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Perceptions of Saudi EFL Teachers on the Adequacy of Textbooks

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Abstract. This research assesses the effectiveness of the "We Can Series," a set of EFL textbooks used in Saudi Arabian elementary schools, from the viewpoints of male and female teachers. Employing a quantitative methodology, the study gathered data via a questionnaire adapted from Alharbi (2017), encompassing 49 items across five evaluation criteria: layout and design, textbook objectives, language methods and activities, language skills, and general evaluation. The questionnaire was distributed online to 51 primary school teachers using Google Forms. Findings indicate that while the series excels in layout and design, with clear objectives, comprehensive language skills coverage, and a sufficient number of activities, it falls short in aligning with learners' needs, lesson quantity, logical topic progression, and the availability of supplemental materials. The study also identified issues with cohesion and sequencing across the series. Consequently, the researchers propose several improvements, including revising objectives and exercises to better meet learner needs, increasing lesson frequency, ensuring logical topic progression, and developing additional materials like test models. The study concludes that while the "We Can Series" has potential as an effective EFL resource, significant revisions are necessary to enhance its suitability for Saudi Arabian elementary education. These recommendations, if implemented, could substantially improve the series' effectiveness.

Keywords: *EFL textbooks; Textbook Evaluation, We Can Series; Elementary school teachers; English as a foreign language*

Introduction

In the absence of adequate language learning materials, commercial textbooks published by international publishers are commonly used in most EFL programs (Alhamami & Ahmad, 2018). Textbooks are considered the primary source of input that students receive during their schooling years. Language teachers build their lessons, activities, and assignments based on the textbooks they use in their classrooms (Vitta, 2021). Alhamami and Ahmad (2018) classify instructional materials into two broadly categories: printed content (textbooks, workbooks, coursebooks, and alternative materials) and non-printed content (audios, videos, and computer-based materials). These materials are considered the backbone of any EFL program. Of all these study materials, textbooks are considered the most important component of any teaching/learning process. A positive attitude towards textbooks by teachers is essential for the effective attainment of actual teaching and learning objectives. Conversely, reservations about textbooks can undermine the entire learning process. It is also important to measure teachers' attitudes towards textbooks because they can provide valuable insights for curriculum designers and material developers (Orfan, et al., 2021). These insights can be used to create and develop new

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teaching materials that are more effective and engaging. In addition, teachers' attitudes towards textbooks can help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these materials. This data may be used to enhance the textbooks and make them more appropriate for implementation in EFL courses. Textbooks are essential in EFL programs. Teachers' favorable disposition towards textbooks is crucial for optimal learning outcomes, and assessing these attitudes may provide significant information for curriculum designers and material creators.

The significance of English in Saudi Arabia is widely acknowledged due to the country's enormous global economic connections. The economic utility attributed to English is a key factor contributing to its significance within the Saudi Arabian education system (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). Furthermore, English is the primary foreign language that is taught in both public and private schools as well as institutions in Saudi Arabia. Consequently, English has been included as a compulsory subject at all levels of school. The implementation of English language instruction (ELT) in Saudi Arabia has seen significant changes during the last century. The introduction of English language instruction dates back to the 1920s; however, it was not until the 2000s that it became integrated into the primary school curriculum. English was included in the syllabus for grades 5 and 6 in 2003 and then shifted to grade 4 in 2012. Nevertheless, the most notable alteration took place in 2021, when the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) declared that English Language Teaching (ELT) would be included in the curriculum for first-grade students in primary school. This decision was taken because of the increasing significance of English in the global economy. English has become the dominant language of commerce, science, and technology, making it crucial for Saudi students to possess a solid grasp of the language in order to thrive in the future.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has been diligently preparing for this transition. New textbooks and training materials have been designed for teachers, along with the creation of a new evaluation system to gauge student development. The first indications are encouraging. The students are exhibiting positive receptiveness to the new curriculum, and they are demonstrating commendable progress. Undoubtedly, this decision will undeniably have favorable consequences for the future of Saudi Arabia. This transformation is noteworthy due to its substantial impact on the pedagogy of English language instruction in Saudi Arabia. Historically, English was regarded as a foreign language only taught to students with a desire to pursue education in other countries. Nevertheless, the updated curriculum highlights the significance of English as a worldwide language that is crucial for effective communication and cooperation. Implementing English Language Teaching (ELT) in the first grade of primary school is a courageous decision; however, it is an imperative one for Saudi Arabia to enhance its competitiveness in the global economy. The first indications are encouraging, and it is evident that this decision will have a beneficial influence on the nation's future. According to Tomlinson (2023), textbooks are an essential element of the majority of language programs. They often function as the main source for a substantial amount of the language material that students acquire and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. The main objective of this research is to investigate the perspectives of Saudi Arabian teachers on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) elementary textbooks. In this study, the textbooks *We Can Series 1, 2, and 3*, published by McGraw Hill, were evaluated: *We Can 1* for first grade, *We Can 2* for second, third, fourth, and fifth grade, and *We Can 3* for sixth grade.

