

## **The Quality of Structures of Explanations in Saudi Arabian History Textbooks**

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**Abstract.** The study considered a critical problem in the history curriculum in the Saudi Arabian middle or intermediate schools, i.e. the school serving students in grades seven to nine.

The problem of comprehension posed by the structure of text offers an important perspective for judging the quality of a textbook. Four aspects of text structures were used to evaluate Saudi Arabian textbooks. The results of the evaluation revealed that texts do not provide adequate historical explanation according to the goal-plan-action outcome frame suggested by Armbruster and Anderson on 1984. Suggestions about some ways in which text explanations might be improved were offered.

Why many students are not proficient in learning from content area textbooks is a question that has challenged many theorists and researchers over the past few years in the United States. Armbruster and Anderson began to suspect that textbooks themselves might be contributing to comprehension and learning problems [1, p.1]. This difficulty prompted them to begin an investigation of text in an effort to identify the aspects of text that seemed to impede learning.

Armbruster and Anderson have proposed four types of text structures which can define the quality of the explanations of historical events in textbooks [2, pp.183-184]. These qualities can be used as analytical tools for identifying the characteristics of text that can cause comprehension and learning difficulties and for determining how these difficulties might be avoided.

### **Cognitive Theory Applied to Text Reading**

Armbruster and Anderson suggested that when the cognitive theory is applied to text reading, one concern of the inquiry is the quality of the information in the text as seen in terms suggested by the notion of the schema. According to the schema theory, a reader's schema (organized knowledge of the world) provides much of the

basis for comprehension, learning and remembering information in texts. Comprehension occurs when the reader constructs a schema that explains events in the text. When people first begin to read, they search their memory for a scheme to account for the information and on the basis of schema, construct a model of the meaning of the text, which provides a framework for continuing the search through the text. The readers gather more information from the text, they develop and refine the model until they are able to perfect their understanding of the text [2, p.181].

As Armbruster and Anderson see it, the content of subject matter can be formulated and conceptualized in structures called *frames*. Frames are composed of slots or categories of content; each slot is characterized by its own type of information. In developing these frames, Armbruster and Anderson have used the concept of story grammar [2, pp. 182-183] (e.g. Stein and Glenn [3, pp. 53-120]; Thorndyke [4]; Mandler and Johnson [5]; Rumelhart [6]). A story grammar defines what constitutes a well-formed or coherent narrative. While story grammars differ in detail, they all have the same fundamental structure. Thus, story grammar provides an analogy for defining frames for explanation in history [2].

### **Frame Map for History**

Armbruster and Anderson formulated a basic history frame which they call the "goal" frame. The goal frame is described and stated in Table 2. The slots of the frame are assumed to constitute the main ideas associated with the explanation of an historical event. The choice of psychological explanation as the basic logical form of historical narrative is based on a broad view of history in an attempt to understand the human experience through psychology (the study of the motives, aims and values of human behavior). That is, historical events are assumed to be explicable in terms of goals of individuals or groups and of the actions taken to attain those goals [2, pp. 182-183].

The historical explanations presented in textbooks can be evaluated by measuring the "fit" between the content of the text and the goal frame slots. Using this approach, the evaluation can determine: 1) whether the text contains content for all the slots; 2) whether it contains content that does not fill any of the slots; and 3) the relative weighing of emphasis given to the content in the various slots[2, p. 187].

Researches indicate that students have considerable difficulty comprehending social studies and history textbooks [1, p. 59; 2, p. 193; 7, pp. 31-35]. It is surprising that no researcher in the Arab world has asked the questions, "What are the problems that are commonly found in informative text structure? What is the generic structure a frame, that can accommodate the quality of explanation of many historical events? Since the present study seeks to apply Armbruster and Anderson's approach [2, p. 187] in different school systems, e.g. in the history textbooks in Saudi

intermediate schools, we have to ask the question, "To what extent do the history text structures in Saudi intermediate schools meet the frames that accommodate the quality of explanation of historical events i.e. Armbruster & Anderson's frames? Our interest in this study is to answer these questions.

