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EFL Teachers' Perspectives on the English Textbooks of the Adopted Self-Learning Program in Northern Syria

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Abstract
This study investigates the perspectives of the English language teachers who teach the adopted Self-Learning Program English Textbooks in North-west Syria by evaluating the English textbooks. It analyses the effectiveness and suitability of this curriculum in non-formal education settings considering the crisis context in Syria. So, to get an actual evaluation of the English textbooks, teachers proved their viewpoints on the context of teaching and the students' educational levels during war conditions. In this mixed method research, the first tool was a questionnaire with 49 items distributed into five structured dimensions: layout and design, the objectives of the textbook, teaching methods and activities, and language skills. The second tool focused on the qualitative data obtained from interviews with five open-ended questions. A total of respondents from 106 English language teachers in the northern Syria crisis region, 43 females and 63 males, and five separate interviews. Over 60% of teachers believe that the adapted Self-Learning Program English textbooks are appropriate to the context and include a precise sequence of English units that fit children's needs in northern Syrian crisis contexts.

Keywords: Adopted Self-Learning Program, ELF teachers' perspectives, English textbook evaluation, Northern Syria

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Introduction

The ongoing crisis in Syria has significantly disrupted formal education, necessitating alternative educational solutions. One such solution is the Self-Learning Program (SLP), which aims to provide continuous learning opportunities for children in non-formal settings. English language education, a crucial component of global communication, has seen the adoption of specific textbooks designed to meet the unique needs of students in these challenging conditions. Despite the availability of these textbooks, there is limited research on their effectiveness and suitability in non-formal education settings, particularly from the perspective of teachers who implement them. Understanding the teachers' viewpoints is essential, as they are directly involved in the educational process and are familiar with the students' needs and the contextual challenges posed by the crisis. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness and suitability of the adopted SLP English textbooks used in non-formal education settings in northwest Syria from the perspectives of EFL teachers. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers about the strengths and areas for improvement of the SLP English textbooks. This can lead to better educational outcomes for children in crisis contexts and enhance the overall quality of English language education in non-formal settings.

Syria witnesses an ongoing conflict and instability of life conditions that require an emergency intervention response to go back to everyday life as soon as possible; for UNICEF, “emergencies include natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, and human-made crises such as civil strife and war,” as well as silent emergencies, extreme poverty and children living in the streets (Pigozzi, 1999, p.1). Syrian people have witnessed and endured terrible forms of violence. They have been forced to leave their homes, facing the traumas of ongoing war and recurrent displacement. The conflict has caused extensive damage to healthcare and education facilities on a large scale (UNICEF, 2013). It is evident that the occurrence of war and conflict results in disastrous effects on children and leads to damage to the education obtained by children (Al Zaroo & Hundt, 2003; Davies, 2004; Macksoud & Aber, 1996; Moinolnolki & Han, 2017). Teachers are influenced by various factors such as inadequate monthly income, the need to switch to non-formal education methods to help students catch up academically, and the challenge of implementing curricula in both formal and non-formal educational environments.

In the textbook evaluation, teachers’ perspectives should be considered because they are at the center of the teaching process, knowing the students’ levels, weaknesses, and strengths. Moreover, teachers’ attitude towards the textbook as they teach it for some time enables them to evaluate it and provide recommendations for change if needed. The proper choice of textbook content and sections should consider the needs of both the students and their teachers to have effectiveness in the teaching and learning process (Ellis, 1998; Rubdy, 2003).

The primary aim of the study was to capture the perspectives of EFL teachers regarding the textbooks used in the English subject within the adopted SLP. This program, accredited by UNICEF, is designed to provide non-formal education to children impacted by the ongoing conflict. The second aim of the study was to evaluate the suitability of the English textbooks in the adopted SLP for the students' educational levels. The goal is to determine how effectively these textbooks facilitate language learning for the students.

