

Saudi EFL Teachers' Perceptions of the Intermediate Stage Textbooks

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at exploring the perceptions of Saudi English language teachers teaching "Lift off for Saudi Arabia" Series prescribed by the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia in 2009. The sample of the study consisted of sixty Saudi English language teachers. A four point Likert- type questionnaire of (42) statements, classified into seven dimensions was used. In addition, an open-ended question was addressed for the participants to elicit their suggestions for the improvement and development of the series. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The results revealed that the participants perceived the series to be highly suitable. The following are some of the suggestions for the improvement and development of the series: reducing the number of units to be compatible with the number of periods allocated for teaching English language, utilizing appropriate Islamic terminology in reading comprehension passages, providing classrooms with adequate multimedia equipments so that teachers can use the audio and visual aids effectively. The study concludes with some recommendations based on the results.

Keywords: perceptions, EFL, Saudi, teachers, intermediate stage, textbooks.

1. Introduction

English language teaching/learning has always been a subject of concern to decision makers in Saudi Arabia. Many reassessment processes have been undertaken by the Ministry of Education (MoE) to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning and to increase the learners' proficiency in English. Along with King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Public Educational Development Project launched in 2006, an English Language Development Project (ELDP), dedicated wholly to improve English language teaching and learning, has come into existence in 2008. As a result of consultations with some British companies specializing in English language teaching and learning, the ELDP has adopted a number of English textbook series for Saudi Arabia published by Macmillan Group and implemented them in a number of selected schools (<http://eldp.gov.sa>). Amongst these series was *Lift off for Saudi Arabia*, published by Macmillan in 2009, to be used for the

intermediate stage. This series has been in operation for three years. Therefore, it is sensible at this point to evaluate it in terms of its positive and negative aspects to capitalize of its strong points and fix the weak ones. The researchers believed that the evaluation of this series at this point will be of great assistance for decision makers at the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia to provide them with feedback about the mentioned series in terms of the merits and demerits revealed by teachers.

According to Sheldon (1988), textbook evaluation is necessary for two main reasons. First, it is helpful for the teacher or program developer in making decisions about the selection of the appropriate textbook. Second, evaluating the merits and demerits of a textbook will familiarize the teacher with its probable weaknesses and strengths. On the other hand, Nunan (1991) maintains that evaluation procedures can help ensure that materials are consistent with the needs and interests of both the intended learners and educational institute. Richards (2001) believes that evaluation is an important part in teaching and learning since it provides teachers with much information which helps them in classroom practice and planning tasks for students.

Hence, the evaluation is an integral part of the educational process because of its importance for

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different sectors in educational institutions. To the researchers best knowledge, no studies have been conducted to evaluate the newly introduced series (i.e. *Lift off for Saudi Arabia*) prescribed by the (MoE) in Saudi Arabia as an instructional materials for first, second, and third intermediate grades. This study aims to explore the perceptions of English language teachers of *Lift off for Saudi Arabia* after three years of implementation.

The Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at exploring Saudi English language teachers' perceptions of the newly introduced textbook series (i.e. *Lift off for Saudi Arabia* in terms of appearance, accompanying materials, fulfilling national goals, scientific content, cultural content, teaching methods, and evaluation techniques, in addition to their suggestions for improving and developing the textbooks.

More specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

What are the perceptions of the Saudi English language teachers of *Lift off for Saudi Arabia* series with respect to appearance, accompanying materials, fulfilling national goals, scientific content, cultural content, teaching methods, and evaluation techniques?

What are their suggestions for improving and developing the textbooks?

Significance of the Study

Since the introduction of the new series of textbooks for the first, second and third intermediate grades, and after three years of implementation, no evaluation has been conducted. It is believed that the present study will shed some light on various aspects of the textbooks which will be valuable to decision makers at the MoE in Saudi Arabia and to the authors of the series. This study aims to provide objective feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of this series by the English language teachers who implemented the series

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The judgment of whether a course book possesses certain features cannot be dependent on impressionistic views solely. It should be based on a systematic calculated process (i.e. evaluation). Tomlinson (1998)

defined materials evaluation as "the systematic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives and to the objectives of the learners using them" (xiv). Nevo (1976) referred to evaluation as:

"the process of delineating, obtaining and providing information on the merit of goals, designs, implementation and outcomes of educational activities that should help to improve educational activities, and should help to improve an educational product during the process of its development, and/or demonstrate the merit of the final product when its development is completed".

