An Evaluation of the Arabic Language Textbook for First Grade From the Teachers’ Point of View

Imad Aburub
Arab American University

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the Palestinian Arabic Language Textbook, “Our Beautiful Language,” for first grade from the viewpoint of the teachers. The study also identified the significance of evaluating textbooks. For this purpose, a mixed methods research design was used to measure the extent to which the Palestinian Arabic language textbook meets the characteristics of a good textbook from the point of view of the teachers of Arabic language for the first grade of primary public schools. This method allows us to collect both quantitative (survey) and qualitative data (interview) data. According to the research results, the textbook still has a specific weakness and deficiency in the psycho-cognitive dimension despite the Palestinian Ministry of Education’s efforts to develop the curriculum. To improve textbooks through a national reform strategy, they must be freed from the constraints to which they are currently subject. To accomplish this, it is necessary to adopt the high standards for content creation established by textbook research centers.

Keywords: evaluation, Arabic language textbook, Arabic teachers’ point of view, first grade

INTRODUCTION

Despite today’s availability of teaching and learning resources, the textbook remains one of the most significant aspects of the school curriculum. Because textbooks are maintained as vehicles that cannot be parted with or ignored, all educational systems place a high value on their authoring, directing, quality, and advancement.

The textbook is seen as one of the most significant socio-educational phenomena produced by modern educational systems. It has acquired, through the development phases, powers that differ based on its objectives and functions. Moreover, it is one of the key didactic methods and the most used in all levels of an educational structure, whether by teachers, students, or parents (Al-Weezy, 2010).

Hence, all educational systems pay close attention to textbooks in terms of composition, production, quality, or development. One of the most effective strategies to improve teaching and learning in any language is to use well-designed textbooks (Ateeq, 2017). Al-Musari (2014) stated that the importance of Arabic language textbooks cannot be overstated. It is deemed the school curriculum’s laboratory, particularly at the primary level, and functions as a tool for students’ learning and expression of ideas and emotions, capturing the instances and viewpoints within their comprehension range, and teaching them communication skills. Also, Dahalan (2020) illustrated that the Arabic Language textbook should contribute to the development of linguistic skills, cultural awareness, linguistic concepts, and critical thinking skills in accordance with 21st century skills, modern teaching strategies, and the requirements of
technology use in teaching Arabic Language. He also stated that students should be exposed to information and educational activities that encourage them to think.

Hence, judging a textbook is not solely linked to its development and design. It must be reviewed and evaluated after being piloted and put into practice in a teaching-educational context. This is true because writing a book is a human effort that will not reach the level of perfection. It will have its share of inadequacy (Abu al-Rub & Abu al-Rub, 2018). Moreover, McGrath (2002) argued that the claim that a book is perfect cannot be fulfilled.

Furthermore, the development of the educational system requires that the textbook conform to the standards and qualities of a good book (Al-Hashmi and Attiya 2009). If this is not the case, then a set of negative phenomena would appear; as a result of the education ecosystem, the wrong materials are capable of producing failed language learners (Mukundan & Kalajahi, 2013). Therefore, the evaluation process can lead to curriculum development and upgrading their level, which helps improve the teaching and learning process (Mukundan & Kalajahi, 2013).

In fact, textual material is critical to meeting the curriculum’s objectives. Learning materials, including textbooks, are important components of good curricula. In fact, meaningful teaching necessitates a comprehensive textbook with texts and lessons tailored to the needs and levels of students (Smart, et al., 2020)

Evaluating textbooks is significant because they represent a major component of the curriculum implementation process. Textbook evaluation helps teachers find appropriate course books for students, allows them to regulate and modify textbooks to meet the learners’ needs, and allows for natural interaction to occur. Skilled teachers have the opportunity to report and reflect on their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks they use in a given class (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2016).

As a result, Al-Hashemi and Al-Ghazawi (2009) stated that the evaluation process must be ongoing in order to measure the effectiveness of a textbook and the level of content representation of the curriculum objectives. Similarly, Al-Hudaybiet al. al. (2019) asserted that the process of evaluating textbooks must be conducted on a regular basis and in accordance with the criteria and characteristics of a good book. Although textbooks can be evaluated by many, such as educational supervisors, decision-makers, or formal and informal institutions, teachers have a crucial role in the evaluation process. According to Bhanegaonkar and Mahfoodh (2013, p.8), teachers are a key factor in the successful implementation of curriculum changes, particularly in textbooks.

