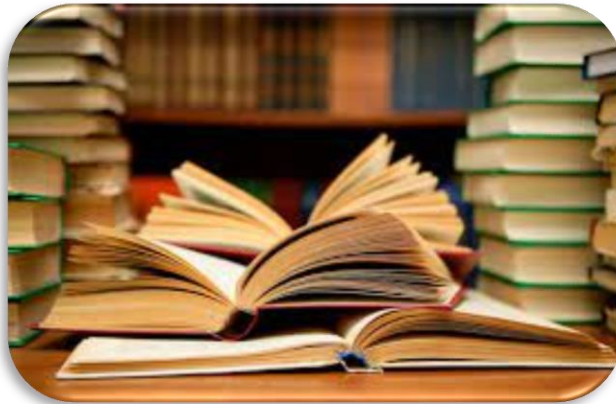


Research Paper



Seasoned and Novice English Teachers' Perceptions of 'Prospect 2': A Critical Exploratory Study on Teaching Experience

Hossein Isaei¹, Hamed Barjesteh^{2*}

¹Ph.D. candidate in TEFL, Department of English Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Ayatollah Amoli Branch, Amol, Iran

hossein_isaei@yahoo.com

²Associate professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Ayatollah Amoli Branch, Amol, Iran

ha_bar77@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

When a textbook is developed and used for an English Language Teaching (ELT) context, its evaluation is even more important because the pedagogical value of the textbook needs to be determined (Richards, 2007); however, ELT teachers' perceptions regarding a particular textbook may differ based on their teaching experience or academic degree. Considering a model provided by McDonough and Shaw (1993) based on external and internal evaluation of textbooks, this study aims to evaluate 'Prospect 2', the main English textbook for 8th-grade junior high schools in Iran. In effect, 400 ELT teachers were randomly invited from three provinces of Iran (i.e., Mazandaran, Gilan, and Golestan) to participate in the study. The Participants were divided into two groups 1) the seasoned teachers with over 10 years, and 2) the novice teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience, to explore their perspectives on (non-)alignment between their attitudes in teaching experience at 'Prospect 2'. A five-point Likert-scale questionnaire with 55 items was adopted and submitted to both groups. Employing SPSS, the teacher-researchers analyzed the data, and it was revealed that the teaching experience does affect the perceptions of ELT teachers regarding the evaluation of a particular textbook. While seasoned teachers were not satisfied with some crucial aspects of 'Prospect 2' and believed it had not met its pedagogical objectives, the novice group revealed moderate satisfaction. However, several similar themes such as the lack of authentic language, variant dialects, motivating illustrations, and poor printing, to name but a few, were reported by both groups.

Key Terms: ELT; External Evaluation; Internal Evaluation; Novice teachers; Seasoned teachers; Textbook

ادراکات معلمان زبان انگلیسی با تجربه و تازه کار از "پراسپکت ۲": یک مطالعه اکتشافی انتقادی در مورد تجربه تدریس

هنگامی که یک کتاب درسی برای آموزش زبان انگلیسی (ELT) تهیه و مورد استفاده قرار می‌گیرد، ارزشیابی آن از اهمیت بیشتری برخوردار است زیرا ارزش آموزشی آن باید تعیین شود (ریچاردز، ۲۰۰۷). با این حال، ادراک معلمان ELT در مورد یک کتاب درسی خاص ممکن است بر اساس تجربه تدریس یا مدرک تحصیلی آنها متفاوت باشد. با توجه به مدل ارزشیابی کتاب درسی (مک دوناه و شاول، ۱۹۹۳)، این پژوهش به ارزیابی کتاب «پراسپکت ۲»، که کتاب درسی انگلیسی پایه هشتم متوسطه در ایران است، می‌پردازد. از این رو، ۴۰۰ معلم زبان انگلیسی از سه استان ایران (مازندران، گیلان و گلستان) برای شرکت در مطالعه دعوت و به دو گروه معلمان مجرب با سابقه تدریس بیش از ۱۰ سال، و معلمان مبتدی با کمتر از ۱۰ سال سابقه، تقسیم شدند تا دیدگاههای ایشان از نظر (عدم) همسویی در مورد کتاب درسی فوق، با توجه به تجربه تدریس آنها بررسی شود. پرسشنامه ۵ درجه ای لیکرت پذیرفته و برای هر دو گروه ارسال شد. داده ها با استفاده از SPSS تجزیه و تحلیل و مشخص شد که تجربه تدریس بر ادراک معلمان در مورد ارزشیابی یک کتاب درسی خاص تأثیر گذار است. در حالی که معلمان کارکننده از برخی از جنبه های مهم «پراسپکت ۲» راضی نبودند و اعتقاد داشتند که اهداف آموزشی آن برآورده نشده است، گروه تازه کار رضایت متوسطی را نشان دادند. با این حال، تعدادی از مضامین مشابه مانند فقدان زبان معتبر، گویش های متنوع، تصاویر انگیزشی، و چاپ ضعیف، توسط هر دو گروه گزارش شده است.

کلمات کلیدی: آموزش زبان انگلیسی، ارزشیابی سطحی، ارزشیابی جزئی، معلمان تازه کار، معلمان کارکننده، کتاب درسی

INTRODUCTION

ELT materials establish the backbone for English language education (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Generally speaking, in many language programs they function as the de facto syllabus and dictate what to teach, in what order to teach, and even the density and pace of teaching (Işik, 2018). Hutchinson and Torres (1994) maintain that during educational innovation, textbooks play a cornerstone role as they provide a picture of what the change is going to look like (Taghipour & Najafi Karimi, 2022). Textbooks are crucial in the classroom, particularly in developing countries where teachers and students have limited resources (López-Medina, 2016). According to Richards and Rodgers (2002), textbooks are inevitable aspects of the ELT curriculum. Textbooks provide ready-made materials to teachers and students and play a significant role in EFL teaching and learning. A significant component of all educational programs is the textbooks, the efficiency of which greatly contributes to the accomplishment of the pedagogical goals of the curriculum (Tomlinson, 2008), English textbooks are used as the most important tools for pushing both teachers and learners toward teaching and learning English language throughout the world; hence, selecting proper and appropriate textbooks for teaching language in the classroom can be one of the most important tasks of language teachers. Studies show that textbooks are very common in ELT contexts (Byrd, 2001; Goodarzi et al., 2020; Isaei et al., 2023; Mohammadi, 2022; Samoudi & Mohammadi, 2020; Shahmohammadi, 2018; Tavakoli Gheinani et al., 2017) and ELT professionals use textbooks for daily teaching.

As Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p. 315) maintain, “The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching and no teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook”. Textbook is “the main component of any instructional program as it is difficult to imagine a class without it” (Nunan, 1999, p. 98). Nunan further implies that textbooks serve as a psychological necessity for both students and teachers as they lay the foundation upon which the progress and achievement of the learners can be measured. Theorists and practitioners in English language teaching widely agree on the critical role that textbooks play in language teaching and learning, considering them as the second most important element in the EFL/ESL classroom, after the teacher.

The effort to emphasize the pivotal role of materials evaluation has abounded (Tomlinson, 2013). It aims to guide stakeholders towards a data-driven, disciplined, and informed decision-making process. The pioneers in the field have not only set the theoretical ground but also carried out research and come up with practical implications, even with materials evaluation checklists (Işik, 2018). In this regard, current materials are evaluated, modified, revised, republished, and sometimes new ones are developed to meet the precise focuses of instruction and the learners’ language needs. In simple terms, the awareness of stakeholders about materials has increased due to the accumulation of theoretical and practical knowledge and data. That knowledge has spread out and contributed to making the materials evaluation a global concern (McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). As a result, the research on material evaluation has globally flourished and researchers all around the world have contributed to the ever-growing body of knowledge in the field (McDonough et al., 2013). That concern even gave birth to the birth of a professional association, The Materials Development Association (MATSDA) which has offered courses, organized conferences, and provided services. The knowledge accumulated in the field, however, needed to be streamlined and put into practice to meet local needs.



Although textbooks are commonly viewed as essential tools for language teaching, their usability, flexibility, and ability to meet the needs and interests of both teachers and students are often not evaluated thoroughly (Taghipour & Najafi Karimi, 2022). Despite numerous studies on course book assessment, the current literature on ELT textbook evaluation remains unconvincing, particularly in the case of evaluating textbooks' suitability for teaching English as a foreign language (Shahmohammadi, 2018). As a result, the significance of textbooks in the ELT context necessitates their rigorous evaluation (Tomlinson, 2008) by teachers, especially in formal language teaching settings. Accordingly, this study focuses on the evaluation of an ELT textbook (i.e., Prospect 2) which is taught at 8th-grade junior high schools in Iran. It is worth noticing that in 2021, the teacher-researchers embarked upon conducting an evaluative study on the main English textbook of 7th-grade junior high schools in Iran (i.e., Prospect 1) through screening the perceptions of 104 ELT teachers, to find out the (de)merits of the textbook (Isaee et al., 2023). In effect, the findings of the current study will provide the opportunity to discover any probable (non)alignment between the perceptions of Iranian ELT teachers regarding 'Prospect 1' and 'Prospect 2', as well as compare the pros and cons of both textbooks together.