We believe that applying Armbruster and Anderson's frames in evaluating the quality of historical explanation in Saudi intermediate textbooks will help ensure that these textbooks will be structured so to be easily read, understood, and remembered. We think that learning will occur without the heavy use of studying strategies. This approach can be also useful for writing textbooks, teaching from textbooks and learning from textbooks.<sup>1</sup>

### Method of Study

#### Procedure

To evaluate the explanation of historical events in Saudi Arabian texts, we are concerned to apply Armbruster and Anderson's [2, p.187] method for evaluating the explanation of three excerpts from Saudi Arabian textbooks, see Table 1. For the analysis, the three excerpts selected from first and second intermediate grade textbooks were each divided into three episodes, while the excerpt from the third intermediate grade textbook was divided into two episodes. Thus, for each of the eight analyses presented, an intact block of material called an episode is utilized. An episode consists of several sentences, generally one or more complete paragraphs, which, taken together, appear to present a narrative of a sequence of events which has an indicated beginning and ending and generally some intervening material that implies the passage of time. The narrative passage commonly refers to a person or object displaying a condition at the beginning of the episode that is changed by the end. Moreover, a person or group of persons capable of having a motive and goal, making a plan, and performing an action that has an identifiable outcome related to the condition is commonly recognizable as the main character of the episode.

The criteria for the selection of excerpts consisted of the following: (a) the excerpt was written in narrative style [8]; b) it was self-contained, beginning and ending with a heading or subheading; c) comprehension of the text was not dependent upon graphic or pictorial information [9, p. 30]; d) the excerpt covers content material that is important for the student to learn; e) it covers content material that the evaluation is familiar with Armbruster and Anderson [1, p. 98].

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this paper is to use Armbruster and Anderson's frames in evaluating the history text; other uses of the frame, e.g. in writing texts, teaching from texts or learning from texts will be presented in another paper (in press) under the author's name.

Armbruster and Andersons' [2, p. 187] method implied two approaches, qualitative and quantitative, which are shown in Table 1. The Table contains three major questions. The first two questions indicate the quantitative judgement, i.e. the evaluator can measure the fit between the content of the text and the goal frame slots. So he/she can determine how much content the text contains in each slot and whether the text contains content in all the slots or in certain slots other the rest. The third question indicates the qualitative judgment, i.e. the evaluator can determine the quality of explanations of historical events by applying three maxims which are: (a) coherency; (b) unity; and (c) audience appropriateness. Each maxim associates with a few guidelines related to the maxim, i.e. the questions follow the maxim. Judging both the quality and quantity of the explanations that are embedded in text requires responses to each question in Table 1.

While it is sometimes possible to answer the four slot questions directly on reading an episode, it is not always the case (as Armbruster and Anderson suggest) that each of the goal frame elements is present and clearly stated in text material. Therefore, the process, as applied in this study, attempted to answer the questions in Table 2.

Table 2 expands the explanation of the qualitative approach in Table 1 (see questions numbers(1) and (2)). The top of Table 1 represents the diagram of the goal frame or the frame map, the frame map consists of four frames which are goal-plan-action-outcome(s). In the left side of the table there are four questions which associate with each frame. In the right side of the table there is the definition of each frame slots.

**Table 1. A method for Evaluating Historical Explanations in Textbooks**

1. Read through the text, noting whether the text answers the frame slot questions: What was the goal? What was the plan for attaining the goal? What action was taken in response to the plan? What was the outcome of the action with respect to the goal?
2. If the content of the text fails to answer many of the questions, the evaluator may decide that the content is not a good explanation and may choose to terminate the evaluation.
3. If the evaluation is to continue, assess subjectively how well the questions are answered. In making this judgment of quality the evaluator might consider the following questions:
  - a. How appropriate are the responses for the target audience of this textbook? Do they presume knowledge the readers are likely to have? Are there enough complete answers for these readers?
  - b. How coherent are the responses? Do the ideas flow easily and clearly from one another? Are important connectives, especially causal and temporal relationships, explicit? Are the questions answered in the text in order to find the answer?
  - c. How unified are the responses? Is the text well balanced with about the right amount of emphasis given to the responses to the various questions? Does the text contain information that is not very relevant to the response to any of the questions?

