



ASSESSMENT OF LANGUAGE COMPONENTS OF ELT TEXTBOOKS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YEMEN

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to assess the language components of ELT textbooks of secondary schools in Yemen. The population of the present study is the teachers of secondary schools in Yemen. The study uses a sample of 100 teachers teaching 11th and 12th grades of secondary schools in Yemen. The study utilizes a questionnaire survey which is consisted of 2 pages and 23 questions related to language components. All questions are scaled based on five point-Likert scales ranging from poor (1), fair (2), average (3), enough (4), and good (5). Descriptive statistics, including frequency analysis, mean, minimum, maximum, normal distribution, and figures, are used to estimate the results. The results reveal that teachers perceive average materials of grammar. In the same context, the results indicate that teachers perceive fair materials of pronunciation. Likewise, the results found that teachers perceive fair materials of vocabulary materials. Similarly, teachers perceive fair materials of exercises and activities. The present study contributes to the strand literature of ELT in Yemen. Very few studies have been conducted in this regard in Yemen. Accordingly, the present study adds to the existing stock of knowledge of ELT in Yemen. The results of the present study open an insight for curriculum developers, teachers, and educational authorities to consider the weak points in the textbook of secondary schools in Yemen and take the necessary actions for improvement.

Keyword: Grammar; Pronunciation; Vocabulary; Exercises and Activities; ELT textbooks; Secondary Schools; Yemen.



1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the importance of the design of English textbooks for teachers and for the complete successful and better performance of teaching process as all; the literature shows that the majority of teachers are facing many problems, difficulties and challenges in English teaching. Not only in the primary and secondary levels of English learning but even in the graduate and postgraduate stages of education. The weak level of university students in English, as a foreign language, is attributed to the poor performance in the early stages of education especially, primary and secondary schools. It is true that many studies have dealt with evaluating English language textbooks, but these are still inadequate (Abdelwahab, 2013).

Looking to the Yemeni context, several studies have been conducted to investigate problems, challenges and weaknesses in English textbooks in different educational stages. Further, with regard to the design of ELT textbooks in Yemen, prior studies also show that there are many problems associating in ELT process and the textbooks design as well. For instance, Zuheer (2013) reported that EFL teachers at Sana'a secondary schools suffer from weakness in their teaching performance that badly affects their roles as EFL teachers. Similarly, Hwaider (2017) revealed a set of problems that encounter teachers in teaching listening and consequently contribute to the difficulty of the listening skill. Further, Muthanna and Karaman (2011) found several themes that highlight various aspects of the ELT program in Yemen. Their findings showed that several academic and administrative problems prospective teachers reported were related to the lack of clear-cut standards and program philosophy statements. The analysis revealed that the education policy-makers paid little attention to program improvement and the application of the strategies they had planned. According to Al-Mushriquee (2003), the attainment of Yemeni students in learning English is quite poor. Consistently, Al Mekhlafi (2007) reported that teaching methodology courses, the curriculum courses, the practicum, the speaking and writing skill courses and English discourse skills should include more new additional topics and be given more time. The content of the curriculum courses should be reduced and updated with current and relevant topics. The educational aids course should contain more information that goes with the school's available resources and capabilities. In another study, Ghassan (2009) reported that the problem of low English proficiency levels is due to the failure to take the aims of English language skills into consideration and apply them in a way that corresponds to the learners' cultural, social, and cognitive needs. This may be due to the absence of a systematic approach for evaluating the secondary curriculum and instruction in Yemeni schools leading to a gap between the curriculum and the techniques used in teaching the communicative approach.



Ali et al., (2016) observed that a majority of Yemeni teachers of English, in spite of graduating from Colleges of Education, tend to use a generous amount of Arabic and traditional methods in teaching English (teacher- centered). They spend most of the class time on teaching grammar and vocabulary and almost ignoring the productive skills. This in turn affects their students who, after studying English for ten years at school level and college level, cannot speak English properly and communicate effectively in real-life situations. Besides, Shaman (2003) argued that the problem of English proficiency in the Yemeni EFL context is related to the EFL writing curriculum, which does not seem to effectively prepare students for higher education. There are real problems faced by teachers and students in teaching and learning English at the secondary school level in Yemen. The most significant problem is the irrelevance of the content to students' real-life situations.