No textbook shall escape evaluation as it is hardly possible to adopt a textbook of total perfection. Charalambous (2011) stated that:

"All books have certain limitations and deficiencies and they all acquire evaluation, selection, adaptation and supplementation. There is no course book that can work in all situations or can be applied to all teachers and students". Alamri (2008) asserted that material evaluation is an educational necessity because it shows how a textbook can be improved or justified. Teaching materials have a direct influence on the process of learning and teaching. Henriques (2009) also agreed that textbooks are of great importance in the process of learning and teaching. In addition, he stated that textbooks are the main teaching tools for teachers by which they deliver their teaching and by which the students can follow their teachers' instructions. Waddel (2009) highlighted the role of the textbooks in language teaching and the importance of evaluating them. She maintains that the teacher should use a checklist to evaluate the textbook s/he uses for the learners taking into consideration the goals of the program.

Having said that, Valerio (2003) made the point that evaluation is not an easy job to do, because teachers need to be trained, be familiar with the teaching terminology and should learn the standards of a good textbook. Patton (2002) pointed out the main purposes of evaluations: summative and formative evaluation. He stated that summative evaluation aimed at providing general judgment about the effectiveness of the thing being examined, while formative evaluation sought to improve the thing being studied and it heavily relied on qualitative data.

On the other hand, Eliss (1997) distinguished two types of materials evaluation: predictive evaluation and retrospective evaluation. Predictive evaluation was designed to make a decision about materials that have not been previously used, and retrospective evaluation was designed to examine materials that are currently in use. Eliss emphasized the importance of retrospective evaluation for the reason that it provides the teacher with information to be used in order to determine whether it is worthwhile using the materials again, which activities 'work' and which do not and how to modify the materials to make them more effective for future use. Retrospective evaluations also served as a means of 'testing' the validity of a predictive evaluation, and show ways in which the predictive instruments can be improved for future use.

Brown (2011) noted that it is worth thinking about how you recognize a good textbook when you see it, and on what grounds you might reject it or criticize it: in other words, what the main criteria for textbook assessment are. According to him, such criteria may be general, applicable to any language teaching course book, or specific, relating to the appropriateness of the book for a certain course or learner population. He suggested general criteria that have been selected from O'Neill (1982) which consisted of the following aspects: objectives, approaches, layout, visual materials, topics and tasks, content and other related components. The specific aspects are grouped under the following headings: coverage, texts, tasks (activities, exercises), and administration.

A course book's format - in which we could include factors such as physical layout, design, structure and length will be a key concern for both motivation and classroom effectiveness (Mukandan et al., 2011). On the other hand, Weddel (2009) warned that cultural conventions should be respected and the material should be socio-culturally appropriate. Garinger (2002) maintained that the use of an evaluation procedure or a checklist can lead to a more systematic and thorough examination of potential textbooks and to enhance outcomes for learners, instructors, and administrators. He suggested a checklist that may be used or adapted as a tool to help educators who are deciding which texts may be most appropriate for their classes. The items of the

checklist comprise questions about the following: objectives, content, cultural background, age, learners' preferences, skills, exercises and activities, and practical concerns.

People who write course books undertake a tremendous balancing act (Litz, 2005). They must somehow bring together the various linguistic elements of the syllabus, matched with appropriate themes and topics, plus spoken and written texts to illustrate and contextualize the target language and the necessary exercises and activities all within a structure that makes sense and presented in an attractive way. It is evident that textbook evaluation is an essential process

Empirical Studies on Textbook Evaluation

Evaluation of textbooks is generally considered a vital educational necessity by all educators. A number of studies have been conducted locally, and internationally to evaluate English textbooks. The following is a summary of some of these studies.

Locally, Al-Hajailan (1999) sought to investigate the quality of the third-grade secondary textbook, "*English for Saudi Arabia*". The study employed both quantitative data gathering methods and statistical test analyses, supported by qualitative data and content analysis. Thus, both questionnaires and interviews were utilized by the researcher. The results of the study revealed support for the textbook's appearance, accompanying materials, academic content, cultural content, and evaluation techniques while disagreements aroused concerning the national goals and the teaching methods. Various suggestions were implied to enhance the textbook under study.

