

The Evaluation of “English Textbook 2” Taught in Iranian High Schools from Teachers’ Perspectives

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the appropriateness of “English Textbook 2” for Iranian EFL second grade high school students from the teachers’ perspectives. The participants of the study consisted of 25 English teachers (8 females and 17 males) randomly selected from different high schools in Boukan, Iran. The evaluation of the textbook was conducted quantitatively through an adapted checklist developed by Litz (2005). The checklist was a 5-point Likert scale and three criteria including subject and content, activities, and skills out of seven criteria in Litz’s checklist were selected for this study. The results of the study revealed that teachers’ perceptions about these criteria were not favorable in general. The results of this study can be helpful for teachers to use appropriate teaching techniques to compensate for the deficiencies of the textbook and the materials developers and syllabus and curriculum designers in Ministry of Education and other pedagogical experts to revise the current textbook or adopt a new textbook instead.

Keywords: EFL, English textbook, evaluation, high school, Iranian, teachers, student

1. Introduction

In order to evaluate a textbook in a correct and systematic way, it is necessary to define it although the term “textbook” is neither precise nor stable. Tomlinson (2011a) defines a textbook as a book “which provides the core materials for a language-learning course” (p. xi) in which a variety of issues are covered considering the learning requirements of the students within a course period. Generally, such a book consists of activities related to four skills, grammatical and lexical information, and various language functions.

Textbooks play a very crucial role in English as a foreign or as a second language (EFL/ESL) classroom. Sheldon (1988, p. 237) suggests that textbooks not only “represent the visible heart of any ELT program” but also offer considerable advantages—for both the student and the teacher—when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom. Nunan (1999, p. 98) states that “a textbook is the main component of any instructional program and it is difficult to imagine a class without it”. According to Ahour and Ahmadi (2012), textbooks easily provide the knowledge to the learners. Therefore, in order to select a culturally and locally appropriate textbook that corresponds to the needs of the learners and teaching/learning requirements, the textbook evaluation is required.

There are different definitions of evaluation. Hutchinson and Waters (1993, p. 96) define evaluation as a “matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose”. For Dudley-Evans and St John (2005, p. 128), “evaluation is a whole process which begins with determining what information to gather and ends with bringing about change in current activities or influencing future ones”.

In this regard, textbooks as instructional materials require evaluation. According to McDonough and Shaw (2003, p. 60), the evaluation of textbooks deserves serious consideration because “an inappropriate choice may waste time and funds and this may have a demotivating effect on both students and other teachers”. Hutchinson and Waters (1993, p. 97) believe that textbook evaluation is basically a straightforward, analytical “matching process: matching needs to available solutions”.

Considering the importance of evaluation, we can say that the textbook evaluation is a requisite to qualifying the content of the textbooks and homogenizing it with the teaching/learning requirement in EFL/ESL settings. In this

case, one of the researchers of this study who has 14 years of teaching experience in different high schools in Boukan, Iran, has noticed that most students encounter immense English language problems after graduating from high schools. For instance, they are not able to use English for communicative purposes appropriately. One might ask where these problems may arise from. Surely, there are several causes to these problems. One of the main causes can be the inadequacies in the design of the prescribed English textbooks used at high school levels (Ghorbani, 2011). Current English textbooks in High schools of Iran have been used for about two decades (except for Pre-University English Book which has been modified several times recently). It is time for material developers to adopt completely new textbooks or at least modified ones. To do this, syllabus and material designers need teachers' help. Because teachers use textbooks in their classrooms, their attitudes, observations, and experiences are valuable for evaluating and adapting textbooks. In this case, they have the right to participate in the textbook evaluation process to find a relevant book for the specific learners of their classes (Tok, 2010). Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate English teachers' attitudes towards the appropriateness of "English Textbook 2" being used for the high school students in Iran. In this regard, the following research questions were posed:

- 1) To what extent is the "English textbook 2" appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of the subject and content?
- 2) To what extent is the "English textbook 2" appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of the activities?
- 3) To what extent is the "English textbook 2" appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of the skills?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

Textbooks play an important role in language teaching and provide a useful source for both teachers and learners. Davison (1975), for example, suggests that after the teacher the textbook is the most important component in the foreign language classrooms. Few teachers enter class without a textbook which provides content and teaching/learning activities that shape much of what happens in the classroom. Some students, in Mukundan and Ahour's (2010, p. 336) words, rely heavily on the textbook as "an essential component of their learning material without which they do not consider the learning situation to be serious".