Significance of the Study

Teachers need to assess English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, particularly newly published ones, to determine their usefulness, advantages, and disadvantages. This evaluation can assist teachers in their teaching techniques and highlight essential aspects of the teaching process. Additionally, it can enable teachers to recognize the topics that require more time for learners to comprehend. Although no book is perfect, teachers and authors strive to find the most appropriate one for their students (Grant, 1987, p.8). When creating a syllabus, both teachers and students need to assess the course materials. In Iran, ELT heavily relies on textbooks, so it is crucial to evaluate their content and the effectiveness of the teaching methods they employ (Taghipour & Najafi Karimi, 2022). This study could be very significant in achieving the designed learning goals. Research studies in this area could be useful for the Ministry of Education's materials developers. Such studies could help them in designing and developing content that meets the needs of both teachers and learners. Therefore, the present study focuses on overall evaluation of 'Prospect 2', which is the main English textbook of the 8th-grade junior high school in the educational system of Iran, by screening the perceptions of seasoned and novice EFL teachers to find the answers to the following research questions:

RQ 1: What are the novice and seasoned EFL teachers' perceptions of different aspects of 'Prospect 2' in terms of the physical appearance, layout, general theme, illustrations, and supplementary materials?

RQ 2: What are the novice and seasoned EFL teachers' perceptions of different aspects of 'Prospect 2' in terms of the exercises, tasks, activities, language components, language types, content, skills, and methodology?

RQ3: What are the crucial aspects of 'Prospect 2' that the seasoned teachers are not satisfied with?

RQ4: To what extent is there any statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the novice and seasoned EFL teachers toward different aspects of 'Prospect 2'?



REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The evaluation of ELT textbooks has begun since the 1970s (e.g., Al Harbi, 2017; Cunningsworth & Tomlinson, 1984; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Nimehchisalem & Mukundan, 2015; Sheldon, 1988; Tucker, 1975), and has spread out so swiftly that it is a global concern currently (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Material evaluation projects, as suggested by Jusuf (2018), provide an opportunity for material designers and developers to have a deeper understanding of their materials and exercise better control over their design and use. According to McDonough and Shaw (2012), materials evaluation is necessary in two circumstances: when teachers adapt or develop materials, and when they use others' products as consumers. Textbooks play a crucial role in educational programs and have cognitive, affective, and educational impacts on second or foreign-language learners; therefore, it is recommended that teachers choose materials that are developed based on sound linguistic and pedagogical principles. It is quite evident that such a critical choice entails careful materials evaluation as "a procedure which involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials" (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 15). Moreover, conducting the evaluation process systematically helps teachers gain accurate, effective, and contextual perceptions of the textbook's overall nature (Tomlinson, 2003).

Methods of Textbook Evaluation

In-depth interview, checklist, and integrated method, which is a combination of the two previous procedures, are among the miscellaneous models used for textbook evaluation (Taghipour & Najafi Karimi, 2022). Most evaluation models require a thorough analysis of the linguistic context, objectives, design, methodology, skills, and additional resources (Nahrkhalaji, 2012). Breen and Candline's (1987) model is a highly intricate approach for critically evaluating the aims, appropriateness, and usefulness of instructional materials. Sheldon's (1988) checklist, which can be costly, covers a wide range of factors associated with all aspects of content, including graphics and flexibility. Chall and Conard (1990) proposed an evaluation framework that adapts Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy of the cognitive domain. The framework assesses the affective processes and cognitive skills required for learners to apply textbook activities using a special rating scale called the "Question Complexity Rating Scale." McDonough and Shaw (1993) created a two-stage framework that included a brief external overview to adopt a textbook followed by a concise internal evaluation to adapt the textbook. Cunningsworth's evaluative checklist includes 45 questions covering goals, language material, style, technique, and expertise, as well as realistic requirements, including availability and cost.

According to Cunningsworth (1995), there are four primary criteria for evaluating textbooks. Firstly, the textbooks should cater to the learners' needs and align with the objectives and goals of the language-learning program. Secondly, they should reflect on the present and future uses of the language. The textbooks selected should help students learn how to use the language effectively as per their requirements. Thirdly, the textbooks should take into account the students' learning needs, without imposing a rigid method. Lastly, the textbooks should have a clear role as a support for learning, just like the teacher, mediating between the target language and the learner. In the same vein, Sheldon (1988) created a checklist comprising fifty-three questions, which were divided into seventeen categories, to evaluate content variables such as usability, content, style, and validity. Other checklists, including Al



Harbi (2017), Brown (2001), Byrd (2001), McDonough & Shaw (2012), and Skierso (1991), also emphasize thoroughness in assessing procedures for developing materials.

Macro and Micro Evaluation

As mentioned earlier, ELT materials can be evaluated at the 'macro' and 'micro' levels (McGrath, 2002, p. 14). "Macro-level evaluation is concerned about obtaining a general impression of the material and has also been termed *external evaluation*". External evaluation involves a comprehensive review of the materials presented by the author or the publisher, including the information provided on the cover page, as well as the introduction and table of contents (McGrath, 2002, p. 25). This type of evaluation provides insights into the intended audience, the level of proficiency, the context of use, the presentation and organization of the materials, the authors' views on language and methodology, the use of audio-visual materials, the vocabulary list, index, cultural aspects, tests, and exercises included in the textbook (Isaee, et al, 2023).

Micro-level evaluation, also known as internal evaluation (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 66), involves analyzing the internal consistency and organization of materials. At this stage, the main concern is to determine the extent to which the external evaluation factors align with the internal evaluation. (Isaee et al., 2023). During internal evaluations, textbooks undergo an in-depth examination to determine how well their content aligns with the author's intended message, as well as the goals and priorities of the teaching program in question (McDonough & Shaw, 1993, p. 64), and such a rigorous investigation, demands the following key factors to be examined:

- 1) The suitability of materials for different learning styles and self-study
- 2) The grading and sequence of the materials
- 3) The way the skills are presented
- 4) The authenticity or artificiality of the speaking materials
- 5) The authenticity or artificiality of the listening materials
- 6) The appropriateness of tests.

Concerns of the Evaluator

It is important to note that the evaluation of a textbook can be influenced by the evaluator's concerns (Richards, 2007). For example, one teacher may evaluate a textbook based on its usability in the classroom, such as whether it can be easily adapted and used flexibly. Another teacher may take a more critical approach, evaluating the textbook in terms of its theoretical orientation and approach (Richards, 2007). To provide more clarity, Richards raises an important question regarding textbooks that teach conversation skills - what theory of conversation do they follow? What syllabus do they use, and how valid are the activities they promote? This means that two different teachers assessing the same textbook may have very different opinions. It is widely recognized that ELT teachers' perceptions of a textbook may vary depending on their teaching experience and academic qualifications (Richards, 2001).

As per Richards (2007), a published checklist cannot be used as-is to evaluate and choose textbooks in any language program. The checklist needs to be adapted based on specific questions generated for each situation, which should revolve around the main issues of textbook evaluation and selection. These



main issues include program factors, teacher factors, learner factors, content factors, and pedagogical factors.

Before Evaluating a Textbook

“With such an array of commercial textbooks and other kinds of instructional materials to choose from, teachers and others responsible for choosing materials need to be able to make informed judgments about textbooks and teaching materials” (Richards, 2001, P. 115). He further adds that “evaluation; however, can only be done by considering something concerning its purpose”. A textbook or coursebook can be the perfect fit for a specific situation, meeting its requirements perfectly. It is easy to use, even by inexperienced teachers with little preparation. It contains just the right amount of material for the program and provides balanced coverage of grammar and the four skills, as stated by Richards in 2001. However, the same book may not be suitable for a different situation, as it may not challenge the teacher and learners enough, provide insufficient material, and include unnecessary elements (such as a grammar syllabus) for the program. According to Richards (2001), one needs to gather information on the following issues before evaluating a textbook:

1) the role of the textbook in the program

Firstly, we need to determine whether there is a well-developed curriculum in place that describes the objectives, syllabus, and content of the program, or if the textbook will be the determining factor. Additionally, we need to establish whether the textbook series will be the core of the program or just one of several different textbooks that will be used. It is also important to consider whether the textbook will be used in small classes or large ones. Lastly, we need to determine whether learners will be required to purchase a workbook or if the textbook provides all the practice students need.

2) The role of the teachers in the program

Is it possible to provide information about the experience and training level of the teachers in the program? Are the teachers, native English speakers? If not, how proficient are they in English? Do the teachers strictly follow the textbook or do they use it as a supplementary resource? Do the teachers have a say in selecting the textbooks? Are they allowed to make changes or additions to the textbook? Additionally, there's a second point to consider, could you please provide more information about it?

3) The role of the learners in the program

Do students have to purchase a textbook for the course? What are the usual expectations of students from a textbook? Will the book be used both in class and at home? In what ways will the book be utilized in class? Is it the primary resource for classroom activities? Finally, what is the maximum cost that students are willing to pay for a textbook?