Theoretical Framework

Richard (2001) posits that the widespread use of commercial textbooks is fundamental to language instruction globally. Rahimpour and Heshami (2011) concur, stating that textbooks are indispensable in language classes worldwide, regardless of the educational institution. Radic-Bojanic and Tapalove (2016) identify several roles of textbooks in EFL education, including providing linked information about grammar, vocabulary, and culture; serving as a blueprint for structured curriculum; and offering

materials and exercises to teachers. Hanifa (2018) expands on this by highlighting the textbook's role in providing instructional materials, language instructions, and achievement activities. Tomlinson (2023) notes that textbooks help students catch up on missed classes and enable lesson planning. Cunningsworth (1995) outlines various roles of textbooks in TEFL, including providing presentation materials, offering communication contexts, serving as a reference, supplying the course syllabus, and assisting in self-directed learning. Amerian and Khaivar (2014) conclude that textbooks are fundamental references for language instruction tasks, helping students achieve goals, focus, and stay motivated.

The "We Can" series by McGraw Hill is the official EFL textbook series for primary education in Saudi Arabia. Alshumrani and Al-Ahmadi (2022) explain that the series comprises six textbooks of increasing difficulty, each designed for a different grade level. The authors of the "We Can" series claim that by completing level six, students will have English proficiency equivalent to the Eiken pre-2 level and the Cambridge Young Learners English Test Movers level. Each textbook includes a balanced mix of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and vocabulary tasks.

Pajares (1992) notes the difficulty in defining 'beliefs' due to its study across diverse fields, resulting in various meanings, including attitudes, perceptions, and perspectives. Teachers' beliefs significantly influence their teaching, assessment, and facilitation of student learning (Alhamami & Ahmed, 2018). Rosyida (2016) emphasizes the importance of considering teachers' perspectives on textbook use to enhance their effectiveness. Tok (2010) argues that teachers should participate in textbook evaluation since they can best identify materials' strengths and weaknesses based on their students' needs and levels (Alghamdi, 2021). Rezaeian and Zamanian (2015) stress the importance of considering teachers' perspectives on the convenience and effectiveness of textbooks to understand their benefits and drawbacks in specific educational settings.

Textbook evaluation is crucial for determining a textbook's appropriateness for the educational context, students' needs, and its positive and negative aspects (Amerian & Khaivar, 2014). Evaluators must establish and apply contextually suitable criteria for evaluating textbooks. Litz (2005) suggests that evaluations should analyze linguistic items, functions, grammar, skills, cultural and gender components, and their relevance to students, teachers, and institutions. Various scholars, including Cunningsworth (1995), Miekley (2005), Sheldon (1988), and Alharbi (2017), have proposed different evaluation criteria and checklists, emphasizing the need for adaptation to specific contexts.

Several empirical studies suggest that while textbooks often have effective content and design, they frequently do not align with students' proficiency levels, lack necessary support or supplementary materials, and have physical or academic weaknesses that need addressing (Alhamami, 2022). For example, Aljouei and Alsuhaibani (2018) investigated teachers' beliefs about the secondary school EFL textbooks in Saudi Arabia (Traveller). They found that the layout, activities, skills, and accessibility of the textbook are efficient, but it does not meet the student's proficiency level in the English language.

Susiati and Mufidati (2020) investigated teachers' views about the quality English textbook "When English Rings a Bell" at secondary schools in Indonesia. They found that the textbook meets Cunningsworth's criteria for a good textbook in some parts. However, they also found that there is still a need for teachers to explain how the textbook works for students and that other supporting materials may be required. Alghamdi (2021) evaluated the 'Super Goal Series' of Saudi intermediate English textbooks from the perspective of EFL teachers. They found that the textbook materials are effective and have a clear and appropriate design. The activities are also effective because they provide a balance of activities that promote productive communication and meaningful practices. Nevertheless, acquiring the student book, teacher's handbook, and audio materials is not readily accessible. Bhandri (2022) investigated the viewpoints of teachers about the physical and intellectual components of the English textbook provided to tenth-grade students in the Kalili area of Nepal. It was discovered that the textbook had both positive attributes and negative aspects. The merits of the material include an appealing front page, unbiased

language, easily comprehensible terminology, appropriate exercises, and well-stated goals. Weaknesses of the product include subpar paper quality, inadequate binding, insufficient attention to exercises, absence of visuals, lack of references and extra resources, and the omission of a teacher's handbook.