**Note:** Adapted from [2].

**Table 2. Frame Map (GPAO)**

GOAL (G)	PLAN (P)	ACTION (A)	OUTCOME (O)
Description of (GPAO)		Questions associated with each frame slots	
(G) Goal is desired state sought by the main (single or group) characters		What is the goal?	
(P) Plan is a strategy for attaining the goal;		What was the plan?	
(A) Action is an overt behavior in response to a plan; and		What action was taken in response to the plan?	
(O) Outcome is a consequence of the action.		What was (were) the outcome(s) of the action with respect to the goal?	

In order to extend the quality judgements on the material in the episodes, the author adopted a rating scale from '0' to '4' where '0' indicates a judgment that no material is offered in the episode that answers a given question and '4' indicates that a question is answered directly and adequately in the episode. The general guidelines used in applying the ratings to the text material were as follows:

- 4 Clear and concise statement that responds directly and adequately to the slot question.
- 3 Response to slot question is direct, but it is somewhat inadequate.
- 2 A sentence, clause or phrase makes a partial direct response.
- 1 A response seems to be implied, but is quite uncertain.
- 0 No statement was found within the episode that seemed to respond to the slot questions. No way to infer a response.

In order to achieve the reliability of the necessarily subjective evaluation results, the author's evaluation of the selected excerpts was examined by an Arabic-speaking assisting professor.

The results will be shown in Table 3. The author will select one of three excerpts that receives the lowest score with regard to the question slots. This excerpt will be taken as an example of the deficiency of quality in explaining the historical events mentioned in it.

### Materials

Eight episodes from three Saudi Arabian history textbooks used in intermediate schools were evaluated in this study. These excerpts were taken from the first inter-

**Table 3. The Results of the Text Answer Frame Slots Questions**

Frame slot question	Excerpt 1			Excerpt 2			Excerpt 3	
	EPISODE			EPISODE			EPISODE	
	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B
a) What was the goal?	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
b) What was the plan for attaining the goal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2-3
c) What action was taken in response to the plan?	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
d) What was the outcome of the action with respect to the goal?	2	1-2	2	3	2-3	0	0	4

mediate grade textbook "The Ancient Arabic History" by El-Bakry and El-Gahly (1985); the second intermediate grade text "The History of the Islamic World" by Ibrahiem, El-Bakry, El-Gahly and Kadumy (1985), and the third intermediate grade textbook "The History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" by Ibrahiem, El-Bakry, El-Gahly and Kadumy (1985).

### Results and Discussion

#### *Excerpt No. 1:*

The Jews in the Roman era (El-Bakry et al., 1985, pp. 111-12).

#### *Episode 1A*

After the Jews claimed that they had killed Jesus, peace be upon Him.

- The Christian religion spread and many Roman governors believed in the Christian religion.
- The Jews made many revolutions against the Romans.
- Titus, the Roman leader, came to Jerusalem in the year 70.
- He conquered Jerusalem and he destroyed the Jews' unity.

#### *Episode 1B*

- The Jews came back and became a united group.
- They started their revolutions again until the year 135 A.D.
- The emperor Hadrian devastated many of the Jews, and the rest of them escaped to other parts of the world.

#### *Episode 1C*

- The Jews remained ununited until Omar Ibn El-Khtab came.
- He captured Jerusalem.
- The Jews lived as a united group ever since under Islamic rule.

*Excerpt 1 Discussion*

In these two paragraphs there are three episodes. The first two episodes are contained in the first paragraph. The third episode is contained only in the second paragraph. The three episodes have an ending with some intervening material but they don't have a beginning. The motive or the goal of the main character is excluded from the three episodes. The three episodes don't have one major character that performs the major action through the episodes... e.g., each episode has two main characters.

