A Critical Comparative Study of Junior High School EFL Textbooks in Iran and Turkey: Iranian EFL Teachers' Perception in Focus

Zahra Sarraf Bank, English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran
Marzieh Sharifi Haratmeh*, English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran
m.sharifih@yahoo.com

Abstract

Textbooks play a crucial role in English language teaching and learning. One of the methods for selecting the most appropriate textbook for a particular educational purpose is comparing two or several similar textbooks with each other. Textbook evaluation can provide useful information about the strengths and weaknesses of textbooks and can lead to the selection of the most suitable materials for specific purposes. The present study is a critical comparison of *Prospect 2*, taught in junior high schools in Iran, and *English Net 6,* taught in junior high schools in Turkey, in terms of their physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning and teaching contents, and language skills. The participants of the study were 20 English teachers who completed two evaluation checklists. The textbook evaluation checklist that was used in the study was based on the guidelines and framework of AbdelWahab's checklist (2013) with 123 items. The results of the study indicated that the Turkish textbook surpassed the Iranian one in many aspects of the text book evaluation checklist. The results revealed that in comparison with *English Net 6, Prospect 2* had more weaknesses in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning and teaching contents, and language skills.

Keywords: English textbook, materials evaluation, textbook evaluation Checklist

Introduction

Among the important tools used in the process of teaching and learning of English are textbooks which play a crucial role in the realm of language teaching and learning and are regarded as the most important factors in the second/ foreign language classroom after the teacher (Riazi, 2003). Without any doubt, the content of education or curriculum plays an important role in students' learning. Papi (2015) states that the role of English Language Teaching (ELT) materials used in classrooms is very important in Iran because outside the language classroom, there are few or no opportunities for language learners to practice and use English.

In explaining the vital role of textbook in teaching, Garinger (2002) states that even with the development of new technologies that is essential for higher quality teacher-generated materials, demand for textbooks is still growing, and the publishing industry responds to this demand through publishing new series and textbooks each year. In addition, Dubin and Olshtain (1986) state that "the tangible element that gives a language course face validity to many learners and teachers is the textbook" (p. 167).

A good English textbook can present content in a way that is clear and easy for students to understand, provides exercises and activities for students' comprehension, and helps them retain information about English learning skills including speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Regarding the primary purpose of the ELT textbooks, Byrd (2001) argues that ELT textbooks represent two kinds of information: the first one is thematic which is related to a

particular theme such as family, school, etc. and the second one is linguistic that is related to grammar, vocabulary, and language skills. The users of ELT textbooks engage with the content of the document to obtain the linguistic knowledge needed to communicate in a foreign language. In other words, the primary purpose of many ELT textbooks is to help learners learn thoroughly the linguistic content through the use of thematic content.

Richards (2001) states that learning textbooks should help teachers concentrate on learning content rather than on content production for students. Such books can also be useful for teachers with less practical experience. As mentioned before, it seems that selecting proper textbook for students have an important role in improving skill learning in them; therefore, this matter should be noted by governors, managers, and educational contents decision makers.

Also, the fact that textbooks are the core of language teaching/ learning process may not be rebuffed and there should be a general satisfaction among teachers and students in relation to the primary role of the textbooks. Therefore, it is important to know how well a textbook plays the role that is assumed for it. The idea of textbook evaluation comes true when decisions are to be made about selecting a suitable textbook for a specific teaching situation.

In order to have effective function of textbooks, McGrath (2006) suggests two factors; firstly, the textbook should suite the teaching context and secondly, the attitudes of the teachers and learners should be considered. One of the best methods for selecting the suitable textbooks for the students is comparing two or several similar textbooks with each other because the comparison procedure can show points of strength and weakness in each textbook. Moreover, in order to select an effective textbook, materials evaluation becomes an unavoidable process in relation to certain guidelines and criteria. Researchers have developed some reference checklists that could be used in material evaluation, in general, and textbook evaluation, in particular. Cunningsworth (1995) states that the most crucial points to be taken into consideration in evaluation of a textbook are approach, design, language content, skills, topic, and so on.

In Iran, English is taught in language institutes and it is also a mandatory subject in schools. In language institute, global textbooks and materials produced by well-known publishers such as Oxford, Longman and Cambridge are used. Unlike institutes, all the textbooks for the schools are prepared and published by the Ministry of Education and language teachers throughout the country have to follow the same syllabus.

