Perception of Teachers and Supervisors on English MM Publications Series for the Intermediate School in the Light of the Curriculum Document in the City of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Rashed Alabdulkareem
Ibtisam Bin-Nahth
Ebrahim Bamanger

ABSTRACT

Evaluation tends to be vital in assessing the efficacy of school curricula. The current study was conducted to identify the compatibility of the content of the developed curriculum of the English Language for the intermediate level, MM Publications: Full Blast, with the Curriculum Document, as perceived by language teachers and supervisors. Following a mixed method approach, the analytical descriptive method was implemented to gather the participants' views regarding the new curriculum through the use of a developed questionnaire. In addition, qualitative data was gathered via interviewing a sample of 30 teachers and 15 supervisors. The descriptive data showed a high level of agreement regarding the compatibility of the content of the developed curriculum with the Curriculum Document. However, the analysis of the interviews showed that teachers and supervisors faced some problems when implemented the developed curriculum. Several recommendations and research directions have been outlined based on the study findings.

Keywords: EFL, Curriculum, compatibility, qualitative, quantitative.

INTRODUCTION

The developed and developing countries seek to develop curricula with the aim to cope with the requirements and challenges of the 21st century as well as the needs of the community and the related cultural changes. Developing a curriculum is as important as building it as a curriculum cannot be left without continuous development for a while (Alwkeel & Mufti, 2008) as the community needs are changing, the knowledge is developing, and the educational thought is renewed. As argued by Albatainh (2006), curriculum development is a necessary process in any community that aims to keep pace with the essence of the modern era.

*Rashed Alabdulkareem, Ibtisam Bin-Nahth and Ebrahim Bamanger are affiliated with King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. They may be reached via E-mail: ebra1982@hotmail.com or ebamange@iu.edu

Several studies highlighted the significance of curriculum development such as the UNESCO studies in educational planning (Hallak & Caillods, 1995), the study of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in the United States (Sparks & Hirsh, 1972) and the World Bank study on productivity skills development in the developing countries (Middleton, et al., 1996), and the study of the Federal government of Education, Science, Technology and Research in Bonn, Germany (Dohmen,1996). Generally, the development of the curriculum has become a major part of the educational policies in Jordan, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, and Egypt (Alshuaibi, *et al.,* 1999).

In the last few decades, education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed some novelties such as the establishment of the Center for Educational Curriculum Development in the academic year 1999/2000. In addition, the Ministry of Education followed two tracks. The first track had the partial development of the curriculum, with two directions: the development of some new courses and the reforming of some courses. The second track had the comprehensive evaluation and development of the curriculum, which began its first stages in the academic year 1999/2000.

Regarding English language curriculum, the project of developing the language curriculum implemented in 2010, was a trial in a number of schools as a pilot sample and was gradually applied in different stages of the school grades until it was distributed in all schools and all stages of primary education in 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014). The development of the English language curriculum began with trying several curricula. Several suggested curricula were tried in schools in the city of Riyadh, with the main focus on MM series publications. They tried the books of this series at different stages as follows: *Smart Class* book in the primary stage, Full Blast book in the intermediate stage, and Traveler book in the high school stage, according to the Urgent Bulletin of the Department of Education issued at the beginning of the year 2014/2015.

Curriculum development processes are susceptible to drawbacks that need to be identified and addressed. This is what was confirmed by Fahmi's study (2004), which dealt with Egypt's experience in curriculum development, noting that there is a problem, but not in the theoretical areas of developing and planning, but within the expected actual development in the educational work in schools. Since the aim of developing a curriculum is to arrive at better practices than the current ones. The study of Aljabr (1992) highlighted the necessity to investigate and evaluate the new curriculum by the designers and implementers of the curriculum to identify the difficulties teachers may face during their teaching, and the importance of helping instructors teach the new curriculum. In this regard, the most important

recommendations of the study of Naji, et al. (1992) were the importance of the participation of early English teachers in planning any new programs or applying a modern method of teaching as well as taking their observations into consideration. The curriculum document is a summary of its design and planning processes. It is a written plan that helps teachers, school supervisors and school principals implement the curriculum. It also contains procedural steps that contribute to the success of development plans and their transformation into reality according to the general vision and educational policy of the country (Alharthy, 1998). The curriculum document often specifies what needs to be studied at each school grade. This includes objectives, content, concepts, competencies, activities, standards and methods of evaluation.

In order to determine the compatibility of the elements of the developed curriculum of English for the intermediate level (MM publications) with the curriculum document as a framework for English language curricula in Saudi Arabia, the researcher thought that it was necessary to study this series (MM publications) in the intermediate schools in Riyadh, with the aim to evaluate it in the light of the curriculum document and the views of English teachers and supervisors.

