Assessment and Analysis of Writing Activities of Secondary High School English Textbooks: Vision Series

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Abstract

Writing is one of the four skills of language learning, especially, one of the skills of practical communication in a communicative approach. The purpose of this research is to evaluate and analyze writing activities of the writing sections of secondary high school English textbooks, grades 10th, 11th and 12th, so-called vision 1, 2, 3. The theoretical framework of this research, a descriptive-analytical and qualitative method, was based on Kern's (2007) and Harmer's (2004) model and continuum of writing activities. The writing activities of these vision books were divided into three major categories of controlled, guided and free writing and fifteen more sub-categories. The exercises and activities of the writing section of these six-volume English textbooks, so-called vision 1,2,3 were counted on and the average and percentage of each category were calculated based on Kern's (2002) and Harmer's (2004) model and continuum of writing. The findings of this research indicate that the categories of controlled writing and copying, the first item of Kern's continuum, are the dominant writing tasks in these books. Activities concerning the guided, and especially the free writing activities in these books are rarely seen or they have not been much carefully regarded. In the communicative approach, regarding the goods and the existing requirements, the teaching of writing is generally concerned with free writing tasks. Therefore, to enhance and promote practical communication skills as an aim of a communicative approach, free writing skills are inevitable. The findings of this research point out that English teachers can reinforce and enhance their students' practical communication abilities in their classes by using freestyle exercises and hence, cover the shortcomings of the books.

Keywords: writing skill, English books of vision 1, 2, 3, communicative approach, assessment

1. Introduction

Regarding the importance of teaching and learning of English language, as well as, using authentic and useful sources, English textbooks, as the only teaching sources, play an important role in this regard. Nobody can deny the significance of using textbooks in teaching students in all grades of school so that even in today's advanced forms and means of communications in all educated systems throughout the world, textbooks are still the best source of teaching based on the current literature (e.g., Gooniband Shooshtari & Akrami, 2013; Jabbari et al., 2014; Mahmudi & Ahmadi Safa, 1398; Malmir & Bagheri, 2019; Sarani & Talati, 2015). In this connection, Sheldon (1988) says that English textbooks have a critical and significant role in English teaching programs. He believes that using textbooks has many advantages and our education environments are imperfect without the use of these books. Indeed, many researchers, Sheldon and Haycroft included, believe that textbooks are the focal point of English teaching programs. Therefore, textbooks and other teaching materials which in fact are the means for the achievement of the process of the designing of teaching syllables, have to be a reflection of students' requirements, goods, procedures and values of the teaching programs. But Iranian English textbooks have never met the needs of English teachers and learners (Taghipour Zahir, 1385).

Without any doubt, there are many obstacles to teaching English here in our educational system, one of which is the textbooks, and because of a variety of reasons, they haven't much helped the process of language teaching. In doing so, the educational system of the country is trying to institutionalize the document for the fundamental changes of the ministry of education, ratified by the supreme council of ministry of education and the supreme council of Cultural Revolution. Also in presenting a national syllabus for teaching materials (1391), they have replaced older English textbooks with the newer ones, so-called Visions in order to teach all four skills of language and to familiarize students with communicative skills, in an overall framework of orientation. The introduction of the above-named document reads:

Foreign language teaching prepares a suitable ground for comprehending, receiving and cultural transactions as well as transferring of human achievements in various forms of language, namely, oral, visual and written for different people and purposes based on Islamic criteria frameworks (National program document, 1391, p.37).

Considering the emphasis on four language skills and communicative ones, the skill of writing is an important aspect of communication of which we can, for example, refer to E-mail as an increasing means of communication for ideas and information. In writing, practical communication is carried out through the presentation of information, and ideas via the means of text writing (Niisato, 2000). Despite all advantages and uses as well as the significance of textbooks in teaching language, some experts believe that they are not always efficient enough and may have some shortcomings. Allwright (1981), for instance, believes that textbooks are not flexible enough and they are mainly under the impact of biases and tenets of their authors. There is also this probability that the principles of teaching presented in these books are rather old, complex or imperfect, or even they might not be written according to the needs of the students. There is a great need

for the experts to analyze and evaluate these textbooks and have a comprehensive and precise assessment of them more than ever (Niknafs, 1383) because the criterion for the quality and worthiness of a book is only possible through a careful and meticulous evaluation of it. Hence, choosing the right method of this assessment must carefully be taken into consideration (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994).

