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An Evaluation of English Textbook "Prospect 3" in Iranian Junior High Schools: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

Objective: This study evaluated the "Prospect 3" English textbook used in Iranian junior high schools based on teachers' perceptions. **Methods:** A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed, starting with quantitative data collection from 90 teachers (50 males, 40 females) using the Teacher Textbook Evaluation Form (TTEF) of Litz's (2005) questionnaire. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 8 teachers actively teaching "Prospect 3" in the qualitative phase. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean values, standard deviations, and percentages on a 5-point Likert scale. Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data. **Results:** Findings indicated general dissatisfaction with the textbook, highlighting issues in practical considerations, layout and design, and integration of skills. Qualitative data revealed that the textbook inadequately addressed diverse learning needs, failed to engage students effectively, and lacked appropriate cultural content. Teachers expressed concerns about the relevance and applicability of the language tasks provided. **Conclusions:** Comprehensive revisions to the "Prospect 3" textbook are necessary to better meet educational goals and enhance language learning outcomes in Iranian junior high schools.

Keywords*:* English as a Foreign Language, Educational Material Assessment, Mixed-method Research, Prospect 3 Textbook, Teacher Evaluations

Introduction

The pivotal role of English language textbooks within the educational framework remains indisputable. These textbooks constitute the foundational pillar of language instruction programs and confer manifold benefits upon both educators and learners when integrated into classroom settings (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Sheldon, 1988). Additionally, for instructors, textbooks serve as pedagogical compasses and mnemonic aids, perpetuating a continuous log of acquired knowledge (Awasthi, 2006). Furthermore, they represent primary reservoirs that facilitate the seamless and methodical dissemination of information and expertise to language learners (Ahour & Ahmadi, 2012). Consequently, it becomes imperative for educators, textbook developers, and curriculum authors to meticulously ensure the practical efficacy of these instructional materials across diverse learning contexts.

Nevertheless, the significance and evaluation of textbooks within educational curricula extend beyond their mere presence. Given that educators and learners constitute the primary audience for textbooks, it would be imprudent to develop and assess these materials without taking their viewpoints into account (McDonough et al., 2013). In their role as front-line practitioners, teachers depend on textbooks to inform their pedagogical approaches. An effectively crafted textbook harmonizes with pedagogical strategies, educational goals, and instructional methods. Furthermore, a textbook designed with teacher usability in mind improves instructional effectiveness, enabling educators to concentrate on creating impactful learning opportunities. Hence, disregarding teachers' viewpoints regarding textbook quality and content may impede successful classroom application (Ahour & Omrani, 2019). Moreover, acknowledging teachers as pivotal stakeholders and purposefully integrating their input into textbook creation guarantees not only successful classroom use but also a more enriching educational journey for students.

Lately, there has been considerable focus on evaluating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks (Lee, 2013). Given the swift progress in technology and educational theories, the demand for current and impactful EFL textbooks is now more crucial than ever. The educational environment continually changes due to factors like digital tools, student preferences, and global trends. EFL textbooks need to adjust to these evolving circumstances (Rathert & Cabaroğl, 2022). Assessing EFL textbooks is now seen as an essential part of language teaching and curriculum design. This evaluation provides valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks, helping educators make informed decisions about how to use, modify, or replace them. Teachers can improve existing materials or explore better alternatives by pinpointing strengths and weaknesses, all aimed at promoting effective second language acquisition (Wang et al., 2020).

Within certain nations, notably Iran, textbooks assume a singular role as the primary instructional material in language education (Azizifar et al., 2010; Kheirabadi & Alavi Moghaddam, 2014). Given this context, textbooks assume an amplified function, and their lack of alignment may give rise to diverse challenges. As Azizifar et al. (2010, as cited in Ahour & Omrani, 2019) assert, when textbooks deviate from meeting language learners' requirements and impede knowledge enhancement, demotivation may ensue. Furthermore, any divergence between the teaching methodology in the textbook and instructors' preferences detrimentally impacts the comprehensive educational process. Textbooks, functioning as intermediaries,

enable the methodical transmission of knowledge; however, their effectiveness wanes when compatibility is absent (Greco, 2020). Educators contend with materials incongruent with their pedagogical stance, while students encounter content falling short of their learning anticipations. In resource-constrained environments, choosing the right textbook becomes critical, as incompatibility can lead to wasted resources—both financial and instructional, affecting overall educational quality (Pouranshirvani, 2017b).

