التكنولوجيا والمتعلم في القرن الحادي والعشرين: تقييم كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق مقابل المعايير الدولية

م.م. محمد رضا عباس يوسف

Technology and the 21st-Century Learner: Evaluating Iraqi ELT Textbooks Against International Benchmarks

Mohammed Ridha Abbas Yousif

Abstract: This Study assesses the extent to which technological competencies have been adopted and mainstreamed in some of the ELT textbooks in Iraq in consonance with current educational needs. Analyzing the content of the First Intermediate Student Book and Activity Book, this research reveals that there are important Areas of omission and lack of direct integration of digital tools and online resources in the material. While the textbooks looked at here show a clear understanding of the four basic skills of language teaching which includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, none is very specific on technology. Such practices as creating posters, scrapbooks, and listening comprehension could be supported by the use of additional application (for instance, Canva, PowerPoint, corresponding online platforms for sharing audio materials, etc.), as it was pointed out no suggestions in this regard were made. Furthermore, there is no information on how the teachers can guide their students to use the technology making the textbooks lacking in their abilities to inform students on the technological advancement. This can only call for an urgent relocation of ELT material to trends that can equip the students to face a technologically enhanced learning environment. The guidelines are the following: using technologies in their teaching, incorporating internet and AI technologies and tools for research purposes, encouraging project-based assignments using documents stored on Google Drive, and offering training to the teachers regarding the suggested tools. An awareness of these demands should be incorporated into the selection and design of ELT materials, arguing that improved technological support can help to develop both the foreign language and relevant digital competencies of Iraqi students.

Corresponding author:
mohammed.ridha@iku.edu.iq

الملخص

تقيّم هذه الدراسة مدى اعتماد الكفاءات التكنولوجية وإدماجها في بعض كتب تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق بما يتماشى مع الاحتياجات التعليمية الحالية. من خلال تحليل محتوى كتاب الطالب وكتاب الأنشطة للصف الأول المتوسط، تكشف هذه البحث عن وجود مجالات هامة من الإغفال ونقص التكامل المباشر للأدوات الرقمية والموارد عبر الإنترنت في المادة. بينما تظهر الكتب المدرسية التي تم النظر فيها فهمًا واضحًا للمهارات الأربع الأساسية في تدريس اللغة، والتي تشمل مهارات القراءة والكتابة والاستماع والتحدث، إلا أنه لا يوجد أي منها محدد بشكل كبير بشأن التكنولوجيا. يمكن دعم ممارسات مثل إنشاء الملصقات وكتب القصاصات وفهم الاستماع باستخدام تطبيقات إضافية) على سبيل المثال، Canva، PowerPoint، والأنظمة الأساسية المتصلة لمشاركة المواد الصوتية، إلخ(، حيث لم يتم تقديم أي اقتراحات في هذا الصدد. علاوة على ذلك، لا توجد معلومات حول كيفية توجيه المعلمين لطلابهم لاستخدام التكنولوجيا، مما يجعل الكتب المدرسية تفتقر إلى قدرتها على إبلاغ الطلاب بالتقدم التكنولوجي. وهذا يستدعي بشكل عاجل إعادة توجيه مواد تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية نحو الاتجاهات التي يمكن أن تؤهل الطلاب لمواجهة بيئة تعليمية معززة بالتكنولوجيا. التوجيهات هي كما يلي: استخدام التكنولوجيا في التدريس، دمج الإنترنت وأدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي لأغراض البحث، تشجيع المهام المعتمدة على المشاريع باستخدام المستندات المخزنة على كوكل.

Introduction

The twenty-first century brings about extraordinary innovations in technology, deeply changing the fabric of societies 'lives', their communication, and education, at large. Thus, present day education has become a challenge since worldwide systems of education are forced to change to ensure that learners obtain necessary skills that will enable them to operate in the complex world characterized by information technology infrastructure. ELT, in particular, has come to be regarded as a key area where the application of blending technology is not only opportune, but compulsory. With the enhancement of the English language day by day as an international language, fluency in spoken and written English is considered a passport to open the door of academic, professional and social life (Hajar Abdul Rahim & Ali Jalalian Daghigh, 2019). To the learners in Iraq, English language is not simply the ability to par keep up with the language academically but the key to worldwide connections and appreciating inter-cultural understanding as well as the essential strengths of the 21st-century learning including problem-solving skills and teamwork with information technology focus, as stated by Assylzhanova et al., (2024). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of ELT in Iraq largely depends on the quality of the educational resources which in many cases are textbooks regarded as the key source of

knowledge in lessons. However, there is increasingly emergent concern that Iraqi ELT textbooks may not accurately reflect the international standards or sufficiently prepared to address the challenges of the technological integrated teaching-learning environment at present (Ismail Anas & Akhmad, 2020).

