

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE



## TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS ARABIC LANGUAGE TEXTBOOK (*AL-LUGHAH AL ARABIYYAH AL MUA'SIRAH*) FOR INTEGRATED DINI CURRICULUM IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS

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### Abstract

This study explores teachers' perception of the Arabic Language textbook (*Al-Lughah Al Arabiyyah Al Mua'sirah*) used within the Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC) in enhancing students' language skills. Utilizing mixed method research, a questionnaire and interview was utilised in this study. This study examined 46 experienced Arabic language teachers across several religious schools in Perak. This study evaluates the strengths and limitations of the Arabic textbook used in the Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC) for enhancing students' language skills. The results show that respondents generally expressed positive views, with satisfaction scores ranging from 3.5 to 4.1 on a 5-point scale, indicating moderate to high approval. The textbook's emphasis on core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—received the highest rating (4.0667), reflecting its effectiveness in covering essential aspects of language learning. The step-by-step grammar and topic progression organisation was also well-rated, further supporting its pedagogical approach. However, areas for improvement were identified, particularly concerning vocabulary, which received the lowest mean score (3.5217) and the highest standard deviation (0.88792), suggesting inconsistent experiences with its practicality for daily communication. The study recommends enhancing the curriculum by incorporating practical activities such as role-playing and real-life communication scenarios to better support students' speaking skills. Future research should explore on the integration of interactive and multimedia content to enhance language learning and assess the textbook's effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Teachers' perception, Arabic Language, Textbook, Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC), language skills.

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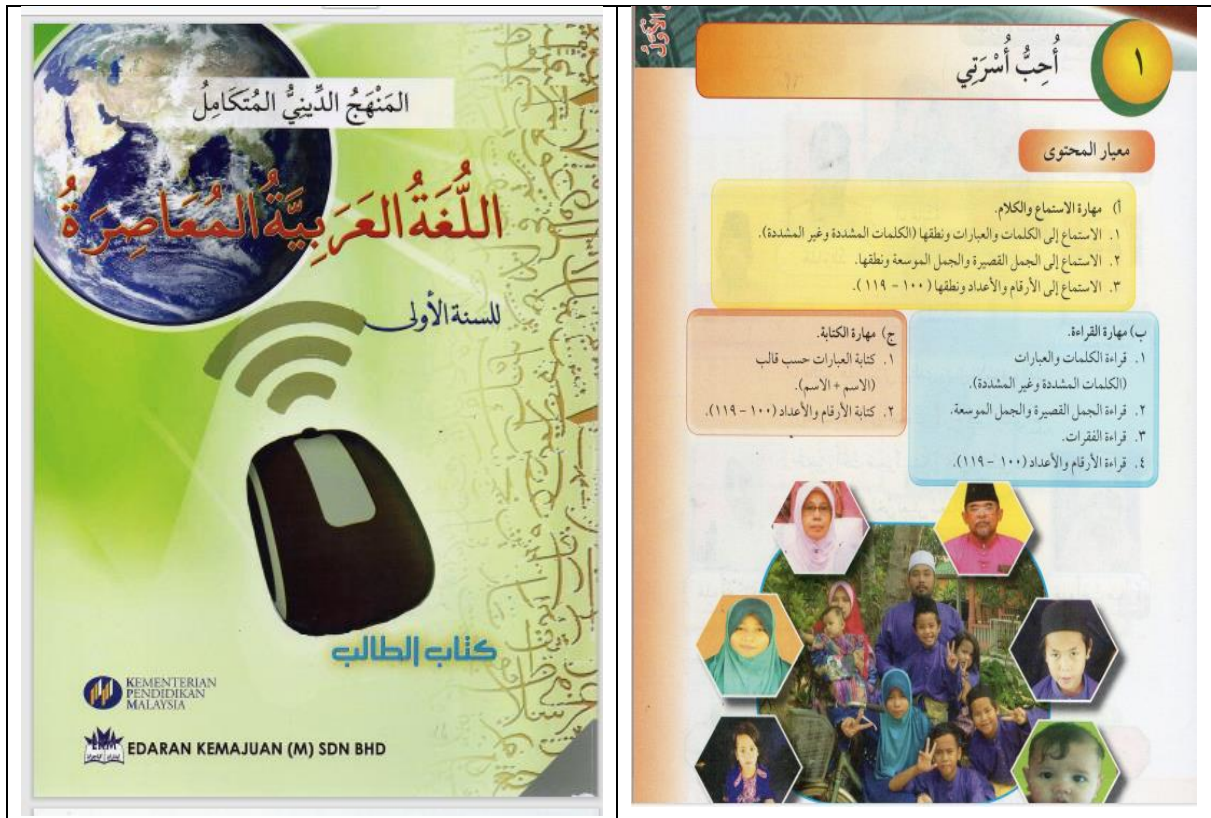
## Introduction