In addition, AlShumaimeri (1999) investigated Saudi first-year secondary school students' perceptions of their English textbooks. Based on need analysis, the researcher attempted to identify the students' needs and then explore how far the textbook fulfills these needs. The findings showed that a large number of students use English outside the classroom. The findings also revealed that among six reasons for studying English (which were presented in the questionnaires), only three were highly rated. These reasons are; 'to pass the final exam', 'English may be useful in the future', and 'to enter a scientific college at the tertiary level'. Furthermore, as

speaking is considered to be the most significant skill needed to achieve students' main aims in studying English, the textbooks in question were found to be not very helpful in developing speaking skills. This finding indicated the existence of a gap between the objectives of the textbook and the actual emphasis of teaching. Therefore, a mismatch exists between the examination system and the focus of the textbooks.

Al-Haidari (2003) conducted a study to verify the compatibility of the freshman English textbooks used in the English language departments or centers in Saudi universities with Saudi Islamic culture. He used a closed and an open-end questionnaire to conduct his evaluation. The conclusions revealed good awareness of the selection of textbooks consistent with Saudi culture. However, a series of textbooks entitled Interactions I and II were found culturally biased and inconsistent with Saudi Islamic culture.

Al-Yousef (2007) evaluated the Third Grade Intermediate English Course book CB (CB refers to Pupil's Book, the Workbook, the Supplementary Material, and Teacher's Manual) in Saudi Arabia, *Say It in English*, which was implemented in 2005 by the Ministry of Education, Riyadh. The results of the study showed that the teachers and the students perceived the CB as moderately adequate. As revealed by quantitative and qualitative data, the content and the visuals of the textbook were among the categories that gained the most support, while Gradation and Recycling and Supplementary Material were the most poorly rated categories.

Alamri (2008) evaluated the English language textbook for the sixth grade Saudi boys in Riyadh from the teachers' perspectives. The findings showed that the textbook is satisfactorily suitable except for the teaching methods along with some other sub-items. The category that had the highest mean was the one on learning components, while the category that had the lowest mean was the one on teaching methods.

Alsaiif and Milton (2012) evaluated English language textbooks in the EFL program in Saudi public schools. The study aimed to investigate whether the vocabulary input in the textbooks in combination with the teaching methodology employed by the teachers and learner motivation can explain the little vocabulary uptake by

Saudi EFL learners. The results showed that the textbooks used in the EFL program in Saudi Arabian public schools provide around 2800 words from the most frequent 5000 words and an additional 1000 less frequent words over a period of seven years. The findings also revealed that the textbooks lack thematic variation which makes them dull and demotivating. Moreover, a section of the word list that is highly suggested by the Ministry of Education was not utilized at all. In light of these findings, limited input proved to be one reason behind the small quantity of vocabulary uptake. Recently, Alsughaier (2013) conducted a study aimed at evaluating "Flying High for Saudi Arabia" series prescribed for secondary school students in Saudi Arabia. The results indicated that teachers perceived the series as moderately suitable.

Internationally, Güntek (2005) carried a comprehensive study through which he evaluated the *ENG 101* courses, *Development of Reading and Writing Skills I* offered by Middle East Technical University to the Department of Modern Languages students. The results of the study revealed general satisfaction with the course. All the participants had generally positive perceptions about the effectiveness of the ENG101 with regard to the achievement of the objectives, effectiveness of the methods, materials and evaluation procedures as well as the course book. On the other hand, some complaints emerged due to teachers' workload and time constraints including too many writing tasks and inadequate language input.

Aytug (2007) investigated English teachers' attitudes towards the evaluation of the textbook *New Bridge to Success for 9th Grade New Beginners*. The results revealed that teachers' evaluations reflect agreement and disagreement concerning the features of the textbook. The features that were received as highly agreeable include: the durability of the textbook cover; the suitability of content to the academic year; the provision of culturally diverse materials; the usefulness of workbook for additional practice. Other features gained less support and were seen as ineffectively presented in the textbook. Most of the teachers considered the textbook unsuccessful in terms of initiating communication. The topics and exercises were judged as uninteresting for students. The vocabulary items were

perceived as uncontrolled and therefore cannot ensure the systematic gradation from simple to complex. The teacher's guide was seen as insufficient and does not offer practical ideas for teachers to use in class.

