



Exploring Difficulties Faced by Iraqi Teachers in Teaching English in “English for Iraq” Textbook

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Abstract

Evaluating high school textbooks is essential as they serve as a primary source of information and learning material, providing a comprehensive overview of the subject matter while aligning with educational standards and catering to the diverse needs of students through careful presentation of their content, language, illustrations, and overall presentation. The present study aimed to diagnose and identify the difficulties faced by English teachers in teaching literary texts in English language using the Iraq 4th-grade textbook, while proposing potential solutions. Convenience sampling was used to select 30 Iraqi EFL teachers who completed a 40-item Likert-scale questionnaire developed by Karamifar et al. (2014), translated into Arabic and validated through a pilot study. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 teachers to collect the data. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the collected data, revealing that teaching literature in “English for Iraq” presents various challenges, including a lack of resources, cultural differences, and varying student language proficiency levels. Consequently, findings suggest incorporating additional materials, using interactive teaching methods, integrating cultural context, and utilizing technology.

Keywords: content analysis, evaluation, Iraqi EFL teachers, literature, textbook

1. Introduction

International trade, business, aviation, technology, and other professions all employ English as a common language for communication among nations. English has taken over as the primary language of communication in the age of globalization and the internet (Mohammad Hosseinpur & Parsaeian, 2023). A textbook is an essential tool for teaching and learning. It is described as a written medium in the classroom, especially for the teaching and learning process (Jamil et al., 2024). It is a physical, well-organized training handbook that covers a wide range of topics in a particular subject area. In other words, a textbook is a guidebook or guide that is primarily used for teaching and learning. A textbook includes books made and published for educational purposes or even any book used as a helpful tool in the classroom (Sari, & Ma’rifatulloh, 2024). According to Bagheri Nevisi and Moghadasi (2020), an

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook is a book that has been written specifically to aid language learners in enhancing their linguistic and communicative skills.

EFL textbooks are regarded as a crucial element in the majority of language programs. It is crucial for both teachers and students and plays a significant part in the EFL teaching and learning process (Zhou, 2021). The importance of the textbook cannot be overstated. It will undoubtedly determine the majority of in-class instruction and outside-of-class learning for the students. This indicates that textbooks give teachers direction for creating lessons and activities.

In light of the world's rapid change, textbook review has recently become a crucial educational concern. This emphasis on textbook evaluation is related to the understanding that we cannot teach all the information that pupils may need as they get older. It is a truth that educational requirements change gradually over time for students. Therefore, it is essential to frequently change the curriculum. The training materials should then align with the curriculum since this is the change that is most obvious (Anderson et al., 2010). One justification for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very beneficial for instructors' personal and professional development. According to Ellis (1997), evaluating textbooks can assist teachers in moving beyond impressionistic assessments and in gaining practical, precise, systematic, and contextual understandings of the general character of the textbook material.

One of the most crucial components of language acquisition in the Iraqi educational system is the textbook, particularly the "student book". It can assist the learner in gaining a thorough understanding of the language. Therefore, it is equally crucial that the contents being offered to the students are relevant and useful. Communication is crucial to the process of acquiring a language because language acquisition does not occur in isolation and involves many facets of society. Therefore, this study looked at the challenges faced by English teachers when instructing 4th graders in "English for Iraq" literature, which has been mandated by the Ministry of Education for secondary schools across Iraq since 2014.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Textbook Evaluation

Teachers must evaluate a textbook before utilizing it because there are so many published textbooks. They must be able to pick a textbook carefully. According to Siregar et al. (2024), teachers should evaluate, test, and consult with students to determine which textbooks are best for them before making a decision. These procedures aid teachers in understanding a textbook's advantages and disadvantages. As a result, they must learn how to evaluate a quality textbook. Examining the content of textbooks involves looking at things like exercises, learning tools, and images, among other things. Next, a textbook is described in the textbook analysis. An excellent textbook, according to Siregar et al. (2024), comprises elements that are exciting and intriguing, such as language pieces with suitable sequencing, explanations of what has to be taught, and summaries of earlier materials (Rofik, 2020).

According to Hanifa (2018), a teaching-learning scenario would be incomplete without the pertinent textbook. Additionally, according to Jamil et al. (2024), textbooks offer a defined foundation. The most significant benefit of using textbooks, according to Roofi'Kusumaningrum et al. (2023), is that it allows students to measure their accomplishments in concrete terms, which is psychologically crucial for them. Every educational institution in the world uses textbooks as a crucial part of their language programs. They serve as the obvious beating heart of any ELT program (Ayu, 2020).

