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Investigating Vocabulary Teaching Strategies in Vision 1: Insights from the Mindscapes Theory

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Abstract

Textbooks and their components, particularly words, are important in a teaching-learning process. This study aims to investigate the critical vocabulary strategies in Vision 1 based on mindscapes (Carter, 2013). This descriptive-analytical research studies the contextual clues, word parts, figurative language, vocabulary enhancement, consolidation, bias and tone recognition and intended meaning as critical strategies in Vision 1. The English textbook for tenth grade students in Iran is a sample unit. The data of strategies were collected and analyzed through a reliable and valid research-made worksheet involving 24 techniques. The results revealed that the qualitative category of critical vocabulary learning strategies was moderate. Bias and tone recognition and contextual clues were the most frequent and intended meaning, and figurative language were respectively the least employed strategies. High frequent uses of employing bias and tone, contextual clues and consolidation strategies were Vision 1's strengths helping learners to develop their vocabulary. However, the infrequent use of intended meaning, figurative language, and the lack of focus on breaking down words into parts were recognized as weaknesses that may limit learners' opportunities to develop morphological awareness of vocabulary acquisition.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Vision 1, Critical strategies, Textbook, Contextual clues.

I | INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a crucial role in the process of learning a language. A person who lacks knowledge of vocabulary has to struggle to formulate even a single coherent sentence. Researchers in the field of English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) have highlighted the significance of vocabulary in language acquisition. According to various studies (Harmon, et al., 2009; Linse & Nunan, 2005; Yokubjonova, 2020), vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are the three key components of a language, with vocabulary being the most important (Bai, 2018, p.1). When it comes to communication, vocabulary does play a significant role as students must know a sufficient number of words before other skills (Adam, 2016, p. 26).

Learning a second or foreign language is very challenging, particularly when it comes to acquiring new vocabulary. Both instructors and learners are supposed to make use of approaches to learn new words effectively and efficiently. Strategies for vocabulary acquisition play a crucial role as they engage students in active learning, create meaningful learning experiences, provide motivation to learn new

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words, and enhance language proficiency (Indriyani, 2019). These strategies are essentially the actions or behaviors that learners adopt to improve the effectiveness of their learning (Qiufang, 2003).

In the process of learning a new language, teachers, students, and textbooks are the key elements (Gholami et al., 2024). If any of these components is not adequate, difficulties may arise, making the learning process challenging or even impossible. Nowadays, a variety of learning materials are used to assist students in their language acquisition journey. Textbooks, in particular, are widely recognized for their crucial role in educational systems worldwide. They serve as valuable tools for teachers in designing courses and for students in gaining knowledge. However, for textbooks to effectively support learning, they must employ proven teaching strategies, updated methods, and theories that address the needs of learners. By incorporating these elements, textbooks can foster student involvement and active learning and enhance the overall quality of education (Torkar et al., 2022).

Understanding language requires a good grasp of vocabulary. The more words we are familiar with, the better we can comprehend written and spoken language. Our vocabulary also influences how effectively we communicate in speaking and writing. Given the importance of vocabulary in all language skills and in academic and personal life, there has been significant focus and research on strategies for learning vocabulary. These studies aim to determine which methods are most effective and commonly used by learners. However, not much research has been conducted on vocabulary learning strategies specifically in EFL textbooks, which are viewed as crucial for language instruction and essential for students' vocabulary acquisition. Although some studies have explored Vision 1 (Khodabandeh & Mobini, 2018; Pouranshirvani, 2017; Gheitasi et al., 2020; Mizbani et al. 2020; Asakereh et al., 2019), no research has looked into the vocabulary learning strategies employed in this book using a critical approach (Carter, 2013). Thus, this study aims to fill the gap of research on critical vocabulary acquisition strategies in Vision 1, the English textbook for tenth graders in Iran. The study analyzes the vocabulary strategies of the book and assess its strengths and weaknesses to increase awareness among teachers and students regarding the importance of critical vocabulary learning strategies. The goal is to provide insights that can assist educators and textbook authors in enhancing the quality of vocabulary instruction in educational materials.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

A lot of quality studies have been conducted to analyze the content of textbooks using various methods. However, the authors have not found any research specifically focusing on critical vocabulary strategies. As a result, this part will discuss some recent studies related to Vision 1.

The studies conducted on Vision 1 indicate that its content lacks diversity in situational contexts, characters, and cultural representation. Consequently, it offers limited scope for teachers to incorporate sociolinguistic and sociocultural dimensions of English into their instruction (Asakereh et al., 2019). Moreover, the internal evaluation of Vision 1 suggests that it needs to be adapted (Pouranshirvani, 2017). Content evaluation of Vision 1 did not reveal any evidence of activities designed to promote higher-order cognitive skills within the four language skills. The activities involving speaking, reading, and writing were found to be focused on lower- order thinking skills such as applying, understanding, and remembering rather than promoting high-order thinking skills in students (Mizbani et al., 2020).

A very recent study by Asadi and Amani (2025) investigated Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of the communicative approach implemented in Vision 1. The findings revealed that teachers rated the vocabulary component of the textbook as poor, suggesting a gap between the intended vocabulary instruction in the book and the practical needs of classroom learners. However, as Asadi and Amani (ibid) focused on teacher perceptions rather than direct content analysis, no study to date has systematically examined the actual vocabulary strategies embedded in Vision 1 using a critical framework such as Carter's (2013).

The evaluation of language skills and activities in Vision 1 showed that it inadequately incorporates activities for the four language skills. It is, therefore, recommended that the Iranian tenth-grade English textbook include appropriate language skill activities to improve learners' accuracy and fluency (Pirzad & Abadikhah, 2022). A review of Vision 1 also revealed that the teachers expressed satisfaction with multiple dimensions of the materials, including the supplementary resources, teacher's book, and the

presentation of grammar, vocabulary, and language functions. Positive feedback also extended to content and language skills, tasks and exercises, design and layout, and the underlying teaching methodology (Fazelimania et al., 2019, Huang, 2025). A study by Khodabandeh and Mombini (2018) evaluated Vision 1 based on seven criteria, including practical concerns, design, activities, skills, language type, subject, and cultural content. The results indicated that the textbook was well-received by teachers and students in every category except cultural considerations.