Karatas (2009) evaluated English II curriculum at Yildiz Technical University using context, input, process and product (CIPP) model. The findings of the study revealed significant differences between the means of teachers' and students' views concerning certain items related to the context, input, process and product components of the curriculum. This result indicates that while the students' perceptions were high regarding the components of the curriculum, the teachers' expectations were higher.

Riasati and Zare (2010) evaluated the effectiveness of New Interchange series from the teachers' perspectives. The study was an attempt to evaluate the suitability of New Interchange series from the Iranian EFL teachers' perception. The outcomes of the study indicated that the practical consideration (which include the reasonable price, its accessibility, the existence of teacher's guide, and the audio tape) of the series was satisfactory. The series was also good in terms of the layout and design, balance of activities as well as adequate communicative practices. However, the findings revealed the following shortcomings: lack of supplementary teaching materials; some parts of the series exceed the linguistic capacity of the learners; too many testing exercises; writing skill does not receive enough attention, and hence, learners do not receive much practice in this skill.

There is no doubt that the above review of related literature offered the researchers with valuable insights about the topic under investigation, enriched their knowledge and vision about the importance of textbooks evaluation and assisted in adapting the items of the questionnaire of the study.

Design and Methodology

Subjects of the Study

The sample is parsing the population of the study. It consisted of all EFL teachers who taught "*lift off for Saudi Arabia*" textbooks at public schools in the academic years 2010-2013. Sixty Saudi male and female English language teachers who taught the series at various cities across KSA were included.

Instrument of the Study

The researcher adopted and adapted a questionnaire devised by Al-Hajalan (1999) which originally consisted of eight dimensions. The first seven dimensions were close-ended statements, whereas the eighth dimension was an open-ended question about some suggestions to improve and develop the series. The questionnaire consisted of 42 Likert-type statements about the characteristics of a good English language textbook (**Appendix 1**). The statements were grouped into seven dimensions which were generally recommended as criteria for textbook evaluation. They are as follow:

(1) book appearance (7 items), (2) accompanying materials (6 items), (3) fulfilling national goals (7 items), (4) scientific content (7 items), (5) the cultural content (5 items), (6) the teaching methods (6 items), (7) evaluation techniques (4 items), and (8) an open-ended question to elicit teachers' suggestions to improve and develop the series.

Validity & Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the questionnaire was established by a jury of three university professors in the department of teaching English as a foreign language at Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, College of Language and Translation. Their comments and suggestions were taken into account and the items of the questionnaire were modified accordingly.

The reliability of the instrument was established through computing Chronbach Alpha which was 0.93. This value was considered sufficient for the purpose of the study.

Material to be evaluated

The series titled *Lift off for Saudi Arabia* is a six level new English course specially written for students in Saudi Intermediate schools. It is designed to continue with a solid grounding in English on which students can build in future years. *Lift off for Saudi Arabia* focuses on providing essential language items through Saudi and UK-based scenarios. It focuses on the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Particular emphasis is placed on literacy skills. Students are encouraged to communicate with each other in English to build confidence. The combined Student's Book and

Workbook is accompanied by a set of flash cards and posters for the first level, and an audio CD for all levels. The teachers are provided by Teacher's Book, which contains pages of the Student's Book and Workbook for easy reference.

The basic foundation of the course as stated by the publishing house is the development of communicative skills by employing communicative approach which reflects the Communicative Language Teaching approach and is considered appropriate for intermediate EFL learners. The approach has been called the Triple an Approach referring to the following:

- **Access** to new language in context while doing communicative activities.
- **Analysis** and practice of new language.
- **Activation** of the learners' expanding language resources in communicative activities.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers distributed the questionnaire hand to hand to the teachers inhabiting in Riyadh through the educational directorate of Riyadh. Due to the fact that only few schools in Riyadh have implemented the series, the researchers utilized an on-line questionnaire so that a wider variety of cities in Saudi Arabia would take part in the study. An invitation letter for the teachers to participate in the survey was posted on line on several Arabic educational forums and social networks to recruit interested teachers to the E-Survey Creator website at the following [link](https://docs.Google.com/forms/d/1cd5_s_zjVNKKof45SPuwO6JJWZy87WE92PIAYH8TGSQ/view) https://docs.Google.com/forms/d/1cd5_s_zjVNKKof45SPuwO6JJWZy87WE92PIAYH8TGSQ/view form which automatically saved participants' responses. The responses of the participants were tabulated, computed, and analyzed using the following measures:

Basic descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation and frequency of each item in the questionnaire were computed.