According to Richards (2001), textbooks and other teaching aids play a significant role in the majority of language-learning programs. A textbook is necessary because it establishes the focus, subject matter, and instructional strategy (McGrath, 2002).

2.2. The Importance of Textbook Evaluation

According to Zhang (2020), evaluating textbooks can assist teachers in moving beyond impressionistic assessments and in gaining practical, precise, systematic, and contextual understandings of the general character of the textbook material. Therefore, evaluating textbooks may be a particularly fruitful way to perform action research and a way to empower and better one's career. Comparably, textbook evaluation can also be an important part of teacher training programs since it helps student teachers get familiar with a variety of published language teaching materials while also educating them on key characteristics to look for in textbooks.

Other justifications for textbook evaluation have been provided by Ayu and Inderawati (2019). They asserted that choosing an ELT textbook frequently denotes a significant administrative and educational choice that requires a significant amount of professional, financial, or even political involvement. The management and instructional staff of a particular institution or organization would therefore be able to distinguish between all of the textbooks on the market with the aid of a complete review.

2.3. Textbook Evaluation Criteria

According to Riazi (2003), after the teacher, textbooks are the second most effective component in any classroom. Many researchers (e.g., Jamil et al., 2024; Mohamed & Halim, 2023), concurred that the criteria created for evaluating any textbook include criteria pertaining to physical aspects, textbook methodology, content areas like language functions, grammar, and skills, and more.

"There is not one sample plan for textbook evaluation, the framework used must be determined by reasons, objectives, and circumstances the evaluation," (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 11). Mohamed and Halim (2023) demonstrated the benefit of offering a checklist or using one for textbook evaluation. According to Ansary and Babaii (2002, p. 6), an excellent textbook should include the following characteristics and standards:

1. The dissemination of a perspective, theory, or method regarding the nature of language.
2. The nature of learning and the practical application of the theory.
3. Outlining the course's overall goals and the goals for each individual unit.
4. The selection process and its justification for organization, sequencing, grading, and coverage.

2.4. Empirical Studies

Many studies in different educational contexts have considered textbook evaluation. Ahmadi and Shah (2014) looked at how English textbooks (New Headway Plus Special Edition) affected Saudi EFL students' attitudes toward culture and their level of English competence. The results of the questionnaire showed that the authors of the textbooks used a mono-cultural and Eurocentric perspective when writing the book's contents and made only minor aesthetic alterations to "Saudize" them. Due to the absence of any depictions of Islam or Saudi Arabia, they largely fail to promote intercultural understanding; yet, their effect on students' performances was not particularly depressing. Additionally, a strong correlation between Saudi EFL learners' English proficiency and their cultural attitudes was

found, showing that more proficient speakers of the language were better able to master not only its linguistic components but also its cultural aspects than less proficient speakers.

In Iranian high schools, ELT materials were appraised by Hosseini (2007). He came to the conclusion that reading skills are the primary focus of English instruction, particularly at the pre-university and senior high school levels, and that there aren't enough listening and speaking activities in the textbooks. Therefore, the teachers at these levels mostly employ the Grammar Translation method of instruction. Hosseini (2007) claimed that writing is given even less attention because writing exercises often take the shape of grammar exercises, such as creating passive sentences or deciphering disordered words and phrases.

English textbooks from the four high schools and the pre-university level were studied by Riazi and Aryashokouh (2007). They examined the consciousness-raising elements of vocabulary drills in their study. They discovered that just 1% of the activities fell into the category of consciousness-raising. Additionally, they discovered that the exercises tended to emphasize single words rather than fixed formulations or lexical/grammatical collocations. They discovered that children acquired the meanings of isolated words rather than how to use words in context.

Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) assessed the three high school English textbooks in Iran from the perspective of the high school English teachers. A 46-item checklist with five categories was used for this purpose. The questionnaire was given to fifty high school teachers with at least five years of classroom experience. The findings indicated that, generally speaking, the textbooks are inadequate in the teachers' eyes when taking into account their five sections, physical layout, and some practical considerations.