Evaluation is the key to judging the effectiveness and relevance of school curricula to the processes of teaching and learning, and on which any decision or action is based (Murphy-O'Dwyer, 1985). In his article dealing with issues related to curriculum assessment, Welch (1969) stated that the main objectives of the curriculum evaluation are to help to collect information that helps develop this curriculum as well as to help teachers make sound decisions in curriculum planning and effective implementation.

Meanwhile, the importance of investigating the new curriculum in the need for careful study is to identify the difficulties that teachers may face in teaching it since the effectiveness of any developed curriculum depends on the teachers (Taima, 1990). Similarly, some studies related to curriculum development indicated some difficulties in the overall development of the curriculum. For instance, Alruwaished, et al. (2005) revealed the lack of clarity of the terms of the members of the working group and the weakness of the training programs. Also, Almoshrif's study (2002) found that the participation of teachers in curriculum development is weak and insufficient. Since the development of the English language curriculum is the application of various international publication series, with the MM Publications series being the most distributed series in the city of Riyadh in the academic year 2014, there is an urgent need to evaluate the curriculum developed for the English language intermediate stage in order to identify the compatibility of elements of this approach with what is stated in the curriculum document. The study explored the

views of both teachers and supervisors regarding the implemented curriculum. According to McGrath, the best book in the world will not be applied well in the classroom if the teacher has good reasons not to accept this book (McGrath, 2001). This study is different from the efforts of the Ministry of Education to evaluate textbooks in terms of methods but aimed to achieve the goal of improving the quality of textbooks, which will have a good impact on learning English. The study problem can be summarized in identifying the compatibility of the elements of the developed curriculum of the English Language for the intermediate level (MM Publications) with the Curriculum Document as the framework of the English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia.

This study is one of the first studies conducted on the English language curriculum developed for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) in Saudi Arabia- as far as the researchers know- because of the recent application of this curriculum, which was implemented only in 2010. Therefore, this study will help understand the compatibility of the newly implemented curriculum and might open up other broad areas for researchers to conduct studies relevant to this area. The study would help in assisting educational supervisors in follow-up implementation of the English language curriculum (MM Publications: Full Blast) to identify the compatibility of the elements of this curriculum with the English curriculum document from their point of view and through the researcher's analysis of the content of these books. It would provide information on the compatibility of the elements of the curriculum with the English language curriculum document to decision-makers in the English language development project to take the necessary steps regarding the newly implemented curriculum during the pilot study stage. In attempts to achieve the objectives of this study, the following questions were answered:

1.   To what extent is the content of the English language curriculum developed for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) compatible with the curriculum document from the point of view of the supervisors?
2.   To what extent is the content of the English language curriculum developed for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) compatible with the curriculum document from the point of view of the teachers?
3.   What are the problems of implementing the curriculum developed for the English language course for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) related to the content from the point of view of the supervisors?
4.   What are the problems of implementing the curriculum developed for the English language course for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) related to the content from the point of view of the teachers?

METHOD

This study followed the analytical descriptive method, which is based on exploring the phenomenon as it is in reality and providing a precise description expressed in qualitative and quantitative terms (Adas, et al., 2005). This method is considered the most appropriate one due to the nature of the research and its objectives where the researchers do not stop at the description stage but go further to the stage of interpretation and analysis of information and draw meaningful and useful inferences in evaluating the curriculum. The researchers, present the results of quantitative analysis, accompanied by the interpretation and the analysis of these figures (Muhammad & Abdelazim, 2012) to answer the first two questions of the study. In addition, to answer the third and fourth questions, the researchers implemented a qualitative analysis of the teachers' and supervisors' interviews.

The population of this study comprised all the 52 educational supervisors of the intermediate schools in the City of Riyadh who adopted the MM Publications series as an English language curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017a) and all the (714) English language teachers of the intermediate schools in the City of Riyadh who adopted the MM Publications series as an English language curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017b).

Table 1: Number of members of the study population

Category	No.
English language Instructors	714
English Language Supervisors	52
Total	766

The sample of the study was the whole population as the researchers were keen to distribute the study tool to all members of the study population. The questionnaire was distributed to the English language teachers in the intermediate schools in the city of Riyadh. In addition, it was distributed personally to all English language supervisors in the educational supervision offices. However, out of (766) questionnaires were distributed, only (252) were returned and 24 were excluded for missing data. Thus, the number of the returned and completed questionnaires was (228) which equals about (30%) of the distributed forms.