Collectively, the results indicate that there is no one textbook that impeccably fulfills the requirements of every teacher and learner. Nevertheless, the studies provide valuable insights into the key elements that teachers deem significant when evaluating an English textbook, including its layout and design, the variety and effectiveness of its exercises, the breadth of abilities it covers, and the language used. Teachers should take into account many elements when assessing an English textbook, including its adherence to the curriculum, cultural suitability, affordability, and the presence of additional resources. The We Can Series textbooks have been recently included in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum in Saudi Arabia for elementary grades. Consequently, there has been a lack of previous studies examining teachers' opinions towards them. Hence, it is important to assess the efficacy of the most recent iteration of the English textbooks from the teachers' standpoint. The main objective of this research is to investigate teachers' perspectives on textbooks. This study aims to assess the efficacy of existing textbooks by evaluating their pedagogical approaches, instructional tactics, aesthetic appeal, appropriateness for students, and alignment with educational goals. Consequently, curriculum creators have the ability to extend and refine these texts. In addition, teachers have the ability to assess the merits and shortcomings of these textbooks and include their own resources to enhance the caliber of the instructional procedure.

The importance of this research lies in its capacity to enhance the quality of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) elementary textbooks in Saudi Arabia. The research aims to analyze teachers' perceptions of these textbooks in order to determine their merits and drawbacks and then provide suggestions for enhancing their quality. The research has significance for two primary reasons. Initially, it will provide material creators and curriculum designers with helpful perspectives on the fundamental components that teachers see as crucial in a high-quality EFL textbook. This data may be used to enhance the design and substance of forthcoming textbooks, making them more efficient for both teachers and students. Furthermore, the research would enhance teachers' understanding of the present condition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) elementary textbooks in Saudi Arabia. The research aims to assist teachers in adjusting their teaching approaches by detecting the omissions and errors present in these textbooks. Ultimately, this will result in enhanced educational achievements for children. This research has the capacity to have a substantial impact on the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Saudi Arabia. By examining teachers' beliefs about primary-level textbooks, the study will identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for how these textbooks can be made more effective.

The main objective of this study is to evaluate EFL textbooks (We Can series) used at primary levels in Saudi Arabia based on teachers' beliefs. More specifically, the study will tackle the following research questions

Q 1. What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the layout and design of the EFL textbooks?

Q 2. What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the objectives of the EFL textbooks?

Q 3. What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the teaching methods and activities presented in the EFL textbooks?

Q 4. What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the language skills emphasized in the EFL textbooks?

Q 5. What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the evaluation and progress assessment methods used in the EFL textbooks?

Materials and Method

Context and Design

The study was conducted with a sample of primary EFL teachers in the southern region of Saudi Arabia, where the We Can Series textbooks are included as a compulsory subject in schools' curricula for English language teaching. A descriptive research approach was used in this study to survey teachers' perceptions of EFL textbooks in Saudi primary schools. A quantitative method was employed by administering a questionnaire. Questionnaires are an appropriate tool for examining the attitudes of teachers towards primary school textbooks. Dornyei (2003) asserts that questionnaires are particularly useful for assessing people's beliefs, including their attitudes, perspectives, convictions, interests, and principles. The survey utilized in this research was modified from Alharbi's investigation and comprised of 49 closed-ended statements to assess teachers' perspectives regarding primary-stage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks. The evaluation was based on five dimensions: layout and design, textbook objectives, language skills, teaching methods and activities, and general evaluation. Participants' replies were analyzed using a 5-point Likert scale. The survey was created using an internet-based application (Google Forms) and disseminated to participants via WhatsApp groups.

The data collection procedures

The data gathering processes were conducted over a span of three weeks. Data was gathered in the second semester of the 2023 academic year from randomly chosen EFL elementary-level teachers in Jazan primary schools. The collection of quantitative study data included the creation of online questionnaires using Google Forms, which were then disseminated to EFL primary-stage teachers using WhatsApp groups. The questionnaires were distributed with the aid of an educational supervisor affiliated with the Jazan Ministry of Education. The questionnaires were attached to a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study, informed participants that the data collected about them was completely confidential, that no names would be used, that the data would be used for academic purposes without mentioning anyone by name or specifically identifying them, and that no one other than the researcher would have access to the data. An Arabic translation of the surveys was also provided.