In Episode 1A, the beginning of the narrative is an outcome statement which obviously belongs to the previous excerpt. The Jews and the Romans are the two main characters that perform the actions throughout the episode. The outcome of the episode is identified by the action of the Roman leader, Titus. The first action was taken by the Jews: "They made many revolutions..." since the action statement was not directed by a plan. Also the reader cannot infer why the Jews made many revolutions...? or whether the Jews revolted three or a dozen times, nor can the reader infer how much time was entailed in each revolution, a year, or even decades. Moreover, this action has not been taken by the main character that identifies the consequence in Episode (Roman), thus, the statement is rated 'O' Titus is introduced as the Roman leader who does not have a motive or a goal or even a plan. His action is to "come to Jerusalem." Since the content of the action statement is at least plausible, the material related to the action question can be rated no higher than '1'. The outcome statements also are problematic. The importance of conquering Jerusalem is not explained. The less sophisticated student would perhaps find the interference of making the Jews ununited less obvious. Thus, outcome statements in Episode 1B are rated '2'. They are direct but inadequate.

In Episode 1B, the authors of the texts introduced the Jews and the emperor Hadrian as the main characters; both do not have a motive or goal or even a plan. The first statement in the episode was the Jews' action "Came back and become a united group," and "started again their revolutions until year 135." The reader can still wonder about where did the Jews go and how they came back and became a united group, and how many revolutions had been made until the year 135 since the Jews started the first one. Again the action was not taken by the main character (Hadrian), in which the outcome of the narrative refers to him. Therefore, the statement is rated 'O'.

The last statement in the episode contains the final historical events of the Roman destruction of the Jews. The outcome statement indicates that many Jews were destroyed by the emperor Hadrian but the seventh grade readers cannot infer whether "destroying many Jews" was the goal of the Romans or part of it, nor could they infer that this consequence satisfied the Romans' motives or not. The material related to the outcome question can be rated no higher than '2', possibly '1'.

While the material for Episode 1C is historically related to the Episodes 1A and 1B, the material in episode 1C which is wholly outcome statements seems unrelated to the actions of the narrative begun in the first two episodes. Omar Ibn El Khtab is introduced as a new main character who has no motive or goal like the other main characters in the two episodes. The first part of the sentence belongs to the final events in the first paragraph. The second part of the same sentence appears to be an action: "Omar Came." It is not a precise statement of where Omar came from. Since the statement answers two slots of questions (O and A), the statement warrants a rating of 'O'. The last two statements seem to be the final events of the narrative which refers to a new era in the Jews' history: " Jews in the Islamic era," not to the same era which the narrative begun. Moreover, the last outcome statement is referred to the Jews satisfaction, since the original goal was excluded from the three episodes, the reader cannot infer whether or not the outcome has met the goal. Therefore, the statement warrants only '2'.

*Excerpt No. 2* The Battle of Heteen (Ibrahiem et al., 1985, pp. 162-163).

*Episode 2A*

- A Arnat, the ruler of the El-Kark Castle broke the treaty which was held with Salah Eldean El Ayoby.
- A He attacked the Muslims tribes, and
- A He also attacked the Muslims while they were going to Mecca for pilgrimage.
- O These actions led to the battle of Heteen which took place between the Muslims and the crusaders. Heteen is located west of the lake of Tiberias (see map no. 20).
- O Salah Eldean won the battle in 1187 and killed most of the Crusaders.
- O He imprisoned the ruler of ElKark, the King of Jerusalem and most of the European rulers.
- O Also, Salah Eldean killed Arnat.

*Episode 2B*

- O After the victory of Heteen, Salah Eldean captured Tiberias, and then liberated Akka, Haifa, Sidon and Beirut.
- O Finally, he beseiged Jerusalem until all the Crusaders in the city surrendered and the Muslims prayed in the ElAksah Mosque.

