

## A Content Analysis-Based Evaluation of The Grade Six English Textbook 'We Can': A Case Study of Saudi Elementary Schools, In Al-Mjmaah City

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**Abstract:** The study evaluated the EFL textbook 'We Can', which is taught to Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils in the elementary schools, Al-Majmaah City. The study adopted the qualitative approach of research design. It is based on content analysis to measure the existence of EFL textbooks' criteria in the examined EFL textbook 'We Can'. Data were collected by using a 35-item evaluation checklist and semi-structured interviews. The evaluation checklist is divided into seven sections with five items each. The semi-structured interviews comprise 3 questions revolved around the evaluation of the EFL textbook 'We Can' in terms of problems and improvement suggestions. In other words, the interviewed Saudi EFL teachers were asked about the problems which they encountered while using the textbook 'We Can' for teaching English to Saudi EFL elementary school pupils, in Al-Majmaah City. Ten Saudi EFL elementary-school teachers in Al-Majmaah City were asked to respond to the evaluation checklist of the examined EFL textbook 'We Can' according to five responses of rating. Six of the ten Saudi EFL teachers were also interviewed. Data were analyzed in accordance with content analysis theoretical framework of EFL textbooks evaluation criteria. These criteria cover the examined EFL textbook's organization and design, goals and objectives, language contents, language skills, practicality, and moral and cultural considerations. The findings indicated that the examined textbook 'We Can' has good quality and meets the EFL textbooks criteria. The findings introduced pedagogical implications for the EFL teaching process in the Saudi EFL context of elementary schools.

**Keywords:** Evaluation, Saudi teachers, Saudi elementary schools, criteria.

تقييم قائم على تحليل المحتوى لكتاب اللغة الإنجليزية "نحن نستطيع" للصف السادس الابتدائي: دراسة حالة

للمدارس الابتدائية السعودية في مدينة المجمعة

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**المستخلص:** قامت الدراسة الحالية بتقييم كتاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية "نحن نستطيع" و الذي يتم تدريسه لتلاميذ الصف السادس الابتدائي بالمدارس السعودية في مدينة المجمعة حيث تبنت الدراسة المنهج البحثي الكيفي و الذي يقوم على تحليل المحتوى من أجل قياس توافر معايير كتب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، و تم جمع البيانات البحثية للتقييم باستخدام قائمة تدقيق مكونة من ٣٥ بنداً و قد انقسمت قائمة التدقيق إلى سبعة أجزاء تضم كل منها خمسة بنود، وتم إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة شملت ثلاثة أسئلة تركزت حول تقييم كتاب "نحن نستطيع" للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية فيما يتعلق بالمشكلات و مقترحات التحسين، وعبارة أخرى تم إجراء المقابلات شبه المنظمة مع المعلمين السعوديين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول المشكلات التي واجهتهم أثناء تدريس كتاب "نحن نستطيع" لتلاميذ المدارس الابتدائية في مدينة المجمعة، حيث قام عشرة معلمين سعوديين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالرد على بنود قائمة تدقيق التقييم لكتاب اللغة الإنجليزية موضع الدراسة "نحن نستطيع" طبقاً لخمسة ردود من التقييم، كما تم إجراء مقابلات مع ستة من المعلمين العشرة للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، و تم تحليل البيانات البحثية طبقاً لإطار العمل النظري لمعايير تقييم كتب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وهي التنظيم و التصميم، الأهداف، لغة المحتوى، مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية، التطبيق العملي، و الاعتبار الأخلاقية والثقافية، وأظهرت النتائج أن كتاب "نحن نستطيع" للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية موضع الدراسة ذو جودة جيدة حيث أنه يفي بمعايير كتب تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية و قدمت النتائج مضامين تربوية لعملية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في السياق السعودي للمدارس الابتدائية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تقييم، المعلمين السعوديين، المدارس الابتدائية السعودية، معايير.

## Introduction

Zhang and Su (2021) explained that the EFL textbooks comprise a series of books such as a student's book and workbook that aims to develop the EFL learners' ability to use English efficiently, correctly, and professionally. It is also designed to provide ample opportunities of learning experiences for EFL learners. The EFL textbooks are often designed in a way that facilitate the EFL teachers' missions to help their students attain better proficiency levels in English. Thus, the EFL textbooks play an instrumental role in providing authentic learning materials and inputs which in turn enhance the students' opportunities of successful learning. The EFL textbooks are mainly related to the process of planning FL curricula in the sense of organizing the consistency between learning inputs and pertinent learning activities. This consistency appears in the equal distribution of tackling various language learning skills while observing the natural scale of learning language skills. That is, the learning of listening precedes that of speaking and reading precedes the learning of writing.

Kaskani and Zafiri (2021), pointed out that the importance of EFL textbook is unquestionable; it is the main engine behind the success of the pedagogical process of teaching and learning English. The essential functions of EFL textbooks revolve around providing the main basis upon which EFL teachers can plan their lessons and enabling EFL pupils to realize English proficiency. As such content analysis of EFL textbooks has appeared as an important trend in the fields of language learning and teaching. This importance stems from the fact that content analysis of EFL textbooks scrutinizes the usefulness and quality of those textbooks used in helping EFL pupils to attain higher proficiency levels in English. The content analysis of EFL textbooks witnesses an expansion by tackling the influence of L1 and L2 cultures on developing the EFL pupils' proficiency. It handles the cultural elements which may positively or negatively affect FL learning, particularly with the emergence of intercultural competence of EFL pupils.