Instruments

The present research used a quantitative approach, using a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. Questionnaires are a suitable approach for acquiring profound and gratifying outcomes when discernible trends are identified among a substantial number of participants. Moreover, surveys serve as valuable instruments for scrutinizing individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and actions pertaining to language acquisition and instruction (Gu, 2016).

The research used a questionnaire derived from Alharbi's (2017) work as a tool for data collection. 51 questionnaires were issued at random to EFL primary school teachers, consisting of 32 men and 19 females. The poll questions used a 5-point Likert scale, with the following options: 1) strongly disagree, 2) disagree, 3) uncertain, 4) agree, 5) strongly agree. The questionnaire was partitioned into two sections: The first section included contextual details on the participants, including their gender, credentials, and experiences. The second portion had a textbook assessment criteria of 49 statements. The statements were categorized into five distinct groups:

1. Layout and design (11 statements)
2. Six statements outlining the aims of the textbook.
3. Methods and activities for teaching (13 assertions)
4. Proficiency in the English language (12 assertions)
5. Assessment (consisting of 7 statements)

Participants

A sample of 51 EFL teachers (32 male and 19 female) was randomly drawn from basic public schools in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. The participants were categorized according to the independent variables of gender, qualification, and years of experience. The participants were distributed according to gender as follows: The male population accounted for 62.7% (32 individuals), while the female population accounted for 37.3% (19 individuals).

The participants' qualifications were distributed as follows: Out of the whole sample, 41.2% (21 individuals) had a Bachelor of Arts degree in English language with educational preparation, while 31.4% (16 individuals) held a Bachelor of Arts degree in English language alone. Additionally, 19.6% (10 individuals) had a Master of Arts degree in English, and 7.8% (4 individuals) had a Master of Arts degree in education.

The participants' experience was distributed as follows: 25.5% (13) have 1 to 5 years of experience in English teaching, 23.5% (12) possess 5 to 10 years of experience, and 51% (26) possess over 10 years of experience.

Results and Discussion

Results

This section provides the findings of the survey that investigated the viewpoints of elementary school teachers on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks.

A. Research Question (1): What is the view of primary-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia about the style and appearance of EFL textbooks?

Table 1.
The results of the first section of the questionnaire

Items	SD	D	Un	A	SA
1. Cover appealing, content accurately indicated.	15.7%	3.9%	35.3%	33.3%	11.8%
2. Font and size stage-appropriate.	17.6%	7.8%	11.8%	37.3%	25.5%
3. Intro page guides textbook usage.	15.7%	17.6%	23.5%	23.5%	19.6%
4. Textbook has detailed contents list.	9.8%	15.7%	5.9%	37.3%	31.4%
5. Every lesson has a title.	7.8%	7.8%	5.9%	35.3%	43.1%
6. Paper quality fits this stage.	5.9%	3.9%	19.6%	43.1%	27.5%
7. Textbook features diverse designs.	9.8%	19.6%	13.7%	37.3%	19.6%
8. Ample line-spacing ensures clarity.	7.8%	13.7%	15.7%	45.1%	17.6%
9. Consistent titles, symbols used.	9.8%	15.7%	19.6%	37.3%	17.6%
10. Diverse, appealing textbook illustrations.	9.8%	11.8%	19.6%	41.2%	17.6%
11. Pictures aid student learning.	15.7%	9.8%	9.8%	45.1%	19.6%

Table 1 displays the results of the first phase of the survey pertaining to the core inquiry of the research: How do primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia perceive the layout and style of EFL textbooks? This section has eleven components that are derived from the arrangement and aesthetic of the textbook. Over 60% of teachers expressed agreement or strong agreement with all items, whereas more than 40% agreed or strongly

agreed with items 1 and 3. Nearly 60% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed on items 7, 9, and 10. More than 60% of the polled individuals agreed or strongly agreed with items 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 11. The findings indicate that EFL teachers at the primary level in Saudi Arabia have a favorable view of the layout and appearance of EFL textbooks. They hold the belief that the textbooks possess an appealing aesthetic, are efficiently structured, and are user-friendly. In addition, they hold the belief that the textbooks include a multitude of characteristics that will facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge. The elements that received the greatest consensus were the aesthetic appeal of the cover, the suitability of the font type and size, and the inclusion of a comprehensive table of contents. The areas that received the least consensus were the inclusion of a page providing instructions to students on how to use the textbook and the uniformity in the usage of titles, designations, and symbols. Overall, the results suggest that the primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are satisfied with the layout and design of EFL textbooks.

B. Question (2): *What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the objectives of the EFL textbooks?*

This table shows the results of a survey of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia about their perceptions of the objectives of EFL textbooks. The survey consisted of 6 items, each of which was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree."