Percentages of the frequencies in each response category for each item in the questionnaire were computed.

Rank order of the domains in the questionnaire was determined.

The researchers used the following scale of percentages to present and discuss the findings of the study:

80 %-----100 % very high (highly suitable)

70 %-----79 % high (suitable)

60 %-----69 % moderate (fairly suitable)

50 %-----59 % low (not suitable)

Findings of the Study

A. First Question

The means, standard deviations, percentages, and the degree of each statement of the questionnaire as well as the means, standard deviations, percentages, and the degree of the total dimension of the questionnaire were calculated. The following tables showed the results of the study per- statement whereas table 8 displayed the results per-dimension.

Book Appearance

The first question of the study was "What are the perceptions of Saudi English EFL teachers of **Lift off for Saudi Arabia** series book appearance? Table (1) shows that the Saudi EFL teachers' perception of the book appearance is very high with a percentage of 87%. All of the statements were evaluated very high except for statement "*The book has web sites for more practice at the end of each unit*" which was evaluated as moderate with a percentage of 60%.

Accompanying Material

Table (2) shows that Saudi EFL teachers' perception of the accompanying material is very high with a percentage of 93.25%. All of the statements were evaluated very high .The statements "*the pictures, the drawings, and the charts are compatible with the content*" and "*Posters and flashcards that accompany the book are suitable*" got the highest percentages with 97.50% and 96.25% respectively.

Table (1)
Means, Standard Deviations, Percentages and the Degree of Each Statement As Manifested By Saudi EFL Teachers on the First Dimension “The Book Appearance”

Dimension 1. Book Appearance	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. The book appearance is suitable	3.60	.64	90	very high
b. The book has as attractive cover.	3.75	.74	93.75	very high
c. The book has a clear, complete table of contents.	3.65	.89	91-25	very high
d. The book has a title at the beginning of each lesson.	3.75	.67	93.75	very high
e. The book has a revision at the end of each unit.	3.55	.54	88.75	very high
f. The book has a glossary section at the end, for new and difficult words.	3.71	.75	92.75	very high
g. The book has web sites for more practice at the end of each unit.	2.40	.65	60	moderate
Average	3.48	.697	87	very high

Table (2)
Means, standard deviations, percentages and the degree of each statement as manifested by Saudi EFL Teachers on the second dimension “The Accompanying Material”

Dimension 2. Accompanying Material	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. The accompanying aids are useful.	3.75	.66	93.75	very high
b. CDs that accompany the book are suitable.	3.80	.76	95	very high
c. Posters and flashcards that accompany the book are suitable.	3.85	.57	96.25	very high
d. The teacher's book that accompanies the book is informative.	3.60	.68	90	very high
e. The pictures, the drawings, and the charts are compatible with the content.	3.90	.78	97.50	very high
f. The pictures, and charts in the book attract the students.	3.50	.85	87.50	very high
Average	3.73	.716	93-25	very high

Table (3)
Means, standard deviations, percentages and the degree of each statement as manifested by Saudi EFL Teachers on the third dimension “Fulfilling National Goals”

Dimension 3. Fulfilling National Goals	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. The book fulfills national goals of education.	2.75	.65	68.75	moderate
b. The book takes into consideration the student culture.	3.50	.59	87.50	very high
c. The book affords the students a window to the world.	2.85	.72	96.25	very high
d. the book gives the students an experience of delight through reading.	2.80	.68	70	high
e. It cultivates critical thinking through reading.	2.35	.67	58.75	low
f. It provides students with reasonable command of English to defend Islam, and to disseminate Islamic culture.	2.10	.81	52.50	low
g. It provides students with adequate knowledge of English to use in their vacations.	2.45	.57	61.25	moderate
Average	2.68	.751	67	moderate

Fulfilling National Goals

Table (3) shows that the Saudi EFL teachers' perception of the third dimension "fulfilling national goals" is moderate with a percentage of 67%. The statements "*the book takes into consideration the students' culture*" and "*the book affords the students a window to the world*" have the highest percentages with 87% and 96.25% respectively, whereas the statements "It provides students with reasonable command of English to defend Islam, and to disseminate Islamic culture" and "It cultivates critical thinking through reading" were evaluated low with the percentages of 52.50% and 58.75% respectively.