2. Literature Review

In recent years, some studies have been done dealing with the evaluation and assessment of textbooks in Iran, many of which were about the older system of education, junior high school textbooks, high school and pre-university books as well. Some other research works dealt with the textbooks of language institutes, too. Regarding the changing educational system and the newly compiled textbooks for secondary high school level, so-called 'Vision books', there are few studies done concerning this topic. In this section, we briefly check some of the research works done in this connection with the newly-compiled English textbooks in the new system of education (e.g., Abdullahi & Motaghian, 1395; Birjandi & Malmir, 2009; Sodmand Afshar et al., 1397; Taherkhani et al., 1396).

Sodmand Afshar et al. (1397) evaluated and assessed 'Prospect and Vision 1' English textbooks from the viewpoint of inter-culture and over-culture capabilities. The framework of the research is a qualitative method that is based on the Liddicoat model of over-cultural and Byram inter-cultural capabilities (1997, 2000). Their findings showed that these books contained some of the local aspects of culture with an emphasis on grammar and language functions, but they failed to take care of over and intercultural capabilities. Also, the two major samples of "separation of culture from language" and "the Iranization of contents and dialogues of textbooks" have been derived from these studies.

In another research, Taherkhani et al. (1396) assessed and evaluated the newly-compiled English textbook of grade 10th at a nationwide level. The findings of this research point to the strengths and weaknesses of the book, saying that from the viewpoint of content, subject and superficial aspects, it is all right but from the point of view of social and cultural conditions as well as listening skills, it is almost unguidable. The results of the research shows that this book was successful in content, language skills, functionality, appearance and allocation of goals and therefore, could to some extent attract the attention of teachers and students of this level positively. This has also been echoed in some other studies conducted in Iran (e.g., Jalilifar et al., 2018; Khani et al., 2018; Khoshsima & Jahani Farid, 2012; Malmir & Khosravi, 2018; Sarani & Talati, 2015).

In another study, Abdullahi and Motaghian (1395) analyzed and evaluated the English textbook of grade 10th superficially. Their findings show that the assessed book was all right considering major fields and criteria discussed in it and it was also based on scientific principles of syllabus writing. Another research under the title of "An Internal evaluation of new English textbook (Vision 1) for grade 10th from the viewpoint of teachers" was done by Pouran Shirvani (2017). The main findings of this study demonstrate that from the point of view of teachers, English textbook for grade 10th is at an optimal level. Other research works done for the analysis of newly compiled English textbooks are as follows: Ahmadi Safa and Farahani

(1394) "The development of inter-cultural capacity in Prospect 1 according to the viewpoint of teachers", Rezaee and Latifi (1394) "assessment and evaluation of cultural factors and the identity of English textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school (Prospect 1), Sodmand Afshar (1394) "Evaluation and assessment of English textbook for the seventh grade of junior high school (Prospect 1), Adel and Talebian (1394) "Cultural analysis and evaluation of photos in the English textbook of grade seventh (Prospect 1) from students' perspective, Mahmoodi and Moradi (1394) "A qualitative evaluation and critique of English textbook for grade seventh of junior high school (Prospect 1)".

Looking briefly at all the research works done in the field of evaluation and analysis of textbooks, one can simply find out that studies and research works dealing with English textbooks have always been appealing to educational experts, teachers and researchers. These studies are concerned with either institutional books or textbooks of the older system of education and there are few researchers who analyzed and evaluated textbooks of the newly established system of education. Research works done in this field, some of which were mentioned above are indeed limited. Furthermore, an internal analysis of high school English textbooks- so-called Vision 1, 2, 3 has rarely been done. Hence, the present research evaluates and analyzes the writing tasks of the writing section of English textbooks for grades 10th, 11th and 12th, so-called Vision 1, 2, 3. We hope that this research provides useful guidelines for authors, teachers and students of secondary high school leve1.

