

An Assessment of English Instruction for Elementary-Level Students in Jeddah Governorate, as Perceived by English Supervisors and Educators

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This study investigated the perceptions of English educators and supervisors in Jeddah Governorate regarding the process of teaching English to elementary students. A survey was conducted using a sample size of 94 educators and 10 supervisors. The data indicate that respondents considered English instruction at the elementary level essential for expanding kids' perspectives, improving academic performance, and promoting international involvement. The main advantages cited are the development of English language skills and the promotion of early education. Although not as easily noticeable, the disadvantages include potential negative impacts on an individual's proficiency in Arabic and their sense of national identification. The highlighted challenges encompass insufficient teacher training, student reluctance towards English, limited resources, and school disparities. The proposed techniques focused on prioritizing English instructors' training, ensuring the use of appropriate content, utilizing technology, and promoting awareness of students and educators. The current research found different obstacles in teaching English at elementary stages. To overcome these obstacles, it will be essential to enhance teacher competencies, develop efficient teaching methods, get the backing of stakeholders, assign adequate resources, and carry out continuous evaluations. Further research can also contribute to a better understanding of how early English learning impacts on Arabic identity and proficiency.

Keywords: English language instruction, elementary education, teacher perceptions, Saudi Arabia, difficulties, advantages, Arabic language, national identity

Introduction

English is a universally acknowledged means of communication, science, business, entertainment, and diplomacy. It has also become a commonplace event in our daily lives. It is vital in contemporary times, characterized by electronic communication and rapid technological advancements. The internet functions to communicate and interact with contemporary culture; as a result, educational institutions prioritize English language instruction (Freeman, 2007). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), following worldwide standards for English language education, tends to teach the Saudi students an additional language to the official language of the country (Arabic) in order to help them acquire knowledge, express themselves, and achieve favorable progress worldwide. In addition, its goals include spreading Saudi knowledge to various communities and promoting the spread of Islam, aiding in the improvement of humanity, and enhancing English language skills in academic

institutions both domestically and internationally. These goals are accomplished by improving the quality of English language instruction and learning through internationally recognized standards, incorporating more teaching materials and resources, and providing training for English educators and supervisors.

A significant percentage of the local population and many economic, social, and educational sectors at the national level are discussing English instruction for elementary school students. This discussion began before English was officially introduced in Saudi educational institutions, starting with the first year of intermediate school. The dispute intensified when the inclusion of the fourth grade of elementary school was introduced into the curriculum in 2003 (Alhazmi, 2004). A continuous debate arose between advocates and critics of English education, namely on the Saudi Ministry of Education's recent approval of a trial English language curriculum for second and third graders. Consequently, scholars start now to examine the process of teaching English at all elementary school levels.

Opponents of English instruction for young elementary students argue that it will overshadow the curriculum, primarily focusing on Arabic, the main component of elementary education. Furthermore, they contend that it impacts the children's mother tongue. Moreover, the hesitance to teach English at this stage can be ascribed to various factors during the technological advancement: the limited availability of proficient English educators in elementary schools, apprehensions about students developing an affinity for and being drawn towards English, and the prevalent utilization of social media (Alsaad, 2002).

On the other hand, supporters of English teaching in early elementary classes argue that it lays a strong foundation for future grade levels. Proficiency in English at an early stage of students' academic journey enhances their ability to acquire and master the language. Acquiring proficiency in a language is a form of self-education, as it serves as the elementary mode of communication. Furthermore, teaching English is an elementary goal in the educational systems of most countries where English is not the native language, particularly in Arab nations (Alamri & Abdurrahman, 2009).

The researcher believes that introducing a new experimental curriculum by the Saudi Ministry of Education to teach English in the second and third grades of early elementary school (beginning in the second semester of the 2019 academic year) was a positive step towards improving the education of young students. Despite a slight delay, it represented a significant change in the awareness of The Ministry of Education officials on The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. The need for English training is critical because English has become the dominant language in fields, such as medicine, computing, science, and knowledge. The pursuit of proficiency in it is a widely sought-after goal worldwide.

Problem Statement

English is a widely used language for global communication in most countries. It has become increasingly fascinating due to technological breakthroughs and resulting societal changes. The Saudi Arabian government has clearly committed to English education at all levels by devoting significant time to acquiring the most efficient teaching techniques and instructions. The government has made substantial investments in languages labs, buildings, educators, curricula, and educational material and has regularly organized training courses to improve the expertise of English language instructors.

Starting from the second semester of the academic year 2019, the Saudi Ministry of Education has introduced a new project including an innovative approach to teaching English in elementary schools' second and third grades. Education authorities required the project implementation per a strategy created by the English

Language Teaching Development Center. This policy was implemented by five education administrations, namely Riyadh, AlMadinah, Asir, Jeddah, and Taif. The investigation aims to confirm that students effectively understand both English and Arabic simultaneously without any detrimental effects on their Arabic language proficiency.