The world has experienced unparalleled technology developments throughout the 21st century which created fundamental changes in functioning structures and communication and learning approaches. The fast-changing environment has intensified the requirement for education systems worldwide to adjust and develop learning skills that benefit learners in their digital interconnected environment. Within the current decade, two major challenges faced educators through the whole world, the first is the Covid-19 Lockdown that forced educational institutions to act remotely and build their online and later blended educational environment. The second is the declaration of the new AI model (GPT) by OpenAI in 2022 and the AI tools that appeared after its announcement. Those two major changes in the world educational trend have become a crucial situation for educators and educational stakeholders to consider that the world after them will not be the same. According to Hajar Abdul Rahim and Ali Jalalian Daghigh (2019) English has established itself as a global lingua franca while effective English communication serves as the key that unlocks both educational and professional and social opportunities. English acquisition for Iraqi learners represents more than language accomplishment because it provides routes to global networks and foreign cultures while promoting critical thinking skills of collaboration and digital fluency (Assylzhanova et al., 2024). ELT in Iraq requires exceptional educational materials to achieve its goals because textbooks comprise the fundamental teaching method in classrooms. Arising from their essential educational functions researcher's express skepticism regarding Iraqi ELT textbooks as they seem neither in alignment with international standards nor prepared to tackle the requirements of modern technology-powered classrooms (Ismail Anas & Akhmad, 2020).Modern educational practices make technology integration the fundamental basis of learning during the twenty-first century. Language acquisition finds enhancement when learners use contemporary digital tools that deliver individualized interactive and 100% immersive learning environments (Mark B. Ulla, 2019). Through technological means students acquire authentic language resources and develop collaborative learning connections between students as it also diminishes cultural distance to strengthen the ELT approach. ELT textbooks show different levels of inclusion for technological affordances in educational settings throughout the world. Educational reforms in Iraq have proceeded at a sluggish pace as ELT materials struggle to demonstrate proper technological preparation. The situation raises significant problems because Iraq aims to harmonize their education system with the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages that requires digital literacy and intercultural communication (Gholam Ali Montazer & Yasser Kareem Al-Rikabi, 2021).The evaluation examines Iraqi ELT textbooks particularly the 1st intermediate textbook through international standards regarding their technological readiness. The study analyzes how technology-based learning techniques get integrated into course materials while identifying shortcomings within those frameworks. A qualitative content analysis of this textbook measures its correspondence to skills from the CEFR and its technological elements for the 21st century. The research evaluates three major aspects: digital tool integration strategies along with intercultural competency advancement and critical thinking with collaborative opportunities development. Actionable recommendations for technological improvement of Iraqi ELT textbooks are the main goal of this evaluation process which targets enhanced textbook relevance alongside learner preparation for twenty-first century challenges.

This research provides valuable contributions to Iraq's ongoing educational reform conversation. Through observing ELT textbook technological implementation gaps the study will provide data-driven suggestions to both curriculum developers and policymakers. The analysis presents detailed insights into merging Iraqi teaching traditions with worldwide requirements to build Iraqi students with global communicative and cultural capabilities (Ahmed Ibrahim Elttayef Al-Abdali & Ali Dakhil Naem Alzayadi, 2020). The research will fulfill a fundamental missing link in existing scholarship while acting as a motors for transforming Iraq's educational structure toward progress.

The research makes use of qualitative content analysis as its analytical technique to examine written documents in a data-driven approach. The methodology shows great effectiveness when used to analyze how technology-related themes appear in Iraqi ELT textbooks and match 21st-century standards. The research has a fundamental structure which unites essential elements of 21st-century competency training across digital fluency and critical reasoning through teamwork alongside diverse cultural adaptability. A systematic analysis of the 1st intermediate Iraqi ELT textbook by using this research framework will reveal recurring universal concepts and inconsistencies that display the textbook's technological preparedness. The research will compare its findings to existing literature in education technology to develop scientifically structured results which maintain their practical applicability.

Different reasons underpin the current research. This study fills a crucial knowledge void by examining technology integration within ELT textbooks in a rarely studied context. Multiple studies exist about technology aspects in ELT education yet research into textbook alignment with 21st-century benchmarks during Iraq's post-conflict era remains scarce. This research investigation leads

to practical applications which benefit curriculum development together with policy formulation initiatives. The research examines weak points to create strategic steps that boost the technological content of Iraqi ELT textbooks which guarantee modern curricula correspond with student needs. The research makes essential contributions to existing academic discussions about educational access and equity. The rise of digital literacy as an inherent opportunity Source demands that all learners receive access to technology-enabled educational resources since this represents a core social justice concern (Hassan Ait Bouzid, 2016).

This research follows a systematic structure. A systematic investigation of 21st-century skills and educational technology and ELT textbook evaluation follows the introduction. The research methodology presentation incorporates qualitative content analysis methodologies with specific evaluation criteria that will determine the outcome of the textbook assessment. The fourth segment introduces the research findings through identification of primary themes and analytical patterns. The study proposes concrete suggestions for Iraqi ELT textbook technology readiness enhancement to support curriculum development and policy implementation. This study ends by evaluating its scholarly value for academic professionals alongside its influence on teaching practices throughout Iraq.