In the context of Iran, extensive research has been conducted to assess the quality of former junior and senior high school textbooks from teachers' perspectives. Researchers emphasize the critical need for a thorough evaluation of the "Prospect" series (Maghsoudi & Khodamoradi, 2023; Taherkhani & Mottaghi, 2021). They contend that such an analysis would enhance the communicative language teaching program for learners and provide valuable insights for educational systems, textbook developers, and teachers. The "Prospect" series includes three textbooks: "Prospect 1," "Prospect 2," and "Prospect 3," designed for different grade levels in junior high schools. While existing studies have primarily focused on Prospect 1 and 2, there has been limited exploration of Prospect 3's quality from teachers' viewpoints. Given the significance of Prospect 3, which serves as a bridge between the "Prospect series" and the "Vision Series" designed for senior high school students, this study poses the following research questions:

1.What are the perspectives of English teachers regarding the "Prospect 3" English language textbook, as assessed through Litz's (2005) questionnaire?

2.How do teachers articulate their viewpoints concerning "Prospect 3"?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to provide a detailed exposition of the textbook's strengths and weaknesses, ensuring clarity for readers and guiding improvements in educational materials.

Literature Review: The significance of English language textbooks as a fundamental element within the educational systems of numerous countries has led to substantial research on textbook evaluation (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2015; Canale, 2021; Gholampour & Mehrabi, 2023; Kalfut, 2021; Pan & Zhu, 2022). For example, Riasati and Zare (2010) carried out a research study examining EFL teachers' perspectives on the textbook "New Interchange". Their research aimed to assess the suitability of the series and explore whether teachers expressed

satisfaction with it. Additionally, they delved into teachers' perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the series. Teachers expressed contentment with the series' subject matter and content. However, several limitations were identified in the textbooks including inadequate emphasis on writing skills, unaligned of some items and topics with Iranian learners' cultural context, and inappropriate quantity of teacher's manuals.

Lodhi et al. (2019) conducted an investigation into the significance of English textbooks at the intermediate level across various schools in Punjab, Pakistan, considering both teachers' and students' perspectives. Utilizing a variety of research methods, including opinion polls, interviews, and questionnaires, they found that the textbooks used in different Punjab schools did not fully meet the common objectives of second language learning. These materials were not aligned with the needs of learners and teachers, lacked innovation, failed to cater to learners' interests, and did not sufficiently address cultural relevance. Additionally, they did not adequately provide practice for the necessary language skills.

In their study, Ahmadi Safa and Karampour (2020) investigated the perceptions of Iranian EFL teachers and students regarding a recently developed Iranian EFL junior high school textbook titled *"Prospect 3"*. The findings indicated that while EFL teachers expressed partial satisfaction with *Prospect 3*, EFL students maintained a neutral stance. Specifically: teachers considered the "Vocabulary and Grammar" aspect as the most commendable. Conversely, the "Language Type" dimension was deemed the least acceptable by teachers. From students' attitudes, the "Vocabulary and Grammar" component stood out as the most praiseworthy, while the aspect related to layout and physical appearance received the lowest satisfaction rating. Susiati and Mufidati (2020) conducted research in Indonesia to assess how the national English textbook titled *When English Rings a Bell* for Junior High School Level aligns with Cunningsworth's (1995) criteria for a good English textbook. The study involved interviews with both teachers and students to evaluate the textbook's suitability. The findings indicate that all chapters in the *"When English Rings a Bell"* textbook meet Cunningsworth's (1995) criteria for a high-quality textbook. This textbook is deemed suitable for use as a teaching and learning resource for seventh-grade students in Junior High School. According to teachers, the textbook aligns well with the current curriculum's learning goals, consistent with Cunningsworth's (1995) standards. However, some students encountered challenges while using this textbook: They still required the teacher's assistance to clarify the materials., and Additional materials from external sources were necessary to enhance students' comprehension

and practical skills. These difficulties may stem from the textbook's lack of sufficient examples. In their investigation, Alhammami and Somaili (2023) explored the suitability of elementary school EFL textbooks "We Can Series" from Saudi teachers' perspectives. The research showed that these primary-stage textbooks exhibit well-organized layout and design. Each section clearly expresses and emphasizes goals, covering all language skills and offering a suitable number of activities and exercises. Furthermore, instructions support each part of the content. However, the study also identified several shortcomings. For example, the book's goals, exercises, skills, and teaching methods were unsuitable for learners' needs at these levels, the number of lessons allotted per week was inadequate for the book's content, and no logical progression existed between topics.

Materials and Methods

To address the research questions, this study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2009). The study comprised two distinct phases. Initially, quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire and subsequently analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The outcomes of this analysis centered on teachers and students' perspectives regarding the "Prospect 3" English textbook. To further elucidate these findings, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), aiming to enhance comprehension of the quantitative data.