While the Saudi Ministry of Education approved the experimental teaching of English in the early elementary education, there was a need for a thorough assessment of its effects before it could be officially adopted and put into practice. Some individuals oppose early English instruction due to their concerns regarding potential language overload among youngsters and the negative impact it may have on Islamic education and the Arabic language. Currently, the issue revolves around unbiased evidence to prove that teaching and learning English based on international standards provides the highest advantage and outcome of learning a foreign language such as English from the early stages. The current research emphasizes the importance of English education during elementary school and finds out the perceptions of educators and supervisors regarding the process of teaching English to elementary students in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Objectives

The following objectives guide the current study:

- Examine the direct experiences and perceptions of English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate regarding the English instruction experiences of elementary school students.
- Assess the importance of English education in elementary schools by evaluating the perspectives of a representative sample of English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate in Saudi Arabia.
- Determine the difficulties and limitations that could impede the achievement of success in teaching English at the elementary level.
- Examine both the advantages and disadvantages of instructing English to elementary school students in Jeddah Governorate.
- Suggest viable strategies to address the obstacles impeding the achievement of English education in elementary schools.

Research Questions

The elementary focus of this study is to investigate the perceptions of English supervisors and educators regarding the process of teaching English to elementary students in Jeddah Governorate, Saudi Arabia. To analyze this overall question, the following refined sub-questions arise:

1. How do English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate perceive the importance of English instruction at the elementary level?
2. How do English supervisors and educators evaluate the current status of English education in Jeddah Governorate?
3. What are the positives of teaching English at the elementary stage in Jeddah Governorate, as stated by English supervisors and educators?
4. What are the disadvantages of English teaching at the elementary level as perceived by English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate?
5. What are the obstacles to teaching English at the elementary level as perceived by English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate?

6. What are the suggested solutions to overcome obstacles to teaching English at the elementary level as perceived by English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate?

Procedural Definitions

For this scientific study, precise procedural definitions have been constructed to guarantee methodological clarity:

- **Assessment:** In the context of this study, assessment refers to ascertaining the value or importance of a particular notion. The English teaching experience is systematically assessed by collecting average ratings from supervisors and educators within a chosen study sample. A highly complex assessment instrument has been specifically customized for this objective. The thorough assessment procedure involves identifying the favorable, unfavorable, and demanding aspects of teaching English to children at the elementary level. Furthermore, it encompasses the assessments made by educators regarding the several elements of the curriculum that are integrated into the instruction, including the goals, subject matter, tasks, and evaluation methods.

- **Teaching English experience:** This phrase refers to the author's hands-on involvement in teaching English to students of all grade levels in elementary classrooms in Jeddah Governorate.

- **Educator:** For this research, the term "educator" refers to English teacher, regardless of gender, employed in a government school within Jeddah Governorate. Their elementary role is to provide English education to elementary students.

- **English language supervisors:** are leaders and educational experts who aim to support English language educators in improving their academic and professional status by applying linguistic knowledge and effective teaching strategies. Consequently, this adds to the general enhancement of pupils' academic performance.

Delimitations

To ensure scientific rigor, it is crucial to recognize and define the limitations that influenced the implementation of this study:

- **Subject limitations:** The research examined the direct experiences related to teaching English to students in elementary schools in Jeddah Governorate. Moreover, a thorough investigation of the possible impact of gender and age on participants' evaluations of the English teaching experience at the elementary level was a crucial aspect of the study.

- **Human limitations:** The scope of the research was limited to a specific sample size consisting of 94 educators and 10 supervisors, all from the educational environment of Jeddah Governorate.

- **Spatial limitations:** The research study was restricted to elementary day schools located only in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- **Time limitations:** The research was conducted across the entire first semester of the academic year 2022, representing a specified period in which the investigation occurred.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The implementation of English language instruction at the elementary level has been a topic of discussion in several countries, including Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education considered introducing English language instruction starting from the fourth grade. This decision led to a division of opinions, with some supporting early English instruction and others prioritizing Arabic as the native language (Alhazmi, 2004).

Believers of early English education present several strong justifications for its incorporation into elementary education. The following is a summary of the most important ones:

- **Extended instruction period:** Providing English instruction at an early stage enables the implementation of a curriculum specifically designed to match the cognitive abilities of various age groups, promoting holistic development.
- **The early introduction of learning facilitates the acquisition and mastery of a wide range of language skills in young learners,** taking advantage of their increased receptiveness throughout their formative years.
- **Language proficiency enhancement:** Commencing English teaching at an early stage facilitates the cultivation of skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, hence augmenting overall language competence.
- **Enhanced academic and professional opportunities:** A high level of English proficiency enables students to pursue a wide range of academic and professional prospects, promoting active involvement with modern culture. Various researches, such as Alhazmi (2004), Mandura (1994), Salih (2007), and Alammar (2008), provide evidence for the beneficial effects of early English learning. These studies highlight the advantages of more extraordinary linguistic skills, new possibilities, and increased cultural involvement, addressing worries about negative impacts on Arabic language competency.
- **Confirmation of the supporting view:** Aldamigh's (2011) comprehensive research, involving a sample size of over 10,000 participants consisting of educators, students, parents, and educators, confirms the tendency of educators, especially in the early elementary grades, to prioritize introducing English language education. Many individuals supported starting English lessons in the first year of elementary school.

However, a contrary perspective on the instruction of English in early elementary education appeared.