Islamic studies in Malaysia started in the sixteenth century, and the government also strengthened various institutions to support Islamic education. The foundation of Islamic schools and institutions was further reinforced with Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC) introduction and other educational reforms. Previously known as the Al-Azhari Curriculum, the IDC differs from the national curriculum, as it was designed with distinct objectives. The Al-Azhari curriculum includes subjects like Hadith, Fiqh, and Tafsir, which was taught using Arabic textbooks sourced directly from al-Azhar University in Egypt. In contrast, the IDC syllabus for the Arabic language is developed to meet current needs (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2015).

The Al-Azhari curriculum, now known as the Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC), provides new perspectives on education, particularly in textbook development. It was established by Lembaga Penasihat Pelajaran dan Pendidikan Agama Islam (LEPAI), the department and Religious Foundation, and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Implemented in 2015, IDC is implemented in various religious institutions in Malaysia, such as Government Assisted Religious Schools (GARS), State Religious Secondary Schools (SRSS), and People Religious Secondary Schools (PRSS). The curriculum, taught in Arabic, includes subjects like *Usul al-din*, *Al-Syariah*, and *Al-Lughatul Arabiah al Muasirah*. While the Al-Azhari curriculum is evaluated through a special religious certificate, IDC assessments are school-based and had been recognized in the Malaysian Certificate of Education (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia). The IDC aims to enhance students' Arabic proficiency to secure placements in higher education institutions abroad, such as al-Azhar University in Egypt, where students must pass the *Imtihan Qabul* (Arabic Language Competency Test). It also seeks to instil noble values and address societal challenges like hedonism and moral misconduct. The IDC is also supported by the Ministry of Education, which regularly supplies the curriculum's textbooks for students (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (2015). Below is an example of some pictures from form one textbook *Al-Lughah Al Arabiyyah Al Mua'sirah*.

Picture 1

Example of Textbook features for form one Arabic Language Textbook



Picture 2

Examples of activities (dialogues, storytelling, songs)



The "*Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyyah Al-Mu'asirah*" textbook is part of the IDC, an integrated religious curriculum used in Malaysian schools, particularly in religious and Arabic language programs. This textbook is specifically designed to teach contemporary Arabic language skills to students within the context of Islamic education. To ensure that students gain a comprehensive comprehension of the language, the textbook places a strong emphasis on combining several language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This study aims to explore teachers' perception of the Arabic Language textbook (*Al-Lughah Al Arabiyyah Al Mua'sirah*) used within the Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC) in enhancing students' language skills.

## Literature Review

### Implications of Curriculum Design on the Quality of Malaysian School Textbooks

The quality of Malaysian secondary school textbooks is greatly impacted by curriculum design, and affects the overall efficacy of teaching materials and educational outcomes. Textbook quality can be improved by a well-structured curriculum, which guarantees that the texts match educational requirements and cater to the needs of both teachers and students. There are several studies on Malaysian school textbooks related to IDC. These studies explore several perspectives such as curriculum relevance, innovation and quality. Despite being new, the Design and Technology (D&T) curriculum seeks to enhance learning through hands-on application. However, yet, it encounters obstacles such as insufficient resources and training for teachers, which affects the efficacy of textbooks. The curriculum design influences the quality of Malaysian secondary school textbooks by highlighting challenges like teachers' skills, students' comprehension gaps, and inadequate resources for effective teaching and learning (Glor et al. 2022).