The content of education or curriculum plays an important role in students' learning, so textbooks are usually reviewed and revised by authors in order to remove the weaknesses, to intensify their existing strengths, and to revise the contents that have changed during the time. English textbooks are published for special educational purposes and are usually reviewed and revised by authors to modify their weaknesses and strengths in order to optimize transferring educational purposes to students. As English is taught as a foreign language in the secondary schools of both Iran and Turkey, the researcher was motivated to compare *Prospect 2*, taught in junior high schools in Iran, with *English Net 6*, taught in junior high schools in Turkey.

Review of Literature

The ever-increasing role of textbooks in language classrooms has motivated researchers around the world to conduct research on English language textbooks. Al-hijailan (1999) investigated the quality of the third grade secondary school textbook in Saudi Arabian schools. The results of the study revealed that the book's appearance, accompanying, materials, academic content, cultural content, and evaluation techniques were satisfied in the textbook while the fulfillment of the national goals and the teaching methods were not. The results uncovered the areas of strength, and weaknesses of the textbook.

In an attempt to evaluate eight current adult courses published by four leading publishers in the United Kingdom. Tomlinson (2001) used a list of 133 course evaluation criteria. The checklist used was divided under two main headings, overall criteria and coursebook specific criteria. The overall-course criteria consisted of eight categories, namely publisher's claims, flexibility, syllabus, pedagogic approach, topic contents, voice, instructions and teach ability. The coursebook-specific criteria included four categories appearance, design, illustration and reading texts. In addition, specific criteria for cassettes and CD ROM, teacher's book, workbook and video were used in this evaluative study. The study provided an evaluation for every individual coursebook and one list of positive trends and another of negative trends in current courses.

In Malaysian context, Chandran (2003) tried to evaluate 9th grade local and international English course book used in high schools in terms of language skills and language components. In order to evaluate the specified coursebook, a comprehensive checklist was designed in terms of language skills and components with reference to some available checklists. Using this checklist, teachers who were the prime users of the coursebook were asked to evaluate them in terms of language skills and language components. The result were analyzed quantitatively and the findings were discussed by considering teacher and student needs. Furthermore, a comparison was made between the local and the international coursebook evaluations and some recommendation were provided relying on the overall findings.

McGrath (2006) set out to investigate teachers' and learners' views on their English language textbook through the metaphors they use to describe them. This study which was conducted in Hong Kong revealed certain potential differences between teachers' and students' attitudes toward textbooks.

Nikou and Soleimani (2012) have also investigated the extent to which the Iranian and Turkish high school English textbooks represent the cultural principles and examined the cultural references in these textbooks. They applied Ramirez and Hall's (1990) categorization. The analysis was carried out within a coding scheme with eight categories. Results of the study indicate that: the ELT textbooks in Turkey and more in Iran appear too weak to provide new information or broaden students' worldview or cultural understanding. In other words, the study seems to postulate that changes should be made if we want to prepare the student to communicate in the multicultural world of English and if we want to use the nationally developed textbooks for the optimum benefit. The findings of the study present the point that cultural principles are not utilized in the Iranian and Turkish high school textbooks.

By adopting ESL textbook evaluation checklist devised and prepared by Miekley (2005), Mobarakeh and Arani (2012) evaluated high school textbooks of general English courses prepared and published by the Ministry of Education in Iran and the New Bridge to Success Series which is taught in Turkish high schools. The evaluation process revealed that ELT books used in Iranian high schools are not authentic; considering sociocultural issues, English and Persian names were used interchangeably; and most importantly oral skills were totally ignored. New Bridge to Success series, on the other hand, didn't suffer from the above mentioned shortcomings.

Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) made an attempt to evaluate three English language textbooks used at high schools in Iran. To do so, the researchers developed a 46-item questionnaire based on different sections (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, reading, language function, and pronunciation practice) of the textbooks under investigation. The participants of this study included 60 high school English teachers with more than five years of experience. The result of Rahimpour and Hashemi's (2011) research showed that the textbook were 'not satisfactorily' acceptable in term of vocabulary, reading, pronunciation as well physical makeup and practical

concerns. However, the textbooks were rated 'to some extent' acceptable in terms of grammar presentation and practice. Moreover, the presentation and practice of Language Function were rated 'not at all' acceptable.