Table 2.
The results of the first section of the questionnaire

Table 2					
Teachers' beliefs about the textbook objectives. Ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA)					
Items	SD	D	Un	A	SA
1. Textbook objectives clear to me.	11.8%	21.6%	13.7%	35.3%	17.6%
2. Goals measurable and verifiable.	15.7%	9.8%	25.5%	33.3%	15.7%
3. Content aligns with objectives.	11.8%	7.8%	31.4%	27.5%	21.6%
4. Objectives suit learner needs.	33.3%	17.6%	17.6%	19.6%	11.8%
5. Objectives stated at start.	9.8%	15.7%	29.4%	21.6%	23.5%
6. Lesson objectives upfront.	17.6%	21.6%	13.7%	31.4%	15.7%

Table 2 shows the results of the second section of the questionnaire about the research's second question: What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the objectives of the EFL textbooks? This section contains six items that are based on the textbook objectives. Nearly half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all items except for item 4. This item, which asks whether the textbook objectives reflect the needs of learners at this stage, was disagreed with by almost 50% of respondents.

The most agreed-upon items were the clarity of the textbook objectives and the presence of the objectives at the beginning of each lesson. The issue that received the least consensus was the degree to which the textbook goals align with the requirements of learners at this particular level. In general, the findings indicate that EFL teachers at the primary level in Saudi Arabia have a mostly favorable view of the goals set out in EFL textbooks. Nevertheless, they contend that the goals may be enhanced by better aligning them with the requirements of learners at this particular level.

C. Question (3): How do primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia perceive the teaching techniques and activities offered in the EFL textbooks? The offered table displays the results of a survey conducted among primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia on their views of

the teaching techniques and activities included in EFL textbooks. The poll consisted of 13 questions, each of which was assessed on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 denoted "strongly disagree" and 5 represented "strongly agree."

Table 3.

The results of the first segment of the questionnaire

Teachers' perspectives on the pedagogical approaches and exercises included in the textbook.					
Items	SA	D	Un	A	SA
1. Logical progression of topics considered.	27.5 %	19.6 %	17.6 %	25.5 %	9.8%
2. Integrates with previous stages.	31.4 %	19.6 %	19.6 %	15.7 %	13.7 %
3. Content modern and scientifically accurate.	11.8 %	11.8 %	23.5 %	35.3 %	17.6 %
4. Information relates to student environment.	11.8 %	37.3 %	19.6 %	21.6 %	9.8%
5. Allows diverse teaching methods.	11.8 %	15.7 %	15.7 %	45.1 %	11.8 %
6. Links teaching theories and practices.	17.6 %	17.6 %	23.5 %	27.5 %	13.7 %
7. Supports constructivist learning theory.	9.8%	13.7 %	31.4 %	29.4 %	15.7 %
8. Enables realistic classroom applications.	7.8%	17.6 %	25.5 %	31.4 %	17.6 %
9. Suits teaching and teacher development.	15.7 %	13.7 %	25.5 %	27.5 %	17.6 %
10. Teacher handbook guides instruction.	11.8 %	11.8 %	13.7 %	35.3 %	27.5 %
11. Encourages modern technology use.	7.8%	13.7 %	21.6 %	41.2 %	15.7 %
12. Fits students' scientific level.	27.5 %	21.6 %	19.6 %	11.8 %	19.6 %
13. Content aligns with weekly lessons.	19.6 %	41.2 %	13.7 %	9.8%	15.7 %

The survey results indicate that a significant proportion of teachers (60% or more) express agreement or strong agreement with the following statements: The textbook promotes the use of contemporary technology, such as the Internet, for learners. The material in the textbook is relevant to the students' surroundings. The material in the textbook facilitates the use of various instructional approaches. The textbook content connects teaching theories and practices. The textbook content is useful for constructivist learning. The textbook content supports realistic applications in the classroom.

Over half of the teachers (40% or more) also agree or strongly agree with the following items: The textbook content is characterized by modernity and scientific accuracy. The textbook content enables the link between teaching theories and practices. The textbook content is appropriate for the teaching process and teacher professional development. There is a teacher handbook that describes how to teach this book to students.