Nation (2003) provides a comprehensive taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies, categorizing them into cognitive (e.g., guessing from context, using word cards), metacognitive (e.g., planning and evaluating learning), and social strategies (e.g., asking peers for word meanings). While Nation's framework has been widely influential, it does not specifically address critical vocabulary strategies such as recognizing author bias, tone, or intended meaning, which are central to critical literacy approaches.

Beyond the Iranian context, international research has examined critical vocabulary instruction and textbook evaluation from various perspectives. Farmati et al. (2024) evaluated vocabulary tasks in Moroccan EFL textbooks using Nunan's (1999) taxonomy. Their analysis revealed that the two textbooks contained 86 vocabulary tasks grouped into 19 different types, although none featured all the types. Ticket to English 2 presented more diverse vocabulary tasks than Ticket to English 1, yet several imperfections related to sequencing, gradation, and recycling of vocabulary tasks were identified (Farmati et al., 2024). These findings suggest that vocabulary strategy gaps are not unique to Iranian textbooks but reflect broader challenges in EFL materials development across different educational contexts. Similarly, Huang (2025) demonstrated the role of peer feedback in vocabulary learning, suggesting that textbooks should incorporate collaborative vocabulary activities. Mo and Bi (2025) evaluated vocabulary use in EFL textbooks against curriculum word lists, revealing mismatches between textbook vocabulary and curriculum expectations. These international studies highlight that vocabulary strategy gaps are not unique to Iranian textbooks but reflect broader challenges in EFL materials development. However, none of these studies employed a critical literacy framework specifically designed to evaluate vocabulary instruction through the lens of bias recognition, connotation, or intended meaning, which is the gap that Carter's (2013) Mindscape theory addresses.

A very recent study by Asadi and Amani (2025) investigated Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions of the communicative approach implemented in Vision 1. The findings revealed that teachers rated the vocabulary component of the textbook as poor, suggesting a gap between the intended vocabulary instruction in the book and the practical needs of classroom learners. However, as Asadi and Amani (ibid) focused on teacher perceptions rather than direct content analysis, no study to date has systematically examined the actual vocabulary strategies embedded in Vision 1 using a critical framework such as Carter's (2013).

Despite the valuable contributions of the studies reviewed above, a critical examination of the literature reveals several significant gaps that the present study aims to address. First, while Asakereh et al. (2019), Mizbani et al. (2020), and Pirzad and Abadikhah (2022) have evaluated Vision 1 from various perspectives, including cultural representation, cognitive skill levels, and language skill integration, none of these studies have specifically examined the vocabulary instruction of the textbook through a critical literacy lens. Second, although Fazelimania et al. (2019) and Khodabandeh and Mombini (2018) reported general teacher and student satisfaction with vocabulary presentation in Vision 1, the very recent perception-based study by Asadi and Amani (2025) directly contradicts these earlier findings, revealing that teachers actually rate the vocabulary component of Vision 1 as poor. This contradiction between earlier satisfaction reports and more recent critical perceptions suggests that previous evaluations may have overlooked specific dimensions of vocabulary quality. Third, while Nation's (2003) taxonomy offers a comprehensive framework for general vocabulary learning strategies (cognitive, metacognitive, and social), it does not account for critical vocabulary strategies such as recognizing author bias, tone, connotation, denotation, euphemism, and doublespeak, which are the strategies essential for developing critical literacy in learners (Carter, 2013). Fourth, and most importantly, no study to date has conducted a systematic content analysis of the actual vocabulary strategies embedded in Vision 1 using a dedicated critical framework. The existing literature relies either on general textbook evaluation criteria (Khodabandeh & Mombini, 2018), cognitive taxonomies (Mizbani et al., 2020), or teacher perceptions (Asadi & Amani, 2025; Fazelimania et al., 2019; Pouranshirvani, 2017). What is missing is a direct, empirical examination of the textbook itself to determine which critical vocabulary strategies are present, which are absent, and to what extent they are

employed. The present study fills this gap by applying Carter's (2013) Mindscapes framework, a taxonomy specifically designed for critical vocabulary instruction, to systematically analyze the content of Vision 1.

This study is grounded in the critical vocabulary framework proposed by Carter (2013) in *Mindscapes: Critical Reading Skills and Strategies*. Carter's framework is specifically designed to move beyond basic vocabulary acquisition (such as memorizing definitions) to developing a reader's critical awareness of language. The framework identifies seven key strategies for critical vocabulary learning including the use of contextual clues (definition, synonym, antonym, inference), the introduction of word parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots), understanding figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole), improving vocabulary through an understanding of parts of speech, origin, and related forms, consolidation (key words, repetition, glossaries, comprehension questions, writing exercises, vocabulary cards), recognizing bias and tone through connotative and denotative meanings, and understanding intended meaning via euphemism and doublespeak.

Unlike Bloom's taxonomy, which categorizes cognitive processes but does not specifically address vocabulary instruction, or ELF frameworks, which focus on cultural and linguistic diversity, Carter's (2013) Mindscapes theory uniquely operationalizes critical vocabulary strategies as measurable categories. This specificity allows textbook evaluators to move beyond general cognitive skill checklists and systematically assess whether a textbook fosters critical literacy through vocabulary, a dimension that frameworks such as Bloom's (Mizbani et al., 2020) or ELF-based models (Asakereh et al., 2019) cannot capture. Carter's (2013) framework is uniquely suited for this study because it provides a systematic and comprehensive taxonomy for analyzing how textbooks can foster critical literacy through vocabulary instruction, which is a dimension largely absent from previous evaluations of Vision 1. By doing so, this study provides an evidence-based foundation for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook in critical vocabulary teaching, thereby informing both classroom practice and future materials development. In order to address the gaps in previous studies, this study aims to address the following questions by examining the critical vocabulary strategies in Vision 1:

1. To what extent do the vocabulary techniques used in Vision 1 align with the seven critical vocabulary strategies proposed by Carter's (2013) Mindscapes framework?
2. Which of Carter's (2013) seven critical strategies is most frequently employed in Vision 1?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Vision 1 when evaluated against the critical vocabulary strategies of the Mindscapes theory (Carter, 2013)?