In another attempt, Dahmardeh (2009) aimed to explore the teachers' perspectives and their perceptions of students' needs about Iranian high school textbooks. The researcher concluded that these textbooks cannot meet the learners' and the teachers' needs within the Iranian educational system and it is a bit strange that they still emphasize structural methods and ignore the communicative role of the language.

In one study, Razmjoo (2007) analyzed the content of the textbooks of the Iranian high schools and some private institutes (The Interchange Series) descriptively and inferentially. The analysis of the data indicated that there was a radical difference between the two type types of textbooks. The high school textbooks were mainly reading and grammar based. However, the textbooks utilized in the private institutes provide an equal balance among all the skills and the components of language.

As mentioned many studies have been conducted on different aspects of English textbooks evaluation and comparison (Nikou & Soleimani, 2012; Mobarake & Arani, 2012; Rahimpour & Hashemi, 2011). However, since *Prospect* textbooks are newly published, there have been few studies comparing them with global and successful EFL textbooks. Therefore, it seems necessary to conduct more investigation on these textbooks in order to reveal their points of strength and weakness. In order to bridge this gap, the present study tried to evaluate *Prospect 2*, a recently published English textbook for Iranian junior high school students, by comparing it with *English Net 6*, taught in junior high schools in Turkey. Specifically this study aims at comparing *Prospect 2* with *English Net 6* in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning and teaching contents, and language skills. The study aimed at answering the following questions:

Q1. Do *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* differ significantly in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes?

Q2. Do *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* differ significantly in terms of efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials?

Q3. Do *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* differ significantly in terms of learning-teaching contents?

Q4. Do *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* differ significantly in terms of language skills?

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the study were 20 English teachers who were asked to complete the evaluation checklists. A number of teachers with the experience of teaching at high schools or junior high schools and the others with the experience of teaching at university and English institutes participated in this study voluntarily. The participants were both male and female whose teaching experiences have been placed somewhere on the continuum of 10 to 30 years and ranging in age from 28 to 50 years old. The participants completed two checklists, one checklist for Turkish 1st grade and the other one for Iranian 3rd grade junior high school EFL textbooks. The Turkish and Iranian textbooks were available to the participants of the study.

Instrumentation

The materials used in this study were Iranian 3rd grade, Turkish 1st grade junior high school EFL textbooks and a textbook evaluation checklist. The analysis and evaluation of the two

textbooks was based on the guidelines and framework by AbdelWahab's checklist (2013. The checklist integrated the elements of a number of previous checklists (e.g., Soori, Kafipour, & Soury, 2011; Mukundan, Nimehchisalem & Hajimohammadi, 2011; Tok, 201). This checklist contained 123 items for evaluation which were grouped under four domains: 1) physical and utilitarian attributes (20 items); 2) efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials (24 items); 3) learning-teaching content (25 items), and 4) language skills (54 items). There were 123 items on the checklist, with two points possible for each item. The criteria were numerically rated on a scale from 1 to 3 in the blank space of the score column as follows: Poor = 1 (It goes up to 64 %.) Satisfactory =2 (It starts with 65% and goes up to 74 %.) Good = 3 (It starts with 75 %.)

To ensure the validity of the checklist, the contents of the items used in the checklist were examined carefully and critically by expert judges. The experts were the researcher and three university faculty members. As a result of the panel views, several items were either discarded or modified. Internal consistency of the survey instrument was estimated using Cronbach's co-efficient alpha. The coefficient alpha ranged more than .81 suggesting a high estimate of reliability based on the mean inter-item correlation.

Procedure

The newly developed checklist was used to collect as many types of data as possible. First, an evaluation checklist with two columns was designed. The universal features of EFL textbooks tailored and adapted to the needs of the learners appeared in the first column on the form. A merit score consisting of numbers 1 to 3 appeared in the second column on the checklist. A comparative weight was assigned to the relative realization of each actual criterion in the textbook under scrutiny: a perfect match between the ideal defined criterion and its actual realization in the textbook received three, a total lack received one, and any inadequate match received two. Finally, the numbers in the merit score column after each criterion were represented on charts. The first version of the checklist was distributed on the jury who gave their opinions concerning each item. The validity of the checklist was ensured as the jury involved a number of experts who are were familiar with the research context. Experts' views on the construct and wording of the items enabled the researcher to realize certain crucial issues that had been neglected in the development of the checklist. Procedures of data collection and analysis went simultaneously and a selected EFL textbook was explored thoroughly with a particular focus on the proposed current checklist criteria under four main categories; Physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning-teaching content, and language skills with sixteen subcategories: general appearance, layout and design , illustrations, book objectives, teaching aids, teaching methods, subject and content, exercises, social and cultural contexts, listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary , and pronunciation