Scientific Content

Table (4) shows that EFL teachers' perception of the scientific content is very high with a percentage of 81%. Most of the statements were evaluated very high. The statements "*the language used is at the students' level* and" "*the introduction explains how the book is organized.*" have the highest percentages with 94.50% and 93.75% respectively, whereas the statements "*the content is compatible with the number of periods*" and "*The scientific content is suitable*" were viewed as moderate with percentages of 60% and 69% respectively.

Table (4)

Means, standard deviations, percentages and the degree of each statement as manifested by Saudi EFL Teachers on the fourth dimension "Scientific Content"

Dimension 4. Scientific Content	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. The scientific content is suitable.	2.76	.62	69	moderate
b. The introduction explains how the book is organized.	3.75	.83	93.75	very high
c. The content fulfills the educational objectives.	3.65	.71	91.25	very high
d. There is a graded reasonable sequence in the content.	3.50	.59	87.50	very high
e. There is a strong relationship between the parts of the content.	2.90	.75	72.50	high
f. The language used is at the students' level.	3.78	.65	94.50	very high
g. The content is compatible with the number of periods.	2.40	.70	60	moderate
Average	3.24	.692	81	very high

Cultural Content

Table (5) indicates that the Saudi EFL teachers' perception of the cultural content is high with a percentage of 74.50%. The statements "*the presence of the local culture in the content made learning English easier*" and "*the presence of the local culture in the*

content made learning English faster were evaluated high while the statements "*The topics in local culture made learning interesting*" and "*the content employs knowledge about the learner's culture, and the target culture*" were perceived as moderate with percentages of 66.25% and 68.50% respectively.

Table (5)

Means, standard deviations, percentages and the degree of each statement as manifested by Saudi EFL Teachers on the fifth dimension "Cultural Content"

Dimension 5. Cultural Content	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. Using the presentation of culture in the content is useful	3.10	.73	77.50	high
b. The content employs knowledge about the learner's culture, and the target culture.	2.74	.67	68.50	moderate
c. The presence of the local culture in the content made learning English easier.	3.25	.80	81.25	high
d. The presence of the local culture in the content made learning English faster.	3.20	.63	80	high
e. The topics in local culture made learning interesting.	2.65	.59	66.25	moderate
Average	2.98	.684	74.50	high

Teaching Methods

Table (6) shows that the perception of Saudi English language teachers of the teaching methods is very high with a percentage of 80.75%. The statements ‘the methods used are student-centered.’ and ‘the methods used encourage students' interaction and participation in

the classroom” were evaluated very high, while the statements “the teaching methods used in the book are effective” and “the methods used are the latest in the field” were viewed as moderate with a percentage of 62.50 .

Table (6)

Means, standard deviations, percentages and the degree of each statement as manifested by Saudi EFL Teachers on the sixth dimension “Teaching Methods”

Dimension 6. Teaching Methods	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. The teaching methods used in the book are effective.	2.75	.73	68.75	moderate
b. The methods used are the latest in the field.	2.50	.71	62.50	moderate
c. The methods used are student-centered.	3.73	.66	93.25	very high
d. The methods used allow students to talk more than teachers.	3.20	.67	80	high
e. The methods used encourage students' interaction and participation in the classroom.	3.65	.74	91.25	very high
f. The methods used allow various class activities.	3.56	.59	89	Very high
Average	3.23	.683	80.75	very high

Evaluation Techniques

Table (7) shows that the Saudi EFL teachers’ perception of the seventh dimension “the evaluation techniques” is moderate with a percentage of 62.50 %.

Two of the four statements (a, d) were evaluated moderate whereas the other two (b, c) were viewed as low with the percentages of 58.75% and 56.75% respectively.