2.1. Theoretical Grounding

Institutionalization of the document for fundamental changes in the ministry of education on behalf of the supreme council of Cultural Revolution as well as the presentation of the National textbook program started together with the changing of the educational system and compiling and writing of new English textbooks. Its main purpose was to teach and emphasize the four main skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also wanted to familiarize students with communicative skills in a framework of general orientation together with a communicative approach from which the outcome was mainly demonstrated in speaking and writing skills. English textbooks for schools must contain writing activities in order to promote and enhance the practical communication abilities of students. According to Raimes (1893, pp. 5-6), writing means an effective, clear and facilitated transfer of ideas. Writing segments are like the spokes of a wheel, in which each of them represents a special task which writers face with when they produce a writing task. Therefore, due to the importance of the four skills of language teaching, textbooks must include comprehensive, effective and useful tasks and exercises for each skill so that teachers will be able to teach the writing skill efficiently. In schools and language classes, writing tasks are different based on the type of text students practice. The designing of the resources and materials for the writing task for a foreign language class provides a framework for the level of students' writing capacity which they can acquire during their studies. Regarding the importance and the role of teaching materials and learning of the writing skill,

this kind of skill has been greatly taken into consideration in various studies, some of which are: Harmer (2204), Hedge (2008), Hyland (2003), Raimes (1988), Kobayakawa (2008).

2.2. Hyland's Writing Activities Categorization

From the viewpoint of Hyland (2003, pp.112-113), exercises and tasks play important roles in learning writing skills. He believes that these activities help students to enhance their understanding of the text and writing skills. Although texts are as important as writing materials, assignments and activities which are individually done by students are far more significant. Hyland (2003) divides the writing tasks into two categories: 1. Activities and exercises which are based on communicative purposes as well as getting the message across 2. Teaching activities that emphasize the development and promotion of students' writing skills.

2.3. Raimes's Writing Task Categorization

According to Raimes's classification (1983, pp. 5-6), the components of writing tasks are syntax (sentence structure, sentence segments, phrases as well as style selection), grammar (grammatical points), writing mechanism (dictation, punctuation marks), vocabulary selection (words and idioms), organization, content, writer's process (getting ideas, starting writing) listener (audience) and purpose. According to Raimes (1988), for translation and controlled writing, students need to know syntactical writing components, grammar, writing mechanism, word choice. In contrast, in freewriting, all components of writing skills are required.

2.4. Kern's Writing Tasks Classification

Kern (2002, pp. 191-192) draws the most usual type of writing activities on a continuum in which at one end there are activities that put emphasis on official writing and language form and at the other end of the continuum, there are contents and text ideas. This classification of form axis to content axis contains the following: Dictation and copying, grammatical exercises, controlled writing, translation, analytical articles, creative writing, letter writing (E-mail), journal writing, notetaking, free writing.

Figure 1

Kern's Writing Tasks Continuum

Emphasis on formal accuracy							Emphasis on content/ideas
copying, dictation	grammar exercises, controlled writing	translation	analytical essays	creative writing	letter writing e-mail	journal writing	free writing
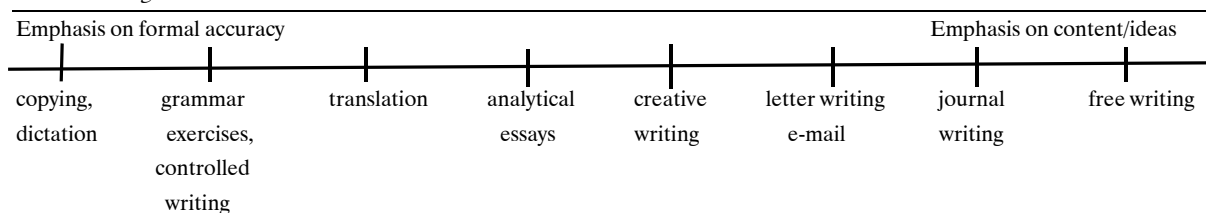
Based on kern's model and continuum (2002, pp. 191-192), copying, grammatical exercises, and controlled writing emphasize grammar, vocabulary and writing mechanism. Creative writing is used to express feelings and emotions. Letter writing with the purpose of communication is considered to be an activity of stimulating writing.