Shak, Albakri, Shukor, and Tahir (2022) clarified that the effectiveness of FL teaching widely depends on the careful selection of EFL textbooks. Rubdy (2014) set several criteria for the evaluation of EFL textbooks. As a learning input material, an EFL textbook should observe the learning differences among the students, goals, and objectives behind teaching the EFL syllabus, varied drills, exercises and practical activities in each unit, moral and cultural considerations. The EFL pupils vary in their cognitive abilities to understand FL rules. Some EFL learners can have better understanding and learning through illustrative colorful images, others may learn better through songs or through audio-visual materials. The learning differences among EFL learners are attributed to their different reasons behind learning English, their feelings about learning English and the received encouragement to learn English. The learning differences can also be related to the socio-economic status of the EFL pupils, their gender, and their various learning experiences. An EFL textbook should cater for all these elements in order to be an effective tool of teaching and learning.

Al-sowat (2012) and Vitta (2021) explained that it is necessary to evaluate EFL textbooks because of their important role as a learning material input for performing classroom activities. The EFL textbooks are viewed as the essential engine behind the EFL students' development of English proficiency. According to Harwood (2017), and Kaskani and Zafiri (2021), they are the tools that enable both EFL teachers and students to fulfill the interactional teaching-learning process. In other words, the EFL textbooks provide the learning input and the activities in which that input is leveraged. The EFL

textbooks also represent the organization of learning input into consistent activities to improve the EFL students' language skills.

In addition, Zhang, and Su (2021) explained that the EFL textbooks have newly emerged functions related to linguistic and cultural variations. The EFL textbooks taught in China include elements of the Chinese culture covering linguistic knowledge and national information. On the contrary, the EFL textbooks taught in Germany are dominated by the English culture and they emphasize the skills of intercultural communication. Aoumeur and Ziani (2022) also admitted the importance of English language globally. However, Aoumeur and Ziani found that the EFL textbook *My Book of English* taught in Algerian middle schools highlights the aspects of Algerian culture as opposed to those of the English culture.

Gholami, Noordin, and Rafik-Galea (2017) called for the necessity of evaluating the EFL textbooks, particularly at the implementation stage. Such evaluation provides indicators of the suitability of using those EFL textbooks to cater for the teachers and students' needs. The evaluation of EFL textbooks often leads to the adaptation of learning input and can help improve the EFL students' learning outcomes. Once the EFL textbooks evaluation takes place, EFL teachers can add activities that compensate for the EFL textbooks demerits. The present study intended to evaluate the EFL textbook 'We Can', which is taught to Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils in the elementary schools, Al-Majmaah City. According to Al-Seghayer (2005) the Saudi educational policy has recently witnessed drastic changes in the light of the Royal Vision of 2030.

The development of different EFL textbooks series, to serve the educational policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, requires further research. Al-Seghayer also stated that the Saudi EFL learners' proficiency levels are still far from being satisfactory. Thus, the effective quality of EFL textbooks such as 'We Can' is questionable. Furthermore, most of the recent research papers over the last decade presented systematic reviews of the EFL textbook evaluation without pinning down a particular case study of assessing an EFL textbook. Examples of these review studies include Gholami, et al. (2017), Harwood (2017), Huang (2019), Vitta (2021), Pan and Zhu (2022), and Shak, Albakri, Shukor, and Tahir (2022). Thus, there is a need to investigate the effective quality of the EFL textbook being taught to Saudi EFL pupils and conduct a case study of EFL textbook in the Saudi EFL context of elementary schools.

### Statement of the problem

Due to the paramount importance of EFL textbooks in the process of teaching and learning English, it deems necessary to investigate such effectiveness in the Saudi EFL context. Thus, the present study intended to evaluate the EFL textbook 'We Can', which is taught to Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils in the elementary schools, Al-Majmaah City. The evaluation is based on the theoretical framework evaluation criteria of EFL textbooks suggested by Rubdy's (2014). These criteria cover the organization and design, textbook contents, goals and objectives, language contents, language skills, practicality (activities & tasks), and moral and cultural considerations.

### Study questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How do the Saudi EFL teachers evaluate the effective quality of the EFL textbook 'We Can' in terms of Rubdy's (2014) evaluation criteria?

2. What are the problems which Saudi EFL teachers encounter in using the EFL textbook '*We Can*' for teaching English to Saudi EFL elementary school students, Al-Majmaah City?
3. What are the suggestions which Saudi EFL teachers provide to improve the use of the EFL textbook '*We Can*' to teach English to Saudi EFL elementary school students, Al-Majmaah City?

### Study aims

This study aimed to determine the Saudi EFL teachers':

1. Evaluation of the effective quality of the EFL textbook '*We Can*' in terms of Rubdy's (2014) evaluation criteria.
2. Views of the problems which they encounter in using the EFL textbook '*We Can*' for teaching English to Saudi EFL elementary school students, Al-Majmaah City.
3. Suggestions to improve the use of the EFL textbook '*We Can*' to teach English to Saudi EFL elementary school students, Al-Majmaah City.

