AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

A STUDY OF THE DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT BETWEEN GRADES 1-3 TESOL PREK-12 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS, AND THE NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN LEBANON

by

SARAH MOHAMAD ZREIM

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Education
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
January 2020

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

A STUDY OF THE DEGREE OF ALIGNMENT BETWEEN GRADES
1-3 TESOL PREK-12 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS, AND
THE NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN
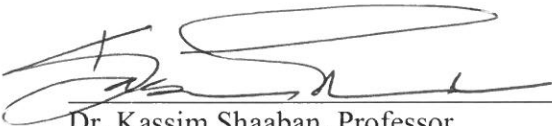LEBANON

by

SARAH MOHAMAD ZREIM

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Ghazi Ghaith, Professor   Advisor
Department of Education

_____
Dr. Kassim Shaaban, Professor   Member of Committee
Department of English

_____
Dr. Anies Al Hroub, Associate Professor   Member of Committee
Department of Education

Date of thesis defense: [21-01-2020]

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name:

Zreim	Sarah	Mohamad
Last	First	Middle

☒ Master's Thesis   ○ Master's Project   ○ Doctoral Dissertation

☒   I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

☐   I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes after:

> **One ---- year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**
> **Two ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**
> **Three ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**

_____   24/01/2020

Signature   Date

ACKNOELDGMENTS

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."

-Benjamin Franklin

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Sarah Zreim   for   Master of Arts

Major: Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Title: A Study of the Degree of Alignment between Grades 1-3 TESOL PREK-12 International Standards, English Language Teaching and Learning Materials, and the National English Language Curriculum in Lebanon

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the degree of alignment between the English language textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides of grades 1-3 and the English Lebanese official curriculum and TESOL PreK-12 International Standards. The researcher developed checklists based on the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards and the Official Lebanese Curriculum. To collect data, the course-books were analyzed and coded twice. Then, the researcher filled in the developed checklists in order to determine the degrees of alignment among the documents under analysis and address the study's questions. The results show that there is an inconsistency in the use of performance tasks among grades 1-3 in the course-books. Also, the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards were not significantly evident within the course-books. Emerging alignment patterns were presented and discussed along with conclusions, pedagogical and research implications, and study limitations.

Keywords: ESL, EFL, curriculum alignment, curriculum development, TESOL

CONTENTS

Appendix

Tables

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Lebanon, a mosaic society, was receptive to many languages and cultures throughout its history due to its location on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Despite its relatively small area and population, Lebanon includes diverse religious sects and belief affiliations. The country's various religions contributed to the variety of its educational composition (Tannous, 1997). According to Zakharia (2009), over the last century, the symbolism of language has held importance in ideological struggles, religious and secular nationalist discourses within Lebanon. As a result, language has been directly linked to the formation of nationalism, regional status, advancements, and international affairs with the West (Zakharia, 2009). Thus, Lebanon was susceptible to foreign influences, which, in return, impacted the teaching of languages other than the native language, Arabic, through three different phases (Frayha, 1999). Historically, Lebanon's educational history passed through four stages: (1) before the 20th century, (2) during the French Mandate, (3) independence to civil war, (4) end of the civil war until our present time.

Before the 20th Century

Before the 20th century, foreign missionaries had established schools that were the product of European relationships with the country. Lebanon has an extended educational history that dates back to the establishment of the Maronite School in Rome back in 1548. The Maronite school taught theology, logic, philosophy, and languages (Latin, Greek, French, and other languages) (Bashour, 1978). The Maronite priests who attended the Maronite School came back to improve Lebanon's education by spreading awareness of the importance of education. Subsequently, the various schools established in the 18th century are Aintoura School, Zahle,

Zagharta, Bkorkash School, Aajaltoun and Shahrour Valley School (Bashour, 1978). During the renaissance era, a turning point in Lebanon's cultural development, several changes took place. The most remarkable changes were the following: Aintoura School reopened after it closed for forty-five years, Malta imported the American press to Beirut, and the first all-girls school opened its doors. Many missionaries came to Lebanon during the second half of the 19th century. These missionaries were mostly Catholics from France and Evangelicals from the United States of America, England, France, and Russia (Shaaban, 1997). The establishment of schools stressed instructing students in the missionaries' native language and Arabic (Bashour, 1978). Therefore, foreign languages were distributed along with sectarian groups with French being learned by Maronites and Catholics. English was taught to Sunni Muslims, mostly by the elites of Greek Orthodox (Frayha, 2004). Even though the French tried to spread their language among Catholics and Maronites, other missionaries' schools instructed students through using the Arabic language, at first, and were open to all religious sects (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2003). During the late 19th century, these missionaries established two universities in Lebanon, the Syrian Protestant College (eventually American University of Beirut) in 1866 and Saint Joseph's University in 1875.

The French Mandate

Throughout the French Mandate (1920-1943), French authorities made the teaching of French compulsory along with Arabic. Consequently, schools that taught English and Arabic had to include the French language as a part of the curriculum (Bahous & Bacha, 2011). Post World War I, France mandated Lebanon aiming to make Lebanon an independent country in the future. In the year 1924, the French mandate established the first Ministry of Public Instruction and the first state-sponsored school system (Shaaban, 1997). The French proceeded to set fundamental principles which included the following educational decisions:

2

1. Bilingual education is mandatory in all public schools (French and Arabic)

2. The medium of instruction sciences, mathematics, and social studies was French

3. The private sector should teach the official curricula. Nevertheless, English medium schools were allowed to teach content area subjects in English (Shaaban, 1997).

Although schools included both Arabic and French, however, French was given more power since it was the language of instruction to the primary subjects. On top of that, the French language was also a prerequisite to entering any civil services (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). In August 1926, in an article published by a Beirut-based francophone newspaper, L'Orient raised concerns after mentioning that soon, the Arabic language would disappear. During the mandate, the language of education became an important representation of "modernity" and "enlightenment." The Languages taught at the time were an indicator of its speakers' social class, religion, identity, and to a certain degree, geographic and demographic roots (Sbaiti, 2009). In the year 1929, the ministry included four official exams as a part of the official curricula, corresponding to the end of the elementary, intermediate, and second and third years of the second cycle (Elementary Certificate, Brevet, Baccalaureate I, and Baccalaureate II) (Shaaban, 1997). Schools in Lebanon became as diverse as its religious communities; each religion was associated with a specific school, whether it was private or public, French or English. This contributed to Lebanon's social fragmentation, cultural disintegration, and national disunity (Tannous, 1997).

Independence to Civil War

In the year in 1943, on November 22nd, Lebanon gained its independence from the French Mandate. The new government was faced with various challenges that were directly related to nationalism. Due to the French mandate, the national identity and unity were at risk.

Thus, the Lebanese government attempted to dissociate from the French government politically and educationally (Shaaban and Ghaith, 1999). Announcements were made, all of which address nationalism through building a strong identity and strengthening the Arabic language. Commonly, education is seen as a primary tool for achieving national unity and identity (Shaaban, 1997). The government issued new measures:

1. Decree #6998, released in the year 1946, declared Arabic as the only official language in Lebanon, and all subjects should be taught using the native language except for the foreign language.

2. Decree #7000, in the year 1950, allowed private schools to contribute to the official curriculum. It also gave foreign schools the right to grant their certificates.

3. Decree #7004, announced the year 1946, stated that after students finish their intermediate and secondary education, they could take official examinations in Arabic or a foreign language (French or English) (Bashour, 1987).

According to Shaaban (1997), these legislations indicate that official language should be given prominence in the new curriculum. Moreover, there had been a longstanding tradition of foreign languages being the medium of instruction of mathematics and sciences. Until this date, foreign languages are seen as a source of modernism, which grants their speakers more opportunities in the job market. In the golden era (1965-1975) of the Lebanese education, the teachers were in state-sponsored schools and at the Lebanese university were highly qualified in both the French and English departments. For once, public school students were competing in a society that viewed foreign language as a requirement. However, this era did not last long since the chaos started in the year 1975 with the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War.

End of the Civil War to the Present Time

In the year 1989, the TAIF agreement put an end to the ongoing Civil War in Lebanon. They declared clear guidelines regarding the Lebanese national identity. Regarding the usage of languages in the country, the government emphasized two critical principles.

1. The Arabic language is the national language and should be used efficiently and effectively.

2. Proficiency in one foreign language for the promotion of multiculturalism and openness (NCERD, 1995).

These principles maintained a positive attitude towards foreign languages in the country. The government then adopted two policies that were limited to public schools only. The principles strengthen the importance of foreign languages (Shaaban, 1997). They are the following:

1. Enable public schools to use foreign languages (French or English) as the language of instruction to teach all subject matter areas in the pre-school and elementary levels (decree #5589 raised the year 1995)

2. Introduction of a second foreign language in the intermediate cycle (NCERD, 1995).

The Lebanese Curriculum Development

In 1997, the Lebanese Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced through the National Center of Educational Research and Development (NCERD) new curricula that were implemented in 1998 (Frayha, 2003). The new curricula reflected the principles of a modern educational philosophy grounded by the TAIF agreement (1989), which ended the civil war (1975-1989) and aimed at building national unity and equipping the Lebanese youth with the needed skills for academic success and employability.

Shaaban (2013) describes the steps followed in developing the new Lebanese official English language curriculum for grades 1-12. Shaaban reported that a committee of thirty-five English Language experts from various backgrounds participated in developing the curriculum. As a first step towards a developed new curriculum, the committee perceived that it is necessary to revise, critique, and evaluate the old curriculum. Furthermore, the committee reasoned that it is imperative to consult international standards for English as a foreign language (EFL) education in developing the new English curriculum (Shaaban, 2013). Consequently, several curricular plans and guidelines were reviewed such as the English National Curriculum in England and Wales (Carter, 1991), the Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools (Van Ek, 1991), and the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines. The TESOL PreK-12 International Standards were also considered given that they provide widely accepted guidelines for English as a second language (ESL) teaching and learning of proven efficacy. This resulted in the development of a new curriculum that proclaimed a theme-based approach and addressed the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in addition to study skills, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. Furthermore, a series of textbooks for grades 1-12 were developed during (1997-2000). These books are currently used in all public schools as well in a considerable number of private schools.

Components of the Lebanese English Language Curriculum

The New Framework for Education (1995) and the Plan for Educational Reform (1994) proposed by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) through the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD) established the principles and guidelines for the new curricula. While developing the English language curriculum, the

6

main aim of the committee was to translate the principles into a curriculum that reflects modern theories, trends, and methodologies of curriculum design and teaching English as a second/foreign language (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997). NCERD (1998) emphasized the following principles underlying the development of the English language curriculum:

1. Language Learning is learning to communicate;

2. Language varies according to academic domains and tasks;

3. Learning a new language is becoming familiar with a new culture;

4. Language learning is most effective when it takes place through meaningful interactive tasks;

5. Language skills are interdependent. (p. 146).

In addition, NCERD stressed the goals of "developing English language proficiency, promoting cultural understanding, and enhancing the ability to work with others. There was also an emphasis on learning English for academic purposes (EAP)" (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997, p. 200). As indicated earlier, the new curriculum prioritized attaining proficiency in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also focused on study skills and cultural awareness (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997). The following goals were developed based on promoting "communication skills, concept-formation techniques, proper study habits, socialization skills, and critical thinking abilities" (Shaaban, 2000, p. 307). Specifically, NCERD (1998) proposed the following general objectives for English language teaching and learning:

1. Enabling students to communicate effectively in different situations and settings with native and non-native speakers alike using authentic, appropriate, and correct linguistic forms

2. Allowing the students to communicate effectively in subject matter areas in general, and particularly in mathematics and sciences

3. Equipping students with the requisite linguistic skills for pursuing university education in their fields of specialization

4. Developing students' critical thinking skills (analytical, synthetic, critical)

5. Developing intercultural understanding and appreciation

6. Promoting students' positive attitudes toward target language and culture

7. Enhancing students' abilities to work with others (p. 148)

The TESOL PreK-12 International Standards

The Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESOL) professional organization developed the following five ESL standards:

Standard 1: English language learners communicate for social, intercultural, and instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of language arts.

Standard 3: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of mathematics.

Standard 4: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of science.

Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of social studies.

Each of those standards is further detailed across the four language skill domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The standards are also framed within five language proficiency levels within each language domain (p. 2).

Statement of the Problem

Shaaban and Ghaith (1999) maintain that there exists a gap between the official English Language curriculum and the English language national textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides developed by the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD). Furthermore, it is unclear to what extent the teaching and learning materials (textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides) are aligned with international standards in the field of teaching English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL). This presents considerable challenges for teachers as they aim to enable their students to achieve the curriculum goals and objectives.

The present study focuses on investigating the degrees of alignment between grades 1-3 TESOL PreK-12 International Standards, English Language Teaching and Learning Materials, and the National English Language Curriculum in Lebanon.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis research is twofold: to examine the degree of alignment between the English language textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides of grades in Cycle I (Grades 1-3) with the official curriculum on the one hand and the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards of grades 1-3 on the other. Specifically, the following research questions are addressed:

1. To what extent are the textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides for grades 1-3 aligned with the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards?

2. To what extent do the English language national course-books of grades 1-3 reflect the official curriculum's goals, objectives, and performance tasks?

Rationale

The present research is rationalized based on the proposition that public schools still witness decreased enrollment rates due to the weakness of foreign language education within these schools (Frayha, 2009; MEHE, 2011). The medium of instruction for mathematics and sciences in the Lebanese public schools is a foreign language (English or French), which negatively impacts achievement if students are not proficient enough in these languages. In this regard, Shaito (2013) expresses concern that inadequate language instructional practices and limited English proficiency levels may contribute to students' drop out and termination of their further education.

Textbooks play a crucial role in the EFL teaching and learning process in Lebanon's public schools. Due to numerous historical, cultural, and educational reasons, teachers may over-rely on the textbooks, and they may not use any additional resources. Textbooks may also lack the

pedagogical practices that are supposed to be applied to achieve the desired curricular and proficiency outcomes. Since textbooks are the primary or only source of teaching (Awad, 2013; Bashour 1978), it is vital to examine to what extent they aid curriculum implementation and reflect international standards and best practices.

Besides, it should be noted that there is some degree of disparity among scholars and researchers of the Lebanese educational system. For instance, some scholars and researchers believe in the effectiveness of the new curriculum as it introduced unique teaching and curriculum design trends and methodologies (e.g., Bacha & Bahous, 2010; Esseili, 2011; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999). These researchers maintain that the goals, instructional objectives, and the performance tasks of the official Lebanese English language curriculum are believed to be aligned with the communicative approach to teaching and learning English (Esseili, 2011; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999; Shaaban; 2005). However, the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (LAES) contradicted these researchers by stating that the objectives: (1) value tertiary education more than technical or vocational education, (2) show no importance to the need of language learning to those directed to work, (3) some objectives remain the same as the lower level objectives or subordinate to them. Furthermore, Shaaban and Ghaith (1999) claimed that the disparity between the curriculum and the NCERD developed textbooks is a serious issue that teachers had to face daily, the researchers also stated that the "overreliance on texts from encyclopedias in some grades, absence of scope and sequence and gradation, scarcity of cooperative learning activities, and no clear evidence of exercises promoting critical thinking and study skills are all examples of serious deviations in textbooks from the curriculum plan" (p. 361). Along similar lines, Shaaban (2005) reported that in private schools, English as a Foreign

Language (EFL), teachers thought that the curriculum was adequate, but they believed that the textbooks did not address the curriculum's objectives.