2.5. Harmer's writing Tasks Classification

According to Harmer (2004, pp. 31-34), writing skill contains two major categories: 1. Writing for learning 2. Writing for writing. Writing for learning includes writing for the purpose of producing and reinforcing the learning of vocabulary and grammar, whereas writing for writing requires learning different styles and genres. It is also writing for the goal of being a better writer. From his point of view, writing for learning is in three types: 1. Reinforcement writing 2. Preparation writing 3. Activity writing. Reinforcement writing means reinforcing the grammatical structures or vocabulary taught through writing. He believes that the size of writing can be various as a single sentence to a paragraph or even a complete composition. A sample of this kind of writing is writing sentences using conditional type 3 or describing an individual using the words given. Preparation and activity writings are given to students in order to make them ready for other activities or facilitate other activities. More than writing for learning and writing for writing, Harmer takes into consideration teaching technical segments of writing such as calligraphy, dictation, punctuation marks, making well sentences, paragraphing and text as well. He introduces the two techniques of coping and parallel writing which help students to practice and achieve the principal technical ability in order to use this ability to produce their own creative writings.

2.6. The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the current paper is to assess, evaluate and analyze, descriptively and qualitatively, the writing tasks of the writing section of secondary high school English textbooks for grades 10th, 11th and 12th so-called Vision 1, 2, 3. This descriptive and qualitative assessment and analysis was carried out to determine the type of writing tasks, to find out the possible shortcomings of these books and to solve these problems so as to promote and develop practical communication abilities in a communicative approach. Therefore, the questions of the current research are the following:

1. What kinds of writing tasks and to what extent can they be found in these English textbooks?
2. How are the writing tasks of these books in the writing tasks of Kern's continuum?
3. Based on Harmer's writing tasks model, what skill(s) do the writing tasks of Vision English textbooks develop in students?

3. Research Method

The method used in this research is library and statistical-descriptive one in which writing exercises and activities of the writing section of six volumes of English books of the secondary high school, namely Vision 1, 2, 3 were analyzed and evaluated statistically from the viewpoint of type, goal and position of these activities and tasks based on models of Kern (2002) and Harmer (2004). Kern's model and continuum for writing tasks were used in order to study and determine different types of writing tasks. Since Kern's categories (2002) differentiates between writing tasks in which he practices writing through language skills practices such as grammatical and copying exercises and writing activities in which the emphasis is on final production and the role of a writing piece (for instance, creative writing tasks or the practicing of letter/ email writing). Furthermore, Kobayakawa's criteria for the analysis of writing activities prepared by the use of studies of Kitauchi (1985), Rivers (1981) and Tezuka (1997) were used as well, the studies which were done about the English textbooks in Japan. As a result, the writing activities of six books of Vision, including student's book and workbook, were classified into three major categories:

1. controlled writing 2. Guided writing 3. Freewriting

Controlled writing is generally concerned with the surface of the axis and in this type of writing there is often a complete answer for each question or for a certain activity. There are a series of limited acceptable answers. Guided writing exerts some general instructions on how writing continues. These sorts of activities are often content-based (Raimes, 1983). Citing Komuro (2001) the definition of controlled and guided writings are different based on the opinions of every researcher. In the current research based on the ideas of Byrne (1979), and Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), the activities of controlled writing emphasize the forms of language such as grammatical structures, whereas guided writing activities focus on content (meaning). In this study, every major category has some sub-categories which are classified into fifteen cases. (table 1)