### Significance of the study

The study is significant since it:

1. supports the policy and goals of Saudi Ministry of Education to teach English in the Saudi EFL context.
2. sustains the efforts of EFL curriculum development in the Saudi EFL context of elementary schools.
3. determines the merits and demerits of the EFL textbook '*We Can*'.
4. sheds some light on the TEFL process in the KSA to elementary school pupils.
5. gives insights into the appropriate teaching methods that can adopted in the Saudi EFL elementary classrooms based on the EFL textbook '*We Can*'.

### Delimitations of the study

The study is limited to the evaluation of the EFL textbook '*We Can*', which is taught to Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils in the elementary schools, Al-Majmaah City. Thus, the expected findings are restricted to the examined EFL textbook in the Saudi elementary schools.

### Review of literature

Rubdy (2014) emphasized the importance of using checklists to evaluate EFL textbooks. For Rubdy, EFL textbooks evaluation is centered on the needs, aims, and pedagogical requirements of the EFL learners. Textbook evaluation should also be based on the beliefs, skills, and abilities of EFL teachers. It should include vital contents and effective methods that enable the successful realization of the teaching and learning process. Rubdy clarified that EFL textbook evaluation should handle the textbook appearance, how language content is organized, the consistency between language content and learning goals and objectives, the interrelation between learning objectives on the one hand and tasks, exercises, and activities on the other, the employment of clear language of instruction, equal covering of all language skills, and observation of moral and cultural considerations. These elements of evaluation are vital in judging the effectiveness and good quality of EFL textbooks because they summarize the two main

functions of EFL textbooks, namely realization of EFL learners' high proficiency in English and facilitation of the EFL teachers' roles.

Rofik (2020) investigated the evaluation of an EFL textbook entitled *Curriculum 2013 English Language* taught to the Indonesian EFL grade 10 students in a vocational school. Data collection relied on analyzing the examined textbook contents that were classified into significant components in light of the theoretical framework. In this qualitative study, Rofik adopted content analysis on the basis of Cunningsworth's textbook criteria covering organization and design, contents of English language, teaching methodology, topics, and practicality. The study adopted qualitative analysis which does not necessitate the formulation of research hypothesis beforehand. Rofik reported that the evaluated textbook follows the proposed Cunningsworth's textbook criteria. Its aims are appropriate to those of the program in which it is taught. Its fifteen units cover different topics pertinent to the learning aims of text structures, written and spoken language skills.

The tested textbook was also planned to develop the communicative skills of Indonesian EFL learners. In this sense, it includes oral activities such as talking about family relationships, asking for and giving information. The evaluated textbook also includes digital learning materials, particularly unit 14. The textbook was well designed and organized since all units cover the English four skills. Although the textbook presented implicit grammar instruction, vocabulary was explicitly taught in each unit. For example, the contents refer to some English tenses, but these rules were implicitly introduced to the learners. Therefore, the Indonesian EFL teachers should pay attention and present explicit grammar review to their students. As for the drawbacks of the examined textbook, Rofik emphasized that *Curriculum 2013 English Language* lacks the development of English listening comprehension skills and English vocational vocabulary. In this regard, Rofik explained that the EFL teachers are required to provide their learners with vocational vocabulary pertinent to their area of study. As such, the learners can authentically experience the use of vocational lexis related to their area of specialization.

Kaskani and Zafiri (2021) evaluated the reading comprehension content of two EFL textbooks, namely *Connect B1* and *Incredible 5* which are commonly taught language centers in Greece. The participants were 50 EFL experienced teachers who had long experience in teaching English at language centers affiliated to both private and public sectors. Whereas all participants replied to the evaluation checklist of the two examined textbooks, only eight participants took part in the interviews. They are specialized English teachers and some of them obtained master's degrees in English teaching, and one had the CELTA certificate. Findings of the evaluation checklist indicated that most participants strongly agreed to the suitability and relevance of reading comprehensions in both examined textbooks. Such reading comprehensions could motivate the Greek EFL learners towards learning English.

In spite of the recent utilization of these two textbooks, they provide relevant reading comprehensions to the Greek EFL students. The interviewees indicated that the main merit of these two textbooks is related to the inclusion of different topics collected from reliable and valid learning sources. The interviewees' answers corresponded with the checklist responses in confirming that the two examined textbooks contain reading topics which attracted the participants' interest and the students' active participation in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the interesting reading topics can successfully develop the EFL learners' motivation towards learning English. In addition, the two



textbooks provide reading comprehension input which develops the Greek EFL learners' cognitive ability. The participants also strongly agreed that the two textbooks provide commonly daily used vocabulary. In other words, the two textbooks sustain the Greek learners' ability to use English in daily-life activities. There was strong agreement among the participants that the two textbooks provide before-reading tasks that prepare the Greek EFL learners to the reading texts. This merit helps to stimulate the students and make them relate their previous information with the reading texts to figure out the exact conveyed meanings. As for the demerits of the two textbooks, the participants indicated that the pre-reading tasks do not encourage students to work in pairs or groups.

Serasi, Levina, Hakim and Anggraini (2021) explored the perceptions of EFL Indonesian teachers and students of the effectiveness of two English textbooks *Grow with English* in teaching and learning English in the Indonesian elementary schools. Serasi et al. measured the textbook's effectiveness in terms of four criteria, namely topics and contents, the four English skills, practicality, and layout and design. The participants were 29 Indonesian 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades EFL learners and an EFL teacher. Data were collected by using a checklist covering the above-mentioned four criteria.