Table (7)

Means, standard deviations, percentages and the degree of each statement as manifested by Saudi EFL Teachers on the seventh dimension “Evaluation Techniques”

Dimension 7. Evaluation Techniques	M	SD	Percent	Degree
a. Evaluation techniques in the book are successful.	2.76	.79	69	moderate
b. The tests and exercises in the book are consistent in their results; they give almost the same results every time students use them (reliable).	2.35	.68	58.75	low
c. The tests and exercises in the book are accurate in testing what they are supposed to test (valid).	2.27	.58	56.75	low
d. The number of exercises is appropriate.	2.65	.81	66.25	moderate
Average	2.50	.715	62.50	moderate

To sum up the results of the first question of the study, Table (8) illustrates the means, standard deviation, percentages, and degree of suitability and rank order of all dimensions. The results clearly show that the dimension of “the accompanying material” was ranked first with a very high degree of suitability and a percentage of 93.25 %, and “ the book appearance” came second with a very high of suitability and a percentage of 87% , whereas “scientific content ”and “teaching

methods” dimensions took the third and the fourth positions respectively with a very high suitability with a slight difference of .25 % and the percentages of 81% and 80.75% respectively. The dimensions “fulfilling national goals” and “evaluation techniques” were ranked sixth and seventh with a moderate suitability and the percentages of 67% and 62.50% respectively. The overall perception of all the dimensions was high with a total percentage of 78%.

Table (8)

Means, standard deviation, the percentages, the degree, and the rank order of all dimensions as perceived by Saudi EFL teachers.

N0	Dimension	Mean	SD	Percentage	Degree	Rank
1.	Book Appearance	3.487	.6971	87%	very high	2
2.	Accompanying Material	3.733	.7166	93.25%	very high	1
3.	Fulfilling National Goals	2.685	.7514	67%	moderate	6
4.	Scientific Content	3.248	.6928	81%	very High	3
5.	Cultural Content	2.988	.6840	74.50	high	5
6.	Teaching Methods	3.231	.6833	80,75	Very high	4
7.	Evaluation Techniques	2.5070	.7150	62.50	moderate	7
	TOTAL			78%	High	

II. Second Question

To answer the second question of the study "What do the Saudi English language teachers suggest for improving and developing the series?" All the participants in this study, who taught the series, were asked to respond to an open-ended question "What suggestions do you recommend to improve and develop the textbooks of *Lift off for Saudi Arabia*. Their written responses were summarized. The following are some of the suggestions to improve and develop the series that were shared by the majority of the participants in this study:

1. The typescript of the textbooks was too small to read. It was suggested that the font size be enlarged to make it easier and clearer for the students.
2. It was suggested that lessons and units be separated by an adequate space to enable students to spot the lessons and the units easily.
3. It was recommended to provide students with some web sites at the end of each unit to practice and consolidate their learning.
4. It was also advised that the work book be combined with the student's book because that will help teachers to refer to relevant exercises easily on one hand, and will deprive students of a frequent excuse: "I forgot the work book".
5. It was mentioned by a number of teachers that the students complain about the speed of the speakers on CDs in a manner that prevented them from following the conversation. Of course, students are not aware of the fact that the speed is a normal one in actual speech. To overcome this problem, students should be trained to

follow the speakers by listening to the conversation or dialogue many times.

6. It was recommended that classrooms be provided with adequate multimedia equipment so that teachers can use the audio aids effectively. One or two audio visual labs are not enough for an intermediate school that has 15 classrooms of different levels. Sometimes, CDs are not accessible to all classes.
7. It is advised to include appropriate terminology on Islam in reading lesson and dialogues and to use easier vocabulary.
8. It is proposed to reduce the number of lessons and units to match with the number of the periods allocated to English.
9. The number of exercises is reduced to the minimum to achieve consolidation and avoid boredom.
10. The majority of the participants believed that foreign characters in textbooks should be replaced by Arab/Saudi characters. They claimed that would help students understand better.

It should be noted that the researchers are mainly reporting objectively what the majority of the participants have suggested in their responses to the open-ended question of the study.

Conclusions

The study aimed at exploring the perceptions of Saudi English language teachers teaching "*Lift off for Saudi Arabia*" Series prescribed by the Ministry of Education of Saudi Arabia in 2009 which was taught at the first, second and third intermediate grades. The participants in this study are confined to Saudi English language

teachers who taught these textbooks in Saudi Arabia. In general, the results revealed that the participants perceived the series to be highly suitable with a percentage of 78%. However, the analysis of the results per statements as shown in the tables revealed that (42.85%) of the statements of the questionnaire (18 statements) were evaluated very high with percentages ranged between 90% - 97.50 and 8 statements (19.04%) of the questionnaire were also evaluated very high with percentages ranged between 80% - 89%. This indicates that approximately more than two third of the statements were evaluated very high by the Saudi English language teachers who taught the textbooks of the series. It is clear that the participants have a highly supportive perception of the course books of the series.