Another example is Moral Education textbooks that have evolved alongside curriculum changes. These textbooks emphasise higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) and moral development theories which are crucial for fostering critical thinking in students. Therefore, curriculum design impacts Malaysian secondary school textbooks by suggesting theory-based content, enhancing 21st-century learning pedagogy, and promoting higher-order thinking skills for improved Moral Education quality. (Nadarajan, 2023). Besides, Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 highlights the importance of creative and innovative textbook designs to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of learning. Thus, this study proves that curriculum design does give impact on Malaysian secondary school textbook quality by including innovation and creativity through indicators identified and modelled using the Interpretive Structural Modelling (ISM) approach (Mohd, Nazri et al. 2017). Despite the goal of curriculum design to enhance textbook quality achieved, issues like teacher preparation and resource constraints might make it difficult to implement the plan effectively, indicating the need for continued support and improvement in these areas.

The Arabic textbooks utilized in Malaysia are essential for language learning and Islamic education, especially in the KSSM and Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC). However, several studies point to important problems with their efficacy and quality. According to research by Mohamad, Hussin et al (2022), there are 70 flaws in the Form Four KSSM Arabic textbook, including spelling and grammar issues (23% and 46%, respectively). This raises concerns about the reliability of these resources for effective language learning. Meanwhile, a study by Ismail & Yusoff (2022) on IDC Arabic textbooks analysed Form Four Arabic textbooks in Malaysia's IDC,



highlighting a high technical presentation level but unsatisfactory readability, accentuating the need for improvement in textbook design. The overall readability is unsatisfactory, suggesting a disengagement between design and learner comprehension. This impacts students' ability to engage with the material effectively. Significant variations in linguistic aspects between educational levels are shown by an analysis of Arabic textbooks used at Islamic schools in Malaysia, suggesting that the language's complexity may not correspond to students' proficiency levels (Kamarulzaman et al. 2021). Another article "An Evaluation Study on ASP textbook 'Advanced Media Arabic' by Abdul Rahman Chik and Tg. Ainul Farha discusses the evaluation of Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) textbooks. It outlines a systematic approach to develop an evaluation tool based on criteria initially set by Rushdie To'eima and further refined by researchers at the International Islamic University Malaysia. The authors conclude that while the textbook is generally effective, improvements are needed in various areas to enhance its educational value. The study aims to contribute to the ongoing development of standards for evaluating language teaching materials in a globalized educational context. (Chik & Rahman, 2012)

In contrast, some studies highlight the importance of mixing Islamic values into Arabic language education. This effort suggests that textbooks can foster a holistic understanding of both language and culture (Ahmad Bahari et al. 2022). This dual focus on language and Islamic education is essential for developing well-rounded students.

### **Strategies used by teachers in teaching Arabic Language Skills**

The four fundamental components of Arabic language proficiency are reading (al-qira'ah), writing (al-kitabah), speaking (al-kalam), and listening (al-istima'). For students to succeed, these abilities must be developed effectively, especially in intensive settings like Islamic schools (LP, Nurjannah., Esther, Heronica., et al, 2024). Recent studies show several teaching strategies used by teachers in teaching Arabic language skills. Strategies of teaching vocabulary practiced by Arabic teachers are related with the linguistic richness level of their students. The most related strategies to the level of linguistic richness are identification and distinction, aloud pronunciation, modeling, similes, and writing (Fawaz, 2023). Meanwhile, a study by Khalil A. Rahman (2024) on Arabic textbook shows that a lack of diverse active tasks. Improving the quality and variety of tasks helps strengthen students' critical reading and writing abilities and encourage interactive learning settings.