Literature Review

Education during the War in Syria

During a conflict, both teachers and children are at higher risk of being exposed to exploitation, abuse and rights violations. Recently in Syria, there was a rise in many community problems such as early marriage and child labor, causing a high dropout rate for education enrollment (Dayıoğlu et al., 2023; UNHCR, 2013). Access to education is lost when children are forced to leave their area of residence suddenly, schools are closed or have no teaching personnel available as they are looking for better paid-job to fulfill their life conditions. Teaching capacity remains overstretched, and many teachers and education personnel are no longer in their teaching posts due to displacement and working as volunteers. This results in poor quality of education, and the recruitment of unskilled teachers with limited financial remuneration impedes learning outcomes achieved by students. The education status has been affected by the current conflict, the status of school infrastructure, access of beneficiaries to education, and the condition of schools that are out of service. The involvement of multiple parties controlling the northern part of Syria has led to the deterioration of educational infrastructure and a lack of funds to cover teachers' incentives, which serve as their primary income. Despite their willingness to teach voluntarily, teachers are facing challenging financial situations. This has forced many to seek non-educational jobs, leading to a significant number of teachers leaving the classroom. Providing the education in weak contexts such as in crises and civil war frames a particular situation (Koshelieva et al., 2023). In 2015, approximately 2 million children were deprived of educational opportunities due to the extensive damage to the educational infrastructure caused by the ongoing civil war. This conflict resulted in complete or partial destruction of around 5,000 schools, severely impacting access to education. The education system in Syria, including tertiary education has been devastated because of the ongoing war (Butler, 2015). The effects on the levels of education vary; one of the research projects discovered that the civil war in all Syria areas had fewer effects on higher education than on primary and secondary education (SCPR, 2014). Education can sustain our children’s lives, keeping them safe and providing and securing cognitive, psychosocial and physical protection (UNICEF, 2015).

Procedures to Fill the Gaps of Education during Crisis in the Northern Syria Context

It is worth mentioning that education in an emergency should be prioritized more in a crisis context as a life-saving intervention (Brock & McCorriston, 2008; INEE, 2010), once education is provided, many psychosocial disorders can be mitigated. Moreover, education can equip children with problem-solving and information skills that might protect vulnerable youth, adolescents and children from all kinds of child labour, exploitation, sexual harassment and abuse. In the most fragile states when there is a conflict, war or human-made disaster, comprehensive budgetary contributions specifically to education be set (Anisimova, 2022; Brannelly & Ndaruhutse, 2008). Education in an emergency context is a collective and participatory work with the responsibilities and commitments of all community members through various activities tailored according to the potentials within the affected people and their communities. To fill the gap, this responsibility starts at home and ends at school because education can not be fulfilled when without engagement and collaboration from all concerned parties. In an emergency context, INEE minimum standards are considered in the humanitarian response to make sure that education activities are implemented in an organized way considering the conflict, insecurity, vulnerability, protection, and available resources. Also, engaging the community and parents in the paid or

voluntary education process can continue creating a culture of volunteerism among community members.

The Adopted English Self-Learning Program

The Adopted English Self-Learning Program (SLP) was created to address gaps and deficiencies in education, particularly for those living in crisis and emergencies caused by conflicts, insecurity, and natural disasters. Self-learning was designed and structured jointly by both UNRWA, UNICEF and the Syrian Ministry of Education as a direct response and support to children who have limited access to education. Now, in the northern parts of Syria, SLP is accredited by UNICEF and an adopted program by INGOs and NGOs that provide educational projects under the supervision of UNICEF in Turkey.

Students and EFL Teachers' Interaction during English SLP Classes in Crisis Context

English language Learning has been significantly affected by technology. Learners can enhance their English skills not only through teachers at school but also by seeking additional support from online videos. This method can be easily followed, even during crises situations. This is a modern trend of learning that learners and even teachers follow to enhance their language capacity. To support this, a lot of EFL teachers keep sharing links for English videos with their students in which these students can practice their skills with other English speakers. Learners should have self-motivation that affects the English learning process. Teachers should inspire students to see language learning as a valuable opportunity. They should emphasize the importance of seizing every chance to practice and improve their language skills, fostering a mindset that views language acquisition as a lifelong and rewarding endeavor (Gardner, 1985; Crookes & Schmidt, 1989). The situation of families is crucial in the education process considering their income, educational background that helps in supporting children's learning specifically learning the languages (Behtoui & Neergaard, 2016). To increase the interaction between teachers and students, EFL teachers have to prepare a lesson plan to enable them to control the English activities according to the objectives of the curriculum before starting teaching. Therefore they build their capacity and allow them to overcome the gaps when delivering the required information to students.

EFL Textbooks Evaluation

As tangible materials for language learning, textbooks are classified as a critical element in language learning programs all over the globe (Richards, 2001; Tosun & Cinkara, 2019) in addition to providing the needed power and energy in English lessons in the classrooms of the learning environment through various practical and theoretical activities, clarifications, and information (Tomlinson, 2002). Authenticity of EFL textbook content can easily increase the learners' motivation to learn the language, resulting in learners being able to communicate and interact smoothly with English. It is obvious that a significant number of EFL teachers prefer the use of structured textbooks during language lessons in classrooms, but the reality might be as Ansary (2002) assures that some EFL teachers ignore the English materials because when sticking to a textbook, it is a kind of losing time until learners be able to respond to the different needs of language skills. Textbooks will pave the way for learning when their content links the language to the learners' main aspirations and the mainstream cultural elements of the target language (Hasan & Raddatz, 2008). Hassan and Raddatz suggest that Syrian EFL textbooks, when compared to

their German counterparts, focus more on cognitive aspects rather than affective and process-oriented aspects.

