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Original Research

Evaluating Commercial EFL Textbooks in Iran: Cognitive and Cultural Alignment through the Lens of Bloom's Taxonomy

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Abstract

Textbooks play a pivotal role in shaping learners' experiences and outcomes in language education. This study evaluates the effectiveness of commercial English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used in Iranian language institutes, focusing on their alignment with the cognitive and linguistic needs of Iranian learners, as framed by Bloom's Taxonomy. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with 210 EFL teachers from various regions across Iran. The majority of the participants were highly qualified, with 72% holding postgraduate degrees and 68% possessing over five years of teaching experience, thereby enhancing the credibility of their evaluations. The findings indicate that while the textbooks provide structured content and are generally rated highly for usability and organization, concerns were raised regarding the cultural appropriateness of the material – particularly among teachers in rural areas. A significant positive correlation was identified between teaching experience and perceived textbook effectiveness. The study concludes that adaptations are needed to enhance both cognitive engagement and cultural alignment, which could lead to more effective EFL instruction in Iran. Recommendations are offered for educators and policymakers to inform textbook selection and adaptation.

Keywords: Textbook Evaluation; Bloom's Taxonomy; Cultural Relevance.

1. Introduction

The use of commercial English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks is a widespread practice in language education globally, and Iran is no exception. These textbooks, typically developed by publishing companies, are designed to provide language learners with a structured and systematic approach to acquiring English. They commonly include a range of activities and exercises aimed at developing key language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The content and structure of these textbooks are generally based on a predetermined curriculum or syllabus intended to guide learners through a progressive path of language learning (Mahruf & Sari, 2022).

In Iranian language institutes, commercial textbooks have long served as a foundational component of EFL instruction. These institutions rely heavily on such textbooks to deliver standardized instruction across various proficiency levels. The appeal of commercial textbooks lies in their accessibility, structured content, and the consistency they provide across different educational settings. Despite their widespread adoption, however, the effectiveness of these materials in addressing the specific needs of Iranian EFL learners has been the subject of ongoing debate (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2011).

A key concern is that commercial textbooks, while designed for a global audience, may not adequately reflect the cultural and educational context of Iranian learners. Cultural relevance is a crucial aspect of language learning, as it

significantly influences learners' engagement and comprehension (Dobakhti & Mahdaviavand, 2025). Textbooks that fail to resonate with students' cultural backgrounds may not only impede the learning process but also diminish motivation and interest (Nunan, 1989). Additionally, the cognitive demands embedded within these textbooks may not align with learners' existing knowledge bases or preferred learning strategies, creating further barriers to achieving desired outcomes.

Given these challenges, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the commercial EFL textbooks used in Iranian language institutes. This study seeks to address that need by examining the extent to which these textbooks meet the cognitive and linguistic needs of Iranian learners. Bloom's Taxonomy serves as the analytical framework for this evaluation, enabling a systematic analysis of the cognitive demands placed on learners by the textbooks and offering insights into their overall effectiveness and pedagogical alignment.

2. Literature Review

Textbooks are central to the language learning process, serving not only as instructional guides but also as tools that shape learners' cognitive and cultural engagement. In the context of Iranian EFL education, the evaluation and selection of textbooks are critical, as these materials must cater to learners' linguistic needs while aligning with their cultural and social realities. Several studies have been conducted in Iran to assess various aspects of textbook effectiveness, ranging from linguistic content and cognitive demands to cultural representation. A growing body of research has emphasized the need for textbooks to go beyond surface-level language instruction by integrating cognitive engagement and cultural relevance. For instance, Sanatipour et al. (2024) applied the brainling model (a synthesis of brain-based and linguistic principles) to evaluate the *American English File* and *Vision* series. Their findings revealed significant disparities in how well each textbook addressed learners' cognitive, emotional, sensory, and cultural dimensions, highlighting the importance of culturally and cognitively responsive materials in EFL education.