Critics of early English learning highlight various perceived risks and drawbacks. The following are some concerns:

- **Adverse academic performance:** There are concerns over the potential detrimental effects on pupils' academic performance in Arabic and other subjects.
- **Disturbance of focus:** Including an additional subject outside the regular curriculum is considered disruptive to pupils' ability to concentrate during a crucial stage of their academic progress.
- **Effects on values and identity:** Detractors contend that English education may harm pupils' moral principles, religious beliefs, and sense of national belonging.
- **Declining status of Arabic:** The Arabic language is at risk of experiencing a decrease in its standing, a damaged reputation, and less ability to adapt to contemporary advancements. Research conducted by Khider (1986) in Egypt and Wong (2003) studying the influence of bilingualism on Arabic language competency provides evidence supporting concerns regarding delayed linguistic development and negative consequences for third-grade learners.

Some researchers advocate for a subtler approach, proposing that foreign language learning should begin in elementary school at approximately the age of 10 after the fundamental language acquisition is accomplished. This strategy aims to reduce the difficulties that may arise in cognitive development and language distinction in the early years of elementary education (Almutairi, 2009). To summarize, teaching English in elementary schools requires carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages and adopting a thoughtful method that considers cognitive development and language differences.

A Comparative Analysis of English Instruction in Elementary Education: Arab and Foreign Perspectives

The widespread influence of English has motivated numerous countries, both within and beyond the Arab region, to incorporate its teaching into elementary school curriculum. This section intends to examine the experiences of specific Arab countries and compare them with the English teaching procedures in other overseas nations.

Experiences of specific Arab nations. Specific Arab nations have embraced English as a means of teaching to enhance students' competence and acquaintance with the language. The highlighted points are critical ideas derived from Arab experiences, as documented by Almutairi (2009):

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE): English language instruction usually consists of four weekly courses, starting with the first grade of elementary school. The pedagogical focus lies on the communicative approach, prioritizing enhancing listening and speaking abilities.
- Kuwait: English education was introduced in public elementary schools in Kuwait in 1993, commencing with the first grade. The educational policy first employed Emirati-authored texts. Throughout the academic years, the frequency of English sessions has risen from four to six lessons per week.
- Bahrain: implemented English education in the first grade of elementary schools in 2008, following its introduction in the third grade in 2000.
- Oman: implemented an education reform initiative between 1999 and 2008, which included the introduction of English language instruction in elementary schools starting from the first grade. This changed from the previous practice of starting English instruction in the fourth grade.
- Qatar: English language instruction in elementary schools in Qatar begins in the first grade and consists of three lessons per week. The frequency progressively rises to four classes in the third grade and then escalates to five in the fourth.
- Egypt: English language education was implemented in Egypt's elementary schools in 2003, commencing from the first grade with a frequency of three lessons per week. Upon entering the fourth grade, the number of weekly lessons was raised to four.
- Jordan: English language instruction in Jordan was extended to include the first grade of elementary schools in 2001. This expansion included a weekly frequency of five to six lessons.

Experiences of foreign nations. English instruction in elementary schools is not limited to Arab nations; foreign countries also recognize the global importance of English. The noteworthy experiences from specific foreign countries, as emphasized by Aldamigh (2011), are as follows:

- Germany: English teaching has been gradually integrated into elementary schools in Germany since the late 1990s. This usually starts around the age of eight; however, in some institutions, it begins as early as kindergarten.
- Italy: Teaching a foreign language often commences at the age of eight, with a curriculum that includes three hours of instruction per week. English and other languages are now commonly taught at the elementary school level in Italy.
- Sweden: The need for English language education was introduced in 1950 for students starting from the fifth grade and was later extended to include students up to the third grade in 1960. English instruction for first-grade children began in 1995.
- China: Teaching English in elementary schools started in the 1980s but became mandatory in 2001. It began with the lower elementary grades, targeting pupils aged eight to 11.

To conclude, teaching English at the elementary level in Arab and foreign nations is characterized by various approaches, which highlight different policies, starting places, and instructional focuses. Examining and comparing these experiences enhances our comprehension of the intricate worldwide scenario of English language teaching in elementary education.

Practical Studies

The researcher thoroughly investigated the extensive literature available in Arabic and international libraries and databases to gain a comprehensive grasp of the complex dynamics of teaching English in early elementary school settings. The study also extensively reviewed the theoretical and practical literature on this topic, which showed a need for more research to provide valuable insights into the complex aspects of teaching English language at the elementary level.

On one hand, Almulla (1994) explored the influence of early foreign language acquisition before the fourth grade on the development of Arabic language skills. The study encompassed 599 pupils from various grade levels, utilizing a thorough language development assessment. Significantly, students who did not have early exposure to foreign language studies outperformed their peers in multiple linguistic dimensions, highlighting a crucial advantage in some aspects of linguistic development.

Additionally, Issa and Al-Mutawa' (1997) attempted to evaluate the impact of simultaneously studying English and Arabic languages on the academic achievement of second-grade children. The study examined various aspects, including academic achievement, language interference, and the viewpoints of educators. The results demonstrated that adding English to the curriculum did not negatively impact Arabic achievement, contradicting prevailing concerns. Despite solid proof of English learning impacting Arabic ability, educators' views disagreed with this fact.