To collect the data necessary to answer the first and second questions, the researchers reviewed the related literature and previous studies concerning the evaluation of curriculum developed in general and the related evaluation studies conducted in the light of the curriculum document in particular. The English language curriculum document was also studied, as well as the English language curriculum

developed for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) and the content of the curriculum. The researchers consulted previous research dealing with content analysis in preparation for the analysis of the English language curriculum in order to develop the study instrument, and then to verify its validity and reliability. In order to gather the data necessary to answer these questions, the researchers developed the items of the questionnaire based on the English language curriculum document, as it represents the frame of reference for the English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia. The aim of the questionnaire in this study was to identify the views of the members of the study who adopt (MM Publications: Full Blast) regarding the content of the curriculum, in light of the English curriculum document. To answer the questionnaire's items, the participants responded following Likert's five-point scale (Strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree).

To determine the facial validity of the instrument, it was presented in its preliminary form to a number of specialists in order to judge the appropriateness of the items to the subject of the study and the clarity and the correctness of the wording and to express their opinions on ways to improve them. The validity of the internal consistency was checked by calculating the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the total sum of the first and the second domains which were 0,901 and 0.536 respectively which are significant at the level of 0.01.

Cronbach Alpha was calculated for the first domain 0.986 and the second domain 0.871 to check the reliability of the instrument as well as the total instrument 0.977, indicating that the instrument enjoys a high degree of reliability and can be relied upon in the field application of the study.

The researchers examined the opinions of 30 English language teachers in intermediate school, out of the total population (714) teachers, which is equivalent to 2.4%. The nomination of the female participants in the interview by the English language supervisors who participated in the interview to answer the sixth question. In addition, the researchers interviewed 15 supervisors representing 29% of the total population of the (52) supervisors. The participants were interviewed in two ways: one-on-one or on the phone. The duration of the interview with each participant ranged from 30 to 45 minutes, during which the researchers asked the participants about the problems of implementing the curriculum, after explaining the objectives of the interview and asking for permission.

The researchers transcribed the interviews following the verbatim style. The researchers then read the interview three times each. Then, the researchers intentionally coded the content of the interviews in order to identify the main themes in the interview, and what falls under each category of ideas. In order to determine the level of compatibility of the content of the English language curriculum developed

for the intermediate level (MM Publications: Full Blast) with the curriculum document, the frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation, and weighted means were calculated for the responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and weighted means of the responses by supervisors on the compatibility of the content of the developed curriculum with the curriculum document. As could be seen in Table 2., all means of supervisors' responses on the compatibility of the content of the curriculum developed for the intermediate level with the curriculum document were within the high range (between 3.87 and 4.33), with standard deviation (ranging between 0.90 and 0.55). This indicates that the supervisors see that the content of the developed curriculum for the intermediate language English language level compatible with the curriculum document in an acceptable manner.

It is evident from the table that the item, "*Content includes a set of the following terms, titles, and topics*", obtained the highest mean of 4.33, with a standard deviation of 0.55, as the majority of the participating supervisors (96.7%) agreed or strongly agreed about this statement, reflecting that the content of the curriculum contains a variety and abundance of terminology. The terms, topics, and titles contained in the content were proportionate to the proposed list included in the curriculum document from the point of view of the supervisors. This result contradicts the results of the study of Khankar (2001), which dealt with the most important problems of the English language curriculum for the first-grade high school, from the point of view of the teachers. The study summarized a number of problems related to the elements of the curriculum, stating that the most important problem was the content's lack of the interesting and modern topics.

The eighth statement " the content includes topics related to the Saudi society culture and Islamic culture", took the second rank and obtained the second-highest mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.59, where 93.4% of the supervisors agreed or strongly agreed about the statement. In fact, this item is stated clearly in the curriculum document, including all classes, which emphasizes the importance of including the content of the English language curriculum for topics related to the Saudi and Islamic culture. Interestingly, this finding is in contrary with the study of Alhalisi (2011), which dealt with the teaching of English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in its early stages, where the most prominent features of that stage were the fact that most of the topics presented in those textbooks were reflective of English culture and were not related to the culture of students. This result is not in line with

that of Alharbi's study (2014), which pointed to the importance of reviewing the content of the developed language curriculum for the fourth grade of the primary school so that the values   not included in the current curricula are re-included, highlighting the importance of involving specialized Saudi authors in the development of modern English curricula, as they are more capable to understand the Saudi society and the requirements of the children. The study also recommended giving the religious and national values more attention and including them in the "*Get Ready* and *Smart Class"* series, which belong to the same company "MM Publications" for the primary stage.

The ninth statement came in third place, where the supervisors see that the content of the curriculum includes the vocabulary of the grammar appropriate with the grades, with a mean of 4.23, and a standard deviation of 0.50. This result contradicts the findings of Al-Radadi (2008) of the English-language curriculum applied in one city in Saudi Arabic, Madinah, which aimed to identify deficiencies in the content of the textbook and to develop good content standards for English language textbooks. This result also contradicts the results of the Alhalaisi's study (2011), which dealt with the teaching of English in Saudi Arabia in its early stages, noting that the main focus was on the grammar in addition to the skills of reading and writing. The previous two studies showed that the grammatical rules were presented in a difficult way that needs to be simplified. In addition, the second study pointed to the concentration of excessive content on grammar. However, the results of the current study showed that the content of the curriculum included the grammatical rules in a way that matches the school levels and is balanced with all other content topics.