Cultural representation, in particular, has emerged as a recurrent concern. Banaruee et al. (2023) evaluated Iranian high school English textbooks through the lens of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' (ACTFL) 5 Cs framework. Their analysis showed that while *Vision 3* performed better than *Vision 1* and *Vision 2*, overall cultural competence was insufficient. This supports the argument that textbooks must enhance learners' awareness of both local and global cultural contexts, especially within the framework of World Englishes. The alignment between textbook content and cognitive engagement has also been critically examined. Pirzad and Abadikhah (2022) assessed *Vision 1* based on Willis' task-based learning model. Their study found that the textbook inadequately addressed the four core language skills and lacked sufficient task variety, which hindered learners' communicative development. These findings suggest a disconnect between the textbook's content and the cognitive strategies required for active language use.

From a practical standpoint, Samoudi and Mohammadi (2021) conducted a two-stage evaluation of *Summit 2B*, a widely used textbook in Iranian language institutes. Despite its relative effectiveness, their evaluation revealed shortcomings in layout, sequencing, and balance of language skills. This aligns with Ahmadi Safa and Karampour's (2021) findings on *Prospect 3*, where both teachers and students noted strengths in vocabulary and grammar, but identified weaknesses in layout and communicative aspects. Together, these studies highlight the need for comprehensive textbook design that addresses both form and function. Cultural appropriacy has been further problematized by Vahdat et al. (2020), who evaluated international textbooks used in Iran and found that many promoted Western-centric values and notions of gender equality that clashed with local norms. Similarly, Janfeshan (2021), in a study of *Vision 1*, noted the inclusion of authentic materials, but called for better integration of culturally familiar contexts.

Teacher perspectives on textbook use and adaptation are also crucial. Nasr et al. (2019) found that EFL teachers in language institutes, particularly those using international textbooks like *Top Notch* and *American English File*, demonstrated higher engagement with scaffolding and monitoring practices compared to their high school counterparts. This suggests that the textbook itself can influence pedagogical practices and that more cognitively and contextually aligned materials may encourage more effective teaching strategies. At the tertiary level, Zare-ee and Hejazi (2018) compared local and international textbooks from the perspectives of Iranian university teachers and learners. Their results showed a clear preference for international textbooks in terms of content quality and activity design, but noted that local

materials were more familiar and accessible. This tension between global standardization and local relevance underscores the need for hybrid or adapted materials.

From a task-based perspective, Jafari and Taki (2018) emphasized the importance of learner-centered tasks in engaging students and aligning textbook objectives with communicative competence. Similarly, Ahmadi Safa et al. (2015) found that while the *Top Notch* series demonstrated potential for fostering intercultural competence, discrepancies existed between teachers' and learners' evaluations of specific cultural elements. Further research by Ansari et al. (2016) on vocabulary learning strategies found minimal gender differences in strategy use, but identified varied preferences for metacognitive versus psycholinguistic approaches. Although not directly tied to textbooks, such studies illuminate learner profiles that should inform textbook design. Evaluations of *Prospect I* and other pre-university textbooks, such as those by Abbasian and Hosseinifar (2015) and Maleki et al. (2014), also noted weaknesses in language development and communicative activities, suggesting that these textbooks require substantial revision. Visual content, as analyzed by Roohani and Saeidfar (2013), was another area of concern, with teachers supporting culturally appropriate visuals, while students were less convinced of their relevance or impact. In comparative contexts, Davoudi Mobarakeh and Khani Arani (2012) found that Turkish textbooks (*New Bridge to Success*) outperformed Iranian materials in terms of quality and global alignment, further reinforcing the need for reform in Iranian textbook development. Finally, Razmjoo (2010) proposed a comprehensive evaluation scheme consisting of six main criteria and 41 items, tailored for stakeholders in the expanding circle, offering a more context-sensitive alternative to existing global frameworks.

Taken together, these studies provide a robust foundation for evaluating EFL textbooks in Iran. However, few have systematically applied Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework to assess the cognitive demands placed on learners. This study seeks to address that gap by evaluating commercial textbooks not only in terms of usability and cultural appropriateness, but also with a focus on how well they engage learners across the cognitive levels of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. The guiding research question for this study is:

To what extent do commercial textbooks used in Iranian language institutes meet the cognitive and language learning needs of learners, as evaluated through Bloom's Taxonomy?