Results

Before analyzing the data to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses, their distribution was analyzed by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to ensure that they were compatible with the assumption of normality. The results showed that the significance level of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to analyze the assumption of normality for physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning-teaching contents, language skills was greater than 0.05. Table 1 shows the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 1. *Results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to Check the Normality Assumption for Overall Comparison between Prospect 2 and English Net 6*

	English Net 6		Prospect 2	
s	Statistic	Sig.	Statistics	Sig.
Physical and Utilitarian Attributes	.656	.782	.896	.399
Efficient Outlay of Objectives and Supplementary Materials	.504	.961	.398	.998
Learning-Teaching Content	.783	.572	.936	.346
Language Skills	.575	.895	.953	.312
Total	.696	.719	.993	.278

The first research question aimed at examining the significance of difference between *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes. Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics which compare physical and utilitarian attributes of Persian and Turkish textbooks in three subcategories.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for the Physical and Utilitarian Attributes*

	Persian Textbook					Turkish Textbook				
	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
General Appearance	20	2.0500	.39403	1.20	2.60	20	2.5900	.30762	1.80	3.00
Layout	20	1.9864	.37340	1.36	2.82	20	2.3045	.26590	1.82	2.82
Visuals	20	1.7000	.51042	1.00	3.00	20	2.2125	.34674	1.50	2.75
Total	20	1.9121	.37310	1.19	2.72	20	2.3690	.25497	1.85	2.73

In this test, the mean score for physical and utilitarian attributes of the Turkish textbook (M = 2.37) was greater than the mean score of the Persian textbook (M = 1.91). It shows that the Turkish textbook was better in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes.

However, to make sure that this difference was statically significant, a paired samples t-test was conducted. Table 3 shows the results of the test.

Table 3. *Results of Paired Samples T- Test for the Physical and Utilitarian Attributes*

	Paired Differences							
		Std.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-
	Mean	Deviation	Mean	Lower	Upper	t	Df	tailed)
Pair 1	2.70000	2.15455	.48177	1.69164	3.70836	5.604	19	.000

Pair 2	3.50000	5.64288	1.26179	.85905	6.14095	2.774	19	.012
Pair 3	2.05000	2.35025	.52553	.95005	3.14995	3.901	19	.001
Pair 4	8.25000	8.76521	1.95996	4.14775	12.35225	4.209	19	.000

Note. Pair 1 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* General Appearance), pair 2 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Layout and Design), pair 3 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Visuals), pair 4(*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Physical and Utilitarian Attributes).

As the results in Table 3 indicate, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* textbooks in terms of general appearance, layout and design, and visuals. The existent results for *English Net 6* physical and utilitarian attributes and *Prospect 2* physical and utilitarian attributes showed that the p-value under the *Sig.* (2-tailed column) was lower than the significance level (.00 < .05). It can be concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes.

The second research question examined the difference between *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of the efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials in Persian and Turkish textbooks in three subcategories.

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for the Efficient Outlay of Objectives and Supplementary Materials*

	Persian Textbook					Turkish Textbook				
	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Book Objectives	20	1.7778	.39159	1.11	2.56	20	2.3944	.30900	1.89	3.00
Teaching Aids	20	2.1300	.49108	1.20	2.80	20	2.5700	.41688	1.00	3.00
Teaching Methods	20	1.7750	.43875	1.10	2.50	20	2.4400	.28359	1.90	2.90
Total	20	1.8943	.33801	1.14	2.51	20	2.4681	.26741	1.91	2.97

The results showed that the mean score for efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials of the Turkish textbook (M = 2.47) was greater than the Persian textbook (M = 1.89).

However, to make sure if the difference was statically significant, a paired samples t-test was conducted. Table 5 shows the results of the test.