This research bridges an essential gap across ELT and educational technology by offering critical insights at this opportune time. The study compares Iraqi ELT textbooks to international criteria with the goal of integrating local educational approaches into global expectations so Iraqi students acquire 21st-century relevant skills. The research relies on its methodological depth along with evidence-based standards to present important findings which support Iraq's educational modernization agenda and student readiness for global opportunities of today's changing world.

Problem Statement

The advancement of education through the incorporation of technology has certainly changed the language learning and teaching approaches, and because of this transformation , there is a need to update curricula, and instructional materials to meet international standards. English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, which constitute the backbone of the teaching coursework, are crucial in preparing students with necessary skills for effective interaction. However, in Iraq, developing and using books on English language also has some problems due to the lack of modern technology integration. This brings to the issue of the need of these textbooks to respond the evolving needs of education in the context of technology. Even though', there are some attempts aimed to approach the questions of improvement of curricula, the question of the degree of readiness of Iraqi ELT textbooks is still not fully understood.

Aim of the Study

The Aim of this study is to identify whether the existing Iraqi ELT textbooks are eligible for the new technological world. This way, the research's focused approach aims at finding out which aspects the textbooks effectively or ineffectually incorporate technology-supported learning concepts.

Objectives

1. To determine the extent to which technological competencies for the 21st century are being incorporated into Iraqi ELT textbooks."

2. To analyze changes over the last decade in the integration of technology-oriented content and methodologies in these textbook.

3. As the purpose of the study is to identify the technological readiness of the Iraqi ELT textbooks, it is also aimed to offer the suggestions for improving the situation.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the selected Iraqi ELT textbooks incorporate technological competencies associated with the recent educational system?

2. What opportunities and/or challenges might be found in these textbooks that would signal they are not quite ready for the technological age?

3. There are certain strategies to enhance the technological content of these textbooks which reflects the need of modern education.

Importance of the Study

This research is significant as it focuses on evaluating the technological readiness of Iraqi ELT textbooks, addressing a critical aspect of modern education. The findings provide visions into how well these textbooks align with the technological demands of the 21st century, offering practical recommendations for improvement. By doing so, the study aims to contribute to enhancing the quality of language education in Iraq and preparing learners for a technology-driven global environment.

Literature review

Modern education relies heavily on technology which is now a vital element of twenty-first century instruction and simultaneously reshapes both teaching methods and student roles. English Language Teaching (ELT) requires technological tools as fundamental instruments to develop three key competencies: communicative competence and digital literacy and intercultural awareness for future global success. Technology becomes essential for ELT because it creates intercultural connections while boosting learner involvement and presenting authentic language training opportunities (Bataineh & Al-Abdali, 2015; Ismail & Akhmad, 2020). The extent of technological integration within educational materials for English Language Teaching is unstudied specifically within the context of Iraq. A review of published research examines technology adoption in English Language Teaching together with universal

technology adoption benchmarks while analyzing the textbook correspondence with these benchmarks for Iraqi language education. This review fills documentation gaps regarding Iraqi ELT materials to enable examination of their readiness to serve contemporary language learners.

Synthesis of Related Literature

The Role of Technology in Enhancing ELT Practices

The transformative potential of technology in ELT has been widely documented in academic literature. Digital tools such as interactive electronic textbooks, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) have been shown to shift classrooms from teacher-centered to student-centered environments, fostering authentic language learning experiences (Bataineh & Al-Abdali, 2015; Assylzhanova et al., 2024). These tools not only enhance learner engagement but also promote communicative competence by providing opportunities for real-world language use (Ismail & Akhmad, 2020). For instance, Assylzhanova et al. (2024) demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive electronic textbooks in primary education, highlighting their ability to foster both linguistic and intercultural competencies.

Academic literature unveiled technology's extensive power to transform ELT approaches. Results reveal that interactive electronic textbooks and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tools shift educational settings from teacher-led to student-involved environments which promote authentic learning experiences (Bataineh & Al-Abdali, 2015; Assylzhanova et al., 2024). Looking beyond active student participation, these resources enable natural language practice through real-life context application (Ismail & Akhmad, 2020). Assylzhanova et al. (2024) established how interactive electronic textbooks deliver successful results in primary education through their development of linguistic aptitude along with cultural skills.The Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) of Byram together with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) highlight the requirement to blend cultural comprehension and technological mastery through digital instruments as per Gray (2002) and Matsuda (2012). The frameworks support ELT materials made for local environments while holding international validations to deliver skills which help navigate globalized settings. The evaluation of textbooks shows limited progress despite rising dedication to technology implementation in ELT especially in foreign language English instruction contexts like Iraq (Shreeb, 2017).

International Benchmarks for Technology Integration

Benchmarks from the CEFR and the TESOL Technology Standards Framework (Healey et al., 2008) serve as mapping tools for incorporating technology into ELT curricula. These benchmarks show the requirement to match educational

materials with worldwide benchmarks for ensuring both their value and performance. The CEFR establishes particular competencies learners need to master as digital literacy accompanies critical thinking aptitude and collaboration skills that represent vital necessities for 21st-century education (Ismail & Akhmad, 2020). TESOL Technology Standards Framework requires teachers to build technological competencies so they can efficiently implement digital educational tools in their lessons (Ulla, 2019).

