

as well as the types of content and activities will help to shape the learner's view of language" (p 210). It is important to note that, in spite of the disagreement of the majority of the teachers with the adequacy of the activities, they agreed that the exercises were based on CLT and integrated different skills. In contrast, Alemi and Hesami (2013), Ghorbani (2011), and Golpour (2012) found that in the previously taught textbook, the number of activities encouraging communicative practices were inadequate. Moreover, the data collected by Alami and Hesami (2013) revealed that the language of the textbooks was not representative of the real life situations.

**Sheldon (1988) asserts that "textbooks are physical artifacts, and the author needs to recognize that layout, format, typography, and graphics are also essential for a successful coursebook" (p 8)**

### Conclusion

In the third millennium where international communication is essential and English is used as the dominant international language, developing appropriate and efficient textbooks for EFL students is of great importance. Efficient textbooks can be of help in the process of students' improvement in terms of language knowledge and skills. They will enable them to use the language appropriately. Overall, it can be concluded that the newly published textbook is much more efficient than the previous one, though some revisions and modifications

are required to improve it. Since the necessity of textbook cannot be neglected in the EFL classroom, it is important for teachers to continuously evaluate the textbook from different angles to meet the learning needs of the students. This way they can maximize its learning potential and enhance the status of English teaching in Iran. The findings of this study have implications for curriculum designers and textbook developers to modify the textbook to improve its efficiency.

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students. Furthermore, the developers of the newly developed textbook have emphasized that while developing the book, they considered the Islamic Iranian cultural values. The attitudes of the teachers approve this claim (83.6% for culture and 61.2% for religion).

The findings of this study revealed that about half of the participants agreed that the vocabulary and structure, dialogues, and exercises and activities are presented appropriately. Such a finding suggest that the book needs some revisions and modifications in these parts in order to be appropriate for the students and promote learning. Regarding the suitability of the exercises for the four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, McDonough and Shaw (2003) maintain that any materials should enable the students to see the effective use of the four skills in an appropriate context because in this way we can involve the learners in authentic tasks and increase

their motivation. However, evaluating the previously taught book, Mahdizade (2005), Ghorbani (2011), and Golpour (2012) found that the activities included in the book were not conducive to improving these skills. Fortunately, in the introduction of the newly developed English textbook, it has been claimed that the textbook developers have paid attention to all four language skills and none of them has been ignored. Although teachers taking part in this study implicitly accept that all these skills are included (58.2% for listening, 58.2% for speaking, 47.7% for reading, and 43.3% for writing skills), they do not approve of the adequacy of the activities. As the percentages reveal, it seems that the majority disapprove of the adequacy of the activities which have been designed for the two important skills of reading and writing. With regard to the importance of communicative exercises and activities, Nunan (1991) emphasizes that “the way materials are organized and presented,



for enhancing learning and that they are developed based on CLT. They also agree that the exercises can promote group work in the classroom.

Finally, concerning the supplementary materials provided for this book, 67.2% of the participants agree that the listening CD is related to the content of the book and it presents appropriate pronunciation. Moreover, they think that the Workbook contains exercises that are appropriately developed according to the Student's Book. They also believe that the teaching aids are available and the Teacher's Guide provides them with the information they require for teaching.

## Discussion

Sheldon (1988) asserts that "textbooks are physical artifacts, and the author needs to recognize that layout, format, typography, and graphics are also essential for a successful

coursebook" (p 8). According to the results of the present study, it can be inferred that junior high school EFL teachers have a rather positive attitude towards the general theme, illustrations and appearance as well as the supplementary materials of the newly developed book. However, the results of the study conducted by Mahdizade (2005) indicated that junior high school EFL teachers disapproved the way content, examples, and illustrations were presented in the previously taught textbooks at this level. Regarding the supplementary materials for the previously taught book, Alemi and Hesami (2013), Ghorbani (2011), and Golpour (2012) found that they were not accessible to the teachers and