Textbooks, according to Tomlinson (2010), prepare learners for examinations, help teachers by reducing their preparation time, help administrators to allocate lessons to teachers, standardize teaching, and provide teaching that would be useful to any learner anywhere at a specified language level. Tomlinson (2011b) also believes that a textbook helps provide a route map for both teachers and learners, making it possible for them to look ahead to what will be done in a lesson as well as to look back on what has been done. They are seen as sources of achieving learners' needs and matching the aims and objectives of their needs. Regarding the textbook as a media of knowledge and information, Ahour and Ahmadi (2012, p. 176) state that "textbooks are the main sources that convey the knowledge and information to the learners in an easy and organized way".

There are many reasons for evaluating textbooks. Hutchinson and Waters (1993, p. 96) indicate that materials evaluation should be performed to determine the suitability of the materials to our "particular purpose". In different words, Hutchinson (1987) declare that materials evaluation help the teachers in the selection of the teaching materials and the development of their awareness regarding the nature of language and learning.

According to Sheldon (1988), there are some other reasons for evaluating textbooks. It can help the teachers to have a good knowledge of the content of the textbooks and to identify the merits and demerits of the textbooks that are already being used. For Sheldon, all the textbooks in ELT should have remarkable features and qualifications, effectiveness, and fitness for people who use them. Likewise, Cunningsworth (1995) mentions two reasons for textbook evaluation including adopting new coursebooks and finding out the particular strengths and weaknesses in coursebooks already in use.

In this regard, some advantages of materials evaluation have been mentioned. Littlejohn (2011, p. 183), for instance, claims that "materials analysis and evaluation enable us to look inside the materials and to take more control over their design and use". McDonough and Shaw (2003, p. 60) state that evaluation is "a useful process in its own right" because it gives teachers insight into the organizational principles of the materials and helps them to keep up with developments in the field. This will in turn help teachers to adapt materials realistically.

2.2 Empirical Studies on Textbook Evaluation

Many empirical studies have been carried out on the textbook evaluation in different contexts. Different researchers have used various textbook evaluation schemes or checklists to evaluate different textbooks or

materials. In South Korea, for example, Litz (2005) investigated appropriateness of a textbook called “English Firsthand 2” (EF2) which was taught at Sung Kyun Kwan University in Suwon, South Korea. He concluded that while EF2 may not be as well-known as other prominent series of textbooks, it has many notable and worthwhile characteristics. For example, the entire textbook package is well conceived and it has a variety of useful supplementary materials. The book was found to be attractive with the clear, logical and coherent organization. In addition, there was the integration of the four language skills without neglecting other important ELT issues such as vocabulary development. Despite its strengths, as Litz found, EF2 still suffered from repetitive activities that failed to encourage truly meaningful practices and promote realistic discourse. They were not also led to the internalization of the language.

Tok (2010) evaluated “Spot on” textbook used in state primary schools in Turkey. The researcher concluded that it has some positive and some negative characteristics. As for the positive features, for example, the teacher's book contains guides about how the textbook can be used to the highest advantage of the students. The content of the textbook is generally realistic, interesting, challenging and motivating with the activities incorporating pair and group work. As Tok indicated, the subject and content of the textbook have a sufficient variety. In addition, it is not biased culturally and does not show any negative stereotypes. Despite its strengths, “Spot On” has many negative characteristics. Most respondents actually responded unfavorably to the layout and design aspects of the book. They believed that the activities in the textbook do not encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practices.

In Iranian EFL context, the issue of textbook evaluation has also attracted the attention of several researchers. Ansary (2004), for example, investigated the merits and demerits of Iranian High school English textbooks. He concluded that the formats of these books are not designed in a way that makes them attractive, usable, and durable. There is little use of pictures and illustrations to make them attractive enough for the students. Even when some illustrations are given, they are not clear enough for the students to completely understand what they should do. Ansary also found that the reading parts of the high school English textbooks have not been organized according to their difficulty level and that background knowledge of the learners has not been considered. The first lesson of grade one, for example, is more difficult than the other two lessons and it has so many new vocabulary items and expressions.