To add, Alsaiedi and Ageel (2006) carried out an investigation which aimed to evaluate the proficiency levels of elementary school students in various English skills. Students from private and public institutions and those who commenced English instruction in the first grade versus the sixth were compared. According to the findings, English should be incorporated as a fundamental subject in the elementary curriculum, emphasizing establishing consistent professional development initiatives for educators of the English language.

Moreover, Alsemaili (2008) researched tactics to enhance children's language proficiency in the early grades. This research was motivated by the growing enthusiasm for English language acquisition in Arab educational programs. The study highlighted the dominant role of English in diminishing the importance of Arabic. The suggestion recommended a holistic approach that includes the household, community, school, and broader society to systematically enhance language education. While each study offers unique viewpoints, collectively, they underscore the complex and varied facets of instructing English in early elementary education. These findings establish a foundational knowledge base for ongoing study, offering valuable insights to direct further investigation in this significant academic domain.

Additionally, Alenezi and Alsaaydah (2014) aimed to analyze English language instruction in elementary classes of private schools in the KSA, focusing on the perspective of instructors. A survey instrument consisting of 75 items over seven categories was created and distributed to a sample of 52 English instructors in elementary schools in Tabuk Region. The research findings revealed a remarkably high level of expertise in English teaching. Furthermore, the research results showed that the areas of difficulty faced during English teaching, objectives of the English language syllabus, content included in the syllabus, activities related to the syllabus, and assessment

of the syllabus all received favorable ratings. Consequently, the domain related to the drawbacks of English training obtained a poor score. Furthermore, the results indicated no statistically significant differences in academic qualifications and teaching tenure. However, significant differences arose about the positive features of teaching English in elementary classrooms and the goals, content, activities, and evaluation, with female educators showing a preference for the former.

Furthermore, Alhaim and Aldaihani (2015) aimed to determine the dominant technical and organizational frameworks that most impact English instruction in elementary schools in Kuwait. The study sought to determine the educational effects of English teaching on students' proficiency in the country's official language. To achieve this objective, the questionnaires were disseminated to 52 school administrators and English educators employed in elementary education in Kuwait. The study confirmed that teaching English adversely affects students' ability in their native language.

On the other hand, Alshehri (2017) conducted an analysis to assess the level of competence among English language instructors in elementary schools. The study aimed to determine the participant's performance on the quality competencies and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Based on this assessment, the study aimed to propose a training program to enhance the proficiency of English language instructors. Alshehri (2017) utilized a descriptive methodology to gather a comprehensive list of essential skills for English language instructors in elementary schools. An observational card was developed to assess the proficiency of English language instructors regarding these quality competencies. The study used a sample of fourteen English language instructors selected randomly from elementary schools in Abha. The study's findings revealed that the participants had a significant level of competency in language-related skills, as 12 out of 15 competencies in this area were achievable. However, educators needed help in effectively demonstrating 10 teaching-related competencies with a high level of proficiency.

To sum up, the previous review of earlier research indicates that the present study is one of many attempts to investigate the difficulties of elementary education and foreign language teaching. A comprehensive body of research has been carried out, including national, international, and individual studies. The present study was carefully designed, considering each of these studies' significant scientific and intellectual value. The vast majority, if not all, of this research influenced the current study's direction and methods. Previous research, even studies unrelated to the specific topics explored in this study, provided significant insights and ideas that improved the research methodology. The current study focuses on the perspectives shared by English language supervisors and elementary school educators in Jeddah Governorate regarding the importance of elementary English instruction. The investigation examines their perceptions based on their practical experiences in the field of teaching and supervising English Language learning.

Methodology

Design

The researcher followed the practical processes and stages of the descriptive-analytical approach. The descriptive technique involves an interpretive aspect that goes beyond the basic chores of gathering and organizing data.

Participants and sampling. The participants in the current study include English language supervisors, and elementary-level English language educators in Jeddah Governorate during the first semester of the academic year 2022. The study sample consists of 10 supervisors and 94 educators, for 104 participants. Both male and

female supervisors and educators are included in the sample. The study sample is described in the table below by the study variables. Table 1 shows the study sample of English supervisors and educators according to study variables.

Table 1

Study Sample of Supervisors and Educators According to Study Variables

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age range	Less than 30	30	31.2
	30 to 45	36	37.4
	More than 45	38	38.76
Gender	Male	68	70.72
	Female	36	37.44

Tool

The research tool employed in this study was a questionnaire designed to collect information from supervisors and instructors in Jeddah Governorate regarding their experiences in teaching English to elementary students. The questionnaire consists of five critical areas of investigation:

1. The current status of English language education in Jeddah Governorate.
2. Advantages of offering English education at the elementary level.
3. Disadvantages of introducing English education at the elementary level.
4. Obstacles in delivering English education in elementary schools.
5. Solutions for overcoming obstacles to English instruction.

The questionnaire consists of 43 carefully constructed statements, each designed to correspond with the particular emphasis of each survey dimension. The instructions prioritize precision and impartiality, leading respondents to act within the choices available in the questionnaire, encouraging meticulous assessment, and marking (x) in the appropriate box. The questionnaire intended for continuous utilization in scientific investigation prioritizes clarity and precision. The questionnaire answers were gathered using a five-point Likert scale, and a thorough correction key was developed. Scores were modified during rectification using a five-to-one scale to enable efficient analysis.