This question frames the evaluation in terms of both linguistic and cognitive dimensions, with particular attention to how well the textbooks promote higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and creation, in addition to foundational skills like remembering and understanding.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of commercial EFL textbooks used in Iranian language institutes. The mixed-methods framework was selected to provide both breadth and depth in data collection and analysis, drawing on the strengths of each methodological tradition (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Dobakhti, 2020). The quantitative phase involved administering a structured survey to a large sample of EFL teachers to gather broad insights into their perceptions of textbook usability, content quality, cultural relevance, and cognitive demand. The qualitative phase included semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected group of teachers to gain deeper insights into their lived experiences and nuanced perspectives on the textbooks in use.

3.2. Participants

The study sample consisted of 210 Iranian EFL teachers drawn from a range of language institutes across different regions of the country. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure diversity in terms of gender, educational background, years of teaching experience, and geographic location. This approach was intended to capture a wide range of perspectives and ensure that the findings reflect the complexities of textbook use in various institutional and sociocultural contexts. Notably, 72% of participants held postgraduate degrees, and 68% had more than five years of teaching experience, enhancing the reliability of the data gathered.

3.3. Instruments

Two primary instruments were employed in this study: a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview protocol.

Questionnaire: The questionnaire was designed to assess teachers' perceptions of textbook usability, content quality, cultural appropriateness, and alignment with Bloom's Taxonomy. It included both Likert-scale and open-ended items. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.85, which indicates a high level of internal reliability.

Semi-Structured Interviews: To complement the survey data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively selected subset of 15 teachers. These interviews explored participants' views on how the textbooks supported (or failed to support) learners' cognitive development and engagement. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on availability, and each lasted between 30 and 40 minutes.

3.4. Analytical Framework: Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) was used as the central analytical framework for evaluating the cognitive demands embedded within the textbooks. This taxonomy categorizes cognitive processes into six hierarchical levels: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Widely adopted in educational research, Bloom's Taxonomy provides a structured means of assessing whether instructional materials promote not only the retention of knowledge but also deeper levels of cognitive engagement and critical thinking (Orey, 2010).

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean scores, standard deviations) to assess overall trends. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between demographic variables (e.g., years of teaching experience) and teachers' evaluations of textbook effectiveness. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to identify any regional differences in teachers' perceptions, particularly regarding cultural appropriateness.

Qualitative data from the interviews and open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involved identifying recurring patterns and themes across participants' responses, particularly those relating to cognitive engagement, textbook usability, cultural alignment, and pedagogical concerns. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for a more holistic interpretation of the data and strengthened the validity of the conclusions drawn.

4. Results

This section presents the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study, focusing on the usability, content quality, cultural relevance, and cognitive demands of commercial EFL textbooks used in Iranian language institutes. The integration of these data sources provides a detailed understanding of teachers' evaluations.

4.1. Quantitative Findings

4.1.1. Textbook Usability

Teachers rated the usability of the textbooks based on four dimensions: ease of use, organization of content, clarity of instructions, and appropriateness of exercises. As shown in Table 1, the overall ratings were positive, with ease of use receiving a mean score of 4.1 (SD = 0.8) and organization of content rated even higher at 4.2 (SD = 0.7). Clarity of instructions was also rated favorably (mean = 4.0, SD = 0.9). However, the appropriateness of exercises received a relatively lower mean score of 3.8 (SD = 1.0), indicating room for improvement in this area.

Table 1. *Teachers' Ratings of Textbook Usability*

Usability Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ease of Use	4.1	0.8
Organization of Content	4.2	0.7
Clarity of Instructions	4.0	0.9
Appropriateness of Exercises	3.8	1.0

4.1.2. Content Quality

Participants evaluated textbook content in terms of relevance to learners' needs, authenticity of language, cultural appropriateness, and coverage of language skills. As presented in Table 2, the textbooks were rated highly for relevance (mean = 4.3, SD = 0.6) and authenticity (mean = 4.1, SD = 0.7). However, cultural appropriateness received a lower mean score of 3.6 (SD = 1.2), suggesting that the content may not fully align with the cultural experiences of Iranian learners. Coverage of language skills was rated moderately well (mean = 4.0, SD = 0.9).