What confirms the importance of the role of teachers in evaluating textbooks is that curriculum experts feel that all stakeholders who are impacted or influenced by textbooks, particularly teachers who use them, must be included in their development. Furthermore, seeing the curriculum as something that has little to do with the teacher in terms of design and planning is no longer an option since modern curriculum professionals deem it a significant component of the teacher’s job (Hidayt, 2010).

Because creating and authoring a textbook is a human endeavor, the end result will not be perfect. This demonstrates the importance of evaluating textbooks. Despite development efforts, the researcher observes that many difficulties and challenges impede the process of implementing the development plan related to Arabic language teaching and learning. According to the General Directorate of Standards, Evaluation, and Examination (2018) research, 50% of students in the fifth grade of primary school are illiterate in Arabic. To that end, the goal of this paper is to assess the Palestinian Arabic language textbook “Our Beautiful Language” for first-grade students from the perspective of the teachers.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

As a result of the Palestinian National Authority taking over obligations for education in 1995, the Arabic language curriculum has experienced enormous advancement that has been represented in many aspects, including being written in the form of textbooks by specialized committees. However, despite all efforts, many challenges remain that hinder the application of the development project in the setting of the first-grade Arabic language teaching and learning process. Ateeq (2017) demonstrated that motivation for the development of Arabic language skills is cumulative. As the curriculum has weaknesses and shortfalls,
it is essential to assess the whole textbook in light of the experiences of Arabic language teachers who have studied and analyzed it. Also, because teachers have the privilege to critically assess textbooks throughout a strict assessment process, they are able to assess their effectiveness from differing viewpoints by recognizing both weaknesses and strengths related to the setting in which the textbooks are being used. However, the following research questions were developed to guide the researcher in evaluating the “Our Beautiful Language” textbook for first graders from the perspective of Arabic language teachers at a primary school in the light of a good book’s characteristics.

Q1: To what extent does the Palestinian Arabic language textbook meet the characteristics of a good book from the point of view of the teachers of Arabic language for the first grade in primary public schools?

Q2: How do first grade Arabic language teachers perceive the Palestinian Arabic language textbook (Our Beautiful Language) as adhering to the textbook’s standards?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher reviewed the available literature and divided the review of related studies into two sections. Section 1 is concerned with textbook standards in Arabic. Section 2 is about evaluating Arabic-language textbooks.

Standards for Arabic Language Textbooks

The standards of a good textbook should be considered when creating, editing, and developing it. Therefore, there is an interest in including these standards in the structure of textbooks. Al-Hodaibi et al. (2018) asserted that an Arabic language textbook could also lead to the improvement of linguistic skills and components, intercultural communication, language concepts, and metacognition and should be consistent with 21st-century life skills and knowledge, advanced teaching techniques, and the demands of using technology in teaching Arabic. Therefore, its content would be suitable in linguistic, psychological, educational, cultural, and social terms, as well as in terms of its technical production. Moreover, educational material and tasks should force learners to reflect rather than follow structured exercises or official readings, so that the document used mostly for printing is small and light, thin, long-lasting, and shiny.

According to Al-Hashimi and Attia (2009), in an attempt to integrate the unity of understanding, an Arabic language textbook must also strive for a type of harmony between Arabic language skills and the fundamentals of integration and development between its sections in its teaching and learning process as well as among other subject areas. In addition to the above-mentioned criteria, Atlantic Canada Foundation of English Language Arts Curriculum (2016) proposed a set of criteria when selecting language textbooks for students, including: Offering engaging and challenging activities that really are suitable for age, ability, and social competence. Describing a variety of literary forms and styles. Making effective use of language. And, assisting students in comprehending society’s nature and political principles.