Validity & Reliability

Two approaches were utilized to guarantee the validity of the questionnaire. Initially, a procedure of reviewer validation was conducted, which included obtaining comments from fourteen experts, resulting in essential modifications. Furthermore, coherence validity was evaluated using Pearson correlation coefficient, confirming a solid internal consistency and validity level. An absolute value of ($r = 0.78\%$) considered a strong correlation.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha calculation. It was confirmed upon reapplication. The obtained results, which varied between (0.70 and 0.88) for all dimensions, satisfied the predetermined requirements, confirming the statistical reliability of the survey's measurements.

Procedures

After confirming the reliability and validity of the study instrument, the researcher continued to carry out the systematic methods for its implementation as described in the following steps:

- Analyzing research studies on English language education to integrate their findings into the tool's development.

- Developing and authorizing the ultimate iteration of the study tool.
- Acquiring the necessary approvals for the execution of the study tool.
- Organizing and assessing the questionnaire responses in preparation for statistical analysis and entering the data into the computer.
- Conducting a statistical analysis of the data.
- Interpreting and analyzing the results.
- Developing recommendations and research proposals based on the study's findings.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected underwent statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to address the research questions, the following descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used: arithmetic means, standard deviations, the Kruskal-Wallis test for differences among more than two independent groups, and the Mann-Whitney nonparametric test for differences between two independent groups.

Findings & Discussion

This portion of the study is dedicated for presenting the findings and the discussion of the most important results: To address the main study question: “How do educators and supervisors in Jeddah Governorate perceive the importance of English instruction at the elementary level?”, means and standard deviations for the evaluation of supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate for the Importance of Teaching English are elaborated in Table 2:

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for the Evaluation of Supervisors and Educators in Jeddah Governorate for the Importance of Teaching English

No.	Statements	Average	Standard deviation	Evaluation grade	Ranking
1	I believe that teaching English is extremely necessary.	3.98	1.01	High	4
2	I believe that teaching English opens up new horizons for students.	3.90	1.08	High	5
3	I believe that teaching English contributes to improving students' academic achievement levels.	3.98	1.01	High	3
4	I believe that teaching English builds generations capable of interacting and positively engaging with the world.	4.09	0.92	High	1
5	I believe that teaching English contributes to achieving development in its various forms.	3.98	0.92	High	2
Total		3.78	0.07	High	

The assessment ratings of supervisors and male and female educators in Jeddah regarding the importance of English instruction are consistently elevated for all assertions, as indicated in Table 2. A high assessment score of 3.78 indicates that English instruction at the elementary level is considered significantly important, as this value represents the general average for this area. The statement “Teaching English builds generations capable of interacting and positively engaging with the world” was ranked the highest in the evaluation criteria. In contrast, the assertion that “Teaching English opens up new horizons for students” obtained the lowest rating.

Based on the research findings, all diverse study participants unanimously acknowledged the importance of English in the modern world. English is highly significant in today's globe due to its widespread recognition, association with scientific and technological progress, and its official status in many developed countries. This is particularly crucial because we live in the information age, which requires social connection. English is a means of communication and social interaction and offers students valuable chances and fresh ideas. Therefore, it is reasonable to prioritize English instruction at the elementary level, especially considering the pupils' insufficient fluency in this specific language.

The second question of the study aims to evaluate the current status of English education in Jeddah Governorate as undertaken by English supervisors and educators. The average values and variability of the evaluations completed by supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate regarding the current status of English education have been calculated. Table 3 presents the results of this investigation.

Table 3

Averages, Standard Deviations, and Evaluation Score of English Supervisors and Educators in Jeddah Governorate for the Current Status of Teaching English

No.	Statements	Average	Standard deviation	Evaluation grade	Ranking
1	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA is good and meets the expectations and goals set.	3.70	1.02	High	6
2	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA faces no difficulties or obstacles.	3.14	1.15	Medium	7
3	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA contributes to the development of reading skills of students.	4.20	0.84	very high	1
4	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA contributes to the development of listening skills of students.	4.06	0.91	High	2
5	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA contributes to the development of expression and conversation skills of students.	4.03	0.98	High	3
6	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA contributes to the development of understanding language rules among students.	3.86	0.94	High	4
7	I believe that the current level of teaching English in the KSA contributes to the development of writing skills of students.	3.85	1.01	High	5
Total		3.55	0.35	High	

The average values and variability of the evaluations completed by English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate regarding the current status of English education ranged from extraordinarily high to ordinary for all statements, as indicated in Table 3 above. The average score for this domain was 3.55, indicating a positive evaluation of the current status of English instruction overall. The statement "The current level of teaching English in the KSA contributes to the development of reading skills of students" achieved the highest assessment score. In contrast, the statement "The current level of teaching English in the KSA faces no difficulties or obstacles" obtained the lowest grade.