Many authors of English textbooks emphasize the authenticity of the content, recognizing it as a practical and crucial feature. EFL teachers possess the capacity and ability to assess English learning outcomes critically. They utilize directives for teaching English effectively and have practical knowledge of the language, which enhances their teaching capabilities. The authenticity of the textbooks goes beyond the artificial language used in the classrooms when teachers interact with students. The teachers themselves can make the lessons more energetic by linking real examples from life as mentioned in these textbooks. EFL teachers can judge any English textbooks and learning materials. They have the capacity and ability to assess learning outcomes of English having critical thinking for utilizing directives of teaching English and obsessing practical knowledge of English as they are teachers of it (Chou, 2008). The purpose of English textbooks is to support teachers by providing a distinct view of its principles, objectives, outcomes, as well as content (Ben-Peretz, 1990; Orland-Barak, 2002). There are many aspects to be taken into consideration when evaluating the textbooks in which the results can be more comprehensive (Richards, 2001), such as:

- The main goal of the textbook is to consider its objectives and outcomes.
- Levels of the textbook are intended.
- The period that learners need to finish it.
- Skills that learners will obtain from it.
- Themes included during the learning process.
- Life conditions that the textbook is designed for.
- The targeted learners considering their age and gender.
- The textbook elements and how they are presented.
- The list of units and content starting from the basic to the advanced ones.
- Levels of difficulty.
- The framework that the textbooks are built on.
- The authenticity of the textbooks and real examples.
- Focusing on the engagement of learners.
- Textbook’s affordability.
- The textbooks have a logical scope and sequence of ideas.

While there is a growing body of literature on EFL education in crisis contexts, studies specifically focusing on EFL teachers' perspectives in Syria remain scarce. Existing research has primarily addressed broader educational challenges and the general effectiveness of educational interventions in conflict zones. However, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the firsthand insights of EFL teachers who directly engage with the Self-Learning Program (SLP) English textbooks in northwest Syria. This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the effectiveness and suitability of the adopted SLP English textbooks in non-formal education settings from the perspectives of EFL teachers. Doing so seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of the educational needs and challenges in this unique context, thereby contributing valuable insights to curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers.

Method

In the present research, a mixed method design was used with qualitative and quantitative data collection tools to measure the variables related to the adopted SLP English textbooks evaluation.

Participants

This study involved 106 EFL teachers from northwest Syria, an area severely affected by ongoing conflict. The sample consisted of 43 females (41%) and 63 males (59%), all of whom were currently teaching English in non-formal education settings. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method due to the challenges posed by the conflict, COVID-19 restrictions, and cross-border issues, necessitating remote data collection. All participants were graduates from English language departments and were teaching in various schools within the crisis-affected regions.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a mixed-method approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative tools. The quantitative data were gathered via a questionnaire adapted from Al Harbi's study (2017), which had been validated and demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach Alpha Coefficient = 0.97). The questionnaire consisted of 49 items classified into five dimensions, rated on a five-point Likert scale:

1. Layout and Design
2. Objectives of the English Textbook
3. Teaching Methods and Activities
4. Language Skills
5. Evaluation

The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Five open-ended questions were designed to elicit in-depth responses about the teachers' perspectives on the adopted SLP English textbooks. The questions focused on the effectiveness, suitability, and impact of the textbooks in a crisis context.

Research Procedures

The research was conducted online due to difficulty accessing the region in person. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms to the 106 EFL teachers. After completing the questionnaires, five teachers (one female and 4 four males) were selected for semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted remotely and recorded for transcription. The questions asked during the interviews included:

1. What do you think of the adopted SLP English textbooks as non-formal education for students in a crisis context?
2. To what extent do the adopted SLP English textbooks help students catch up with their English level?
3. What is your judgment concerning the appropriateness of the English SLP textbooks for children in basic education?
4. Do EFL teachers in Northern parts of Syria need training to teach the SLP English textbooks effectively?
5. What do you think of parental involvement in the adopted SLP?

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics via SPSS software. The analysis aimed to determine the overall perceptions of the teachers regarding the five dimensions of the textbooks. For the qualitative data, all interviews were transcribed, and responses were grouped into main themes with the help of a research expert. These themes highlighted the EFL teachers' viewpoints on the SLP curriculum.