Arabic Language Textbooks Evaluation

Due to the importance of evaluating Arabic language textbooks, many studies have been conducted in this context; for example, Hamadan (2012) assessed the Arabic Language textbook for first grade from the perspective of a Jordanian teacher. The results revealed that 15 paragraphs matched the criteria for a good book while 39 did not. In a similar vein, Al-Tuwarjry (2004) conducted research aimed at analyzing an Arabic language textbook for first grade in Kuwaiti elementary schools from the perspective of Arabic language teachers and instructors. The results revealed that textbooks require improvement, particularly in terms of consistency, between the material and the students’ age and prior experience. According to Ateeq (2017), the problems and deficiencies in the old curriculum served as catalysts for its development. Thus, the book must be assessed based on the experiences of Arabic language educators who are teaching it. It is the teachers’ right to express their perceptions of textbooks through an ongoing evaluation process in order
to assess a book’s benefits and efficacy by recognizing its strengths and weaknesses in the context in which it is taught.

Furthermore, Dayikh (2020) conducted a study entitled, “Evaluation of the Arabic Language Textbook for the First Middle Grade from the Viewpoint of Teachers in Basra Governorate.” The results of statistical methods used in that research show that book content did not take into account the mental level and average age of first-grade students. Results also show that the book contains many types of typographical and linguistic mistakes. Besides, in certain areas, the book’s language was difficult to understand.

Furthermore, Al-hasanat (2016) analyzed assessment questions included in an Arabic language textbook for eighth grade in Jordanian schools according to the levels of knowledge in Bloom’s Taxonomy. According to the findings of this study, textbook questions primarily focus on lower levels of thinking. The percentages of the distribution of the textbook assessment questions and the standard percentages at five levels likewise show a significant difference (remembering, understanding and comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation).

METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, the researcher used a mixed-methods research design. This method entails gathering quantitative (survey) data first, followed by qualitative (interview) data.

Population and Sample

The population of this research consists of all teachers who taught the Arabic language book for first graders in the Palestinian West Bank during the second semester of the academic year 2021–2022.

Sample

Random sampling was used in this research. The researcher distributed a questionnaire among (262) Palestinian Arabic teachers who taught using the Arabic textbook for first graders.

Instrument

After reviewing the literature and holding discussion meetings with teachers, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed to evaluate the Arabic language textbook for the first grade from the viewpoint of teachers in a primary public school in the West Bank of Palestine. The questionnaire contained 32 items divided into four dimensions: content, national and cultural, book design and production, and psycho-cognitive.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

To ensure that the content of the questionnaire is valid, it was presented to six specialists in the field of evaluation, education, and educational technology. The members were asked to evaluate the appropriateness of the questionnaire for the purpose of this study. Consequently, the specialists sent letters in which they ensured the validity of the questionnaire and recommended some modifications, which were taken into consideration. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, it was tested by using Cronbach alpha formula as an indicator of homogeneity to the level of the instrument as a whole. It was found to be 0.79, which is acceptable for study purposes.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, we used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17.0. The results of the study are expressed as means and standard deviation. To understand the response of the sample, the following scale was applied: 4.21–5 very high, 3.41–4.20 high, 2.61–3.40 neutral, 1.81–2.60 low, 1.80–1.0 very low.
Interview Analysis

Eight male and female teachers who specialized in Arabic from four separate school districts responded to the open-ended question of the interview that focused on the objectives, content, and language of the book; exercises; and the national and technical dimensions and images. Since the researcher had a limited and easily manageable number of interviews, he conducted a manually analytical process, and no use of specific research software was made. To prepare for analysis, the researcher followed a qualitative content analysis method. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. As such, the analysis was transversal to the process from the very beginning to the end when listening to the recorded interviews, transcribing them, summarizing the content to establish matrices, coding information, synthesizing categories according to the research questions, and finding connecting or divergent topics. To get a critical view as a researcher and as a measure to increase the validity of the data, an independent researcher who specialized in qualitative research was asked to read the resulting text and judge whether it was reasonable or not.

RESULTS

Results Related to the First Question

RQ1: To what extent does the Palestinian Arabic language textbook meet the characteristics of a good book from the point of view of the teachers of Arabic language for the first grade of primary public schools?