*Episode 2C*

- A The Jews burned part of ElAksah on the eight of Jumada Al Akhirah 1389 and,
- O It is still under Jewish occupation until now.
- G Salah Eldean treated his enemies the Crusaders peacefully, while the Crusaders were acting immorally in their first expedition, especially when they entered Jerusalem. Thus, Salah Eldean wanted to give his enemy a lesson about Islam, namely that it is the religion of peace and forgiveness.



*Excerpt 2 Discussion*

These three episodes are contained in two paragraphs in the text. The material of the first episode is contained in the first paragraph. The second and the third episodes are contained in the second paragraph of the text. While the episodes deal with the same issue, the second episode being wholly outcome statements, the material in episode three seems unrelated to the historical events of the narrative beginning in the first two episodes.

Episode 2A begins with the actions of Arnat, the leader of the Crusaders, toward the Muslims: "He broke the treaty," "attacked the Muslim tribes," "attacked the Muslims who were going to Mecca for pilgrimage." These action statements are not taken by the main character (Salah Eldean), who has an identifiable outcome in the narrative of the text. Moreover, they appear to be the motivations that led Salah Eldean to engage in the battle of Heteen but they are not stated to fit in the goal slot. They answer the action question. Therefore, they warrant only a rating of 'O'.

The rest of the episode statements are outcomes. In these statements, the authors of the text have introduced Salah Eldean as the main character who is the leader of the Muslims and who does not have any goal, motive, plan or action but the outcomes of the historical events in the episode are attributed to him. In as much as the outcome statements are stated explicitly, but parts of the statements are not precise sentences such as "killed most of the Crusaders" and "he imprisoned most of the European rulers." Of course the reader cannot infer whether 70% of 90% or even half of the Crusaders were killed and how many of the European rulers were imprisoned thus; the statements are rated '3'.

In episode 2B, all the content has to do with the final events of the outcome of the Battle of Heteen. The statements are stated explicitly but since the goal was excluded from the narrative, then judging whether or not the outcome statements are related to the original goal is impossible. The statement is rated '2' or possibly '3'.

In episode 2C the authors of the texts introduced new group of people who performed an action and outcome and introduced Salah Eldean with a goal which is not related to the historical events. Since these statements seem to be isolated from the narrative of the Battle of Heteen, the statements in episode 2C are rated 'O'.

*Excerpt No. 3: The Ottoman conquest of the Arab world and the constitution of the Islamic State. First conquest of Syria (Ibrahiem et al., 1985, pp. 25-26).*

*Episode 3A*

When the Ottoman armies were unable to expand their territories to Europe, they changed their plans of expansion to other parts of the world. The Arab region was the region which attracted their attention for the following reasons:

- G To defend the Arabic territories from Mongol raids and the destruction they left behind.
- O The expansion of the power of the Persian Emperor Ismail El Safwy to Iraq and Asia.
- O The conquests of the Mamluks in South Asia.
- O To protect the Islamic World from the enmity of the Portuguese which was revealed in the geographic discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, and India. Also their occupation of the shores of the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf in order to prevent commercial communication between the Muslims, India and Asia.
- G The desire of Spain and other European countries to expand their power to North Africa.

### *Episode 3B*

The conflict between the Mamluks, the leaders of Egypt and Syria and the Ottoman leaders.

- P The Ottoman Emperor "Saleem the First" sends an expedition to fight the Mamluk's leader "El Ghuree".
- A The two armies met at the North of Syria (Marj Dabbiq battle in the year 1516).
- O The Emperor Saleem defeated them, and continued his expansion to Damascus and Palestine, then occupied Egypt.

### *Excerpt 3 Discussion*

In these two paragraphs, there are two episodes. Each episode is included in one paragraph. The first episode has a beginning and no end. The second episode contains the consequence historical events of those began in the first episode.

In episode 3A the Ottomans are introduced as a group of persons who aimed at expanding their territories in the Arab World in order to "defend Arab territories from Mongol raids..." and to "protect the Islamic world from the enmity of the Portuguese...". Although these goals seem clearly stated, the importance of the Arab world to the Ottomans will escape the inference of the students of the third intermediate grade. The goal statements warrant only the rating of '3'.