Considering teaching methodology, Hosseini (2007) evaluated ELT materials in Iranian High schools. He concluded that the main focus of English education, especially at the pre-university and senior high school levels, is on reading skill and the textbooks lack listening and speaking activities. Therefore, the Grammar Translation teaching as the dominant method is used by the teachers at these levels. According to Hosseini, even the less emphasis is on writing because writing activities take the form of grammatical exercises including making passive sentences or unscrambling the disordered words and phrases.

Ghorbani (2011) evaluated the “English Book 1” being used in Iranian senior high schools based on a new checklist created by the researcher. The findings of the study indicated that the textbook is perfect in physical qualities like paper quality, binding, printing, etc. But there is not a well-balanced pattern among four language skills. There are no audio CDs and student's and teacher's guides as reference materials. There is also no glossary at the end of the book. The design of the book is more structural-based than communicative. The book lacks various communicative tasks and information gap activities. The speaking activities are limited to question-answer types using the pair works and there is not much more attention to other communicative activities such as group work, role play, simulation, etc.

In this regard, the present study was conducted to fill the gap in the literature by seeking the teachers' perspectives about the appropriateness of “English Textbook 2” prescribed by Ministry of Education for High School students in Iran, which was not specifically investigated in the literature.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The data required for the study were collected from 25 teachers comprising both male ($n = 17$) and female ($n = 8$) English teachers who were randomly selected from different High Schools in Boukan, Iran. Their years of teaching experience varied between 2-9 years (4 teachers—16%), 10-17 years (15 teachers—60%), and 18-25 years (6 teachers—24%).

3.2 Instrument

The instrument used in this study was the textbook evaluation checklist developed by Litz (2005). In this study, three criteria (i.e., subject and content: items 1-5; activities: items 6-12; and skills: items 13-17) in the Litz's

checklist were considered. The researchers chose these criteria because based on their teaching experience the English textbook 2 suffers from appropriate attention to these criteria. Moreover, for the convenience of statistically defining and coding, instead of 10-point Likert scale in Litz's study, the 5-point Likert scale (Completely Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Moderately Agree = 3, Agree = 4, Completely Agree = 5) was used (see Appendix). After checking the checklist by two educational experts and three experienced teachers for the content validity, a pilot study was conducted with 14 English teachers prior to the main study. The aim of the pilot study was to find out to what extent the items of the adapted checklist were clear and comprehensible to the subjects of the study. In addition, the time required for answering the checklist, suitability of the items for the actual context of the study and the clarity of instructions were also piloted. The pilot study, in general, confirmed the validity of the checklist for the context of Iran. In order to find out the internal reliability (consistency) of the items in the checklist, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated and a very high reliability was obtained ($\alpha = .96$).

3.3 Material

The book selected for evaluation was "English Textbook 2" written by Birjandi, Noroozi, and Mahmoodi (2012) that was prescribed by Ministry of Education in Iran for using in second grade in high schools. The reason for choosing this textbook was that based on the teaching experience of one of the researchers in high schools it was noticed that English Textbook 2 has more shortcomings than the other textbooks taught in high schools in Iran. English Textbook 2 is taught two hours per week. It includes seven lessons. Each lesson consists of nine different parts such as (A) New Words, (B) Reading, (C) Comprehension, (D) Speak Out, (E) Write It Down, (F) Language Functions, (G) Pronunciation Practice, (H) Vocabulary Review, and (I) Vocabulary list. This textbook has been used for about twenty years without any specific revisions or modifications.

3.4 Procedure

In this descriptive study, the quantitative data were obtained through the teacher textbook evaluation checklist. With the permission of the officials in the Education Administration, data collection procedure was carried out in Boukan, Iran, among English teachers who were randomly selected, during the second semester in the academic year 2012-2013. Before implementing the instrument, the researchers informed the participants of the purpose of the study and data collection procedure. Necessary information were given to them and based on the teachers' teaching timetables, in different high schools that were randomly selected, the dates for the data collection were scheduled. Then, the checklists were distributed among the 25 English teachers (17 male and 8 female) to complete and return it to the researchers. The collected data were entered into the SPSS 17.0 for further analysis. The descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage were used in the data analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results of the Data Analysis for Research Question 1

The first research question was: 'To what extent is the textbook appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of Subject and Content?' The section of 'Subject and Content' in the checklist had five items for which the means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were estimated (see Table 1).