However, nearly half of the teachers disagree or strongly disagree with the following items: The textbook material takes into account the coherent progression of information. The textbook information is seamlessly incorporated with prior levels. The textbook material is suitable for students at this level. The material in the textbook aligns with the

designated number of lessons assigned for each week. In general, the results indicate that primary-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia have a mostly favorable impression of the teaching techniques and activities that are included in EFL textbooks. Nevertheless, they hold the belief that the textbooks might be enhanced in some aspects, such as their coherent sequence of subjects and their alignment with the allotted number of sessions per week. The topics that garnered the highest level of favorable feedback are those pertaining to the textbook's incorporation of contemporary technologies, its promotion of learners' use of technology, and its content's alignment with the students' surroundings. The factors that garnered the least favorable feedback pertain to the textbook's coherence in presenting themes, its alignment with prior stages, and its suitability in terms of the number of lessons assigned each week.

The results indicate that EFL teachers at the elementary level in Saudi Arabia are receptive to incorporating contemporary technology into their classrooms and hold the belief that these technologies have the potential to improve the learning process. The results also indicate that teachers prioritize textbooks that are relevant to the students' surroundings and can effectively bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application. Most teachers expressed agreement or strong agreement with items 10, 11, and 3. These factors pertain to the textbook's use of contemporary technologies, its promotion of learners' engagement with technology, and its content's alignment with the students' surroundings. More than 50% of the teachers agreed or strongly concurred with questions 5, 6, 7, and 8. These criteria pertain to the textbook's capacity to enhance teaching techniques via diversification, its connection to teaching theories and practices, its use for constructivist learning, and its support for practical applications in the classroom. Nevertheless, over 50% of the teachers expressed disagreement or significant disagreement with issues 1, 2, 4, 12, and 13. These factors pertain to the textbook's coherent sequence of themes, its incorporation of prior stages, its content suitability for students at this level, and its alignment with the allotted number of weekly sessions. In general, the findings indicate that primary-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia have a mostly favorable impression of the teaching techniques and activities that are included in EFL textbooks. Nevertheless, they hold the belief that the textbooks might be enhanced in some aspects, such as their coherent sequencing of subjects and their alignment with the designated number of sessions per week.

D. Question (4): *What is the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the language skills emphasized in the EFL textbooks?*

This table shows the results of a survey of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia about their perceptions of the language skills emphasized in EFL textbooks. The survey asked teachers to rate their agreement with a series of statements, using a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 4.

The results of the first section of the questionnaire

Items	SD	D	Un	A	SA
1. Improves learners' listening skills.	9.80 %	9.80 %	17.60 %	41.20 %	21.60 %
2. Enhances pronunciation through exercises.	15.70 %	11.80 %	19.60 %	37.30 %	15.70 %
3. Enhances students' proficiency in spoken English.	13.70 %	11.80 %	29.40 %	31.40 %	13.70 %
4. Easily clarifies English grammar.	15.70 %	17.60 %	15.70 %	27.50 %	23.50 %

5. Provides a wide range of reading subjects.	7.80 %	19.60 %	21.60 %	29.40 %	21.60 %
6. Enhances proficiency in English reading.	33.30 %	21.60 %	15.70 %	11.80 %	17.60 %
7. Conforms to the requirements and preferences of the students.	23.50 %	33.30 %	11.80 %	19.60 %	11.80 %
8. Improves students' cognitive abilities.	17.60 %	15.70 %	23.50 %	29.40 %	13.70 %
9. Promotes active engagement of students.	13.70 %	15.70 %	13.70 %	39.20 %	17.60 %
10. Promotes everyday English use.	19.60 %	31.40 %	21.60 %	9.80 %	17.60 %
11. Balances academic, home duties.	13.70 %	11.80 %	25.50 %	37.30 %	11.80 %
12. Better than previous textbooks.	15.70 %	15.70 %	21.60 %	19.60 %	27.50 %

Over half of the teachers (91.65%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the textbook material enhances listening abilities (41.25%), facilitates the pronunciation of words (50.4%), and aids in the acquisition of English grammar (50%). However, respondents expressed less optimism about the textbook's efficacy in improving students' reading comprehension of English texts (11.8%) and its capacity to connect the material with students' specific needs and goals (38.8%). The textbook obtained a lower level of approval in terms of its efficacy in motivating students to use English in authentic situations (9.8%). In general, most teachers expressed contentment with the textbook's treatment of language skills, except for reading, vocabulary, and thinking abilities, which they found unsatisfactory. The textbook earned the least favorable response, specifically for its material on the application of English in real-life situations. The results indicate potential areas for improvement in the textbook: The textbook would benefit from including more exercises that specifically target the development of reading comprehension skills. The textbook should be better tailored to meet the specific requirements and preferences of the students. The textbook would benefit from including more exercises that actively challenge students to use their English language skills in authentic situations.

E. Question 5: How do primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia perceive the evaluation and progress assessment techniques used in EFL textbooks?