The present study aims to assess the language components of ELT textbooks of secondary schools in Yemen. Very few studies have been conducted in this regard in Yemen. This study differs from other studies; it evaluates the language components in the context of a developing country, Yemen, where the English language is used as a foreign language. Further, the teaching of English subject in Yemen starts from the 7th class, which may put an extra burden on teachers and students to teach and learn the English language. Accordingly, the present study adds to the existing stock of knowledge of ELT in Yemen. The results of the present study open an insight for curriculum developers, teachers, and educational authorities to consider the weak points in the textbook of secondary schools in Yemen and take the necessary actions for improvement.

The present study is organized as follows: section two provides a literature review, section three introduces the research methodology, section four presents the results and discussion, and section five concludes.

1. Literature Review

Several studies have evaluated English textbooks in Yemen (e.g., Ezzi, 2012; Al-anisi, 2009). (Hassen, 2019) stated that there is a big gap between the foreign environment and the Yemeni environment which make problem in the process of teaching/learning English in Yemen. (Ahmed, 2019) attempted a survey challenge of English language teaching in AL- Dhalea primary and secondary schools from the viewpoints of 20 EFL senior teachers and supervisors. The study tried to identify such challenges and suggesting some solutions and strategies for better English language teaching. The study reported that the major challenges that English language teaching in AL-Dhalea primary and secondary schools encounter are: large classes, lack of teaching aids and materials, teachers' low proficiency in English and



English teaching, overemphasizing written skills over oral ones, lack of motivation to learn English and the cheating habits in the final years of the primary and secondary stages.

Alghaberi,(2019) evaluated the teaching methods, approaches, techniques and activities used for teaching English speaking skills at Thamar Secondary Public Schools, Yemen. The study also attempted to investigate the utilization of instructional aides as well as technological resources and facilities available at schools in Thamar city. Three different data collection techniques were used, namely observation, questionnaire, and interview. Open and closed teachers and ended questionnaires were constructed. The questionnaire survey was distributed to students. The results of the study revealed that English teachers in Thamar still follow the traditional teaching methods. The study further indicated that speaking skill was almost neglected. Further, the lack of proper teaching methods and activities coupled with the absence of instructional aides stand behind students' deficiency in English speaking.

Asaad,(2019) analyzed the principles and techniques of English language teaching emphasized in the English language textbook "Crescent English Course for Yemen" used for teaching English for the third secondary grade in Yemen. The study also provided a discussion about the effectiveness and feasibility of the methodology and techniques employed in the textbook. The study reported that although the textbook was designed and developed based on the communicative language teaching method to encourage the English language learners to engage in communication, to interact, and participate in communicative classroom activities, many obstacles prevent them from achieving these goals. The study revealed that among these obstacles were that teachers mostly follow the traditional grammar-translation method in teaching the English language, and students mainly focus on the final results, namely to pass the examinations, which mostly consist of reading and writing tests.

Al-Hammadi (2017) examined the overarching approaches to second language (L2) writing instruction as reflected in the Yemeni English as Foreign Language (EFL) secondary curriculum and how well this curriculum prepares students for the university level EFL writing in content areas. The data were collected by reviewing EFL curriculum documents such as the mandated EFL textbook in Yemeni public secondary schools and EFL workbook as well as observing EFL writing lessons at selected Yemeni secondary schools. The study examined the types of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories, L2 writing instructional approaches, learner roles and teacher roles, the types of writing tasks and the emphasis on writing as a means to achieve the learning outcomes stipulated in the selected curriculum. The data for the study were analyzed using manifest content analysis. The findings showed that the Yemeni EFL writing curriculum was highly cognitive in nature rather than communicative. In terms of preparing students for academic writing skills required for the



tertiary level, writing skill was emphasized in the Yemeni EFL secondary curriculum over reading, listening, and speaking skills.