It is significant to mention that neither the Ministry of Education nor the NCERD has reviewed the curriculum since its implementation in 1998. However, according to Article 3 by the NCERD, the Lebanese curriculum should be under continuous revision. After the Lebanese curriculum was published in 1997, it has not been evaluated. This violates the Lebanese law, which requires periodic evaluations (NCERD, 1998). The lack of revisions raises the question of where does our curriculum that was developed twenty-two years ago stands in our modern days. Shaaban (2013) mentioned that curriculum developers stressed the importance of introducing revisions based on constructive feedback from practitioners, experts, and researchers.

Few studies have researched the English language curriculum at the elementary level, the shortage of researching English language learning in the Arab region in general and Lebanon in particular directly impacts well-informed decisions related to education policies, curriculum development, and teaching materials especially when course-books are adopted from Western countries without any consideration for the local context in which these books are implemented (Esseili, 2011). In fact, none of the previous studies have examined the degree of alignment of the grades 1-3 NCERD English textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides to the goals, objectives, and performance tasks set by the official curriculum nor to international standards.

Consequently, the present study aimed to investigate the degree of alignment between the English language textbooks, workbooks, and teachers of grades 1-3 and the curriculum goals and objectives on the one hand and the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards on the other.

Significance

The significance of this study on the practical level is the provision of recommendations for future curriculum designs that are based on empirical evidence from the results of analyzing the textbooks and identifying their strengths and weaknesses. In the Lebanese public schools, teachers have no choice in textbook selection. It is only one book across the country that is used in public schools. Hence, teachers need to be aware of the weaknesses and strengths of the textbooks they use. Furthermore, teachers need to make sure that their students reach the objectives by supplementing the textbooks with additional materials beyond the textbooks when teaching the weak sections of the book. The present study will also provide a framework for analyzing textbooks at these levels and other elementary level classes.

On the theoretical level, the present study aims to fill a gap in the literature since no other studies have examined the textbooks of grades one, two, and three concerning the official Lebanese curriculum and the TESOL PreK-12 International standards.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a review of relevant research studies in the field of curriculum design. First, it presents various curriculum definitions defined by many experts in the field of education. Then, it explores the multiple critical components of English language teaching. After this, it summarizes studies that contributed to the literature internationally and nationally. Lastly, it explains the relevance of the conducted research.

Curriculum Definitions

The late 1980s was a turning point for the theory and practice of curriculum design and language syllabus (Graves, 2008). The authors Dubin & Olstain's (1986) book *Course Design* and Yalden's (1987) *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*, emphasized the importance of communication concerning educational practices. Since then, examples of language curriculum development have been reported and recorded (Brown, 1995; Markee, 1997; Shaaban & Ghaith, 1997). Due to the ongoing approaches to language curriculum development, it is essential to define "curriculum" to gain valuable perspectives on language curriculum. The literature provides a wide range of operational definitions of the word "curriculum." Glatthorn, Boschee, whitehead, and Boschee (2012) claim that "curriculum" is considered as one of the most challenging concepts since it has been used in various ways throughout history. Thus, it often helps to research the original meaning of the concept. The Latin word 'curriculum' means a 'course' or 'track' that must be followed.

When defining the curriculum in the context of education, the most obvious interpretation is to view it as 'a plan for learning' (Taba, 1962). As stated by Tyler (1949), the curriculum is a

plan for action or a written document that includes a plan for achieving the desired goals or objectives. Marshall (2003) defined the curriculum as a grade-level set of expectations which state the scope and sequence for every grade level. In addition, a curriculum includes the time frame of the materials and the order that they should be taught. This definition describes the curriculum as what every grade will learn; it has its map to follow throughout a specific time frame. Other researchers focused more on the impact of education on students' behaviors, according to Dopson and Tas (2004), the definition of curriculum highlights the importance of providing students with a set of classroom skills which will affect them positively and constructively change them. It is a set of experiences that students are subjected to, which, in return, modifies their behaviors (Stewart, 1993).

On the contrary, some researchers gave a broader and more general definition. As stated by White (1988), the curriculum is the entire content taught, and objectives realized within one school or educational system. Stern (1983) gives a more detailed explanation than White (1988), a curriculum is not limited to the taught subject area; it is the entire instructional process, including types of equipment, materials, assessments, and the teacher training process (Stern, 1983). In light of this perspective, a curriculum should involve planning, implementation, and evaluation (Hall & Hewings, 2001).

The Importance of Textbooks in Language Learning Classrooms

It has been commonly accepted that textbooks are a fundamental component to obtain successful EFL/ESL education. Sheldon (1987) mentions that manuals could be considered as a published book that its objective is to aid language learners linguistically and expressively. Textbooks are not only useful to language learners but also are beneficial to teachers and

function as a teaching instrument (O'Neil, 1982l; Ur 1996). Ordinarily, students' textbooks are one component out of other course-book materials such as the teacher's guide and workbook. These materials are intended to assist teachers by directing them towards specific language learning activities and support students' classroom practices in an effective way (Cunningsworth, 1995; Mares, 2003). Accordingly, it is vital to explain the widespread of ELT globally. Textbooks are found to be effective in teaching at universities, colleges, language centers, and schools. In summary, ESL/EFL textbooks constitute a significant contribution to any ELT program (Litz, 2005; Sheldon 1988).

Yet, despite proven efficacy, the role of textbooks inside the classroom has been debatable since the year 1981. Some believe that textbooks are beneficial to the teaching and learning process. On the contrary, others believe that it prevents learners from getting a proper education.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Textbooks

For decades, there has been an ongoing argument about whether textbooks are the ideal medium for introducing language learning materials. In 1981, Allwright (1981) began a debate about the value of textbooks. He argued against the way textbooks introduced language learning materials, claiming that textbooks also eliminate learners from arranging the curriculum design process. He believes that textbooks limit the teachers' roles inside the classroom, which leads to teachers' demotivation to give more input inside the classroom.

Additionally, he noted that textbooks are subject centered and give no importance to students' participation. Supporting Allwright's point of view, Prabhu (1989) argues that textbooks will not be useful because they are not in touch with the learners' current knowledge

16

and needs. Along similar lines, Charalambous (2011) discusses that if students were actively participating in their learning, there would be better learning outcomes. To support that, Charalambous also stated that if the same topics and materials are being used, it leads to a boring teaching and learning approach.

However, O'Neil (1982) firmly stated his belief that textbooks are beneficial in delivering language learning materials. Likewise, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) believe that textbooks are essential, and without them, the classroom is incomplete. Furthermore, according to Haycroft (1998), textbooks help students measure their progress throughout the academic school year. Similarly, Sheldon (1988) comparably considers that learners believe that textbooks have more validity and credibility and save teachers more time and money. They can also save teachers' cognitive and occupational loads. Textbooks also offer teachers security, guidance, and support (O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988).

The Language Learning Classroom

Gumperz (1962) indicates that the term 'language setting' refers to the totality of communication roles inside the classroom. The environment plays a vital role in determining the learning and teaching atmosphere. Thus, when planning a language program, program planners need to understand and assess the importance of the language setting in terms of its impact on the learners and the learning process (Dubin, & Olshtain, 1986).

The learning process and interaction in the language classroom have been described through a set of metaphors—the classroom as control, as discourse, as communication, as socialization, and as an 'ecological system' (Breen, 2001; Tudor, 2001; Wright, 2005). The following metaphors symbolize the classroom differently. On this account, 'the classroom as

17

socialization' embodies it as a social setting where students learn the norms and ethics which they will integrate into their lives later on. Tudor (2001) proposes that classrooms develop their own social rules. According to Breen (2001), the classroom as discourse reveals how teachers and students behave inside the classroom; it can provide awareness that can help with L2 learning and teaching. It reveals patterns of behaviors, motivation, classroom talk, interaction, and control (Breen, 2001).

As an illustration, the language learning process needs facilitators that encourage and motivate students. Thus, language learning activities play a crucial role in the process. However, Nation and Macalister (2009) mention that not all teachers set language learning objectives for the activities that they implement inside the classroom. Also, beginner teachers are mostly concerned about whether the students are enjoying the activity or not. This leads to the conclusion that it takes a courageous teacher to question whether the activity is resulting in useful learning. The researchers came up with a list of questions in which the teacher should consider before introducing a new activity to the classroom:

1. Will my learners enjoy this activity?

2. Does this activity fit in the classroom's time frame?

3. Will this activity cause chaos?

4. Do the students know how to complete this activity, or should I explain it to them thoroughly?

5. Will this activity create a lot of grading for me to complete?

All of these questions help teachers in designing a productive activity in which the students will enjoy and at the same time, it ensures a calm classroom environment. Environmental analysis is an essential part of teaching because it provides successful results since it takes into consideration the local situation (Nation & Macalister, 2009).

The Role of an ESL Teacher inside the Classroom

Aagaard and Skidmore (2002) claim that research has been going on for more than a hundred years, trying to figure out what an effective teacher is. Most of the results of the literature state that both personal characteristics and teaching methods seem to play a vital role (Cotton, 1995; Demmon-Berger, 1986; Gresh, 1995; Norton, 1997; Witcher, Onwuegbuzie, Minor, 2001; Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Eckert, 2013; Gao & Liu, 2013).

As a result, further pedagogical implications should be mentioned. Most English teachers use the textbook as a guide for students to follow. They teach students from the beginning of the book to the last unit. On the other hand, some other teachers, who have more freedom, choose specific texts, activities, or exercises from outside resources and use them together. Most published course-books are usually written by professionals in the field who have experience in curriculum design. As a result, the teacher should base their teaching process according to the provided course-books. However, if there is a gap between the goals and objectives not filled by the usage of the course-book, then the teacher can reach out to outside resources and try to fill in that gap. Teachers who only refer back to the course materials are passively teaching for the textbooks rather than actively engaging students with essential resources in the subject area.

Teacher's Guides Evaluation

Barely any research has been conducted on ELT teachers' guides. Coleman (1986) questions whether the pedagogical approach of teachers' guides is thoroughly explained to teachers. Coleman concluded that based on the evaluated samples, less care was given in the creation of the teachers' guides than in the materials for learners. Thus, there is a threat that poorly written teachers' guides lead to poorly taught textbooks. Mol and Tin (2008) complain that a weakness of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) textbooks is that they 'focus on *what* to teach rather than *how* to teach' (p. 88). In addition to that, they have suggested that for teachers' empowerment, information about research findings on SLA, motivation, and many other language learning aspects could be added to the textbooks. Nicol and Crespo (2006), found out that teachers' guides need to be written in a way that also supports new teachers pedagogically and academically. Teachers' guides should include what and how to teach a lesson. In fact, the guide should provide further explanation about why specific lessons are presented in this sequence. They also mention that it is essential to include justifications in engaging and interactive methods. Because providing more text and various pedagogical approaches to how a concept could be taught might not interest and intellect teachers. Thus, Remillard (2000) suggests that new teachers need to be involved in investigating curriculum materials. Teachers should engage in questioning the consequences of adapting or not adapting certain materials. As a result, teachers should take the initiative in wisely considering which materials to teach. Thus, the teacher's guide is an essential aid for teachers to pick and choose from the lessons based on the presented explanation it provides.

Textbooks' Evaluation

Cunningsworth (1995) and Ellis (1997) maintain that there are three different types of course book evaluations. They both agree that the most common type of assessment is the 'predictive' or 'pre-use' evaluation that evaluates course books for future usage. The other two textbook evaluations are the 'in-use' evaluation, which is designed to examine material that is being used and the 'retrospective' or 'post-use' (reflective) evaluation of a textbook that has been used.

Ellis (1997) differentiates between two types of evaluations in detail. A predictive evaluation is designed to make a decision about which materials are best to use. On the other hand, a retrospective evaluation examines materials that have been used. It provides teachers with the strengths and weaknesses of the applied curriculum. It also tests the validity of a predictive assessment, and it can help improve predictive instruments in the future.

A retrospective evaluation provides teachers with information that can be used to help determine whether it is worthwhile to keep using the same textbooks. It provides teachers with the results which help them decide which activities and lessons are helpful. It is also beneficial for them to decide which lessons need some modifications and which do not.

Review of Tools and Studies on Textbooks and Material Evaluation

Since materials evaluation is viewed as an integral part of the educational process, it is vital to review the tools and studies that examined the effectiveness and textbooks and teaching and learning materials more generally.

During the last three decades, various textbook evaluation checklists have been developed to evaluate the English language textbook. Many researchers have contributed to the

evaluation of ESL/EFL textbooks. Concerning the importance of textbooks in teaching ESL, Nunan states, the selection procedure can be significantly contributed by the use of *materials evaluation procedures,* which ensure that the materials are consistent with the learners' interests and needs. Besides, teaching and learning materials should be in harmony with the institution's ideology on the nature of learning languages (Nunan, 1991)

According to Cunningsworth (1995), materials' evaluation is a complicated issue that evaluators go through. Thus, many variables come into play when evaluating teaching materials. As a result, Cunningsworth proposes the most general criteria for evaluation that is referred to as a basic quick-reference checklist. This checklist includes a developed set of 45 criteria in 8 categories: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topics, methodology, teachers' books, and practical considerations.

Williams (1983) recommends an evaluative scheme which is based on teaching expectations and the linguistic and pedagogical elements correlated to these expectations. The scheme is based on four elements: (1) a recent second language methodology, (2) learners' needs, (3) instructions for non-native English language learners, and (4) socio-cultural appropriateness. He proposes an EFL/ESL textbook evaluation questionnaire which involves seven criteria in 28 categories: (1) general, (2) speech, (3) grammar, (4) vocabulary, (5) reading, (6) writing, (7) and technical. The general criteria are concerned with accepting universal suggestions about methodology, the learners' needs, the teacher, and the community. The technical criterion addresses "the quality of editing and publishing; the availability of supplementary material; cost and durability of the text; the authenticity of language and style of the writer, etc." (pp. 352-353). Williams affirms that the checklist is not in-depth; hence teachers can develop their own sets of criteria for multi-level course books.

Similarly, Skierso (1991) suggests that before performing a coursebook evaluation, there should be background information about the learners, the school's objectives, and the teachers. Skierso developed the below criteria: bibliographical data, aims, and goals, subject matter, vocabulary and structures, layout, and physical make up. Skierso claims that it is essential to examine the teacher's manual under the following criteria: general features, supplementary exercises, methodological and pedagogical guidance, and linguistic background guidance.

Sheldon (1988) suggests a checklist that consists of 53 questions classified under 17 major criteria, which evaluates factors such as accessibility, content, layout, and authenticity. Sheldon is aware of the wide ESL course-books, and he advocates the use of evaluative measures. Sheldon notes that there should be a globally standardized evaluative measure of materials analysis.

Hrehovčik (2002) believes that evaluating a textbook is a difficult task to accomplish because there isn't a scientifically based methodology for evaluation. Accordingly, he presented three crucial criteria for evaluating Likert. The first criterion is a tendency towards descriptivism, the second criteria is an orientation towards a linguistic aspect of evaluation, and the third criteria is the shortage of theoretical foundation of evaluative criteria.

Evaluative Checklists like these imply that researchers are striving for comprehensiveness in evaluation procedures. Cunningsworth (1995) and Sheldon (1988) claim that teachers should evaluate textbooks subjectively rather than objectively. The reason for that is because a checklist requires adaptation before being submitted to the personal use of a teacher. As Cunningsworth (1995) declares, the selection is a framework and should be modified to suit the teacher's preferences. Likewise, Sheldon (19888) agreeably mentions that coursebook

23

evaluation is a subjective activity and that there is not a fixed standard or system that evaluators can follow.