Quantitative Phase: Participants: In this study, 90 EFL high school teachers (50 males and 40 females) participated. The researchers employed a "convenience sampling" method to select the samples. They chose Shiraz city due to its practical suitability in terms of physical proximity and accessibility during a specific time. Since high schools in Shiraz were widely dispersed, the authors aimed to enhance the representativeness of Iranian high schools by adopting cluster random sampling. Cluster sampling, as described by Dörnyei (2007), entails randomly choosing "larger groupings or units from the population and subsequently analyzing all individuals within those selected units" (p. 98). In this study, the selected unit was public high schools in Shiraz. From a list provided by the General Directorate of Education and Training of Fars Province, 40 public high schools were randomly chosen from the four educational districts. Subsequently, all teachers from these 40 schools participated in the survey through simple one-stage cluster sampling. Teachers were teaching "Prospect 3" in public junior high schools at the time of data collection. The teachers' ages ranged from 30 to 53, with

an average age of 38. Among them, 70 held a B.A. degree, 15 had an M.A. degree, and 5 possessed a Ph.D. in TEFL, English language and literature, or English translation. On average, their teaching experience was 14 years, ranging from 8 to 28 years.

Material: Material under scrutiny in this research pertained to the English textbook titled "Prospect 3", which was taught to ninth-grade students in Iranian junior high schools. The textbook, authored by Alavi Moghaddam et al. (2017), was published and endorsed by the Iranian Ministry of Education to cater to the educational requirements of ninth-grade students and ameliorate the deficiencies identified in the preceding textbook.

The textbook comprises six lessons, each lesson revolves around a thematic organization and is authored with specific functions. Additionally, one or more communicative themes are explored. Throughout this book, the lesson content gradually transcends personal contexts, aligning with the increased language proficiency of students. Social and linguistic contexts are more advanced in each lesson.

The book consists of a total of 136 pages, encompassing six vocabulary-focused lessons and conversational elements. Various sections within each lesson include dialogues. The fourth section delves into grammar, while the 'language melody' section focuses on intonation. New vocabulary is introduced alongside relevant images.

In the 'language melody' section, a brief conversation is provided, emphasizing teaching. Subsequently, a grammatical point is introduced, and intonation patterns are practiced. The final part of each lesson covers the four main language skills. Initially, listening skills are addressed, followed by role-playing exercises for writing proficiency. Finally, the lessons conclude with oral presentations.

Instruments: To gather quantitative data from teachers, researchers utilized the teacher textbook evaluation form (TTEF) of Litz (2005) textbook evaluation questionnaire. The statements were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

The TTEF comprised 40 criteria statements for evaluating textbooks. These statements were systematically grouped into seven distinct categories: (a) practical considerations (including aspects like price, accessories, and methodology), (b) layout and design, (c) activities, (d) skills, (e) language type, (f) subject and content, and (g) cultural considerations. The TTEF was

rendered into Persian, the native language of the participants. For translating the teacher form of the questionnaire, back-translation method was employed. The purpose of utilizing this back-translation technique was to verify that the questionnaire items remained comprehensible and lucid for all participants

In this study, the TTEF demonstrated commendably high levels of internal consistency in terms of reliability, as assessed using Cronbach's alpha. It yielded a value of 0.91. To establish the validity of this measurement, a panel of five experts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) conducted a thorough review of all items within the TTEF. The unanimous consensus among these experts was that the items in the TTEF were deemed appropriate.

Data Collection Procedure: Quantitative data collection spanned approximately one month, from January 7th to February 12th, 2024. The process involved the following steps: (1) Contacting Principals: the researchers initially sought permission from the principals of selected high schools in Shiraz via telephone, (2) Consent Forms: once permission was granted, the researchers distributed consent forms to 90 English teachers. These forms outlined the study's objectives, (3) Verbal Communication: the researchers verbally explained the study's aims to the teachers, emphasizing that participation was voluntary and refusal to complete the questionnaire was an option. All participants willingly agreed to take part, (4) Instructions and Procedures: before distributing the questionnaire, the researchers provided detailed instructions and procedures to the participants, (5) Confidentiality Assured: participants were assured of strict confidentiality regarding the gathered information and data. Only aggregated results would be made public, (6) Questionnaire Administration: subsequently, the questionnaire was administered to the participants.

Data Analysis: The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, specifically version 21, was utilized for quantitative data analysis. The mean values and standard deviation, and percentage of the questionnaire items were computed.

Qualitative Phase: Participants: In accordance with the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the researchers established a link between the initial quantitative data collection phase and the subsequent qualitative data gathering. Subsequently, they purposefully chose 8 teachers (5 males and 3 females) using maximum variation sampling for semi-structured interviews. The aim was to further explore the insights revealed during the descriptive quantitative analysis of the survey results.