Considering teachers' viewpoints, Ahour and Golpour (2013) examined if "English Textbook 2" was appropriate for Iranian EFL second grade high school students. On the basis of a checklist suggested by Litz (2005), the textbook was examined. Out of the seven criteria on Litz's (2005) checklist, three—such as subject and substance, activities, and skills—were chosen for this study on a 5-point Likert scale. Twenty-five teachers from several high schools in Boukan, Iran, took part. According to teachers, there are certain drawbacks to this book. The pupils' needs, wants, and concerns are not piqued by the subject or content of the textbook. The exercises and activities in the textbook don't motivate or include enough meaningful communication practice.

3. Research Questions

The goal of this study was to diagnose, identify, and suggest some answers to the challenges English teachers face when attempting to teach literature in English for the fourth grade textbook in Iraq. To achieve the purpose of this study, two major questions were addressed:

1. What are the main problems that Iraqi EFL teachers face in teaching literature in “English for Iraq” textbook?
2. What are Iraqi EFL teachers’ suggestions to cope with the problems they face in teaching literature in “English for Iraq” textbook?

4. Method

4.1. Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative and descriptive analytical approach. Descriptive research, as the name suggests, delves into the characteristics of a group or phenomenon. It employs descriptive statistics, such as measures of central tendency and dispersion (Brown & Rodgers, 2002), to paint a detailed picture of the data. This approach, as highlighted by Abu Shaaban (2014), aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of a phenomenon, potentially enabling the drawing of reliable inferences.

4.2. Participants

This study recruited English teachers from Iraqi schools across various provinces. Convenience sampling was employed to select participants. The sample included both male and female in-service teachers ($n = 30$). Their ages ranged from 28 to 45.

4.3. Instruments

To gather information on the challenges English teachers face when using the "English for Iraq" 4th grade literature textbook, the researchers chose a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as the primary data collection methods. This survey was distributed to English teachers and a limited number of supervisors across all Iraqi governorates during the 2022-2023 academic year.

4.3.1. *Teacher Questionnaire of Course-Book Evaluation*

A 40-item Course-Book Evaluation Questionnaire developed by Karamifar et al. (2014) was used to assess Iraqi EFL teachers' perceptions of the 'English for Iraq' textbook. The questionnaire covered various aspects of the book, such as physical appearance, layout, objectives, skills, activities, tasks, structures, and vocabulary. Teachers rated each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic for this study, and its internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in a coefficient of 0.79, indicating good reliability.

4.3.2. *Semi-Structured Interview*

To gain deeper insights into the challenges faced by Iraqi English teachers while using the "English for Iraq" 4th grade literature textbook, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. Each interview, lasting approximately 20 minutes, focused on specific difficulties encountered by the teachers. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. This mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative questionnaire with qualitative interviews, provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than either method could offer alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

4.4. Pilot Study

A pilot study ($n=10$) was conducted to evaluate the validity and reliability of the instruments. Ten teachers with similar characteristics, from schools other than those participating in the main study, were chosen for the pilot study. This ensured the instruments were tested on a relevant target population without influencing the main data. The pilot questionnaire was translated into Arabic to enhance

participant understanding and engagement (Williams, 2007). The pilot data were then analyzed to assess the instrument's effectiveness in gathering accurate and consistent information.

4.5. Procedure

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, several steps were taken. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Informed consent was sought from all participants, including teachers and other stakeholders. The questionnaire, initially developed by Karamifar et al. (2014), was translated into Arabic and piloted to ensure its appropriateness for the Iraqi context. Participants could choose to complete the paper or electronic version within a 5-minute timeframe. To gain deeper insights, ten participants were randomly selected for semi-structured interviews, following Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007) recommendation of interviewing 20-30% of the sample. These interviews aimed to validate and enrich the quantitative data. Rapport and confidentiality were maintained throughout the interview, and participants had the option to skip questions. With the participants' permission, interviews were recorded for further analysis. Finally, all data (questionnaires and transcripts) were analyzed to ensure its usefulness for the research.

4.6. Statistical Analysis

To understand the characteristics of the data, the researchers employed descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and standard error of the mean. Additionally, thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes within participants' responses. Thematic analysis, a cornerstone of qualitative research, involves systematically identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data. This approach allows researchers to gain deeper insights by organizing qualitative data, typically from interviews or transcripts, into meaningful themes. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed.