Table 5 shows the results of the fifth section of the questionnaire, which asked teachers about their perceptions of the evaluation and progress assessment methods used in EFL textbooks. The section contains seven items, each of which was rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 5.

The results of the first section of the questionnaire

Table 5					
Teachers' beliefs about the textbook general evaluation. Ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA)					
Items	SD	D	UN	A	SA
1. Varied exercises for vocabulary, skills.	17.60 %	7.80 %	19.60 %	41.20 %	13.70 %
2. Aids real-life English communication.	37.30 %	15.70 %	23.50 %	9.80 %	13.70 %
3. Clear instructions for all activities.	13.70 %	9.80 %	21.60 %	35.30 %	19.60 %
4. Exercise count suits content.	11.80 %	17.60 %	21.60 %	29.40 %	19.60 %

	%	%	%	%	%
5. Includes valid test questions.	17.60	7.80	47.10	11.80	15.70
	%	%	%	%	%
6. Contains periodic diagnostic reviews.	19.60	9.80	33.30	25.50	11.80
	%	%	%	%	%
7. Quarterly, final test models included.	35.30	11.80	21.60	19.60	11.80
	%	%	%	%	%

Variety of Exercises and Activities: 55% of teachers agreed that the textbook offers a variety of exercises and activities for vocabulary and skill practice, while 19.6% were undecided, and 25.4% disagreed. Only 23.5% agreed that the textbook provides exercises and activities helping students communicate in real-life English tasks, while 23.5% were undecided, and 53% disagreed. About 55% agreed that the textbook provides clear instructions for all activities, while 21.6% were undecided, and 23.5% disagreed. Nearly 49% agreed that the number of exercises and activities is appropriate for the textbook content, while 21.6% were undecided, and 29.4% disagreed.

Only 27.5% agreed that there are valid test questions in the textbook, while 47.1% were undecided, and 25.4% disagreed. About 37.3% agreed that the textbook contains periodic reviews for diagnostic assessment, while 33.3% were undecided, and 29.4% disagreed. Only 31.4% agreed that there are models for quarterly and final tests, while 21.6% were undecided, and 47.6% disagreed.

About 50% of teachers generally agree with the variety of exercises, clarity of instructions, and appropriateness of exercises (items 1, 3, and 4), while 40% agree with the inclusion of periodic reviews (item 6). However, there is considerable uncertainty (47.1%) about the validity of test questions (item 5), and nearly half of the teachers disagree with the provision of real-life communication tasks and models for quarterly and final tests (items 2 and 7). This highlights mixed perceptions about the general evaluation of the textbook, with notable concerns about real-life communication tasks, test question validity, and the availability of test models.

Discussion

The study aimed to scrutinize the beliefs held by Saudi EFL teachers concerning the textbooks employed at the primary educational level.

Perceptions on Textbook Layout and Design

The study's first question aimed to explore the perception of primary-level EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia towards the layout and design of EFL textbooks. The results indicate a generally positive perception among teachers. More than 60% of participants expressed agreement or strong agreement about the well-crafted nature of the textbooks, specifically highlighting the appeal of the cover, the suitability of the font style and size, and the inclusion of a comprehensive table of contents. Nevertheless, there was a lack of agreement over the existence of a reference page for students and the uniformity in the use of titles and symbols. This implies that while the textbooks are mostly successful in their organization and aesthetics, there is potential for enhancing the provision of more thorough instructions for students and maintaining uniformity in design components. The research indicates that teachers typically have a positive perception of textbook layout and design. Approximately 78% of participants agreed that every lesson in the textbook had a clearly labeled title, which makes it easier to navigate through the information. This is consistent with other studies conducted by Aljouei and Alsuhaibani (2018) and Alghamdi (2012), which also concluded that textbooks exhibit a high level of design quality. Nevertheless, these findings contrast with the results of Bhandri's 2022 research on Nepalese grade-ten textbooks, which discovered several deficiencies in their design.

Perceptions on Textbook Objectives

The second inquiry centered on teachers' perspectives about the goals delineated in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course materials. The research indicates that teachers typically see the goals as clear and precisely articulated, with the exception of their congruence with the learners' needs. Approximately half of the participants expressed dissent over the alignment of the goals with the learners' requirements at this particular level. There is a need for textbook designers to carefully fit the goals with the particular requirements and situations of the learners.

The majority of teachers affirmed that the goals outlined in the textbooks were unambiguous and relevant, aligning with the conclusions stated by Susiati and Mufidati (2020) and Bhandari (2022). However, there was a significant deviation from the majority opinion, as most people believed that the textbooks adequately catered to the requirements of students. This view was also reflected in the findings of Aljouei and Alsuhaibani's research conducted in 2018.