The third question of the study focuses on finding out the positives of teaching English in the elementary stage in Jeddah Governorate, as observed by English supervisors and educators of both genders. The average values and variability of the evaluation scores given by educators and supervisors in the governorate of Jeddah for the positive features of English instruction were calculated. The findings from this investigation are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4

Averages and Standard Deviations for the Positives of Teaching English in the Elementary Stage in Jeddah Governorate, as Observed by English Supervisors and Educators of Both Genders

No.	Statements	Average	Standard deviation	Evaluation grade	Ranking
1	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to raising students' academic achievement in English overall.	4.47	0.75	Very high	1
2	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to improving students' reading skills and developing them.	4.44	0.67	Very high	4
3	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to improving students' listening skills and developing them.	4.41	0.72	Very high	3
4	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to improving students' expression and conversation skills and developing them.	4.23	0.80	Very high	5
5	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to improving students' understanding of grammar rules and developing them.	4.19	0.81	High	4
6	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to improving students' writing skills and developing them.	4.01	0.96	High	7
7	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to accustoming students to the language from an early age, facilitating the process of acquiring it.	3.86	0.98	High	2
8	I believe teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to extending the learning duration of the language, making it easier to learn effectively.	3.29	1.17	Medium	6
Total		4.11	0.41	High	

Table 4 above demonstrates that the positive assessments of English teaching at the elementary level in Jeddah Governorate varied significantly for each statement, ranging from exceptionally high (4.44) to moderate (3.29). The average score for this question was 4.11, indicating that the overall statements were extensively evaluated. The statement “Teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to raising students’ academic achievement in English overall” obtained the highest assessment score. In contrast, the statement “Teaching English in the elementary stage will contribute to extending the learning duration of the language, making it easier to learn effectively” was ranked the lowest.

Most survey participants unanimously agreed on the benefits of teaching English at the elementary level. This confirms that the current conditions are advantageous for conducting an English language teaching experiment at the elementary level. This can be credited to the significant human and material resources available to the KSA and the remarkable progress in English education at various levels in recent years, aligning with the Saudi Arabia 2030 vision. Moreover, this activity aligns with the regional and international standards that advocate for adopting such a strategy due to the English language’s rapid expansion and dominant position in science, technology, and commerce worldwide.

The fourth question of the study focuses on finding out the disadvantages of English teaching at the elementary level as perceived by English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate. The average values and standard deviations were calculated. The findings derived from this investigation are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5

Average Values, Standard Deviations, and Evaluation Scores of English Supervisors and Educators About Disadvantages of Teaching English at the Elementary Level in Jeddah Governorate

No.	Statements	Average	Standard deviation	Evaluation grade	Ranking
1	I believe that teaching English in the elementary stage will weaken students' proficiency in Arabic.	3.18	1.14	Medium	3
2	I believe that teaching English in the elementary stage will distract students and prevent them from mastering either Arabic or English.	3.27	1.22	Medium	2
3	I believe that teaching English in the elementary stage will have a negative impact on students' culture and future values.	3.35	1.15	Medium	1
4	I believe that teaching English in the elementary stage will have a negative impact on students' national belonging.	3.05	1.17	Medium	4
5	I believe that teaching English in the elementary stage will burden students with an additional subject.	2.95	1.11	Medium	5
Total		3.16	0.36	Medium	

The results presented in Table 5 indicated that both instructors and supervisors rated the downsides of English instruction as moderate for all claims. The obstacles were assessed as moderate severity, with an average score of 3.16, indicating the overall negative impact. The evaluation score placed the statement "I believe that teaching English at the elementary level will burden students with an additional subject" in the lowest position. In contrast, "I believe that teaching English in the elementary stage will have a negative impact on students' culture and future values" was ranked first.

This exemplifies a notable indifference towards the possible disadvantages of teaching English at the elementary level. It underscores the importance of guaranteeing that students' future Arabic language skills are not negatively impacted. Moreover, it underscores the importance of protecting the identity and values of students for the future, as they encounter this within their community and participate in supplementary courses that enhance their awareness and shape their values and identity.

The fifth question of the study focuses on finding out the obstacles to teaching English at the elementary level as perceived by English supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate. The average values and standard deviations were calculated. The findings derived from this investigation are presented in Table 6 below:

Table 6

Average Values, Standard Deviations, and Evaluation Scores of Supervisors and Educators on Obstacles to Teaching English at the Elementary Level as Perceived by Supervisors and Educators in Jeddah Governorate

No.	Statements	Average	Standard deviation	Evaluation grade	Ranking
1	Insufficient training of educators assigned to teach English in the elementary stage.	4.23	0.80	Very high	4
2	Difficulty in designing English language curricula for the elementary stage that consider students' abilities and needs.	3.29	1.17	Medium	9
3	Some students' aversion to learning English and their teacher due to personal difficulty with the language or a weak understanding of it.	4.41	0.72	Very high	3
4	Lack of assistance and educational resources for teaching English in the elementary stage.	3.59	1.21	High	8
5	Families' lack of cooperation in helping their children learn English due to the low educational level of the family, their lack of awareness of the importance of English, or their lack of interest and commitment to their children learning English, etc.	4.19	0.81	High	5

(Table 6 to be continued)

6	Disparities between school levels, which may make the experience successful in some and fail in others.	4.01	0.96	High	6
7	Lack of a clear and precise strategy for educational decision-makers with short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals for this experience.	3.86	0.98	High	7
8	Opposition from some parties to teaching English in the elementary stage.	4.47	0.75	Very high	1
9	Limited use of appropriate strategies by some educators for teaching English.	4.44	0.67	Very high	2
Total		4.05	0.41	High	

It is obvious from Table 6 above that the evaluation scores of English supervisors and instructors for all statements indicating difficulties in teaching English at the elementary level varied from very high to moderate. The statement “Opposition from some parties to teaching English in the elementary stage” achieved the highest ranking based on the evaluation score. In contrast, the statement “Difficulty in designing English language curricula for the elementary stage that consider students’ abilities and needs” obtained the lowest score.