III. CRITICAL VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THE MINDSCAPES THEORY

The vocabulary learning strategies typically include cognitive, metacognitive and social approaches. Cognitive strategies are mental processes that help to understand, categorize, and store new words in the mind. They include using keywords, making associations, guessing, dictionary uses, note taking, learning words in group, written and spoken repetitions, word lists and flash cards (Hedge, 2000). Learners apply metacognitive strategies to exercise control over and evaluate their learning in a holistic manner. Conversely, social cognitive strategies are characterized by collaborative knowledge-seeking behaviors, such as inquiring about the synonyms, definitions, or contextual examples of unknown words (Schmitt, 1997). This study is grounded in Carter's Mindscapes theory. Comparing Carter's (2013) strategies with other well-known taxonomies in vocabulary learning strategies (such as Ghazal, 2007; Gu, 2003; Lip, 2009; Nation, 2003), Anugakul (2011) indicates that Carter's (2013) taxonomy is notably more comprehensive and structured according to a recognized language learning strategy scheme. Therefore, the Mindscapes theory serves as this study's theoretical framework. This is due to its inclusion of cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies pertaining to critical vocabulary acquisition. The critical strategies that she introduces on learning vocabulary include the use of contextual clues, word parts' introduction, understanding figurative language, vocabulary enhancement, consolidation, bias and tone recognition, and grasping intended meaning. Following the Mindscapes theory, these strategies are illustrated in this study.

1. Use of contextual clues: It is when a reader uses surrounding information in a text to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word. This method includes four techniques as follows:
 - a) Definition clue: it occurs when a writer provides a direct explanation of a word within a sentence or phrase.
 - b) Synonym clue: it happens when a new word is suggested as a replacement for an unfamiliar word, both have similar meanings.
 - c) Antonym clue: it involves the presentation of a word with its opposite meaning.
 - d) Inference clue: the meaning of a specific word can be better understood by looking at the sentences around it for clues.
2. Introduction word parts: If one wants to search for structure clues of an unknown word, one needs to break it into parts. Words have three parts: prefix, root and suffix. They help infer the meaning of unknown words word (Carter, 2013, 117- 119).
3. Using figurative language: It helps create a vivid mental image in a reader's mind. Writers use figurative language when they want to illustrate or call attention to a particular point in a memorable way. Metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole are the most common techniques of this strategy (Carter, 2013: 275).
4. Improving vocabulary: A dictionary can be used to improve the vocabulary. Moreover, identifying words' parts of speech, their origin, related forms, inflection and derivation helps us improve the vocabulary (Carter, 2013: 363- 365).
5. Consolidation: It is the stage of learning in which new material is reviewed and, where possible, learning is reinforced. It consists of six following techniques (Carter, 2013: 429- 431):
 - a) Introducing key words: it can enhance the readers' comprehension.
 - b) Repetition of words: it is helpful for students' long-term memory.
 - c) Glossaries: It is a list of all key terms and important concepts in the textbook.
 - d) Comprehension questions: They are the most important learning tools in textbooks, specially designed to enhance a student's understanding of the material being studied.
 - e) Learning key terms: it includes two sub-techniques:
 1. Writing exercises: it suggests using writing exercises to learn new vocabulary.
 2. Using vocabulary cards: Vocabulary or index cards are useful tools for learning new words and phrases.
6. Recognizing bias and tone: Bias and tone is the underlying attitude an author has about a subject. For this purpose, it is useful if an author introduces the connotative (an emotion a word conjures in mind) and denotative (dictionary definition) meanings of a particular word.
7. Understanding intended meaning: Euphemism and doublespeak are specific kinds of loaded language. Euphemism is a nice way of saying something unpleasant. Doublespeak is the use of language to blunt or nullify a harsh truth.

To ensure replicable coding, each of the seven strategies was operationalized with specific, observable criteria. *Contextual clues* were coded when a textbook sentence or exercise explicitly provided a definition, synonym, antonym, or inference to explain an unfamiliar word. *Word parts* were coded when prefixes, suffixes, or roots were explicitly introduced or practiced. *Figurative language* was coded when metaphor, simile, personification, or hyperbole appeared in the text, regardless of whether it was explicitly taught. *Improving vocabulary* was coded when parts of speech, word origin, or related forms were introduced. *Consolidation* was coded when key words, repetition, glossaries, comprehension questions, writing exercises, or vocabulary cards appeared. *Bias and tone* were coded when connotative or denotative meanings were explicitly distinguished. *Intended meaning* was coded when euphemism or doublespeak was used. For categories involving subjective interpretation (particularly bias/tone and figurative language), examples from the textbook were discussed between coders until agreement was reached, ensuring the consistent application of the criteria.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research design

As this study investigated the content of the textbook in the form of a document book, the descriptive-analytical content analysis was utilized as the research design. It aimed to examine the occurrence of critical vocabulary strategies in Vision 1 as a sample unit. This textbook was the English textbook for Iranian tenth-grade students and included both a student book and a workbook. The student book contained four

lessons, and each lesson included several main parts such as Get Ready, Conversation, New Words & Expressions, Reading, Grammar, Listening & Speaking, Pronunciation, Writing, and What You Learned. The workbook contained reading and writing exercises that were all related to the four lessons in the student book. To begin, based on the research questions and the sample for analysis, the strategies were identified and coded in the sample unit. Then, the frequencies of the strategies were counted, analyzed, and conclusions were drawn.

