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## **A Comparison of Two Global ELT Course books in Terms of Their Task Types**

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### **Abstract**

It is generally observed that the textbooks employed in the classroom play a crucial role in the process of teaching and learning. In the EFL context in Iran, where Iranian EFL learners rarely have access to native speakers, the teacher mediates between the learner and the text. Accordingly, a textbook plays more important roles in this context and textbook evaluation is critical. Nowadays, under the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), most global materials try to involve learners in the process of learning by introducing several types of tasks and activities whose aim is to promote learners' interaction. However, most teachers and instructors are using the global materials without being aware of the task types used in them and whether these task types really involve learners in the communication process or not. The purposes of this study was to evaluate and compare the two most popular global course books (*Top Notch* and *Interchange*) which are taught in Iranian ELT institutes, in terms of their task types according to Nunan's (1999) classification of the tasks. The results suggested that generally, both course books used mostly linguistic tasks and less cognitive ones. However, in particular, the number of co-operative tasks in *Interchange* title is more frequent than other types of tasks, while in *Top Notch* title most of tasks are practice tasks. The results of this study could be helpful for curriculum developers and institute authorities, to assist them to become more aware of different task types used in each of these global materials and to better select the most suitable ones for their purposes. It can also

help material developers in order to develop ELT materials with more communicative tasks.

**Key Words:** *Interchange, Top Notch, Nunan classification, Task types*

## **Introduction**

In countries where English is used as a foreign or second language, two main types of English language teaching (ELT) materials are commonly used in schools and colleges; global materials and institutional or in-house materials. The former are produced by leading western publishers such as Longman, Oxford, and Cambridge and are used as a source of teaching and learning English in foreign or second language contexts (e.g. *Interchange, Top Notch, English Result*, etc. that are used by English language teachers and learners throughout the world). On the other hand, local educational institutions such as Iranian Ministry of Education also produce institutional materials. In the EFL context in Iran, where Iranian EFL learners rarely have access to native speakers, the teacher mediates between the learner and the text. Accordingly, a textbook plays more important roles in this context and textbook evaluation is even more critical.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Theoretical Background**

According to Tomlinson (2011), language learning materials can be defined as “anything which is used by teachers and learners to facilitate the learning of a language”. Therefore, all the videos, DVDs, emails, dictionaries, books, etc. that are used for the process of language learning could be called language learning materials. However, the most important and influential materials which are used in teaching-learning contexts are course books. In this regard, materials development is a crucial part of any language program. Material development is the systematic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives and to the objectives of the learners using them (Tomlinson, 2011).

According to this definition, although a competent EFL/ESL teacher may or may not be a good materials developer (Dudley-Evan and St. John, 1998), s/he should be able to select and adapt materials to the learning situation in order to ensure that learners’ needs are met. Textbook evaluation is one effective ways which can assist teachers in the selection and adaptation of materials.

Nowadays under the influence of CLT, most textbooks and course books try to improve learners’ communicative competence through using real-life and communicative tasks. In this regard, because of its link to CLT methodology, Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has gained considerable attention among material developers and instructors.

Based around a constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching methodology, task-based language learning has evolved in response to

some limitations of the traditional PPP approach, represented by the procedure of presentation, practice, and performance (Ellis, 2003; Long & Crookes, 1992).

Task-based learning was first developed by N. Prabhu (1987) in Bangalore, southern India. Prabhu believed that students may learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are using. Task-based instruction (TBI) views the learning process as a set of communicative tasks that are directly linked to the curricular goals they serve (Brown, 1994).

Advocates of task-based language teaching claim that such a teaching approach is "compatible with current SLA theory." (Long & Crookes, 1992, p.43). Murphy (2003) emphasized the fact that tasks may be chosen and implemented so that particular pedagogic outcomes are achieved. Tasks must be designed carefully to lead the students to the intended objective. He also distinguishes between factors that affect learning outcomes: the contribution of the individual learner, the task and the situation in which the task is performed.

Nunan (1989) defines task as a piece of classroom work involving learners in understanding, directing, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is on meaning rather than form. Nunan reports that, "The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right" (Nunan, 1993, p. 59).