Research by Shin and colleagues (2011) along with Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) evaluated textbook content for cultural plurality and digital learning materials and concluded the necessity for materials designed for diverse contexts. Reports from these studies emphasize why schools should include digital tools for education to develop important skills from the 21st century which include critical thinking as well as collaboration and digital literacy competencies. The use of these benchmarks for ELT textbook evaluation shows limited implementation when examining textbooks in Middle Eastern contexts (Shreeb, 2017).

Evaluation of ELT Textbooks: Strengths and Shortcomings

Assessments of ELT textbooks demonstrated both successful implementation and inadequate integration of technology-based learning features. The work of Shin, Eslami, Chen (2011) and Tajeddin, Teimournezhad (2015) demonstrates that textbooks should combine cultural education with technical education. Research on Iraqi ELT textbooks exclusively analyzes cultural elements while paying insufficient attention to technical implementations (Shreeb, 2017). The examination by Shreeb (2017) of Iraqi textbook cultural content revealed an underrepresentation of technological education in texts despite existing educational needs for digital literacy and critical thinking skills.

Research by Bouzid (2016) about Moroccan textbooks showed that they use activities to teach communication and teamwork but do not fully develop ICT literacy or creativity skills. A more sophisticated examination of educational materials in locations whose digital framework fails to match international benchmarks (Al-Abdali, 2017) becomes imperative.

Regional Studies on Technology Integration in ELT

Research on technology integration for ELT in the Middle Eastern region reveals both current opportunities and present obstacles. Al-Abdali (2017) discovered Iraq was struggling in applying e-learning technologies which researchers attributed to the country's delayed acceptance along with its inadequate technological foundation. Assylzhanova et al. (2024) proved through research that interactive electronic textbooks demonstrate high effectiveness in supporting primary education while they promote communicative competence and student engagement. The studies reveal the need for ongoing teacher

training programs while showing the importance of integrating technological literacy into educational content for educators (Ulla, 2019).

Iraq has English language education as a foreign subject so textbook alignment with international frameworks particularly CEFR becomes essential for effective teaching. Even though Shreeb (2017) identifies a lack of technological depth in Iraqi ELT materials these resources still fall short of international reference points. The revealed deficit necessitates new research to measure Iraqi ELT textbook technological preparedness and the effectiveness of their teaching methods for modern 21st-century skills acquisition.

Identification of Gaps

Research presents multiple gaps in analyzing ELT textbooks which target Iraq as their evaluation context. Research by Shin, Eslami, and Chen (2011) and Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) evaluated ELT textbooks for cultural and technological content but publications about Iraqi materials incorporating technology to develop 21st-century abilities remain scarce according to Shreeb (2017). The CEFR and TESOL Technology Standards Framework have gained prominence but Iraqi ELT textbook evaluations show significant deficits when measuring compliance against these standards (Ulla, 2019). Research focused on Iraq needs to address the specific technological readiness of local English Language Teaching materials due to limited scientific studies in this area (Al-Abdali, 2017) despite existing regional studies that revealed Middle Eastern integration challenges.

This study examines the technological capabilities and learner usefulness of Iraqi English Language Teaching textbooks against international standards. This research addresses open areas to advance both ELT studies as well as offer guidance for enhancing Iraqi learning materials to match modern educational standards.

Transition to the Research Context

Research findings guide an assessment of Iraqi ELT textbooks by illustrating the necessity of performing a comprehensive review of their technological readiness. The research gaps discovered in the absence of international benchmark alignment demonstrate why this investigation matters. The study assesses Iraqi ELT textbooks through global benchmarks to measure their capabilities for integrating technology while developing essential 21st-century abilities. The evaluation process targets essential literature gaps simultaneously while fueling educational technology implementation conversations throughout ELT contexts where English functions as a foreign language especially in regions like Iraq.

The transformative impact of technology on 21st-century ELT becomes clear through this literature review which shows materials must reflect international standards like the CEFR and the TESOL Technology Standards Framework.

Italian research has evaluated ELT textbooks from various perspectives but fails to address Iraqi textbook evaluation primarily through technological integration analysis. The present study has been developed out of the recognition that there exists a need to assess Iraqi ELT textbooks through international benchmarks for preparing them for contemporary learner demands. By addressing these gaps, the study seeks to contribute to the broader field of ELT and provide insights into how Iraqi materials can be improved to foster 21st-century skills.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach in order to evaluate Iraqi ELT textbook The research involves the following steps:

1. **Textbook Analysis**: detailed content analysis well be conducted of a selected Iraqi ELT textbook focusing on the inclusion of technology-oriented content and approaches.
2. **Selection of Criteria**: The evaluation will use a framework based on 21st-century skills and technological competencies to guide the analysis.
3. **Findings and Recommendations**: The analysis will identify strengths and gaps in the textbook, culminating in actionable recommendations to enhance their technological readiness.

