible for the resistance and paving the way for making the correct humans (learners). In other words, as the series is

changed, more power is given to the teachers as agents of the system. This increasing sense of control could be explained in two ways. Firstly, that there is a historical experience and cultural norm among Iranians to be self-indulged (Ghazi Moradi, 2018) they have to control everything and they know how to resolve their social and cultural issues. Secondly, it shows that the system is in a constant state of anxiety to exercise its power against the other who is indirectly believed to have more power (Gandhi, 1998). Note that, in a country where there are problems with the basis of democracy, trusting the agents of education to decide for themselves requires certain degrees of safety and freedom of making a decision, while in rather strictly controlled societies, this cannot be left to the people (Arendt, 1979). The control from the above in this system of education is the anxiety of influence as well as a symbol of uncommon control.

*The Graded* series has nothing to mention regarding learners. This starts from the *Right Path to English*. Once again, the textbook promises the learners that their acquisition of the English can bring them success and prosperity (also attested in Philipson, 1992 analysis). This is the power of the English that has overshadowed the system. On the other side, though, it is the very source of anxiety for the system as well, since learners are cautioned to be aware of their agentive role they are going to play upon learning the foreign language. As the system deems to protect them, they have to be careful that there is a possible danger, that their identity has to be firmly established and they need to learn a language from an Islamic perspective regarding identity. The system shows its particular role for the users of the textbook as it happens in different areas of life. These individuals are supposed to acquire the language of the west and write back to them. That is why they need to be critical analyzers of the knowledge they are to intake. Most of the addressing to the learners happens in the *Right Path to English*, and note that this package

was produced in the first decade of independence and political change. The only case in the *Prospect/Vision* is that learners have to be careful. However, it could also be the fact that the system is merging within the wider world community, and the learners are merely recipients. But the anxiety the textbook has for the learners shows itself in other parts as well.

In the last part, the prefaces emphasize the textbook's role and status in the series.

Table 4.  
*The Role of the Textbooks in the Prefaces*

<i>Graded series</i>	<i>Right Path to English</i>	<i>Prospect/Vision</i>
Islamitization of the words and pictures	Suggested side sources are acceptable for use in the class	The communicative approach is focused, which is a western approach
Emphasis on educational and life values	Textbooks' framework is based on the scientific findings	Searching for the best method, what is modern
	Avoidance of using L1, and the partial teaching of grammar	The topics are more universal
	The textbook knows what the teacher and students do, think and understand	Communicative and self-awareness approaches are focused
	All the four skills are to be focused	Independence of the textbook
	Axioms: healthy, interactional, happy, value-laden, goal-based, dynamic, meaningful, and effective	

The last set of themes concerns the effect the textbook per se has for the system. The sudden political change during the course of publishing the *Graded series* after the revolution needs the Islamitization of the textbooks. However, this is not to be the case for education, but rather the life skills are

also emphasized. This latter point becomes absent in further series, as the mere educational and ideological underpinnings are bolder in their expression. In the case of *Right Path to English*, the textbook tries to borrow the findings of the scientific community for its construction, which is also true for the *Prospect/Vision*; however, the general teaching/learning approach is the finding of the west, and note that this western approach is in certain occasions suggested being avoided. But the value-laden conception and the meaningful goal setting are not only mentioned in the *Right Path to English* but also marginally emphasized. There is, however, a better understanding and alignment with the world understanding of language teaching, at least in theory, in the later series, since the idea of communicative approach is very deeply emphasized in the *Prospect/Vision*. The *Right Path to English* tries to indirectly borrow the findings of the west but more importantly relies on the ideological foundation of the country. This is also true in the case of *Prospect/Vision*, but note that more acceptance is given to the western approach to teaching, and it seems that further self-reliance could be attributed to the package since it claims that it is standing on its very own framework of materials development. The latest textbook is actually merging further into the international textbook as more universal topics are chosen (e.g. art and culture in *Vision 2*; Renewable energy in *Vision 3*); nevertheless, there is still anxiety behind the materials.

### Conclusion

To put all pieces of the puzzle together, one can conjecture on the general picture of the textbooks. First of all, the textbooks throughout have constant anxiety that the learning of a foreign language can influence the learners' identity. There is a decipherable war in the lines of the prefaces that the learners need to be protected, and resist next to their teachers against this

cultural invasion. This case of the anxiety of influence is also stated by Gandhi (1998) in explaining the cultural situation of the postcolonial nations. However, it is a particular case for Iran, since it is anxious about loss from an Islamic perspective. The prefaces try to write back by a means of the west (Ashcraft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2002). The textbook attests that the future and the economic prosperity of the nation are much indebted to the English but it is in the danger of losing its Iranian-Islamic identity. There is a dual ambivalence concerning the exposure to the language. However, this uncanniness (Bhabha, 1994) is not clearly productive in its outcome. While a hybrid individual or system can bloom a new paradigm, the system knows indirectly, though with reluctance, that it has to accept that it needs the west to develop; however, this development is constantly anxiously fluctuated between hopeful and disastrous outcome, unproductive hybridity of rejecting on the one hand, and acceptance on the other, neither this nor the other, but actually none. It mimics the other (*ibid*) but it rejects it at the same time. As the series is changed, more confidence is shed through the texture of the producers. Nonetheless, anxiety has become deep-seated and more indirectly manifested. This resistance in the background of the textbook is mentioned constantly to the learners, teachers, and the whole body of the educational system. The agents of change and practitioners of the textbook are to be aware, and critical of the language and its culture, so that they might not be influential, despite the fact that in theory, the conceptualization of the nature of language is a means of mere communication. The goals are to open the doors of the Islamic country and export the political (in early series) to scientific and cultural objectives (in later series). This attempt is happening within a theologically Islamic nature. There is the other to be cautioned against, and the self which is anxiously stepping forward; however, it is not trusting the other, though it is using the means and the tools of the other.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the general perspective of the prefaces shows that the packages are entrapped in a dilemma of either relying on the domestic resources or appropriate the western English speaking models of textbook production. However, the constant shuffling between the two has resulted in a tragic attempt of production and the resistance dominant in the prefaces seems to be futile as there is not much internal theoretical foundation and resources.

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