Tasks can be classified in different ways. Prabhu (1987) was the first to classify tasks into three types: information gap, reasoning gap, and opinion gap. While information gap activities involve a transfer of given information from one person to another, the reasoning gap activities involve deriving some new information from given information through processes of inference, deduction, and practical reasoning. The third type, which is opinion gap activity, involves identifying and articulating a personal preference or feeling (Prabhu, 1987, cited in Nunan, 2004).

In another typology, Pattison (1987) set out seven task and activity types; question and answers, dialogues and role plays, matching activities, communication strategies, pictures and picture stories, puzzles and problems, and discussions and decisions. Moreover, Berwick (1988) distinguished between transactional and interpersonal tasks. A transaction task is one in which communication occurs principally to bring about the exchange of goods and services, whereas an interpersonal task is one in which communication occurs largely for social purposes.

Nunan divides tasks into two categories: "real-world tasks or target tasks" and "pedagogical tasks" (1989, p40-41). As can be seen from these names, the tasks in real world are designed for daily life usage that aim to improve the learners' abilities to fulfill similar tasks in real life while the teaching tasks do not always directly reflect common tasks in daily life. They involve the theories and practices of second language acquisition and are applied in certain teaching situations only. Pedagogical tasks are derived from the tasks in real life and could be sub-tasks in real life. They also involve exercises in language skills. Furthermore, Ellis (1991) distinguished between reciprocal and non-reciprocal tasks. The distinction between these two types of tasks is that the former requires an exchange of information while the latter does not.

Richards (2001) divided tasks into jigsaw tasks, information gap tasks, problem solving tasks, decision-making tasks, and opinion exchange tasks. In addition, Nunan (1999) grouped the tasks according to the strategies underpinning them. As a result, he proposed five different tasks types: cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective, and creative. These five categories were themselves sub-categorized making a list of 20 different task types.

Since very few studies have been conducted to evaluate ELT course books/textbooks in terms of their task types, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the two most popular ELT global course books, which are taught in Iranian ELT institutes, in terms of their tasks according to Nunan's (1999) framework.

## Previous Research Findings

Many studies have been conducted on ELT global textbooks evaluation. Many of them evaluated *Top-Notch* or *Interchange* individually or in comparison to each other or to other course books.

Some of these studies tried to identify and analyse different forms of speech acts in the course books. Tavakoli (1995) conducted research on the *Top Notch* series, using Searle's (1976) model of speech act for analyzing dialogues, to investigate whether different forms of speech acts were correctly used and how frequently each function was used. He believed that representative, directive, and expressive functions were mentioned in the textbooks, while commissives and declarations were not introduced at all.

As a part of their study on speech act strategies used by learners, Delen and Tavil (2010) tried to evaluate the *Top Notch* and *Summit* series in terms of the frequency of three speech acts; request, refusal, and complaint. They found that the frequency of requests in the books was not problematic, but the refusals and complaints were barely included in most of them.

In the area of pragmatics, Soozandehfar and Sahragard (2011) conducted a study about language functions and speech acts in the *Top-Notch* series. In this regard, 14 conversations from the entire 14 units of the series were selected randomly and the two pragmatic models of Halliday's (1978) language functions and Searle's (1976) speech acts were applied. As a result of this evaluation, it was shown that the conversations in these textbooks are not pragmatically efficient and functional.

A number of researchers employed checklist or questionnaire approaches, to evaluate some of the widely used textbooks/ course books. In another attempt to evaluate the *Top Notch* series, Razmjoo and Jozaghi (2010) devised a checklist based on the elements of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory proposed by Gardner (1998). The results confirmed that *Top Notch* was rich in addressing verbal intelligence followed by the visual, logical, musical, interpersonal, bodily, and intrapersonal one while to some extent poor in representing natural and existential intelligences.

In order to provide empirical evidence to the possible relation between the type and the base of intelligence and motivation, and learners' satisfaction of *Interchange* and

*Top Notch* Elementary books, Amiryousefi and Dastjerdi (2011) utilized a complicated analysis of the data obtained from Student Textbook Evaluation Questionnaire, Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scales (MIDAS) Questionnaire, and Gardner's Motivation Test Battery (MTB). The results of the three questionnaires used indicated that both groups had both instrumental and integrative motivation and a higher base of intrapersonal and logical-mathematical intelligences. They were also satisfied with their textbooks due to variety of topics and exercises included.