Review of Empirical Research

English language curriculum evaluation from around the world. Kırkgöz (2009) discusses an evaluation of the three English textbooks which are provided by the Ministry of National Education (MNE). It aimed to study teachers' and fourth-grade students' perceptions of the three English language teaching textbooks of grade four. The researcher distributed questionnaires that included 37 items conducted in the light of curriculum objectives to students and teachers. A parallel questionnaire was developed containing the same set of 37 statements. Both teachers and students had to express their opinion by filling out the questionnaire, which ranged from a five-point Likert scale ranging from "I totally agree" to "I do not agree at all" by coloring the appropriate smiley face.

In addition, the researcher conducted focused group interviews with students and teachers. Focus groups included 61 teachers, 12 of whom using *Trip 1*, 11 *Texture*, and 38 *Time for English*. One hundred sixty-one students were interviewed, 60 using *Trip 1*, 41 *Time for English*, and 58 *Texture*. The students were asked three questions throughout the interview: (1) whether they liked learning English through the particular textbook, (2) what they liked the most about the book, and (3) if they can use what they learned in real life. The results showed that all grade 4 students who were interviewed liked their books. Students expressed their interest in hands-on activities, drawings, coloring, songs, and games. Also, students believe that they can use the information found in their English book in their real-life experiences.

On the other hand, teachers were asked different questions. During the interview, the researcher asked teachers three questions: (1) whether the textbooks meet the MNE curriculum objectives and goals, (2) their thoughts about the methodology underlying the design of the book, and (3) whether these books can teach students the English language adequately. As a result of the conducted interviews, teachers showed positive opinions regarding the utilized textbooks. They all agreed that the textbooks meet the MNE goals and objectives. Secondly, they mentioned that the books are student-centered, thus, allowing students to be active learners inside the classroom. Lastly, they believe that these books are efficient and motivate students in English language learning.

Hong Xu (2004) carried out an evaluative study and explored the criteria for assessing ESL textbooks. The purpose of the study was twofold; on the one hand, it was to investigate the challenges that teachers face in textbook use. On the other hand, it aimed to develop a list of criteria for selecting ESL textbooks for Canadian high school students. The conducted research was qualitative; it included questionnaires and interviews. The developed questionnaire included 80 criteria in 13 categories: reliability, organization, content, activities, culture, evaluation, legal, communication, format, additional components, literacy, language, and marketability.

As a result, Hong Xu's research indicated that teachers and supervisors take into account several determinants. First, they refer to the quality of language in the textbook, an appealing textbook design, evidence of advancement in content, reading comprehension questions after each reading, a sufficient amount of activities, proper communication skills development, educational validity, topics that students can relate to, an assessment for the costs and durability, and differentiated activities which match the needs of a multi-level classroom. Also, the

researcher stated that there was a need for an in-depth textbook evaluation tool and methods to train teachers on the way of usage.

The Finnish National Board of Education introduced a new curriculum in 2004. A conducted study was done by Korkeamäki and Dreher (2011) in Finland that aimed to study how this core curriculum has been implemented for past years by observing language and literacy lessons in eight first and second grade classrooms over two months.The study involved gathering data from forty-four preservice teachers' observations. The observations were in eight grade one classrooms, three grade two classrooms, and one combined grades one and two classrooms. Groups of two-to-four preservice teachers conducted the observations. To ensure manageable inspections and to gather unbiased data, the preservice teachers were asked to focus on the below aspects during classroom instruction:

1. the structure of the lesson;
2. the methods and materials used for literacy lessons;
3. content of the lesson;
4. students' engagement and motivation;
5. social interaction;
6. physical environment (grouping of children, literacy environment such as texts on the wall and classroom library);
7. general atmosphere in the classroom; and
8. The use of teachable moments (Korkeamäki & Dreher, 2011, p. 117).

During the observations, the preservice teachers took notes while they observed students. They also followed the course of the lessons and indicated the duration of each activity. The

researchers analyzed the observational records; by using deductive content analysis. Furthermore, the analysis of lessons resumed by comparing and linking the categories and their properties and finding a relationship between them. The final analysis step involved comparing the findings from the observational notes to the core curriculum and the content of the 'mother tongue and literature.'

Results indicated a lack of consistency between the taught and the national core curriculum. The instruction in the school did not fully correspond with the requirements of the national core curriculum. For example, the course-books in use were published after the national core curriculum was in place. However, the lessons were mostly teacher-directed, whole-group work; but the core curriculum emphasizes the importance of students taking active roles inside the classroom, learning with help from their peers and teacher. As a result, the course-books did not fully reflect the principles of the core curriculum. In the observed classrooms, students were not offered opportunities to be active rather than passive. This leads to the question of whether other schools are facing the same teaching practice and discrepancy between the taught curriculum and the national core curriculum.

A study done in Iran by Moazam and Jodai (2014) evaluated the "Total English" course-books for intermediate level students based on a checklist adapted from Litz (2005). The evaluation checklist criteria included methodological, physical, organizational, and logistical characteristics. Some items have been devoted to the skills and components of language and topics. Gender issues and cultural awareness have also been taken into consideration. The checklist also included the correspondence of the textbooks to the interest and needs of students. The researchers formed a five-point structured questionnaire with thirty-five items on a Likert scale: twenty Iranian males and females TEFL teachers teaching the book filled in the

questionnaire. The researchers investigated the textbooks and stated their subjective opinions. After performing the research, the researchers displayed descriptive statistics of the teachers' answers to the items of the questionnaires. The overall results indicate that Iranian textbooks meet the goals since the results showed how many teachers agree or disagree with the stated statements offered by Litz (2005). According to the questionnaire, the textbooks contain the essential criteria which an ELT textbook must provide. Thus, the researchers recommend this textbook to be used in future ELT courses.

English curricula evaluation in the Arab world. Previous research is done to investigate curriculum design in the Arab world, mainly focused on the taught curriculum through observations of teaching styles rather than the written curriculum (Dbaibo, 2016). Researching teaching techniques rather than the written curriculum proves that there is a shortage in the evaluation of the written curriculum (Dbaibo, 2016).

A study done in Egypt by Sheir, Abdel Khal, and El Nabawy (2014) investigated whether oral questioning techniques enriched students' critical thinking. The researchers believe that one of the main issues that all secondary students suffer from is weakness in critical thinking skills. Thus, the main aim of the research was to develop critical thinking skills through the oral questioning technique. The participants of the research were sixty students selected from El Zahra Secondary School for girls only in the academic year 2012-2013. The sixty participants were split into two groups, thirty students for the control group and thirty students for the experimental group. The researchers used three instruments to collect information:

1. Critical thinking checklist to determine the critical thinking sub-skills necessary for first secondary students.

2. Pre and post-tests to measure students' critical thinking skills

3. A rating scale rubric for scoring critical thinking skills.

The researchers reviewed previous studies that included critical thinking skills and oral questioning. Then, they selected suitable critical thinking techniques, such as mind-mapping questioning, student-centered discussion, and brainstorming. Next, they identify appropriate topics. Lastly, the control and experimental groups were administered. Results indicate that the experimental group students gained higher scores than the controlled group students. Therefore, students' progress in critical thinking is due to oral questioning activities as a teaching method. The results indicate that questioning techniques like probing increased the critical thinking skills of students. The study stated the importance of adding questioning to the curriculum, so teachers will be motivated to use questioning inside the classroom setting.

In Iraq, research done by Suleyman (2011) investigates the effects of pictorial story style on the vocabulary acquisition of sixth graders during the academic year 2008-2009. The study's sample consisted of 66 female students who were divided into two groups; the first group was the experimental group, and they were taught using pictorial story style, and the second group was the controlled group, and they were taught by the conventional method. The researcher used a pre-test and post-test design and prepared new English vocabulary tests to verify the hypothesis of the research. The researcher collected the pupils' level of achievement in the English language through an English vocabulary test, and the results show that the groups were equivalent in terms of this variable. Their English language teacher taught both groups for two reasons: (1) to avoid the effect of changing the teacher on students and (2) to prevent the researcher's bias to a particular method or style. The researcher designed lesson plans according

29

to the two methods of teaching: pictorial story method and the conventional method. Both plans were submitted to several experts in the field, where they accepted the plans and added some instructions. The research started on the 8th of March and ended on the 23rd of April

The results show that the experimental group which used pictorial stories did better than the controlled group. Also, there is not any statistical difference in the pre and post-tests of the controlled group in the new English vocabulary. This result is due to the lack of opportunity to acquire new vocabulary and being limited to traditional teaching methods. The results indicate that the pictorial story style motivates and enables a pupil's arising enthusiasm to learn new vocabulary words. This leads to the conclusion that students cope successfully with new forms of language learning. He also adds that stories can be a good source for students to learn more about the culture of the foreign language being learned. As a result, the author emphasizes the importance of adding in the curriculum different reading instruction techniques.

Al-Saif (2005) carried out a comprehensive evaluation of the 6th grade English textbooks used in Saudi Arabian elementary schools. The purpose of the study is to examine the textbook's strengths and weaknesses with specific measurements of its suitability to teachers, young learners, and social context. The methodology used to gather data was quantitative. The sample of the study included 144 male and 149 female teachers, trainers, and supervisors who took part in training elementary level English language teachers. The provided questionnaires consist of 93 specific criteria in 12 categories: the workbook, the teacher's manual, language skills, vocabulary, grammar, methodology, content, assessment techniques, rationales, objectives, teaching aids, and general aspects. The findings of the study conclude that the distribution of the data was not conclusive. It outlined that the textbook was "moderately adequate," in addition to that, it required constant and cyclical evaluation due to the ongoing changing circumstances of

the program. Al Saif (2005) contends that this finding "suggests some indecisiveness on the part of the evaluators" (p. 62) because of their inadequate training and their experience with the textbook. As a conclusion to his research, in addition to the level of curriculum implementation, teacher professional development is the critical basis in any successful textbook evaluation.

English Language Learning in Lebanon. Due to the importance and vital role that the English language has in today's education, various studies researched English language learning in Lebanon. It is crucial to investigate where our education stands internationally so we can offer recommendations and implications to improve our English language education. The following studies investigated English language learning in Lebanon:

Dbaibo (2016) investigated the Lebanese grade four English language reading curriculum: the written and taught curriculum. The purpose of her study was to explore the design of the existing Lebanese Grade 4 language reading curriculum regarding the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development 21st Century necessary literacy skills and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The data was collected from twelve grade four English language teachers and coordinators in 6 Lebanese public schools. The researcher interviewed the teachers through semi-structured interviews to ask them about their planned learning experiences for reading. The method used to analyze was based on grounded theory and constant comparison.

The results indicate that the curriculum is missing key components that would align with the 21st C skills/ CEFR skills criteria. Hence, there is a partial alignment between the 21st C skills/CEFR criteria, the Lebanese Grade 4 English reading curriculum, and the planned learning experiences developed by teachers/coordinators. However, teachers seem to be personally

engaged to supplement students with learning experiences that can enrich students' learning. The researcher suggests several systematic and contextual barriers to design a curriculum that aligns with 21st C Skills/ CEFR Skills. Dbaibo (2016) also mentions socioeconomic barriers, stating that public school students whose parents barely received any formal type of learning have no chance to communicate in English when they go back home. Another suggested factor preventing teachers from supporting students to acquire the necessary English language reading skills is the lack of guidance and preparation of teachers to cater to all students within their socioeconomic conditions.

Orr (2011) reported on English language teachers' education in Lebanon. The research investigates who these teachers are and how they have been trained. It also seeks to learn about how teachers perceive the usefulness of training. A 37-item survey was developed based on the experience of collaboration between the British Council, CERD, and ATEL, and discussions with the head of the NCERD and an ELT teacher. The author surveyed 715 Lebanese teachers, along with four structured interviews. The surveys were sent by email and by CERD to all public schools to be completed by their English language teachers. After receiving the surveys, the researcher transferred the data to SPSS to generate descriptive statistics. Another source of data was through the semi-structured interviews. The author interviewed an official from the Ministry of Education and three working teachers. The diverse backgrounds of the interviewees helped to interpret the qualitative data and the survey results.

The results indicated that 91% of the English language teachers in public schools are female; their ages ranged between 26 and 49 (64%). Most of them had more than five years of experience (77%) and have received at least a Bachelor's degree (79%). According to the results, the teacher training programs cause some concerns about the effectiveness of undergraduate

courses in theory, methodology, and practical teaching activities. Thus, training in both the public and private sectors is theoretical. He also added, "It seems unfortunate that in-service training does not seem to take full advantage of the opportunity to make the link to practical classroom application…The problem here seems to be one of failing to situate the learning in actual classroom practice" (p. 11)

In a significant study, Shaaban (2006) explored the effects of the Jigsaw II cooperative learning on Lebanese students who come from a low socioeconomic background. The language of instruction is Arabic, and students have no chance of communicating in English. The researcher of the study applied a posttest-only control group experimental design. The total of all the participants was forty-four students; they were randomly chosen to take part in the research. The experimental group included twenty-two participants (fourteen males and eight females), and the control group included twenty-two participants as well (twelve males and ten females). The students' ages ranged from eleven to twelve years old. The same teacher will apply the lesson plans provided to both groups.

The study lasted for eight weeks, and ten 60-minutes sessions were given per week. The teacher used five short stories taken from a 5th grade book and read to both groups. While using the same materials, the teacher taught each group differently. The controlled group was instructed according to the five-stage instruction developed by Philips (1984): pre-teaching, skimming, intensive reading, comprehension, transferrable integrating of skills. The experimental group was taught using Jigsaw II (Slavin, 1995). Students were assigned to groups; each group consisted of twenty-two students. The participants of each group were divided by four to create teams. The study was conducted based on the hypotheses that the experimental

group would show better results in reading comprehension, perception of the value of reading, motivation to read, and reading self-concept.

The findings of the study did not confirm the hypothesis, which claims that Jigsaw II would be more effective than whole-class instruction in improving reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition of grade five English foreign language learners. However, the results showed significant differences in favor of the experimental group on the variable of reading motivation.

Similarly, Sab'ayoun (2012) researched the extent to which the practices of Lebanese public high school (LPHS) teachers of English as a foreign language in general, and cooperative learning, in particular, are aligned with the curricular reforms and integrated into the classrooms. The researcher used a case study design; she examined four EFL teachers who reside in South Lebanon who taught in four different schools. The researchers applied a qualitative approach and employed interpretive methods. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, sequential interviews, observations, and a research diary with each participant. Significant findings were concluded; there were major discrepancies between teachers' reported conceptions and their practice. Cooperative learning was almost absent, teacher preparation was mostly theoretical and traditional, and EFL teachers receive minimal support. In conclusion, teachers' beliefs of teaching mainly were incongruent with the curricular reform. There is inadequate teacher training due to the lack of communication between the teacher education program, curriculum designers, and LPHS.

Conclusion

Lebanon, like other countries in the Arab region, faces the problem of producing proficient teachers who can ensure that the new generations graduate with a high level of English language proficiency. Also, various factors influence students' language learning acquisition, such as their socio-economic status, their parents' educational background, or teacher training. Reviewing studies that are done internationally and nationally help in identifying various obstacles that designers, students, and teachers face during the period of English language learning.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of the research design, instruments, and data analysis procedures used to address the study questions. This study aims to identify issues in Lebanon's current English language curriculum, built on the English national Lebanese textbook, and presents possible solutions to address them. In this chapter, the research design of the study is firstly discussed. Information about the study materials, instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis are hereby presented.