Table 5. *Results of Paired Samples T- Test for the Efficient Outlay of Objectives and Supplementary Materials*

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	5.55000	4.32222	.96648	3.52714	7.57286	5.743	19	.000
Pair 2	2.20000	2.30788	.51606	1.11988	3.28012	4.263	19	.000
Pair 3	6.65000	5.10186	1.14081	4.26226	9.03774	5.829	19	.000
Pair 4	14.40000	10.62965	2.37686	9.42517	19.37483	6.058	19	.000

Note. Pair 1 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Book Objectives), pair2 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Teaching Aids), pair 3 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Teaching Methods), pair 4 (*Prospect2* and *English Net 6* Efficient Outlay of Objectives and Supplementary Materials).

As the results reveal, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* textbooks in terms of book objectives, teaching aids and teaching methods. It can be observed that the p-value under the *Sig.* (2-tailed column) was lower than the significance level (.00 < .05). Accordingly, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* in terms of efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials.

The third research question related to the difference between the *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* from the viewpoint of learning- teaching content. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics of learning- teaching content of Persian and Turkish textbooks.

Table 6. *Descriptive Statistics for the Learning- Teaching Content*

	Persian Textbook					Turkish Textbook				
	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Subject and Content	20	1.7556	.48446	1.00	2.78	20	2.5556	.31220	1.78	3.00
Exercises	20	1.9111	.25643	1.33	2.33	20	2.3333	.84080	1.56	5.67
Social and Cultural Context	20	1.7286	.29642	1.29	2.29	20	2.0571	.36613	1.57	2.71
Total	20	1.7984	.28972	1.21	2.47	20	2.3153	.32359	1.80	3.23

The relevant results showed that the mean score for learning- teaching content of the Turkish textbook (M = 2.31) was greater than the mean score of the Persian textbook (M = 1.80).

However, to make sure that the difference was statically significant a paired samples t-test was conducted. Table 7 shows the results of the test.

Table 7. *Results of Paired Samples T- Test for the Learning-Teaching Content*

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1	7.20000	5.38614	1.20438	4.67921	9.72079	5.978	19	.000

Pair 2	3.80000	7.26636	1.62481	.39924	7.20076	2.339	19	.030
Pair 3	2.30000	3.64331	.81467	.59488	4.00512	2.823	19	.011
Pair 4	13.30000	9.20011	2.05721	8.99421	17.60579	6.465	19	.000

Note. Pair 1 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Subject and Content), pair 2 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Exercises), pair 3 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Social and Cultural Contexts), pair 4 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Learning-Teaching Content).

As the results indicate, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* textbooks in terms of subject and content, exercises, and social and cultural contexts. The results for *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* learning-teaching content showed that the p-value under the *Sig.* (2-tailed column) was lower than the significance level (.00 < .05). Accordingly, there was a significant difference between the learning- teaching content of *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2*.

The fourth research question examined the difference between the *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of language skills. Table 8 shows the comparison of language skills of Persian and Turkish textbooks.

Table 8. *Descriptive Statistics for the Language Skills*

	Persian Textbook					Turkish Textbook				
	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Listening	20	1.7643	.41785	1.00	2.57	20	2.3571	.29130	1.71	2.86
Speaking	20	1.7583	.47596	1.00	2.83	20	2.2417	.37258	1.50	3.00
Reading	20	1.5750	.33102	1.00	2.33	20	2.3083	.57297	1.00	3.00
Writing	20	1.6813	.32816	1.00	2.25	20	1.9000	.38815	1.13	2.63
Vocabulary	20	1.8273	.42425	1.09	2.82	20	2.2000	.27129	1.64	2.82
Grammar	20	1.9364	.72554	1.18	4.73	20	2.2364	.31685	1.82	2.82
Pronunciation	20	1.8300	.54008	1.00	2.80	20	.8909	.20772	.45	1.36
Total	20	1.7675	.33599	1.05	2.46	20	2.0192	.22600	1.74	2.54

The relevant results showed that the mean score for language skills of the Turkish textbook (M = 2.02) was greater than the mean score of the Persian textbook (M = 1.77).

However, to make sure that the difference was statically significant a paired samples t-test was conducted. Table 9 shows the results of the test.