4.2. Instruments

A researcher-made worksheet was used (see appendix 1) to collect the data. The worksheet was prepared based on the strategies introduced in *Mindscapes* (Carter, 2013). It is a three-dimensional worksheet consisting of seven main strategies and 24 techniques. The strategies are contextual clues, analyzing words, figurative language, improving vocabulary, consolidation, bias and tone and understanding intended meaning. To make the worksheet reliable, the researchers separately identified and coded the strategies and the techniques and then they were discussed to reach an agreement for the final data. After the worksheet was prepared, a total of seven strategies and 24 techniques were given to experts to determine their face validity. To establish the face validity of the researcher-made worksheet, a panel of four ELT professors was consulted, following the procedure of Mirjalili (2021). Each professor independently rated all the 23 techniques on two criteria: (a) clarity of wording and (b) potential for misinterpretation. A 10-point Likert scale was used, where 1 indicated "*completely unclear/high potential for misinterpretation*" and 10 indicated "*completely clear/no potential for misinterpretation*." The average score across all the techniques and all the four raters was calculated using the formula: $\text{mean} = (\text{sum of all ratings}) / (\text{number of techniques} \times \text{number of raters})$. The overall mean face validity score was 8.4, with a standard deviation of ± 0.2 , indicating high clarity and low misinterpretation potential among the raters. All the professors confirmed that the worksheet measured what it intended to measure. To establish the reliability of the coding process, the inter-rater reliability was assessed. Two researchers independently analyzed the same sample unit of Vision 1 using the finalized worksheet. The percentage of agreement was calculated by dividing the number of coding agreements by the total number of the coding decisions and multiplying by 100. The initial agreement rate was 92%. To provide a more robust measure, Cohen's kappa (κ) was also calculated to account for chance agreement. The obtained kappa value was 0.86, which is interpreted as "almost perfect" agreement according to Landis and Koch (1977). Where disagreements occurred (8% of cases), the researchers discussed the discrepancies and reached a consensus. These procedures ensure that the coding was consistent and reproducible.

The coding procedure followed a standardized protocol. First, both researchers independently read the entire sample unit of Vision 1 (student book and workbook). Second, each researcher systematically searched for evidence of the 24 techniques across all the sections of the unit (Get Ready, Conversation, New Words & Expressions, Reading, Grammar, Listening & Speaking, Pronunciation, Writing, and What You Learned). Third, each instance of a technique was recorded on the worksheet, noting the lesson number, section, and page reference. Multiple codes could be assigned to a single exercise if it contained more than one strategy (e.g., a comprehension question that also introduced the key terms). When ambiguous cases arose (such as distinguishing between a definition clue and an inference clue), the researchers referred to Carter's (2013) definitions and examples. Disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. This standardization ensured that the coding decisions were consistent and reproducible.

4.3. Data collection and data analysis procedures

To collect the primary data, after preparing the worksheet, the researchers searched for the critical strategies in Vision 1, both student and work books. The researchers intended to find out whether they were used in these textbooks or not. The books were studied line by line and the materials were matched with the worksheet carefully. The data were collected manually by two researchers through several steps of observation. The researchers read and observed the content of the textbooks thoroughly. Then, they compared the content of the textbooks with the checklist of vocabulary critical strategies. After that, the collected data of two researchers were compared with each other to ensure that the data is accurate and complete. The data were classified based on seven strategies. The strategies and techniques employed in Vision 1 were counted quantitatively and the frequency of each one was calculated.



V. FINDINGS

In this part some samples of vocabulary critical strategies in Vision 1 were introduced. The first strategy is the use of contextual clues. Contextual clues are used in all of the four lessons of Vision I. One of the techniques of this strategy is employing definitions. Here are some samples:

1. Lesson 1, student book, the definition of the word “instead” (page 21).
2. Lesson 2, student book, definitions for the words “carry”, “defend”, “collect”, and “fact” (page 49).
3. Lesson 3, student book, definitions for the words “solve”, “develop”, and “quit” (page 79).
4. Lesson 4, Student book, definitions for the words “entertainment”, “culture”, and “range” (page 104).

The synonym technique is used in three lessons as below:

1. Lesson 1, student book, the synonym for the word “human” (page 21).
2. Lesson 2, student book, the synonym for the word “wonderful” (page 52).
3. Lesson 3, student book, the word “give up” is the synonym of the word “quit” (page 79).

The antonym technique is employed in all of the lessons:

1. Lesson 1, student book, “big” and “small” and “wild and farm animals” (page 33).
 2. Lesson 2, work book, the word “healthy” is the antonym of the word “sick” (page 26).
 3. Lesson 3, work book, the word “outside” is the antonym of the word “inside” (page 59).
 4. Lesson 4, student book, the word “international” is the antonym of the word “domestic” (page 104).
- The word “expensive” is the antonym of the word “cheap” (page 119).

Contextual inference clues were found in lessons 1 and 4:

1. Lesson 1, student book, there is an inference clue for the phrase “endangered animals” in the second sentence of the reading: Today, there are some endangered animals on Earth. It means that only a few of them can be found around us (page 22).
2. Lesson 4, Student book, the inference clue for the phrase “range of activities”: Iran is a four-season country and tourists can find a range of activities from skiing to desert touring in different parts of the country (page 105).

The frequencies of the contextual clues in Vision1 are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of the contextual clues in Vision I

Strategy	Techniques	Number of lessons	Frequency of techniques			
			Base		Used	
			No	%	No	%
Use of Contextual Clues	Definition clue	4	4	100	4	100
	Synonym clue		4	100	3	75
	Antonym clue		4	100	4	100
	Inference clue		4	100	2	50
Total	4	4	16	100	13	81.25

Table 1 shows that the definition and antonym techniques have the greatest frequencies in Vision1. In total this strategy has been used 81.25%.

Identifying affixes or word parts strategy was not used in none of four lessons. The techniques of this strategy are introducing prefixes and suffixes. No evidence was observed showing the existence of these two techniques: introducing prefixes and introducing root.

Use of figurative language strategy has five techniques. Using metaphor technique was found in lesson 4:

1. Lesson 4, Student book: This beautiful country is a true paradise for people of the world (page 105).
- Another technique is using simile that only was found in lesson 2, student book, "This world is like a strange book" (page 52).

Using personification technique was observed in lesson 2, work book, the phrase “neighbor of the earth” is a personification (page 37).

Hyperbole strategy was not found in Vision 1.

The frequency of using figurative language and its techniques are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency of using figurative language in Vision1

Strategy	Techniques	Number of lessons	Frequency of techniques			
			Base		Used	
			No	%	No	%
Use of figurative language	Using Metaphor	4	4	100	1	25
	Using Simile		4	100	1	25
	Using Personification		4	100	1	25
	Using Hyperbole		4	100	-	-
Total	4	4	16	100	3	18.75

Table 2 indicates that figurative language strategy was employed 18.75 % in Vision 1.