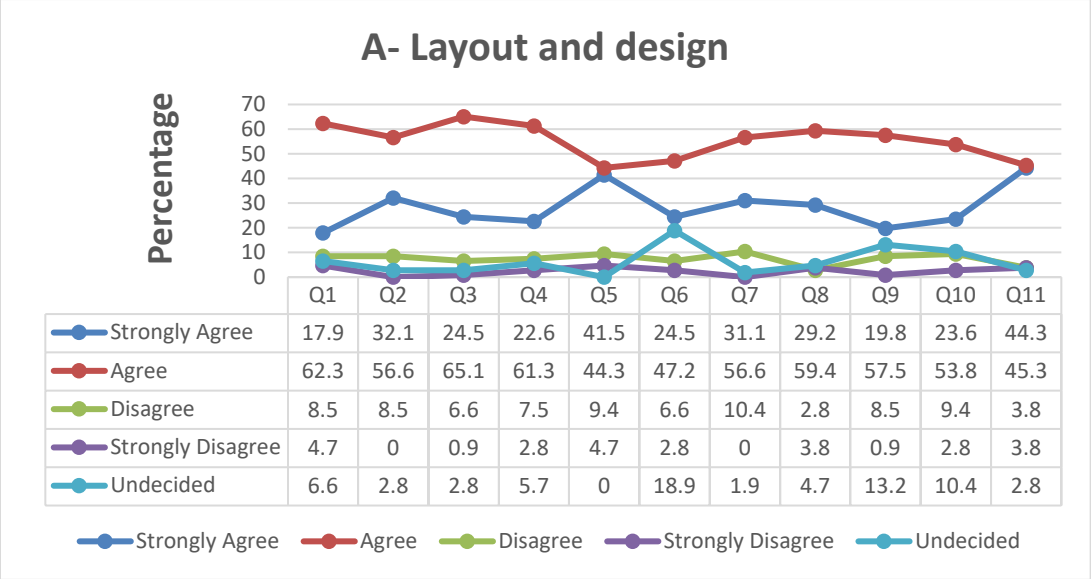
Findings

The current study investigated Syrian EFL teachers' views with respect to the English SLP textbooks taught to the students during the war conditions in the northern parts of Syria. Quantitative findings of the teacher perspectives questionnaire are presented in frequency and percentage for each item in the five sections of the questionnaire to brief and describe the responses that each EFL teacher provided. The descriptive findings are explained in the below tables according to each section of the questionnaire as follows:

Teacher Perspectives

Layout and Design

The average percentage of EFL teachers' responses showed that 55% selected the answer "agree" on the Likert Scale, meaning that there is a tendency for the textbooks to be designed in a friendly way to students as they have vivid colors and drawings that attract students' attention to the main topics of the textbooks as most of the pictures inside the textbooks are intended to facilitate the learning process of students who need a supportive way of textbooks to keep their concentration as in Figure One.



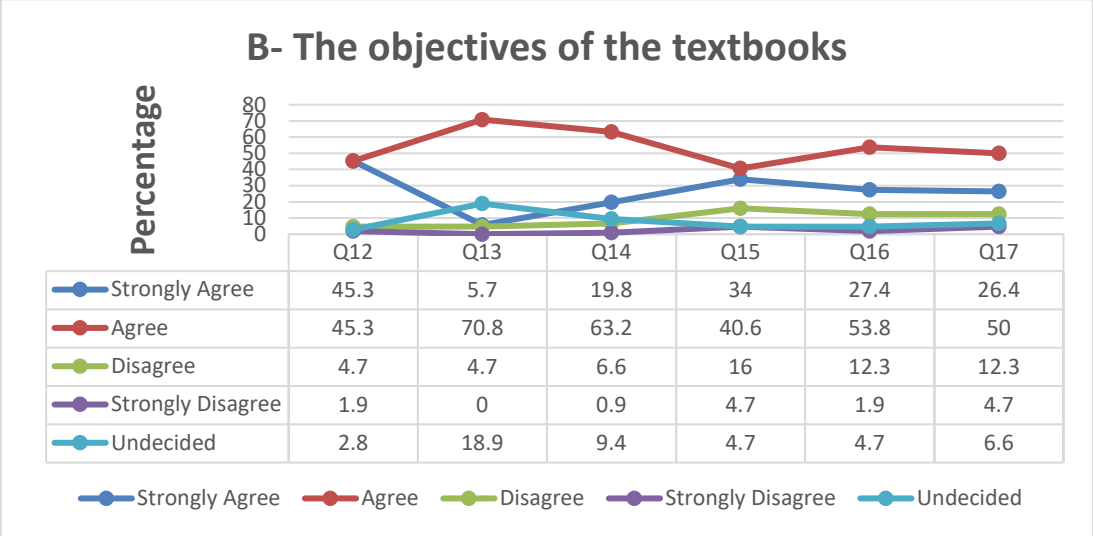
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Strongly Agree	17.9	32.1	24.5	22.6	41.5	24.5	31.1	29.2	19.8	23.6	44.3
Agree	62.3	56.6	65.1	61.3	44.3	47.2	56.6	59.4	57.5	53.8	45.3
Disagree	8.5	8.5	6.6	7.5	9.4	6.6	10.4	2.8	8.5	9.4	3.8
Strongly Disagree	4.7	0	0.9	2.8	4.7	2.8	0	3.8	0.9	2.8	3.8
Undecided	6.6	2.8	2.8	5.7	0	18.9	1.9	4.7	13.2	10.4	2.8