The sixth statement, "the content presents a diverse culture (multiple cultures of English and non-English speaking countries)" obtained the lowest rank with a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.90. However, this mean is still in the high range as 73.3% of supervisors strongly agreed or agreed that the content exposes students to various cultures. Still, this statement received the lowest level of agreement as three 10% did not agree about it and about 7% were not sure. The table 2 presents the frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation, and weighted means of the responses by teachers on the compatibility of the content of the developed curriculum with the curriculum document.

Table 3 shows that the average responses of the teachers on the compatibility of the content of the curriculum developed with the curriculum document reached 4.29 and by a standard deviation of 0.78. The means of all statements ranged between 4.0 and 4.56, indicating that the participating teachers showed that the content of the developed curriculum highly corresponds to the curriculum document.

As could be seen, the eighth statement, "*including topics related to the Saudi society and Islamic culture*" took the highest mean (4.56) as 93.9% of the teachers found that the content has topics that adequately present the culture of the students' country and the official religion. Almost similar findings have been reported by the supervisors of the current study, which means that the curriculum's content takes into account the religious and cultural foundations of Saudi society. However, this finding was not in line with the findings of some studies that reported a low level of representation of Saudi culture in the curriculum (Alhalisi, 2011; Alharbi, 2014).

The tenth statement, "*including a set of terms, titles, and topics",* occupied the second rank with a mean of 4.44, and a standard deviation of 0.74, with 90.9% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Interestingly, this statement was ranked in the first place from the perspective of supervisors, which indicates that the curriculum content has taken into account the availability of terms, titles and topics in a manner consistent with the English language curriculum document. Although the participating teachers gave the sixth statement "presenting a diverse culture" (multiple cultures of English and non-English speaking countries) the lowest mean (4.0). It received a high level of agreement as about three-thirds of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed about the inclusion of various cultures in the developed curriculum's content. In the same line, the current study's participating supervisors reported similar levels of agreement as they gave this statement the lowest level of agreement.

Generally, the sample of this study expressed high levels of agreement regarding the statements (7, 2, 1, 3, 9, 4 and 5) with means ranged from 4.12 to 4.42 as they believe that indicates that these items are available with the content of the curriculum. These findings differ from the findings of Al-Yousef's (2007) study that explored the English language curriculum for the first-grade high school and aimed to highlight its strengths and weaknesses. Al-Yousef reported the lowest levels of satisfaction regarding the evaluation of the curriculum.

It is necessary to ascertain the extent to which the content of the developed curriculum can be implemented to make sure that the content is suitable and the time of its implementation. The results of the study of Alshamri (1990) showed that the outputs may not be commensurate with the time and effort spent. Therefore, the problems of implementing the content related to the educational environment and all elements of the curriculum will be identified by discussing the results of the field interviews conducted with a group of supervisors and a selection of teachers in order to identify the problems of implementing the curriculum related to the content of the curriculum. And proposed solutions to problems, if any. Within the answers to question 3 and question 4 of the research questions:

Based on the qualitative analysis of the interviews with the supervisors, which addressed the most prominent problems that hinder the implementation of the curriculum developed for the English language course related to the content, several obstacles have been reported from the point of view of the participants:

      i.   Nature of the content-related Problems

     ii.   Teacher-related problems

The issues related to the nature of the content include density of the content, frequent repetition of content and content irrelevancy to the Islamic culture.

A.   *Density of the content:*

After analyzing the data, it became apparent that the obvious problem with the implementation of the content is its intensity, as 10 participants agreed on that, and 4 of them stressed the need to increase the number of class sessions to five per week instead of four classes, in order to ensure the achievement of the actual objectives of the curriculum and the need to provide the complete content to ensure that the output fits the desired aspirations. In this regard, the participant No. 2. indicated that increasing the number of classes will serve the course of implementing the curriculum and serve the achievement level of students. Similarly, participant No. 7. Highlighted the significance of presenting and covering the entire curriculum and not to reducing its content, stating, "I see that the curriculum is really intense but this is beneficial for the students because learning a language depends on practice and the current curriculum focuses on skills more than on grammar. It helps the student to focus on the language and practice it extensively." This result is consistent with what the study of Khankar (2001) has reported on the problems of the English language curriculum, indicating that the most prominent problem was the intensity of the curriculum and the length of the content in a manner that is not commensurate with the time allotted to it.