Table 1

Classification of writing activities of Vision English textbooks

Categories of writing	Writing tasks
1) controlled writing	a) copying
	b) arranging words/ phrases/ sentences
	c) filling gaps with the words
	d) combining the sentences
	e) changing a word form
	f) writing a sentence describing a picture/table
	g) replacing words or phrases
2) Guided writing	h) completing a sentence
	i) composing a sentence with given words
	j) writing an answer to a given question
3) Free writing	k) creative writing
	l) writing an opinion, feeling or experience
	m) writing an email, a letter or a postcard
	n) writing what comes next
	o) writing various kinds of texts (brochure, report, diary, essay)

3.1. Research Tools

The current research evaluates and analyzes the writing exercises of the writing section of English textbooks of secondary high school, grades 10th, 11th, 12th so-called Vision 1, 2. 3. It also assesses the writing exercises of the writing section of English workbooks of Visions in the new system of education of the ministry of education. The Iranian educational system in secondary high school includes three grades, tenth, eleventh and twelfth. The English textbooks for each grade are 1. The tenth grade: English 1 so-called Vision 1. the student's book and workbook 2. The Eleventh grade: English 2 so-called Vision 2, the student's book and workbook 3. The twelfth grade: English 3 so-called Vision 3, the student's book and workbook. Each of these books focuses on the four language skills namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. All these books contain various language activities which are organized in different parts of the books. Most of the exercises and activities of these Vision textbooks to some extent require writing skills. Table 2 shows the list of English textbooks of secondary high school level of Ministry of Education which were used in the current research.

Table 2

The List of English Textbooks of Secondary High School Level

Grade	Books		Year
10th	Vision 1, English 1 Student's book	Vision 1, English 1 workbook	1397
11th	Vision 2, English 2 Student's book	Vision 2, English 2 workbook	1397
12th	Vision 3, English 3 Student's book	Vision 3, English 3 workbook	1397

3.2. The Analysis of the Data

Data are indications of realities and instructions and analysis is a process of research. Since the research method is statistical-descriptive, for the analysis of data, descriptive statistics were used. The number of writing activities of each category in secondary high school English textbooks is in percentage and for the analysis of the gathered data as well as the descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage), SPSS software (Version 22) was used.

4. Results and Discussion

The number of the writing activities for each book was counted on. English 1 (Vision 1), an English textbook for the tenth grade contains 23 writing activities in its writing section. The student's book contains 13 tasks and the workbook includes 10 tasks respectively. Table 3 shows the percentage of writing tasks of English textbooks 1 (Vision 1) in three major categories and 15 sub-categories under the title of writing activities. As it is vividly seen in table 3, the copying activity allocates the most percentage of activities of the book to itself, followed by the writing tasks of 'filling the gaps and changing a word form'. The least percentage is given to the guided writing section as well as the writing tasks of 'completing and composing a

sentence'. There aren't any activities related to free writing and its relevant tasks. Replying to the second question of this research and based on the model and continuum of Kern (2002) in which 'dictation and copying' are the first categories of the form axis of writing activities, maximum writing activities of English textbook for grade tenth are found in this category. No activities of dictation are seen in this category of the book, though. Grammar and controlled composition as the second category of Kern's continuum places second in the English textbook for grade tenth. Other categories of Kern's continuum cannot be found in this book. Answering the third question of this research, one can say that these sorts of writing activities in English book 1 for grade tenth, put emphasis on grammatical points and syntactical structures and according to the citation of Harmer, these kinds of activities enhance the writing skills for learning.