Table 9. Results of Paired Samples T- Test for the Language Skills

Paired Differences.							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-
		Std.	Std. Error					
	Mean	Deviation	Mean	Lower	Upper	t	Df	tailed)

Pair 1	4.15000	4.43995	.99280	2.07204	6.22796	4.180	19	.001
Pair 2	2.90000	2.53190	.56615	1.71503	4.08497	5.122	19	.000
Pair 3	4.40000	3.84434	.85962	2.60079	6.19921	5.119	19	.000
Pair 4	1.75000	3.71165	.82995	.01290	3.48710	2.109	19	.048
Pair 5	4.10000	5.36950	1.20066	1.58699	6.61301	3.415	19	.003
Pair 6	3.30000	7.12372	1.59291	-.03400	6.63400	2.072	19	.052
Pair 7	.65000	4.01674	.89817	-1.22989	2.52989	.724	19	.478
Pair 8	21.25000	19.47164	4.35399	12.13699	30.36301	4.881	19	.000

Note. Pair 1 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Listening), pair 2 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Speaking), pair 3 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Reading), Pair 4 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Writing), pair 5 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Vocabulary), pair 6 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Grammar), pair 7 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Pronunciation), pair 8 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Language Skills).

Based on the results in Table 8, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* textbooks in terms of listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary. On the contrary, there was no significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* textbooks in terms of grammar and pronunciation. The results of paired sample t-test in table 8 indicated that there were significant differences between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* in terms of language skills (.00 < .05).

An overall comparison was made between *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of the four major domains. Table 10 shows the descriptive statistics of this comparison.

Table 10. *Descriptive Statistics for Overall Comparison between Prospect 2 and English Net 6*

	Persian Textbook					Turkish Textbook				
	N	M	SD	Min	Max	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Physical and utilitarian attributes	20	1.9121	.37310	1.19	2.72	20	2.3690	.25497	1.85	2.73
Efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials	20	1.8943	.33801	1.14	2.51	20	2.4681	.26741	1.91	2.97
Learning- teaching content	20	1.7984	.28972	1.21	2.47	20	2.3153	.32359	1.80	3.23
Language skills	20	1.7675	. 33599	1.05	2.46	20	2.0192	.22600	1.74	2.54
Total	20	1.8431	.30410	1.15	2.52	20	2.2929	.17309	2.02	2.74

The relevant result showed that the mean score of the Turkish textbook (M = 2.29) was greater than the mean score of the Persian textbook (M = 1.84).

However, to make sure that the difference was statically significant a paired samples t-test was conducted. Table 11 shows the results of the test.

Table 11. *Results of Paired Samples T- Test for Overall Comparison between Prospect 2 and English Net 6*

	Paired Differences						Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t		
				Lower	Upper			
Pair1	8.25000	8.76521	1.95996	4.14775	12.35225	4.209	19	.000
Pair 2	14.40000	10.62965	2.37686	9.42517	19.37483	6.058	19	.000
Pair 3	13.30000	9.20011	2.05721	8.99421	17.60579	6.465	19	.000
Pair 4	21.25000	19.47164	4.35399	12.13699	30.36301	4.881	19	.000
Pair 5	.44985	.33864	.07572	.29136	.60834	5.941	19	.000

Note. Pair 1(*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Physical and Utilitarian Attributes), pair 2 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Efficient Outlay of Objectives and Supplementary Materials), pair 3 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Learning-Teaching Content), pair 4 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* Language Skills), pair 5 (*Prospect 2* and *English Net 6*).

As the results indicate, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* textbooks in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning-teaching content, and language skills. The results for *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* learning-teaching content showed that the p-value under the *Sig.* (2-tailed column) was lower than the significance level (.00 < .05). Accordingly, there was a significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2*.

Discussion

The first finding of the study was related to the significance of difference between the viewpoints of teachers about *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes. The results of the study indicated that *English Net 6* was mostly–preferred by language teachers in terms of general appearance, layout and design. In line with prior research (Nikou & Soleimani, 2012; Mobarake & Arani, 2012; Rahimpour & Hashemi, 2011), the results of the study indicated that Iranian textbooks were not satisfactorily acceptable in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes. The findings provided further evidence for Rahimpour's and Hashemi's (2011) study which indicated that in comparison with Turkish textbooks, Iranian textbooks were not acceptable in terms of physical make up and practical concerns.

The second finding of the study was related to the significance of difference between the viewpoints of language teachers about *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials. The result of the study indicated that *English Net 6* was preferred by language teachers in terms of book objectives, teaching aids and teaching methods. Similar to the findings of Mobarakeh and Arani (2012), the result of the study indicated

that ELT textbooks used in Iranian high schools are not authentic. Furthermore, the findings of the study are in line with Zohrabi's, Sabouri's and Behrozian's (2012) study. They found that English textbooks didn't meet the students' and teachers' needs within the educational system. In other words, the Iranian English textbooks ignored the communicative objectives of the language. Contrary to Jafarigohar and Ghaderi (2013) that found no significant difference in terms of textbook objectives and methods, the findings of this study indicated that there was a significant difference between Iranian and Turkish English textbooks in terms of objectives and teaching methods.