In the current study, most of the participants agreed on the intensity of the content, and almost half of the interviewed supervisors stated that this intensity is positive and necessary to help students. However, two participants stressed the need to reduce the content as they think that intensity is not the critical factor to enhance the quality of learning. They just think that the content should be reduced to meet the time allotted. In the same line, one supervisor believes that there is difficulty in increasing the number of classes because this increase will require hiring more teachers, which is not a feasible choice as there is a shortage of qualified teachers. She also thinks that the content should not be reduced as it is related to each other and due to the importance of all the content items.

Table 2: Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations of the participants' responses

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly Agree		M	SD	Rank
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
Using English through an authentic context or the so-called real-world language.	0	0	1	3.3	2	6.7	20	66.7	7	23.3	4.10	0.661	6
Diversity in context, content, and texts such as dialogues, stories, articles, and videotapes.	0	0	1	3.3	2	6.7	18	60	9	30	4.166	0.698	5
Teaching culture as it varies in different countries.	0	0	0	0	6	20	13	43.3	11	36.7	4.166	0.746	5
Addressing different types of cultures used in language books: first language's culture (the culture of the learners themselves).	0	0	2	6.7	5	16.7	14	46.7	9	30	4.00	0.870	7
Including the culture of the target language (culture of English-speaking countries).	0	0	2	6.7	2	6.7	21	70	5	16.7	3.966	0.718	8
Presenting a diverse culture (multiple cultures of English and non-English speaking countries.)	0	0	3	10	2	6.7	15	50	7	23.3	3.866	0.899	9
Expanding of terms from one level to another (range and sequence).	0	0	1	3.3	2	6.7	17	56.7	10	33.3	4.20	0.714	4
Including topics related to the Saudi society and Islamic culture.	0	0	0	0	1	3.3	17	56.7	11	36.7	4.30	0.595	2
Including suitable vocabulary of the presented grammar.	0	0	0	0	1	3.3	21	70	8	26.7	4.233	0.504	3
Including a set of terms, titles and topics.	0	0	0	0	2	6.7	18	60	11	36.7	4.333	0.546	1

B. *Frequent Repetition of Content:*

Four participating supervisors agreed that the problem in the content is not related to its intensity but rather the repetition, especially the repetition of the exercises whether in the student's book or the activity book or at the end of each unit. They affirmed that the content includes iterations that hinder its implementation as it should, and that these repetitions in the rules or exercises affect the implementation time of the curriculum due to its long content.

C. *Content Irrelevancy to the Islamic Culture*

One supervisor confirmed that the curriculum is not relevant to the Islamic religion, as it does not present topics directly related to the Islamic religion such as Hajj, fasting, prayer, etc., and that it is far from Islamic culture. She stated that students need to link the curriculum with the Islamic religion and culture because they need to know the Islamic terms in the English language.

Teachers' inability to manage time is one teacher-related problem. Three participants articulated that the problem lies in the fact that teachers are not able to manage the time of the class in the proper way. They emphasized that the problem is not with quantity, but rather in how teachers activate the time for the class. In this regard, the participant No. 11. emphasized the importance of time management, stating that some of the teachers apply traditional methods in teaching and are not professionally developed.

Even though the participants confirmed that this curriculum is intensive, they stated that it requires a qualified teacher in time management to present it within the specified time without the need to delete parts of it. This view was clearly stated by the participant No. 2, who stated that teachers feel anxious to finish the curriculum without achieving the required goals because they may delete some essential parts. Similarly, participating supervisor No. 1. indicated that teachers may delete a lot of skills or go over the curriculum quickly in order to complete it. She added that such a procedure negatively impacts students' language learning.

On the other hand, ten of the supervisors agreed that the curriculum is varied and appropriate for students. As stated by the participant No. 10, the most important note on her students' performance after taking this developed curriculum is the change in the students' personality and way of thinking, because the curriculum requires self-reliance, speaking, applying what has been learned of diverse and distinct skills. However, this result is inconsistent with one of the findings of the study of Khankar (2001), which is the problem with the content and its lack of motivation for students to learn on their own.

Based on the analysis of the interviews with the participating teachers, several obstacles have been outlined by the teachers regarding the content.

A- Density of content compared to class time:

One of the most prominent problems mentioned by the participants in the interview was the density of the content, as two-thirds of the participating teachers agreed that the curriculum is very long, and its content is intensive. The content is composed of four units, and each unit includes six lessons. Each lesson includes all four English language skills. In this regard, one of the participants, Teacher 19 indicated that the length of time for the lessons is not enough in her view to deepen the concepts given in the lessons, as well as the richness of the content in the subjects and lessons constitutes a difficulty for students in acquiring the language, which affects their motivation towards learning the English language. It turned out that the intensity of the content greatly hinders the implementation and achievement of the content of the curriculum because the teacher was unable to achieve what is required of her in the class because of the length of the content and the impact of this on the student's acquisition of the language.