It is important to realize that no textbook can perfectly fit a language program.

Related Studies on ‘Prospect’ Series

As Brown (2001, p. 2) suggests, it is essential to study the available non-survey data before developing any new data collection instrument. He further implies that non-survey data could be gained through a literature review. In Iran, In the realm of textbook evaluation, different authors and researchers have conducted a vast body of studies in different contexts (Abbasi et al., 2015). In this regard, they have



adopted, developed, and employed various ELT textbook evaluation schemes or checklists (e.g., Alavi et al., 2015; Goodarzi et al., 2020; Isaei et al., 2023; Jahangard, 2007; Khani et al., 2023; Maghsoudi & Khodamoradi, 2023; Mohammadi, 2022; Samoudi & Mohammadi, 2020; Shahmohammadi, 2018; Tavakoli Gheinani et al., 2017).

Taghiour and Najafi Karimi (2022) conducted a study to evaluate the textbook 'Prospect 3'. They screened the attitudes of 200 ELT teachers using a checklist developed by Cunnings Worth (1995). The questionnaire consisted of 50 criteria divided into 14 categories, such as content, grammar, vocabulary, phonology, language skills, methodology, study skills, objectives, content selection, gradation and recycling, visuals, practices and testing, supplementary materials, and teacher manual. The aim was to understand the opinions and judgments of the participants about the textbook.

In the same vein, Ahmadi Safa and Karampour (2020) conducted a study to gather the perspectives of EFL teachers and students on 'Prospect 3', an Iranian EFL junior high school textbook. The study included 218 third-grade junior high school students and 103 EFL teachers who were conveniently selected from different junior high schools in Khuzestan, Golestan, Hamedan, and Qom provinces. A researcher-made 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used for the quantitative evaluation of the textbook. Upon analyzing the results, it was found that EFL teachers were only partially satisfied with 'Prospect 3', whereas EFL students remained neutral towards it.

Similarly, Isaei et al. (2023) evaluated 'Prospect 1', which is the main English textbook for 7th-grade junior high schools in Iran. The study participants comprised 104 EFL teachers from two provinces in Iran—Mazandaran and Gilan. The researchers adopted a 55-item Likert scale questionnaire which was submitted to the respondents in person and virtually. Based on the evaluation, it was concluded that 'Prospect 1' had poor printing quality and lacked engaging pictures and illustrations. Additionally, the absence of different dialects and authentic language, non-utilization of modern techniques such as typography and perceptual saliency, and neglect of the learners' requirements were also reported as significant shortcomings.

Goodarzi et al. (2020) conducted a study on the cognitive, communicative, and creative potentials of the 'Prospect' series using a CLT model. As they maintain, although the textbooks aim to obey the CLT approach, they fall short in fulfilling cognitive, communicative, and creative potentials to an adequate extent. In addition, the study highlights crucial elements of CLT that are not addressed, such as the use of authentic materials, strategy instruction, and skills integration. The study also finds that the emphasis on Iranian culture has negatively impacted the sociocultural aspects of CLT.

In the same fashion, Ahmadi Safa et al. (2017) conducted a study on 'Prospect 2' by randomly selecting 236 EFL school teachers from seven cities in Iran. They used a 65-item researcher-made Likert scale questionnaire to collect data and conducted semi-structured interviews, in which 38 ELT teachers participated. The results of the study showed that the EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards the linguistic aspects of the textbook. However, they had negative attitudes towards the cultural points, authentic contextualization of the language, and physical aspects of the text. Similarly, Tavakoli et al. (2017) evaluated the 'Prospect' series (i.e., Prospect 1, 2 & 3). The study was conducted using questionnaires to explore the attitudes of English Language Teaching (ELT) school teachers and determine if there were any differences in their perceptions. The findings indicated that the teachers had



positive attitudes toward the textbooks used in ELT; however, a significant difference was observed among them when it came to their attitudes toward the ‘Prospect 3’ textbook.

Finally, employing Litz’s (2005) evaluation checklist, Bemani and Jahangard (2014) evaluated ‘Prospect 1’ by screening 102 EFL teachers’ perceptions. The findings showed that the participants were partially satisfied with ‘Prospect 1’. The researchers also concluded that the presentation of cultural norms and skills needs to be revised and modified.

Having reviewed the empirical studies and the related literature, it is obvious that the second member of the Prospect series has received relatively less attention and deserves further evaluative studies.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A sample of 400 Iranian EFL teachers from junior high schools in three Provinces of Iran, namely Mazandaran, Gilan, and Golestan, were randomly invited to participate in this study. Holding an average age of 31 and 45 for the female teachers and males respectively, the study participants comprised 210 female and 190 male EFL teachers. All the ELT teachers have been teaching 8th-grade English textbooks at various urban and rural junior high schools for at least three years. The participants were divided into two groups based on their teaching experiences. Those with 3 to 10 years of teaching experience were assigned as the novice group (i.e., 198 participants), and those teachers with over 10 years of teaching experience were assigned as the seasoned group of ELT teachers (i.e., 202 participants) to see any probable (non)alignment between their attitudes.

According to Table 1, the average years of teaching experience of the EFL teachers was determined to be 16. Regarding teachers’ academic degrees, 16% held a Ph.D. degree, 45.2% held an MA degree, 27.4% held a BA degree, and 11.4% had an associate Art (AA) degree. Moreover, 56% of the teachers were involved in teaching in urban areas and 44% in rural areas. In addition, 48.7% of the participants maintained less than 10 years of teaching experience, and 51.3% of them enjoyed more than 10 years of teaching experience.

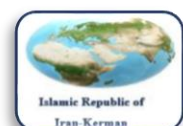
Table 1

Demographic information of the participants

	Gender		Age	Teaching Experience			Workplace		Academic Degree			
	Female	Male	26 -58	3 -10	11-over	Urban	Village	AA	BA	MA	Ph D	
Number	210	190	400	198	202	226	174	44	108	184	64	

Instrumentation

In 2018, Ahmadi Safa et al. developed a 55-item questionnaire based on the characteristics of a good ELT textbook proposed by McDonough and Shaw (1993) to assess different aspects of the textbook. The questionnaire’s construct validity was established in the original study through expert judgment and



exploratory factor analysis. Additionally, Cronbach Alpha analysis was used to assess the internal consistency of the scale, and the resulting reliability index was ($\alpha=0.88$), indicating high reliability (i.e., greater than 0.70). It was also assured by 3 faculty members of the Ayatollah Amoli Branch of Islamic Azad University, Amol, Iran. As the primary tool for collecting data in this study, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants. The questionnaire had two main sections: the first section aimed to collect demographic information about the ELT teachers, while the second section focused on an in-depth evaluation of the ELT textbook 'Prospect 2'. The second section comprised eight distinct criteria:

- 1) physical appearance, layout, and general theme
- 2) illustrations
- 3) supplementary materials such as teacher's guide, workbook, and CDs
- 4) language components, including structure and vocabulary
- 5) exercises, tasks, and activities
- 6) language types
- 7) content and language skills, and
- 8) methodology

Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected from 400 male and female English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers working in public and private junior high schools located across urban and rural areas of Mazandaran, Gilan, and Golestan Provinces in Iran. The ELT textbook evaluation questionnaire was distributed to the teachers either in hard copy during face-to-face meetings or shared virtually through email correspondence. During the study, the teacher-researchers provided explanations and examples in Persian to describe how to choose answers. The purpose of the study was to retrospectively evaluate the effectiveness of the English textbook 'Prospect 2', which was created by the Ministry of Education of Iran for teaching English to 8th-grade students in junior high schools in Iran. The evaluation was done quantitatively.

The completed questionnaires were divided into two categories based on the respondents' teaching experience. The respondents with 3 to 10 years of teaching experience were classified as the novice group (i.e., 198 ELT teachers), while those with over 10 years of teaching experience were considered the seasoned group (i.e., 202 ELT teachers). This was done to determine if there were any possible differences in their attitudes and to assess whether they were aligned or not.

Finally, the completed questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 22 to answer research questions. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected through the 5-point Likert scale. The Likert scale is an interval scale where the mean score is crucial in determining the level of agreement, in that, a score between 1 and 1.80 indicates strong agreement, 1.81 to 2.60 represents agreement, 2.61 to 3.40 indicates a neutral position, 3.41 to 4.20 means disagreement, while a score between 4.21 to 5 represents strong disagreement. At last, independent samples t-tests were conducted to identify alignment between participant groups' perceptions.