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages of the items on subject and content

Textbook evaluation scales	5		4		3		2		1		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Subject and Content	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Item 1	-	-	1	4.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	21	84.0	1.28	.74
Item 2	-	-	-	-	4	16.0	8	32.0	13	52.0	1.64	.76
Item 3	-	-	1	4.0	2	8.0	3	12.0	19	76.0	1.40	.82
Item 4	-	-	1	4.0	2	8.0	10	40.0	12	48.0	1.68	.80
Item 5	-	-	4	16.0	6	24.0	5	20.0	10	40.0	2.16	1.14

Note: Completely Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Moderately Agree = 3, Agree = 4, Completely Agree = 5

As Table 1 illustrates, 92% of the teachers declared their disagreement with the first item in this section and only 8% agreed or agreed moderately with the item ($M = 1.28$, $SD = .74$). A majority of the teachers (84%) stated that

the subject and content of the textbook is not generally realistic (item 2) ($M = 1.64$, $SD = .76$). About 88% of the teachers in this study believed that the subject and content of the textbook is not interesting, challenging, and motivating (item 3) and only 12% stated their agreement ($M = 1.40$, $SD = .82$). Similarly, 88% stated their disagreement with the variety in the subject and content of the textbook (item 4); while, 12% agreed with it ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .80$). For the last item, 60% stated their disagreement but 40% indicated their agreement with the item ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.14$).

As shown in Table 1, the highest mean (2.16) in the section of ‘Subject and Content’ is related to the item dealing with the culturally biased materials. Out of 25 teachers, 15 indicated their disagreement and 10 expressed their agreement. This implies that most of them consider the content to be culturally biased and that they portray negative stereotypes of the culture. The lowest mean (1.28) is related to the relevance of the subject and content to the students’ needs as English language learners. The results indicate that the subject and content of the “English textbook 2” require some modifications based on the students’ needs and interest. For this, sufficient variety should also be considered in selecting the subject and content of the textbook.

Cunningsworth (1995) points out that there should be a correspondence among textbooks, aims and objectives of the language learning program, and the learners’ needs. He indicates that those materials that cannot cover the related interesting topics are in the risk of losing their users’ attention. Therefore, we should consider the needs of the new generation in this technology-oriented era and use the texts and topics that are more related to today interests such as tablet games, internet, satellite informative programs, etc.

4.2 Results of the Data Analysis for Research Question 2

The second research question was: “To what extent is the textbook appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of the activities?” The section of “Activities” had seven items for which the means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were estimated (see Table 2).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages of the items on activities

Textbook evaluation scales	5		4		3		2		1		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Activities	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Item 6	1	4.0	-	-	4	16.0	12	48.0	8	32.0	1.96	.93
Item 7	-	-	1	4.0	2	8.0	10	40.0	12	48.0	1.68	.80
Item 8	1	4.0	-	-	5	20.0	12	48.0	7	28.0	2.04	.93
Item 9	-	-	1	4.0	3	12.0	8	32.0	13	52.0	1.68	.85
Item 10	1	4.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	7	28.0	13	52.0	1.80	1.08
Item 11	-	-	1	4.0	3	12.0	10	40.0	11	44.0	1.76	.83
Item 12	-	-	1	4.0	9	36.0	11	44.0	4	16.0	2.28	.79

Note: Completely Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Moderately Agree = 3, Agree = 4, Completely Agree = 5

As shown in Table 2, 20 teachers (80%) stated that the textbook does not provide a balance of activities (item 6); that is, there isn’t an equal distribution of free versus controlled exercises and tasks focusing on both fluent and accurate production ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .93$). A majority of the teachers (88%) believed that the activities do not encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice for the students. Only 12% agreed with the item 7 ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .80$). Seventy six of the teachers completely disagreed or disagreed that textbook activities incorporate individual, pair, and group work (item 8) ($M = 2.04$, $SD = .93$). Eighty four percent disagreed or disagreed completely with the item 9 “The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts” ($M = 1.68$, $SD = .85$). The rest of the participants declared their agreement with the item. Regarding the item 10, 80% stated that the textbook activities do not promote creative, original and independent responses but 20% agreed or agreed completely with the item ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 1.08$). Eighty four percent disagreed or disagreed completely with the role of the tasks (item 11) in that they do not lead to the internalization of newly introduced language ($M = 1.76$, $SD = .83$). For the last item, which was related to the activities, more than the half of the teachers (60%) believed that the activities can not be modified or supplemented easily; while, 36% agreed moderately and only 4% agreed with the item ($M = 2.28$, $SD = .79$).