The average means and standard deviations of the domains and items of the tool were calculated using computer-based programs as reported in Tables 1–5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and culture</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book’s design and production</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-cognitive</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean and general standard deviation</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates that the mean average of all dimensions is 2.49 and the standard deviation is 0.23 while the mean average ranged between 1.56 and 4.05. This table shows that dimension No. 1 ranked first, demonstrating the good content of the textbooks. Dimension No. (5) Ranked last, showing that teachers’ satisfaction toward all dimensions is poor, except for the content field. It can be concluded that the textbooks are the object of criticism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The content is consistent with the objectives of the Arabic language for the basic stage.</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The content provides opportunities to train students on the safety of pronunciation by taking out letters from their correct exits.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The content of the book is suitable for the students.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The content of the book is organized appropriately.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The content contributes to forming and developing the linguistic skills of the students.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Content is presented through activities that deepen understanding and encourage thinking.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Content allows the training of students to understand what they read, interact with it, and benefit from in their lives.</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The book helps in forming new words by reading and writing from the sounds of letters.</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total degree</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.31</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 lists the mean average of textbook content, which reached 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.31 and mean averages ranging between 3.68 and 4.48, which represents a high score. The table shows all items are on a high average, indicating that the respondents were highly satisfied with the standard of the content.

### TABLE 3
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE FIELD OF NATIONAL AND CULTURE DIMENSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The book reflects the culture of the Palestinian people.</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The book contains national content.</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The book aims to build the learner’s national character.</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The book encourages students to imitate Palestinian national symbols.</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The book takes Palestinian privacy in its national and religious characteristics into consideration.</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total degree</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.03</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the mean average of all investigated items in the field of national and cultural dimensions is 2.03 with a standard deviation 0.22, and the mean of all investigated items ranges between 1.69 and 2.59. These results demonstrate how the textbook pays poor attention toward the national and culture dimensions.

Table 4 shows that the mean average of all investigated items in the field of the book’s design and production is 2.38 with a standard deviation 0.28, and the mean of all investigated items ranges between 2.04 and 2.97. These results demonstrate a lack of attention on the process book design and production.
### TABLE 4
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE BOOK’S DESIGN AND PRODUCTION DIMENSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Arithmetic Average</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The cover is engaging to students.</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The graphics and pictures are engaging to students.</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The place of the picture in the book is consistent with the desired goals.</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The graphics and pictures represent the educational material.</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The line spacing is consistent.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The pages of the book keep visual spaces so that they do not tire the eyes.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Colors used are appropriate.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The quality of the paper used is appropriate.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total degree</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE FIELD OF PSYCHO-COGNITIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The book helps students to form new words in reading and writing from the sounds of letters.</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The book helps in developing the skill of understanding the text by reading, listening, or watching.</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The book develops the skill of reasoning by linking causes and effects in written or audio texts.</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The book develops the skill of criticism by expressing opinions on written and audio texts.</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The book includes activities with a picture (Abstraction).</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The book includes activities that are an extension of the process of adapting to the student’s surroundings.</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The book encourages students to think and conclude ideas.</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The book includes reasonable challenges to students’ cognitive abilities.</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The book includes activities that provide information about students’ level of thinking.</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 shows that the mean average of the psycho-cognitive fields is 1.65 with a standard deviation of 0.32, thus representing a low degree as its mean averages ranged between 1.29 and 1.97. The table demonstrates that all aspects are on a low average and indicates that the respondents were convinced that the standard of the psycho-cognitive field is weak.

### Results Related to the Second Question

RQ2: How do first grade Arabic language teachers perceive the Palestinian Arabic language textbook (Our Beautiful Language) as adherent to the textbook’s standards?

The qualitative data were analyzed to comprehend the results of the quantitative phase in a better manner. The analysis of interviews has highlighted the following subjects: National Values, Linguistic Skills, Thinking Skills, Objectives, and Technical Production.

### Linguistic Skills

The answers of the participants indicated that the Arabic Language Textbook has focused on training the students in Linguistic Skills, namely: Reading, writing, conversation, and listening. Teacher (A) stated that: “The book collared all of the four (4) skills within one lesson”. On the other hand, some teachers believe that the book failed to focus on the reading skill, referred thereto by Teacher (S): “The textbook does not include but two long texts at the end of it that are related to training the students on the reading skill”. In addition, Other Teacher (S) explained that: “The reading exercises are limited to short sentences”, and Teacher (R) emphasized that: “The reading activities and exercises are syllables and words, in some cases are short sentences.”