## Results

The results of the study are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:**  
The Frequency and Percentage of the EFL Teachers' Attitude towards the 7th Grade English Book

variables	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Structure & vocabulary	6	9	32	47.7	25	37.3	4	6
General Theme	2	3	18	26.9	28	41.8	19	28.3
Pictures & Appearance	3	4.5	14	20.9	36	53.7	14	20.9
Dialogue	7	10.4	23	34.3	30	44.8	7	10.4
Exercises & Activities	2	3	28	41.8	33	49.3	4	6
Supplementary Materials	0	0	22	32.8	38	56.8	7	10.4

As can be seen from table 2, overall 43.3% of the participants agree that the new words and structures are introduced appropriately and in meaningful situations to facilitate understanding, the number of introduced words in each lesson is appropriate, and they reappear in the subsequent lessons for the sake of reinforcement. Moreover, they agree that new structures are introduced based on the students' needs in a logical order. The results also show that overall 70.1% of the participants are in agreement with the general theme of the book. In other words, they agree that the cultural and religious issues are adequately included in the book.

With regard to the theme of pictures and appearance, the result show that 74.6% of the teachers, taking part in the study, accept that illustrations used in the book are relevant, clear, and simple. The font used in the book is also found to be suitable for the students at this age. Moreover, they agree that the book has an eye-catching cover. The table shows

that 55.2% of the participants believe that the dialogues are attractive, up-to-date, appropriate for the students' language knowledge, and there is a wide variety of dialogues. In addition, the dialogues are arranged reasonably, that is, from simple to difficult and are consistent with the students' needs.

**Overall, it can be concluded that the newly published textbook is much more efficient than the previous one, though some revisions and modifications are required to improve it**

Regarding the attitude of the EFL teachers towards the exercises and activities included in the book, the results show that 55.3% of them approve of the appropriateness and attractiveness of the exercises. They also believe that exercises create a meaningful situation

## Method

### Participants

A total of 67 English teachers teaching in the 7th grade (31 male and 36 female) took part in this study. They were from Mazandaran, Markazi, Tehran, and North Khorasan Provinces with the mean age of 37.5 years. Their teaching experience ranged from 3 to 29 years. Among them, 11.9% had associate degree (AD), 67.2% hold a BA degree, and 20.9% were MA holders. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers were involved in teaching in urban areas and 11.9% in rural areas.

Table 1:  
Demographic Information of the Participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	31	46.3
	Female	36	53.7
Age	20-29	9	13.4
	30-39	32	47.8
	40- over	26	38.8
Teaching Experience	Up to 9	10	14.9
	10-19	28	41.8
	20-over	29	43.3
Work Place	City	59	88
	Village	8	11.9
Academic Degree	AD	8	11.9
	BA	45	67.2
	MA	14	20.9

### Instrument

To evaluate the 7th grade English textbook, a questionnaire was developed based on the checklists in Byrd (2001), Skierso (1991), and Ur (1996). It

contained two main sections, one for collecting demographic information of the participants and the second one was aimed to collect their attitudes towards the textbook. The second part included six domains, namely, structure and vocabulary, general theme, appearance and illustrations, dialogues, exercises and activities, and supplementary materials. The participants were required to answer 43 four-point Likert scale items which assessed the participants' attitudes towards the six domains. The questionnaire was given to four experts in the field to comment on its statements. It was modified, based on the experts' comments. To ensure the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The overall reliability of the questionnaire with 43 statements was 0.93 which is considered an acceptable indicator of reliability. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 18. To find the answer to the research question, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and mean were employed.

**textbooks are "designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction, support and specific language-based activities aimed at offering classroom practice for students" (Mares, 2003: p, 131) and foster effective language learning (Cunningsworth, 1995)**

## Introduction

In an ELT classroom, there is a strong reliance on textbooks because “materials [textbooks] are not simply the everyday tools of the language teacher, they are an embodiment of the aims, values, and methods of the particular teaching/ learning situations” (Hutchinson, 1987: p, 37). Ur (1996) asserts that textbooks are a supportive teaching instrument. In other words, textbooks are “designed to give cohesion to the language teaching and learning process by providing direction, support and specific language-based activities aimed at offering classroom practice for students” (Mares, 2003: p, 131) and foster effective language learning (Cunningsworth, 1995). For example, in a study, Richards, Tung, and Ng (1992) found that textbooks were one of the main sources of teaching materials. In another study carried out by McGrath (2006) it was revealed that English teachers of secondary schools considered the use of textbooks as important.