Hwaider (2017) intended to explore the most challenging areas in teaching the listening skill. Two statistics assortment measures were used to gather the facts; a classroom observation, and a questionnaire for teachers. Fifty teachers of English language retorted to the questionnaire, and 11 secondary schools in five districts of Aden Governorate in Yemen experimented for the persistence of assembling facts on the teaching of the listening skill. The data were evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively. The discoveries exposed a set of difficulties that happenstance teachers in teaching listening and consequently contribute to the difficulty of the listening skill. These problems were classified into linguistic and non-linguistic problems. The non-linguistic problems were the main interruptions to teaching listening together with complications involving to learners, teachers, and teaching atmosphere which had mostly led was taken no notice of this skill. The linguistic complications were observed in the pronunciation, stress, intonation, vocabulary, and syntactic structure. The study suggested some instructive inferences to recover the development of teaching listening in the secondary schools of Yemen.

Omer & Attamimi, (2014) inspected the efficiency of supportive learning in English language classrooms to improve Yemeni students' speaking skills and brashness. A quasi-experimental interrupted time sequence strategy was used with sixty undergraduates registered in the foundation English programmed at Hadhramout University, Yemen. The conclusions displayed a notable growth in the students' speaking skills and attitudes after the overview of cooperative learning techniques. The study also indorsed that teachers would profit from smearing CL in English classes, which may, in turn, mature students' speaking skills and attitudes.

Zuheer (2013) assessed EFL teachers' performance at Sana'a secondary schools in the light of their professional and specialist needs. The study used interview which consisted of (25) English teachers. Further, the study used a pre-administration of observation checklist, and a training program based on the four professional and specialist needs to develop the teaching performance of EFL teachers at Sana'a secondary schools. The results proved that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group of the study on the observation checklist and the achievement test in favor of the post administrations mean scores due to the effect of the training program. In the same context, Ezzi (2012) conducted a study to assess English teachers' opinions about grammar learning and teaching. It threw light on the teachers' definite practices in the classrooms of 7th -12th grades, at quite a few schools of Hodeidah, Yemen. A questionnaire survey was used to collect data on teachers' beliefs and their teaching procedures in classrooms. It is administered to 80 teachers of 12 primary and

secondary schools. Non-participatory classroom-observations were also made to back up the main data. It is found that teachers do possess a set of complex beliefs about learning and teaching grammar that are likely to be derived from their prior experience of teaching English. In another context, Muthanna and Karaman (2011) assessed various aspects of the English Language Teacher Education Program ELTE program in Yemen. The study employed primary data sources; education policy documents and semi-structured interviews with four prospective teachers before program completion. The findings showed that several academic and administrative problems prospective teachers reported were related to the lack of clear-cut standards and program philosophy statements.

2. Research Methodology

The population of this study includes secondary schools in Yemen. The sample of this study comprises 100 teachers of 11th and 12th grades of secondary schools in Yemen. The study utilizes a questionnaire survey which is consisted of 2 pages and 23 questions related to language components. All questions are scaled based on five point-Likert scales ranging from poor (1), fair (2), Average (3), enough (4), and good (5). In 1997, Parahoo discussed the definition instrument as “a tool used to collect data. An instrument is a tool designed to measure knowledge, attitude, and skills.” Qualitative and quantitative are the two approaches that are used by most the researchers. In (2003) Burns and Grove have described the qualitative approach as a “systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning”. The concept, quantitative is known as a systematic method involving numerical data. Quantitative helps to recognize the relationship between dependent and independent variables and it is based on the collected information. In this study, the data were collected through a well-set questionnaire method. Questionnaires were filled in without any influence on the respondents by the researchers. However, each questionnaire took around 7 minutes to be completed. The study assesses four dimensions of language components which are grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, exercises and activities. Following is figure (1) that demonstrates the research framework:

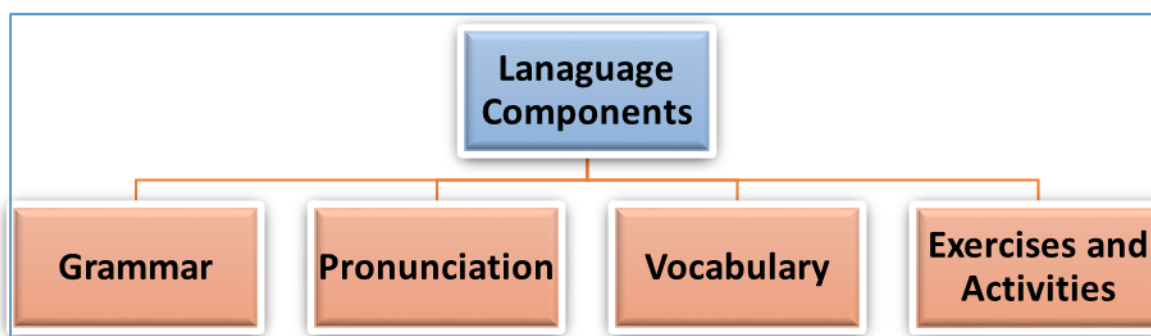


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Assessment of Grammar Materials

In table (1) Grammar materials, all the items (G1:G8) are having a minimum of 1 and a maximum value of 5, which indicate that teachers' perception ranges between the scale of poor and good. Further, the data show that there is a variation in the perception of teachers, which is indicated by the values of standard deviation. The results also show that the values of skewness and kurtosis lay in the criterion values, which are ± 1 for skewness and ± 3 for kurtosis. Looking to the mean values of all items, the results reveal that the mean value ranges between a minimum of 2.70 and a maximum of 3.08, which indicate that the respondents (teachers) perceive average materials of grammar. In the same context, the results show that G1, G3, G5, G6, G7, and G8 have the highest responses for "Fair" scale followed "Average" scale; however, both G2 and G4 have the highest responses for the scales of "Average" and "Fair" (see figure 2).

Table (1) Grammar Material

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis		Poor		Fair		Average		Enough		Good		Total	
					Value	Std. Error	Value	Std. Error	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
G1	1	5	3.08	1.28	.11	.24	-1.10	.47	10	29	28	26	25	19	18	20	19	105	100	10
G2	1	5	2.70	1.29	.27	.24	-.93	.47	22	25	24	29	28	16	15	12	11	105	100	22
G3	1	5	2.79	1.36	.32	.24	-1.07	.47	20	29	28	24	23	13	12	18	17	105	100	20
G4	1	5	2.87	1.27	.20	.24	-.91	.47	16	26	25	31	30	16	15	15	14	105	100	16
G5	1	5	2.73	1.28	.32	.24	-.92	.47	19	30	29	26	25	16	15	13	12	105	100	19
G6	1	5	2.74	1.29	.33	.24	-.98	.47	18	33	31	22	21	18	17	13	12	105	100	18
G7	1	5	2.70	1.23	.51	.24	-.64	.47	15	38	36	26	25	12	11	13	12	105	100	15
G8	1	5	2.74	1.36	.34	.24	-1.09	.47	21	31	30	20	19	16	15	16	15	105	100	21