Another study that emphasizes on the speaking skills stated that, one of the renowned and effective strategies for developing speaking skills is debate. Naim & Haron (2024); Mohd Noor et al. (2021); Azlan & Muhammad (2020) stated that students' speaking skills would improve significantly through debate as it enhanced various aspects involving basic knowledge in language such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and also advanced part of the knowledge such as the quality of content in the speech. In addition, students who are in debate training also improve their self-confidence, soft skills, and motivation (Naim & Haron 2024). Furthermore, Mohd Noor et al. (2021) found a positive perception of debate online learning. Therefore, debate training can be considered a prominent and relevant strategy for developing speaking skills employed by teachers regardless of technological evolution as it can be practiced outside and in the classroom. Nevertheless, recent teaching strategies for speaking skills have shifted to gamification technology integration. Studies by Al-Saggaf & Azmi (2020); Al-Bataineh & Al-Saedi (2019) explore the potential of Minecraft as an educational tool for Arabic language learning. Zamziba et al. (2024) analyzed thirty articles, and the results showed that Minecraft would enhance the Arabic language

learning outcomes including speaking skills. In addition, teachers also use gamification strategies utilizing a mobile application. Results from a study conducted by Puasa et al. (2022) showed that participants were satisfied with the technological, usability, and pedagogical aspects of the i-Kalam App. To increase linguistic competency, techniques such as incorporating extracurricular activities and instructional technologies are recommended (Sudi, Yahya et al., 2023). To sum up, studies of teaching strategies and the integration of technology innovation are important in developing the most effective way of enhancing speaking skills among students.

Despite the variety of teaching strategies employed by the teachers, it is vital to analyze the teacher's perspectives on the effectiveness of the Arabic textbook module for IDC in enhancing students' language skills. For developing teaching strategies, IDC acts as a fundamental element for teachers' reference in all schools. To date, few studies have been conducted on the teacher's perspective.

### Methodology of Study

The data for this study were collected using a questionnaire and interview. Respondents of this study were selected based on purposive sampling. The respondents are 46 teachers from different religious schools located at Perak. They teach Arabic Language subject using Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC) syllabus. All of these teachers had an experience of more than 6 years in teaching this syllabus using the new textbook module *Al-Lughah Al-Arabiyah Al-Muasirah* for form 1 until form 3. The questionnaire utilized in this study was adapted from a structured questionnaire developed by questions adapted from a questionnaire study from an article "Evaluation of Tamil Language Curriculum Implementation in National Schools" (Peng C.F & Tanggayah S., 2019). It was adjusted to suit the specific requirements of the current research. Comprising 10 questions, the questionnaire aimed to elicit teachers' perceptions and feedback on the effectiveness of Arabic textbook for Integrated Dini Curriculum in enhancing students' language skills. Each item on the questionnaire was rated using a Likert Scale, with students selecting from the following options: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral (neither agree nor disagree), 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. Prior to start the main study, researchers performed a pilot test to assess the reliability of the research instrument, despite its prior validation by experts. The primary research instrument underwent pilot testing with a sample of 20 teachers from one school at Kinta district. The Alpha Cronbach coefficient was employed to evaluate the reliability of both the research instrument and its 10 questionnaire items.

**Table 1**  
*Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.751	10

The obtained Alpha Cronbach coefficient was 0.751, indicating that the developed instrument is reliable and acceptable for the actual data collection phase of the research. The researchers employed suitable statistical instruments to collect data, aiming to fulfil the research objectives. After selecting and piloting the instrument, the results indicated the questions' acceptability. The collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

In addition, in-depth interview was conducted towards six teachers from the same population to obtain qualitative data that support quantitative results.

## Results and Discussions

### Demographic Information

**Table 2**

*Age*

Years	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-30	7	15.2	15.2	15.2
30-40	22	47.8	47.8	63.0
40-50	16	34.8	34.8	97.8
50-60	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	46	100.0	100.0	

The age ranges are divided into four categories: 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, and 50-60 years old. Here is the detailed analysis of each category. The age distribution data reveals a majority of teachers aged 30-40 years, followed by those aged 40-50 years. The data reflects a significant drop in frequency for the oldest age category (50-60 years).

**Table 3**

*Gender*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	14	30.4	30.4	30.4
	female	32	69.6	69.6	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

The gender distribution data reveals a significant predominance of female teachers (69.6%) compared to male teachers (30.4%).