Research Design

The research design of this study is quantitative, non-experimental, content analysis because it could most effectively review the current curriculum's adherence to the TESOL PreK-12 International standards and the national curriculum. "A research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description to manifest content of communication" (Berelson's, 1952, p.18). Weber (1990) added that "Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (p. 9). Krippendroff (1989) indicated that content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in social sciences. Also, Krippendroff (1989) mentioned that content analysis assures that all units of analysis receive equal treatment, and the assessment is objective.

Consequently, the researcher needs to make valid inferences after completing the content analysis. It is crucial to note the importance of completing the coding phase cautiously and precisely. George (2009) explained that the primary purpose of content analysis is a statistical technique for gathering descriptive data on content variables. The content analysis method offers

the opportunity to gain more precise, reliable, and objective observations about the frequency with which content characteristics occur.

This method serves the purpose of this study which is to examine the degree of alignment between the NCERD grades 1-3 course-books and the: (1) the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards, and (2) goals, objectives, and performance tasks found in the official Lebanese curriculum. The study is conducted using the English language materials of grades 1-3, which were published in 1998 by the MEHE. This study is a post-use (retrospective-reflective) evaluation, which helps in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the materials after a period of use (Ellis, 1997). Post-use evaluation is probably the most valuable type of evaluation because it can state the long- and short-term impact of the textbook (Tomlinsion, 2003). Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979) suggested that the ultimate evaluation of a text should be conducted after actual classroom use. Cunningsworth (1995) states that "Evaluation of this kind can be useful in helping to decide whether to use the same materials on future occasions" (p.14). The results of this study will assist in identifying the areas that need further improvement in the future.

Study Materials

The NCERD English language teaching and learning materials of grades 1-3, the English-Lebanese official curriculum goals, objectives, and performance tasks of the selected grades, and the TESOL PreK-12 international standards are used. Lessons of the designated grades are the focus of the content analysis. The researcher investigated all the lessons in the textbooks of grades 1-3; thus, all the lessons are evaluated. Consequently, the TESOL PreK-12

International Standards were adopted for this study to determine where the NCERD books stand internationally.

Learning and Teaching Materials

Grade one study materials consist of four books: two reading comprehension books, a workbook, and a teacher's guide. In total, grade one contains five units divided into 30 lessons. Grade two study materials include three books: a reading comprehension book, a workbook, and a teacher's guide. The total number of lessons included is twenty lessons divided over units. Similarly, grade three study materials are two reading comprehension books, a workbook, and a teacher's guide. Grade three also consists of five thematic units and includes twenty lessons subdivided over these units.

Let's learn together is offered as an instructional tool to facilitate the language learning experience. The student book includes five thematic units; each of these thematic units is focused on an aspect of *Let's Learn Together*: the student. The five units are divided into lessons, and each lesson focuses on a particular topic. Every lesson includes different topics, songs, and poems. The workbook contains practical follow-up exercises that reinforce activities carried out during each hour of instruction. The workbook provides exercises to check students' vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, and develop writing abilities. The teacher's guide contains reproductions of the student book. Also, it offers specific activities and techniques to teach the lessons. The teacher's guide also provides additional work to complement the lesson. The thematic units are divided into suggested hours, and each lesson is given almost seven hours.

Instruments

Checklists used in this study include various categories that tackle the degree of alignment of the grades 1-3 NCERD English textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides with: (1) performance tasks proclaimed in the current official Lebanese curriculum, and (2) the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards.

A course-book evaluation checklist is developed based on the English-Lebanese official curriculum performance tasks of grades one, two, and three. A crucial benefit of including a checklist in this research is that it is a very systematic way to ensure all the performance tasks are included and evaluated (Cunningsworth, 1995; McGrath, 2002). The developed checklists contain clear evaluation criteria.

The checklists are designed to measure the degree of alignment between the course-books and the official Lebanese curriculum. Each grade has a checklist developed based on performance tasks for each grade. The checklists list the curriculum performance tasks designated for each of the assigned grades (Appendices D, E, and F).

After reviewing the official curriculum performance tasks, the researcher listed these performance tasks to measure the degree of alignment between the textbooks and the official curriculum. The Official Lebanese curriculum contains performance tasks that are distributed as follows: listening, oral communication, reading, written communication, thinking skills, study skills, and cultural awareness. Each grade has the seven mentioned skills; however, each grade has different tasks. In addition to that, the number of tasks differ per grade. Grade one has twenty-two tasks, grade two has twenty tasks, and grade three has twenty-one tasks. So, the

developed tables include the seven categories and performance tasks assigned to each category (refer to Appendices D, E, and F).

The TESOL International Standards include five important standards that are distributed among specific content topics for four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing); for each skill, there are five levels that measure students' performance abilities. The researcher designed a table for standard 2 "English language learners **communicate** information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of LANGUAGE ARTS" that included the four skills, a content topic, and five levels of proficiency. Grades one, two, and three share the same TESOL standards. The TESOL (2006) association explains why these grades share the same standards:

> English language learners in primary grades are becoming acclimated to the demands of schooling and developing a strong foundation in literacy, whether in the native language or English. These grade levels are grouped together because in most elementary school programs, this instruction is geared toward learning to read (p. 32)

However, each grade has a table to measure the degree of alignment. The TESOL rating scale (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5) is included in each of the skills. Each level determined language proficiency; Level 1- Starting, Level 2-Emerging, Level 3-Developing, Level 4- Expanding, and Level 5-Bridging. The TESOL (2006) explains that content topics are a window into the English language demands. They set a starting point for determining the language objectives for instruction and assessment. Frequency sections are developed to check the degree of alignment between the English-Lebanese course-book and the TESOL international standards (Appendices A, B, and C).

Data Collection Procedures

      As a first step, the researcher collected the NCERD course-books of grades one, two, and three. The official Lebanese curriculum and TESOL PreK-12 English language proficiency books were collected too. Then in order to re-code the data, the researcher made copies of all the NCERD books. The official curriculum goals of five objectives and performance tasks were cautiously reviewed. The TESOL language proficiency levels were carefully examined as well.

      Before beginning the coding sessions, intimate knowledge and understanding of the data were applied. The researcher read and re-read all the NCERD course-books. After the lessons were reviewed, the researcher developed the codes. To code, the author used different colors and codes. Starting with coding the official Lebanese performance tasks, firstly, the author highlighted the sentence which reflects a specific performance task. The next step was to refer to which performance task it belonged; thus, the researcher used codes such as R (for reading) and the number of performance tasks. So, the researcher has a highlighted text with a code such as "R3".

      To ensure intra-coder reliability, as Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest, the researcher codes all the data at two separate periods of time (Time one and Time two). After a month, the NCERD books were coded again. After the second coding session was completed, the researcher filled in the developed checklist independently based on the NCERD grades 1-3 official curriculum and the TESOL grades 1-3 standard 2. Then the tables of frequencies were filled, emerging from the frequencies of occurrences. Percentages were conducted to specify whether the tasks or levels were evident inside the course-books.

Data Analysis Procedures

The study aimed to investigate the degree of alignment of grades 1-3 English national

textbooks to the Lebanese official curriculum and the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards.

All the data collected was in the light of the Lebanese official curriculum performance tasks and

the TESOL Prek-12 International Standards.

After the researcher completed (Time one and Time two) coding to ensure intra-reliability, the

checklists were filled. After the checklists were completed for each grade, frequencies and

percentages of each item on the checklists were computed to address the questions raised in the

study. The percentages of how many times each item occurred inside the lessons. In addition to

that, each level or task has an occurrence rate. Emerging patterns are presented and discussed.

Recommendations and limitations for improving practice, as well as further research, were

suggested.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of the study is to explore the degree of alignment between the Lebanese official English language textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides of Cycle I (grades 1-3) with the official curriculum and grades 1-3 TESOL International Standards. This chapter consists of two parts, which present the following: (1) the degree of alignment between the TESOL standard 2 and national course-books of grades 1-3; (2) the degree of alignment between the Lebanese official curriculum and the English grades 1-3 national course-books.

Content Analysis of the English Language Cycle I Curricula

The English language curriculum (Cycle I) of Basic Education is designed based on a number of widely accepted principles in language teaching and learning. Instructional design and lesson planning are developed clearly in the course-books. The developed course-books covered listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, cultural awareness, and thinking skills. Thus, this content analysis is to examine where the English language curriculum stands nationally and internationally.

The Alignment of the Lebanese Curriculum Internationally

Grade One

Table 1

Grade 1 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Listening Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Phonics Phonemic awareness	Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally(e.g., by clapping) in small groups	Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner.	Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner	Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner	Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) through simulation	
Frequency	9	4	2	8	4	**27**
Lessons	5	3	2	7	3	**20**

Each of the five listening skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 27 (18%) occurrences which were distributed 20 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally (e.g., by clapping) in small groups" occurred 9 times (6%) in 5 lessons (17%). Level 2 "Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner" occurred 4 times (2.6%) in 3 lessons (10%). Level 3 "Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner" occurred 2 times (1.3%) in 2 lessons (7%). Level 4 "Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner" occurred 8 times (5.3%) in 7 lessons (23.3%). Level 5 "Identify

the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) through stimulation" occurred 4 times (2.6%) in 3 lessons (10%).

Table 2

Grade 1 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Speaking Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Rhyming words	Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g., "The boy has a toy.")	Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups	Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups	Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner	Recite original raps, verses, poetry	
Frequency	0	31	2	4	9	**46**
Lessons	0	20	2	4	7	**33**

Four of the five speaking skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 46 occurrences (30.2%) which were distributed 33 times among the 30 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g., "The boy has a toy.")" did not occur in the course-books. Level 2 "Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups" occurred 31 times (20.3%) in 20 lessons (67%). Level 3 "Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups" occurred 2 times (1.3%) in 2 lessons (7%). Level 4 "Perform rhymes, raps or verses developed with a partner" occurred 4 times (5.3%) in 4 lessons (13.3%). Level 5 "Recite original raps, verses, poetry" occurred 9 times (6%) in 7 lessons (23.3%).

Table 3

Grade 1 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Reading Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Story grammar	Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)	Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events	Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end	Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories	Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories	
Frequency	47	0	0	4	0	**51**
Lessons	25	0	0	3	0	**27**

Two of the five reading skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 51 occurrences (33.6%) which were distributed 28 times among the 30 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)" occurred 47 times (31%) in 25 lessons (83.3%). Level 2 "Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events" did not occur in the course-books. Level 3 "Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end" did not occur in the course-books. Level 4 "Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories" occurred 4 times (2.6%) in 3 lessons (10%). Level 5 "Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories" did not occur in the course-books.

Table 4

Grade 1 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Writing Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Homophones Compound Words	Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner	Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner	Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner	Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner	Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)	
Frequency	2	3	2	5	16	**28**
Lessons	2	3	2	4	11	**22**

Each of the five writing skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 28 (18.4%) occurrences which were distributed 22 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner" occurred 2 times (1.3%) in 2 lessons (7%). Level 2 "Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner" occurred 3 times in 3 lessons (10%). Level 3 "Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner" occurred 2 times (1.3%) in 2 lessons (7%). Level 4 "Produce visually supported or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner" occurred 5 times (3.3%) in 4 lessons (5.3%). Level 5 "Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)" occurred 16 times (10.5%) in 11 lessons (10.5%).

Grade Two

Table 5

Grade 2 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Listening Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Phonics Phonemic awareness	Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally (e.g., by clapping) in small groups	Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner.	Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner	Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner	Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) Through simulation	
Frequency	6	0	3	2	2	**13**
Lessons	4	0	3	2	2	**11**

Four of the five listening skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 13 (7%) occurrences which were distributed 11 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally (e.g., by clapping) in small groups" occurred 6 times (3.2%) in 4 lessons (21%). Level 2 "Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner" did not occur inside the course-books. Level 3 "Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner" occurred 3 times (1.6%) in 3 lessons (16%). Level 4 "Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner" occurred 2 times (1%) in 2 lessons (10.5%) Level

48

5 "Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) through simulation" occurred 2 times (1%) in 2 lessons (10.5%).

Table 6

Grade 2 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Speaking Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Rhyming words	Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g.,"The boy has a toy.")	Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups	Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups	Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner	Recite original raps, verses, poetry	
Frequency	0	9	4	1	7	**21**
Lessons	0	6	4	1	5	**16**

Four of the five speaking skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 21 (11.4%) occurrences which were distributed 16 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g., "The boy has a toy.")" did not occur in the course-books. Level 2 "Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups" occurred 9 times (5%) in 6 lessons (31.5%). Level 3 "Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups" occurred 4 times (2.17%) in 4 lessons (21%). Level 4 "Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner" occurred 1 time (0.5%) in 1 lesson (5.3%). Level 5 "Recite original raps, verses, poetry" occurred 7 times (3.8%) in 5 lessons (26.3%).

Table 7

Grade 2 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Reading Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Story grammar	Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)	Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events	Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end	Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories	Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories	
Frequency	68	30	8	0	0	**106**
Lessons	19	13	7	0	0	**39**

Three of the five reading skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 13 (57.6%) occurrences which were distributed 39 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)" occurred 68 times in 19 lessons (100%). Level 2 "Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events" occurred 30 times (16.3%) in 13 lessons (68.4%). Level 3 "Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end" occurred 8 times (4.34%) in 7 lessons (37%). Level 4 "Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories" did not occur inside the course-books. Level 5 "Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories" did not occur inside the course-books.

Table 8

Grade 2 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Writing Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Homophones Compound Words	Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner	Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner	Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner	Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner	Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)	
Frequency	0	10	2	12	20	**44**
Lessons	0	5	2	8	12	**27**

Four of the five writing skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 44 (24%) occurrences which were distributed 27 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner" did not occur in the course-books. Level 2 "Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner" occurred 10 times (5.43%) in 5 lessons (26.3%). Level 3 "Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner" occurred 2 times (1%) in 2 lessons (10.5%). Level 4 "Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner" occurred 12 times (6.5%) in 8 lessons (42%). level 5 "Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)" occurred 20 times (11%) in 12 lessons (63%).

Grade Three

Table 9

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Phonics Phonemic awareness	Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally (e.g., by clapping) in small groups	Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner.	Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner	Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner	Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) Through simulation	
Frequency	0	0	6	0	2	**8**
Lessons	0	0	6	0	2	**8**

Grade 3 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Listening Levels

Two of the five listening skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed

randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 8 (5.6%) occurrences which were

distributed 8 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally (e.g., by clapping) in small

groups" did not occur in the course-books. Level 2 "Discriminate between regular and irregular

words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner" did not

occur in the course-books. Level 3 "Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through

gestures in oral discourse with a partner" occurred 6 times (4.13%) in 6 lessons (30%). Level

4 "Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a

partner" did not occur in the course-books. Level 5 "Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) through stimulation" occurred 2 times (1.37%) in 2 lessons (10%).

Table 10

Grade 3 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Speaking Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Rhyming Words	Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g., "The boy has a toy.")	Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups	Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups	Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner	Recite original raps, verses, poetry	
Frequency	0	3	2	2	0	**7**
Lessons	0	3	2	2	0	**7**

Three of the five speaking skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 7 (4.8%) occurrences which were distributed 7 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g., "The boy has a toy.")" did not occur in the course-books. Level 2 "Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups" occurred 3 times (2.1%) in 3 lessons (15%). Level 3 "Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups" occurred 2 times (1.37%) in 2 lessons (10%). Level 4 "Perform rhymes, raps or verses developed with a partner" occurred 2 times (1.37%) in 2 lessons (10%). Level 5 "Recite original raps, verses, poetry" did not occur in the course-books.