Perceptions on Teaching Methods and Activities

The third inquiry explored the pedagogical approaches and instructional exercises included in the textbooks. The results indicate that teachers are typically happy with the integration of contemporary technology and the relevance of the curriculum to students' surroundings. Nevertheless, many voiced apprehensions about the coherence of the subject matter's sequence and its incorporation with prior educational phases. This indicates that while the textbooks have strengths in some areas, they might be improved by a more cohesive arrangement of information and a closer connection with previous learning stages. The textbook's educational techniques elicited varied responses among teachers. Although the presence of a teacher's handbook was praised, other components were not as positively assessed. This aligns with previous research but differs from studies such as Alghamdi (2021) and Bhandri (2022), which identified a scarcity of instructional resources for teachers.

Perceptions on Language Skills Emphasis

The fourth inquiry investigated teachers' perspectives on the linguistic proficiencies addressed in the instructional materials. Teachers were generally content with the attention given to hearing and pronunciation, although they had concerns over the emphasis placed on reading skills and the textbook's suitability for meeting students' requirements. This implies that the next versions of the textbooks might be improved by adopting a more equitable approach to language skills, namely by boosting reading comprehension exercises and matching the material with the requirements of the students.

The textbooks' emphasis on language skills was well-received by teachers, which is consistent with prior research (Aljouei & Alsuhaibani, 2018; Alghamdi, 2021; Bhandri, 2022). Nevertheless, they voiced concerns over the textbooks' applicability to daily language use, a topic that was also acknowledged in Alghamdi's 2021 research.

Perceptions on Evaluation and Assessment Methods

The purpose of the fifth question was to ascertain teachers' perspectives about the evaluation and assessment techniques used in the textbooks. The findings indicate a combination of positive and negative sentiments among teachers. Although there was consensus on the range of exercises and the clarity of instructions, there was considerable doubt over the authenticity of test questions and a dearth of practical communication activities. Approximately 50% of the teachers expressed their disagreement over the inclusion of models for both quarterly and final assessments. This underscores the need for a more all-encompassing and pragmatic approach to evaluation and assessment in the next versions of textbooks. Teachers had divergent opinions on evaluation procedures.

Although many features received appreciation, others, such as the lack of practical relevance, faced criticism. This aligns with Bhandri's 2022 research, which emphasized the need for additional resources.

Conclusion

The study offers useful insights into the advantages and disadvantages of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks from the perspective of primary-level teachers in Saudi Arabia. Although the textbooks are generally praised for their layout, design, and objectives, there are areas that could be improved. Specifically, there is a need to better align the objectives and content with the learners' needs, improve the logical progression of topics, and achieve a more balanced emphasis on various language skills. Incorporating more authentic activities and offering clearer testing rules might enhance the evaluation and assessment procedures. The research aimed to assess the effectiveness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks at the primary level in Saudi Arabia, using a multi-criteria approach. The data indicates that while the textbooks demonstrate excellence in their style and design, they do not adequately address the demands of students, which supports the findings of Litz's 2005 research. Based on the results, various suggestions arise to improve the effectiveness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks at the primary level in Saudi Arabia. It is crucial to review the goals of the textbooks to ensure they are more closely matched with the unique requirements and real-life situations of the students. Simultaneously, it is important to focus on resolving the lack of curricular integration in the "We Can" series in order to provide a more unified learning experience. Furthermore, it is essential to carefully choose and organize the information in a way that strongly connects with the learners' surroundings, thereby enhancing the relevance and appeal of the instructional material. In order to achieve this objective, it would be advantageous to augment the quantity of lessons to sufficiently include the extensive scope and complexity of the subject. Furthermore, the textbooks might be greatly enhanced by including models for quarterly and final examinations, thereby offering teachers and students important resources for evaluating and monitoring progress. The study's scope was restricted to the Saudi setting, hence limiting its generalizability. Furthermore, the limited sample size and methodology may not adequately encompass the breadth of teacher perspectives. To enhance our comprehension of teacher opinions, future research endeavors might use mixed-methods methodologies, such as including interviews. Including a broader and more varied sample in the research might further improve the validity of the results. Subsequent investigations may prioritize the viewpoints of students to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the textbook's efficacy. Furthermore, doing a comparison analysis that includes several editions or kinds of textbooks might provide further understanding of the characteristics that best enhance language acquisition. To enhance the quality and appeal of learning materials, textbook designers and curriculum planners should focus on these specific areas. This will result in the creation of more efficient resources that cater to the requirements of both teachers and learners.

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