Semi-structured Interviews: In the context of evaluating the "Prospect 3" textbook, the researchers employed semi-structured interviews to delve into teachers' perceptions and identify potential shortcomings and weaknesses. These interviews allowed for an in-depth exploration of relevant topics. Gillham (2000, as cited in Dörnyei, 2007) emphasizes the value of combining interviews with questionnaire results, as interview data can enhance understanding and breathe life into research findings. Specifically, the researchers intentionally selected 8 teachers and administered a semi-structured interview protocol consisting of ten open-ended questions. The protocol, informed by survey results, focused on two dimensions: (1) teachers' perspectives regarding the textbook, and (2) their insights into its shortcomings and weaknesses. The interview questions were formulated using evaluation criteria similar to those employed in the questionnaire.

Data Collection Procedure: On the designated interview day, participants were requested to complete informed consent forms, and all 8 willingly agreed to take part. The participants, identified by pseudonyms for confidentiality, included Manouchehr, Mehrzad, Mehrdad, Mehran, Susan, Parvin, Shahrzad, and Azar. The semi-structured interviews were conducted within the teachers' offices, and the language of communication was Farsi (the participants' mother tongue). The researchers chose Farsi to establish rapport, facilitate communication, prevent misinterpretation, and enable teachers to express their opinions and emotions effectively. Each interview commenced with a concise explanation of the study's purpose, emphasizing the importance of sincerity, honesty, and open communication. The interview duration ranged from 30 to 45 minutes, and all sessions were audio-recorded.

Data Analysis: The transcripts underwent thematic analysis following the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, providing a rich and detailed organization of the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Notably, this method offers flexibility, operating independently of specific theories or epistemological frameworks, making it applicable across diverse theoretical and epistemological approaches. Consequently, it is particularly well-suited for mixed methods research (Querstret & Robinson, 2012, as cited in Jafari et al, 2012).

The thematic analysis process comprised six steps: (1)Transcription and Familiarization: the interviewees' responses were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were meticulously reviewed multiple times to identify text relevant to teachers' perspectives on the textbook and its strengths and weaknesses, (2) Coding: researchers systematically divided and labeled the data into meaningful codes, (3) Code Analysis and Theme Formation: these codes were then

analyzed and combined to form overarching themes. These themes emerged through an inductive interpretation of individual texts and were theoretically influenced by the conceptual foundations of textbook evaluation, (4**)** Theme Refinement: the identified themes underwent review and refinement to create a coherent thematic "map" of the data, (5) Definition and Naming: researchers further defined and refined each theme, assigning descriptive names to facilitate clarity, and (6) Final Reporting: the final phase involved writing a comprehensive report summarizing the thematic analysis.

Qualitative Validation Strategies: Before conducting the interview sessions, a panel of experts reviewed and validated the interview questions' content. To enhance data accuracy, the researcher carefully analyzed select excerpts twice. Additionally, a second coder, specialized in applied linguistics, independently coded all excerpts. Subsequently, the results were compared, and any discrepancies were addressed. The intracoder agreement level for all coding units was deemed satisfactory, with a coefficient of .80 for rater 1 and .76 for 2).

Ethical Considerations: Ethical protocols were strictly followed in both the quantitative and qualitative phases. In the quantitative phase, informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants were aware of the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw. Data was anonymised, and only aggregated results were reported to protect privacy.

In the qualitative phase, participants were informed about the purpose and confidentiality of the interviews, and consent was obtained for audio recording. Personal identifiers were removed from transcripts to maintain anonymity. Data was securely stored and accessed only by the research team, ensuring ethical research standards and safeguarding participants' rights and welfare.

Results

Quantitative Results: What are the perspectives of English teachers regarding the "Prospect 3" English language textbook, as assessed through Litz's (2005) questionnaire?

 Initially, we delve into the quantitative findings. Subsequently, we present each section of the questionnaire in a tabular format, accompanied by its corresponding statements and arithmetic

mean. Specifically, Table 1 illustrates teachers' perspectives concerning the practical considerations of the textbook.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Practical Considerations

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	The price of the textbook is reasonable	2.23	5.31	1.27	70.21	20.11	3.48
2	The textbook is easily accessible.	3.11	7.12	5.10	68.25	16.28	3.44
3	The textbook is a recent publication.	1.23	1.44	3.11	80.11	14.10	3.21
4	A teacher's guide, workbook, and audio-tapes accompany the textbook.	40.21	43.79	1.43	5.21	9.69	1.24
5	The author's views on language and methodology are comparable to mine	70.21	15.34	2.96	5.12	6.37	1.14
Total Mean	2.50						
Total SD	1.5						