53

Table 11

Grade 3 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Reading Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Story grammar	Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)	Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events	Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end	Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories	Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories	
Frequency	44	17	5	1	0	**67**
Lessons	18	11	5	1	0	**35**

Four of the five reading skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 67 (46.2%) occurrences which were distributed 35 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)" occurred 44 times (30.3%) in 18 lessons (90%). Level 2 "Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events" occurred 17 times (11.7%) in 11 lessons (55%). Level 3 "Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end" occurred 5 times (3.4%) in 5 lessons (25%). Level 4 "Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories" occurred 1 time (0.7%) in 1 lesson (5%). Level 5 "Identify

and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories" did not occur in the course-books.

Table 12

Grade 3 Frequency of TESOL Standard 2 Writing Levels

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Homophones Compound Words	Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner	Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner	Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner	Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner	Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)	
Frequency	7	18	4	11	23	**63**
Lessons	5	12	4	9	13	**43**

Each of the five writing skill levels occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 63 (43.3%) occurrences which were distributed 43 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

Level 1 "Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner" occurred 7 times (4.8%) in 5 lessons (25%). Level 2 "Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner" occurred 18 times (12.4%) in 12 lessons (60%). Level 3 "Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner" occurred 4 times (2.75%) in 4 lessons (20%). Level 4 "Produce visually supported or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner" occurred 11 times (7.5%) in 9 lessons

(45%). Level 5 "Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer

tools)" occurred 23 times (15.8%) in 13 lessons (65%).

Lebanese Curriculum Performance Tasks

This section records the frequency occurrences in the lessons of grades 1-3 in each of the

performance tasks under the 7 skills of the official curriculum

Grade One

Table 13

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Listening skills

Performance tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Respond physically to a series of simple oral instructions	27	27
Match what is heard to objects, pictures, or printed words	22	11
Name objects and actions in the story.	6	6
Fill out missing words or simple phrases in a song/short paragraph.	11	11
Express feelings about a song, rhyme or story.	3	3
Total	**69**	**58**

Each of the listening performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed

randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 69 (13.74%) occurrences which were

distributed 58 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Respond physically to a series of simple oral instructions" occurred 27

times (5.37%) in 27 lessons (90%). The performance task "Match what is heard to objects,

pictures, or printed words" occurred 22 times (4.38%) in 11 lessons (37%). The performance task "Name objects and actions in the story" occurred 6 times (1.19%) in 6 lessons (20%). The performance task "Fill out missing words or simple phrases in a song/short paragraph" occurred 11 times (2.19%) in 11 lessons (37%). The performance task "Express feelings about a song, rhyme or story" occurred 3 times (0.6%) in 3 lessons (10%).

Table 14

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Oral Communication skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Give information about self, others, and things in the intermediate environment.	94	29
Offer and accept invitations and assistance.	39	19
Express basic needs, preferences, and desires.	16	10
Participate in simple role playing activities.	47	25
Total	**196**	**83**

Each of the Oral Communication performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 196 (39%) occurrences which were distributed 83 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Give information about self, others, and things in the intermediate environment" occurred 94 times (18.72%) in 29 lessons (97%). The performance task "Offer and accept invitations and assistance" occurred 39 times (7.76%) in 19 lessons (63.3%). The performance task "Express basic needs, preferences, and desires" occurred 16 times (3.2%) in 10

lessons. The performance task "Participate in simple role playing activities" occurred 47 times (9.36%) in 25 lessons (83.3%).

Table 15

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Reading skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Answer simple comprehension questions based on what is read.	72	27
Identify key facts in a text or events in a story.	21	16
Group words into sets of related lexical items.	12	8
Total	**105**	**51**

Each of the reading performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 105 (21%) occurrences which were distributed 51 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Answer simple comprehension questions based on what is read" occurred 72 times (14.34%) in 27 lessons (90%). The performance task "Identify key facts in a text or events in a story" occurred 21 times (4.18%) in 16 lessons (53.3%). The performance task "Group words into sets of related lexical items" occurred 12 times (2.39%) in 8 lessons (27%).

Table 16

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Writing skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Write upper and lower case letters and numbers in manuscript and in cursive style.	14	7
Use capital letters to begin sentences and to write proper nouns.	12	8
Identify words that contain particular sounds in a given passage.	30	20
Write simple and complex sentences.	0	0
Total	**56**	**35**

Three out of the four writing performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 56 (11.2%) occurrences which were distributed 35 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Write upper and lower case letters and numbers in manuscript and in cursive style." occurred 14 times (2.8%) in 7 lessons (23.3%). The performance task "Use capital letters to begin sentences and to write proper nouns." occurred 12 times (2.4%) in 8 lessons (27%). The performance task "Identify words that contain particular sounds in a given passage" occurred 30 times (6%) in 20 lessons (67%). The performance task "Write simple and complex sentences" did not occur in the course-books.

Table 17

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Thinking skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Relate language experiences to life experiences.	25	16
Request assistance and clarification from peers, adults, and parents.	3	3
Total	**28**	**19**

The two Thinking skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 28 (5.57%) occurrences which were distributed 19 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Relate language experiences to life experiences" occurred 25 times (5%) in 16 lessons (53.3%). The performance task "Request assistance and clarification from peers, adults, and parents" occurred 3 times (0.6%) in 3 lessons (10%).

Table 18

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Study skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Adhere to rules and instructions	38	14
Recognize parts of text	10	6
Total	**48**	**20**

The two study skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 30 lessons. The total frequency is 48 (11.2%) occurrences which were distributed 35 times among 30 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Adhere to rules and instructions" occurred 38 times (7.56%) in 14 lessons (47%). The performance task "Recognize parts of text" occurred 10 times (2%) in 6 lessons (20%).

Table 19

Grade 1 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Cultural Awareness

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Reproduce common culturally determined formulaic utterances	0	0
Match common national objects and artifacts to corresponding countries.	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**

The cultural awareness performance tasks did not occur inside the course-book.

Grade Two

Table 20

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Listening skills

Performance tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Identify characters, feelings, and actions a story.	1	1
Answer simple factual questions based on what is heard.	8	5
Take down message based on what is heard.	0	0
Total	**9**	**6**

Two out of the three listening skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 9 (2.33%) occurrences which were distributed 6 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Identify characters, feelings, and actions a story" occurred 1 time (0.25%) in 1 lesson (5.3%). The performance task "Answer simple factual questions based on what is heard" occurred 8 times (2.07%) in 5 lessons (26.3%). The performance task "Take down message based on what is heard" did not occur inside the course-books.

Table 21

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Oral Communication skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Tell and/or retell a story.	11	10
Express mood, feelings, likes and dislikes etc.	20	11
Introduce self and others.	7	5
Report to class about experiences and TV programs.	27	11
Total	**65**	**37**

Each of the four oral communication performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 65 (16.83%) occurrences which were distributed 37 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Tell and/or retell a story" occurred 11 times (2.84%) in 10 lessons (53%).

The performance task "Express mood, feelings, likes and dislikes etc" occurred 20 times (5.18%) in 11 lessons (58%). The performance task "Introduce self and others" occurred 7 times (1.81%) in 5 lessons (26.3%). The performance task "Report to class about experiences and TV programs" occurred 27 times (7%) in 11 lessons (58%).

Table 22

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Reading skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Record information in graphic entries.	40	12
Underline common homophones, homographs, compound words, etc.	30	13
Explain characters' feelings and motives	17	11
Total	**87**	**36**

Each of the three reading skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 87 (22.53%) occurrences which were distributed 36 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Record information in graphic entries" occurred 40 times (10.36%) in 12 lessons (63.2%). The performance task "Underline common homophones, homographs, compound words, etc." occurred 30 times (7.77%) in 13 lessons (68.4%). The performance task "Explain characters' feelings and motives" occurred 17 times (4.4%) in 11 lessons (58%).

Table 23

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Written Communication skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Leave the right amount of space between letters and words.	0	0
Spell out and write down words that have long and short vowel sounds.	6	3
Join sentences with appropriate connectors.	7	5
Organize scrambled words in meaningful sentences.	3	2
Total	**16**	**10**

Three out of the four oral communication performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 16 (4.14%) occurrences which were distributed 10 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Leave the right amount of space between letters and words" did not occur in the course-books. The performance task "Spell out and write down words that have long and short vowel sounds" occurred 6 times (1.55%) in 3 lessons (16%). The performance task "Join sentences with appropriate connectors" occurred 7 times (1.81%) in 5 lessons (26.3%). The performance task "Organize scrambled words in meaningful sentences" occurred 3 times (0.77%) in 2 lessons (11%).

Table 24

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Thinking skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Compare and contrast two objects, ideas, actions, etc.	54	18
Give and receive appropriate feedback.	20	11
Total	**74**	**29**

Each of the thinking skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books,

distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 74 (19.7%) occurrences which

were distributed 29 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Compare and contrast two objects, ideas, actions, etc" occurred 54 times

(14%) in 18 lessons (95%). The performance task "Give and receive appropriate feedback"

occurred 20 times (5.8%) in 11 lessons (58%).

Table 25

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Study skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Organize study materials and study time.	49	18
Identify and use part of text.	76	19
Total	**125**	**37**

Each of the study skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 125 (32.3%) occurrences which were distributed 37 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Organize study materials and study time" occurred 49 times (12.7%) in 18 lessons (95%). The performance task "Identify and use part of text" occurred 76 times (19.7%) in 19 lessons (100%).

Table 26

Grade 2 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Cultural Awareness skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Set up classroom display centers which feature dolls, stamps, currency etc. representing target culture.	8	8
Perform songs, jigs, and dances which typify the target culture.	2	2
Total	**10**	**10**

Each of the study skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 19 lessons. The total frequency is 10 (2.6%) occurrences which were distributed 10 times among 19 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Set up classroom display centers which feature dolls, stamps, currency, etc. representing target culture" occurred 8 times (2.07%) in 8 lessons (42%). The performance task "Perform songs, jigs, and dances which typify the target culture" occurred 2 times (0.5%) in 2 lessons (10.5%).

Table 27

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Listening skills

Performance tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Paraphrase events in a story.	7	5
State similarities and differences among characters, feelings, and actions in a story.	2	2
Answer basic information questions about what is heard.	33	15
Total	**42**	**22**

Each of the three listening skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 42 (9.33%) occurrences which were distributed 22 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Paraphrase events in a story" occurred 7 times (1.5%) in 5 lessons (25%).

The performance task "State similarities and differences among characters, feelings, and actions in a story" occurred 2 times (0.44%) in 2 lessons (10%). The performance task "Answer basic information questions about what is heard" occurred 33 times (7.33%) in 15 lessons (75%).

Table 28

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Oral Communication skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Receive and relay messages.	82	20
Give instructions to perform simple tasks.	11	8
Express empathy for others.	3	3
Total	**96**	**31**

Each of the three oral communication performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 96 (21.33%) occurrences which were distributed 31 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Receive and relay messages" occurred 82 times (18.22%) in 20 lessons (100%). The performance task "Give instructions to perform simple tasks" occurred 11 times (2.44%) in 8 lessons (40%). The performance task "Express empathy for others" occurred 3 times (0.66%) in 3 lessons (15%).

Table 29

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Reading skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Sequence events in a logical order.	6	5
Distinguish between different characters, motives, literary genres, plots, etc.	25	14
Provide synonyms antonyms and simple definitions of underlined words in a text.	3	3
Answer basic information questions about the contents of the text.	50	18
Total	**78**	**40**

Each of the four reading skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 78 (17.33%) occurrences which were distributed 40 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Sequence events in a logical order" occurred 6 times (1.33%) in 5 lessons (25%). The performance task "Distinguish between different characters, motives, literary genres, plots, etc" occurred 25 times (5.55%) in 14 lessons (70%). The performance task "Provide synonyms antonyms and simple definitions of underlined words in a text" occurred 3 times (0.66%) in 3 lessons (15%). The performance task "Answer basic information questions about the contents of the text" occurred 50 times (11.1%) in 18 lessons (90%).

Table 30

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Written Communication skills

Performance Task	Frequency	Lessons
Record data on a chart/graph or graphic organizer	37	15
Use punctuation marks appropriately.	18	9
Correct own spelling mistakes.	4	3
Unscramble a text and organize ideas in a logical sequence.	8	6
Write a simple story using own words.	36	13
Total	**103**	**46**

Each of the five written communication performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 108 (22.8%) occurrences which were distributed 46 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Record data on a chart/graph or graphic organizer" occurred 37 times (8.22%) in 15 lessons (75%). The performance task "Use punctuation marks appropriately" occurred 18 times (4%) in 9 lessons (45%). The performance task "Correct own spelling mistakes" occurred 4 times (0.88%) in 3 lessons (15%). The performance task "Unscramble a text and organize ideas in a logical sequence" occurred 8 times (1.77%) in 6 lessons (30%). The performance task "Write a simple story using own words" occurred 36 times (8%) in 13 lessons (65%).

Table 31

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Thinking skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Classify and organize information logically.	66	18
Use techniques to reduce anxiety.	19	9
Total	**85**	**27**

Each of the two thinking skills performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 85 (18.8%) occurrences which were distributed 27 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Classify and organize information logically" occurred 66 times (14.6%) in 18 lessons (90%). The performance task "Use techniques to reduce anxiety" occurred 19 times (4.22%) in 9 lessons (45%).

Table 32

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Study skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Write legibly for future reference.	19	14
Use key pages for easy reference.	12	6
Total	**31**	**20**

Each of the five written communication performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 31 (6.9%) occurrences which were distributed 20 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Write legibly for future reference" occurred 19 times (4.2%) in 14 lessons (70%). The performance task "Use key pages for easy reference" occurred 12 times (2.66%) in 6 lessons (30%).

Table 33

Grade 3 Frequency of the Lebanese Curriculum Cultural Awareness skills

Performance Tasks	Frequency	Lessons
Use realia to compare and contrast the Lebanese and the target cultures.	13	5
Compare and contrast the daily activities of children across cultures.	2	2
Total	**15**	**7**

Each of the two cultural awareness performance tasks occurred inside the course-books, distributed randomly among the 20 lessons. The total frequency is 15 (3.3%) occurrences which were distributed 7 times among 20 lessons accordingly:

The performance task "Use realia to compare and contrast the Lebanese and the target cultures" occurred 13 times (2.9%) in 5 lessons (25%). The performance task "Compare and contrast the daily activities of children across cultures" occurred 2 times (0.44%) in 2 lessons (10%).

73

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

As it has been indicated earlier, the purpose of this study was to examine the degree of alignment between the NCERD grades 1-3 course-books and the: (1) performance tasks found in the official Lebanese curriculum, and (2) the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards. To achieve this purpose, quantitative and content analysis methods were implemented to collect and analyze data. Based on the collected and analyzed data, the research questions will be hereby discussed. This chapter concludes with a discussion, conclusions, pedagogical implications, and limitations.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the following research questions:

(R1): To what extent are the textbooks, workbooks, and teachers' guides for grades 1-3 aligned with the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards?

(R2): To what extent do the English language national course-books of grades 1-3 reflect the official curriculum's goals, objectives, and performance tasks?