Elsewhere, in order to analyze the *Pacesetter Series*, Alemi and Sadehvandi (2012) used the Litz (2000) questionnaire to examine the series thoroughly in all essential aspects from a teachers' perspective. The results of descriptive statistics indicated that there is an overall consensus among the teachers that *Pacesetter* rightly addressed the needs of the learners in a communicative curriculum.

Birjandi and Alizadeh (2012) conducted a study to investigate the extent to which the *Top Notch*, *Interchange*, and *English File* series include critical thinking skills. Using a checklist mainly based on Bloom's taxonomy, they concluded that the books mainly tapped knowledge, comprehension, application, and building community of thinkers' skills and failed to acceptably include other skills reported to be of utmost importance for students' academic success.

Other studies have utilized different models and standards to evaluate ELT course books. Eslami Rasekh, Esmali, Ghavaminia, and Rajabi (2010) set out to evaluate the four mostly instructed course books in Iran English language institutes. The books were *Top Notch*, *Interchange*, *Headway*, and *On Your Mark*. The researchers evaluated course books in 2 stages based on Mcdounough and Shaw's (2003) division of course book evaluation into internal and external evaluation. They concluded that *Top Notch* best met Mcdounough and shaw's (2003) evaluation criteria.

In order to evaluate the *Top Notch* and *ILI* series based on their use of Metadiscourse, Alemi and Isavi (2012) conducted a study using Hyland's (2004) model of interactional metadiscourse. Their findings revealed that all categories of interactional metadiscourse are used in both textbooks. However, among the different categories of interactional metadiscourse, engagement markers seemed to enjoy the highest frequency of use in the *ILI* series and self-mentions dominate in the *Top Notch* series.

Alemi and Mesbah (2012) evaluated the *Top Notch* series based on ACTFL standards. After analysing the data collected from fifty Iranian teachers, they indicated that the series enjoyed some benefits for language learners such as encouraging the students to communicate successfully by offering lots of opportunities for interaction, and demonstrating cultural-based aspects not only through lively and authentic visual images but also without cultural bias. However, the series suffer from some shortcomings such as the lack of activities or discussions that present words, cognates, idiomatic expressions of students' native language.

With regard to the pragmatic aspect of course books, several studies have focused on gender and gender bias in the ELT course books. Dominguez (2003) in her thesis

discussed how *New Interchange Intro* (Students Book) represents men and women. Her findings showed that the book does not represent any sexist bias.

In another study, Alemi and Jafari (2012) tried to analyze gender and culture bias by investigating and tallying the gender and cultural origin of personal proper nouns. Carrying out a corpus-like analysis of personal proper names, from 10 local and global EFL textbooks, they found that females are less visible in these textbooks than males and that the global textbook series analyzed is not very global (only 5 % of the names were non-Western).

Additionally many course books were evaluated in terms of their pedagogic values and in actual teaching context. Sahragard, Rahimi, and Zaremoaeyeddi (2008) conducted an in-depth evaluation of the *Interchange* series with a focus on the real application of communicative and task-based approaches applied in the materials of the text book. The result suggested that the communicative skills were emphasized in the textbook. In contrast, the textbook had the limitations in providing opportunities for the learners and the teachers in order to decide on the content of the tasks.

Elsewhere Hamiloğlu and Karlova (2009) conducted a comparative study and evaluated five English course books in terms of vocabulary selection and teaching techniques. The books were Countdown to first certificate, advanced master class, Grammar in context 2, New Headway advanced, and Top Notch 2. The results of evaluation indicated that all the selected course books integrated lexis into their syllabus, giving emphasis to vocabulary building.

Also, Riasati and Zare (2010) attempted to evaluate the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the *Interchange* series from the Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives. The findings demonstrated that most teachers agreed with the effectiveness and suitability of the series. Despite these merits, some shortcomings were mentioned for this series such as lack of supplementary teaching materials, too many testing exercises, and inadequate number of Teacher's Manual.