The checklist rating was based on a five-point scale: *very bad, bad, fairly good, good, and very good*. The two tested textbooks *Grow with English* were rated as good teaching and learning materials according to the majority of the grades 4 and 5 participants. Serasi et al. found that the two EFL textbooks *Grow with English* managed to fulfill the criteria of good EFL textbooks. These two EFL textbooks were positively viewed by the fourth and fifth grade participants and the EFL teacher as having good quality and can be used to guide and perform activities of teaching and learning English at these two elementary levels. Serasi et al. also recommended that the EFL teachers can compensate for the drawbacks of the two examined textbooks. Some participants indicated that they found difficulties in comprehending some skills presented in these two textbooks such as grammar and pronunciation. In such as case, the EFL teachers are required to utilize other learning sources in order to ensure their students' full understanding of the taught English skills.

Bergstrom, Norberg and Nordlund (2023) explored the role of EFL textbook in structuring the development of vocabulary learning in the Swedish EFL context. In other words, Bergstrom, et al. discussed the general concept and thoughts of Swedish EFL curriculum developers on the content of FL vocabulary learning in the EFL textbooks. The eight interviewed curriculum developers had wide experience in developing learning materials for EFL textbook. They comprise three native speakers of English. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were adopted to collect data regarding the interviewed participants' opinions on FL learning contents in the Swedish EFL textbooks. Bergstrom, et al. qualitatively analyzed the views of English curriculum developers for teaching and learning English vocabulary in the Swedish secondary schools. Notably, the Swedish secondary schools comprise grades 7, 8, and 9. Bergstrom, et. al. reported that the interviewed eight curriculum developers are mainly concerned with providing materials which encourage the Swedish EFL learners' engagement and intuition to learn FL vocabulary.

They used to exploit word lists for the purpose of teaching reading comprehension rather than for learning vocabulary. The eight participants accounted their views on the basis that learning EFL vocabulary is not an end per se; Swedish EFL learners should understand vocabulary whenever it incidentally occurs in various activities. In other words, the Swedish EFL curriculum developer do not consider learning vocabulary as an

objective itself, but rather English vocabulary should be taught implicitly in the Swedish EFL classrooms.

Rahmawati and Ambarwati (2023) conducted a qualitative analysis to examine the suitability and quality of the EFL textbook *Grow with English*. As opposed to the study of Serasi et. al. (2021), Rahmawati and Ambarwati only restricted their study to the grade four textbook *Grow with English*. The researchers descriptively collected data from the examined textbook. These data contain introspections, life stories, visual and textual texts. The researchers classified the collected data to determine whether they meet the textbook evaluation criteria. The quality of the examined EFL textbook was measured based on the framework of the National Education Standards Agency and the theory of textbook evaluation criteria. Rahmawati and Ambarwati found that the tested textbook meets the criteria of Indonesian national education goals and the curriculum criteria of English language teaching. The examined EFL textbook provides good guidelines to both Indonesian EFL teachers and students.

It meets the criteria of present meaningful exercises and drills. It is also suitable for the participants' age, interest, and culture. Rahmawati and Ambarwati added that the grade four textbook *Grow with English* contains learning materials suitable for developing the elementary school learners' proficiency in English. These learning materials are theoretically and empirically proper to the Indonesian EFL elementary learners. Theoretically, the textbook is based on the most up-to-date learning and teaching theories of English. Empirically, it contains different units covering various themes and topics which are suitable for the learners' interests. The textbook also develops the learners' ability of self-learning and innovation and maintain their cultural and identical values.

### Research design

The study adopted the qualitative method of content analysis in order to measure the existence of EFL textbooks' criteria in the examined EFL textbook '*We Can*' (including Pan & Zhu, 2022; Patton, 2015; Rahmawati & Ambarwati, 2023; Rofik, 2020). The qualitative approach employs content analysis by using an evaluation checklist. It also helps to uncover detailed information about the examined textbooks in terms of its design, organization, language contents, language skills, teacher's book, practicality, appropriateness for the Saudi EFL context. The Saudi EFL context highlights the necessity and importance of teaching English to younger learners since the elementary school stage. It emphasizes the importance of using English as a language of instruction and the avoidance of using the Arabic language. The Royal Saudi ministry of Education is keen on providing authentic learning materials of English throughout all educational stages. The study also conducted semi-structure interviews of 6 Saudi EFL teachers.

### Participants

Ten Saudi EFL teachers in the Saudi elementary schools, Al-Majmaah City were randomly selected to take part in the present study. For the purpose of this qualitative study, the number of participants is small in order to obtain in-depth information through the data collection instruments.

### Procedure

Data was collected during the first semester of the school year 2022-2023. In prior, the internal and external validity of the developed evaluation checklist for the EFL textbook '*We Can*' was judged by four experienced curriculum and instruction professors whose experience exceeded twenty years. The main purposes of the four experienced

professors' judgment were to determine the importance of the evaluation checklist items and realize accuracy, effectiveness, and practicality of the developed evaluation checklist. The internal validity occurs in the ability of the developed evaluation checklist to measure the participants' evaluation of the examined textbook. The external validity occurs in the sense that the developed evaluation checklist can be replicable and used in other similar studies. The semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed. Although this study maintained the main textbook evaluation criteria of Rubdy, some items were adapted from different studies and other items were rewarded to fit in the present study. As for the developed evaluation checklist and semi-structured interviews, they were piloted by using 6 Saudi EFL teachers. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .91 and .93 successively suggesting high reliability of both data collection instruments.