Table 2. *Teachers' Ratings of Textbook Content Quality*

Content Quality Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
Relevance to Learners' Needs	4.3	0.6
Authenticity of Language	4.1	0.7
Cultural Appropriateness	3.6	1.2
Coverage of Language Skills	4.0	0.9

4.1.3. Correlation and Regional Differences

A Pearson correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between years of teaching experience and overall textbook effectiveness ($r = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that more experienced teachers tended to rate the textbooks more favorably, possibly due to their adaptability and familiarity with instructional materials.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine regional differences in teachers' perceptions of cultural appropriateness. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference, $F(3, 206) = 4.62$, $p < 0.05$. Post hoc analysis indicated that teachers from rural regions rated the textbooks as significantly less culturally appropriate compared to their urban counterparts. This finding underscores the challenges of applying a single curriculum across diverse cultural contexts.

4.2. Qualitative Findings

To complement the survey results, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 15 teachers, selected based on the diversity of their survey responses and teaching backgrounds. Thematic analysis yielded four recurring themes:

Theme 1: Textbook Usability

Teachers generally praised the textbooks' layout and logical sequencing, indicating that the materials are well organized and easy to follow. One participant noted, "*The structure is good, and the supplementary resources really enhance my teaching*" However, several expressed concerns about limited flexibility for differentiation. One participant remarked, "*The structure is great, but I often have to modify activities to suit my students' abilities.*" This indicates that while the materials are accessible, they do not always support differentiated instruction.

Theme 2: Content Quality and Cultural Relevance

While teachers appreciated the textbooks' linguistic authenticity, many highlighted a disconnect between the content and the cultural realities of Iranian learners, particularly those in rural areas. As one teacher noted, "*The students don't connect with many of the situations or characters in the textbooks because they represent a lifestyle that is far removed from what they know.*" This suggests the need for localized content that resonates more effectively with learners' backgrounds.

Theme 3: Cognitive Demand and Bloom's Taxonomy

The data from the interviews revealed that the textbooks primarily focused on lower-order cognitive skills such as remembering and understanding, with minimal attention to higher-order skills like analysis, evaluation, and creativity. One participant stated, *"There's a lot of repetition and recall, but not enough tasks that push students to analyze or create."* Several teachers called for the inclusion of tasks that promote critical thinking and real-world problem-solving, aligning more closely with the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Theme 4: Suggestions for Improvement

Participants proposed several strategies for enhancing the textbooks, including integrating more culturally relevant materials and designing activities that foster creativity and problem-solving. One teacher suggested, *"We need more tasks that challenge students to think critically, especially those that relate to real-life situations."*

Some respondents believed that, in order to develop more inclusive instructional materials and textbooks, publishers should consider designing region-specific editions that reflect the diverse cultural and educational needs of learners across Iran. Such localized content would not only enhance relevance but also promote greater inclusivity and engagement. Furthermore, more attention should be given to integrating tasks that support the development of higher-order thinking skills, in alignment with the full cognitive spectrum outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy. These changes would help ensure that textbooks do not simply serve as repositories of information but function as dynamic tools for effective language learning.

4.3. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings revealed several areas of convergence and divergence: Both data sets indicated high usability and a general strength in teaching foundational language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). However, both data also highlighted a lack of emphasis on higher-order cognitive skills and cultural alignment. While survey responses suggested moderate satisfaction with cultural appropriateness (mean = 3.6), interviews revealed more critical views, particularly among rural teachers. These participants emphasized the disconnect between textbook content and their students' lived experiences. This divergence points to the limitations of quantitative metrics in capturing context-sensitive issues like cultural resonance. It also reinforces the value of triangulated data in providing a more nuanced understanding of textbook effectiveness.