Improving vocabulary strategy includes three techniques: introducing words' part of speech, origin of words and related forms of words. The technique part of speech has been employed in all the lessons as below:

1. Lesson 1, student book, "noun" is introduced with many examples (pages 34- 35).
2. Lesson 2, Student book, "adjective" is introduced with different examples (pages 62-64).
3. Lesson 3, student book, "verb" is introduced with many examples (pages 91-92).
4. Lesson 4, student book, "adverb" is introduced with some examples (page 115).

The origin technique was not observed in Vision 1. The related forms technique was found in all the lessons as below:

1. Lessons 1, student book, singular words are introduced with plural forms (page 37).
2. Lesson 2, student book, adjectives and their comparative and superlative forms are introduced (page 66).
3. Lessons 3, student book, verbs are introduced with their both simple and continuous forms (page 93).
4. Lesson 4, student book, some adverbs are introduced with the adjective they have been made of (pages 116-117).

Table 3 shows the frequency of the improving vocabulary strategy.

Table 3. Frequency of improving vocabulary in Vision I

Strategy	Techniques	Number of lessons	Frequency of techniques				
			Base		Use		
			No	%	No	%	
Improving vocabulary	Introducing part of speech	4	4	100	4	100	
	Introducing words' origin		4	-	-	-	
	Introducing the related forms of a word		4	100	4	100	
Total		3	4	12	100	8	66.66

Table 3 shows that Vision 1 employed 66.66% of the techniques to improve the students' vocabulary.

A Consolidation concept is a strategy required for reading comprehension. This strategy includes introducing key words, repetition of words, summary, glossary, comprehension questions and learning key terms. Learning key terms includes writing exercises and using vocabulary cards as sub-techniques. The sample unit analysis showed that the glossary technique was not employed in Vision 1, while the other techniques were employed. The key terms were introduced in all the four lessons as below:

1. Lesson 1, student book, "a few, human, instead, and future" were introduced as key terms (page 21).
2. Lesson 2, student book, "healthy, defend, carry, collect, and fact" were introduced as keywords (page 49).
3. Lesson 3, student book, "solve, develop, belief, quit, and thousands of" were the five introduced key words (page 79).



4. Lesson 4, student book, four key words were “entertainment, domestic, culture, and range” (page 104).

The words repetition technique was found in all the four lessons. Some examples are:

1. Lesson 1, the word “endangered” (pages 19, 22- 23 & 31).

2. Lesson 2, the word “wonderful” (45, 47, 50-52).

3. Lesson 3, the word “famous” (pages 76, 80-81).

4. Lesson 4, the word “abroad” (pages 99, 105 & 107).

The comprehension questions technique was employed after reading each lesson. Most of the questions are related to vocabulary:

1. Lesson 1, student book (page 23).

2. Lesson 2, student book (page 51).

3. Lesson 3, student book (page 81).

4. Lesson 4, student book (page 106).

Learning key terms' technique includes two sub-techniques: writing exercises and using vocabulary cards. Vision 1 does not include vocabulary cards (index cards) at all. In the work book, however, there are lots of exercises for vocabulary:

1. Lesson 1 (pages 14-19).

2. Lesson 2 (pages 32-38).

3. Lesson 3 (pages 50-55).

4. Lesson 4 (pages 69-75).

The frequencies of consolidation Techniques are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequencies of consolidation strategy's techniques in Vision 1

Strategy	Techniques and sub-techniques	Number of lessons	Frequency of techniques			
			Base		Used	
			No	%	No	%
consolidation	Introducing key words	4	4	100	4	100
	Repetition of words		4	100	4	100
	summaries		4	100	-	-
	Glossary		4	100	-	-
	Comprehension questions		4	100	4	100
	Writing exercises	4			4	
	Learning key terms					
	Using vocabulary cards		4	100	4	100
					-	
	Total	6	24	100	16	66.66

Table 4 indicates that Vision 1 employed the consolidation strategy in 66.66 cases.

Bias and tone strategy includes connotative and annotative meanings. Connotative meanings were introduced in Vision 1 as below:

1. Lesson 1, student book, the connotative meaning of homes is environment (page 19).

2. Lesson 2, student book, the connotative meaning of the word moon means what moves around a planet other than the Earth (page 47).

3. Lesson 3, student book, the connotative meaning of the word cool was not related to temperature but approved what the other speaker says (page 76).

The denotative meaning was observed in all the four lessons:

1. Lesson 1, student book, the denotative meaning of the phrase “a few” (page 21).

2. Lesson 2, student book, the denotative meaning of the word “carry” (page 49).

3. Lesson 3, student book, the denotative meaning of the verb “develop” (page 79).

4. Lesson 4, student book, the denotative meaning of the word “culture” (page 104).

Table 5 indicates the frequency of this strategy in Vision 1.

Table 5. Frequency of recognizing bias and tone in Vision I

Strategy	Techniques	Number of lessons	Frequency of techniques			
			Base		Use	
			No	%	No	%
Recognizing bias and tone	Introducing the connotative meaning	4	4	100	3	75
	Introducing the denotative meaning		4	100	4	100
Total	2	4	8	100	7	87.5

As Table 5 shows, this strategy was employed 87.5%. The frequency of introducing annotative meaning is more than that of connotative meaning.

Intended meaning strategy includes two euphemism and doublespeak techniques. The latter was not employed in Vision 1, but the former was found as the following:

1. Lesson 2, student book, “donate blood” was used in place of “give blood” (page 50).
2. Lesson 3, student book, “passed away” was used in place of “died” (page 82).

The frequency of intended meaning and its techniques are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Frequency of the intended meanings in Vision I

Strategy	Techniques	Number of lessons	Frequency of techniques			
			Base		Used	
			No	%	No	%
Intended meaning	Euphemism	4	4	100	2	50
	Doublespeak		4	100	-	-
Total	2	4	8	100	2	25

Table 6 shows 25% for the frequency of the intended meaning in total. Table 7 summarizes the frequencies of all these seven strategies used in Vision 1.