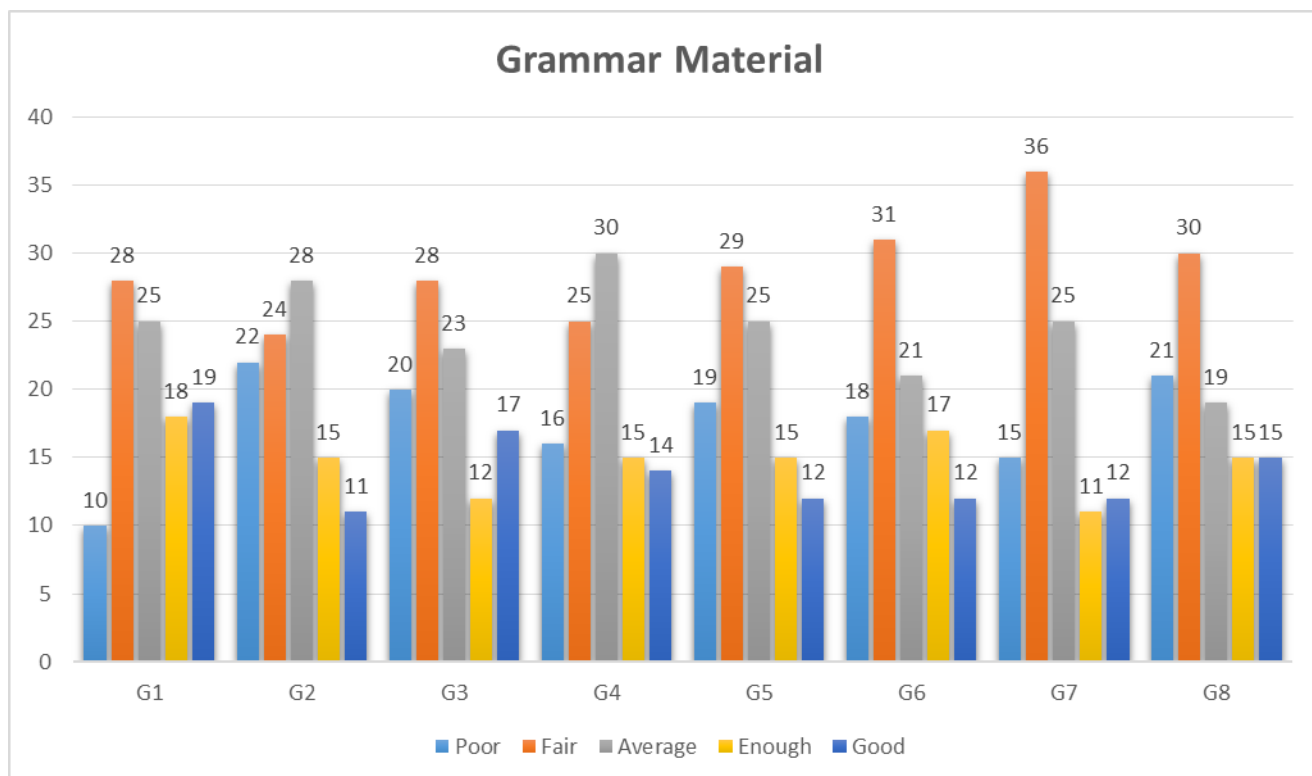


Figure 2. Grammar Material

3.2. Assessment of Pronunciation Materials

The results in table (2) demonstrate frequency distribution and descriptive statistics for pronunciation materials. Pronunciation materials are assessed using the items of P1: P5. The results show that all items are having a minimum of 1 and a maximum value of 5, which indicate that teachers' perception ranges between the scale of poor and good. The results indicate that there is a variation in the perception of teachers, which is indicated by the values of standard deviation. Further, the results also show that the values of skewness and kurtosis lay in the criterion values, which are ± 1 for skewness and ± 3 for kurtosis. Overall, the mean values of all items show that the mean value ranges between a minimum of 1.70 and a maximum of 2.05, which indicate that teachers perceive fair materials of pronunciation. Likewise, the results show the highest frequency distribution lay on "poor" scale followed by "fair" scale, indicating that teachers perceive that pronunciation materials are fair on average (see figure 3).

Table (2) Pronunciation Material.

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis		Poor		Fair		Average		Enough		Good		Total	
					Value	Std. Error	Value	Std. Error	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
P1	1	5	1.95	1.11	.95	.24	.00	.47	48	24	23	20	19	8	8	3	3	105	100	48
P2	1	5	1.98	1.18	.98	.24	-.09	.47	49	23	22	17	16	10	10	4	4	105	100	49
P3	1	5	1.98	1.23	1.11	.24	.12	.47	50	25	24	12	11	10	10	6	6	105	100	50
P4	1	5	2.05	1.22	1.04	.24	.15	.47	45	27	26	17	16	7	7	7	7	105	100	45
P5	1	5	1.70	1.18	1.65	.24	1.66	.47	66	15	14	10	10	5	5	6	6	105	100	66