The English textbook 2 for the eleventh grade, so-called Vision 2 contains 30 writing activities in its writing section, 16 activities in the student's book and 14 activities in the workbook, respectively. Table 4 represents the percentage of writing activities of English book 2, grade eleventh. According to this table, the components of controlled writing and copying are the dominant tasks of the book and allocate a maximum percentage to themselves. Activities of 'filling the gaps, changing a word form, arranging the words and writing a sentence' are placed next. In the guided writing component, the maximum percentage is concerned with 'completing a sentence' and the minimum percentage goes to 'writing an answer to a question. Replying to the second question of this research, similar to book one, the tenth grade, the maximum percentage of writing tasks goes to the first category of Kern's continuum, namely 'copying'. There are no activities concerning dictation in this book, too. The category of grammar and controlled composition of Kern's continuum places second in writing tasks of English book 2. About fourteen per cent of the writing tasks of the book are related to the category of guided writing. Other categories of Kern's continuum such as translation, analytical articles to free writing don't allocate any writing activities to themselves in this book. Answering the third question of the current research, one can reiterate that the presence of writing tasks relevant to controlled and guided writing demonstrate Harmer's reinforcement of writing skill for learning which mainly emphasizes grammatical points as well as syntactical structures.

The writing activities of the writing section in English book 3 for the twelfth grade (Vision 3) contain 26 writing tasks of which 16 activities are in the student's book and 10 activities in the workbook respectively. As table 5 of the writing activities of Vision 3 shows, the prevalent activity of this book is copying which allocates a high percentage to itself. The components of 'filling the gaps and composing a sentence' are placed second and the components of 'arranging the words, replacing the words and combining the sentences'-subcategories of controlled writing- are placed next. Unlike English books 1 and 2, in this book, English 3, 23% of writing activities are concerned with the component of free writing. The answer to the second question of the current research can be reiterated as: similar to English books 1&2, copying component, the first category of Kern's continuum is the dominant writing activity in this book, too. The components of controlled writing subdivisions such as 'filling the gaps are in the second place' and 'arranging the words and combining the sentences' are placed next. The component of free writing places second amongst the writing activities of the book, although there are no exercises and activities relevant to the sub-categories of this component such as letter writing, an email, writing an opinion and writing various kinds of

tasks. The guided writing component places third regarding the number of writing activities. Answering the third question of this research as well as considering the above-mentioned points, the writing activities of the book mainly emphasize the reinforcement of writing task for Harmer's learning which in turn puts pressure on syntactical structures and grammatical points.

English textbooks 1, 2 and 3 of secondary high school so-called Visions 1, 2, 3 contain 79 writing activities of which 45 belong to student's book and 34 of them are allocated to workbooks. Table 6 demonstrates the writing activities of these six books, namely Vision 1, 2, 3 and their relevant workbooks in their writing sections. As it is shown, the component of controlled writing has the highest percentage and the component of copying is the prevalent task in these six books. In the next places, about 18% of writing activities of controlled writing are for 'filling the gaps' and 11.39% per cent are for 'changing the word form'. Other components of controlled writing have lower percentages. In contrast, the guided writing component places second with a percentage of 15.20% in writing tasks of these books. The component of 'composing a sentence' with 10.13% percent is the highest one among the writing tasks of these books, yet other components of controlled writing are placed next, having a lower percentage. However, writing tasks of free writing component can only be seen in English textbook 3, namely grade twelfth, with the lowest percentage of 7.60% just after the two components of controlled and guided writing, respectively. Even though there are a few free writing tasks in this book, writing tasks connected to this component are limited only to a certain type of exercise such as creative writing. The percentage of free writing component in all these six books wouldn't exceed 8% and exercises of free writing section in Vision 3 of grade twelfth will ultimately be limited to five exercises as well as writing a paragraph about a specific subject. To answer the second question of this research and based on Kern's model and continuum of writing activities, 77% of writing activities of these six books are concerned with controlled writing continuum and the majority of activities are compatible with the first part of Kern's model and continuum, which is copying. For the rest of the writing activities of controlled writing and the guided one, the highest percentages are for 'filling the gaps and changing the word form' with 17.73% and 11.39% respectively. Other components are compatible with Kern's continuum of grammar and controlled composition component. Furthermore, 7.60% of writing activities of secondary high school English textbooks which are about five exercises in English book 3 of the twelfth grade, being only concerned with writing a paragraph about a particular subject, are compatible with creative writing of free writing component. Other components of Kern's writing continuum, such as translation, analytical essays, journal writing and writing various texts don't have any such tasks and activities in these six English textbooks, known as Vision 1, 2, 3. Since the main goal of these Vision books is a communicative approach and in such daily tasks, as letter writing and especially E-mail writing is significantly used, the lack of writing activities relevant to Kern's continuum is quite astonishing. In response to the third question of this research, thus, one should say that since the dominant writing activities of these books are 'copying and controlled as well as guided writing and much emphasis is put on grammatical points and syntactical structures, these sorts of writing tasks in these six English textbooks, known as Visions are mostly concerned with Harmer's reinforcement of writing skill for learning. According to Alavi et al. (1396),