Figure 1. Layout and design

The Objectives of the Targeted EFL Textbook

The EFL teachers provided their judgements as they teach the English textbooks of this curriculum, so this section aims to reflect how the textbooks are linked and consistent in terms of their objectives to each unit that suit learners needs and gaps in learning English. Most of the

answers go close to “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”, and the average percentage of the answers scored 54% under the “Agree” answer as in Figure Two.

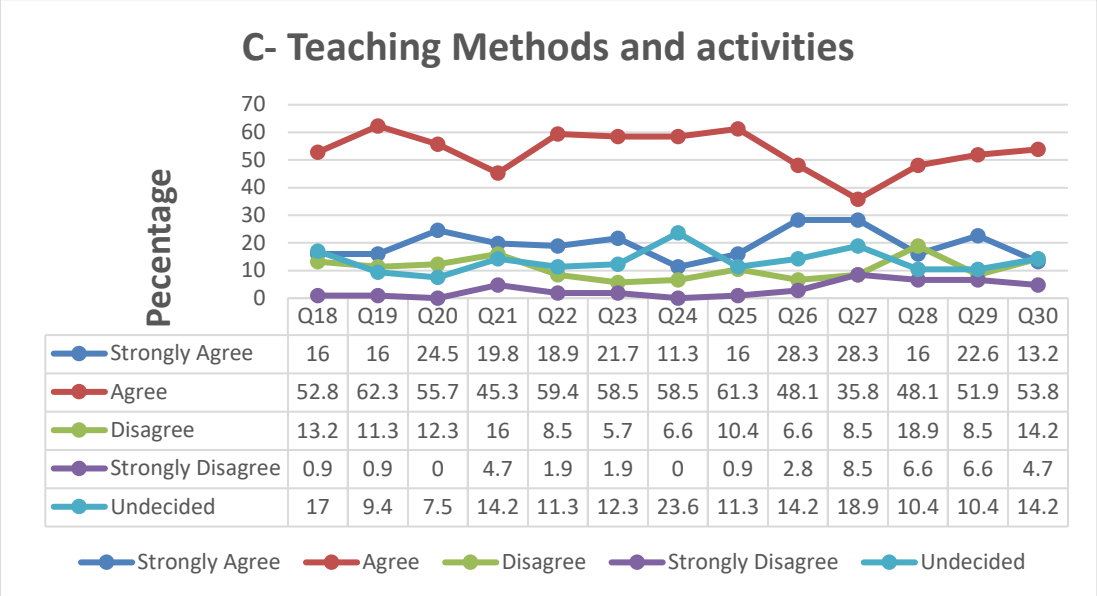


	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17
Strongly Agree	45.3	5.7	19.8	34	27.4	26.4
Agree	45.3	70.8	63.2	40.6	53.8	50
Disagree	4.7	4.7	6.6	16	12.3	12.3
Strongly Disagree	1.9	0	0.9	4.7	1.9	4.7
Undecided	2.8	18.9	9.4	4.7	4.7	6.6

Figure 2. The objectives of the targeted EFL textbook

Teaching Methods and Activities

These items focus on the logical progression of topics and how they are integrated into the sequence of units as well as activities in each SLP grade. The average percentage of the answers is 53% under the “Agree” option and at the same time, this result reflects that the SLP textbooks contain information connected to the student environment that is abundant with modernity and scientific accuracy. The highest average percentage was above 60% for the two items (19 & 25), and the textbooks are reported as realistic and having diverse applications of teaching methods in classrooms, which denotes the constructivist theory of learning as in Figure Three.