Data Analysis

The answers to the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed to find the answers to the research questions. Additionally, independent samples t-tests (inferential statistics) were conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the perceptions of seasoned and novice teachers. The findings of the data analysis are presented in 11 tables and 2 figures.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

To find the answer to the first and second research questions of the study regarding the perceptions of novice (n=198) and seasoned (n=202) junior high school ELT teachers on the main aspects of ‘Prospect 2’, descriptive statistics including mean, percentage, and standard deviation were used and tabulated in 9 tables which are as follows:

Table 2 displays descriptive statistics on the physical appearance, printing quality, layout, and general theme of the textbook, measured through 10 items of the questionnaire (i.e., 1-10).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for physical appearance, layout, and general theme items

	Group	N	Mean	SD	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The book has a good appearance.	novice	198	4.16	.551	.000	20.3	2.90	30.2	46.6
	seasoned	202	3.99	1.01	1.10	24.5	1.90	28.2	44.3
2. The book’s hardcover is attractive.	novice	198	4.46	.423	1.90	5.82	1.88	25.0	65.4
	seasoned	202	4.83	1.33	1.00	.690	2.01	64.2	32.1
3. The colors of the pages are appealing.	novice	198	3.77	.830	7.70	9.61	1.99	39.2	41.5
	seasoned	202	3.98	.607	2.00	3.11	8.49	54.3	32.1
4. The book has a high	novice	198	4.90	.218	.000	.000	.000	40.3	59.7
	seasoned	202	4.81	.302	.000	.000	.000	1.30	98.7



printing quality.									
5. The book is well organized.	novice	198	2.58	1.44	34.6	49.6	3.80	5.57	6.43
	seasoned	202	2.19	1.67	37.3	48.2	1.94	6.12	6.44
6. The book has a good layout.	novice	198	2.13	1.53	41.5	39.6	0.50	1.10	17.3
	seasoned	202	2.55	1.60	32.2	38.8	16.0	2.50	10.5
7. The table of contents is quite comprehensive and useful.	novice	198	3.87	1.73	14.2	32.7	9.53	36.4	7.17
	seasoned	202	1.62	.254	55.2	34.1	5.26	2.21	3.23
8. A list of words at the end of the book is useful.	novice	198	3.19	1.38	10.2	36.2	23.5	18.8	11.3
	seasoned	202	4.11	.535	1.66	9.64	12.2	33.3	43.2
9. A list of references is provided at the end of the textbook.	novice	198	4.65	.525	1.10	2.02	3.98	37.8	55.1
	seasoned	202	4.78	.595	1.00	2.20	.000	30.9	65.9
10. Useful and helpful index/s is/are included.	novice	198	4.89	.604	1.49	0.44	2.27	23.5	72.3
	seasoned	202	4.93	.423	.000	.000	.900	67.0	32.1
Layout	novice	198	3.86	.923					
	seasoned	202	3.70	.790					

Based on the findings presented in Table 2, the mean score and standard deviation of the novice teacher's assessment of the textbook's physical appearance, layout, printing quality, and general theme are 3.86 and 0.923, respectively. The results indicate that more than half of the novice teachers expressed partial dissatisfaction with the overall layout and physical appearance of 'Prospect 2' textbook. The



seasoned teachers also have a mean score of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 0.790, which shows that they are also somewhat dissatisfied. When we compare the means of both groups, it is clear that they are both relatively dissatisfied with the overall layout and physical appearance of ‘Prospect 2’. However; the novice group revealed a higher rate of dissatisfaction ($M=3.86$) compared to the seasoned group ($M=3.70$). Furthermore, the highest rate of disagreement between both groups could be traced in item 7 (i.e., The table of contents is quite comprehensive and useful), in that while 90% of the experienced EFL teachers confessed that the table of contents is really useful, nearly 50% of the novice teachers didn’t think so.

Table 3 below summarizes descriptive statistical results for the five questionnaire items (11-15) measuring the second evaluated aspect of the 8th-grade English textbook: illustrations.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for illustration items

	Group	N	Mean	SD	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
11. The book contains visually appealing images that are of top-notch quality.	novice	198	1.71	.211	70.7	7.72	8.92	9.53	3.13
	seasoned	202	3.11	.944	.000	15.5	31.3	53.2	.000
12. Images and figures are clear and not confusing.	novice	198	3.98	.985	13.9	22.6	30.7	23.3	9.50
	seasoned	202	1.20	.654	52.1	41.2	4.37	1.19	1.14
13. Images, charts, shapes, and tables are relevant.	novice	198	1.19	.452	52.3	24.9	13.8	6.45	1.92
	seasoned	202	1.89	.337	77.2	15.0	2.02	3.00	2.78
14. Images make the input more comprehensible.	novice	198	1.18	.657	71.4	8.16	5.13	11.5	3.81
	seasoned	202	1.23	.908	72.1	3.60	.000	12.1	12.2
15. Perceptual salience and typography are used to draw students’ attention.	novice	198	4.35	.451	6.91	5.18	9.16	42.7	36.5
	seasoned	202	2.65	.810	13.1	51.4	5.30	15.4	14.8



Illustrations	novice	198	2.48	.551
	seasoned	202	2.01	.730

As indicated in Table 3, both groups of EFL teachers' mean score and standard deviation for illustrations of the textbook are $M=2.48$, $SD=.551$, for the novice group, and $M=2.01$, $SD=.730$, for the seasoned group. It shows that both groups of participants were partially satisfied with the Illustrations aspect of the textbook, but not entirely. The highest rate of agreement between the perceptions of both groups can be observed in item 14, as both groups believed that the images in 'Prospect 2' make the input more comprehensible. In the same vein, the highest rate of disagreement can be traced in item 12 (i.e., $M=3.98$ for the novice group, and $M=1.20$ for the seasoned group). In this regard, with the mean difference of $MD=2.78$, the low-experienced teachers believe that the images and figures are not clear and confusing through 'Prospect 2', whereas the high-experienced teachers believe vice versa.

The supplementary materials of the textbook include the teacher's guidebook, workbook, flashcards, and CDs. These materials were evaluated through a questionnaire consisting of five items (i.e., 16-20). Table 4 presents the descriptive statistical data obtained from the evaluation.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics for supplementary materials items

	Group	N	Mean	SD	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
16. There is a useful Teachers' Guide for novice and experienced teachers.	novice	198	1.52	1.11	71.2	17.3	3.83	3.70	3.97
	seasoned	202	4.22	1.34	12.1	9.10	2.10	34.4	42.3
17. Based on the latest research findings in the field of ELT, the Teachers' Guide provides recommended practices.	novice	198	2.48	.549	24.6	26.9	2.19	28.8	7.17
	seasoned	202	4.98	1.85	1.19	1.01	.000	43.2	54.6
18. The Teachers' Guide provides techniques to help students	novice	198	2.19	.773	36.9	30.0	13.8	15.4	3.90
	seasoned	202	4.74	1.44	.000	11.2	1.80	46.8	40.2



activate their background knowledge.									
19. The workbook includes helpful exercises that are relevant to the topic.	novice	198	2.00	.414	30.0	50.0	3.00	11.5	5.50
	seasoned	202	4.34	.966	11.2	4.67	2.22	42.3	44.3
20. Complementary materials such as CDs, video clips, and flashcards are also provided for the students.	novice	198	4.27	1.22	3.82	11.5	3.88	23.5	57.3
	seasoned	202	4.21	1.01	2.64	9.12	9.34	22.4	56.5
Supplementary Materials	novice	198	2.49	.813					
	seasoned	202	4.49	1.32					

As shown in Table 4, the mean score and standard deviation for availability and acceptability of supplementary materials of the Iranian 8th-grade English textbooks are 2.49 and 0.813, for the novice teachers, and 4.49 and 1.32, for the seasoned teachers. According to the results of Table 4, the low experienced EFL teachers have fairly been pleased with the supplementary materials and teacher’s guide; however, this is not the case for the highly experienced ones. The highest rate of disagreement between both groups of study can be seen in item 16 (i.e., mean difference -2.7), in which the seasoned teachers believe that there is no useful Teachers’ Guide for novice and experienced teachers. In the same vein, a high rate of difference between the perceptions of both groups could be observed in items 17 ($MD= -2.5$), 18 ($MD= -2.55$), and 19 ($MD= -2.34$) of the questionnaire. In contrast, both groups of participants unanimously believe that complementary materials such as CDs, video clips, and flashcards are not provided for the students (item 20), and in this regard, the highest rate of agreement between the attitudes of both groups can be observed in item 20.