5. Results

5.1. Addressing the First Research Question

The primary research question of this study was: "What are the main challenges faced by Iraqi EFL teachers when teaching literature in 'English for Iraq'?" This question aimed to identify the specific difficulties teachers encounter in this context. Interviews, a valuable qualitative tool, facilitated direct data collection from participants. Following content analysis, themes were identified based on conclusions shared by at least 80% of the participants. Here are some examples of these participants' statements:

In my opinion, the teaching method used in the book has some difficulties. For example, it focuses more on grammar and vocabulary than on reading and comprehension. Additionally, the book does not provide enough opportunities for speaking and listening practice, which are essential skills for language learners. I believe that a more balanced approach to language learning would be more effective.

The difficulties in teaching method used in the book are believed to have some limitations. It is considered that the book focuses more on grammar and vocabulary than on reading and comprehension. Opportunities for speaking and listening practice, which are essential skills for language learners, are not provided enough by the book. A more balanced approach to language learning is thought to be more effective.

From my experience, the main difficulties that Iraqi English teachers face in teaching literature in “English for Iraq” for fourth-grade students are related to the students’ limited vocabulary and lack of reading comprehension skills. Additionally, the book does not provide enough cultural context and background information, which can make it challenging for students to understand the content.

The main difficulties faced by Iraqi English teachers in teaching literature in “English for Iraq” for fourth-grade students are related to the students’ limited vocabulary and lack of reading comprehension skills, based on my experience. It has been found that the lack of cultural context and background information provided in the “English for Iraq” textbook can make it challenging for students to understand the content.

While English for Iraq can be used as a reference for teaching literature, I believe that it should be supplemented with other resources to provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. The book has some limitations, such as the lack of cultural context, which can be addressed by using additional materials.

According to the participant’s response, English for Iraq can serve as a reference for teaching literature, but it is not sufficient on its own to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the subject. In order to better support students’ learning, he believes that “English for Iraq” should be supplemented with additional resources that provide more in-depth information and a broader cultural context. The book has some limitations, such as a lack of cultural context, which can be addressed by using other materials in conjunction with the book. For example, incorporating texts that provide cultural context and background information can help students better understand and appreciate the literature they are studying.

I think that the book can be helpful for students to develop skills that can be transferred to other contexts. For example, the book provides opportunities for students to practice reading and writing, which are essential skills that can be applied in various academic and professional contexts.

Regarding the participant’s response, English for Iraq can be beneficial for students to develop skills that can be transferred to other contexts. For instance, the book provides opportunities for students to practice reading and writing, which are essential skills that can be applied in various academic and professional settings. The ability to read and write in English is a valuable skill that can prepare students for academic and professional opportunities. By practicing these skills through the use of English for Iraq students can develop a foundation that can be applied in various contexts.

As far as I’m concerned, the book is based on grammar translation method (GTM). The book is focusing on reading, writing, vocabularies and grammar more than listening and speaking. So, it’s not challenging students to improve speaking. Although warm up questions at the beginning of each lesson could prepare students to deal with that. In most of the lessons, grammar part is after writing and reading. In my opinion grammar would be better to be placed after vocabulary and before reading. So, students could also concentrate on grammar during reading. I think this book can be used as a reference independently because as I mentioned it has used GTM method so students are not going to get involved in speaking a lot.

According to the participant’s response, the book applies grammar-translation method which is probably the oldest method for teaching a foreign language because its origins go back to the teaching of classical languages, it is also known as the classical method. As GTM focuses on the application of

grammar and correct sentence structure, this method neglects the other important skills such as listening and speaking (Table 1).

Table 1

Themes and Percentages of Difficulties Faced by Iraqi English Teachers in Teaching Literature

Themes	Percentages
Insufficient opportunities for speaking and listening Practice	33%
Lack of cultural context and background information	23%
Limited vocabulary and reading comprehension skills of students	17%
Need for supplementary resources	9%
Neglect of other important skills (Reading and writing)	7%
Lack of flexibility in teaching method	6%
Lack of engagement and attractiveness of topics	5%

The table summarizes the main challenges faced by Iraqi EFL teachers when teaching literature in "English for Iraq," along with the percentage of teachers who reported each difficulty.

- Insufficient opportunities for speaking and listening practice (33%) indicate a significant need for activities that develop these crucial skills.
- Lack of cultural context and background information (23%) highlights the difficulty of teaching literature without a strong foundation in the cultural context.
- Limited vocabulary and reading comprehension skills of students (17%) suggest students may struggle to understand and analyze literary texts. This might necessitate differentiated instruction.
- Need for supplementary resources (9%) indicates a desire for additional materials beyond the textbook to support effective teaching and learning.
- Neglect of other important skills (listening, speaking) (7%) suggests some teachers perceive a focus solely on reading and writing, potentially hindering students' overall language development.
- Lack of flexibility in teaching methods (6%) reflects a desire for more freedom to adapt teaching approaches to students' needs.
- Lack of engagement and attractiveness of topics (5%) suggests a need for strategies to make literature more engaging and relevant to students' interests.