### Data collection instruments

The main source of data collection is the EFL textbook 'We Can'. It was published by arrangement with McGraw Hill, Education, LLC (UK) Limited. Data collection relied on two instruments namely content analysis checklist and semi-structured interviews. Content analysis relied on a checklist evaluation of the EFL textbook 'We Can'. The study developed a 35-item evaluation checklist based on the reviewed studies such as Rahim and Daghigh (2020), Zokaeieh, Karimi, Nouri and Hakimzadeh (2019), Lei and Soontornwipast (2020), and Sahin (2020). It is divided into seven sections with five items each. It covers various criteria including organization and design of the textbook 'We Can', textbook contents, objectives, goals and approaches of teaching English to the Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils, presentation language contents, cognition and practicality (activities and tasks), language skills, moral and cultural considerations. It is a five-point rating scale which provides five responses: Strongly Agree SA=1, Agree A=2, Not Sure NS=3, Strongly Disagree SD= 4, and Disagree D=5.

The semi-structured interviews comprise 3 questions revolved around the evaluation of the EFL textbook 'We Can' in terms of problems and improvement suggestions. In other words, the interviewed Saudi EFL teachers were asked about the problems which they encountered while using the textbook 'We Can' for teaching English to Saudi EFL elementary school pupils, in Al-Majmaah City. They were also asked to provide suggestions for the improvement of using the EFL textbook 'We Can' in teaching English in the Saudi context. These questions are constructed based on reviewed literature such as Khoo and Knight (2015), Annum (2017), Kaskani and Zafiri (2021). These questions are as follows:

1. What are the problems which you encountered in using the EFL textbook 'We Can' in teaching English to Saudi EFL elementary school students?
2. What do you suggest improving the use of the EFL textbook 'We Can' to teach English to Saudi EFL elementary school students?

### Data analysis, Results and Discussion

The qualitative analysis of the evaluation checklist seven sections employed the percentage scores of the participants' responses to all items. As shown in Table 1, the percentage scores of the participants' Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) responses were extremely higher than that of their Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D) and Not Sure (NS) responses. In other words, the participants' responses to the evaluation checklist items indicate their acknowledgement of the good quality of the EFL textbook 'We Can' taught to the Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils. In the sense of verifying the good quality of the examined EFL textbooks, the findings of the present study are similar to those reported



by Rofik (2020), Serasi et. al. (2021), Kaskani and Zafiri (2021), Bergstrom, et al. (2023), and Rahmawati and Ambarwati (2023).

**Table 1**

*Evaluation Checklist of the EFL Textbook 'We Can'*

No	Items	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Not Sure %	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %
<b>Organization &amp; Design</b>						
1	It is convenient for pupils to handle its size	40	35	5	7	13
2	Its units, headings and subheadings are all well organized	38	39	3	12	8
3	It contains sufficient illustrations, graphs, pictures, images, etc.	42	40	4	8	6
4	It contains audio-visual aids that facilitate integrated learning of the four skills	45	43	2	6	4
5	It contains sufficient lists or glossaries of vocabulary	41	47	3	5	4
<b>Textbook Contents</b>						
6	It contains a suitable and clear table of contents	44	46	2	5	3
7	The content covers various topics and subjects	45	42	4	4	5
8	The contains supports the learners' self-learning	40	38	6	8	8
9	It contains real-life situations	46	43	5	2	4
10	The content covers almost all language skills	43	45	3	6	3
<b>Objectives &amp; Goals</b>						
11	Objectives are clearly and precisely displayed to learners	47	45	2	2	4
12	Objectives are realistic and varied in difficulty	40	44	3	7	6
13	Objectives are consistent with Bloom's taxonomy	42	46	4	6	2
14	Objectives observe learning differences among learners	39	43	5	8	5
15	Objectives are consistent with the allocated time for the textbook	42	44	6	2	6

No	Items	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Not Sure %	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %
Organization & Design						
Language content						
16	It includes authentic language	43	41	5	4	7
17	It covers phonological aspects	44	46	3	2	5
18	It asserts language use and communication	47	44	4	2	3
19	It introduces and explains new concepts	43	41	5	7	4
20	It is understandable and suitable for the learners' proficiency level	50	44	1	2	3
Activities & Tasks						
21	It contains various activities and tasks	47	43	2	5	3
22	There are clear and sufficient instructions for doing the activities and tasks	42	44	4	6	4
23	Activities are interactive in nature that encourage the utilization of new learned words for communication	48	44	2	2	4
24	Activities encourage learners to use rule of grammar in real-life situations	45	46	4	3	2
25	Language activities and skills activities are balanced	44	47	2	3	4
Language Skills						
26	The textbook covers the four language skills adequately	43	45	3	6	3
27	It pays attention to writing skills such as writing composition	42	44	4	4	6
28	There are adequate materials for listening comprehension	44	46	2	5	3
29	There are adequate activities of reading comprehension	47	45	1	4	4
30	There are adequate activities of the spoken language such as dialogues and role plays	45	42	3	3	7
Moral & Cultural Values						