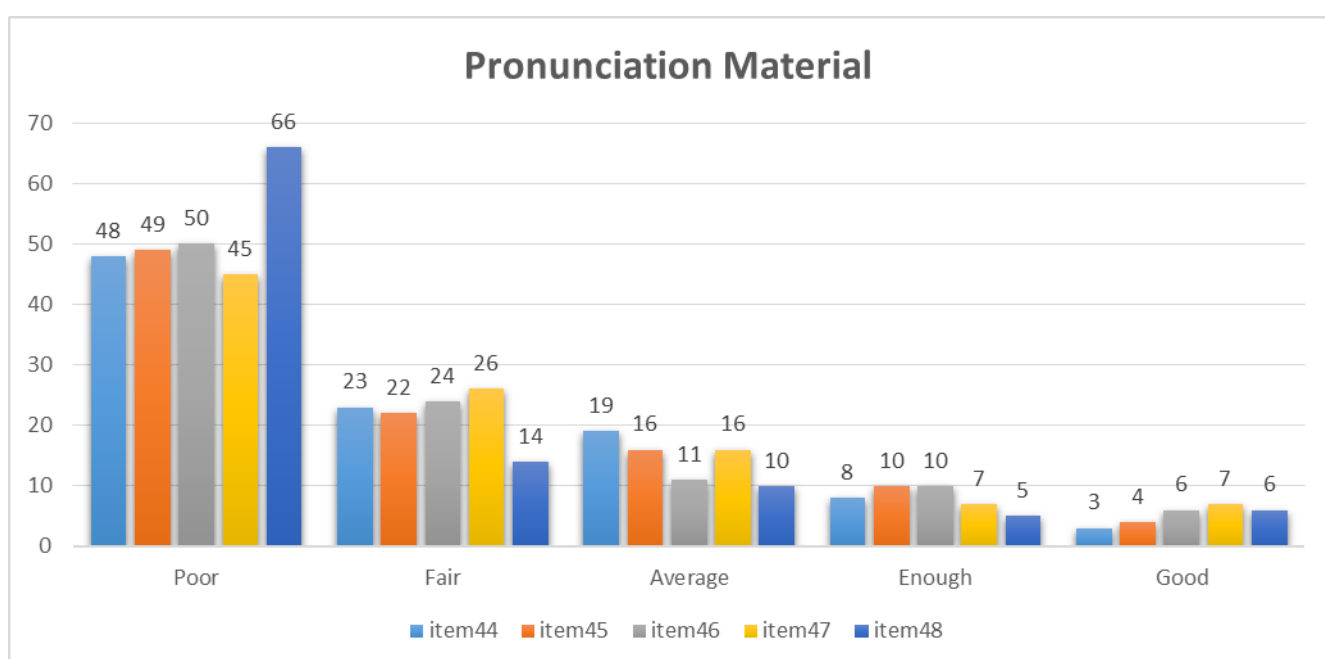


Figure 3: Pronunciation Material.

3.3. Assessment of Vocabulary Materials

Table (3) provides frequency distribution and descriptive statistics for vocabulary materials. Vocabulary materials are assessed using the items of V1: V5. The results show that all items are having a minimum of 1 and a maximum value of 5, which indicate that teachers' perception ranges between the scale of poor and good. The results indicate that there is a variation in the perception of teachers, which is indicated by the values of standard deviation. Further, the results also show that the values of skewness and kurtosis lay in the criterion values, which are ± 1 for skewness and ± 3 for kurtosis. Overall, the mean values of all items show that the mean value ranges between a minimum of 2.57 and a maximum of 2.94, which indicate that teachers perceive fair materials of vocabulary. Likewise, the results show the

highest frequency distribution appears on “fair “scale followed by “Average” scale indicating that teachers perceive that Vocabulary materials are average (see figure 4).

Table (4) Vocabulary Material.