Based on Table 7, recognizing bias and tone was done more than the other strategies (87.5). Next to this strategy, contextual clues were used (81.25). In total, 51.4% of the critical strategies were used in Vision 1. The researchers used the method that Tambunan et al. (2019) employed to change numbers into qualitative category (68%-100% = high, 34%-67% = moderate, and 0%-33% = low). This tripartite classification is widely used in content analysis studies (e.g., Mizbani et al., 2020; Pirzad & Abadikhah, 2022) because it provides a consistent and transparent standard for interpreting frequency data, allowing for meaningful comparison across studies and strategies. It was found that, in general, the use of critical strategies in Vision 1 was moderate.

Table 7. Frequencies of the critical strategies employed in Vision 1

Strategies	Techniques	Number of lessons	of techniques Frequency				Qualitative category
			Basis		Use		
			N	P	N	P	
Use of contextual clues	4	4	16	100	13	81.25	High
Introduction of word parts	3	4	12	100	0	0	Low
Use of figurative language	4	4	16	100	3	18.75	Low
Improving vocabulary	3	4	12	100	8	66.66	Moderate
Consolidation	6	4	24	100	16	66.66	Moderate
Recognizing bias and tone	2	4	8	100	7	87.5	high
Intended meaning	2	4	8	100	2	25	Low
Total	24	4	96	100	49	51.04	Moderate



VI. DISCUSSION

This study applied [Carter's \(2013\)](#) Mindscales framework, a taxonomy of critical vocabulary strategies to the analysis of an EFL textbook. Unlike the prior evaluations of Vision 1 that used general content or cognitive skill checklists, this study examined the textbook for the presence of seven specific strategy categories and 24 techniques. The findings not only confirm some prior observations but, more importantly, reveal previously undocumented strengths and weaknesses that have direct pedagogical implications. The two most frequently employed strategies were recognizing bias and tone and use of contextual clues. The high frequency of bias and tone recognition, particularly the introduction of denotative meanings and connotative meanings, suggests that Vision 1 emphasizes the understanding of words beyond their dictionary definitions. As [Carter \(2013\)](#) argues, recognizing the connotative and denotative dimensions of vocabulary helps readers detect an author's underlying attitude. This finding aligns with the critical orientation of the framework used in this study.

The frequent use of contextual clues, especially definition clues and antonym clues, indicates that Vision 1 provides learners with structured opportunities to infer word meanings from the surrounding text. According to [Nation \(2003\)](#), contextual inference is a cognitive strategy that supports both comprehension and retention. The presence of inference clues in only half of lessons, however, suggests that more demanding, text-based inferencing is less systematically practiced.

Three strategies including introduction of word parts, figurative language, and intended meaning were classified as low. The complete absence of word parts instruction (prefixes, suffixes, roots) is notable given that [Carter \(2013\)](#) presents morphological analysis as a core structural clue for determining the meaning of unknown words. Without explicit instructions in breaking down words into their parts, learners may lack an important cognitive tool for independent vocabulary development.

The low frequency of figurative language means that techniques such as metaphor, simile, and personification appear only incidentally. For example, the metaphor "This beautiful country is a true paradise" (Lesson 4) and the simile "This world is like a strange book" (Lesson 2) are presented without explicit teaching. As [Carter \(2013\)](#) notes, figurative language helps create mental images and call attention to particular points in memorable ways. Its underrepresentation may limit learners' exposure to creative and expressive uses of English.

The intended meaning strategy, which includes euphemism and doublespeak, was also low. Only two instances of euphemism were found (donate blood, passed away), and doublespeak was entirely absent. [Carter \(2013\)](#) emphasizes that recognizing euphemism and doublespeak is essential for understanding when language is used to soften or obscure truth. The low frequency of this strategy suggests that Vision 1 does not systematically develop learners' ability to read critically for loaded language.

The findings of this study both extend and complicate earlier evaluations of Vision 1. [Mizbani et al. \(2020\)](#) found that Vision 1 focuses on lower-order thinking skills (remembering, understanding, applying) rather than higher-order skills. The present study reveals, however, that in the domain of vocabulary, certain critical strategies, particularly bias and tone recognition, are employed at high levels. This finding directly operationalizes [Carter's \(2013\)](#) emphasis on connotation and denotation as tools for detecting author perspective. This also suggests that criticality in vocabulary instruction may operate independently of the cognitive categories identified by [Mizbani et al. \(2020\)](#). A textbook can emphasize lower-order thinking in general skills while still incorporating critical vocabulary strategies.

The absence of word parts instruction in Vision 1 aligns with the observations by [Pirzad and Abadikhah \(2022\)](#) in that the textbook inadequately integrates activities for the four language skills. The lack of morphological analysis may be part of a broader pattern of limited strategic depth ([Jajere et al., 2025](#)). Similarly, [Asakereh et al. \(2019\)](#) criticized Vision 1 for limited cultural and sociolinguistic diversity. The present study adds that the neglect of figurative language and euphemism further restricts learners' exposure to the sociocultural dimensions of English vocabulary, since metaphors and euphemisms often carry culturally specific meanings.

[Fazelimania et al. \(2019\)](#) reported that teachers expressed satisfaction with the presentation of vocabulary in Vision 1. However, the present study suggests that this satisfaction may reflect the presence of high-frequency strategies (contextual clues, consolidation) while overlooking the absence of word parts and figurative language. Teachers may not have been explicitly aware of what critical strategies were missing.

Based on the criteria of [Carter's \(2013\)](#) critical strategies, the strengths of Vision 1 are a) the systematic use of bias and tone recognition, which helps learners understand that words carry emotional and cultural meaning, b) the frequent use of contextual clues, which supports independent word inference, and c) the moderate use of consolidation techniques, including key word introduction, repetition, comprehension questions, and writing exercises, which reinforce vocabulary learning over time.