The Results

Content Analysis of the Iraqi ELT Textbook for 1st Intermediate Level

1. Overview of Content

The textbook, English for Iraq: 1st Intermediate Student's Book, is structured into eight units, six content units and two review ones (unit 4 and unit 8) each focusing on different themes such as spare time, dates and seasons, other countries, and dangers. The units include a mix of reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities, with a strong emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, and cultural awareness. The textbook also incorporates project work, songs, and rhymes to engage students with no explicit reference to technology neither as educational tools nor as culture related topics. The book seems to belong to a pre-modern technology era. The following is a list of the topics contained in the textbook:

1. **My Spare Time**: Focuses on hobbies, holidays, and daily routines.
2. **Dates and Seasons**: Covers weather, months, and seasonal activities.
3. **What Have You Done Today?**: Explores daily activities, moods, and feelings.
4. **Review Unit**: Consolidates learning from the first three units.
5. **Other Countries**: Introduces countries, cultures, and industries.
6. **Friends Abroad**: Discusses pen-friends (which is now replaced by modern communication platforms like Facebook, X, WhatsApp and the like which require an ultimately different language style), customs, and nationalities.

7. **Danger!**: Addresses, safety, warnings, and instructions.
8. **Review Unit**: Consolidates learning from the latter units.

2. The Use of Old Technologies

The textbook mentions and urges the students to use old technologies that are not commonly used nowadays making the book a piece of history other than a modern life representative. The following are some examples:

1- **Pen-Friends:** pen-friends appeared with the appearance of journals and newspapers and gradually disappeared and replaced by the use of online technologies such as old online communities and forums and lately Facebook, X (Formerly Twitter), Instagram and other technologies that not only replaced pen-friendships but also created a new language that is important for the students to understand especially in the language they try to learn (English in our case).

2- **Radios and other old tools**: the insistence of using tools like Radio (and even television that is declining or changing completely nowadays and even showing pictures of old radios and televisions (as well as other old tools such as old cameras) puts the textbook in a pre-technology era.

3- **Old Photographs**: the book shows a large variation of photos that mostly look old style (cars, racing cars, pictures of places, airplanes and space rockets) non of which are modern or even related to relatively modern technology.

Figure 1: Pictures 3 and 6 show an old camera and an old radio that do not exist anymore

Key Observations:

- **Explicit Technology Integration:** Minimal. There are no explicit mentions of digital tools, online resources, or multimedia platforms. In addition, even the means of communication as culture related matters are not included.

- **Implicit Technology Integration:** Some activities, such as listening exercises, could be adapted to use digital tools, but the textbook does not explicitly guide this. The recordings are supposed to be included within a Compacted Disk (that is rarely used nowadays) which is not available to all teachers (based on the researcher experience as a training leader for more than a decade and noticing the lack of those CDs) and the lack on online access to the audio recordings neither to the teachers nor to the students.
- **Focus Areas:** The textbook primarily focuses on traditional language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and cultural content (not including technology related cultural aspects), with little emphasis on digital literacy or technology-supported learning.

3. Analysis of Activities and Materials

The textbook includes a variety of activities, such as reading comprehension, role-playing, and project work. However, the activities are largely paper-based and do not incorporate modern technological tools or methodologies.

Technology-Related Content:

- **Listening Exercises:** The textbook includes audio-based listening exercises, but these are not linked to digital platforms or interactive tools. For example, students are asked to listen to conversations and answer questions, but there is no mention of using online audio resources or apps (as mentioned before, the audio recordings are on CDs that are not available the majority of teachers and students.
- **Project Work:** Projects like creating posters or writing letters and scrapbook making are traditional and do not encourage the use of digital tools (e.g., creating digital presentations or using online collaboration tools). This is inconsistent with the environment that surrounds the students outside the classroom.
- **Cultural Content:** While the textbook introduces students to different cultures and countries, it does not leverage technology to enhance this learning (e.g., virtual tours, online cultural exchanges). In addition to that, modern technology based life is not illustrated as a culture related phenomenon.
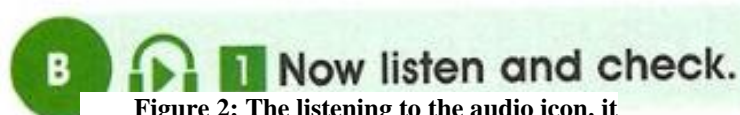-

Figure 2: The listening to the audio icon. it does not include any reference to online resources or any app

Gaps:

1) **Digital Literacy:** There is no explicit instruction on how to use digital tools for language learning (e.g., online dictionaries, grammar checkers,

or language learning apps) and of course the book does not show any sense of encouraging the students to use such tools.

2) **Critical Thinking and Collaboration:** Activities are mostly individual or pair-based, with no emphasis on collaborative online platforms or tools that foster teamwork and critical thinking.

3) **Adaptability:** The textbook does not prepare students for the digital demands of the modern world, such as navigating online resources, using AI-based educational tools, or using technology to solve problems.

4. Comparison with 21st-Century Standards

The textbook does not align well with globally recognized frameworks for 21st-century skills, such as the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) or ISTE Standards. These frameworks emphasize skills like digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity, which are largely absent in the textbook. The textbook in general avoids any real explicit mention of technology or technology-based knowledge.