the association of the writing skill section with grammar in English book 1 for tenth grade and its significant closeness to the grammar category redoubles the significance of grammar. The results of this research demonstrate that majority of the writing activities and exercises of the writing section in Vision books 1, 2, 3 for secondary high school are from the controlled type of writing activities. All the books assessed in this research contains a rather low proportion of guided and free writing activities.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of the current research was to have a descriptive, analytical assessment and critique of writing activities in the writing section of six volumes of English textbooks, namely Vision 1, 2, 3 in secondary high school for grades of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth, respectively. The main findings of this research are compatible with the following answers to the questions raised in this research:

1. writing activities of English textbooks (Vision 1, 2, 3) in secondary high school is to a large extent in favor of controlled writing continuum, yet the proportions of the other two writing continuums, namely guided and free writing are too low.

2. Based on Kern's continuum (2004), the majority of writing activities in secondary high school English textbooks -Visions- are placed at the preliminary part of Kern's model and continuum (such as copying, grammar and controlled composition), nonetheless, the middle and final parts of the continuum which are mainly free writing are barely pointed out.

Putting the writing activities of English textbooks 1, 2, 3 in Kern's continuum, especially at the preliminary part of it, and according to Harmer (2004), we conclude that these sorts of writing tasks, firstly reinforce the skill of writing for learning in students and secondly they seem to be useful for the reinforcement and learning of grammatical points as well as syntactical structures. Since the purpose of the secondary high school English textbooks- Vision 1, 2,3- is a communicative approach, more efforts are needed to reinforce the students' practical communication skills in the writing section to direct the teaching of writing skill in a way to better fulfil the appointed and pre-determined goals. Therefore, the purpose of teaching writing skill in secondary high school English textbooks should be the promotion and reinforcement of students' practical abilities through additional opportunities for free writing. Nevertheless, as the researched English textbooks contain guided activities in their writing section, there are very few free writing tasks. There is a great doubt that such an imbalanced composition in the current writing activities would ever succeed to bridge the gap for more abilities of students in free writing which in turn is the outcome of a communicative and productive approach. It is vividly obvious that regarding Kern's model and continuum (2004), there is a meaningful gap between controlled and free writing in the writing section of English textbooks (Vision 1, 2 3). We should here point out that writing activities of English textbooks in secondary high school researched in this study are assessed based on their forms, not their contents. The result of this research shows how we should take more care to assist students to develop fully independent writing rather than learning simple grammar and vocabulary which of course are rudimentary requirements for the skill of writing. Based on the findings of this research, we suggest that in order to fill the meaningful

gap between controlled writing and freewriting, more guided writing exercises and activities, as well as special writing tasks for free writing exercises be added to the writing section of these English textbooks. It is also recommended that to resolve the limitations and probable shortcomings of the writing section of Vision English textbooks 1, 2, 3, more research be carried out regarding the contents and continuities of writing tasks. We hope that the results of this research will help textbook authors, researchers as well as teachers to take constructive steps to resolve and remove the shortcomings and impediments which hinder the process of English teaching and learning.