Studies have shown that textbooks are highly common in ELT contexts and ELT professionals use textbooks for daily teaching purposes and the fact is that very few of them would not use the published materials at some stage of their profession (Byrd, 2001; Litz, 2005; McDonough & Shaw, 1993). Since they are the most crucial component of an EFL classroom, the evaluation of the textbooks is of great importance. Textbooks are revised and republished and sometimes new books are written to meet the changing focuses of instruction as well as the changing language needs of the learners. A number of researchers have emphasized the importance of post-use evaluation of a textbook since it can provide data concerning the actual effect of the

textbook on the users (Tomlinson, 2003; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004). Actually, when a book is newly developed for an EFL context, its evaluation is even of more importance because its pedagogical value need to be determined before long-term use.

**Textbooks are revised and republished and sometimes new books are written to meet the changing focuses of instruction as well as the changing language needs of the learners. A number of researchers have emphasized the importance of post-use evaluation of a textbook since it can provide data concerning the actual effect of the textbook on the users**

Prospect 1 developed for the 7th grade students is a new textbook in Iran. Hence, there is a need to collect empirical data to evaluate the book from different angles. The present study was conducted to collect data eliciting the attitudes of the EFL teachers teaching in several parts of the country as to evaluate the extent to which the expectation of material developers are fulfilled. The following research question guided the study:

What are teachers' views on Prospect1 in terms of structure and vocabulary, general theme, appearance, illustrations, dialogues, exercises and activities, and supplementary materials?

# The Attitude of Iranian EFL Teachers towards the Junior High School Textbook: Prospect 1

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## چکیده

در کشورهایی که وزارت آموزش و پرورش کتاب‌های درسی را تهیه می‌کند و معلم در تدوین و انتخاب آن‌ها نقشی ندارد، ارزیابی کتاب درسی امری ضروری است. از آنجا که کتاب زبان سال هفتم به تازگی تألیف شده است، در این تحقیق تلاش شد این کتاب از دیدگاه دبیرانی که آن را طی سال تحصیلی گذشته تدریس کرده‌اند بررسی شود. به این منظور، پرسش‌نامه‌ای شامل شش محور (ساختار گرامری و لغت، موضوع کلی، تصاویر و ظاهر کتاب، تمرین‌ها، مکالمات، و ضمائم) طراحی شد و در اختیار دبیران مورد نظر قرار گرفت. یافته‌ها نشان داد که بیشتر دبیران زبان انگلیسی شرکت‌کننده در این مطالعه نسبت به موضوع کلی، تصاویر و ظاهر کتاب، و ضمائم آن نظر مثبت دارند، در حالی که فقط نیمی از آن‌ها دارای نگرش مثبت نسبت به ساختار گرامری و لغت، تمرین‌ها، و مکالمات موجود در کتاب‌اند. به این ترتیب، به نظر می‌رسد کتاب مذکور به‌رغم مزیت‌های ساختاری، برای کارایی بهتر به بازنگری و تغییر نیاز دارد.

**کلیدواژه‌ها:** ارزشیابی کتاب درسی، نگرش معلمان، کتاب درسی هفتم متوسطه ۱

## Abstract

Textbooks are an important part of a curriculum so textbook evaluation seems to be inevitable and necessary, especially in countries where the textbooks are developed by the Ministry of Education and not selected by the EFL teachers. Since a new English book has been developed for the 7th grade students in Iran, this study aimed at evaluating the newly developed textbook from the perspective of the teachers who had used it in their classroom instruction. To accomplish the study, a questionnaire was developed to evaluate the book based on six domains, namely, structure and vocabulary, general theme, appearance and illustrations, dialogues, exercises and activities, and supplementary materials. The findings revealed that most EFL teachers were satisfied with the general theme, appearance and illustrations, and supplementary materials, while nearly half of them were not satisfied with the dialogues, vocabulary and structure, and exercises and activities. It can be concluded that, in spite of some privileges, the book is in urgent need of revision and modification.

**Key Words:** textbook evaluation, EFL teachers' attitudes, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Iran