Nahrkhalaji (2012) evaluated the values of the *Top Notch* textbook in process and its actual effects on the users. She designed a two –phase evaluation framework which contained whilst-use and post-use evaluation. In the first phase the mnemonic ASPECT represented some of the main features observed in the language classroom. In the second phase, the actual outcomes of the materials on the users were examined with a focus on long-term effects of the materials. Finally the writer proposed a number of recommendations in relation to the evaluation, development and application of materials for language learning.

Since English is taught and learnt as an international language, some of the studies have considered the international role of this language in their evaluation. Naji Meidani and Pishghadam (2012) tried to find out to what extent English language textbooks demonstrate the international status of the language by comparing four different textbooks (*New American Streamline*, *Cambridge English for Schools*, *Interchange Series Third Edition*, and *Top Notch*) published in different years. The criteria that they used to evaluate these textbooks were references to Inner Circle countries, references to Outer and Expanding Circle countries, non-native accents, dialogues in non-English speaking countries, and place of home culture and famous

people. Their analysis revealed differences among the selected books with a gradual tendency towards more recognition of the international status of English.

Although a large body of studies was done on textbook evaluation, especially on the target course books, a gap can be noticed in the literature in the evaluation of ELT course books in terms of their task types. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, up to now, almost no study was done on the evaluation of ELT course books based on the task types they used.

In Iran, English is taught and learned as a foreign language and outside the language classroom there are few or no opportunities for language learners to encounter the language. Therefore, the role of ELT materials used in classrooms becomes evident. In most language institutes, teachers have no choice but to teach the predetermined global course books. However, the implementation of different task types in such materials can work as a criterion for selection and application of them. If curriculum developers and institute authorities become aware of different task types used in each of these global materials, they can better select the most suitable one for their purpose. It can also help material developers in order to develop ELT materials with more communicative tasks.

## Research Questions

To this end the research posed the following questions:

- 1- What kinds of task types are utilized in the *Top Notch* and *Interchange* course books?
- 2- Which of these task types are more frequent in these course books?
- 3- Is there any significant difference among the frequency of task types in these course books?

## Methodology

### Selected Course books

In this study two most popular global course books which are currently taught in Iranian ELT institutes were evaluated.

These course books were as follows:

- 1- *Top Notch* (J. Saslow and A. Ascher, 2006)
- 2- *Interchange* (J. C. Richards, 2005)

In order to be homogeneous, both course books were evaluated at the intermediate level.

## The Framework

In 1999, in his book *Second language teaching and learning*, Nunan classified tasks to different groups according to the strategies underpinning them. He divided tasks into five major groups each one consisting sub-groups. As the whole, 20 different task types were categorized under the main types of cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective, and creative. This framework was selected to be utilized in this study because it defines each type of tasks clearly and gives examples for each one that makes it more comprehensible and practical.

## **Cognitive tasks**

Cognitive tasks, as a major category constitute eight task types as sub-categories including: classifying, predicting, inducing, note taking, concept mapping, inferencing, discriminating, and diagramming. Nunan (1999) also gave a definition for each of these task types.

- Classifying: putting things that are similar together in groups
- Predicting: predicting what is to come in the learning process
- Inducing: looking for patterns and regularities
- Note taking: writing down the important information in a text in your own words
- Concept mapping: showing the main ideas in a text in the form of a map
- Inferencing: using what you know to learn something new
- Discriminating: distinguishing between the main idea and supporting information
- Diagramming: using information from a text to label a diagram

## **Interpersonal tasks**

Interpersonal tasks constitute two task types as sub-categories including: co-operating, and role playing.

- Co-operating: sharing ideas and learning with other students
- Role playing: pretending to be somebody else and using the language for the situation you are in



## **Linguistic tasks**

The third type of tasks is called linguistic tasks which in itself include: conversational patterns, practicing, using context, summarizing, selective reading/listening, and skimming.

- Conversational patterns: using expressions to start conversations and keep them going
- Practicing: doing controlled exercises to improve knowledge and skills
- Using context: using the surrounding context to guess the meaning of an unknown word, phrase, or concept.
- Summarizing: picking out and presenting the major points in a text in summary form
- Selective reading/listening: reading or listening for key information without trying to understand every word
- Skimming: reading or listening to get a general idea of a text

## **Affective tasks**

Nunan (1999) divided the affective tasks into three sub-groups which are: personalizing, self-evaluating, and reflecting.