No	Items	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Not Sure %	Strongly Disagree %	Disagree %
Organization & Design						
31	The textbook observes the historical values of KSA	40	38	6	8	8
32	It sustains the social values of the KSA	42	39	5	7	7
33	It supports the cultural values of the KSA	38	40	7	9	6
34	It sustains knowledge about different types of English cultures	37	39	8	10	6
35	Knowledge of English cultures stimulate learners to know about their own culture	42	39	5	9	5

In terms of organization and design, the participants stated that grade 6 pupils have no difficulty handling the size of the EFL textbook 'We Can'. It is well organized as its units are clearly divided and its heading and subheading are clearly visible. Other design characteristics of the EFL textbook 'We Can' include its adequate colorful illustrations, graphs, pictures, and images. It also contains adequate audio-visual aids to facilitate the integrated learning of the four skills. It contains lists of vocabulary and a dictionary. All these characteristics help to attract the grade 6 pupils to use the examined textbook, ease their ability to follow up instructions, motivate them to take part in the required activities and tasks, and develop their positive attitudes towards learning English. The well-organized textbook functions as a magnet that attracts pupils' attention and increases their curiosity to uncover, explore and discover the contents of that textbook. This finding comes in agreement with Gholami et. al.'s (2017) emphasis on the necessity of evaluating the extent of EFL textbook's suitability to the needs of both EFL teachers and learners.

In terms of the examined textbook contents, the EFL textbook 'We Can' provides two types of contents, namely, units' contents and syllabus contents distributed over the three school terms. The table of contents serves as a systematic framework that guides both EFL teachers to plan their lessons and EFL pupils to know what they have been taught. Based on the table of contents, EFL teachers particularly the novice ones can set their goals over the specific academic term, and they can determine the calendar of what they have taught and what they will teach ahead. It also helps the EFL pupils to systematically follow up and review their units. It also serves as an index that informs those pupils of the sections where they can find the pictured dictionary, word lists, audio track lists, and the workbook. In addition, the syllabus contents show the topics of all the 12 units and the grammar rules to be taught in each unit. The syllabus contents allow the EFL teachers to diversify their lesson objectives, determine the types of aids they can employ in fulfilling those objectives and manage time allocated for each of the classroom activities. The finding is similar to those reported by Khoo and Knight (2015) and Bergstrom et al. (2023).

As for objectives, the EFL textbook allocates a separate section to explain the main objectives behind teaching the syllabus contents on page 135. In this regard, it would be better to introduce these objectives on the early pages of the examined textbook in

order to pay the attention of the EFL pupils at an early stage to recognize these objectives and hence adjust their learning strategies to fulfill these objectives. These objectives are based on Bloom's taxonomy as indicated in the verbs 'recognize', 'apply', 'use', 'understand, etc. as such these objectives aim to realize the intellectual and professional learning outcomes. The finding comes in agreement with those reported by Annum (2017) and Serasi et al. (2021).

As for language content, the examined EFL textbook '*We Can*' contains authentic language in the sense that it is originally written by English native-speaking authors and published by a UK publisher. It was then modified to suit the Saudi EFL context. This characteristic is considerably important to ensure accuracy and simplification of rules particularly the grammar ones. It is quite suitable for the proficiency level of the Saudi grade 6 pupils, even though those pupils should have acquired the phonics features contained in the textbook '*We Can*' in earlier grades. Another advantage of this textbook is the focus on developing language use and communication through the emphasis on listening and speaking skills. The arrangement of listening tasks followed by practice of speaking skills indicates that the textbook logically follows the proper system of developing FL skills. The design of the textbook's units reflects the importance of listening skills in FL learning as the queen skill. It also reflects the importance of listening activities to develop speaking skills particularly in terms of pronunciation, stress, and intonation patterns. This finding is similar to those reported by Rofik (2020) and Rahmawati and Ambarwati (2023).

This finding leads to the activities and tasks included in the examined textbook '*We Can*'. These activities and tasks are written in a clearly understandable language since the textbook is originally written by English-native speaking authors who linguistically know how to address non-native speaking pupils. Activities are designed in a way that develops the communication skills of the grade 6 pupils as can be visibly seen in the various activities of speaking skills. Grammar is also taught in real-life situations as indicated in the sections of 'Grammar in Action'. This finding is compatible with the concluding remarks of Harwood (2017) and Kaskani and Zafiri (2021) that the EFL textbooks' essential role is to provide authentic learning input that facilitates the EFL learners' performance of learning activities.

Furthermore, the four language skills are equally represented to some extent in the examined textbook '*We Can*'. That is, there are adequate learning materials for listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. This finding asserts the emphasis of Al-sowat (2012) and Vitta (2021) that EFL textbooks should sustain the EFL learners' proficiency levels. The textbook mainly pays attention to develop the English communication skills of Saudi grade 6 pupils. All units depend on listening activities as the main source of developing other skills. For instance, a unit consists of 'listen and practice' activity that aims to expose the Saudi grade 6 pupils to authentic speech. Then, the pupils are required to practice speaking through the activity '*I can*' by performing some role plays, '*Small Talk*' activity to hold a short question-and answer dialogue with a partner, '*Listen, match, and circle the correct answer*' activity, '*Listen, point and chant*' activity, '*Interview Practice*' activity where the pupils hold interviews with their teacher and friends, and '*Grammar in Action*', '*Listen and Chant Past Tense Regular/Irregular Verbs*', '*Verb Game*' activities in which the pupils learn grammar rules by listening, pointing and repeating.