The third finding of the study was related to the viewpoints of teachers about *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of learning-teaching content. The results of the study indicated that teachers had significantly positive perceptions of *English Net 6* in terms of learning- teaching content. The findings of the study were similar to Zohrabi's, Sabouri's, and Behrozian's (2012) study, in which they evaluated the English textbook which is taught in Iranian first grade high schools to explain the weaknesses and strengths of the book. They concluded that the textbook could not meet the students' and teachers' need within the Iranian educational system in terms of topics and contents, grammatical points and exercises, language skill, and language functions. Furthermore, the findings of the study are in line with Azizifar's, Koosha's and Lotfi's (2010) study. They focused on the examination of two English textbooks taught in Iranian high schools. Their study revealed that the Iranian textbooks focused on structural organization of their content. The results indicated that the books were devoid of communicative values for learners.

The last finding of the study was related to the significance of difference in the viewpoints of teachers about *Prospect 2* and *English Net 6* in terms of language skills. The results of the study indicated that teachers had significantly positive perception of *English Net 6* in terms of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, it was not significant in grammar and pronunciation subcategories. In line with Alemi's and Sadeghvandi's (2012) study, in which they found that speaking and listening skills were not given the deserved attention, the results of the study provided further evidence for the lack of attention to all language skills in Iranian textbooks. Furthermore, similar to the findings of this study, Miekley (2005) and Mobarakeh and Arani (2012) found that oral skills were totally ignored in Iranian textbooks. However, Turkish textbooks did not suffer from the above mentioned shortcomings. They evaluated high school textbook published by Ministry of Education in Iran and the *New Bridge to Success Series* which is taught in Turkish high schools. Similarly, they found that Iranian textbooks were not authentic and ignored oral skills.

Conclusions

The first conclusion drawn from the study was related to the positive viewpoints of teachers about *English Net 6* in terms of physical and utilitarian attributes. It can be concluded that the general appearance, layout and visuals of *English Net 6* was significantly better than *Prospect 2*. It seems that in *English Net 6* visuals are more functional and are compatible with students' culture. The second conclusion was related to the efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials in *English Net 6*. It can be concluded that more attention had been paid to the objectives, teaching methods and teaching aids in *English Net 6*. In other words, very little attention had been paid to the efficient outlay of objectives in *Prospect 2*. The third conclusion of the study was related to the learning-teaching content. It can be concluded that *English Net 6* was mostly preferred by Iranian language teachers in terms of learning-teaching content. The lack of these important aspects are evident in *Prospect 2*. It seems that in *English Net 6* more attention has been paid to learner-centered aspects of language learning and language teaching. The last

conclusion was related to the significance of teachers' viewpoints about *English Net 6* in terms of language skills. It can be concluded that the major language skills have been considered simultaneously in *English Net 6. English Net 6* listening materials are well recorded and authentic and it has more sufficient reading materials for improving language skills. The results of the present study revealed that there wasn't any statistically significant difference between *English Net 6* and *Prospect 2* in terms of grammar and pronunciation.

To put in a nutshell, the Turkish textbook, *English Net 6,* surpassed the Iranian one in quality and efficiency in many aspects of textbook evaluation. In fact, considering all the important criteria we discussed for any EFL textbook including physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient outlay of objectives and supplementary materials, learning-teaching content, and language skills with sixteen subcategories the evaluation process revealed that *Prospect 2* has some limitations in comparison with *English Net 6* .

The findings of this study could be of great help to the ministry of education, teachers, publishers and material developers who are faced with the complicated task of selecting and publishing an appropriate textbook for their students. Teachers can also state their opinion on the textbook in a more conscious way with a kind of criteria on their minds. This study aimed to let teachers express their perceptions about the particular textbooks. The comparative nature of the present study can enable EFL material developers to avoid the kind of pitfalls that previous publisher fell into and they can also follow successful procedures. Moreover, this study can be a practical guide for other researchers who are interested in the area of textbook evaluation and research.

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