Language Components (i.e., grammar and vocabulary) were measured through seven items of the questionnaire (i.e., 21-27), and the results of the analyses are summarized and depicted in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics for language components, including grammar and vocabulary items

Group	N	Mean	SD	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
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21. The book introduces an appropriate level of vocabulary for the students.	novice	198	4.32	.72 1	11.1	3.60	1.80	55.8	27.7
	seasoned	202	3.13	1.7 7	53.4	43.0	.000	1.39	2.21
22. The Grammar rules are chosen based on their frequency of usage in daily conversations.	novice	198	1.58	.46 3	61.5	23.1	1.52	12.7	1.18
	seasoned	202	4.39	.43 2	12.5	18.2	2.66	23.4	43.2
23. Words are distributed from easy to hard in each unit of the book.	novice	198	1.44	.51 1	34.6	32.7	5.18	7.70	19.2
	seasoned	202	4.34	.66 1	12.2	1.84	.000	76.2	24.2
24. Recycling vocabulary has been done effectively.	novice	198	1.10	.43 9	34.2	48.7	3.70	11.5	1.90
	seasoned	202	4.21	.70 1	10.1	5.20	.000	38.7	46.0
25. Considering students' language proficiency, the grammar rules are appropriate.	novice	198	1.65	.38 9	69.6	15.8	.000	6.30	8.30
	seasoned	202	4.87	.36 4	1.10	2.22	2.08	39.9	54.7
26. The grammar rules are explained using real sentences or brief passages.	novice	198	1.92	.44 1	59.6	17.3	1.90	13.5	7.17
	seasoned	202	4.89	.40 6	28.9	54.4	2.17	12.2	2.33
27. Throughout the book, grammar is implicitly	novice	198	2.29	.93 5	30.8	36.2	0.40	16.8	15.8
	seasoned	202	4.59	.43 4	9.29	3.80	5.21	16.4	65.3



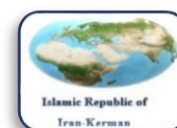
presented, explained clearly, and practiced.					
	Components of Language	novice	198	2.04	.557
		seasoned	202	4.34	.681

As displayed in Table 5, the mean score and standard deviation for the low-experienced teachers' evaluation of grammar and vocabulary are $M=2.04$ and $SD=.557$, showing their moderate satisfaction with these aspects of 'Prospect 2'. In contrast, the mean score and standard deviation for the high-experienced participants of the study are $M=4.34$, and $SD=.681$, indicating their high dissatisfaction. According to the results of Table 5, except item 26 (i.e., the grammar rules are presented in authentic sentences or short passages) receiving a considerable rate of agreement by both groups of participants ($MD=.03$), non-alignment between the perceptions of both groups is manifested through all items of this section (i.e., 21-27).

Concerning the fifth section of the questionnaire (i.e., exercises, tasks & activities), descriptive statistical results are summarized and shown in Table 6 below (i.e., items 28-33).

Table 6
Descriptive statistics for exercises, tasks, and activities items

	Group	N	Me an	SD	strongl y agree	agr ee	neutr al	disagr ee	strong ly disagr ee
28. A balanced range of exercises is seen in the book.	novice	198	1.96	.906	22.7	46.2	11.5	13.8	5.80
	seasoned	202	1.22	.466	71.2	11.1	1.48	12.1	4.12
29. Individual, pair, and group work are included.	novice	198	.500	.312	74.0	19.2	6.85	.500	.500
	seasoned	202	4.80	.391	1.21	2.12	2.57	49.8	44.3
30. Engaging in activities motivates students to think and act creatively,	novice	198	1.95	.518	55.8	21.2	5.69	5.81	11.5
	seasoned	202	3.91	1.14	.000	1.11	47.7	1.29	49.9



explore innovative solutions, and develop their independence.									
31. The activities are intentionally created to encourage students to engage in meaningful communication .	novice	198	1.73	.320	63.5	19.2	3.80	7.69	5.81
	seasoned	202	3.79	.955	.000	.00	32.2	67.8	00.0
32. Students' learning of new things is evaluated through tasks and activities.	novice	198	.500	.868	55.1	37.7	7.02	.000	.000
	seasoned	202	1.40	.623	64.5	21.1	3.30	.200	10.9
33. The tasks are designed to help students learn grammar by creating real-life situations and contexts.	novice	198	1.50	1.31	17.9	30.7	28.3	14.1	9.00
	seasoned	202	4.67	.611	2.33	8.17	2.20	43.2	44.1
Exercises, Tasks and Activities	novice			.705					
		198	1.35						
	seasoned			3.3					
		202	6	.697					

As depicted in Table 6, the mean score and standard deviation for the low-experienced teachers' evaluation of the exercises, tasks, and activities of 'Prospect 2' are $M=1.72$, and $SD=.705$, indicating their high satisfaction with these important facets of the textbook. However, the same amount for the highly experienced EFL teachers are $M=3.36$, and $SD=.697$, which reveals their neutrality with the acceptability of the exercises, tasks, and activities of 'Prospect 2'. In effect, with a mean difference of $MD=-1.64$, a



considerable rate of disagreement is reported between the perceptions of both groups of teachers. In addition, item 29 (i.e., individual, pair, and group work are included in Prospect 2) enjoys the highest rate of disagreement between both groups of EFL teachers ($MD=-4.30$), and item 28 (i.e., A balanced range of exercises is seen in the book.) maintains the highest rate of agreement between novice and seasoned EFL teachers ($MD=.74$).

The language types of the textbook ‘Prospect 2’ were evaluated and measured through four items (i.e., 34-37) of the questionnaire and are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics for language-type items

	Group	N	Me an	SD	strong ly agree	agr ee	neutr al	disagr ee	strongl y disagr ee
34. The book uses realistic language that reflects everyday speech.	novice	198	4.25	.690	.000	5.70	13.5	30.8	50.0
	seasoned	202	4.67	.675	1.11	2.22	1.07	44.3	51.3
35. The language used in the book is tailored to the language proficiency level of the learners.	novice	198	4.17	.644	5.20	7.00	10.6	33.7	43.5
	seasoned	202	4.33	.546	3.11	2.29	13.6	45.2	35.8
36. The book uses a range of dialects and vocabulary types to express its ideas.	novice	198	4.77	.513	5.18	11.5	6.42	53.8	23.1
	seasoned	202	4.97	.766	.000	1.99	3.11	41.2	53.7
37. The language applications used in daily interactions are included in the language functions.	novice	198	4.21	.713	.000	7.70	17.3	30.8	44.2
	seasoned	202	4.88	.443	.000	9.21	6.99	15.1	68.7
Language Types	novice	198	4.35	.640					
	seasoned	202	4.71	.607					

Based on the data presented in Table 7, the mean scores for the novice and experienced teachers evaluating the Language Types of ‘Prospect 2’ are 4.35 and 4.71, respectively. The standard deviations for novice and



experienced teachers are $SD=.640$ and $SD=.607$, respectively. Therefore, the results ($MD=-.36$) indicate that both groups of EFL teachers are highly dissatisfied with the language types of 'Prospect 2'.

Analysis of the 13 questionnaire items (38-50) in Table 8 investigated the 7th criterion of textbook evaluation, i.e., content and language skills.

Table 8

Descriptive statistics for content and language skills items

	Group	N	Mean	SD	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
38. The book's content addresses real-life problems and promotes critical thinking skills while doing so.	novice	198	.510	.253	90.5	8.50	.000	.500	.500
	seasoned	202	3.86	.665	1.39	1.59	1.12	32.5	63.4
39. The book's topics, contents, and language are appropriate for the students' age and interests.	novice	198	4.10	.871	1.90	13.5	.000	42.3	42.3
	seasoned	202	3.55	1.22	19.1	17.2	38.2	14.0	11.5
40. The book covers a wide range of topics, providing sufficient variety in subject matter.	novice	198	1.77	.486	64.4	12.5	3.40	19.2	.500
	seasoned	202	1.35	.414	54.1	33.2	10.2	1.12	1.38
41. Explanations and examples of the book are understandable for the students.	novice	198	2.17	1.59	42.3	23.1	3.80	17.3	13.5
	seasoned	202	1.22	.344	65.4	21.1	1.00	7.20	5.30



42. Students are naturally drawn to conversations because they closely resemble real-life situations and tasks.	novice	198	1.21	.33 3	60.6	25.8	3.05	5.41	5.14
	seasoned	202	3.11	.76 5	3.00	2.00	37.1	27.9	30.0
43. Instructions to various sections are clear enough for the learners.	novice	198	1.77	.71 6	69.2	11.5	1.91	8.23	9.16
	seasoned	202	1.10	.71 7	74.3	21.1	.000	.000	2.16
44. The content is appropriately graded in terms of vocabulary and grammar difficulty.	novice	198	1.79	.47 7	68.1	13.4	3.19	3.81	11.5
	seasoned	202	3.98	1.3 2	12.2	23.1	4.50	39.1	21.1
45. The book adequately covers all four language skills.	novice	198	1.92	.50 9	59.6	15.7	7.72	7.72	9.26
	seasoned	202	1.12	.70 3	75.4	13.0	1.50	.000	10.1
46. Miscellaneous listening and reading assignments featuring audio files present different English dialects to students.	novice	198	2.18	1.0 6	17.5	36.0	7.50	18.5	20.5
	seasoned	202	4.95	.35 9	.000	.000	.000	45.4	54.6
47. The conversations have been well-crafted to allow	novice	198	1.94	.69 8	60.8	18.6	.000	10.6	10.0
	seasoned	202	3.32	.81 2	1.00	3.10	40.2	21.2	34.5



students to utilize them for authentic purposes.									
48. The grammar rules are explained through real-life sentences or brief passages.	novice	198	1.65	.54	59.6	28.8	1.90	5.87	3.83
	seasoned	202	1.99	.44	55.1	36.2	4.32	2.23	2.34
49. Engaging activities can be used before, during, and after addressing four language skills and sub-skills.	novice	198	2.88	1.0	15.4	53.8	13.5	11.5	5.80
	seasoned	202	4.20	.66	2.90	9.10	8.60	32.2	48.1
50. Tasks related to writing that are helpful have been included.	novice	198	1.23	.42	59.1	31.0	1.19	1.60	7.11
	seasoned	202	4.81	.59	1.20	.000	7.50	35.1	56.2
Content and Language Skills	novice	198	1.93	.69					
	seasoned	202	2.96	.69					

According to Table 8, the analysis of the perceptions of low-experienced EFL teachers revealed a mean score and standard deviation of $M=1.93$ and $SD=.692$ respectively, indicating their high level of satisfaction with the content and language skills of 'Prospect 2'. On the other hand, the high-experienced EFL teachers' mean score of the content and language skills is determined to be $M=2.96$ (i.e., in the neutral area) with a standard deviation of $SD=.693$, as per the results. Furthermore, the mean score of both groups of participants regarding 13 items of the questionnaire (i.e., 38-50) is determined to be $M=2.44$. Although disagreement and non-alignment are salient between the perceptions of both groups, it could be concluded that the content and language skills of 'Prospect 2' enjoy partial satisfaction of EFL teachers.