Further, Table 2 shows the mean score, Std. Deviation, and Std. Error Mean of the teacher questionnaire of course-book evaluation. As it is clear from this Table, the Mean score of the items and Std. Deviation and Std. Error Mean of teacher questionnaire of course-book evaluation are 2.02, 1.391, and 1.51 respectively.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Questionnaire of Course-Book Evaluation

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
40	2.02	1.391	1.51

5.2. Addressing the Second Research Question

The second research question posed in the present study was: What are Iraqi EFL teachers' suggestions to cope with the problems they face in teaching literature in "English for Iraq"? The aim of

this research question was to gather suggestions from teachers on how to cope with the challenges they face when teaching literature in English for Iraq. Here are some of the participants’ comments:

From my experience, the most common challenges that teachers face when teaching literature in English for Iraq are related to the students’ limited vocabulary, lack of reading comprehension skills, and the absence of cultural context and background information in the textbook.

The interviewee suggests that the most common challenges faced by teachers while teaching literature in English for Iraq are related to the students’ limited vocabulary, lack of reading comprehension skills, and the absence of cultural context and background information in the textbook. This statement draws attention to the importance of developing English language curricula that address these challenges.

To address the challenges, I have found that incorporating additional materials, such as authentic texts and multimedia resources, can be beneficial in providing students with more comprehensive knowledge of the subject. Moreover, I have also found that using interactive teaching methods, such as group discussions and creative writing activities, can help engage students and improve their language skills.

Incorporating cultural context and background information is essential in teaching English literature. The participant strongly believes that using supplementary materials that provide students with a deeper understanding of the literary works is crucial for their academic development. As such, the participant incorporates texts that provide historical context, cultural references, and other relevant information to the literature to ensure that students can fully appreciate the literary works.

I incorporate cultural context and background information into my teaching of English literature by using supplementary materials that provide students with a deeper understanding of the literary works. This may include incorporating texts that provide historical context, cultural references, and other relevant information to the literature.

By providing cultural context and background information, students can cultivate a better understanding of the literature’s significance and meaning. It also helps them to relate to the characters and themes in the literary works. This approach has proven to be effective in enhancing students’ critical thinking skills and expanding their knowledge of the subject matter.

An analysis of Iraqi English teachers’ suggestions for tackling challenges in teaching literature reveals several key themes. Table 3 highlights the prominence of incorporating additional materials (41%), suggesting teachers value resources like authentic texts and multimedia to enrich student understanding. Interactive teaching methods (28%) also feature prominently, indicating a preference for engaging activities like group discussions and creative writing to boost student participation and language skills.

Cultural context (19%) emerges as another crucial theme, underlining the importance of integrating background information to enhance students’ grasp of literary significance. Technology and multimedia (12%) find their place as well, with teachers recognizing the potential of videos and podcasts to aid visualization and comprehension of complex literary concepts.

Table 3

Themes and Percentages of Suggestions to Cope with the Challenges by Iraqi English Teachers in Teaching Literature

Themes	Percentages
Incorporating additional materials	41%
Using interactive teaching methods	28%
Incorporating cultural context	19%
Using technology and multimedia	12%

In conclusion, these suggestions by Iraqi English teachers – incorporating additional materials, using interactive methods, integrating cultural context, and utilizing technology – all aim to foster deeper student understanding, engagement, and language development in their literary studies. Finally, Table 4 illustrates the statistical descriptive results drawn from the teachers' responses to each item of the questionnaire.