The results indicate that the level of proficiency does not increase with higher grade levels. The most frequent level among all the TESOL PreK-12 International standards was level 1, and it is the starting level for students in English language learning. After comparing the official Lebanese curriculum with the Lebanese course-books, the researcher found that the performance tasks of grade one were the most addressed among the three grades. It is vital to

emphasize on the fact that a large number of the performance tasks weren't included enough in course-books; in addition, no attention was given to the cultural awareness in all three grade levels.

The TESOL PreK-12 International Standards

After investigating the course-books and the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards of grades 1-3 the results indicate the following:

The listening skill among all the investigated grade levels was mostly frequent in grade 1 with 27 occurrences 18%, then grade 2 with 13 occurrences 7%, and lastly grade 3 with 8 occurrences 5.8%. Level 1 of grade one, occurred nine times and made up 6% of the total occurrences for that grade. Level 1 was also the most frequent in grade two, and it occurred 6 times and made up 3.2% of the total occurrences of that grade. On the other hand, level 3 was the most frequent in grade three, it was included 6 times throughout the whole textbook, making up 4.13% of the total occurrences rate. The listening skill does not occur sufficiently in all of the investigated grade levels.

The expected result would be that with each grade level, the levels of competence increase. However, the frequencies of occurrences decreased and not all of the levels were reflected in the course-books and the ones which were included were only partially found in the course-books. It is crucial to mention that there is an inconsistency in how the occurrences were distributed. For example, level 1 which gained the most frequencies in grades one and two is not evident in grade three. Assuming that students have attained the skill, it is still essential to remind students of previous knowledge whilst moving on to higher levels. In addition, for grade one, levels one and four have almost the same occurrences (9 and 8 respectively), this leads to a

knowledge gap in levels two and three since learning should move gradually among the five different levels.

The speaking skill among all the investigated grade levels was mostly frequent in grade one with forty-six occurrences (30.2%), then grade two with twenty-one occurrences (11.4%), and lastly, grade three with seven occurrences (4.8%). Level 2 of the speaking skill was the most frequent level among all three examined grades. In grade one, level 2 occurred thirty-one times and made up 20.3% of the total occurrences. In grade two, it occurred nine times and made up 5% of the total occurrences. In grade three, it occurred three times and made up to 2.1% of the total occurrences. We can conclude that the speaking skill was apparent in grade 1 but was not sufficiently included in grades two and three.

Surprisingly, under the speaking skill, all of the examined grades scored 0 on level 1 and had the highest frequencies in level 2. So, the course-books are skipping level 1 which is a starting point for students and focusing on level 2 instead. As a result, it is safe to assume that after mastering one level, the occurrences of that level should then decrease in the next grades and increase in the higher levels of competence. However, the same level (level 2) was the most occurring in the higher grades with a lower occurrence rate. Thus, as students are maturing, the focus is still on the same level with little to no increase in the higher competence levels (levels 3, 4 and, 5).

The reading skill among all the investigated grade levels was mostly frequent in grade two with one hundred six occurrences 57.6%, then grade three with sixty-seven occurrences 46.2%, and lastly grade one with forty-seven occurrences 31%. Level 1 of the reading skill was the most frequent level among all of the three investigated grades. In grade one, level 1 occurred forty-seven times and made up 31%. In grade two, it occurred sixty-eight times and made up

37%. In grade three, it occurred forty-four times and made up 30.3% of the total occurrences. We can conclude that the reading skill was included inside all three grades, however, the lowest level was the most occurring level in all three grades.

Although the reading skill is found to be evident in the course-books, however, the same level of competence (level 1) was the most evident in each of these grades. So this implies that students' reading skills aren't improving during Cycle I. Thus, students are relearning the same level during the first three years of elementary without a noticeable increase in any of the higher levels. Learning should be built on prior knowledge to help students develop in the higher levels.

The writing skill among all the investigated grade levels was mostly frequent in grade three with sixty-three occurrences 43.4%, then grade two with forty-four occurrences 24%, and lastly, grade one with twenty-eight occurrences 18.4%. Level 5 of the writing skill was the most frequent level among all three grades. In grade one, level 5 occurred sixteen times and made up 10.5%. In grade two, it occurred twenty times and made up 11% of the total occurrences. In grade three, it occurred twenty-three times and made up 15.8% of the total occurrences. Thus, level 5 of the writing skill made a small increase in every grade level.

Level 5 of the writing skill is the most evident among all three grades. This raises the question as to why the course-books are featuring the most proficient level without taking into consideration the importance of gradual learning. It is essential to move through the levels consistently without forming a gap between the levels of proficiency. For example, in grade one levels 1 to 4 were not sufficiently reflected in the course-books; however, level 5 was highly included. This gap raises the question as to how can students create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (level 5) without practicing to contribute vocabulary or match vocabulary to illustrated word charts (level 1). So, to reach level 5, continuous learning throughout the

course-books should be included. The evident gap among the levels raises the question of whether students will be able to complete level 5 proficiently.

An overall discussion about the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards is necessary to understand where the Lebanese curriculum that was developed in 1997 stands internationally in today's world. It is obvious that there is an unequal distribution among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The listening skill was not given any importance and it had the lowest percentages among all grades one, two, and three in comparison to all the other skills. Another concern is related to the speaking skill; it is evident in grade one and less evident in grades two and three. This leads to decreasing all the likelihood of students attaining and mastering the skill. A huge significance has been given to the reading skill; however, the first level was the most occurring level among all three grades. Also, it is crucial to mention that the writing skill is mostly evident in the highest level among all 3 grades. Except for the listening skill, all the highest occurrences and percentages were evident in the same levels among all of the three grades. Thus, students are learning the skill in grade one and relearning it again in grades two and three. It is crucial to point out that learning should be gradual and based on previous learning experiences. Among all of the levels across all of the skills, level 1 is the most evident level in grades one, two, and three.

Level 1 is considered the "starting" level in foreign language learning. According to the TESOL International Association (2006) level one is the following:

> At the Starting level, students initially have little to no understanding of English and rarely use English for communication. They respond nonverbally to simple commands, statements, and questions. As their oral comprehension increases, they begin to imitate the verbalizations of others by using single words or simple phrases, and begin to use

English spontaneously. At the earliest stage, learners construct meaning from text primarily through non-print features (e.g., illustrations, graphs, maps, tables). They gradually construct more meaning from the words themselves, but the construction is often incomplete. They are able to generate simple texts that reflect their knowledge level of syntax. These texts may include a significant amount of nonconventional features, such as invented spelling, grammatical inaccuracies, pictorial representations, and surface features and rhetorical patterns of the native language (such as replication of ways of structuring text from the native culture and language) (p.40).

Lebanese Curriculum Alignment

As mentioned earlier, the Lebanese curriculum includes seven skills and the performance tasks fall under these skills. The performance tasks are a set of tasks that students should be able to complete by the end of each grade level. Each of these tasks is independent, and unlike the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards, they are not based on levels. Thus, each one of the performance tasks of each grade level is independent and is not considered as prior knowledge. However, when moving up to the next grades students must have high exposure to the performance tasks to achieve their grade levels' performance tasks.

The listening skill is one of the least occurring skills among all three grade levels. In grade one, it occurred sixty-nine times (13.74%) distributed among five different performance tasks. In grade two, there are three performance tasks under the listening skill; nevertheless, it occurred only in two different performance tasks nine times (2.3%). The listening skill in grade three occurred forty-two times (9.3%). The listening skill is not distributed equally among the performance tasks at each grade level. There is an imbalance of distribution among

79

performance tasks. For example, the listening skill in grade one included the performance task "Name objects and actions in the story," which occurred only three times. Then, in grade two, the performance task "Answer simple factual questions based on what is heard" is based on the previously mentioned performance task of grade one. Thus, from one grade to another, the performance tasks rely on the ones that occur in previous grade levels. Therefore, it is vital to question students' ability to master a specific performance task before moving on to a higher ability performance task.

Similarly, like the listening skill, oral communication skill was also the most evident in grade one, then grade three, and lastly, grade two. The oral communication skill was the most occurring skill in grade one, and the occurrences added up to one hundred ninety-six (39%). In grade two, it occurred 65 times (16.83%). In grade three, it occurred 96 times (21.3%); most of the occurrences were due to the high-frequency level of the performance task "Receive and relay messages."

In grade two, the official curriculum included "Introduce self and others" to the performance tasks. The mentioned performance task only occurred seven times throughout the whole years of grade two. Grade three students are expected to "Express empathy for others" which occurred only three times. Nevertheless, students will not be able to express empathy for others if they are not able to introduce themselves or others.

Once again, grade one attains the highest frequency among all the other grade levels in the reading skill. The reading skill occurred one hundred five times (21%). In grade two, it occurred 87 times (22.53%). In grade three it occurred seventy-eight times (17.3%). Although the reading skills are included in the course-books with high frequencies, some of the included performance tasks weren't reflected adequately inside the course-books.

The written communication is mostly frequent in grade three where it occurred 103 times (22.8%). In grade one, it occurred fifty-six times (11.2%). This skill barely occurred in grade two's course-books reaching sixteen occurrences (4.14%).

Grade three also scores the highest frequency for the thinking skill; it occurred eighty-five times (18.8%). Grade one scored the least with twenty-eight occurrences (only 5.57%). In grade two, the thinking skill occurred seventy-four times (19.17%). The only skill that was the most frequent in grade two compared to the other grades is the study skill. In grade two it occurred 125 times (32.3%). In grade one it occurred forty-eight times (9.56%). In grade three it occurred eighty-five times (18.8%). The cultural awareness performance tasks weren't included in the course-books of grade one. Grade two included 10 occurrences (2.6%) and grade three had a slight increase in the frequencies, occurring 15 times (3.33%).

Although some of these skills are highly occurring in the course-books, it is necessary to mention that many of the performance tasks that fall under them are not very frequently added and some of them are not evident. For example, grade one's listening skills had a high percentage of occurrences; however, three out of five of the performance tasks occurred with a low frequency. Thus, when a specific skill is evident, it doesn't automatically indicate that all the assigned performance tasks are evident.

The highest frequency rate of all the performance tasks occurred in grade one; the total frequencies sum is 502 times. Grade three comes in second place, and the total frequency number is 450 times. Grade two comes in third place; the total number of occurrences is 386 times. Grades one and three equally split the highest level of occurrences frequency. The listening, oral communication, and reading have the highest occurrence rate in grade one. Written communication, thinking skills, and cultural awareness have the highest occurrence rate

81

in grade three. However, cultural awareness had two performance tasks that occurred only 25 times throughout the whole course-books of grade two and three (ten times in the former and 15 times in the latter). In other words, cultural awareness might have the highest occurrence rank in grade three among the other grades; however, it doesn't mean that the students will grasp the provided information. After summing up all the occurrences per skill, the skills fall in this descending order: oral communication, reading comes second, study skills come third, thinking skills come forth, listening skills come fifth, written communication comes sixth, and cultural awareness comes last.

Conclusion

The curriculum is based on the general objectives (goals); these general objectives reflect the primary purpose of the developed curriculum. The general objectives are then divided into curricular objectives for each Cycle. The 'curricular objectives' of Cycle I are later transformed into specific grade levels performance tasks. As mentioned earlier, certain performance tasks were not included in the course-books, and some were partially included. As a result, this causes a direct impact on the fulfillment of the goals and objectives assigned to each grade level. This inconsistent inclusion of the performance tasks in the course-books of grades one, two, and three, leads to an imbalance among the grades while impeding the main goal of the curriculum. The official curriculum states that the main aim is to provide students with native-like English proficiency skills. Nevertheless, the course-books are a reflection of level 1 "starting" of the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards.

As previously explained, the course-books can be better aligned with the international standards as well as the official Lebanese curriculum. There is a pattern of minimal inclusion of

the listening/oral communication (except the oral communication skills of grade one) in the course-books. These skills are as equally important as reading and writing skills. Raimes (1983) believes that listening and speaking are as important as other skills when communicating.

The goals include study skills and critical thinking skills that will enable students to think clearly and systematically. Also, the inclusion of cultural awareness is a step forward to help students accept and build interaction with people from diverse backgrounds. After investigating all the performance tasks, the official Lebanese curriculum gave less attention to the study, thinking and cultural awareness skills. These mentioned skills only consist of two performance tasks whereas the rest of the skills consist of three at minimum. As stated in previous sections, there is a lack of cultural awareness in the Lebanese course-books, so it is essential to take a look at what the official Lebanese curriculum stated regarding the inclusion of cultural awareness skills.

1. Learning a new language is becoming familiar with a new culture. Learners of a new language become aware of new values, norms, thought patterns, and beliefs. As a result of this cultural exposure and of the ensuing analysis of similarities and differences with native culture, learners develop understanding of, respect for, and appreciation of diversity of cultural background. (NCERD, 1997, p. 146)

2. Language will be presented to students in its proper cultural context. Though language learning will start with universal themes, the particular characteristics of the culture of English-speaking people will be introduced gradually and where appropriate. The purpose of this is to develop cross-cultural openness, tolerance, and understanding. It is for this purpose that the proposed curriculum highlights foreign

language literature at all grade levels and includes a special section on cultural

awareness skills (NCERD, 1997, p. 147).

3. "Developing intercultural understanding and appreciation." (p. 148)

4. "Promoting students' positive attitudes toward the target language and culture" (p.

148).

5. "Recognize typical behaviors in common everyday situations in the target culture."

(p. 151)

6. "Develop empathy towards the target culture." (p. 151)

After stating all the above quotations taken from the NCERD, it is safe to say that the

official curriculum over-emphasized the importance of including cultural awareness. In addition

to all of the above quotes, it is vital to remind the readers that among the seven skills, cultural

awareness was one of them and it included specific performance tasks for each grade level.

Although the curriculum has continuously shed light on cultural awareness, curriculum

developers did not include any assigned performance tasks for grades one and two, and tasks

were only partially evident in grade three.

Materials Used

A well-produced curriculum should take into consideration the reality of schools.

Lebanese schools barely have any materials and curriculum developers are aware of this fact.

However, various performance tasks rely on materials to be met. For example, in grades 1-3,

some performance tasks call for students to set up displays of realia of the target culture which

might be problematic for certain students. Objectives and performance tasks should reflect

available resources in the classroom or school. It is also unfair for certain students to achieve

performance tasks, while others do not. So, teachers with limited access to materials should make use of available materials to teach students about different cultures. For example, students can design their dolls using old fabrics or recyclable objects.

Performance Tasks

It is essential to ensure that the goals, objectives, and performance tasks are addressed inside the course-books. When establishing the official curriculum, each of the goals, objectives, and performance tasks should be a reflection of one another. Thus, the general objectives should be reflected in the stated performance tasks which are included inside the course-books. As a result, the committee members should take a huge role in developing the curriculum and ensuring that the general goals, objectives, and performance tasks are covered inside the developed curriculum.

After reviewing the performance tasks, some of them were somewhat unclear. For example, grades two and three's study skill performance tasks include the following "Identify and use part of the text," "Write legibly for future reference," and "Use key pages for easy reference." So, as a part of the curriculum development, the performance tasks should be developed clearly with a detailed explanation about how teachers can achieve them. In grade three, the performance tasks are repetitive to a certain extent in three different skills. The performance tasks "Sequence events in a logical order," "Unscramble a text and organize ideas in a logical sequence," "Classify and organize information logically," are under the reading, written communication, and thinking skills respectively. Thus, the rewriting of the performance tasks is essential to provide a high quality of teaching and learning.