Similarly, writing is taught as an integrated skill with listening and speaking skills. For example, the 'listen, point, say, and then write' activity in which the pupils listen to

a number of sentences, provide an oral answer, and then have to write down in the allocated space. Particular activities also aim to develop the pupils' writing skills such as 'letter sharing game' and 'Write the Word by using ea or ee' activity. Reading is developed by using activities such as 'Reading Race' in which the pupils are asked to read fast a number of sentences and match them to some pictures, 'Listen, say, read and number', 'Read and Complete' in which the pupils are expected to read individual words and place them in the correct blank', 'Listen and Read' activity as the pupils are required to listen to a short text, then read it, and answer true/false statements, and 'Rhythms and Reading' activity as the pupils are expected to listen, chant and read.

The moral and cultural considerations can be seen in the proverbs and wisdom included in all units under the label of 'Advice Time' such as 'Show me your friend and I'll tell you who you are'. They represent moral and cultural functions as they tend to guide the pupils' behavioural conduct and implant good ethics of both English and Arabic cultures. In addition, the Arabic label 'I admit no God except Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of God' appears on various pages of the examined textbook as a reminder of the religious and social values of the Saudi community. Some Arabic proper names are used as well along with names of Arab cities in reference to the Arab identity of the Saudi grade 6 pupils. However, there is a lack of mentioning the Saudi historical events. The finding expresses agreement with those reported by Zhang and Su (2021) and Aoumeur and Ziani (2022).

As for the results of semi-structured interviews the Saudi EFL interviewed teachers stated that reliance on listening activities for teaching other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing initially caused a difficulty for the Saudi grade 6 pupils to comprehend the exact instruction and what they are required to do in those activities. For example, a Saudi EFL teacher commented "in the beginning, most of the pupils showed slow response to the instructions included in the listening activities and till I decided to simplify those instructions". Other Saudi EFL teachers clarified that it is also hard for the pupils to understand the content of the reading texts displayed through the listening activities. Thus, the interviewee teachers tended to allow the pupils to read the text first before listening to it. As Saudi EFL teacher mentioned "it was really hard for the pupils to train the pupils to perform the 'Listen and Read' activity because they are not used to listen to the text before reading it". Another Saudi EFL teacher commented "It really takes a long time to train the pupils on performing the 'Listen and Read' activity".

Saudi EFL teachers also clarified that performance of role plays contained in the 'I Can' activities require imposing further discipline on the part of the teachers and more training on the part of the pupils because some of them feel anxious and hesitant to take part in such activities. A Saudi EFL teacher said, "some pupils were afraid to perform the role plays of included in 'I Can' activities". Thus, the fear of speaking in front of other classmates should be handled to ensure full participation of all pupils in the speaking activities. The interviewed Saudi EFL teachers reported that listening and chanting do not ensure their pupils' full comprehension of the English grammar rules. Some Saudi EFL teachers commented "It is not an adequate procedure to totally rely on 'Listen and Chant' activities to achieve the pupils' full understanding of English grammar rules.... Some pupils just repeat what they hear without really understanding the cognitive knowledge implied in the activity". Furthermore, the interviewed Saudi EFL teachers explained that teaching of writing cannot solely rely on training the pupils to master individual words' spelling.



The interviewed Saudi EFL teachers provided some suggestions for improving the use of the examined EFL textbook for teaching English to elementary school pupils in Al-Majmaah City. These suggestions are as follows:

1. Further attention should be given to writing skills activity by developing the pupils' ability to write short compositions.
2. Activities of writing skills should also focus on training the pupils on proper use of punctuation.
3. The integration of listening into teaching reading skills should not precede the reading of the intended texts to ensure the pupils' comprehension of the reading text before listening to it.
4. The Saudi elementary school pupils need further training to overcome fears of taking part in the speaking skills.
5. Reliance on isolated lists of words does not ensure better learning of English vocabulary.
6. Elementary School pupils need to be trained to infer information and relate new information to their previous knowledge in the shape of short reading comprehension passages which are mainly devoted to the development of reading skills.
7. It would be better to include some Saudi historical events in the examined textbook '*We Can*'.

### Conclusion and pedagogical implications

The current study concludes that the content analysis reveals good quality of the examined English textbook '*We Can*'. The investigated textbook meets Rubdy's (2014) textbook criteria in terms of design and organization, textbook contents, objectives and goals, language contents, activities and tasks, language skills, moral and cultural considerations. The findings are compatible with those reported by Rofik (2020), Serasi et. al. (2021), Kaskani and Zafiri (2021), Bergstrom, et al. (2023), and Rahmawati and Ambarwati (2023). The findings show that the content is stated clearly as there is a detailed explanation of the content of each unit indicating the topics, reading, and writing, grammar, phonics, and activities of phonics practice. The detailed explanation is illustrated in separate tables at the beginning of the tested textbook.

The examined textbook '*We Can*' sustains the grade 6 pupils' oral communication skills of listening and speaking. For example, it highlights the importance of listening skills as each unit starts with '*Listen and Practice*' activities. The listening practice is sustained with speaking practice activities embodied in constant sections of '*I can*', '*listen, say and match*', '*Challenge Time!*' in which pupils are required to talk about specific topics such as 'meeting someone with a partner', 'ask and answer questions about name, age, personal information'. In '*Challenge Time!*', the pupils are required to listen and circle the correct answers.