As the results indicate, the mean range for the section “Activities” is between 1.68 (the lowest) and 2.28 (the

highest). Considering the range between completely disagree and completely agree, the obtained mean range, for the items related to the “Activities” of the textbook is close to the scale of disagree. Therefore, it seems that the activities may not be as effective as it is expected and some changes might be necessary to make them more useful and applicable in the classrooms.

According to Widdowson (1983), the communicative activities should be included in any language program. As Widdowson points out, the notion of linguistic competence and the way it can be realized as communicative capacity should be reconciled in the form and function of language programs. Grant (1987, p. 7) also puts emphasis on the communicative feature of the textbooks and indicates that they should help the students to communicate in the language.

The quantitative data analysis, in this study, indicated that the teachers’ perceptions about the activities and exercises of the textbook were not satisfactory in general. The reason for this result may refer to the fact that the activities of “English textbook 2” which include repetition, substitution, transformation, and production mostly concentrate on controlled and mechanical exercises that the students do individually according to the model. For example, lesson one of the English textbook 2 provides the following model:

Answer these questions. Follow the model:

Model: *Had you washed the dishes before they arrived? (clean the room)*

No, I hadn't. I had cleaned the room before they arrived.

According to Ellis (1990, p. 192), “Controlled practice appears to have little long-term effect on the accuracy with which new structures are performed” and “has little effect on fluency”. In order to overcome the deficiency of using models, the use of more fluency promoting activities such as communicative and meaningful practices should be encouraged in the textbook.

The results of this study in terms of activities are in agreement with the findings of the study done by Ansary (2004). He indicated that the high school textbooks’ exercises and activities do not satisfy most of the students with different motivations for learning English. In “Write it down” section of high school English textbooks, most of the exercises are completion of sentences, responding to questions, or writing out some items related to grammatical points. Most of the exercises have a model to follow, which will detract from motivation of new answers and decrease creativity in responses.

4.3 Results of the Data Analysis for Research Question 3

The third research question was: “To what extent is the textbook appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of the skills?” The section of “Skills” had five items for which the means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were estimated (see Table 3).

Table 3. Means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages of the items on skills

Textbook evaluation scales	5		4		3		2		1		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Skills	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Item 13	-	-	2	8.0	5	20.0	6	24.0	12	48.0	1.88	1.01
Item 14	1	4.0	-	-	-	-	4	16.0	20	80.0	1.32	.85
Item 15	-	-	1	4.0	2	8.0	2	8.0	20	80.0	1.36	.81
Item 16	-	-	2	8.0	3	12.0	7	28.0	13	52.0	1.76	.97
Item 17	1	4.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	11	44.0	10	40.0	1.88	1.01

Note: Completely Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Moderately Agree = 3, Agree = 4, Completely Agree = 5

As Table 3 indicates, 72% of the participants declared their disagreement with the first item regarding the focus on the skills the students need to practice, while 28% agreed or agreed moderately with the item ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 1.01$). A vast majority of the participants (96%) stated that the materials do not provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills and only 4% agreed with the item 14 ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .85$). For the sub-skills (item 15), 88% disagreed or disagreed completely with the item and only 12% stated their agreement ($M = 1.36$, $SD = .81$). Eighty percent stated their disagreement with the item 16 related to the pronunciation practices and believed that the textbook is weak in this regard and do not highlight natural pronunciation ($M = 1.76$, $SD = .97$).

Eighty four percent stated that the practice of individual skills is not integrated into the practice of other skills (item 17) and 16% agreed with it ($M = 1.88$, $SD = 1.01$).

As it can be seen in Table 3, the mean range for the items related to the “Skills” in the textbook is between 1.32 and 1.88. This implies that, a majority of the teachers, in this study, do not agree with the presentation of the skills and sub-skills and the way they are practiced.