The classroom is an environment that includes all types of learners, so the curriculum should take these learners' abilities into account. The official curriculum should include "general objectives" with various differentiated levels so that students of different learning abilities can excel. A differentiated curriculum creates multiple paths for students of different abilities to experience an equal opportunity of understanding, using, developing concepts as part of their daily learning process. The classroom should include all different abilities by providing challenging tasks that are based on their individual needs. Also, teachers are the facilitators inside the classroom; hence, their role is the most important role to achieve the set performance tasks.

Pedagogical Implications

This study offers several implications for classroom teaching and learning. Due to the results mentioned above, that reflect the fluctuating frequencies and percentages of the performance tasks in course-books, curriculum developers need to be a part of the course-books development process in addition to the development of the Lebanese curriculum. As mentioned earlier, the listening and speaking skills of the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards and the official Lebanese Curriculum were not reflected enough in the course-books. Listening and speaking skills are crucial for language learning. These skills help students understand what is being said and grant the listener a chance to be a part of the communication process. Thus, listening and speaking skills which are co-dependent skills, should be addressed more inside the course-books. So, while including the listening and speaking skills, there should be an equal balance between the performance skills among all the four skills. Since the Official Curriculum will not change anytime soon, teachers need to take into consideration the lack of inclusion that these two skills were given. Teachers can play a major role in making a change in this weak area

86

of the curriculum. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibility to include listening and speaking in the classroom.

Before providing students with a listening activity, ESL teachers should provide students with background activities where students can relate them to their real-life. When including listening inside the classroom, students need to know why they are listening so that they can listen with a purpose and become aware of the specific information they need to listen for. Sometimes listening skills are mistaken for students' memorization abilities. However, understanding what is heard is not necessarily memorizing what is heard. So, ESL teachers should test students' comprehension rather than memorization. Consequently, various types of listening comprehension questions should be added in order to examine students' listening performance. Since the listening skill requires different types of processing, top-down and bottom-up skills should be applied while teaching listening. Bottom-up processing is beneficial for low achieving students; it helps pupils with understanding lexical and pronunciation features. On the other hand, top-down processing mainly relies on previous knowledge. The listener draws conclusions of the text based on the speaker, topic, context, and situation.

When teaching students speaking skills, teachers should choose a subject that is directly related to students' background knowledge or one that they can relate to. It is often hard for students to speak up in front of their friends; thus it is necessary to start teaching students oral communication skills at an early age. To make speaking an enjoyable learning experience, the teacher should provide students with multiple topic choices according to their age group and knowledge. Also, students can start by presenting in front of small groups of students rather than larger groups and moving on to eventually being able to present to the whole classroom.

A central feature of culture is language; cultural understanding plays a significant role in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Language functions to shape and convey perceptions from one community to another. Ghaith (2012) states that due to the ongoing exacerbation of aggression and the widespread misunderstandings and critical incidents internationally and nationally, there has been a need to develop cultural awareness skills of inter-cultural and intra-cultural communication. In this regard, foreign language learning requires a lot of foreign culture learning, Citron (1995) believes that language learning opens students' minds to the ways that others think and increases the opportunities for cross-cultural acceptance. Integrating cultural awareness in the English language classroom is necessary due to the essential role that language plays in teaching about the target culture. Contrarily, including cultural awareness in the English language classroom might have negative results. Challenges may include teachers' limited foreign experiences and knowledge of the target culture, lack of materials and methods, and fear of arising controversial issues that have been globally recognized as obstacles which hinders the cultural awareness experience (Arries, 1994; Bragaw, 1991; Damen, 1987; Hadley, 1993; Mantle-Bromley, 1993).

One of the critical components of the official curriculum is cultural awareness. However, like listening and speaking, cultural awareness wasn't given much attention in the course-books. Tolerance and acceptance should be taught at a very young age. However, teachers should learn more about the target culture in order to teach students. Thus, teachers' limited knowledge should not stand in the way of students' cultural awareness. This skill should be reflected more in the course-books, and the performance tasks should not be limited to materials, displays, or songs. The performance tasks should focus more on accepting diversity and providing information about different cultures.

Research Implications

Upon the completion of this thesis research, various research implications could help improve education in Lebanon. Firstly, other research can focus on whether students acquire the goals, objectives, and performance tasks inside the classroom. Secondly, it is vital to examine public and private schools' teachers' knowledge of the official Lebanese curriculum's principles that were then transformed into the goals, objectives, and performance tasks. Also, research should take into account teachers' perceptions of the textbooks, course-books, and teachers' guides.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. Firstly, given that the researcher did the data collection and data analysis, there is a limitation in terms of objectivity. Secondly, the data collection procedure was time-consuming since the researcher had over twenty-one performance tasks of the official Lebanese curriculum and twenty performance tasks under the TESOL PreK-12 International Standards. Thirdly, it would have added more value to the research if students were examined whether they achieve these goals, objectives, and performance tasks by the end of their school year.

REFERENCES

Aagaard, L., & Skidmore, R. (2002). *Preservice teachers' perceptions of their best and worst K-12 teachers*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the 29th Mid-South Educational Research Association, Chattanooga, TN, November 6-8, 2002.

Allwright, R. L. (1981). What do we want teaching materials for? *ELT Journal,* 36(1), 5–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/36.1.5

Al-Saif, A. (2005). The motivating and inhibiting factor affecting the use of web-based instruction at the University of Qassim in Saudi Arabia. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Wayne State University

Arries, J. F. (1994). Constructing culture study units: A blueprint and practical tools. *Foreign Language Annals*, *27*(4), 523-534. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1994.tb01230.x

Awad, A. (2013). Evaluating English for Palestine 12 in Terms of the EFL/ESL Textbook Evaluating Checklist from the Teachers' Perspectives in Nablus Directorate Schools. *An-Najah Univ. J. Res.(Humanities)*, *27*(11), 2013. Retrieved from https://journals.najah.edu/media/journals/full_texts/8.pdf

Bacha, N. N., & Bahous, R. (2011). Foreign language education in Lebanon: A context of cultural and curricular complexities. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2, 1320-1328. http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.6.1320-1328

Berelson, B. (1952). Content analysis in communication research. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Bragaw, D. H. (1991). Priority: Curriculum The Global Imperative and Its Metalanguage. *Foreign Language Annals*, *24*(2), 115. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/openview/5b6524c7f6d6151a11c6344ba2c04b52/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1821600

Breen, M. (2001). Overt participation and covert acquisition in the language classroom. *Learner contributions to language learning: New directions in research*, 112-140.

Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum: A systematic approach to program development*. Heinle & Heinle

Carter, R. (1991). The National Curriculum for English: A Guide to the Development of a National Curriculum for English in England and Wales 1984-1990. English Language Division, the British Council.

Charalambous, A. C. (2011). The Role and Use of Course Books in EFL. (Master's thesis in ELT), Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524247.pdf

Citron, J. (1995). Can Cross-Cultural Understanding Aid Second Language Acquisition? Toward a Theory of Ethno-Lingual Relativity. *Hispania*, 78 (1), 105-113. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/345230

Coleman, H. (1986). Evaluating teachers' guides: Do teachers' guides guide teachers. *JALT journal*, *8*(1), 17-36. Retrieved from http://jalt-publications.org/files/pdf/jalt_journal/jj-8-1.pdf#page=28

Cotton, K. 1995. *Effective student practices: A research synthesis—1995 update*, Available http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/esp/esp95.html#1

Cunningsworth, A. (1995). *Choosing your coursebook*. Oxford: Heinemann.

Damen, L. (1987). Culture learning: The fifth dimension in the language classroom. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Daoud, A. & Celce-Murcia, M. (1979). Selecting and evaluating a textbook. In M. Celce-Murcia and L. McIntosh (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 302-307). Cambridge, MA: Newbury House.

Dbaibo, H. J. (2016). *Investigation of the Lebanese grade 4 English language reading curriculum: the written and the taught curriculum in public schools* (Unpublished master's thesis). American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon.

Decker, L. E., & Rimm-Kaufman, S. E. (2008). Personality characteristics and teacher beliefs among pre-service teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 35*(2), 45-62. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/23479223

Demmon-Berger, D. (1986). *Effective teaching: Observations from research.* Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Dopson, L. R., & Tas, R. F. (2004). A practical approach to curriculum development: A case study. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 16*(1), 39-46. doi: https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2004.10696783

Dubin, F., & Olshtain, E. (1986). *Course design: Developing programs and materials for language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Eckert, S. A. (2013). What do teaching qualifications mean in urban schools? A mixed- methods study of teacher preparation and qualification. *Journal of Teacher Education, 64*(1)*,* 75-89. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0022487112460279

El Amine, A., & Jurdak, M. (2005). Reform of general education, case study on Lebanese curriculum reform [In Arabic]. In Adnan Al-Amin*, reform of general education in the Arab countries* (pp.55-76). Lebanon: Beirut, UNESCO-LAES.

El-Hussari, I. A. (2002). *The concept of cultural awareness within the Lebanese new national curriculum and the national English textbook: a case study of policy and practice in Lebanese public and private secondary schools* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation), University of Leicester, United Kingdom, England.

Ellis, Rod. (1997). The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials. *ELT Journal*, 51 (1), pp. 36-42. doi: https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/51.1.36

Esseili, F. (2011). *English in Lebanon: Implications for national identity and language policy* (Unpublished doctoral Dissertation), Purdue University, United States.

Frayha, N. (2003). Education and social cohesion in Lebanon. Prospects, 33(1), 77-88. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023/A:1022664415479.pdf

Frayha, N. (2009). The negative face of the Lebanese education system. Lebanon Renaissance. Retrieved from http://www.lebanonrenaissance.org/assets/Uploads/0-The-negative-face-of-the-Lebanese-education-system-by-Nmer-Frayha-2009.pdf
Google Scholar

Gao, M., & Liu, Q. (2013). Personality traits of effective teachers represented in the narratives of American and Chinese preservice teachers: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3*(2), 84-95.

George, A. (2009). Quantitative and qualitative approaches to content analysis. In K. Krippendorff and M. A. Bock (Eds.). *The content analysis reader* (pp. 144-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ghaith, G. (2012). The knowledge base of teaching English as an additional language: A framework for curriculum and instruction. *Arab World English Journal, 3*(4), 4. Retrieved from https://awej.org/index.php/awej-vol-3-no-2-june-2012/30-awej-volume-3-number-4-2012/155-ghazi-ghaith

Ghaith, G., & Shaaban, K. (1999). The prospects and problems of the new Lebanese English language curriculum. In F. Ayoub (Ed.), *The new curricula in Lebanon: Evaluative review* (pp. 351-364). Beirut: Lebanese Association for Educational Studies.

Glatthorn, A.A., Boschee, F., Whitehead, B.M., & Boschee, B.F. (2012). The nature of curriculum. In A.A. Glatthorn, F. Boschee, B.M. Whitehead, & B.F. (3rd ed.). *Curriculum leadership strategies for development and implementation.* USA: Sage Publications.

Graves, K. (2008). The language curriculum: A social contextual perspective. *Language Teaching*, *41*(2), 147-181. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004867

Gresh, D. K. (1995). *The perceptions of adults with learning disabilities regarding their learning experiences, (*Unpublished Doctoral dissertation), Pennsylvania State University, United States.

Gumperz, J. J. (1962). Types of linguistic communities. *Anthropological linguistics*, 4 (1), 28-40. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/30022343

Hadley, A.O. (1993). 'Teaching for Cultural Understanding', in A. Hadley (ed.), Teaching Language in Context, pp. 357-406, Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Haycraft, J. (1978). *An introduction to English language teaching*. London: Longman.

Hewings, A. and Hewings, M. (2005). Grammar and Context: An Advanced Resource Book. London: Routledge.

Hong Xu, I. (2004). Investigating criteria for assessing ESL textbooks, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Hrehovčik, T. (2002). Foreign language textbook evaluation –methodological considerations. Retrieved from https://univ.rzeszow.pl/file/1246/sar_v1_18.pdf

Hutchinson, T., & Torres, E. (1994). The textbook as agent of change. *ELT Journal*, 48(4), 315–328. Retrieved form https://academic.oup.com/eltj/article-pdf/48/4/315/8584524/48-4-315.pdf

Kırkgöz, Y. (2009). Evaluating the English textbooks for young learners of English at Turkish primary education. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *1*(1), 79-83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2009.01.016

Korkeamäki, R. L., & Dreher, M. J. (2011). Early literacy practices and the Finnish national core curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 43*(1), 109-137. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220271003801959

Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (LAES) (2002). The English as a first foreign language curriculum. In *Evaluation of the new educational curricula in Lebanon: Assessing objectives, structure, and lesson distribution* (pp. 272-307).

Litz, D. R. (2005). Textbook evaluation and ELT management: A South Korean case study. *Asian EFL journal*, *48*, 1-53. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David_Litz/publication/228383638_Textbook_evaluation_and_ELT_management_a_South_Korean_case_study/links/5693859f08ae0f920dce8121.pdf

Macalister, J., & Nation, I. S. P. (2009). *Language curriculum design*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203870730

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). Common data collection measures. *Second language research: methodology and design. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum*, 43-99.

Mantle-Bromley, C. (1993). Preparing Teachers to Make a Global Difference. *Foreign Language Annals 26*.2: 208-16.

Marc, V., & Rees, K. (2009). Literary education curriculum and institutional contexts: Textbook content and teachers' textbook usage in Dutch literary education, 1968-2000. p*oetics*, *37*(1), 74-97. on curriculum and institutional contexts: Textbook content and teachers' textbook usage in Dutch literary education, 1968-2000.Poetics, 37(1), 74-97

Markee, N. (1997). *Managing curricular innovation*. Cambridge University Press.

Marshall, K. (2004). Let's clarify the way we use the word "curriculum". *Education Week*, *24*(1), 43.

MEHE. (2011). Quality education for growth national education strategy framework education sector development plan (General Education): 2010-2015. Retrieved from http://www.mehe.gov.lb/uploads/file/ESDP%20modified%20march%202010/ESDP%20English%20FINAL%20-p%201.pdf

Moazam, I., & Jodai, H. (2014). Textbook evaluation: a reflection on Total English (Intermediate). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *4*(11), 2402. Retrieved from http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol04/11/26.pdf

Mol, H., & Tin, T. B. (2008). EAP materials in New Zealand and Australia. *English language learning materials: A critical review*, 74-99. https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/35178332/English_Language_Learning_Materials_A_Critical_Review__2008.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DEnglish_Language_Learning_Materials_A_Cr.pdf&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A%2F20191024%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20191024T064825Z&X-Amz-Expires=3600&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=0ce60c7f0b2b1b928d94817b2dcbb4764f6edcb76ed83372499bcd89ab57d952#page=85

NCERD (National Council for Educational Research and Development) (1994) *Plan for educational reform.* Beirut: NCERD.

NCERD (National Council for Educational Research and Development) (1995). *New framework for education in Lebanon.* Beirut: NCERD.

NCERD (National Council for Educational Research and Development) (1998). *The English language curriculum.* Beirut: NCERD.

Nicol, C.C. and Crespo, S.M. (2006). Learning to teach with mathematics textbooks: How preservice teachers interpret and use curriculum materials. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 62, 331–355. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10649-006-5423-y.pdf

Norton, J. L. (1997). *Learning from first year teachers: Characteristics of the effective practitioners.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association. Memphis, TN, November.