The findings of this study also point to several directions for future research. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess the long-term effects of textbooks that promote higher-order thinking on students' language development and academic success. Comparative research could investigate how different types of textbooks perform in varied cultural and institutional settings across Iran. Moreover, future studies could explore the impact of teacher-created supplementary materials on enhancing students' cognitive and linguistic outcomes, especially in under-resourced or culturally distinct regions.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study offer a wider perspective on the strengths and limitations of commercial EFL textbooks currently used in Iranian language institutes. Overall, these materials were perceived as effective in supporting foundational language instruction, particularly in the development of the four core skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These results align with previous studies (e.g., Salehi & Vahdatnia, 2020), which have similarly emphasized the role of commercial textbooks in promoting basic language competence. Teachers in the current study consistently rated the textbooks highly for usability, citing clear instructions, logical organization, and consistent sequencing of content as key strengths. These features appear to support instructional efficiency and classroom manageability across diverse teaching contexts (Dobakhti & Khalili, 2024).

Despite these merits, the findings also reveal several critical shortcomings that warrant closer attention. One of the most prominent limitations concerns the narrow cognitive scope of the textbooks. Although they effectively engage students in remembering and understanding language content, they fall short in promoting the kinds of higher-order thinking that are essential for advanced language competence. The content and tasks provided in the textbooks rarely challenge students to analyze, evaluate, or create – cognitive operations situated at the higher levels of Bloom's

Taxonomy. This limitation reflects a broader pedagogical concern: when instructional materials focus disproportionately on lower-order thinking, students may be inadequately prepared to apply their linguistic knowledge in more complex academic, professional, or real-world settings. Prior research (e.g., Dobakhti, 2021; Tabatabaei & Kazerooni, 2017) has similarly pointed to this imbalance, underscoring the need for materials that foster deeper cognitive engagement.

Equally important is the issue of cultural relevance, which emerged as a significant area of concern in both the quantitative and qualitative data. While some teachers, particularly those in urban centers, reported moderate satisfaction with the cultural content of the textbooks, others – especially educators from rural areas – highlighted a pronounced cultural disconnect. The findings suggest that many of the textbooks include examples, themes, and references that are poorly aligned with the everyday experiences of Iranian learners. This cultural dissonance may hinder student engagement, reduce motivation, and ultimately compromise the effectiveness of instruction. As Nunan (1989) and Razmjoo and Kazempourfard (2012) have argued, cultural relevance is integral to successful language learning, as it fosters learner identification with the content and enhances the interpretability of language input. In contexts such as Iran, where there is considerable regional and cultural diversity, a one-size-fits-all approach to textbook design appears insufficient.

The regional disparities in teachers' perceptions of textbook effectiveness – particularly with regard to cultural appropriateness – underscore the importance of localizing instructional materials. Teachers from rural areas described the textbooks as misaligned with the cultural and social realities of their students. Many indicated that they frequently needed to skip or adapt portions of the content to make lessons more relatable and meaningful. Such adaptations, while commendable, place an additional burden on teachers and raise questions about the equity and accessibility of language education across different regions of the country. These findings suggest that textbook developers and policymakers should consider producing regionally adapted versions or modular content that reflects the sociocultural diversity of Iranian learners.

In addition to localized content, the study also highlights the need for textbooks that better support the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers consistently expressed a desire for more cognitively demanding tasks – those that encourage students to synthesize information, form judgments, and produce original content in English. The current textbooks, in focusing predominantly on drills, repetition, and comprehension-based exercises, provide limited opportunities for students to use the language creatively or reflectively. This narrow cognitive focus may contribute to stagnation in learner development and limit their readiness for real-world communication in English. Bloom's Taxonomy offers a valuable framework for addressing this issue, as it provides clear benchmarks for assessing and designing tasks that span from foundational knowledge to complex reasoning.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings point to several implications for teaching practice. Teachers may need to take a more active role in supplementing textbook content to ensure that students are not only developing linguistic accuracy but also engaging in meaningful cognitive processes. This may involve integrating open-ended discussions, debates, problem-solving tasks, and creative writing activities into lessons – even when such activities are not explicitly supported by the textbook. However, for teachers to do this effectively, they must be equipped with the necessary training and resources. Professional development programs should be designed to help teachers implement cognitively enriching strategies and to localize materials in a way that remains pedagogically sound (Dobakhti & Khalili, 2025).