The patterns observed in Vision 1 are not arbitrary but likely to reflect broader curricular priorities. The emphasis on bias and tone recognition suggests that the textbook designers intended to develop learners' critical awareness of author perspective. However, the complete absence of word parts instruction indicates that morphological analysis was not considered a priority, possibly due to assumptions that vocabulary learning should rely on contextual inference rather than structural analysis. This curricular choice may have pedagogical consequences; while contextual strategies support incidental vocabulary growth, the absence of explicit word analysis instruction may limit learners' ability to decode unfamiliar academic words independently. Similarly, the underrepresentation of figurative language may reflect a curricular focus on transactional rather than expressive language functions. These patterns suggest that Vision 1 prioritizes inferential vocabulary skills while neglecting structural and creative dimensions of vocabulary knowledge.

The weaknesses are equally clear; the complete absence of word parts instruction denies learners a fundamental structural strategy for decoding unfamiliar words, the low frequency of figurative language limits exposure to metaphor, simile, and personification, and the low frequency of intended meaning strategies, particularly the absence of doublespeak, restricts critical reading of loaded language. This absence is a critical gap, as [Carter \(2013\)](#) identifies morphological analysis as a foundational strategy for decoding unfamiliar academic language independently.

It is important to distinguish between frequency and pedagogical quality. A strategy appearing frequently does not necessarily mean it is taught effectively. For example, while contextual clues were frequently employed, most instances were definition or antonym clues, which require minimal cognitive effort, whereas inference clues, which demand deeper processing, appeared in only half of the lessons. Similarly, while consolidation strategies appeared frequently, the absence of glossaries and vocabulary cards suggests that independent study strategies were neglected. Thus, the frequency counts reported in this study should be interpreted as indicators of *coverage* rather than *quality*. Future research should complement frequency analysis with qualitative judgments of how effectively each strategy is implemented.

The primary innovation of this study lies in its application of [Carter's \(2013\)](#) Mindscapes theory to the analysis of an EFL textbook. Previous evaluations of Vision 1 (e.g., [Asakereh et al., 2019](#); [Mizbani et al., 2020](#); [Pirzad & Abadikhah, 2022](#)) employed general content analysis frameworks such as ELF features, Bloom's taxonomy, and skill integration checklists that did not specifically target vocabulary instruction. Consequently, those studies could report, for instance, that Vision 1 emphasizes lower-order thinking skills ([Mizbani et al., 2020](#)) or lacks cultural diversity ([Asakereh et al., 2019](#)). However, they could not identify which specific vocabulary strategies were present or absent, nor could they assess critical dimensions such as bias recognition, connotation, or euphemism. The present study, by contrast, used [Carter's \(2013\)](#) seven-strategy taxonomy to conduct a fine-grained analysis of its 24 specific techniques. This approach produced several novel findings that were invisible to prior research. For example, bias and tone recognition emerged as the most frequently employed strategy, contradicting the general assumption that Vision 1 neglects criticality and suggesting that critical vocabulary instruction can coexist with lower-order cognitive tasks—a nuance missed by Bloom-based evaluations. Furthermore, word parts instruction was found to be completely absent, a gap no previous study has documented despite the well-established role of morphological awareness in reading comprehension ([Nation, 2001](#)). Similarly, figurative language and intended meaning were severely underrepresented, deficits that prior studies without Carter's framework could not have detected. Thus, the theoretical framework did not merely confirm existing findings; it revealed a new layer of textbook quality that general evaluation tools cannot access. The innovation is methodological, providing a replicable coding scheme for critical vocabulary strategies, and pedagogical, offering precise, strategy-level guidance for textbook revision and teacher supplementation.

VII. CONCLUSION

Textbooks are the main components of a curriculum with a dominant role in teaching and learning subjects at school. Consequently, as one side of a teaching-learning process, they play the key role in the system of educational tools that help the other two sides (teachers and students) achieve their educational goals. Because of the importance of English textbooks in language teaching-learning process that is an essential issue in people's life, this study is dealing with Vision 1. This study investigated the critical vocabulary strategies in Vision 1, the English textbook for tenth-grade students in Iran, using [Carter's \(2013\)](#) *Mindscales* framework. A descriptive-analytical content analysis was conducted on a sample unit using a researcher-made worksheet comprising seven strategies and 24 techniques. The overall frequency of critical vocabulary strategies in Vision 1 was moderate.

The findings revealed that recognizing bias and tone and employing contextual clues were the most frequent strategies. These represent the primary strengths of the textbook, as they help learners understand connotative meaning and infer word meanings from the surrounding text. Consolidation and improving vocabulary were moderate. The least frequent strategies were intended meaning, figurative language, and word parts instruction. The complete absence of word parts instruction and the low frequency of figurative language and euphemism/doublespeak constitute the main weaknesses of the textbook.

In response to the three research questions, which were framed explicitly around [Carter's \(2013\)](#) *Mindscales* theory, the findings provide both confirmatory and novel insights. Regarding the first question, the alignment of Vision 1 with Carter's seven critical vocabulary strategies was found to be moderate overall. This moderate alignment itself is an important finding because previous evaluations of Vision 1 (e.g., [Mizbani et al., 2020](#); [Asakereh et al., 2019](#)) did not employ a vocabulary-specific critical framework and, therefore, could not assess alignment at the strategy level. The second question asked which of Carter's strategies is most frequent; the answer is recognizing bias and tone, followed by contextual clues. This finding contradicts the assumption, derived from Bloom-based evaluations ([Mizbani et al., 2020](#)), that Vision 1 lacks criticality. Instead, it demonstrates that critical vocabulary instruction, specifically, attention to connotation, denotation, and author perspective can coexist with lower-order cognitive tasks, a nuance that only a theory like Carter's could reveal. Regarding the third question, the advantages of Vision 1 from a *Mindscales* perspective are its systematic use of bias and tone recognition and contextual clues, while the disadvantages are the complete absence of word parts instruction and the severe underrepresentation of figurative language and intended meaning. Prior studies without Carter's taxonomy could not have identified these specific deficits. Thus, the use of the *Mindscales* theory was not ornamental; it provided the diagnostic precision to detect which critical strategies are present, which are missing, and how the textbook can be improved in ways that general evaluation frameworks cannot. The textbook reliance on definition and antonym clues reflects the most basic levels of [Carter's \(2013\)](#) contextual clue taxonomy, while more demanding inference clues are underutilized.