O'Neil, R. O. (1982). Why use textbooks? *ELT Journal*, *36*(2), 104–111.

Orr, M. (2011). Learning to teach English as a foreign language in Lebanon. *Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Education, 2,* 1-14. Retrieved from https://www.qscience.com/content/journals/10.5339/nmejre.2011.2?crawler=true

Prabhu, N. S. (1989). Three models in second language pedagogy. *Journal of English and Foreign Languages*, *3*, 1-14. Retrieved form http://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/handle/10635/130248

Raimes, A. (1983). Tradition and revolution in ESL teaching. *TESOL quarterly*, *17*(4), 535-552. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.2307/3586612

Ramaswami, S., Sarraf, I., & Haydon,J., (2012). English Language Quantitative Indicators: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen. A custom report compiled by Euromonitor International for the British Council. TAIF

Remillard, J. T. (2000). Can curriculum materials support teachers' learning? Two fourth-grade teachers' use of a new mathematics text. *The Elementary School Journal*, *100*(4), 331-350. Retrieved from https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1086/499645

Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum development in language teaching*. Ernst Klett Sprachen. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/download/56734101/Curriculum_development_in_language_teaching.pdf

Saba 'Ayon, N. (2012). *Lebanese English as a foreign language teachers' conceptions of teaching and their practice in Lebanese public high schools*. DPhil Thesis, University of Sussex.

Sbaiti, N. (2009). "If the Devil taught French": Strategies of language and learning in French mandate Beirut. In *Trajectories of Education in the Arab World* (pp. 75-99). Routledge.

Shaaban, K. (2000). Assessment of young learners' achievement in ESL classes in the Lebanon. *Language Culture and Curriculum*, *13*(3), 306-317. 10.1080/07908310008666606

Shaaban, K. (2005). English language teaching in Lebanon: Challenges for the future. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Teaching English to the world: History*, *curriculum and practice* (pp. 103-113). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Incorporated.

Shaaban, K. (2006). An initial study of the effects of cooperative learning on reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and motivation to read. *Reading Psychology*, *27*(5), 377-403. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02702710600846613

Shaaban, K. A. (2013). Disparity between ideals and reality in curriculum construction: The case of the Lebanese English language curriculum. *Creative Education*, 4(12), 28. http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2013.412A2005

Shaaban, K., & Ghaith, G. (1997). An integrated approach to foreign language learning in Lebanon. Language, *Culture and Curriculum, 10*, 200-207.Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07908319709525252

Shaaban, K., & Ghaith, G. (1999). Lebanon's language-in-education policies: From bilingualism to trilingualism. *Language Problems and Language Planning, 23*, 1-16. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1075/lplp.23.1.01leb

Shaito, Z. A., & American University of Beirut. Faculty of Arts and Sciences.Department of Political Studies and Public Administration. (2013). *Public education in lebanon: The case of the primary-age dropout rate in public schools*

Sheir, A.A., Abdel Khal, M.W., & El Nabawy, E. (2014). Oral questioning technique for developing critical thinking skills in EFL classroom. *Journal of Education Science, 22*(1), 2-23. Retrieved from search.shamaa.org.

Sheldon, L. E. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *ELT Journal, 42,* 237-246. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/42.4.237

Stern, H. (1983) Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching. Oxford: OUP.

Stewart, W.J. (1993). Facilitating Holistic Curriculum Planning in Schools. *Clearing House, 67*(2), 112-115. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.1993.9956036

Sulayman, R.H. (2011). The effect of using pictorial story style on the acquisition of new English vocabulary by sixth primary pupils. *Journal of College Basic Education Researches, 10*(3). Retrieved from search.shamaa.org.

Taba, H. (1962). *Curriculum development: Theory and practice*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

Tannous, H. (1997). Religious diversity and the future of education in Lebanon. Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies, 2(1), 21-35

Tannous, H. (1997). Religious diversity and the future of education in Lebanon. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies, 2*(1), 21-35

TESOL International Association. (2006). PreK-12 English language proficiency standards. *Alexandria, VA: Author*.

The Taif Agreement. (1989). *The Taif agreement*, Saudi Arabia.

Tudor, I. (2001) The Dynamics of the Language Classroom. Cambridge: CUP.

Tyler, R. W. (1949). Achievement testing and curriculum construction. *Trends in student personnel work*, *3914107*.

Van Ek, J. A. (1991) *The threshold level for modern language learning in schools.* Malaysia: Longman

White, R. (1988) The ELT Curriculum: Design, Innovation and Management. Oxford: Blackwell.

Williams, D. (1983). Developing criteria for textbook evaluation. *ELT journal*, *37*(3), 251-255. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/37.3.251

Witcher, A.E., Onwuegbuzie, A.J., & Minor, L.C. (2001). Characteristics of effective teachers: perceptions of preservice teachers. *Research in the Schools, 8*(2), 45-47. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED438246.pdf

Wright, T. (2005) Classroom Management in Language Education. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yalden, J. (1987). *Principles of course design for language teaching* (pp. 16-18). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zakharia, Z. (2009). Language-in-education policies in contemporary Lebanon: Youth perspectives. In *Trajectories of Education in the Arab World* (pp. 173-200). Routledge.

المراجع

بشور، م. (١٩٧٨) بنية النظام التربوي في لبنان: دراسة نوعية. مركز التربوي للبحوث والإنماء، بيروت: لبنان

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE TESOL INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS WITH GRADE ONE

GRADE ONE					
LISTENING					
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Phonics Phonemic awareness	Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally(e.g., by clapping) in small groups	Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner.	Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner	Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner	Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) Through simulation	
Frequency	9	4	2	8	4	**27**
Percentage	6%	2.6%	1.3%	5.3%	2.6%	**18%**
SPEAKING					
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Rhyming words	Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g.,"The boy has a toy.")	Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups	Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups	Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner	Recite original raps, verses, poetry	
Frequency	0	31	2	4	9	**46**
Percentage	0%	20.3%	1.3%	2.6%	6%	**30.2%**
READING					
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Story grammar	Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or	Categorize story elements with visual support	Sequence story events with visually supported	Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases	Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified	

	places (settings)	using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or events	text by beginning, middle, and end	with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported stories	grade-level stories	
Frequency	47	0	0	4	0	**51**
Percentage	31%	0%	0%	2.6%	0%	**33.6%**
WRITING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Homophones Compound Words	Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner	Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner	Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner	Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner	Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)	
Frequency	2	3	2	5	16	**28**
Percentage	1.3%	2%	1.3%	3.3%	10.5%	**18.4%**
SUM OF FREQUENCIES	**58**	**38**	**6**	**21**	**29**	**152**
SUM OF PERCENTAGES	**38%**	**25%**	**4%**	**14%**	**19%**	**100%**

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE TESOL INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS WITH GRADE TWO

GRADE TWO						
LISTENING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Phonics Phonemic awareness	Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally (e.g., by clapping) in small groups	Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner.	Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner	Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner	Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) Through simulation	
Frequency	6	0	3	2	2	**13**
Percentage	3.2%	0%	1.6%	1%	1%	**7%**
SPEAKING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Rhyming words	Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g.,"The boy has a toy.")	Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups	Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups	Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner	Recite original raps, verses, poetry	
Frequency	0	9	4	1	7	**21**
Percentage	0%	5%	2.17%	0.5%	3.8%	**11.4%**
READING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Story grammar	Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)	Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or	Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end	Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually supported	Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories	

		events		stories		
Frequency	68	30	8	0	0	**106**
Percentage	37%	16.3%	4.34%	0%	0%	**57.6%**
	WRITING					

Topic	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Total
Homophones Compound Words	Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner	Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner	Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner	Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner	Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)	
Frequency	0	10	2	12	20	**44**
Percentage	0%	5.43%	1%	6.5%	11%	**24%**
SUM OF FREQUENCIES	**74**	**49**	**17**	**15**	**29**	**184**
SUM OF PERCENTAGES	**40.2%**	**27%**	**9.2%**	**8%**	**16%**	**100%**

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE TESOL INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS WITH GRADE

THREE

GRADE THREE						
LISTENING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Phonics Phonemic awareness	Identify sounds, syllables, or compound words nonverbally(e.g., by clapping) in small groups	Discriminate between regular and irregular words (e.g., count nouns or past tense) through gestures in oral sentences with a partner.	Identify affixes root words, and derivational endings through gestures in oral discourse with a partner	Replicate through gestures, stress, and intonation patterns of rhymes, prose, or poetry with a partner	Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, or onomatopoeia) Through simulation	
Frequency	0	0	6	0	2	**8**
Percentage	0%	0%	4.13%	0%	1.37%	**5.6%**
SPEAKING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Rhyming words	Practicing illustrated word pairs with a partner (e.g.,"The boy has a toy.")	Repeat phrases or chunks with illustrated referents in large or small groups	Create sentences or chants based on familiar word families or topics in small groups	Perform rhymes, raps or versus developed with a partner	Recite original raps, verses, poetry	
Frequency	0	3	2	2	0	**7**
Percentage	0%	2.1%	1.37%	1.37%	0%	**4.8%**
READING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Story grammar	Identify story elements with visual support by names (characters) or places (settings)	Categorize story elements with visual support using graphic organizers by description of characters, settings, or	Sequence story events with visually supported text by beginning, middle, and end	Match transition words (e.g., "finally") or phrases with sequence, main ideas, or details in visually	Identify and order main ideas and details, using modified grade-level stories	

		events		supported stories		
Frequency	44	17	5	1	0	**67**
Percentage	30.3%	11.7%	3.44%	0.7%	0%	**46.2%**
WRITING						
Topic	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Level 5**	**Total**
Homophones Compound Words	Fill in vocabulary in context from illustrations with a partner	Contribute vocabulary or match to illustrated word charts, games, or other materials with a partner	Use vocabulary to design visually supported games, word walls, puzzles, or patterns with a partner	Produce visually supported prose or lyrics from vocabulary banks or resources with a partner	Create original prose or lyrics from vocabulary resources (e.g., computer tools)	
Frequency	7	18	4	11	23	**63**
Percentage	4.8%	12.4%	2.75%	7.5%	15.8%	**43.4%**
SUM OF FREQUENCIES	**51**	**38**	**17**	**14**	**25**	**145**
SUM OF PERCENTAGES	**35.17%**	**26.2%**	**11.72%**	**9.7%**	**17.2%**	**100%**

APPENDIX D

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE LEBANESE CURRICULUM WITH GRADE ONE

Grade One		
Listening		
Performance tasks	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Respond physically to a series of simple oral instructions	27	5.37%
Match what is heard to objects, pictures, or printed words	22	4.38%
Name objects and actions in the story.	6	1.19%
Fill out missing words or simple phrases in a song/short paragraph.	11	2.19%
Express feelings about a song, rhyme or story.	3	0.6%
Total	**69**	**13.74%**
Oral Communication		
Give information about self, others, and things in the intermediate environment.	94	18.72%
Offer and accept invitations and assistance.	39	7.76%
Express basic needs, preferences, and desires.	16	3.2%
Participate in simple role playing activities.	47	9.36%
Total	**196**	**39%**
Reading		
Answer simple comprehension questions based on what is read.	72	14.34%
Identify key facts in a text or events in a story.	21	4.18%

Group words into sets of related lexical items.	12	2.39%
Total	**105**	**21%**
Written Communication		
Write upper and lower case letters and numbers in manuscript and in cursive style.	14	2.8%
Use capital letters to begin sentences and to write proper nouns.	12	2.4%
Identify words that contain particular sounds in a given passage.	30	6%
Write simple and complex sentences.	0	0%
Total	**56**	**11.2%**
Thinking Skills		
Relate language experiences to life experiences.	25	5%
Request assistance and clarification from peers, adults, and parents.	3	0.6%
Total	**28**	**5.57%**
Study Skills		
Adhere to rules and instructions	38	7.56%
Recognize parts of text	10	2%
Total	**48**	**9.56%**
Cultural Awareness		
Reproduce common culturally determined formulaic utterances	0	0%
Match common national objects and artifacts to corresponding	0	0%

countries.		
Total	0	0%
Total Sum	**502**	**100%**

APPENDIX E
THE ALIGNMENT OF THE LEBANESE CURRICULUM WITH GRADE TWO

Grade Two		
Listening		
Performance tasks	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Identify characters, feelings, and actions a story.	1	0.25%
Answer simple factual questions based on what is heard.	8	2.07%
Take down message based on what is heard.	0	0%
Total	**9**	**2.33%**
Oral Communication		
Tell and/or retell a story.	11	2.84%
Express mood, feelings, likes and dislikes etc.	20	5.18%
Introduce self and others.	7	1.81%
Report to class about experiences and TV programs.	27	7%
Total	**65**	**16.83%**
Reading		
Record information in graphic entries.	40	10.36%
Underline common homophones, homographs, compound words, etc.	30	7.77%
Explain characters' feelings and motives	17	4.4%
Total	**87**	**22.53%**
Written Communication		
Leave the right amount of space	0	0%

between letters and words.		
Spell out and write down words that have long and short vowel sounds.	6	1.55%
Join sentences with appropriate connectors.	7	1.81%
Organize scrambled words in meaningful sentences.	3	0.77%
Total	**16**	**4.14%**
Thinking Skills		
Compare and contrast two objects, ideas, actions, etc.	54	14%
Give and receive appropriate feedback.	20	5.18%
Total	**74**	**19.17%**
Study Skills		
Organize study materials and study time	49	12.7%
Identify and use part of text.	76	19.7%
Total	**125**	**32.3%**
Cultural Awareness		
Set up classroom display centers which feature dolls, stamps, currency etc. representing target culture.	8	2.07%
Perform songs, jigs, and dances which typify the target culture.	2	0.518%
Total	**10**	**2.6%**
Total Sum	**386**	**100%**

APPENDIX F

THE ALIGNMENT OF THE LEBANESE CURRICULUM WITH GRADE THREE

Grade Three		
Listening		
Performance tasks	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Paraphrase events in a story.	7	1.5%
State similarities and differences among characters, feelings, and actions in a story.	2	0.44%
Answer basic information questions about what is heard.	33	7.33%
Total	**42**	**9.33%**
Oral Communication		
Receive and relay messages.	82	18.22%
Give instructions to perform simple tasks.	11	2.44%
Express empathy for others.	3	0.66%
Total	**96**	**21.33%**
Reading		
Sequence events in a logical order.	6	1.33%
Distinguish between different characters, motives, literary genres, plots, etc.	25	5.55%
Provide synonyms antonyms and simple definitions of underlined words in a text.	3	0.66%
Answer basic information questions about the contents of the text.	50	11.11%
Total	**78**	**17.33%**
Written Communication		

Record data on a chart/graph or graphic organizer	37	8.22%
Use punctuation marks appropriately.	18	4%
Correct own spelling mistakes.	4	0.88%
Unscramble a text and organize ideas in a logical sequence.	8	1.77%
Write a simple story using own words.	36	8%
Total	**103**	**22.88%**
Thinking Skills		
Classify and organize information logically.	66	14.6%
Use techniques to reduce anxiety.	19	4.22%
Total	**85**	**18.88%**
Study Skills		
Write legibly for future reference.	19	4.22%
Use key pages for easy reference.	12	2.66%
Total	**31**	**6.9%**
Cultural Awareness		
Use realia to compare and contrast the Lebanese and the target cultures.	13	2.9%
Compare and contrast the daily activities of children across cultures.	2	0.44%
Total	**15**	3.33%
Total Sum	**450**	**100%**