**Table 4**

*Teaching experiences*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-3	6	13.0	13.0	13.0
	3-6	10	21.7	21.7	34.8
	6-9	6	13.0	13.0	47.8
	9-12 and above	24	52.2	52.2	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

The data on teaching experiences indicates a various range of years in the profession among the surveyed teachers. The largest group, comprising 52.2% of the total, has 9-12 years or more of teaching experiences. Those with 3-6 years of experience form the second-largest group at 21.7%, followed by both the 1-3 years and 6-9 years groups, each representing 13.0%. This distribution suggests a strong presence of experienced teachers, which could indicate a stable and mature teaching workforce, potentially providing a wealth of expertise and mentoring opportunities for newer educators. The participants were given 10 questions to gather their perspectives and feedback on the effectiveness of Arabic textbook module for Integrated Dini Curriculum in enhancing students' language skills. Based on the questionnaire, below are the acquired data:

**Table 5**

*Integrated Dini Curriculum in enhancing students' language skills*

No	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	The textbook topics are interesting, organized and systematic in helping to improve students' language skills	3.8478	0.66558
2.	The topics are related to each other	3.9130	0.62632
3.	The arrangement of the title is arranged from easy to difficult level	3.9783	0.71458
4.	Each topic can be easily understood	3.7609	0.67280
5.	The words used are words that are commonly used in everyday life	3.5217	0.88792
6.	The exercises in the textbook can improve the level of students' Arabic language skills	3.7174	0.80727
7.	The words and sentences used are simple and clear	3.7609	0.70505
8.	Grammar skills have been arranged on properly	3.9565	0.75884
9.	Language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are emphasized in textbooks	4.0667	0.65366
10	The selection of texts in the textbook <i>Al-Lughah Arabiyyah Al Muasirah</i> is appropriate and interesting	3.9565	0.69782

To analyze the provided data, researchers will focus on several key statistical aspects which are the mean and standard deviation of each item. This analysis will help to identify trends and variability in the evaluations of different aspects of the textbook. The mean represents the average score for each item, indicating general satisfaction or agreement with the statement. The closer the mean is to 5, the higher the level of satisfaction. The highest mean refers to item number 9 "Language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are emphasized in textbooks" (Item 9) has the highest mean of 4.0667, indicating strong satisfaction or agreement. Meanwhile, the lowest mean refers to point number 5 "The words used are words that are commonly used in everyday life" (Item 5) has the lowest mean of 3.5217, suggesting that there is less satisfaction in this area compared to others.

In addition, the standard deviation (SD) measures the spread of the data around the mean. A lower SD indicates that the responses are more consistent, while a higher SD suggests greater variability in the responses. The lowest standard deviation refers to item number 2 "The topics are



related to each other" (Item 2) has the lowest SD of 0.62632, which means that the respondents generally agree or have consistent views on this statement. Item number 5 has the highest standard deviation, "The words used are words that are commonly used in everyday life" (0.88792), showing the greatest variability in responses, which could indicate mixed opinions about the choice of vocabulary in the textbook.

### **Interpretation by Items:**

1. Textbook topics are interesting and systematic (Mean = 3.8478, SD = 0.66558): Respondents generally find the topics helpful for improving speaking skills, with some variability in opinion.
2. Topics are related to each other (Mean = 3.9130, SD = 0.62632): The relatively high mean and low SD indicate consistent agreement that the topics are interconnected.
3. Arrangement of titles from easy to difficult (Mean = 3.9783, SD = 0.71458): This item also scores highly, showing respondents believe the difficulty progression is effective, with moderate agreement.
4. Topics are easy to understand (Mean = 3.7609, SD = 0.67280): There is general satisfaction, although there is room for improvement in making topics more comprehensible.
5. Words are commonly used in everyday life (Mean = 3.5217, SD = 0.88792): This area shows the least satisfaction, with a high variability in responses, indicating that some respondents may feel the vocabulary is less practical for everyday use.
6. Exercises improve speaking skills (Mean = 3.7174, SD = 0.80727): While generally positive, the SD suggests a range of opinions on how effective the exercises are.
7. Words and sentences are simple and clear (Mean = 3.7609, SD = 0.70505): Respondents tend to agree, but there is some variability in how clear they find the language used.
8. Grammar is properly arranged (Mean = 3.9565, SD = 0.75884): Grammar instruction is rated highly, with moderate agreement across responses.
9. Language skills are emphasized (Mean = 4.0667, SD = 0.65366): This item has the highest mean, indicating strong satisfaction with the textbook's focus on different language skills.
10. Selection of texts is appropriate and interesting (Mean = 3.9565, SD = 0.69782): Respondents generally find the text selections engaging, with moderate agreement.