Similarly, Teacher No. 4 added that English language skills cannot be given to all students within the class time, which makes the teacher neglect many of these skills, especially the important skill of listening that many times she cannot reach. She added that when the teacher neglects a number of skills involved in the content due to the length and density of the content, there will be a number of goals that have not been and will not be achieved linked to the deleted skills or the skills that were covered in a very brief way because of the time barrier to implementing it. Teacher No. 13 explained that the class time is only 45 minutes is never enough to present the whole lesson and explain all the skills included in the one lesson. She extended saying that although the curriculum is very beautiful, not boring, and has a variety of presentations, the problem is the lack of sufficient time. This finding is consistent with the findings of Khankar's (2001) study.

To overcome this problem, a number of participants mentioned some of the solutions that they resort to in order to present the lesson in a way that satisfies them and ensures achieving the required goals in each lesson. Teacher No. 10 narrated her experience saying that due to the density and length of the content, I had to explain and take additional time through reserve classes. Here we could see that this participant relied on taking additional classes to ensure content delivery and achieving all goals, but this solution does not fit all teachers, as teacher No. 13 emphasized that her load is already 24 classes and she cannot take reserve classes to complete the curriculum, so the time factor for me is a very big obstacle.

Unfortunately, participating teacher No. 11 just randomly picks some exercises to present and ignores others that cannot be covered as a strategy to overcome the intensity of the content.

Generally, the participants had opinions and suggestions about the intensity of the content and the appropriate way to overcome this obstacle. Three participants indicated reducing content to three units per semester instead of four units per semester. An equal number of teachers suggested increasing the number of classes to 5 classes per week in order to cover the content. To meet this increase in classes, they suggested hiring more English language teachers.

B- Content Density due to Frequent Repetitions

Another view expressed by 21 of the participants in the interview indicating that the most prominent problem related to the nature of the content and that the density of the content is due to iterations. Teacher No. 14 stated that the content is defective by repetition because the topics are repeated in the first and the second intermediate classes. In grammar lessons - for example - the only difference is the expansion and the increase in exercises.

C- Content Level Compared to Students' Level

Twenty participants agreed in the interview that the content level compared to the students' level is one of the problems of implementing the content and is related to the nature of the content. However, the views of the participants varied as follows:

1. The first group of 8 participating teachers confirmed that the content is at a difficult level and does not match the level of the students. One of the participants, teacher No. 6 assured that there is no connection between this curriculum and that of the sixth-grade curriculum. There are vast differences in the level of these two curricula. There is a shift between the skills of the sixth-grade primary and the content of the first-grade intermediate curriculum. In addition, students cannot understand this curriculum by themselves and in case they missed a class, they cannot understand the lesson alone through the textbook only, especially the English grammar as it is covered very briefly and the explanation for it, at the end of the book, is not sufficient. This level of the curriculum does not match the level of our students in the English language. Teacher No. 25 stated that she noted that students of the first grade looked impressed by the curriculum, but when they move to the second intermediate and third intermediate grades, I notice that they suffer from the difficulty of the curriculum and their inability to understand it alone without the help of the teacher. In addition, terms need to be explained and clarified

Table 3: Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations of the participants' responses

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly Agree		M	SD	Rank
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
Using English through an authentic context or the so-called real-world language.	0	0	1	0.5	29	14.6	77	38.9	91	46	4.30	0.732	5
Diversity in context, content, and texts such as dialogues, stories, articles, and videotapes.	0	0	1	0.5	14	7.1	82	41.4	101	51	4.42	0.647	4
Teaching culture as it varies in different countries.	0	0	1	0.5	42	21.2	52	26.3	103	52	4.29	0.816	6
Addressing different types of cultures used in language books: first languages culture (the culture of the learners themselves).	0	0	2	1	48	24.2	68	34.3	80	40.4	4.14	0.818	8
Including the culture of the target language (culture of English-speaking countries).	0	0	8	4	36	18.2	77	38.9	77	38.9	4.12	0.848	9
Presenting a diverse culture (multiple cultures of English and non-English speaking countries.)	5	2.5	12	6.1	38	19.2	66	33.3	77	38.9	4.00	1.27	10
Expanding of terms from one level to another (range and sequence).	5	2.5	0	0	14	7.1	65	32.8	114	57.6	4.42	0.832	3
Including topics related to the Saudi society and Islamic culture.	0	0	0	0	12	6.1	62	31.3	124	62.6	4.56	0.607	1
Including suitable vocabulary of the presented grammar.	0	0	6	3	18	9.1	100	50.0	74	26.7	4.22	0.734	7
Including a set of terms, titles and topics.	0	0	6	3	12	6.1	67	33.8	113	57.1	4.44	0.743	2

as students cannot alone understand these terms.