- Personalizing: learners share their own opinions, feelings, and ideas about a subject
- Self-evaluating: thinking about how well you did on a learning task, and rating yourself on a scale
- Reflecting: thinking about ways you learn best

## **Creative tasks**

By creative tasks, Nunan (1999) means brainstorming tasks which encourage learners to think of as many new words and ideas as they can.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Each of these course books was evaluated by the researchers in terms of their task types using Nunan's (1999) framework. The tasks were first categorized in their associated groups by each researcher individually, then the researchers came together to agree upon one list of categorization, finally the agreed list of categorization was cross-checked with one specialist in order to enhance the validity of it. After that the frequency of each type was calculated. Later the course books were compared with each other with regard to their task types.

## Data Analysis

The study included two parts; qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative part, the researchers analyzed each single task in the *Top Notch* and *Interchange* books and then based on Nunan's (1999) model, categorized them in different categories. In the quantitative part, inferential statistics (Frequency) of task types was calculated using SPSS 16 (statistical package for social science). Moreover, Chi Square analysis was used for the comparison.

## Results and Discussion

In order to answer the research questions, each course book was analyzed in terms of its task types based on Nunan's (1999) framework. The results are presented and discussed in the following sections.

### What kinds of task types are utilized in the *Top Notch* and *Interchange* course books?

Book \ Task Type	Interchange		Top Notch	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Classifying	6	1.20	3	0.77
Predicting	1	0.20	1	0.25
Inducing	_____	0	0	0
Taking Notes	1	0.20	2	0.51
Concept Mapping	21	4.23	_____	0
Inferencing	1	0.20	3	0.77
Discriminating	3	0.60	_____	0
Diagramming	_____	0	_____	0
<b>Cognitive (total)</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6.65</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.32</b>
Co-operating	137	27.62	41	10.59
Role Playing	9	1.81	16	4.13
<b>Interpersonal (total)</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>29.43</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>14.72</b>
Conversational Patterns	9	1.81	8	2.06
Practicing	79	15.92	155	40.05

Using Context	5	1.008	10	2.58
Summarizing	2	0.40	2	0.51
Selective Listening/Reading	58	11.69	28	7.23
Skimming	21	4.23	17	4.39
<b>Linguistic (total)</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>35.08</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>56.84</b>
Personalizing	83	16.73	47	12.14
Self-Evaluation	13	2.62	11	2.84
Reflecting	2	0.40	_____	0
<b>Affective (total)</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>19.55</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>14.98</b>
Brainstorming	46	9.27	43	11.11
<b>Creative (total)</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>9.27</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>11.11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of task type

As Table 1 shows, most of the task types were covered by these course books; however, no inducing or diagramming task was found in *Interchange*. Inducing a grammar from text has proven to be a notoriously challenging learning task. The primary reason for its difficulty is that in order to induce plausible grammars, the underlying model must be capable of representing the intricacies of language while also ensuring that it can be readily learned from data (Cohn, Blunsom and Goldwater, 2010) ; however, It encourages the students to refer more often to the context of the grammar point. It means a bit more mental effort for students and this can have the result that they engage more fully with the language.

In case of *Top Notch*, neither diagramming and reflecting nor discriminating and concept mapping tasks were found. In fact most of the grammar parts in *Interchange* book are directly explained in the form of boxes named "Grammar Focus", so there is no chance for learners to induce the grammatical points from the examples.

Additionally, in both course books there is no opportunity for learners to use the information from a text to label a diagram. In most of the tasks of *Interchange* learners are asked to use the information that they heard or read to complete the tables; however, diagramming tasks can help learners to organize the information which is going to be learned and as a result will improve the foreign/second language learning process.

*Top Notch* also lacks concept mapping tasks, therefore, learners do not use the information that they get from a written or spoken text but for answering some follow

up questions. It seems that the purpose of reading or listening is just answering the follow up questions and as a result *Top Notch* book has little care about authentic reading or listening. Another important strategy while reading or listening is to be able to distinguish between the main idea and supporting information. Reading/listening tasks should encourage learners to improve such a strategy; however, *Top Notch* book does not seem to fulfill this requirement since no discriminating task was found in this course book.