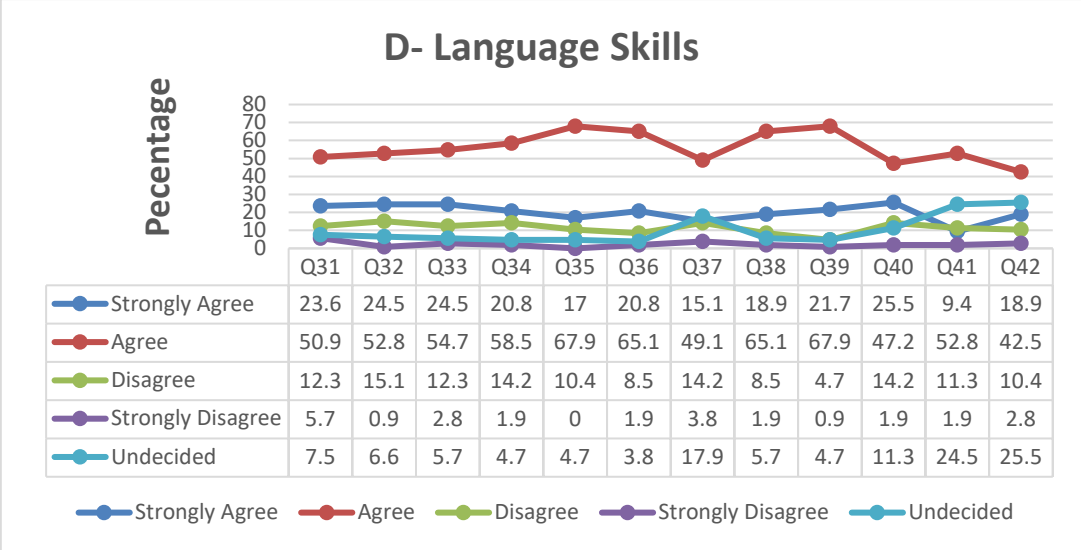
	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30
Strongly Agree	16	16	24.5	19.8	18.9	21.7	11.3	16	28.3	28.3	16	22.6	13.2
Agree	52.8	62.3	55.7	45.3	59.4	58.5	58.5	61.3	48.1	35.8	48.1	51.9	53.8
Disagree	13.2	11.3	12.3	16	8.5	5.7	6.6	10.4	6.6	8.5	18.9	8.5	14.2
Strongly Disagree	0.9	0.9	0	4.7	1.9	1.9	0	0.9	2.8	8.5	6.6	6.6	4.7
Undecided	17	9.4	7.5	14.2	11.3	12.3	23.6	11.3	14.2	18.9	10.4	10.4	14.2

Figure 3. Teaching methods and activities

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Language Skills

The fourth section of the questionnaire highlights how the English language in the SLP textbooks is simplified and suitable for the students. The average percentage of the answers is 56% under the "Agree" label, and this indicates that the language of the textbooks improves the students' listening skills with simplified activities that increase their ability to pronounce and communicate in English and also helps the students to acquire straightforward and easy grammar as in Figure Four.

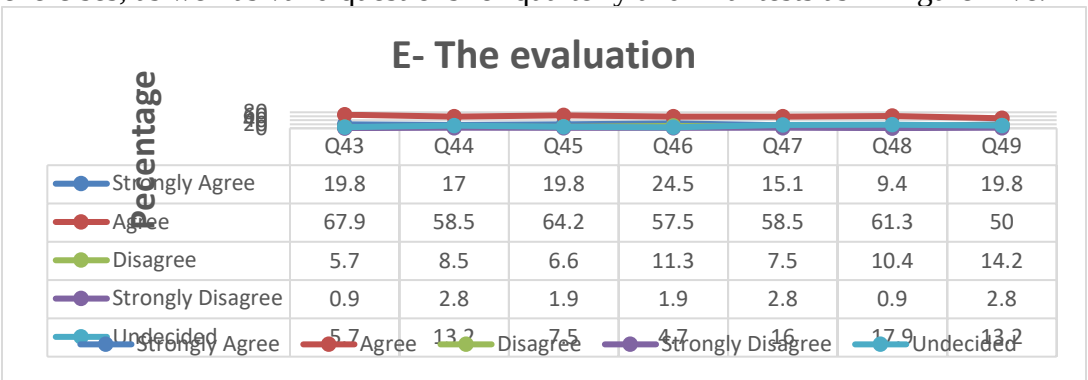


	Q31	Q32	Q33	Q34	Q35	Q36	Q37	Q38	Q39	Q40	Q41	Q42
Strongly Agree	23.6	24.5	24.5	20.8	17	20.8	15.1	18.9	21.7	25.5	9.4	18.9
Agree	50.9	52.8	54.7	58.5	67.9	65.1	49.1	65.1	67.9	47.2	52.8	42.5
Disagree	12.3	15.1	12.3	14.2	10.4	8.5	14.2	8.5	4.7	14.2	11.3	10.4
Strongly Disagree	5.7	0.9	2.8	1.9	0	1.9	3.8	1.9	0.9	1.9	1.9	2.8
Undecided	7.5	6.6	5.7	4.7	4.7	3.8	17.9	5.7	4.7	11.3	24.5	25.5