Grammar is taught explicitly through the section of '*Grammar in Action*' which is placed in all units. It covers different grammar rules such as different forms of adjectives, auxiliary verbs, and simple tenses. In the examined textbook '*We Can*', reading is taught in a combination with listening and writing skills such as '*Listen and Read*' and '*Read and Write*' activities. The textbook '*We Can*' should include separate short reading comprehension passages which are mainly devoted to the development of

reading skills. These passages could develop the cognitive features of earning English among the Saudi grade 6 pupils. It could also train them to relate information to each other in an arranged way. It could help them to infer new simple information from the reading texts.

There are several reference aspects to moral and cultural considerations in the examined textbook 'We Can'. These cultural aspects can be found in the use of Arabic names such as Muhammad and Abdullah. There is also a repeated 'Advice Time' section with a photo of Saudi parents. However, there is no reference to historical Saudi events as no sentences or passages talk about the Saudi history. There is also limited use of Saudi cities except for Riyadh.

The pedagogical implications are based on the interviewed Saudi EFL teachers' opinions and suggestions. The Saudi EFL teachers can overcome the difficulty which their elementary school pupils go through when practicing listening activities by providing clear pre-listening introduction including questions about the topics the pupils are going to listen to. This method helps the pupils to realize what the topics are about and makes it easier for them to understand the listening instructions. The scale of developing Saudi grade 6 pupils' writing skills should rely on further activities that develop their ability to write short English compositions. Writing activities should be expanded to include proper usage of English punctuations and the ability to rearrange scattered English sentences. There also should be separate reading comprehension texts to train Saudi grade 6 pupils to infer new information and relate it to their previous knowledge. Saudi EFL teachers should help their pupils to overcome fears of performing speaking activities in the sense that feeling of anxiety and hesitance should be treated to encourage Saudi grade 6 pupils to practice speaking activities. The English textbook should also include reference to the Saudi historical events as a cultural aspect which reflects the national identity.

### Recommendations

The study introduced the following recommendation to conduct further studies in the Saudi EFL context. These recommendations are as follows:

1. Different studies can be conducted to evaluate EFL textbooks being taught at the Saudi different educational levels.
2. Studies can examine the consistency between Saudi EFL teachers' needs and the EFL textbooks.
3. Studies may investigate the impact of EFL textbooks on the Saudi EFL students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English.
4. Studies may explore the effect of EFL textbooks on the development of Saudi EFL students' language skills.
5. A study may separately focus on the development of Saudi EFL grade 6 pupils' reading skills in order to evaluate the impact of the textbook 'We Can' in this regard.
6. It is also hoped that the findings can guide evaluation studies of other EFL textbooks being taught in the KSA at different educational levels.

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## Appendix A

**Table 1**

*Evaluation Checklist of the EFL Textbook 'We Can'*

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
<b>Organization &amp; Design</b>						
1	It is convenient for pupils to handle its size					
2	Its units, headings and subheadings are all well organized					
3	It contains sufficient illustrations, graphs, pictures, images, etc.					
4	It contains audio-visual aids that facilitate integrated learning of the four skills					
5	It contains sufficient lists or glossaries of vocabulary					
<b>Textbook Contents</b>						
6	It contains a suitable and clear table of contents					
7	The content covers various topics and subjects					
8	The contains supports the learners' self-learning					
9	It contains real-life situations					
10	The content covers almost all language skills					
<b>Objectives &amp; Goals</b>						
11	Objectives are clearly and precisely displayed to learners					
12	Objectives are realistic and varied in difficulty					
13	Objectives are consistent with Bloom's taxonomy					
14	Objectives observe learning differences among learners					
15	Objectives are consistent with the allocated time for the textbook					



No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
	<b>Organization &amp; Design</b>					
	<b>Language content</b>					
16	It includes authentic language					
17	It covers phonological aspects					
18	It asserts language use and communication					
19	It introduces and explains new concepts					
20	It is understandable and suitable for the learners' proficiency level					
	<b>Activities &amp; Tasks</b>					
21	It contains various activities and tasks					
22	There are clear and sufficient instructions for doing the activities and tasks					
23	Activities are interactive in nature that encourage the utilization of new learned words for communication					
24	Activities encourage learners to use rule of grammar in real-life situations					
25	Language activities and skills activities are balanced					
	<b>Language Skills</b>					
26	The textbook cover the four language skills adequately					
27	It pays attention to writing skills such as writing composition					
28	There are adequate materials for listening comprehension					
29	There are adequate activities of reading comprehension					
30	There are adequate activities of the spoken language such as dialogues and role plays					
	<b>Moral &amp; Cultural Values</b>					

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
<b>Organization &amp; Design</b>						
31	The textbook observes the historical values of KSA					
32	It sustains the social values of the KSA					
33	It supports the cultural values of the KSA					
34	It sustains knowledge about different types of English cultures					
35	Knowledge of English cultures stimulate learners to know about their own culture					

## Appendix B

### Semi-Structured Interviews of 6 Saudi EFL Teachers

1. What are the problems which you encountered in using the EFL textbook 'We Can' in teaching English to Saudi EFL middle school students?
2. What do you suggest improving the use of the EFL textbook 'We Can' to teach English to Saudi EFL middle school students?