### Thinking Skills

The responses of the participants revealed that the book failed to train students on Thinking Skills, commented thereon Teacher (F): “The book does not cover the activities of I-Think.”

### Objectives

The participants have illustrated that the objectives are clear and specific, as Teacher (T) explained: “Objectives are written down at the beginning of each lesson”. Furthermore, Teacher (K) stated that: “Objectives are correlated with the content”, and Teacher (T) believes that: “Objectives are proportional to the traits of the students”.

### Technical Production

All participants agreed that the book, does not enjoy the standards of the qualities of the Good Book. Teacher (T) expressed that: “The paper of the book is easily torn”, and another Teacher (T) added: “Colors are easily mixed”. Also, Teacher (W) said that: “The page is fully occupied with exercises, and there are no empty spaces”.

### National Cultural Dimension

The results of the interviews analysis have brought to light that the book neglected the national and cultural theme. Referring to this dimension was implied and not direct or purposive. This notion was
expressed by Teacher (T): “The Palestinian Flag is portrayed with a small image, unclear”. And Teacher (S) indicated: “Subjects of national and cultural theme are timid”.

DISCUSSION

The standards, according to the study instruments, are related to the experience gained by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in developing the national school curriculum. In 2015, the Ministry began developing the curriculum based on the results of many previous evaluation studies. This reevaluation process was carried out for several reasons including the cognitive and technological development that required guidance for future generations, the development of contemporary trends in learning and education policies, the teachers’ roles, preparation and qualification, and the obsolescence of the existing curriculum. The current curriculum was released 15 years ago. The results of national and international tests have shown low levels of student achievement in the field studies, indicating a weak representation of life skills in the curriculum and the shallowness of its concepts in comparison to life contexts and patterns of thinking (The Ministry of Higher Education, 2016).

In addition, one of the reasons behind the development of the old curriculum was the shortage and shortcomings of its content (Ateeq, 2017). This resulted in avoiding the defects of the old curriculum and enhancing its content. The results also revealed that the authors paid attention to the linguistic standards in textbook content. This is because the textbook has focused on four dimensions of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Madkour (2002) considers these dimensions to be the main language skills that provide the opportunity to raise children so as to use the Arabic language in an appropriate manner.

The results showed that the textbook failed to recognize the significance of the psycho-cognitive dimension. This is because the textbook’s authors are Arabic experts. The team also lacked psychology and education experts, which led to a disregard for the criteria of this dimension. It also demonstrated how the book’s opening emphasizes language proficiency as a standalone objective (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2016). This has resulted in an emphasis on explicit information in texts and their extraction (Hijazi, 2017).

The results also demonstrated that the necessary level of interest in cultural and national dimensions was not attained. This is directly related to the fact that there is no supremacy on the Palestinian issue. Because the creation and funding of the Palestinian curriculum are dependent on funding and outside assistance, we are unable to monitor it. Because of this, the National Authority must strike a balance between the demands of financiers, who tie funding to the need for the Palestinian curriculum to take into account the needs of the peace process (Mohammed, 2021), and the uniqueness of the Palestinian situation, which still seeks independence.

With regard to the standards of the textbook in terms of design and production, the results showed that its standards are at a low level. This is directly linked to the financial factor. The Palestinian National Authority suffers from a financial deficit, which has led to a decrease in the budget of the Ministry of Education, which reached 19.5% in 2021. This is also below the estimated value of the Ministry of Education for 2022. This definitely affects the services provided by the Ministry of Education, including improvements to textbooks (Ministry of Education, 2022).

The results also imply that the authors paid careful consideration to the linguistic norms in the textbook material. This is due to the textbook’s emphasis on the four language-related aspects of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. According to Madkour (2002), these are the primary language arts and skills, and concentrating on these periodicals offers the chance to get the students to the stage where they are utilizing the Arabic language properly.