The pedagogical implications are clear. Teachers using Vision 1 should supplement the textbook with explicit instruction in word analysis (prefixes, suffixes, roots), figurative language recognition (metaphor, simile, personification), and critical reading of euphemism and doublespeak. Material developers should revise future editions to include these missing strategies systematically. Textbook writers can integrate a dedicated section on prefixes, suffixes, and roots into each lesson, with recognition and production exercises, include explicit teaching of metaphor, simile, and personification using examples from authentic texts, and incorporate examples of euphemism and doublespeak for critical analysis. Curriculum developers can revise the syllabus to allocate instructional time for morphological awareness and figurative language and provide supplementary materials that address the identified gaps. Teacher educators can design professional development workshops that train teachers to identify missing strategies and develop supplementary materials. They may also equip teachers with strategies to extract metaphors and similes from authentic texts.

For material developers, the moderate overall frequency of critical strategies (51.04%) suggests room for revision. Future editions of Vision 1 could integrate word parts instruction into each lesson, include explicit teaching of figurative language techniques, and incorporate examples of doublespeak for critical analysis. As [Torkar et al. \(2022\)](#) argue, textbooks must employ proven teaching strategies to enhance the quality of education. The moderate status of critical vocabulary strategies in Vision 1 indicates that the textbook partially meets this standard but requires improvement.

The findings of this study have several teaching implications. Teachers who are informed of the strategies not employed by Vision 1 (word parts, figurative language, intended meaning) can guide supplementation. They can introduce mini-lessons on common prefixes and suffixes, extract metaphors and similes from authentic texts, and design activities that distinguish euphemistic from direct language. As [Carter \(2013\)](#) emphasizes, critical vocabulary strategies are most effective when taught explicitly rather than incidentally. Teachers can also introduce mini-lessons on common prefixes and suffixes, use authentic texts (songs, news headlines, short stories) to teach figurative language, design activities that distinguish euphemistic from direct language, and encourage collaborative vocabulary activities that incorporate peer feedback ([Huang, 2025](#)).

Despite the careful design and systematic execution of this study, several limitations must be acknowledged regarding its methodology and scope. First, regarding the sample, this study analyzed only one unit of Vision 1 (a sample unit) rather than the entire textbook. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the distribution of critical vocabulary strategies across all the four lessons of the student book and the corresponding sections of the workbook. It is possible that some strategies absent in the sampled unit appear in other units. Second, regarding the instrument, the researcher-made worksheet, while face-validated by a panel of four ELT professors with an average score of 8.4 out of 10, was not tested for criterion validity against an established vocabulary strategy instrument. Third, regarding the scope of analysis, this study examined the textbook content in isolation. No data were collected from teachers or students regarding how these critical vocabulary strategies are actually implemented in classroom practice or how they are perceived by end-users. Consequently, claims about the effects of strategy absence on learner motivation, passivity, or confidence remain interpretive inferences rather than empirically demonstrated outcomes. Fourth, regarding the theoretical framework, while [Carter's \(2013\)](#) Mindscapes taxonomy provides a structured lens for identifying critical vocabulary strategies, it is not the only possible framework. Other taxonomies of critical literacy or vocabulary instruction might yield different categorizations and interpretations. Fifth, the study is contextually bounded to Vision 1, the tenth-grade English textbook in Iran. The findings may not generalize to other grade levels (Vision 2 or Vision 3), other textbook series, or other educational contexts outside Iran. Finally, the study adopted a quantitative frequency approach to measuring strategy presence (percentage of techniques used). This quantitative focus does not capture the qualitative depth or pedagogical quality of how a strategy is presented. For example, a strategy might be present but poorly explained, or absent but effectively taught by a teacher supplementing the textbook. Future research should address these limitations by analyzing all the units of Vision 1, collecting classroom observation and learner outcome data, and incorporating qualitative judgments of strategy quality alongside frequency counts. Additionally, content analysis evaluates the intended curriculum (what the textbook presents) rather than the enacted curriculum (how the textbook is actually used in classrooms). Teacher mediation, learner engagement, and contextual factors may substantially influence the effectiveness of vocabulary strategies, meaning that a strategy absent from the textbook could still be taught effectively by a teacher, and a strategy present in the textbook might be overlooked in classroom practices.

This study contributes to the limited research on critical vocabulary strategies in EFL textbooks. It demonstrates that content analysis using a structured framework like [Carter's \(2013\)](#) can identify both strengths and weaknesses in textbook vocabulary instruction. Future research should extend this analysis to all the units of Vision 1, compare Vision 1 with other Iranian English textbooks (Vision 2 and Vision 3), and investigate whether teacher supplementation of missing strategies leads to measurable improvements in student vocabulary acquisition. The findings of this study have implications beyond the Iranian context. Iranian textbooks share challenges common to EFL materials development globally. The coding framework employed in this study, based on [Carter's \(2013\)](#) taxonomy, can be adapted by researchers and educators in other contexts to evaluate critical vocabulary strategies in their own textbooks, facilitating cross-national comparisons and the sharing of best practices. Thus, while the analysis is contextually bounded to Iran, the methodological approach and the identified strategy categories are internationally transferable.



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APPENDICES



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Appendix A

Strategies	Techniques and sub-techniques		Frequency	
1. Use of contextual clues	1. Definition clue 2. Synonym clue 3. Antonym clue 4. Inference clue			
2. Introduction word parts	1. Introducing prefixes 2. Introducing suffixes 3. Introducing roots			
3.Use of figurative language	1. Using Metaphor			
	2. Using Simile			
	3. Using Personification			
	4. Using Hyperbole			
4. Improving vocabulary	1. Introducing parts of speech			
	2. Introducing the origin of a word			
	3. Introducing the related forms of a word			
5. Consolidation	1. Introducing key words			
	2. Repetition of words			
	3. Glossary			
	4. Comprehension questions			
	5. Learning key terms	1. Writing exercises		
		2. Using vocabulary cards		
6. Recognizing bias and tone	1. Introducing the connotative meaning			
	2. Introducing the denotative meaning			
7. Intended meaning	1. Euphemism			
	2. Doublespeak			