Figure 4. Language skills

Assessment and Evaluation

This section got the highest average percentage under the "agree" answer, reaching 60% among the previous sections of the questionnaire which means that the SLP English textbooks are supportive of the English teaching and learning process in a crisis context. The highest score percentage was registered for the three items (43, 45 & 48) as presented in Figure Five. Also, this indicates that there are a variety of exercises and activities in which students can use vocabulary and practice their skills to communicate in English in real daily life. In addition, through EFL teachers' answers, it is obvious that the textbooks have clear instructions for all activities and exercises, as well as valid questions for quarterly and final tests as in Figure Five.



	Q43	Q44	Q45	Q46	Q47	Q48	Q49
Strongly Agree	19.8	17	19.8	24.5	15.1	9.4	19.8
Agree	67.9	58.5	64.2	57.5	58.5	61.3	50
Disagree	5.7	8.5	6.6	11.3	7.5	10.4	14.2
Strongly Disagree	0.9	2.8	1.9	1.9	2.8	0.9	2.8
Undecided	5.7	13.2	7.5	4.7	16	17.9	13.2

Figure 5. Assessment and evaluation

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Teacher Perspectives Reflected Through Qualitative Interview

The qualitative data collected through interviews on teachers' perspectives of SLP curriculum was audio recorded and analysed with open content analysis paradigm. This analysis followed a systematic step in which the answers of interviewed teachers were grouped based on the similarities and clusters provided in the interviews. The emerging themes from the content analysis are:

Simple and applicable curriculum

During the last ten years of the Syrian crisis, increasing drop out rates has been an emerging problem. SLP curriculum is one of the non-formal education curricula to use during emergency and displacement contexts as they do not have formal schooling. This curriculum provides an opportunity for these students to catch up with their peers. The English textbooks of the SLP curriculum have a strong and supportive way of teaching and learning English. Mustafa explained this in Extract 1 and Omar in Extract 1 as below.

Extract 1. (Teacher Mustafa)

"As we are living in Arab countries, English is not used much outside the educational settings such as in schools and university, we call English as a tough subject matter because we are very restricted to practice it publicly except for specific purposes so that English textbooks of the adopted SLP curriculum try to address this gap among learners, I repeat that it is very simple and students' feel satisfied with it".

In this extract, the teacher mentioned that the SLP curriculum is a very crucial curriculum without any kind of complexity as it gives clear information to children in crisis contexts as a non-formal curriculum. The curriculum follows a clear sequence of English activities and exercises that help students to catch up with their peers, but it still needs visual instruments and tools to support students' level like voice recording, videos, etc.,

Authentic Content

The content is genuine and authentic as it links the theoretical information into practical life, and children find it friendly one as it has exemplary drawings and practical easy examples. The content considers the logical progression of topics considering the consistency of English vocabulary and grammar in all stages. Also the content is up to date related to the students' environment.

Extract 2. (Teacher Akram)

"I think English in SLP is explained in a very simple way to keep children in love in education process as the textbooks are very simple not complicated and they contain a lot of exercises and friendly example in which they can keep motivated to learn English and to remember what they learn in exams. I think puzzles and quizzes are very easy that they keep moving on".

It is noticeable that both teachers Akram and Ahmed stressed about the English textbooks content in which the curriculum allows teachers to diversify teaching methods according to the students' levels as the focus is on the educational levels not the age during non-formal settings as we have in north-west Syria.

Parental Engagement in the SLP Curriculum

Most of the interviewees assured that many children in Syria have left schools due to ongoing conflict. Now, parents/caregivers are very keen on life conditions and getting income to stay alive and afford the very harsh economic situation that affects them and their children's

education. Parents can support mostly literacy and numeracy specifically for the basic grades and get satisfied when their children can write in Arabic.

Extract 3. (Teacher Ahmed)

"Parents can easily follow up their children in this curriculum and as we know, there are many parents who lack education and at the same time there might be some parents to support. Parents want to go to work to afford living, so they do not have enough time to catch up in addition to children working to support their parents due to the poor economic situation".