The outcome statements are problematic, since there is no connection between the Ottomans' expansion in the Arab World and the expansion of the power of the Persian Empire to Iraq and Asia, and the conquests of the Mamluks in Southern Asia is missing. The outcome statement warrants only the rating of 'O'. In the statement of episode 3A, the authors of the text have introduced new groups of persons, such as the Spaniards and other European countries, who have the desire to expand their territories to North Africa. The connection between the desire of Spain and other European countries to expand their territories to North Africa and the Ottomans' goal to expand their power in the Arab region is missing. The statement is rated 'O'.

Episode 3B is the first statement that appears to fit in a plan slot, though it is not clear what tactic would give Saleem the First the edge he needed in his war with the Mamluks. Therefore, the statement warrants only the rating of '2' or possibly '3'. The action statement is immediately followed by the plan slot question and, because it is not clearly expressed, the action statement can be rated no more than '2'. The content of the last statement has to do with the final events of the outcome of Saleem the First's expedition in Syria. The outcome succeeded to satisfy the Ottoman goal at the beginning of the narrative in episode 3A. It is appropriately related to the original goal. The statement is rated '4'.

*Compensating for the Deficiencies (in Excerpt 2)*

A teacher who is going to teach the lesson which includes the material in episode 2A, 2B, and who intends to develop the students' ability to comprehend the historical events that are embedded in the passages, may attend to the ratings assigned to slot questions. These questions and the ratings of the responsive material offered in episodes 2A, 2B are as follows:

Questions:	2A	2B	2C
a) What was the goal?	0	0	0
b) What was the plan for attaining the goal?	0	0	0
c) What was the outcome of the action with respect to the goal?	3	2-3	0

Outcome is the only part that is treated most adequately in the text. The outcomes listed in 2B and 2C are, in fact, given the most emphasis and attention in the text. A teacher who is concerned with students' understanding of the events being described, however, would probably exclude episode 2C from 2A and 2B lessons and teach this material separately in as much as the goal plan and action material in 2A and 2B is largely unrelated to 2C's outcomes.

If the teacher intends to make up the deficiencies that are embedded in the 2A/2B episodes she/he may want to have students hypothesize reasons why Arnat would break the treaty with the Muslims. A teacher may need to raise such questions as:

Why Arnat would start first to break the treaty with the Muslims, rather than say Salah Eldean?

Why would any one of the two sides in the treaty break it? What would you expect from the other side to do?

A discussion focused on this question may need the teacher to encourage her/his students to investigate some verses of the Quran about remaining faithful to agreements, etc.

Because the goal information was excluded in this text, some effort would be required from the teacher to either help the students to bring information to fit with the goal frame or replace the information in such a slot so as to fit in an appropriate slot by asking the following questions:

**Why did Salah Eldean want to make a battle with the Crusaders?**

**What were Salah Eldean's motivations in engaging in the Battle of Heteen with the Crusaders?**

**What were the conditions of the treaty between Salah Eldean and the Crusaders?**

**Do you think the Crusaders deserved that Salah Eldean fight them?**

A discussion focused on these or similar questions would obviously explain such concepts as army, leaders, ruler, battle, war, attack, treaty and provoking of treaty.

The authors of the text did not consider the plan slot information in the text. Therefore, the teacher may want to make up the material missed in plan questions, and she/he would need to develop two lines of information.