The overall trend is positive, with most items scoring between 3.5 and 4.1, indicating a moderate to high level of satisfaction. The lowest-scoring item relates to the practical use of vocabulary. The results suggest that the textbook could benefit from incorporating more common, everyday language. Meanwhile, items related to topic progression, grammar, and language skills have relatively low SDs, indicating consistent agreement on these aspects. This analysis suggests that while the textbook is generally effective, particular attention could be paid to improving the practicality of the vocabulary and exercises to ensure they meet students' needs more effectively.

Qualitative data analysis from interview showed that teachers who used the Arabic Textbook mostly have same opinions regarding the quality of current textbook. Data from Table 5 display teachers' opinion from interview.

**Table 6***Data analysis from interview*

No.	Themes	Opinions
1.	<b>Organizational Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most teachers appreciate the well-organized lower secondary textbooks</li> <li>• They value the clear progression from basic to advanced language levels</li> <li>• The structured approach to language skills is widely recognized</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Activity Books</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers positively view the inclusion of "Kitabun Nashat" (activity books)</li> <li>• These supplementary resources are seen as beneficial, especially for Forms 1 and 2</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Design and Aesthetics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers consistently praise the textbooks' attractive design</li> <li>• They appreciate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Colorful layouts</li> <li>○ Engaging visual materials</li> <li>○ Attractive illustrations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4.	<b>Language Skills Coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A balanced focus on key language skills (<i>maharat</i>) is highlighted</li> <li>• Skills include listening, speaking, reading, and writing</li> <li>• Multimedia integration (like QR codes) is seen as a positive enhancement</li> </ul>

Most teachers agree that the lower secondary textbooks are well-organized and structured. The progression from basic to advanced levels and the clear focus on language skills are repeatedly mentioned. The attractive design, integration of colourful layouts, and engaging materials like dialogues and stories are highlighted. Teachers also highlight the balanced focus on *maharat* (key skills): listening, speaking, reading, and writing, though with some reservations for upper levels. They also recognize the addition of "Kitabun Nashat" (activity books) and the use of QR codes for multimedia resources is noted as an enhancement in learning. But there are some comments on the vocabulary used. Vocabulary is sometimes too advanced for students. While Quranic and hadith content, calligraphy, and cross-referencing between textbooks and activity books are appreciated by some, others feel this content may not fully address practical conversational needs for students.

### Conclusion and Suggestion

This study has illuminated the strengths and limitations of the Arabic textbook within the Integrated Dini Curriculum (IDC) in enhancing students' speaking skills. The analysis of the Arabic textbook reveals an overall positive reception from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The quantitative and qualitative assessment reveals a generally positive reception of the lower secondary Arabic textbooks, with most evaluation items scoring between 3.5 and 4.1. The textbook demonstrates strengths in several key areas, including a well-structured

organizational approach, clear progression of language skills, and an engaging design with colorful layouts and attractive visual materials. Teachers particularly appreciate the balanced focus on language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the inclusion of supplementary activity books that complement the main textbook.

However, the evaluation also highlights areas for potential improvement. The most significant concern relates to vocabulary, with both quantitative data and teacher interviews suggesting that the language used is sometimes too advanced and may not sufficiently address practical conversational needs. While the textbook excels in grammatical arrangement, topic connection, and overall skill development, there is a clear recommendation to incorporate more every day, commonly used language to enhance students' practical language acquisition. The multimedia integrations, such as QR codes, are viewed positively, but the core focus should be on making the vocabulary and exercises more accessible and relevant to students' real-world communication needs.

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