Here the teacher stated that the SLP program comes from the origin of self-learning which means children with the support of their parents can manage their education. In a nutshell, parents cannot replace teachers' roles but can support them based on the skills and knowledge they have.

SLP accreditation

Most interviewees mentioned that they see the copyright of this curriculum as it is prepared and authorized by UNICEF and UWRWA. This curriculum has an accreditation to be taught in non-formal settings specifically for students with weakness in their educational levels mostly during crisis context.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that the majority of EFL teachers perceive the layout and design of the SLP English textbooks as user-friendly and visually appealing, with approximately 65% highlighting the clear structure and consistent format. This finding aligns with Smith (2016), who emphasized the importance of well-designed educational resources in enhancing learning outcomes in conflict-affected areas. A clear and consistent format helps maintain engagement and comprehension, crucial in unstable environments.

Over 60% of the respondents indicated that the textbooks effectively meet their stated objectives. Teachers noted that the content is aligned with educational goals tailored for children in crisis contexts, ensuring continuity in their English language learning despite disruptions. This finding supports Brown and Jaber (2018), who highlighted the necessity of aligning educational content with the specific needs of students in unstable environments to ensure educational goals are met, even amidst disruptions. Also, teachers perspectives and the results of this study confirm that crisis environments which call for specific measures forthe negative consequences can be supported by education (Koshelieva et al., 2023).

About 58% of the teachers found the teaching methods and activities proposed in the textbooks to be practical and engaging. They appreciated the variety of interactive exercises that cater to different learning styles and promote active participation. This positive feedback is consistent with Al Harbi's (2017) findings on the importance of interactive and engaging pedagogical approaches in maintaining student interest and participation, particularly in non-formal education settings.

Approximately 62% of the teachers affirmed that the textbooks adequately cover essential language skills, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They emphasized that the balance of skills helps students develop comprehensive language proficiency. This affirmation resonates with Jackson (2019), who argued for a balanced approach to language instruction to ensure comprehensive language development, which is crucial for students' overall language proficiency.

The study also highlighted the need for teacher training, as identified by some participants, which aligns with Roberts and Peters (2020), who advocated for ongoing professional development to equip teachers with the necessary skills for effective education delivery in challenging contexts. Additionally, challenges such as weather conditions and inadequate infrastructure, noted by the teachers, underscore the importance of adaptable teaching strategies and materials. For instance, the shorter time dedicated to SLP sessions compared to formal education and the impact of weather conditions on the learning environment highlight the need for flexible and resilient educational practices.

In all war contexts, a high proportion of those affected by conflicts are children (Nicolai, 2003). Globally, 50% of children do not receive any form of education (Children's Living Nightmares, 2017). Emergency education should be prioritized as a life-saving intervention (Brock & McCorriston, 2008; INEE, 2010). The main aim of this study is to highlight the effectiveness of the adopted SLP curriculum, mainly the English textbooks, emphasizing their applicability to students with educational weaknesses, especially during crisis and emergencies.

The study elaborated on how the education system and services in Syria have been affected by the ongoing conflict, leading to a shift from formal to non-formal education, particularly in the northern parts of Syria. This shift allows affected children to catch up on their educational gaps and eventually transition to formal schooling after receiving non-formal education, as is the case with the SLP.

The findings underscore the importance of tailored educational materials in crisis contexts. By addressing the identified research gap, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the educational needs and challenges in conflict-affected areas, providing valuable insights for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers. Further research is recommended to confirm the effectiveness of the SLP curriculum in other conflict-affected regions, considering the accreditation by UNRWA and UNICEF.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the perspectives of EFL teachers on the adopted Self-Learning Program (SLP) English textbooks used in non-formal education settings in North-west Syria. The findings indicate that the majority of teachers found the textbooks to be user-friendly, well-designed, and effective in meeting educational objectives tailored for children in crisis contexts. Over 60% of teachers affirmed the applicability of the textbooks, noting their clear structure and comprehensive coverage of essential language skills. The positive feedback on teaching methods and activities underscores the importance of interactive and engaging pedagogical approaches.

Challenges such as the need for teacher training and the impact of inadequate infrastructure were highlighted, emphasizing the necessity for adaptable teaching strategies in crisis environments. This study contributes to the understanding of educational needs in conflict-affected areas, providing insights for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers. Further research is recommended to confirm the effectiveness of the SLP curriculum in other regions affected by conflict. In conclusion, the SLP English textbooks are considered effective and suitable for supporting children's education in non-formal settings during emergencies, helping bridge educational gaps, and facilitating a transition to formal schooling.

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