Items	Min	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis		Poor		Fair		Average		Enough		Good		Total	
					Value	Std. Error	Value	Std. Error	Fr. eq.	Per. %	Fr. eq.	Per. %	Fr. eq.	Per. %	Fr. eq.	Per. %	Fr. eq.	Per. %	Fr. eq.	Per. %
V1	1	5	2.68	1.08	.31	.24	-.49	.47	13	35	33	33	3	17	16	6	6	105	10	13
V2	1	5	2.84	1.29	.25	.24	-.98	.47	16	30	29	26	2	17	16	15	14	105	10	16
V3	1	5	2.94	1.28	.19	.24	-.94	.47	14	26	25	32	3	14	13	18	17	105	10	14
V4	1	5	2.77	1.32	.33	.24	-.95	.47	19	29	28	27	2	13	12	16	15	105	10	19
V5	1	5	2.57	1.25	.42	.24	-.87	.47	23	33	31	21	2	18	17	9	9	105	10	23

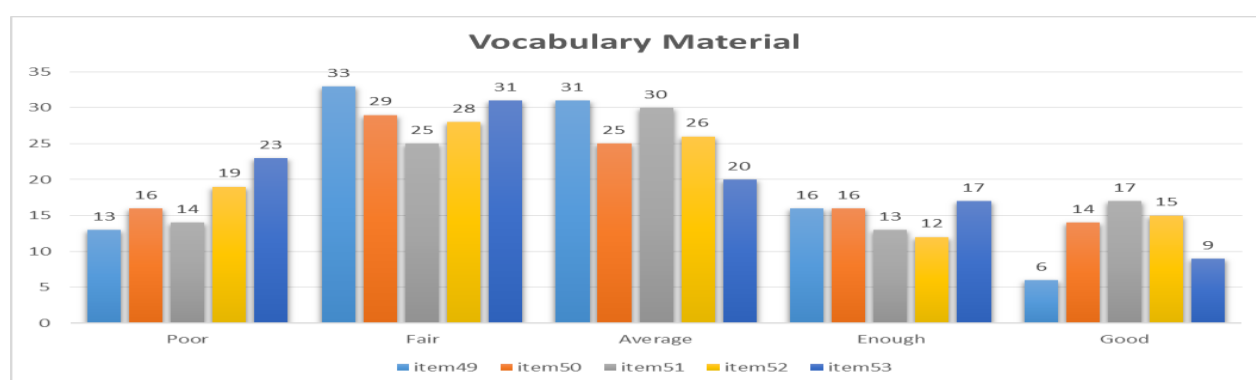


Figure 4: Vocabulary Material.

3.4. Assessment of Exercises and Activities Materials

The results in table (5) present frequency distribution and descriptive statistics for Exercises and Activities materials. Exercises and Activities materials are assessed using the items of

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EA1: EA4. The results show that all items are having a minimum of 1 and a maximum value of 5, which indicate that teachers' perception ranges between the scale of poor and good. The results indicate that there is a variation in the perception of teachers, which is indicated by the values of standard deviation. Further, the results also show that the values of skewness and kurtosis lay in the criterion values, which are ± 1 for skewness and ± 3 for kurtosis. Overall, the mean values of all items show that the mean value ranges between a minimum of 2.09 and a maximum of 2.68, which indicate that teachers perceive fair materials of pronunciation. Likewise, the results show the highest frequency distribution lay on "Fair" scale followed by "Average" scale indicating that teachers perceive that **Exercises and Activities** materials are fair in some cases and average in some others (see figure 5).

Table (4) Exercises and Activities Material.

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis		Poor		Fair	Average		Enough		Good		Total		
					Value	Std. Error	Value	Std. Error	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %
EA1	1	5	2.67	1.22	.44	.24	-.61	.47	18	32	30	31	30	11	10	12	11	105	100	18
EA2	1	5	2.68	1.21	.39	.24	-.77	.47	17	35	33	25	24	17	16	10	10	105	100	17
EA3	1	5	2.54	1.22	.49	.24	-.54	.47	23	30	29	31	30	10	10	10	10	105	100	23
EA4	1	5	2.09	1.28	.99	.24	-.14	.47	46	25	24	15	14	9	9	8	8	105	100	46
EA5	1	5	2.39	1.17	.62	.24	-.37	.47	26	35	33	25	24	11	10	7	7	105	100	26