According to the Table 1, the mean scores for the items ranged from 1.14 to 3.48. Specifically, item 5 had the lowest mean score of 1.14, while item 1 had the highest mean score of 3.48. The

overall mean was 2.50, with a standard deviation of 1.5. This suggests that English language teachers were not satisfied with "practical considerations" of the "Prospect 3" textbook.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Layout & Design

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	The textbook includes a detailed overview of the functions, structures and vocabulary that will be taught in each unit	35.34	40.33	3.98	11.10	9.14	1.48
2	The layout and design is appropriate and clear.	37.12	40.21	2.15	10.15	9.28	2.11
3	There is no grammatical and spelling error within the texts of the book.	6.21	8.41	3.88	41.19	40.32	3.21
4	The printing of the book is of high quality.	10.14	9.11	9.13	30.23	40.21	2.98
5	The textbook is organized effectively.	41.14	35.22	2.55	10.23	12.64	1.74

#	Item						
6	An adequate vocabulary list or glossary is included.	25.21	60.10	2.26	5.03	7.01	1.47
7	Adequate review sections and exercises are included.	45.39	30.21	5.48	10.51	7.52	1.61
8	An adequate set of evaluation quizzes or testing suggestions is included.	20.16	50.44	3.71	10.11	15.21	1.41
9	The teacher's book contains guidance about how the textbook can be used to the utmost advantage.	60.10	20.29	2.33	8.68	8.33	1.32
10	The materials objectives are apparent to both the teacher and the student.	40.21	45.67	2.21	5.11	6.21	1.25
Total Mean	1.72						
Total SD	1.15						

As indicated by Table 2, the range of mean scores falls between 1.25 and 3.21. Specifically, Item 10 (with a mean of 1.25) represents the lowest value, while Item 3 (with a mean of 3.21) corresponds to the highest value. The overall mean for this component is 1.72, with a total standard deviation of 1.15. This suggests that English language teachers had unfavorable attitudes towards the layout and design of the Prospect 3 textbook.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Activities

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	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).	35.21	45.63	3.26	5.21	10.11	1.84
2	. The activities encourage sufficient communicative and meaningful practice.	60.21	30.12	3.41	3.10	3.13	1.12
3	The activities incorporate individual, pair and group work.	25.27	50.11	3.11	10.57	10.58	1.35

4	The grammar points and vocabulary items are introduced in motivating and realistic contexts	70.35	20.80	2.31	4.16	2.69	1.14
5	The activities promote creative, original and independent responses.	50.15	30.29	4.21	4.41	9.37	1.25
6	The tasks are conducive to the internalization of newly introduced language.	20.10	47.47	5.21	10.52	15.51	1.24
7	The textbook's activities can be modified or supplemented easily.	36.31	38.51	6.28	8.36	10.12	1.47
Total Mean	1.34						
Total SD	1.10						

Based on the results obtained from Table 3, the average values for the items fall within the range of 1.12 to 1.84. Specifically, item 2 exhibits the lowest average value of 1.12, while item has the highest average value of 1.84. The overall mean for this component is 1.34, with a total standard deviation of 1.10. This suggests that English language teachers had no satisfaction with "activity" component of the textbook.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Skills

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	The materials include and focus on the skills that I/my students need to practice	60.34	25.33	4.58	5.11	3.32	1.86
2	The materials provide an appropriate balance of the four language skills.	55.21	40.11	1.15	1.15	2.30	1.36
3	The textbook pays attention to sub-skills (grammar, vocabulary, etc.)	25.21	40.41	2.88	15.34	15.32	1.64
4	The textbook highlights and practices natural	50.12	35.21	3.13	4.23	6.21	1.38

	pronunciation (i.e. stress and intonation).						
5	The practice of individual skills is integrated into the practice of other skills.	30.33	44.39	2.32	10.81	11.12	1.41
Total Mean	1.53						
Total SD	1.18						

Drawing insights from the data presented in Table 4, we observe that the mean values for the assessed items lie within the range of 1.36 to 1.86. Specifically, Item 2 demonstrates the lowest average value of 1.36, while Item 1 exhibits the highest average value of 1.86. The overall mean score for this component stands at 1.53, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.18. These findings imply that English language teachers were not satisfied with the "skills" component featured in the textbook.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Language Type

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	The language used in the textbook is authentic i.e. like real life English.	71.23	20.10	2.43	2.23	3.13	1.12

2	The language used is at the right level for my (students') current English ability	30.11	45.12	5.46	8.57	9.21	1.41
3	The progression of grammar points and vocabulary items is appropriate.	60.36	20.29	3.25	8.21	6.33	1.47
4	The grammar points are presented with brief and easy examples and explanations	25.21	45.88	5.11	15.29	8.14	2.31
5	The language functions exemplify English that I/my students will be likely to use	60.12	28.97	4.21	3.10	3.46	1.14
Total Mean	1.49						
Total SD	1.32						