The first of these is spatial in nature and would undoubtedly require the use of a globe or map to show the location of the Heteen battle, the locations of the Crusaders and the Muslims, and the land routes to gain access to the place of the battle. The second of these lines of information is strategic and is responsive to a set of questions which a teacher may want to explore with a class of students:

**How does a country or nation plan for a battle?**

**How could it win a battle?**

**What were Salah Eldean's tactics to defeat the Crusaders?**

These two plans of elements of space and strategy are of course related and sometimes indistinguishable from the action elements implied in Armbruster and Anderson's action slot. Here a teacher might want to explore two aspects of the action taken, as reflected in the following questions:

**What actions did Salah Eldean actually take?**

**Which of these directly fulfilled the goal of the war and the plan of the battle?**

**Which actions were not fulfilling of the goal and plan, or were unfunctional?**

**Was the killing necessary to the goal and plan?**

The first of these questions would elicit a set of chronological events. If explored

extensively, detailing Salah Eldean's capture of Tabaria, Akka,... Jerusalem, such listing should be illustrated on the map used in depicting the plan. History teachers, however, are commonly overly zealous in listing chronology and depicting movements on maps. An emphasis on actions may in fact detract from the overall lesson to be learned.

In the last activity related to Armbruster and Anderson's slot questions episode 2A offer adequate answers. It was rated '3' while episode 2B offer only moderately adequate answers, it was rated '2-3'. A teacher desiring to explore this aspect of the explanation could ask:

What according to your text were the results of the Heteen battle?  
 Did Salah Eldean actually achieve his goal?  
 Did Salah Eldean win the battle?  
 How much territory did he gain?

Outcomes, like actions and plans, may not fit perfectly with goals, even when accurately reported by historians or history text writers. Armbruster and Anderson's slot questions are, of course, not addressed to the proper course of events in the world of phenomena, but to the proper selection of actual information by the text writer to relate to the goal slot. Therefore, when a selected episode is found to be deficient, say, in its report of an outcome, as in the case in episodes 2A and 2B a teacher may ask:

What should the authors have written for us to show that Salah Eldean's goal was fulfilled?

Why do you suppose the author included outcome material not direct to the goal of the battle of Heteen?

These two questions would permit two different thought-related discussions. The first would require information from other sources. The second question is not truly a history question but a historiographical question. Historians, history text authors and history teachers alike use facts and factual assertions for reasons other than fulfilling explanatory frames. In this discussion students would be asked to examine the motivations of Ibrahiem, El-Bakry, El-Gahly and Kadomy for including among their outcome statements in Episode 2A such as Salah Eldean's killing of most of the Crusaders and "Arant" leader of El Kark and imprisoning the King of Jerusalem and most of the European royalty.

As noted earlier, the 2C episode is irrelevant to the explanation offered in 2A and 2B. If a teacher wants to explore aspects of the actions and outcome achieved in episode 2C, he/she could ask:

**What action did the Jews take in 1389 in El Aksah Mosque?  
How important is El Aksah Mosque to the Muslims?  
Who is occupying it now?**

The last part of the text would lead the teacher to ask his/her students to check the accuracy of its information from other sources beyond the textbook.

First in the outcome statements in episode 2A, the authors of the textbooks informed the readers that Salah Eldean “killed most of the Crusaders, he imprisoned the ruler of... and the European royalty and he killed...” At the end of text the authors report that Salah Eldean “dealt with the Crusaders peacefully... he wanted to teach that Islam is the religion of peace and forgiveness.” The two initiatives seem to be contradictory, students who have a high level of curiosity may raise such questions as:

**Why would Salah Eldean have killed many of the Crusaders if his policy was to deal with his enemies “the Crusaders” peacefully and teach them that Islam... is the religion of peace and forgiveness?**

In that case, the teacher may encourage students to examine the accuracy of the assertion in that text. The teacher may ask the students to check in other sources whether Salah killed many Crusaders before or after he dealt with the Crusaders peacefully.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The primary purpose of this paper was to apply Armbruster and Anderson's GPAO frames in evaluation explanations in Saudi history textbooks for identifying the characteristics of the text that can cause comprehension problems as well as determining how these problems can be avoided in order to increase the learning both quantitatively and qualitatively. The criterion used in evaluating the quality of explanation embedded in the text was how well the text answered the Armbruster and Anderson's GPAO frame questions: a) what was the goal?; b) what was the plan?; c) what action was taken in response to the plan?; d) what was the outcome of the action with respect to the goal?