Furthermore, the study’s results uncover obstacles that could hinder the effectiveness of English teaching at the elementary level schools in Jeddah Governorate. Notable challenges in elementary education include insufficient teacher training, the intricacy of designing curricula that cater to the abilities and needs of elementary students, resistance to teaching English at this level from specific groups, and disparities between schools that may lead to uneven success rates. Additionally, the lack of a specific and well outlined plan that encompasses immediate, intermediate, and long-term goals for this endeavor is also concerning.

The sixth question of the study focuses on finding out the suggested solutions to overcome obstacles to teaching English at the elementary level as perceived by supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate. The average values and standard deviations were calculated. Table 7 below shows average values, standard deviations, and evaluation scores of supervisors and educators on suggested solutions to overcome obstacles to teaching English at the elementary level as perceived by supervisors and educators in Jeddah Governorate:

Table 7

Average Values, Standard Deviations, and Evaluation Scores of English Supervisors and Educators on Suggested Solutions to Overcome Obstacles to Teaching English

No.	Statements	Average	Standard deviation	Evaluation grade	Ranking
1	Identify multiple contexts affecting the learning and teaching of English, such as the school environment, educational resources and materials, and the attitudes, preferences, and work to address them.	3.37	1.05	Medium	8
2	Consider the suitability of the English language content for the age and mental level of the elementary-stage students and ensure that this content is connected to prevailing conservative Islamic values in Saudi society.	3.53	1.02	High	3
3	Effective monitoring by those responsible for teaching English in the elementary stage, including administrators and supervisors, to review the implementation of English teaching and overcome obstacles.	3.51	1.01	High	4
4	Create a school environment conducive to teaching and learning English in the elementary stage.	3.51	1.04	High	5
5	Use appropriate educational tools, media, and advanced technology in teaching English in the elementary stage.	3.47	0.99	High	6
6	The educational policy in Saudi Arabia towards teaching and learning English in the elementary stage.	3.47	1.03	High	7

(Table 7 to be continued)

7	Conduct continuous training courses to enhance the professional competence of English language educators in elementary school.	3.55	1.01	High	2
8	Focus on the quality of English language educators, carefully select, and prepare them before they start working in elementary school.	3.55	1.00	High	1
9	Raise awareness of the importance of the English language among students and their parents to increase their commitment to acquiring and mastering English to keep pace with current and future developments.	3.32	1.17	Medium	9
Total score		3.48	0.08	High	

Results presented in Table 7 above show that both English supervisors and educators rated the ways to overcome obstacles in English instruction at the elementary level in Jeddah Governorate with a range of ratings from very high to moderate for every statement. The average score for this question was 3.48, indicating a positive assessment of the suggested solutions overall. The statement “Focus on the quality of English language educators, carefully select, and prepare them before they start working in elementary school” obtained the highest rating score. However, the statement “Raise awareness of the importance of the English language among students and their parents to increase their commitment to acquiring and mastering English to keep pace with current and future developments” obtained the lowest rating score.

To sum up, the study results indicate that there are several requirements and circumstances that could improve the effectiveness of teaching English language at elementary stages schools in Saudi Arabia. These measures encompass offering comprehensive training to educators and individuals responsible for implementing and spreading the program, conducting a comprehensive initial evaluation of the program before extending it to other educational institutions, consistently assessing the adopted curricula, and monitoring students’ achievements to identify and correct any errors or deficiencies. The research highlights the importance of gaining knowledge from the experiences of other countries. The current study findings align with the research conducted by Mandura (1994) and Aldamigh (2011), as well as Alenezi and Alsaaydah (2014), Alhaim and Aldaihani (2015), and other scholars who have explored the appropriateness of English teaching at the elementary education level. These findings imply that English language training should begin in the first grade of elementary school.

Regarding the six questions of the study, which focused on the perceptions of supervisors and male and female educators regarding the positives, negatives, and obstacles of teaching English at the elementary level in Jeddah Governorate, considering the factors of age and gender and the importance of these variations, special statistical analysis was conducted to find out the effect of age and gender on the results of this study:

First: Differentiations based on age:

The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to assess variations in judgments of the positives, negatives, and obstacles of teaching English at the elementary level among English supervisors and educators based on their age. The results are presented in Table 8 below:

The Kruskal-Wallis test indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in assessing the positives, negatives, and obstacles of teaching English language in the elementary stage based on chronological age, as presented in Table 8 above. This indicates that there are no discrepancies in the evaluation of the given assessment, specifically in relation to the age of the individuals included in the sample. This conclusion may be attributed to the convergence of environmental and cognitive circumstances within the study group. This is because there is a shared understanding of the need for teaching English from the early years of elementary school. It is an inevitable outcome of their mutual belief in the necessity of teaching English at the elementary level.