The results of this study in terms of skills are in agreement with the findings of Ansary (2004) and Ghorbani (2011) who evaluated ELT materials in Iranian High schools. Ansary concluded that although the course objectives are improving the four skills, reviewing the content of the high school textbooks indicate that they are given different weight with the highest emphasis on reading comprehension and writing and the given tasks do not develop the skills interdependently. Similarly, Ghorbani showed that the balance of four skills in the “English textbook 1” is not appropriate to the learners and the learning situation in Iran. While a particular space is devoted to the reading and writing skills, little attention has been paid to the speaking and almost no attention to the listening skill. Even the speaking activities do not make students to speak out their thoughts and feelings correctly.

In contrast to the high school English textbooks, “New Interchange Series” evaluated by Riasati and Zare (2010) are found to be more appropriate for EFL learners in terms of four language skills. Based on teachers’ opinions, the focus of the books is on the skills that the students need to practice and the four skills are balanced appropriately. The teachers also agreed that the sub-skills (e.g., listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, and practice of natural pronunciation including stress and intonation) are given due emphasis and practice in the books. In addition, the practice of individual skill is integrated into the practice of other skills.

5. Conclusion

As the findings of this study revealed, there are much more disadvantages than advantages in “English Textbook 2”. Based on the teachers’ viewpoints, the subject and content of the textbook is not relevant to the students’ interest, needs, and concerns. There is not also sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook. Its exercises and activities do not involve and encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice. The textbook does not pay attention to the listening, speaking, and writing skill and only the reading skill is emphasized.

In general, according to the teachers’ perceptions, the “English textbook 2” is not appropriate for Iranian high school students in terms of subject and content, activities, and skills. However, “no single textbook can meet the needs of a large and different group of language learners” (Riasati & Zare, 2010, p. 60). In these cases, the burden, as Riasati and Zare state, lies on the teacher to use the appropriate teaching methods and techniques to compensate for the deficiencies of a certain textbook in order to bring about effective learning outcomes.

The results of this study can guide the syllabus designers, textbook writers and evaluators. One of the most important implications of this study can refer to the necessity of conducting a detailed needs analysis from the teachers and students and considering the results in designing, preparing and even evaluating the textbooks. Additionally, it would be the responsibility of the materials developers and syllabus and curriculum designers in the Ministry of Education and other pedagogical experts to revise the current textbook based on the teaching/learning requirements in Iran or adopt a new textbook instead.

In the current study, only the teachers evaluated the three features of the “English Textbook 2”. Further research is required to investigate other features of the textbook based on the learners and learning needs in the EFL situation of Iran. In addition, more studies based on both the teachers’ and students’ attitudes, in different parts of Iran, are needed to collect more reliable and comprehensive information about the appropriateness of the Iranian high school English textbooks.

The evaluation of the EFL materials currently taught at public high schools in Iran requires a deeper analysis and scrutiny by a group of experienced teachers. The findings of a single study might not adequately reveal the strengths or shortcomings of any material. The researchers, materials developers, textbook writers, and teachers need to work in collaboration in order to improve the effectiveness of language learning/teaching materials.

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Appendix

Teacher textbook evaluation form (Adapted from Litz, 2005)

Dear colleagues, please provide the following information.

1) Gender: male ☐ female ☐

2) Teaching experience: ____ Years

The purpose behind this study is to find out the attitudes of high school teachers about “English Textbook 2”. According to your personal idea, please rate the following items related to different features of the textbook.

Please choose one of the choices for each item (put X or √).

Please Note:

Completely Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Moderately Agree = 3, Agree = 4, Completely Agree = 5

Subject and Content	1	2	3	4	5
1. The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my (students') needs as an English language learner(s).					
2. The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic.					
3. The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.					
4. There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.					
5. The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.					
Activities	1	2	3	4	5
6. The textbook provides a balance of activities (Ex. There is an even distribution of free vs. controlled exercises and tasks that focus on both fluent and accurate production).					
7. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.					
8. The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.					
9. The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts.					
10. The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.					
11. The tasks are conducive to the internalization of newly introduced language.					
12. The textbook's activities can be modified or supplemented easily.					
Skills	1	2	3	4	5
13. The materials include and focus on the skills that I/my students need to practice.					
14. The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.					
15. The textbook pays attention to sub-skills - i.e. listening for gist, note-taking, skimming for information, etc.					
16. The textbook highlights and practices natural pronunciation (i.e.- stress and intonation)					
17. The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.					

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