Table 5 reveals that all the statements have the arithmetic mean ranging from 1.12 to 2.31. Specifically, Item 1 indicates the lowest average value of 1.12, while Item 4 shows the highest average value of 1.86. In summary, the overall assessment (total mean=3.23, total SD= 1.32) indicates that teachers were not pleased with the "language type" of the English textbook for ninth-grade students.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Subject & Content

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	The subject and content of the textbook is relevant to my (students') needs as an English language learner(s).	40.76	45.14	3.23	4.79	5.34	1.63
2	The subject and content of the textbook is generally realistic	35.12	47.26	5.86	6.15	5.32	1.34
3	The subject and content of the textbook is interesting, challenging and motivating.	30.21	38.65	4.23	9.98	15.11	1.31
4	There is sufficient variety in the subject and content of the textbook.	25.32	35.21	6.21	20.41	11.98	2.11
Total Mean	1.60						
Total SD	1.12						

Based on Table 6, all the four items have the arithmetic mean ranging from 1.63 to 2.11. The results, characterized by a mean score of 1.60 and a standard deviation of 1.12, imply that teachers exhibited unfavorable outlook toward the "subject and content" within the Prospect 3 English textbook.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Considerations

N	Statement	SD	D	U	SA	A	Mean
1	The materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes	25.43	37.74	2.12	6.64	26.58	2.50
2	The content serves as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British etc.)	24.94	35.21	7.23	7.91	24.10	2.30
3	The content deal with L2 socio-cultural factors that increase motivation to learn target language.	30.56	30.12	7.12	11.14	20.86	1.85
4	The content deals with both L1 and L2 socio-cultural factors indiscriminately	26.11	28.34	8.11	17.34	18.98	1.77
Total Mean	2.11						
Total SD	1.28						

Table 7 reveals that all the statements have the arithmetic mean ranging from 1.77 to 2.50. The findings, marked by an overall mean score of 2.11 and an overall standard deviation of 1.28, confirm that teachers believed that "Prospect 3" was not effective with respect to "cultural considerations" component.

Qualitative Results: How do teachers articulate their viewpoints concerning "Prospect 3"?

To address the research question, an analysis of qualitative data was conducted. The findings from this analysis are presented under four primary themes: language learning styles, vocabulary strategies, inclusivity and diversity, and pedagogical effectiveness.

Language Learning Styles: Indeed, a plethora of empirical evidence underscores the potential benefits conferred upon language learners through the integration of learning styles in English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks (Banaruee et al., 2023; Hatami, 2012; Richards, 2014; Victoria & Sangiamchit, 2021). Nevertheless, the Prospect 3 textbook exhibits a conspicuous absence of tasks and activities that incorporate these language learning styles. For example, Mehran stated, "*Upon examination of the tasks and activities within the textbook, it becomes evident that they lack a foundation in the diverse learning styles that students could potentially employ, contingent on their individual learning characteristics, to enhance their language acquisition.*" Parvin also said, "*The textbook would undoubtedly benefit from the inclusion of a dedicated section elucidating the various learning styles, thereby empowering students to identify whether they are predominantly visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners and subsequently tailor their approach to tasks in alignment with their identified learning style.*"

Vocabulary Strategies: The importance of vocabulary strategies for L2 students is well-documented. Effective strategy uses, such as guessing from context, recognizing cognates, using a dictionary, and note-taking, can significantly enhance language acquisition (Cohen, 2011; Graham, 2007; Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Macaro, 2001; Martínez-Adrián et al.,2019). However, it is noteworthy that these crucial language learning strategies are overlooked in the Prospect 3 textbook, creating a gap in the learners' skill set. For example, Shahrzad stated that "*The Prospect 3 does not include a section teaching students how to deal with unknown vocabulary. In other words, it does not teach techniques such as using context, prefixes, etc. to students in order to deal with unknown vocabulary in a text they encounter*". Manouchehr also emphasized the importance of vocabulary strategies in Prospect 3, by stating that, "*In my opinion, the first unit of the Prospect 3 English textbook would greatly benefit from a dedicated section on dealing with unknown vocabulary. This is particularly important for ninth-grade students. By learning techniques such as using context clues and prefixes, students' autonomy in reading texts can significantly increase. This not only enhances their comprehension but also boosts their confidence in language acquisition*".