At the level of textbook development and educational policy, the study highlights the importance of designing instructional materials that are both cognitively challenging and culturally inclusive. Textbook developers should incorporate a wider range of tasks that reflect the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, thus promoting deeper learning and more dynamic language use. At the same time, cultural representation should be treated not as an afterthought, but as a core component of textbook design. Materials should be crafted in a way that reflects the diverse experiences and values of Iranian learners, particularly those from underrepresented or rural regions.

While the study provides valuable insights into the current state of commercial EFL textbooks in Iran, it is not without limitations. The use of purposive sampling, while effective in selecting knowledgeable participants, may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of EFL teachers and learners. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, particularly in cases where participants hold strong opinions about textbook effectiveness. Future research should aim to include a more diverse sample, encompassing a broader range of educational

contexts such as public schools and universities. Longitudinal studies could also help assess the long-term impact of cognitively and culturally responsive textbooks on language development.

In summary, while commercial EFL textbooks used in Iranian language institutes offer a strong foundation for basic language instruction, they fall short in supporting higher-order thinking and in addressing the cultural diversity of learners. Addressing these gaps requires a collaborative effort among teachers, textbook developers, and policymakers to ensure that instructional materials are both cognitively enriching and culturally inclusive. Such efforts will ultimately contribute to a more equitable, effective, and contextually responsive model of English language education in Iran.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to evaluate the effectiveness of commercial EFL textbooks used in Iranian language institutes, with a specific focus on their alignment with learners' cognitive and linguistic needs as outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of how these textbooks function in practice, revealing both strengths and limitations in their design and implementation.

The textbooks were generally found to be effective in meeting the basic language learning needs of Iranian students. Teachers reported that the materials were user-friendly, well-organized, and helpful in supporting the development of fundamental language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These features contributed to a structured learning environment that facilitated clarity and consistency in classroom instruction. Such strengths are particularly important in institutional settings where standardized curricula and instructional efficiency are valued.

However, the study also uncovered several important limitations. Chief among them was the restricted cognitive scope of the textbooks. The findings indicated that while the materials effectively supported lower-order thinking skills – such as remembering and understanding – they lacked tasks and activities that promoted higher-order cognitive engagement. Students were rarely challenged to analyze, evaluate, or create using the target language. This narrow cognitive focus may limit students' ability to apply their language skills in complex communicative contexts and hinders their development as independent, critical language users. In this regard, the textbooks fell short of fostering the full range of competencies advocated by Bloom's Taxonomy, particularly those necessary for advanced academic or professional performance.

Cultural relevance also emerged as a significant concern. Although the textbooks were generally viewed as acceptable in urban contexts, many teachers in rural areas expressed dissatisfaction with the cultural content. They noted that the examples, characters, and scenarios featured in the textbooks often reflected lifestyles and values that were distant from their students' lived experiences. This cultural disconnect was seen to affect learner engagement and motivation, raising concerns about the equity and inclusivity of the materials across different sociocultural contexts in Iran. These findings underscore the need for instructional materials that are not only pedagogically sound but also contextually and culturally responsive.

The implications of these findings are multifaceted and extend to classroom practice, teacher training, textbook development, and educational policy. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and supplement textbook content to bridge the cognitive and cultural gaps identified in this study. This could involve the incorporation of open-ended discussions, critical thinking tasks, problem-solving activities, and creative language use in classroom instruction. However, such adaptations require that teachers be adequately trained and supported. Professional development programs should focus on equipping teachers with strategies for enhancing cognitive engagement and for tailoring textbook materials to better reflect the cultural realities of their students.

From a policy perspective, the selection and approval of textbooks for use in Iranian language institutes should be guided by criteria that extend beyond linguistic accuracy and curriculum alignment. Policymakers should prioritize materials that foster both cognitive development and cultural relevance. Evaluation frameworks should be revised to include indicators for higher-order thinking and sociocultural appropriateness, thereby encouraging the adoption of more holistic and context-sensitive instructional materials.

In conclusion, while commercial EFL textbooks used in Iranian language institutes provide a solid foundation for basic language instruction, they require thoughtful revision to better support cognitive complexity and cultural inclusivity. By addressing these gaps through adaptive teaching, informed textbook development, and responsive policy, English language education in Iran can evolve to meet the diverse and dynamic needs of its learners more effectively.

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