The methodology aspect of the textbook was measured through five items of the questionnaire (i.e., 51-55), and the obtained descriptive data are presented in Table 9 below.



Table 9
Descriptive statistics for methodology

	Group	N	Mean	SD	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
51. The textbook appears to be relevant to various approaches to teaching the English language.	novice	198	1.15	.539	42.5	40.0	11.5	2.70	3.30
	seasoned	202	1.25	.564	51.2	31.8	3.91	9.40	3.69
52. The textbook has been created using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.	novice	198	1.37	.521	75.0	19.2	2.17	1.92	1.71
	seasoned	202	1.65	.594	43.2	29.1	19.2	.000	8.50
53. This book takes into account the various learning styles and strategies of the learners.	novice	198	3.81	.617	8.42	11.5	3.18	53.8	23.1
	seasoned	202	3.91	.751	1.43	.000	5.24	89.1	4.23
54. Activities are designed in a way to let students take responsibility for their learning.	novice	198	3.57	1.15	17.3	34.6	3.90	32.7	11.5
	seasoned	202	3.21	1.11	15.2	15.1	34.2	17.2	18.3
55. Compared to the old version of the	novice	198	1.41	.697	80.5	10.5	1.92	7.08	.000
	seasoned	202	1.21	.455	76.4	15.1	0.19	8.31	.000



8th-grade textbook, the paradigm shift from GTM to CLT can be seen clearly in this textbook.			
Methodology	novice		.704
		198 2.26	
	seasoned		.694
		202 2.24	

According to Table 9, the mean score and standard deviation for the novice teachers' evaluation of the methodology endorsed in the 8th-grade textbook are $M=2.26$ and $SD=.704$, testifying to the positive perceptions of the low-experienced EFL teachers on this aspect of the textbook. In the same vein, the mean score and standard deviation for the seasoned teachers are $M=2.24$ and $SD=.694$, therefore, a high rate of agreement between the perceptions of both groups is reported ($MD=.02$). The highest rate of satisfaction ($M= .81$) can be traced in item 55, as both groups believed that the paradigm shift from GTM to CLT can be seen clearly in the textbook compared to the old version of the 8th-grade textbook. In contrast, item 53 ($M=3.86$) enjoyed the highest rate of dissatisfaction and both groups of participants believed that different learning styles and strategies of the learners are not considered in the textbook.

To find the answer to the third research question (i.e., What are the crucial aspects of 'Prospect 2' that the seasoned teachers are not satisfied with?), and to compare the results based on the perceptions of both groups of participants, the descriptive statistics for all subcategories of 'Prospect 2' are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptive statistics for all subcategories

	Group	N	Mean	SD
1. Physical Appearance and Layout	novice	198	3.86	.923
	seasoned	202	3.70	.790
2. Illustrations	novice	198	2.48	.551
	seasoned	202	2.01	.730
3. Supplementary Materials	novice	198	2.49	.813
	seasoned	202	4.49	1.32
4. Components	novice	198	2.04	.557
	seasoned	202	4.34	.681
5. Exercises, Tasks and Activities	novice	198	1.35	.705
	seasoned	202	3.36	.697
6. Language Types	novice	198	4.35	.640

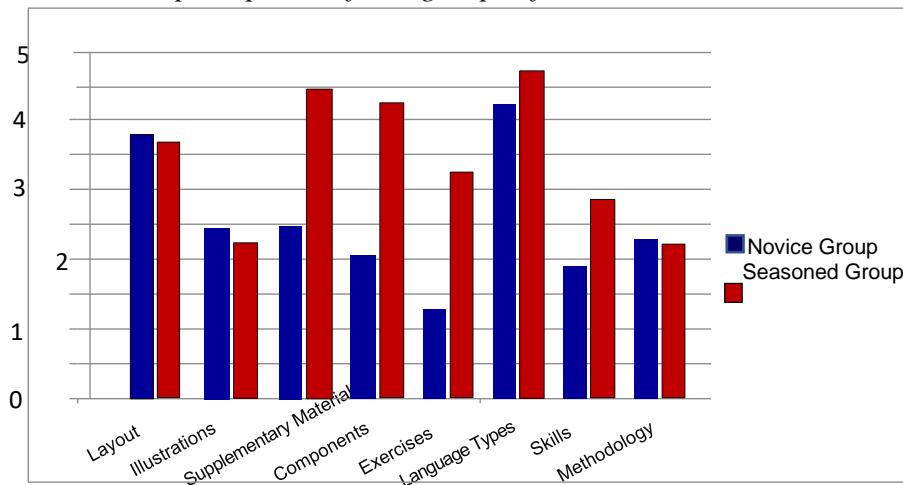


	seasoned	202	4.71	.607
7. Content and Skills	novice	198	1.93	.692
	seasoned	202	2.96	.693
8. Methodology	novice	198	2.26	.704
	seasoned	202	2.24	.694
Total	novice	198	2.59	.698
	seasoned	202	3.47	.776

Based on Table 10, we can compare the mean scores and standard deviations of all eight subcategories that were evaluated. The novice EFL teachers’ mean score is $M=2.59$, with a standard deviation of $SD=.698$. These scores indicate that low-experienced teachers are partially satisfied with the overall evaluation of ‘Prospect 2’. Additionally, the seasoned EFL teachers’ mean score and standard deviation are $M=3.47$, and $SD=.776$, according to the results of Table 10, which reveals partial dissatisfaction of the seasoned group of the study with various aspects of ‘Prospect 2’. In fact, Supplementary Materials, Components of Language, and Language Types are considered crucial aspects of ‘Prospect 2’ which require revision and modification according to the attitudes of highly experienced participants. For a better grasp of the data, they are visually depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Mean differences between perceptions of two groups of teachers



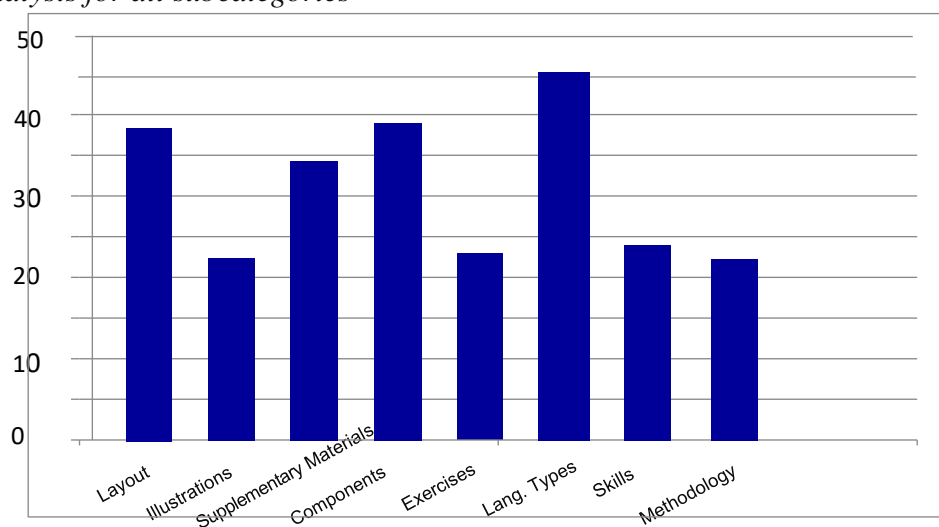
As depicted in Figure 1, the ELT teachers’ perceptions regarding the textbook ‘Prospect 2’ differed based on their teaching experiences. According to Figure 1, the most considerable difference between the perceptions of both groups of teachers could be observed in 3) Supplementary Materials, 4) Language Components, 5) Exercises and Activities, 6) Language Types, and 7) Language Skills of ‘Prospect 2’; however, positive alignment between the perceptions of the novice and seasoned group could be traced in the 1) Layout, 2) Illustrations, and 8) Methodology of the textbook, which will be discussed later.

Finally, to find out the overall attitudes of all the participants of the study ($n=400$) on ‘Prospect 2’, the descriptive analysis of the data for all subcategories is shown in Table 11.