Inclusivity and Diversity: Incorporating a broad spectrum of registers and accents in ELT textbooks is essential for equipping learners with the skills needed for real-world communication. This approach, which enhances the learning experience and promotes a holistic understanding of the language, encourages adaptability and effective communication in a global context. It is therefore crucial for textbook developers to include a diverse range of English accents, both native and non-native, aligning with the concept of English as an International Language (EIL) that acknowledges the varied norms of English use worldwide (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). Accordingly, Mehrdad stated that "*While Prospect 3 currently focuses on the American accent, it's essential to incorporate other English accents. By doing so, we can familiarize learners with a variety of accents, thereby enhancing their communication skills with people who have different English accents*". Azar also said that "*The Prospect 3 English textbook predominantly uses one register, which is formal. However, it's crucial to introduce other forms of registers, such as casual and intimate, in tasks, activities, and content. This approach will enable students to understand when, where, why, and to whom they should use a particular register, thereby sounding natural in various communication settings.*"

Pedagogical Effectiveness: Tasks and activities in writing and speaking play a pivotal role in developing L2 students' confidence and creativity in their speaking and writing skills (Sun, 2023; Wang, 2019). These interactive exercises provide a practical and engaging platform for students to explore and express their ideas, thereby enhancing their linguistic competence (Li, 2021). Accordingly, Susan said that "*the activities for speaking in Prospect 3 heavily rely on memorization. While these methods have their place in language learning, they do not necessarily foster a student's confidence to speak in varied situations. Language is dynamic and interactive, and our teaching methods should reflect that. We need to incorporate activities that encourage spontaneous conversation and real-world application of language skills. This way, we can better equip our students to confidently express themselves in any situation*"

Discussion

Evaluating "Prospect 3" Textbook's Efficacy in English Language Education: This study conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the "Prospect 3" English language textbook using Litz's (2005) questionnaire to assess its practicality, layout, design, activities, language skills, content, subject matter, and cultural relevance. The aim was to determine its effectiveness in English language education. The data gathered provide a detailed picture of the textbook's reception among English teachers, highlighting a pervasive pattern of dissatisfaction.

The practical aspects of the textbook, which are crucial for ease of use and classroom implementation, scored a mean of 2.50. This indicates moderate dissatisfaction and suggests significant challenges in adapting the textbook to various teaching contexts. The layout and design, essential for effective learning and content presentation, received particularly low approval with a mean score of 1.72. This reflects serious concerns about the textbook's aesthetic and functional elements.

Furthermore, the activities section, vital for engaging students and reinforcing learning, scored a mere 1.34. This underscores profound dissatisfaction with the quality, variety, and relevance of the activities provided. The core language skills section, encompassing reading, writing, listening, and speaking, had a mean score of 1.53, suggesting it is ineffective in developing these essential skills. Although the language type and content scored the highest among the categories at 3.23, this still indicates dissatisfaction, pointing to content that may not be engaging or suitable for the intended audience.

The subject matter and content, which are intended to align with educational goals and student interests, received a mean score of 1.60. This implies that the textbook may not be meeting curricular needs or adequately capturing student interests. Cultural considerations, increasingly crucial in a globalized educational context, scored 2.11. This suggests that the textbook may not effectively represent the cultural diversity of the English-speaking world or address the cultural backgrounds of the students.

These findings underscore the urgent need for significant revisions to the "Prospect 3" textbook. Enhancing its practicality, design, and activity quality, as well as ensuring it effectively develops core language skills and includes culturally relevant content, is essential. These improvements are critical to better meet the educational goals and expectations of both teachers and students, thereby improving the overall efficacy of English language education in Iranian junior high schools.

Addressing the Shortcomings of "Prospect 3" in Meeting Modern Educational Demands: The quantitative and qualitative findings from this study present a clear picture of dissatisfaction with the "Prospect 3" textbook among English language teachers. These results underscore the urgent need for substantial revisions to better align the textbook with the multifaceted demands of contemporary English language teaching.

Practical aspects such as the textbook's size, binding, print quality, and clarity of instructions are crucial for its effectiveness in the classroom. The reported low scores in these areas suggest that "Prospect 3" may not meet teachers' logistical needs, potentially due to its cumbersome nature, which could hinder its utility in time-constrained educational settings. Additionally, the design and layout of the textbook, which significantly influence how information is processed by learners, appear to be dense, cluttered, or visually unappealing. This impacts students' ability to effectively absorb material.

The activities provided in "Prospect 3" are also a major point of contention; they seem neither stimulating nor sufficiently varied or relevant to students' real-world experiences, thus diminishing the textbook's value. There is a notable misalignment between the provided exercises and the communicative needs of students, alongside a lack of integration across different language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—which are essential for effective language acquisition.

Furthermore, the language content and type in "Prospect 3" raise concerns about authenticity and appropriateness, indicating that the language may be outdated, overly simplistic, or too complex. Such content misalignment can disengage students and demotivate them from learning. Cultural considerations are equally critical; however, "Prospect 3" falls short in reflecting the cultural diversity of the English-speaking world and the students' own cultures, which is vital for fostering a global perspective and relevance in language learning.