In addition, the results showed that the researcher suggested the integration of language activities that improve students’ thinking skills. According to Al-hasanat (2016), there is a link between language and thought, and an Arabic language textbook should foster and promote students’ thinking skills. Furthermore, these results contradict the views of The Ministry of Higher Education (2016), which highlights that the book “focuses on different levels of thinking skills.”
Reviewing the results of participants’ responses, it is apparent that the textbook assists in the development of students’ linguistic skills. This is in harmony with the Al-Hashimi & Attiya (2009). Moreover, the results indicate that the content of the book is adequate for the students. Thus, the content is based on the students’ experiences and contexts, and it addresses the elements of good content in terms of credibility and simplicity. As a result, it aids in its implementation and instruction to students, resulting in the achievement of the targeted outcomes. These results are also in line with Al-Hodaibi, et al. (2019).

CONCLUSION

According to the research results the researcher concludes that the textbook still has a specific weakness and deficiency in the psycho-cognitive dimension despite the Palestinian Ministry of Education’s efforts to develop the curriculum. This has negative effects on the structure of the textbook, focusing on the volume of knowledge, stereotyping, and focusing on recalling knowledge. Additionally, this hinders creativity and problem-solving, and prevents the organization and production of knowledge in mental representations. However, this dimension contradicts the nature of language by denying that human language is primarily a cognitive phenomenon. In this regard, Torrance (1977) argues that there is strong consensus among educators and psychologists that the primary school years are key years in the development of creativity among students, which contradicts the goal of the school to foster creativity and creative thinking (Amer & Masri, 2018).

The results suggested that the declared official curriculum does not go beyond the catchword and that the textbook’s neglect for Arabic for the fundamental first grade, indicating the supremacy of the secret curriculum. These objectives are frequently used to reproduce the political decision with all of its drawbacks and differences in favor of the dominant elite while hidden educational goals are frequently established to serve the political system and ideological domination (Mohammed, 1997). Consequently, education becomes a tool of manipulation and rotation in order to submit the individual to the absolute authority of the political elite (Captain, 1993).

In the same vein, Al-Butran (2021), who believes that educational policymakers and curriculum designers argue that the Palestinian Authority is governed by conventions that force it to cancel out educational curricula in particular and the school in general from the conflict scene, confirms this authoritarian trend of control in the curriculum. Without permission, they view the teacher’s informal programs and plans as a class that includes lessons on liberation rhetoric and the development of learners’ national identities. However, given the extensive demands placed on teachers, even this assertion is debatable in terms of its relevance and efficacy. Due to this ideological hegemony, the textbook is free from having to address the authority’s pedagogical logic and, by consequence, the authority of knowledge (Karumi, 1999). Also, ignoring this cultural dimension diminishes its importance (Morsi, 2007).

This result contradicts the cultural and social function of the textbook according to Younis and Zayer (2016), who asserted the significance of a nation’s language and its role in contextualizing and refining the personality of the students. The results show that the textbook’s production and design suffer from artistic obligation because its design is not high-tech. This has a negative impact on the textbook’s function and educational status. This creative element contributes significantly to the textbook’s quality. The subject is interesting to the student because of artistic and aesthetic techniques that fit into their psychology and embrace it enthusiastically. However, it should be noted that due to the material restrictions imposed by the handbook’s artistic quality, this technical aspect is absent from the manual.

To improve textbooks through a national reform strategy, they must be freed from the constraints to which they are currently subject. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to adopt the high standards for content creation established by textbook research centers. Textbooks must be freed from ideological hegemony, political authoritarianism, and centralization. They must also be arbitrated without reference to schedules, with the quality of art books as a goal and one based on commercial considerations; a tool for generational building and outfit for ideological perspective and political mobilization, making the national and cultural dimension the heart and core of the textbook.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to all Arabic teachers and administrators in all ministries of education in Palestine for their efforts and cooperation in accomplishing this work.

REFERENCES


Atlantic Canada Foundation of the English Language. (2016). *Canada Curriculum guides for each of the four key stages—entry-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, and grades 10-12.* Retrieved from http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/ed_eng_found.pdf


Mohammed, B. (1997). *Education and freedom, for the sake of a philosophical vision, the pedagogical act*. Morocco: East Africa.

Mohammed, M. (2020). *European Union intervention in the Palestinian educational curricula*. Retrieved from https://www.masarat.ps/article/5918/%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%AE%D9%91%D9%84