Table 11*Descriptive statistics for all subcategories*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Physical Appearance and Layout	400	3.78	.856
2. Illustrations	400	2.24	.640
3. Supplementary Materials	400	3.49	1.06
4. Components	400	3.91	.619
5. Exercises, Tasks and Activities	400	2.35	.701
6. Language Types	400	4.53	.623
7. Content and Skills	400	2.44	.692
8. Methodology	400	2.25	.699
Total	400	3.12	.736

Table 11 shows the mean for each category, reflecting the views of all 400 teachers, ranging from 2.24 to 4.53. According to the data analysis results, Illustrations ($M=2.24$) and Methodology ($M=2.25$) of 'Prospect 2' enjoy the highest rate of EFL teachers' satisfaction and are considered the most meritorious aspect of the textbook, whereas Language Types of the textbook receive the lowest rate of satisfaction by the participants ($M=4.53$), and is considered the most demeritorious aspect of the textbook. Furthermore, participatory EFL teachers did not reveal satisfaction with the overall Layout ($M=3.78$), Supplementary Materials ($M=3.49$), and Language Components ($M=3.91$) of the textbook, and believed these aspects needed revision and modification; however, the same participants showed moderate satisfaction regarding Exercises, Tasks and Activities ($M=2.35$), Content and Language Skills ($M=2.44$), and Methodology ($M=2.25$) of 'Prospect 2'. At last, the total mean score and standard deviation for all subcategories of 'Prospect 2' are determined as $M=3.12$, and $SD=.736$, testifying to partial dissatisfaction of the respondents. For a better grasp of the data, they are visually depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2*Descriptive analysis for all subcategories*

As depicted in Figure 2, the data obtained from the self-report questionnaire helped researchers gain a general profile of all the participants’ attitudes toward ‘Prospect 2’. As the mean score of all subcategories is $M=3.12$ (in the neutral area), it is inferred that the participants ($n=400$) are not satisfied with the textbook. In the second phase of the data analysis, inferential statistics were employed to find the answer to the fourth research question of the study, as follows.

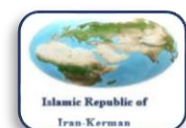
Inferential Statistics

To find the answer to the fourth research question of the study (i.e., Is there any statistically significant difference between the low-experienced and high-experienced EFL teachers’ perceptions on different aspects of ‘Prospect 2’?), a series of independent samples t-tests were run to discover any probable (non-)alignment between the perceptions of both groups. The results are presented in Table 12, as follows.

Table 12

Independent samples t-test for the differences between EFL teachers’ perceptions

	Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	SD. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
1. Physical Appearance & Layout	Equal variances assumed	9.816	.006	17.2	318.5	.114	.16	.45	-7.11	5.01
	Equal variances not assumed			17.3	228.3	.122	.16	.38	-7.04	5.08
2. Illustrations	Equal variances assumed	18.12	.110	9.02	324.2	.210	.47	.44	-2.88	1.23
	Equal variances not assumed			9.41	271.1	.150	.47	.38	-2.79	1.32
3. Supplementary Materials	Equal variances assumed	9.01	.030	-5.28	331.0	.000	-2.0	.79	-8.51	-2.57



	Equal			-	265	.00	-2.0	.71	-7.99	-2.41
	variances not			5.	.0	0				
	assumed			33						
4. Components	Equal	8.97	.00	-	323	.00	-2.3	.50	-4.99	-.790
	variances		6	3.	.4	0				
	assumed			98						
	Equal			-	237	.00	-2.3	.58	-4.95	-.830
	variances not			4.	.5	0				
	assumed			91						
5. Exercises, Tasks & Activities	Equal	7.52	.50	-	321	.00	-2.01	.16	2.12	5.71
	variances		1	7.	.2	0				
	assumed			31						
	Equal			-	214	.00	-2.01	.16	2.07	3.72
	variances not			7.	.1	0				
	assumed			31						
6. Language Types	Equal		.01	-	337	.00	-.36	.51	1.56	8.98
	variances	7.92	3	1.	.1	0				
	assumed			48						
	Equal			-	266	.00	-.36	.61	1.40	7.82
	variances not			1.	.4	0				
	assumed			37						
7. Skills	Equal		.02	-	328	.00	-1.03	.26	1.04	4.09
	variances	8.83	2	12	.4	0				
	assumed			.5						
	Equal			-	243	.00	-1.03	.24	1.08	4.21
	variances not			13	.5	0				
	assumed			.6						
8. Methodology	Equal	9.53	.53	6.	329	.15	.02	.42	-2.11	2.91
	variances		0	41	.4	1				
	assumed									
	Equal									
	variances									
	assumed									



Equal	6.	209	.21	.02	.41	-2.10	2.71
variances not assumed	62	.0	0				

According to the results of Table 12, a statistically significant difference could be observed between the perceptions of the novice and seasoned EFL teachers regarding Supplementary Materials, $t(331.0) = -5.28, p = .00 < .05$, Language Components, $t(323.4) = -3.98, p = .00 < .05$, Exercises and Activities $t(321.2) = -7.31, p = .00 < .05$, Language Types $t(337.1) = -1.48, p = .00 < .05$, and Language Skills $t(328.4) = -12.5, p = .00 < .05$. As to the results, the p-value is significant (i.e., less than 0.05) in all five mentioned subcategories, manifesting a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of both groups of the EFL teachers. In contrast, no statistically significant variation is discovered between the novice and seasoned group’s evaluation of the Layout, $t(318.5) = 17.2, p = .114 > .05$, Illustrations, $t(324.2) = 9.33, p = .210 > .05$, and Methodology, $t(329.4) = 6.41, p = .151 > .05$, (i.e., the p-value is more than 0.05). So, according to the results of inferential statistics, it could be inferred that there is a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of novice and seasoned teachers regarding the five main categories of ‘Prospect 2’ as mentioned above.

DISCUSSION

Richards and Renandya (2002) consider material evaluation helpful in identifying textbook strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, in the current study, attempts have been made to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the Iranian 8th-grade EFL textbook (i.e., Prospect 2) by emulating a model provided by McDonough and Shaw (1993) based on external and internal evaluation of textbooks. In this regard, the perceptions of 400 EFL teachers were screened from eight different but interrelated aspects, including 1) physical appearance, and layout, 2) illustrations, 3) supplementary materials, 4) Language components, 5) exercises, tasks, and activities, 6) language types, 7) content and language skills, and 8) methodology. Furthermore, to examine the role of *teaching experience* on textbook evaluation, the low and high-experienced ELT teachers’ perceptions were compared together to discover any probable (non-)alignment between their attitudes, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The teacher-researchers had previously conducted an evaluative study on ‘Prospect 1’. The purpose was to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the 7th-grade English textbook in junior high schools in Iran (Isaae et al., 2023). The current study provides researchers with an opportunity to compare the attitudes of ELT teachers towards the two main members of the ‘Prospect’ series, namely Prospect 1 and Prospect 2.

Concerning the first two research questions of the study, Tomlinson (2008) suggests that materials should pique learners’ curiosity, interest, and attention. He provides examples, such as the use of attractive colors, photographs, and interesting illustrations. In the same fashion, Sheldon (1988, p. 8) maintains that “textbooks are physical artifacts, and the author needs to recognize that layout, format, typography, and graphics are also essential for a successful course book”. Based on the findings of this study, both groups of EFL teachers were dissatisfied with the overall Layout and Physical Appearance of ‘Prospect 2’. Such dissatisfaction with this aspect of the ‘Prospect’ series has previously been reported in some studies (e.g., Ahmadi Safa, et al., 2017; Ahmadi Safa & Karampour, 2020; Isaae, et al., 2023). In contrast, illustrations of ‘Prospect 2’ enjoyed the highest rate of satisfaction by both groups of EFL teachers, and the congruity between their perceptions is salient. However, they declared that material developers could



employ modern techniques such as typography and perceptual saliency to make the input more comprehensible for the learners. This piece of finding contradicts Isaei et al.'s (2023) findings, which reflected the EFL teachers' negative attitudes towards the illustrations of 'Prospect 1'.

According to Spratt et al. (2005, p. 114), "supplementary materials include skills development materials; grammar, vocabulary, and phonology practice materials; a collection of communicative activities; and teacher's resource materials", and such teaching materials should be relevant to the learning outcomes and contents of the course and should enhance the curricula. In the same fashion, Tomlinson (2012, p. 143) states that supplementary materials should serve five purposes for language learners. Firstly, they should inform the learner about the target language. Secondly, they should guide the learner in practicing the language. Thirdly, they should provide the learner with experience of the language in use. Fourthly, they should encourage the learner to use the language. Lastly, they should help the learner to make discoveries about the language. Based on the findings of this study, Supplementary Materials of 'Prospect 2' received partial dissatisfaction from the participants. Although the novice EFL teachers were partially pleased, the EFL teachers with prior experience did not approve the supplementary materials and strongly disagreed with this significant aspect of the textbook. This piece supports Ahmadi Safa et al.'s (2017), Ahmadi Safa et al.'s (2018), and Isaei et al.'s (2023) findings, which all reflected the EFL teachers' negative attitudes towards the lack of supplementary materials of 'Prospect' series.