The study's qualitative data illuminate these issues further, revealing themes such as inadequate attention to diverse learning styles, ineffective vocabulary strategies, and a lack of inclusivity and cultural diversity. These findings highlight the necessity for "Prospect 3" to evolve into a tool that is not only a repository of language knowledge but also practical, engaging, and reflective of the diverse tapestry of the English language and its speakers. Thus, the textbook needs significant revisions to truly support the needs and preferences of both teachers and students.

Aligning "Prospect 3" with Contemporary Educational Standards and Expectations: The evaluation of the "Prospect 3" English language textbook using Litz's (2005) questionnaire reveals significant findings that both resonate with and diverge from the established body of literature on English language textbook evaluation. While previous research emphasizes criteria such as practical considerations, layout and design, language skills, and cultural content (Alqahtani, 2024; Ghoorchaei et

al., 2021; Yağızel1 & Çelik, 2023), our quantitative results indicate that "Prospect 3" falls short in meeting these benchmarks. This is particularly evident in the areas of practical aspects, layout, and cultural relevance, suggesting a misalignment with evolving educational standards despite the textbook's intended compliance.

Cultural representation within ESL/EFL textbooks, which is crucial for reflecting the diverse cultures of the English-speaking world (Dos Santos, 2020; Shahmohammadi, 2018; Somaili & Alhamami, 2023), is inadequately addressed in "Prospect 3," as indicated by its low mean scores in cultural inclusivity and relevance. Our qualitative analysis further highlights concerns about the textbook's pedagogical effectiveness, revealing a lack of accommodation for diverse learning styles and effective vocabulary strategies (Bhatti & Abdullah, 2024). This points to a misalignment with contemporary educational approaches that emphasize learner diversity and strategy training.

Moreover, the extent of dissatisfaction reported by teachers, particularly regarding the activity and skills components of the textbook (Copley, 2017; Orfan et al., 2021), suggests growing expectations for more dynamic and interactive educational resources. This dissatisfaction could potentially be mitigated by integrating digital resources to complement the traditional textbook format (Gholampour & Mehrabi, 2023; Khodabande & Mombini, 2018).

Our study provides a contemporary snapshot of teacher perspectives, highlighting critical areas where "Prospect 3" does not meet established criteria or the evolving needs of language education. This contributes to the ongoing discourse on English language textbook evaluation and underscores the necessity for "Prospect 3" to undergo significant revisions to better support effective language teaching and learning.

Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive evaluation of the "Prospect 3" textbook through both quantitative and qualitative lenses, revealing widespread dissatisfaction among English language teachers. The analysis based on Litz's (2005) questionnaire identified significant shortcomings in practical aspects, layout and design, activities, skills development, language appropriateness, subject matter, and cultural relevance. Overall low mean scores indicate that the textbook does not align with teacher expectations. The qualitative insights corroborated these findings, highlighting a lack of diversity in learning styles, insufficient vocabulary strategies, a narrow range of linguistic registers and accents, and an excessive focus on

memorization. These findings suggest that "Prospect 3" fails to meet the varied needs and expectations of teachers, necessitating substantial revisions in future editions to enhance its educational efficacy and improve both teacher satisfaction and student learning outcomes.

The study underscores several critical areas for improvement in the "Prospect 3" textbook to better serve the pedagogical needs of educators and students. Incorporating a variety of learning activities to cater to different learning styles is essential as it will help engage students more effectively and support diverse learning preferences. Implementing explicit vocabulary strategies, such as context clues, word analysis, and the use of dictionaries, can enhance students' language acquisition and autonomy. Expanding the range of linguistic registers and accents represented in the textbook will better prepare students for real-world communication and reflect the diversity of the English-speaking world. Shifting from a focus on memorization to a more communicative approach will foster students' confidence and ability to use the language dynamically and interactively. Addressing these points will support a more learner-centered approach in future textbook designs, thereby contributing to more effective language teaching and learning.

To further enhance the efficacy of English language textbooks, future research should explore how incorporating various learning styles into textbooks affects student engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, studying the long-term impact of explicit vocabulary learning strategies on students' language proficiency will provide valuable insights. Assessing the effectiveness of including a broader range of cultural contexts and linguistic diversity in promoting global competence among students is crucial. Furthermore, investigating the benefits of integrating digital resources with traditional textbooks can create more interactive and engaging learning environments. This study highlights the necessity of ongoing evaluation and updates to educational materials to reflect the evolving dynamics of language education, contributing to the ongoing discourse on improving English language teaching and learning.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of Kashmar Institute of Higher Education. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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