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Appendix

Table 3

Writing Activities of English Textbook for Tenth Grade (Vision 1)

Types of writing	stage	activities	Vision 3	Workbook 3	Vision 3 &workbook
1)Controlled composition	copying	Copying words/phrases/sentences	6 (37.5%)	3 (30%)	9 (34.60%)
		Arranging words/phrases/sentences	1 (6.25%)	1 (10%)	2 (7.69%)
		Filling gaps with the words	2 (12.5%)	1 (10%)	3 (11.53%)
	Recombination	Replacing words or phrases	0	1 (10%)	1 (3.85%)
		Combining sentences	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.85%)
		Changing a word form	0	0	0
		Writing a sentence describing a picture/table	0	0	0
	Translation	Direct translation of a sentence	0	0	0
		Completing a sentence	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.85%)
2) Guided composition	Guided writing	Composing a sentence with given words	1 (6.25%)	2 (20%)	3 (11.54%)
		Writing an answer to a given question	0	0	0
		Writing an opinion, feeling or experience	0	0	0
3) Free composition		Writing an email, postcard or letter	0	0	0
		Writing what comes next	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.85%)
		Writing various kinds of texts (brochure, report, diary, etc	0	0	0
	Free writing	creative writing	3 (18.75%)	2 (20%)	5 (19.24%)
	Total		16	10	26

Table 4

Writing Tasks of English Textbook, Grade Eleven-Vision 2

Types of writing	stage	activities	Vision 2	Workbook 2	Vision 2 &workbook
1)Controlled composition	copying	Copying words/phrases/sentences	6 (37.5%)	5 (35.71%)	11 (36.66%)
		Arranging words/phrases/sentences	1 (6.25%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (6.66%)
		Filling gaps with the words	3 (18.75%)	4 (28.57%)	7 (23.33%)
	Recombination	Replacing words or phrases	0	0	0
		Combining sentences	0	0	0
		Changing a word form	2 (12.5%)	1 (7.14%)	3 (10%)
	Translation	Writing a sentence describing a picture/table	0	1 (7.14%)	1 (3.34%)
		Direct translation of a sentence	0	0	0
		Completing a sentence	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.34%)
2) Guided composition	Guided writing	Composing a sentence with given words	3 (18.75%)	1 (7.15%)	4 (13.33%)
		Writing an answer to a given question	0	1 (7.15%)	1 (3.34%)
		Writing an opinion, feeling or experience	0	0	0
3) Free composition		Writing an email, postcard or letter	0	0	0
		Writing what comes next	0	0	0
		Writing various kinds of texts (brochure, report, diary ,etc	0	0	0
	Free writing	creative writing	0	0	0
	Total		16	14	30

Table 5

Writing Tasks of English Book for Grade Twelve- Vision 3

Types of writing	stage	activities	Vision 3	Workbook 3	Vision 3 &workbook
1)Controlled composition	copying	Copying words/phrases/sentences	6 (37.5%)	3 (30%)	9 (34.60%)
		Arranging words/phrases/sentences	1 (6.25%)	1 (10%)	2 (7.69%)
		Filling gaps with the words	2 (12.5%)	1 (10%)	3 (11.53%)
	Recombination	Replacing words or phrases	0	1 (10%)	1 (3.85%)
		Combining sentences	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.85%)
		Changing a word form	0	0	0
		Writing a sentence describing a picture/table	0	0	0
	Translation	Direct translation of a sentence	0	0	0
2) Guided composition	Guided writing	Completing a sentence	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.85%)
		Composing a sentence with given words	1 (6.25%)	2 (20%)	3 (11.54%)
		Writing an answer to a given question	0	0	0
3) Free composition		Writing an opinion, feeling or experience	0	0	0
		Writing an email, postcard or letter	0	0	0
		Writing what comes next	1 (6.25%)	0	1 (3.85%)
		Writing various kinds of texts (brochure, report, diary, etc	0	0	0
	Free writing	creative writing	3 (18.75%)	2 (20%)	5 (19.24%)
	Total		16	10	26