In order to become an autonomous, a learner needs to be able to think about ways of learning that works for him or her. According to Anderson (2005), when learners reflect upon their learning, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning. As O'Malley and Chamot (1990: p.8) state, students who do not reflect about their learning process "are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their progress, or review their accomplishments and future learning directions." However, as the results indicated, no reflecting task was observed in *Top Notch* book. These results are also in contrast with what the *Top Notch's* authors claimed that the activities promote critical thinking. In case of *Interchange*, just two reflecting tasks were observed that is very few for a course book. The followings are the only examples in *Interchange* book.

- *Which learning styles work best for you? (Interchange 3, page 55)*
- *What do you do to help improve your English? (Interchange 3, page 57)*

### **Which of these task types are more frequent in these course books?**

Generally, in both course books, linguistic tasks are more frequent than other types of tasks. Table 1 shows that 35.08% and 56.84% of all tasks are linguistic ones for *Interchange* and *Top Notch* respectively. According to Purpura (2004), in language teaching, the view that grammar plays a central role in the language curriculum is often firmly held.

Although the knowledge of grammar is essential for clarity of communication in both the written and the spoken form, an ELT course book which consisted mostly of linguistic tasks to the detriment of creative tasks would not achieve this goal. It seems that for basic levels of language learning, linguistic tasks play an important role since they help novice learners to discover the language universals and build their base of language learning, but intermediate and advance learners, mostly need to communicate via language rather than just knowing the rules. At these levels, linguistic rules can be integrated in some kinds of communicative and creative tasks indirectly. Interpersonal and affective tasks are in the second and third position for *Interchange* and the vice versa is observed for *Top Notch*.

Table 2 presents the ranking of general task types for both course books.

Rank	Task Type		Percentage	
	Interchange	Top Notch	Interchange	Top Notch
1	Linguistic	Linguistic	35.08	56.84
2	Interpersonal	Affective	29.43	14.98
3	Affective	Interpersonal	19.55	14.72
4	Creative	Creative	9.27	11.11
5	Cognitive	Cognitive	6.65	2.32

Table 2: Ranking of general task types

Affective tasks include personalizing and role playing tasks. Raz (1985) opined that role play was the most effective method in foreign language education, because it has beneficial effects on the learner's communicative competence and motivation. Tanaka (2002) also asserts that dramatization provides an opportunity in which students' desires to practice English in the classroom and to express themselves are increased. Also, the activity of drama is suitable for making an environment in which students do not remain silent but rather can naturally speak in and listen to the target language (Oyabu, 1999). In this study, *Interchange* and *Top Notch* cover this type of task with 26.28 and 16.86 percent respectively. Affective tasks and especially role play, can expose learners to large quantities of comprehensive input. Students are also actively involved and have positive effect (Crookall, 1990). Such activities can foster the personal growth of students as they participate in creative and cooperative assignments. The following excerpts are examples of role playing tasks from *Interchange* and *Top Notch*.

- *Role play asking for express service. (Top Notch 3A, page 29)*
- *Imagine you are a headhunter. You find jobs for people. Offer jobs that your partner might enjoy. Then change roles and try the role play again. (Interchange 3, page 15)*

Asking learners to give their ideas on a specific issue, they get involved in the learning process and therefore personalizing tasks may lead to learners' self esteem. Cordova and Lepper (1996) in their study for enhancing students' intrinsic motivation found that personalization produced dramatic increases, not only in students' motivation but also in their depth of engagement in learning, the amount they learned in a fixed time period, and their perceived competence and levels of aspiration. Therefore, in order to maintain intrinsic motivation throughout elementary and intermediate levels, a complex challenging creative task taxonomy may be helpful. The following excerpts are some of the examples of these tasks in *Interchange* and *Top Notch*.