The result of the evaluation and discussion revealed that the episodes from Saudi Arabia history textbooks do not provide adequate historical explanations according to the GPAO frame suggested by Armbruster and Anderson [2].

Specifically, the episodes fail to contain information about one or more of the content categories defined by the frame slot questions. Also, some sentences contain the answer to more than one frame slot question.

Moreover, the narrative passage which has two characters plays the main role in the narrative. The reader should receive information that answers the question about each character e.g., 8 slots or 7 slots in case of the two characters having shared the same goal. In Saudi texts, the authors fail to display each character with its own information for each slot question. Sometimes the authors of the text display two characters performing the information that answer the same frame slot question; while one of the two characters plays the information of the action slot, the other character acts out the information of the outcome slot. These results indicate that texts could create a fragmented explanation. These texts could be improved by reconstructing them in a stricter fashion, in accordance with the GPAO approach.

In spite of the results presented above, however, this evaluative focus suggests a criticism of the Armbruster and Anderson approach to the effect that this approach is appropriate in evaluating only certain historical explanations that refer to the goals, plans and actions of rational actors as the basis of the explanation offered. Moreover, the Armbruster and Anderson approach cannot be regarded as a panacea for improving the quality of explanations in history classrooms. Teachers who are aware of this approach, however, can more precisely focus their teaching techniques and strategies on making up for the deficiencies in the explanations in the text.

Furthermore, Armbruster and Anderson propose that their goal frames reflect the quality of the explanations embedded in the accounts of historical events and in the sequences of events presented in texts. The study, however, points out that there is often overlap between the frames, and in many cases it becomes impossible to distinguish between frames, i.e. action and outcomes.

Although Armbruster and Anderson justify their choice of an account of historical explanations using the terms of modern cognitive psychology, the frames reflect the syllogistic aspects of logical arguments as defined by Aristotle and developed for teaching by Smith and Meux [10] and Ennis [11]. This comment is not offered as a criticism of Armbruster and Anderson, but it is offered as a suggested avenue for expanding Armbruster and Anderson's frame system to incorporate other forms of explanations.

The major implication of this study is that the Saudi Arabian teaching and history textbooks could be improved if teachers and writers become aware of the use of the GPAO frame as a means of clarifying certain explanations made in history textbooks. As a further goal, teachers and writers may become aware of the different types of explanation available, thus allowing them to choose the type most appropriate for effectively explaining a historical event. In addition to being aware of the various types of explanation, teachers should be skilled in using different teaching strategies to expand and clarify the explanations of the text material. Armbruster and Anderson's goal frame questions outline for teachers a significant approach toward achieving this skill.

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## كيفية شرح بنية النص التاريخي لكتب التاريخ المقررة في المرحلة المتوسطة في المملكة العربية السعودية

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ملخص البحث. تتناول هذه الدراسة إحدى المشكلات المهمة في منهج التاريخ في المملكة العربية السعودية للمرحلة الإعدادية (من الصف السابع إلى التاسع)، فالتركيب البنائي للنص التاريخي قد تسبب مشكلة سوء فهم عند القاريء. لذلك يمكن اتخاذ الخصائص النوعية لبنية النص للحكم أساساً على نوعية المعلومات المتضمنة في الكتاب المدرسي.

وقد استخدمت أربع خصائص لبنية النص التاريخي في هذه الدراسة لتقويم نوعية شرح الأحداث التاريخية للكتب المدرسية في المملكة العربية السعودية. أوضحت نتيجة التقويم أن النصوص التاريخية المتضمنة في الكتاب المدرسي لم تعط شرحاً تاريخياً ملائماً طبقاً للهيكل (الهدف - الخطة - التنفيذ - النتائج) ذلك الهيكل الذي اقترحه أرم برستر وأندرسون في عام (١٩٨٤)، وقد قدمت بعض المقترحات الأخرى حول تحسين شرح النصوص التاريخية لكتب المملكة العربية السعودية.