2. The second direction views the curriculum as an excellent fit for the students. This opinion was expressed by 7 participating teachers who believe that the content is excellent, and its level suits the students. One of the participants, teacher No. 19 stated that the content has varied topics and includes modern topics that reflect the culture of the society. Similarly, Teacher No. 20, assured that this curriculum is one of the best-developed ones she has taught. Interestingly, teacher No. 23 argued that she does not find any problems with the content of this series. She is totally impressed with the topics. She stated that her students interact with them.

Moreover, Teacher No. 12, indicated that the content of this curriculum is comprehensive; it guarantees the student's learning of the language in all respects, it also includes the appropriate grammatical rules for the students. Further, the series presents a comprehensive terminology reinforced with pictures that make it easy to explain them. In addition to listening, speaking, and reading skills, the curriculum includes sections to teach the writing skill, which is one of the most difficult skills that teachers seek to facilitate to students at this stage. In fact, this result contradicts findings of the study Alharbi (2014), which emphasized that one of the most prominent problems of teaching the English language lies in the curriculum itself as it focuses on specific skills only and not others, with a recommendation to pay more attention to listening and writing skills.

3 A third opinion expressed by the interviewed teachers was that the content is not useful and difficult. Five teachers supported this view emphasizing that the topics are not useful, and students find them difficult. They stressed that the content includes topics that do not mean anything to the students and are not interesting topics for them. For instance, Teacher No. 22 gave an example of one lesson, "the cruise by the ship", stating that the whole topic including the steps involved in the trip the related concepts and culture are boring and unimportant for students, and therefore they did not fully interact with these topics. In the same line, Teacher No. 17, gave another lesson, "Dream teams", as another example of the boring lessons. Moreover, Teacher No 9 criticized having a lesson about saving dolphins, while there are no dolphins in the students' environment, so what is the benefit of these subjects! She argued that the curriculum needs reevaluation to delete such topics. She also disagreed with the choice of names such as "jack" and supported replacing it by Khalid or Ahmed, for instance. the female students do not know whether it is a male or female name. In addition, she called for

integrating topics related to students' needs such as the vocabulary to be able to use it in useful situations such as at the hospital, the airport or the restaurant. Similar findings have been reported by Khankar (2001) who argued for the curriculum's lack of interesting topics. Similarly, Almashari (2005) in his study of the most important problems of teaching the English language, stating that the curriculum failed to attract students' attention and motivation to engage with its topics.

4- Content is not related to the Islamic Culture

One of the teachers stated that there is a lack of relevance of the content to the Islamic culture. Teacher No. 15 stated that the content presents the Islamic culture retroactively and anciently. For example, it presents "Marquq" as one of the foods of Saudi people, and the camel as the most prominent animal in the Saudi environment. However, she thinks these examples symbolize an ancient environment. In contrast to the above-mentioned opinion, Teacher No. 5 stated that the content includes good lessons for students to enjoy. For instance, in the first intermediate grade book, it presents the lesson of "Janadriyah" as an interesting cultural event, which can strengthen the patriotism as well.

CONCLUSION

Generally, the participating supervisors and teachers showed a high level of agreement regarding the compatibility of the content of the developed curriculum with the curriculum document. However, the analysis of the interviews with the participating teachers and supervisors indicated some problems regarding the implementation of the developed curriculum. These problems related to the nature of the content, the repletion of some topics, the time management skills of the teachers, and the students' level.

Based on the findings, it is suggested to evaluate the time allotted to teaching English and to provide more time to teach the developed curriculum in order to ensure the application of the language skills and the achievement of the related goals. In addition, the topics need to be reviewed to evaluate their suitability to students' level and to enrich the curriculum with pictures and drawings to illustrate the concepts. Furthermore, the curriculum should be evaluated with attention to the suitability to the culture by deleting topics and names that do not reflect the context of the students. In regard, to language skills, it is recommended to give more time to listening skills to train students on the skill to enhance their listening proficiency. In terms of further research directions, a similar study is recommended to evaluate the curriculum of the English language for the primary school and the high school

of the same series (MM Publications), to determine their compatibility with the curriculum document in Saudi Arabia, and to explore the potential problems of implementation from the point of view of teachers and supervisors. Furthermore, a comparative study between the developed English language curriculum and similar curricula in other countries to identify the problems of implementation and its relationship to the nature of the community. Moreover, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study between the English language curriculum in Saudi Arabia and the English language curriculum in the Gulf countries as they share some cultural similarities with Saudi Arabia and explore their success with English language teaching. A follow-up evaluation study that deals with the four English language skills in the developed curriculum are also recommended to find out the extent of the development of these skills among the students at each stage. In addition, a study to evaluate the curriculum developed for the English language for the intermediate level (MM Publications series), should be conducted implementing other evaluation models such as the performance criteria model or the CIPP of Stufflebeam.