Key Misalignments:

1. **Digital Literacy:** The textbook does not teach students how to use technology for learning or communication.

2. **Critical Thinking:** Activities are mostly rote-based (e.g., answering comprehension questions) and do not encourage higher-order thinking or problem-solving.

3. **Collaboration:** There is no emphasis on collaborative tools or platforms that could help students work together digitally.

4. **Creativity:** Projects and activities are traditional and do not encourage students to use technology to create or innovate.

4. Historical Analysis

While no previous versions of this textbook were provided for direct comparison, the lack of technology integration suggests that the textbook has not kept pace with advancements in ELT methodologies over the last decade which witnessed at least two major world technology related trends i.e. the need for Online based education during Covid-19 lockdown and the announcement of AI-based tools and Large Language analysis models. Modern ELT materials increasingly incorporate digital tools, interactive platforms, AI tools, and multimedia resources to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. This textbook, however, remains rooted in traditional, paper-based methodologies. It does not even use the previous decade technologies and trends like the introduction of smartphones and tablets and the web 2.0 (which belongs even to an earlier era.

5. Suggestions for Improvement

To better align with 21st-century competencies and modern ELT standards, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Integrating Digital Tools:

a) Online Resources: Including links to online dictionaries, grammar checkers, and language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Quizlet).

b) Multimedia Content: Incorporating videos, podcasts, and interactive exercises to enhance listening and speaking skills.

c) Virtual Collaboration: Using platforms like Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams for collaborative projects and discussions.

d) AI-Tools: Using AI-based tools that facilitate self-learning, personal education AI-tutors and human-AI communication that facilitates language learning.

2. Fostering Digital Literacy:

- **Digital Skills Modules:** to add sections that teach students how to use technology for language learning, such as navigating online resources, using digital dictionaries, creating digital presentations and using AI tools and models.
- **Online Research:** Including activities that require students to research topics online and present their findings using digital tools.

3. Promoting Critical Thinking and Collaboration:

- **Problem-Solving Activities:** The introduction of activities that require students to use technology to solve real-world problems (e.g., creating a digital travel guide for a foreign country).
- **Collaborative Projects:** Encouraging students to work together on digital platforms to complete projects, such as creating a class blog or podcast.

4. Enhancing Creativity:

- **Digital Storytelling:** To include activities where students create digital stories or videos using tools like Canva or iMovie.
- **Interactive Projects:** Encouraging students to use technology to create interactive presentations or quizzes for their peers.

5. Updating Cultural Content:

- **Virtual Exchanges:** Facilitating virtual exchanges with students from other countries to enhance cultural awareness and language practice.
- **Virtual Tours:** Including links to virtual tours of historical sites or cultural landmarks mentioned in the textbook.
- **The Use of Technology Through the World:** showing cultural differences between countries as related to the use of some technology related matters like the use of smartphones, the use of EarPods and the like.

6. Professional Development for Teachers:

Providing training for teachers on how to integrate technology into their lessons using the updated textbook materials.

Conclusion

The English for Iraq: 1st Intermediate Student's Book is a traditional ELT textbook that does not adequately integrate technology-supported learning concepts. To meet the demands of the modern technological world, the textbook needs significant updates to incorporate digital tools, foster 21st-century skills, and align with international ELT standards. By implementing the suggested improvements, the textbook can better prepare students for the digital age and enhance their language learning experience. The book seems to deliberately avoid technology because of the amount of old style old fashioned design of the whole textbook including the use of old photos, the illustration of old technologies that are scarcely used nowadays and the complete absence of everyday live technologies.

First Intermediate Activity Book

1. Content Review: Technological Competencies in the Textbooks

The Unit 1 activity book presents only classical language learning tasks which incorporate reading and writing alongside speaking and listening practice. These materials include few instances where technological competencies receive explicit treatment. Below are the key observations:

- **Implicit Technological References:**
    - **Listening Exercises:** Adaptive digital resources including online audio resources and interactive listening platforms would better enable students to tackle the listening exercises located on pages 2, 3, and 6. The textbook lacks any explicit directions about technology implementation.
    - **Project Work:** On page 14 students must develop a poster which showcases their holidays. The textbook next to page 14 recommends traditional décor materials (e.g. scissors, magazines, glue) yet fails to link this project to digital presentation tools like Canva or PowerPoint.
    - **Writing Activities:** The reading assignment on page 2 requires students to create a one-page written description about their holiday experiences. The textbook omits references to digital writing tools although students could use Google Docs and Microsoft Word for these exercises.
- **Explicit Technological References:**
    - **None Found:** There are no explicit mentions of technology, digital tools, or online resources in the provided pages. The textbook does not reference the use of computers, tablets, or the internet, which are essential components of modern educational systems.

2. Evaluation: Adequacy and Depth of Technological Competencies
- **Adequacy:**

o The textbook lacks explicit integration of technological competencies. While some activities (e.g., listening exercises, poster creation) could be adapted to include technology, the textbook does not guide students or teachers in this direction.

o The absence of digital tools or online resources limits the textbook's ability to prepare students for a technologically advanced educational environment.