In the light of previous research on the evaluation of textbooks, these results are to some extent consistent with similar studies in varying degrees of perception that ranges between satisfactory, moderate, and high. Studies conducted by Al-Hajailan (1999), Alsughaier (2013), Al Haidari (2003), Al Yousef (2007), Alamri (2008), Guintek (2005, Karatas (2009), Riasati and Zare (2010) revealed support for different dimensions in the current

study, i.e., accompanying material, academic content, evaluation techniques, and the overall perception of different textbooks .

On the other hand, the results were in disagreement with some dimensions in studies conducted by Al-Haidari who reported that the English textbooks used in Saudi universities were culturally biased and inconsistent with Saudi Islamic culture. Aytug (2007) reported that the topics and exercises were judged as uninteresting for students. Riasati and Zare (2010) found that there were no supplementary materials and there were too many testing exercises.

The analysis of results per statements indicated that (19.04%) (8 statements) were perceived as moderate, whereas, (6 statements) (14.85%) of the questionnaire were viewed as low with percentages ranged between 50% - 60%. In fact, only six statements that were evaluated low by the subjects of the study. These items represented the areas of weakness that need to be modified according to the Saudi EFL and teachers. The statements with the lowest means (less than 2.50) are shown in Table (9) below.

Table (9)

Mean	Statement	No.
2.40	The book has web sites for more practice at the end of each unit.	1.
2.10	It provides students with reasonable command of English to defend Islam, and to disseminate Islamic culture.	2.
2.45	It provides students with adequate knowledge of English to use in their vacations.	3.
2.40	The content is compatible with the number of periods	4.
2.35	The tests and exercises in the book are consistent in their results; they give almost the same results every time students use them (reliable).	5.
2.27	The tests and exercises in the book are accurate in testing what they are supposed to test (valid).	6.

In respect to the analysis of the results per dimensions, Table (8) indicated that four of the dimensions were evaluated very high and “cultural content” was viewed as high, whereas the dimensions “evaluation techniques “and “fulfilling national goals” were evaluated moderate. The degree of suitability and

the rank order of the dimensions were as follows: the accompanying material, the book appearance, the scientific content, the teaching methods, the cultural content, fulfilling national goals, the evaluation techniques respectively.

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تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية السعوديين عن الكتب المدرسية في المرحلة الإعدادية

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ملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية السعوديين عن الكتب المدرسية في المرحلة الإعدادية التي قررتها وزارة التربية والتعليم عام 2009، حيث تكونت عينة الدراسة من ستين معلمًا سعوديًّا لمبحث اللغة الإنجليزية. استخدم الباحثون استبانة من (42) فقرة، ذات أربعة اختيارات على مقياس Likert وصُنفت إلى سبعة مجالات، بالإضافة إلى سؤال يتطلب إجابة مفتوحة من أفراد العينة يدور حول مقترحاتهم لتحسين وتطوير سلسلة الكتب الدراسية المذكورة، وقد تم استخدام أسلوب الإحصاء الوصفي لتحليل البيانات. وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن تصورات أفراد عينة الدراسة كانت مناسبة بدرجة عالية وبنسبة مئوية بلغت 78%. كما تم تقديم العديد من المقترحات لتحسين وتطوير السلسلة، كان من أهمها: تخفيض عدد الوحدات الدراسية لتناسب مع عدد الحصص المخصصة للغة الإنجليزية، وتضمين دروس القراءة بعض المفردات الإسلامية، و تزويد الفصول الدراسية بعدد كافٍ من الأدوات التكنولوجية حتى يتمكن المدرسون من استخدام الوسائل السمعية والبصرية بشكل فعال. وخلصت الدراسة إلى بعض التوصيات المهمة لتحسين طريقة تنفيذ المعلمين للكتب الدراسية المعنية.

الكلمات الدالة: تصورات، المعلمون، اللغة الإنجليزية، المرحلة الإعدادية، الكتب المدرسية، السعودية.

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