REFERENCES

Adas, A., Obidat, D., & Abdelhaq, K. (2005). *Scientific research: Its concept, tools, and methods.* Riyadh: Dar Osama for Publishing and Distribution.

Albatainh, R. (2006). *Educational curricula: Concept, elements, principles, types, and development*. Jordan: Modern Book World.

Alhalisi, M. (2011). *The effect of using differentiated education on academic achievement in the English language course for sixth graders*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Faculty of Education. Umm Al Qura University, Makkah.

Alharbi, A. (2014). *Analyzing and evaluating the content of the English language courses for the high school in light of suggested standards for language proficiency*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Department of Curricula and Teaching Methods. Faculty of Education. Umm Al Qura University, Makkah.

Alharthy, I. (1998). *Curriculum planning and development from a realistic perspective*. Riyadh: Al-Shaqri Library.

Aljabr, Z. (1992). The effect of training courses on helping teachers of developed English language curriculum in the intermediate school in the State of Kuwait to overcome the difficulties of distributing students to groups, and the use of educational techniques. *The Educational Journal. Kuwait, 6* (23), 145-210.

Almashari (2005). *The problems of teaching English in public schools from the viewpoint of teachers.* Unpublished Master Thesis. Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University.

Almoshrif, A. (2002). The extent of actual and desirable teacher participation in curriculum development in the Ministry of Education, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Doctoral Thesis. *Journal of Educational Documentation,* (46).

AL-Radadi, N. (2008). *Evaluation of the First Grade English Textbook in Saudi Intermediate Schools*. Unpublished Master Thesis. Taiba University.

Alruwaished, M., Abdulkarim, S., Almadi S., & Beshi, M. (2005). *Difficulties facing the curriculum project and suggestions to fix it,* Riyadh: Ministry of Education, Center for Educational Development.

Alshamri, A. (1990). Teaching English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: For whom, when, and how to teach English? *King Saud University Journal. Educational Sciences.1* (1,2), 171-194.

Alshuaibi, Y., Almogibl, M., Alsalama, H., Albdri, A., & Alshamrani, S. (1999). Curricula in the Ministry of Education between partial and comprehensive development: A brief overview of what the General Curriculum Department is currently doing in the Ministry of Education. *The eighth Annual Meeting of the Saudi Society for Educational and Psychological Sciences,* Riyadh (9- 11, 1999).

Alwkeel, H. & Mufti, M. (2008). *Principles of curriculum development and its regulations.* Amman: Dar Al-Masirah.

AL-Yousef, H. (2007). *An Evaluation of the Third Grade Intermediate English Coursebook in Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished Master Thesis. King Saud University.

Dohmen, G. (1996)**.** *Lifelong learning: Guidelines for modern education policy*. Germany: Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology.

Fahmi. (2004). Is curriculum development the solution? Culture and Development, *Egypt, Year 5.,* (10)5-2.

Hallak, J. & Caillods, F. (1995)**.** *Educational planning, the international dimension***.** Switzerland: UNESCO: International Bureau of Education.

Khankar. W. (2001). *Identifying the most important problems of the English language curriculum for the first high school grad from the teachers' point of view in Taif Governorate.* Master's Thesis. Faculty of Education. Umm Al Qura University.

McGrath, I. (2001)**.** *Materials evaluation and design for language teaching.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Middleton, J., Ziderman, A. & Adams, A. (1996). *Skills for productivity, vocational educational training in developing countries.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Ministry of Education. (2014). *English Language Development Project*, Riyadh.

Ministry of Education. (2017a). *Statistics of English female supervisors in the education offices in Riyadh*. Riyadh.

Ministry of Education. (2017b). *Database of female intermediate school teachers' affairs in education offices in Riyadh.* Riyadh.

Muhammad, W. & Abdelazim, R. (2012). *Analysis of the curriculum content in the Art Sciences.* Amman: Al Masirah House for Publishing and Distribution.

Murphy-O'Dwyer, L. M. (1985) Evaluation. *Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education 7*, 97-128

Naji, I., Osman, S., Alsharbini, Z., Bawares, R., & Alnajjar, Z. (1992). Evaluating the goals of teaching English at the secondary level in the Yemen Arab Republic. *Journal of Educational Research and Studies - Yemen, 1*, (2) .154 - 160.

Sparks, D. & Hirsh, S. (1997)**.** *A new vision for staff development.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. USA, *Virginia*: Alexandria.

Taima, R. (1990). Training in developed curricula. Its foundations, levels, and plan. *Educational*