- **Depth:**
  o The textbook's activities are rooted in traditional, non-digital methods. For example, the poster project (page 14) relies on physical materials rather than digital alternatives.
  o There is no mention of using technology for research, collaboration, or presentation, which are critical skills in modern education.

- **Gaps and Outdated Methodologies:**
  o **Gap 1:** No integration of digital tools for language learning, such as language apps (e.g., Duolingo, Quizlet) or online dictionaries.
  o **Gap 2:** No mention of using the internet for research or accessing additional learning resources.
  o **Gap 3:** No guidance on how to use technology for collaborative projects or presentations.

Figure 3: Scrapbook projectwork that uses paper and non-technological tools

3. Opportunities and Challenges: Readiness for the Technological Age

- **Opportunities:**
  - **Potential for Enhancement:** The established classroom activities such as listening exercises and poster creation remain easy to convert into digital content. Students can use either digital scrapbooking applications or online presentation applications for their work.
  - **Listening Exercises:** Additions of online audio resources together with interactive listening platforms to existing listening exercises would deliver modern audio experiences to students.
  - **Project Work:** The poster project from page 14 should evolve to allow students to produce digital presentations combined with digital posters through educational technology.

- **Challenges:**
  - **Content Misalignment:** The learning resources in the textbook do not address current technological developments. Businesses and educational institutions demand modern digital competencies which this material fails to develop for students.
  - **Lack of Guidance:** For areas lacking access to technological resources the omission of digital content from the textbook remains unimportant. The textbook presentation seems obsolete to educational institutions that have working technology systems.
  - **Resource Limitations:** In regions with limited access to technology, the lack of digital integration in the textbook may not be a significant issue. However, for schools with access to technology, the textbook's traditional approach may be seen as outdated.

4. Strategic Recommendations: Enhancing Technological Content

To align the textbook with the demands of modern education, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Incorporate Digital Tools:**
  - **Digital Writing Tools:** Teachers should leverage digital tools for students' writing activities as suggested on page 2. Students need both Google Docs and Microsoft Word to write their assignments and make edits in their writing.
  - **Online Listening Resources:** Students should access online audio material through the listening exercises found on pages 2, 3 and 6 which also contain interactive listening platforms.
  - **Digital Posters:** The poster project on page 14 needs expansion through the implementation of digital tools. Presentations made

with PowerPoint or Canva together with alternative presentation software help students create digital posters.

- **Integrate Online Research:**
  - o **Research Projects:** The assignments should mandate students to conduct online research utilising the internet for their tasks. Students would investigate Iraq's historical landmarks (page 6) and use digital tools to deliver their research results to classmates.
  - o **Collaborative Projects:** Students should undertake collaborative projects through online platforms that support work-on-group assignments and presentation development including Google Docs and Microsoft Teams.
- **Include Technology-Focused Activities:**
  - o **Language Apps:** Students should make use of language learning applications Duolingo and Quizlet because they enhance textbook learning materials.
  - o **Virtual Field Trips:** The teacher should recommend virtual historical visits into digital collections accessible through internet platforms. On page 8 readers will find Karen's visit to a museum in Australia thus showing alignment with this section.
- **Teacher Training and Resources:**
  - o **Teacher Guides:** Provide teachers with guides on how to integrate technology into the lessons. This could include step-by-step instructions for using digital tools and online resources.
  - o **Professional Development:** Offer professional development workshops for teachers to help them become familiar with modern educational technologies.
- **Accessibility Considerations:**
  - o **Low-Tech Alternatives:** For schools with limited access to technology, provide low-tech alternatives that still encourage critical thinking and creativity. For example, students could create physical posters but present them using storytelling techniques.

5. Activity Book Analysis Conclusion

The provided Iraqi ELT activity book demonstrates a strong foundation in traditional language learning methods but lacks integration of technological competencies. While there are opportunities to enhance the textbook's content with digital tools and online resources, significant gaps exist in its readiness for the technological age. By incorporating digital tools, online research, and technology-focused activities, the textbook can be better aligned with the demands of modern education. Additionally, providing teacher training and resources will be essential for successful implementation.

The Discussion

The assessment of chosen textbooks showed how insufficient technological competencies exist between pages for preparing students for educational requirements and job markets. Students can find fundamental concepts about traditional language acquisition in these textbooks yet those materials lack specific instructions about digital tools and online resources. This research section both provides context to the discoveries and performs a critical analysis of their effects alongside assessments of their interconnections before recommending actions for enhanced future measures.

Contextualizing Findings

Reading, writing, speaking and listening exercises comprise the core teaching strategy throughout the First Intermediate Student Book and Activity Book textbooks. Traditional activities in the books demonstrate that they do not explicitly teach technology competencies. Kindergarten English textbooks provide scrapbooking and poster creation activities on pages 4 and 14 yet the books fail to mention digital tools such as Canva and PowerPoint for their enhancement. Listening activities featured throughout the units show potential for enhancement through digital audio content and interactive online environments but fail to provide recommendations for such digital resources. The absence of explicit technological references, such as the use of computers, tablets, or the internet, is a notable limitation, particularly in an era where digital literacy is paramount.