- *Which majors sound the most interesting to you? Why? (Interchange3, page 50)*
- *What do you think of comics? (Top Notch 3B, page 81)*

As the results of Table 2 indicate, creative tasks are in the fourth position in both course books and this can be considered as one of the limitations of both course books. Second language learners need to be exposed to tasks and situations in which they can produce something (written or spoken) with the target language otherwise they cannot move from usage to use phase in the process of language learning and thus the language they produce is not authentic. This issue becomes more vital in Intermediate and advance level of language learning. Researchers have reasoned that for intrinsic motivation to occur, students need to be given challenging creative tasks (Elliot & Dweck, 1988). The examples of these tasks in these course books are:

- *Create conversations for the people in the picture. (Top Notch 3B, page 85)*
- *Choose a job and make a list of its advantages. Then use the list to write a paragraph about the job. Add a title. (Interchange 3, page 10)*

Cognitive tasks are the least among all types of tasks in both course books. Cognitive or thinking levels describe the degree of elaboration and organization of information required at each level. It is expected that tasks requiring high levels of thinking, that is application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, will foster intrinsic reasons for learning.

In particular, the number of co-operating tasks in Interchange book is more than other types of tasks, while in *Top Notch* most of the tasks are practicing tasks. *Interchange* encourages learners to share ideas and learning with other students in the form of pair work, group work and class activity tasks. Long and Porter (1985) mentioned five pedagogical arguments for the use of group work in second language (SL) learning. They concern the potential of group work for increasing the quantity of language practice opportunities, for improving the quality of student talk, for individualizing instruction, for creating a positive affective climate in the classroom, and for increasing student motivation. Pica, et al. (1996) also found that learners working together in groups were found to display greater motivation, more initiative, and less anxiety regarding their learning.

In *Top Notch*, activities which involve mainly grammar exercises are mostly presented in two grammar boxes in each unit. Although this type of activity is not without pedagogical value, they do not seem to provide a meaningful context for the students, since they only let the learners do some grammatical transformations on single unrelated sentences.

Rank	Task Type		Percentage	
	Interchange	Top Notch	Interchange	Top Notch
1	Co-operating	Practicing	27.62	40.05
2	Personalizing	Personalizing	16.73	12.14
3	Practicing	Brainstorming	15.92	11.11
4	Selective reading/listening	Co-operating	11.96	10.59
5	Brainstorming	Selective reading/listening	9.27	7.23

Table 3: The first five ranking of particular task types

### Is there any significant difference among the frequency of task types in these course books?

In order to see whether there is a significant difference between the frequencies of task types in these course books, a Chi-Square was run. Table 4 shows the result of Chi-Square test. Based on the results, the value of significance .00 is less than .05 ( $p = .00$ ,  $\chi^2 = 55.408$ ), so there is a significant difference between the frequency of task types in Interchange and Top Notch.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	55.40	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	56.87	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.00	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	883		

Table 4: Chi-Square Tests

Table 5 shows the frequency and standard residual of each task type in both course books. According to the results, there is a significant difference between the frequency of interpersonal and cognitive tasks in *Interchange* and *Top Notch*. The *Interchange* book has a significantly higher number of interpersonal and cognitive tasks. However, *Top Notch* includes significantly more linguistic tasks than *Interchange*. However, in terms of affective and creative tasks, no significant difference was observed between *Interchange* and *Top notch*.

			Task Type					Total
			Cognitive	Inter personal	Linguistic	Affective	Creative	
Book	Interchange	Count	33	146	174	97	46	496
		% within Book	6.7%	29.4%	35.1%	19.6%	9.3%	100.0%
		Std. Residual	1.9	3.0	-3.2	1.1	-.6	
TopNotch	Count	Count	9	57	220	58	43	387
		% within Book	2.3%	14.7%	56.8%	15.0%	11.1%	100.0%
		Std. Residual	-2.2	-3.4	3.6	-1.2	.6	
Total	Count	Count	42	203	394	155	89	883
		% within Book	4.8%	23.0%	44.6%	17.6%	10.1%	100.0%

Table 5: Book \* Task Type Cross tabulation

In each course book, the writers try to include the task types which they think are more important in the process of language learning. It can be understood that, with significantly more numbers of cognitive tasks, *Top Notch* tries to enhance learners' comprehension. These tasks are presented in the book in the forms of classifying, predicting, note taking, concept mapping, inferencing, and discriminating tasks. The followings are examples of these task types in *Interchange*:

- *Read these sentences from the reading, which statements are inferences(I)? which are restatement (R)? which are not given (NG)? (Classifying task, Interchange 3, page 111)*
- *Listen to the quiz show. Can you guess the occupation? (Predicting task, Interchange 3, page 95)*
- *Listen to the explanations for the two events in part A and take notes. (Note taking task, Interchange 3, page 87)*
- *Listen to people discussing changes that will affect these areas in the next 50 years. Write down two changes for each topic in the following table. (Concept mapping task, Interchange 3, page 68)*
- *Read the article. Which of the three people seems the happiest? The least happy? (Inferencing task, Interchange 3, page 77)*



- Find these sentences in the article. Decide whether each sentence is the main idea or a supporting detail in that paragraph. (Discriminating task, *Interchange 3*, page 97)

With regard to interpersonal tasks, *Interchange's* writers concern more with co-operating and role playing tasks than *Top Notch*. Actually, most of the tasks of *Interchange* want learners to work in pairs or group. The following excerpts are some examples from *Interchange* book.

*Pair work: Can you give a definition for each job? (Interchange 3, page 10)*

*Group work: Join another pair of students. Then compare and discuss your lists. (Interchange 3, page 130)*

*Student A: Imagine you are buying this car from Student B, but it's too expensive. Describe the problems you see to get a better price. Change roles and try the role play again. (Interchange 3, page 43)*

In terms of linguistic tasks, *Top Notch* book has significantly more tasks than *Interchange*. Besides linguistic tasks that are used in each lesson, *Top Notch* contains a section called "Grammar Booster" at the end of the book which mostly includes practicing tasks. 39.75 percent of *Top Notch* tasks expose learners with controlled exercises to improve their linguistic knowledge and skills.

- Listen to the vocabulary and practice. (*Top Notch 3A*, page 44)
- Complete each statement with the correct form of the nouns and verbs. (*Top Notch 3B*, page 101)

The results showed no significant difference between the frequency of affective and creative tasks in *Interchange* and *Top Notch*. In both course books learners are encouraged to give their ideas and opinions on a particular issue and speak or write about their interests. They are also encouraged to think about how well they did on a learning task and sometimes they are asked to rate themselves on a scale.

- Have you ever seen a Bollywood movie? If so, how did you like it? (*Interchange 3*, page 97)
- How well can you do these things? Check the boxes from "very well" to "a little".
  1. Make requests with modals, if clause and gerunds. Very well OK a little
  2. Pass on messages using indirect requests. (*Interchange 3*, page 28)
- Have you or someone you know experienced a natural disaster? What happened? (*Top Notch 3B*, page 70)
- Tick what you can.

Now I can...

  - a) Recommend a book
  - b) Describe my reading habits
  - c) Discuss the quality of reading materials (*Top Notch 3B*, page 85)

As the numbers show, creative tasks are the least among all task types in both course books and this could be a drawback for these course books.

## Conclusion and Implications

*Interchange* and *Top Notch* are two popular course books currently taught in Iranian institutes. Recently, *Top Notch* series seem to be used more than *Interchange* and replaced it in most of the institutes. However, on one hand, the types of *Top Notch* tasks are mostly linguistic with a special attention paid to grammatical parts of the language and on the other hand, four types of tasks (Concept mapping, Discriminating, Diagramming, and Reflecting) are not covered at all.

In terms of *Interchange*, tasks which involve students in pair or group work have the highest frequency among all tasks. This shows that the author of *Interchange* has given importance to pair/group work in their book.

One of the positive points of *Interchange* and *Top Notch* is that in both of them learners are provided with enough opportunities to share their own opinions, feelings and ideas about a subject and speak or write about their interests in the form of personalizing tasks. However, in both course books less attention was paid to creative tasks and it can be a great drawback for both *Interchange* and *Top Notch*.

The results of this study could be helpful for curriculum developers, institute authorities, teachers, and instructors to become aware of different task types used in each of these global materials and better select the most suitable one for their purpose. It can also help material developers in order to develop ELT materials with more communicative tasks. They can also be used by the authors of *Interchange* and *Top Notch* to pay deep attention to the task types used in their course books and make necessary modifications in the new versions of their course books.

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