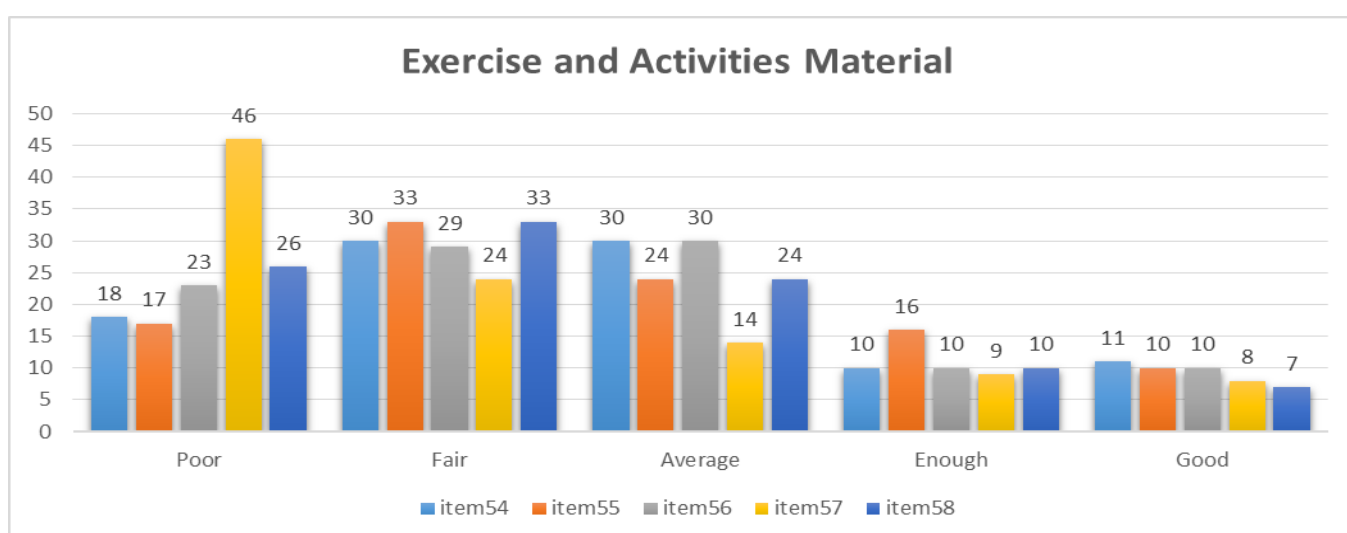


Figure 5: Exercises and Activities

5 CONCLUSION



The present study aims to assess the language components of ELT textbooks of secondary schools in Yemen. Very few studies have been conducted in this regard in Yemen. This study differs from other studies; it evaluates the language components in the context of a developing country, Yemen, where the English language is used as a foreign language. Further, the teaching of English subject in Yemen starts from the 7th class, which may put an extra burden on teachers and students to teach and learn the English language. Accordingly, the present study adds to the existing stock of knowledge of ELT in Yemen. The population of the present study is the teachers of secondary schools in Yemen. The study uses a sample of 100 teachers teaching 11th and 12th grades of secondary school in Yemen. The study utilizes a questionnaire survey which is consisted of 2 pages and 23 questions related to language components. All questions are scaled based on five point-Likert scales ranging from poor (1), fair (2), average (3), enough (4), and good (5). Descriptive statistics, including frequency analysis, mean, minimum, maximum, normal distribution, and figures were used to estimate the results. The results reveal that teachers perceive average materials of grammar. In the same context, the results indicate that teachers perceive fair materials of pronunciation. Likewise, the results found that teachers perceive fair materials of vocabulary. Similarly, teachers perceive fair materials of Exercises and Activities. The present study contributes to the strand literature of ELT in Yemen. Very few studies have been conducted in this regard in Yemen. Accordingly, the present study adds to the existing stock of knowledge of ELT in Yemen. The results of the present study open an insight for curriculum developers, teachers, and educational authorities to consider the weak points in the textbook of secondary schools in Yemen and take the necessary actions for improvement.

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