Language Component of 'Prospect 2', second to Language Types, was determined as the most demeritorious aspect of the textbook based on the findings. The seasoned EFL teachers strongly disagreed with the efficacy of this aspect of the textbook and declared that the needs of the learners have been ignored by material developers, which reminisces the findings of some previous studies (e.g., Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2014; Ahmadi Safa & Karampour, 2020). According to Hutchinson and Waters (2006), learners' needs and interests greatly influence their motivation and the effectiveness of their learning (Mohammadi, 2022). Nonetheless, teachers without prior experience showed partial satisfaction with Language Components of 'Prospect 2', hence, a statistically significant discrepancy was observed between their perceptions.

The incongruity between the perceptions of both groups of teachers regarding the suitability of the exercises, tasks, and activities is salient. McDonough and Shaw (2003) argue that materials should enable learners to see effective use of the four skills in an authentic context. This way, teachers can involve learners in real tasks and increase motivation. Furthermore, "the way materials are organized and presented, as well as types of content and activities, will help to share the learner's view of language" (Nunan, 1999, p. 210). Based on the findings of this study, the seasoned EFL teachers confessed that the activities of the textbook do not provide a good range of pair work and individual/group activities. Besides, they strongly believed that the activities are not designed in a way to lead students to create meaningful communications, nor do the activities of the textbook encourage students to respond independently, creatively, and innovatively. As highlighted by Safdari and Farzi (2018), teachers should always encourage students to maintain their responsibility in learning and/or further increase their confidence level by providing specific tasks at the right level of difficulty which challenges but does not



defeat them. Nonetheless, the low-experienced teachers thought differently and revealed high satisfaction with the aforementioned items.

Both groups of participants expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction with the language types used in 'Prospect 2'. Therefore, it is evident that there is congruity between their perceptions. The novice and seasoned teachers did not find the language used in the book to be authentic and reflective of real-life language. Furthermore, the respondents strongly disagreed that the book's language covered a variety of dialects and vocabulary types. Additionally, the language functions did not contain practical language applications that learners would use in their daily interactions. As to the findings, Language Type is the most disadvantageous aspect of 'Prospect 2' based on the attitudes of the low/high experienced teachers. This supports the results of some scholars who unanimously reported the dissatisfaction of ELT teachers with the language types of 'Prospect' series (e.g., Ahmadi Safa et al., 2017; Ahmadi Safa et al., 2018, Isaei et al., 2023; Taghipour & Najafi Karimi, 2022).

Concerning the Language Skills and Methodology aspects of 'Prospect 2', both groups of EFL teachers were satisfied, and a positive alignment between their perceptions can be traced according to the results. Participants believed that the content provides an appropriate balance of the four language skills. Concerning the gradation of the content in terms of the level of difficulty, most respondents were relatively satisfied too. Krashen (1982) says that "the next teaching item should be just above the current competence of the learner". During the recent decades, language educators have manifested a steady shift from teacher-centered to more learner-centered approaches (Safdari & Farzi, 2018; Maftoon & Safdari, 2018) in the realm of English language teaching. Accordingly, the EFL teachers' evaluation of the methodology endorsed in the 8th-grade textbook testified to their positive view on this aspect of the textbook as they believed it is designed based on learner-centered communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT).

Regarding the third research question of the study, the analysis of both data sets manifested the inevitable influence of teaching experience on how ELT teachers perceive and evaluate a particular textbook (Brown, 2001). In this regard, both groups of participants showed identical perceptions regarding the Layout, Illustrations, and Methodology; however, in terms of the Supplementary Materials, Exercises and tasks, Content, Language Types, and Skills a statistically significant discrepancy was observed between their perceptions, which reminisces the findings of some previous studies (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2016; Ahmadi Safa & Karampour, 2020; Rahimpour & Hashemi, 2011).

Regarding the fourth research question of the study, the highly experienced ELT teachers manifested the highest rate of dissatisfaction with the Supplementary Materials, Language Components, and Language Types. They believed some crucial aspects of 'Prospect 2' need revision and modification: 1) The hardcover of the book is not attractive and the book has a poor printing quality, 2) A list of references/indexes is not provided at the end of the textbook, 3) The Teachers' Guide does not provide recommended practices based on the latest research findings in the field of ELT, 4) Considering students' language proficiency, the grammar rules are not appropriate and not explained using real sentences or brief passages, 5) The textbook does not use realistic language that reflects everyday speech, nor is the language used in the textbook tailored to the language proficiency level of the learners, 6) There are no miscellaneous listening and reading assignments featuring different English dialects to students, 7) Helpful writing tasks have



not been included, and 8) Some crucial elements of CLT such as the use of authentic materials, strategy instruction, and skills integration have not been addressed. The results also show that the extraneous emphasis on Iranian culture has negatively impacted the sociocultural aspects of CLT, as previously highlighted by Goodarzi et al. (2020).

At last, according to the results of the present study, it could be inferred that junior high school EFL teachers reveal a rather negative attitude toward 'Prospect 2'. In Iran, several projects have previously been carried out to evaluate the 'Prospect' series in which similar or exact results have been reported, consolidating current research's findings (e.g., Ahour & Golpour, 2013; Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2014; Ahmadi & Karampour, 2020; Ahmadi Safa et al., 2018; Goodarzi et al., 2020; Isaee et al., 2023; Mohammadi, 2022; Salehi & Amini, 2016; Samoudi & Mohammadi, 2020; Shahmohammadi, 2018; Taghipour & Najafi Karimi, 2022; Tavakoli Gheinani et al., 2017). However, Sheldon (1988) argues that textbooks are not utopic, infallible, or perfect, and instructors can use textbooks to evaluate their strengths and shortcomings.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study revealed that Iranian EFL teachers were partially dissatisfied with 'Prospect 2' and some aspects of the textbook are in dire need of revision and modification to lessen the drawbacks and improve the strengths. Constant evaluation of textbooks by teachers and researchers in Iran is essential for effective English language teaching that meets student needs. It seems there is a pressing requirement to provide training to novice teachers regarding the use of communicative language syllabi. The Ministry of Education should implement a long-term project that not only enhances low-experienced teachers' performance but also familiarizes them with the techniques of teaching communicative syllabi.

The findings of this study have some implications for textbook designers/developers and the curriculum bureau in the Iranian Ministry of Education so that they can modify the 'Prospect' series to improve its efficiency. This study could also be illuminating for future textbook evaluation research. Furthermore, should the results of such studies be accumulated and meta-analyzed, then more precise decisions could be made regarding Iranian ELT textbooks and L2 teaching in Iran.

Caution must be taken in interpreting the results since the present study had some limitations which might restrict the generalizability of the findings. First of all, the present study evaluated only one of the Iranian junior high school English textbooks of the 'Prospect' series (i.e., Prospect 2). Secondly, this study was not accompanied by an interview, and the data collection procedure was limited to a quantitative questionnaire-based method. Undoubtedly, the results would be more precise if the researchers had employed the qualitative and triangulated data collection approaches. In addition, the participants were separated into 2 groups (i.e., novice and seasoned teachers) based on their teaching experiences for the researchers to find out any statistically significant discrepancy between their perceptions regarding external and internal evaluation of 'Prospect 2', and EFL teachers' academic degrees were ignored in this classification. Undoubtedly, more accurate results would have been generated if the researchers had incorporated the participants' academic degrees while categorizing them.

Textbooks are more important than ever before as an essential component of the ELT career particularly in the context of the Middle East in general, and in the country of Iran in particular, where



teachers and students are deprived of sufficient exposure to L2 and enjoy limited resources. Furthermore, as highlighted by Zarrabi and Brown (2015, p. 349), a “one-for-all recipe is becoming a prevalent trend in textbook development in Iran; in this way, plenty of students and contexts are neglected”. Thus, as an inevitable duty on the shoulders of the ELT community, designing and developing appropriate and efficient textbooks for EFL learners (followed by their post-use evaluation) is of high significance, enabling learners to apply the international language correctly for the sacred purpose of communication.

To develop educational materials, a data-driven, disciplined, and systematic process is required. This process involves setting program goals, conducting need and context analysis, preparing interim goals and objectives, determining content and related tasks, and following the necessary steps to develop materials. This process requires expertise from materials developers (McGrath, 2006). Materials development is a complex task that requires a team of experts to equip developers with the necessary knowledge and skills for language teaching. It can't be handled by a single person alone. The team should include designers, pedagogues, psychologists, applied linguists, scriptwriters, information technology specialists, directors, and other dedicated professionals.

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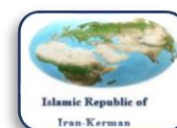
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Biodata

Hossein Isaee is a Ph.D. candidate in TEFL. His areas of interest include Material Development, Material Evaluation, and Online/Remote Teaching. He strives to enhance the quality of English language teaching/learning in his country— Iran. He is an English language instructor, scholar and author.

Hamed Barjesteh holds a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. He is the head of the English Language Department at Ayatollah Amoli Branch of Islamic Azad university, Amol, Iran. His areas of interest



include Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking. He is an ELT author, an ELT scholar, and an Associate Professor. Currently, he is the President of the same university.