Critical Analysis

The assessment results expose a delicate mismatch between educational textbooks and current technological frameworks that influence modern educational approaches. This misalignment has several implications. Textbook restrictions prevent students from experiencing the digital tools which modern language education depends on including language applications (Duolingo, Quizlet) and virtual lexicons. The evaluation ignores how modern technology holds promise to both boost engagement levels and student performance. Google Docs alongside Microsoft Teams provide opportunities for teamwork through collaborative projects yet they remain inaccessible within traditional educational settings. Absent teacher training in digital integration creates two major problems since instructors face simultaneous challenges stemming from both insufficient technology skills and limited training for digital pedagogy.

Similar to academic discussions academics have noted the delayed implementation of technology features in English Language Teaching materials which affects areas with shortages of digital infrastructure. These findings represent both a challenge and an opening for curriculum designers to consider integrating technology within available frameworks. Digital content utilization in textbooks represents a critical deficiency which demands immediate attention

from academic and industry leaders who should establish technology education standards for language education resources.

Interconnections

The gaps identified in the textbooks are interconnected and have broader implications for educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers. For instance, the lack of digital tools for language learning is closely tied to the absence of guidance for teachers, creating a cycle where neither students nor educators are adequately prepared for the technological age. Similarly, the reliance on traditional methods may hinder students' ability to develop critical digital skills, such as online research and collaborative project work, which are increasingly valued in higher education and the workforce.

Call to Action

The findings suggest an urgent need for revising Iraqi ELT textbooks to better align with modern educational requirements. Immediate attention should be given to incorporating digital tools, online resources, and technology-focused activities. Teacher training and professional development programs are also essential to ensure that educators can effectively integrate these tools into their teaching practices. By addressing these gaps, Iraqi ELT materials can better prepare students for a tech-driven world, fostering both language proficiency and digital literacy.

The Conclusion

This study evaluated the inclusion of technological competencies across selected Iraqi ELT textbooks while investigating their suitability for current educational standards (as related to the use of technology). This evaluation highlighted considerable shortcomings in textbook authors' direct inclusion of digital resources even though certain activities could benefit from technology. This summary section presents essential research findings alongside important insights related to stakeholder interests which leads to practical recommendations.

The primary objective of this study was to assess the extent to which technological competencies are integrated into Iraqi ELT textbooks and to identify areas for improvement. The findings indicate that while the textbooks excel in relatively traditional language learning methods, they lack explicit references to digital tools and online resources. In addition, the textbooks do not contain any technology assisted activities accept for the use of the audio recordings supplied in a CD (which is not available for most of the teachers (based on the researcher field experience as a Training Leader for more than ten years) Activities such as scrapbooking, poster creation, and listening exercises could be significantly enhanced with technology, yet no such recommendations are provided. The absence of guidance for teachers on integrating technology

further compounds the issue, highlighting a critical gap in the textbooks' readiness for the technological age.

The tested books showed no considerable signs of readiness for fulfilling the requirements of this technology based educational era and this came in the following ways:

1- The textbooks have not contained any reasonable reference to any recent technology that might promote technological literacy, nor it coped with the everyday technological life that the students live. Smartphones, online chatting, internet surfing, computers, online gaming and other technology life signs are rarely mentioned, and the books seem to be coming from the pre-technology era.

2- The post-Covid 19 educational era requires more flexible curricula that can be taught face-to-face, online, and in a blended environment, and this requires serious reforms in textbooks. This has not been achieved in the tested textbooks and those textbooks do not show readiness to the next step of the adaptation of blended learning which requires a flexible, technology-friendly textbook.

3- Since 2022, when OpenAI announced the first (practical), publically available AI model, the world witnessed the beginning of a new era in all the aspects of life including education. This world trend showed a remarkable progress in educational technologies with the introduction of the new more interactive personal assistants powered by AI (personal assistants appeared before this year but witnessed a tremendous progress thanks to the new AI models. This put curricula, even modern ones that already use modern technology, in a critical situation that required a real reform to make use from the new AI educational tools that appeared within a couple of years. The Iraq EFL curriculum is not an exception.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Curriculum Major Reform: There is a real need for making a thorough reform to the Iraqi EFL Curriculum and make it more technology use friendly.

2. Incorporating Digital Tools: The activities of scrapbooking and poster creation need modifications to integrate digital tools including Canva and PowerPoint together with Google Slides. The needs of listening exercises demand improved resources through both internet-based audio content and dedicated interactive platforms.

3. Integrating Online Research: Training students to perform online research since this combination stimulates dual competencies in digital literacy and critical thinking abilities.

4. Promoting Collaborative Projects: Online collaborative tools including Google Docs and Microsoft Teams should be promoted for peer assignments so students can learn digital teamworking.

5. Providing Teacher Training: To create protocols alongside development pathways which demonstrate how teachers can apply technology in their teaching methods through effective practices.

6. Ensuring Accessibility: Educational institutions lacking advanced technology should be provided with basic creative learning solutions that will stimulate critical thinking abilities.

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