Table 8

Value (χ^2) and Significance for Differences in Assessing the Positives, Negatives, and Obstacles of Teaching English in the Elementary Stage According to the Age Variable of English Supervisors and Educators in Jeddah Governorate

Domain	Age	Number	Mean rank	Value (χ^2)	Significance
Positives of teaching English	Less than 30	30	94.85	0.61	0.74
	Between 30 and 45	36	97.85		
	More than 45	38	93.66		
Negatives of teaching English	Less than 30	30	95.48	0.50	0.78
	Between 30 and 45	36	97.16		
	More than 45	38	93.74		
Obstacles to teaching English	Less than 30	30	94.12	1.52	0.47
	Between 30 and 45	36	94.81		
	More than 45	38	90.89		

Moreover, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was used to analyze the differences of responses of the participants (English supervisors and educators at Jeddah Governorate) based on their gender focusing on positives, negatives, and obstacles of teaching English for elementary students at Jeddah Governorate. Table 9 shows the value of (Mann Whitney) analysis and its significance for the differences between male and female supervisors, as well as male and female educators, in assessing the positives, negatives, and obstacles of teaching English language for elementary students at Jeddah Governorate.

Table 9

Value (Mann Whitney) and Its Significance for the Differences Between Male and Female Supervisors, as Well as Male and Female Educators in Assessing the Positives, Negatives, and Obstacles of Teaching the English Language in the Elementary Stage According to Gender

Domain	Gender	Number	Average rank	Sum of ranks	U-value	Significance
Positives of teaching English	Male	68	110.70	20,480.00	610	0.01
	Female	36	40.05	841.00		
Negatives of teaching English	Male	68	110.13	20,374.00	716	0.01
	Female	36	45.10	947.00		
Obstacles of teaching English	Male	68	110.86	20,508.50	581.5	0.05
	Female	36	38.69	812.50		

Table 9 above shows that the Mann-Whitney test demonstrates a substantial difference in assessment grades based on gender, as the table above suggests a preference for female gender. Consequently, it may be inferred that women possess a more optimistic viewpoint about the positives, negatives, and obstacles of teaching English at the elementary education level. The variation in this result can be attributed to the disparities in preparedness, qualifications, life experiences, and individual abilities between male and female English supervisors and educators; each gender has a unique influence on shaping perspectives regarding the positives, negatives, and obstacles associated with elementary English instruction. Moreover, personal beliefs about the essential requirements and criteria might significantly impact. This result is consistent with the results of Ozek (2000) and Alenezi and Alsaaydah (2014), which demonstrated statistically significant differences favoring female educators about the influence of gender in education.

Conclusions

To conclude, this study aimed to evaluate the educational experience of elementary school English supervisors and educators at Jeddah Governorate, Saudi Arabia. The results revealed that the participants regarded elementary English education as highly significant for equipping students with essential language skills, expanding their knowledge, improving their academic performance, and enabling active engagement in the global society. In contrast, the evaluation of the current status of English education at the elementary level was somewhat mild, as concerns were raised about the potential difficulties and obstacles that may arise.

The research findings strongly agree that early English learning can significantly enhance students' reading, listening, speaking, grammar, and writing abilities. Moreover, it assists in acquainting children with English language at their early developmental stage when it may be more effortless to acquire. The reported negatives were insignificant and mostly related to potential negative impacts on Arabic language skills, national identification, or diversion. The problems cited needed more teacher preparation, children's reluctance towards English, limited resources, and school disparities. The suggested ways to overcome these challenges include prioritizing selecting and training high-quality educators, ensuring age-appropriate curriculum, closely monitoring implementation, utilizing technology, and boosting awareness among parents and students.

A differentiation emerged regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants. Female educators and supervisors showed a notable disparity in their views on the positives, negatives, and obstacles to teaching elementary English. Nevertheless, there were no notable disparities detected across the different age partners. Concisely, the research confirms the substantial perceived worth and benefits of providing English learning at an early stage. It also reveals current deficiencies in its implementation and a multitude of challenges in effectively teaching the language at the elementary level in Saudi Arabia.

To overcome these challenges, a comprehensive strategy is likely required, which includes enhancing instructor expertise and knowledge, adopting appropriate teaching methods and curriculum, garnering support from relevant stakeholders, providing adequate resources, and continuously evaluating outcomes. Further investigation can enhance the general understanding of the impact of early English acquisition on English language competency and cultural identification. Nevertheless, considering the growing global importance of English, it is logical to expect its instruction to expand to encompass progressively younger children.

Recommendations

In light of the results of the current study, the researcher recommends the Saudi decision makers:

- to begin learning and acquiring English language at the elementary level.
- to enhance the English pedagogical skills of elementary school educators. Training should prioritize enhancing the instructor's proficiency in the target language and their understanding of good pedagogical techniques.
- to extract knowledge from the experiences of highly developed countries about the teaching methods of English as a second or foreign language, starting from elementary school.
- to give considerable emphasis to the instruction of English in educational establishments at various levels and within diverse systems throughout the KSA.
- Additional psychological, pedagogical, and linguistic research is recommended to ascertain the impact of early English instruction on learning Arabic among elementary school students.

- to conduct additional pedagogical studies to ascertain common mistakes in speaking, writing, and grammar that elementary school students make in Arabic as a result of learning English at an early stage and suggesting solutions to reduce its impact.

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