Table 4

Teacher Questionnaire of Course-Book Evaluation

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. The pictures of the book are clear and illustrative.	1.82	0.965
2. The sequencing of content enjoys good variety.	1.90	1.160
3. The content is arranged from easy to difficult.	2.03	1.288
4. The number of pictures is enough for teaching purposes.	2.68	1.408
5. The pictures are suitable regarding the age of the students	1.93	1.177
6. The appearance of the book attracts the students.	1.77	0.945
7. There is sufficient information presented on each page of the book.	1.95	0.999
8. The pictures are up to date and of good quality.	1.75	0.968
9. The textbook pays enough attention to speaking skill.	1.78	0.976
10. Speaking topics are interesting and various.	2.37	1.353
11. Speaking topics are related to the background knowledge of the students.	2.17	1.355
12. There are enough exercises for listening.	2.57	1.500
13. Listening exercises familiarize students with a variety of accents.	2.10	1.245
14. The length of the listening exercises suits the class time available.	1.78	0.940
15. The difficulty level of the listening exercises matches the level of students.	1.87	1.096
16. The questions which follow each listening section increases students' focus on the listening content.	2.22	1.329
17. There are enough exercises for reading comprehension in the textbook.	2.05	1.268
18. The length of the reading passages matches the level of the students.	2.42	1.306
19. The reading passages are authentic and they are taken from original magazines and newspapers.	2.12	1.180
20. The difficulty level of the grammatical structures used in the reading passages matches the level of the students.	2.75	1.622
21. There are enough exercises for writing.	2.32	1.384
22. The writing topics are in line with the topics of units.	2.38	1.415
23. Paragraph writing and essay writing have been taught in the textbook.	2.45	1.478
24. Presenting new words using pictures is suitable for students.	1.97	1.134
25. Presenting new words using explanations is suitable for students.	2.00	1.276
26. The number of exercises to practice the usage of new words is enough.	2.25	1.323
27. The difficulty level of the new words matches the level of the students.	2.23	1.370

28. The new words and idioms are up to date.	2.62	1.497
29. The cultural issues presented in the textbook are understandable to the students.	2.07	1.133
30. The grammar of each unit has been sufficiently explained.	1.92	1.225
31. There are enough examples for each grammatical structure.	2.58	1.357
32. There are enough exercises for new grammatical forms.	1.63	.938
33. There are some sections in the book dedicated to pronunciation.	2.45	1.489
34. There are enough exercises for pronunciation practice.	2.53	1.455
35. Sub segmental elements such as sentence stress and intonation are emphasized.	2.12	1.263
36. The textbook is student centered to a large extent.	2.30	1.430
37. This textbook encourages students to use supplementary sources such as Internet to enhance their learning.	1.90	1.085
38. The textbook is flexible and can be taught using different teaching methodologies.	1.92	1.293
39. The Teachers' book fulfills the needs of teachers to a large extent.	2.48	1.347
40. Teachers' book is a useful help for novice teacher.	2.18	1.186

The survey results reveal a positive teacher response to the physical appearance and format of "English for Iraq."

- **Visual Appeal:** A significant majority (80%) strongly agree that the textbook's pictures are attractive and engaging for students. This suggests the book effectively captures student attention.
- **Durability:** Most teachers (80%) agree that the textbook appears durable, with 20% unsure.
- **Image Quality:** Half of the teachers (50%) believe the pictures are up-to-date and of good quality, while 30% were unsure. This indicates some room for improvement in image selection.
- **Information Density:** A positive 80% of teachers felt that each page presents sufficient information to enhance their understanding of all language skills.
- **Listening Activities:** The vast majority (90%) agreed that the listening exercises are well-organized and sufficient in number. This finding implies the textbook effectively strengthens listening skills.
- **Cultural Content:** Teachers overwhelmingly (90%) felt students could grasp the cultural themes, new vocabulary, and idioms introduced in the book.
- **Grammar Focus:** However, 75% of educators suggested a lack of exercises for practicing new grammatical structures.
- **Teacher Support:** Fortunately, 70% of instructors strongly agreed that the teacher's book adequately meets their needs.

Overall, the survey indicates a favorable teacher reception towards the format and presentation of "English for Iraq." While the listening activities were a strong point, the lack of exercises for new grammar emerged as a key improvement area.

6. Discussion

In this study, in an attempt to answer the first research question, the researchers went to gather information about the problems that teachers face in teaching literature in English for Iraq. This research

sought to identify specific challenges that teachers may encounter when teaching literature to students using the English for Iraq curriculum.

The findings revealed that one of the most significant challenges is the lack of resources, such as textbooks and other supplementary materials. This can make it difficult for teachers to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, cultural differences can also pose a challenge (Mohammad Hosseinpur & Sarbandi Farahani, 2017 & 2019) in teaching English literature in countries like Iraq, as students may not be familiar with the literary works or the cultural context surrounding them. Furthermore, there may be issues with students' language proficiency levels, which can impact their ability to understand the literature. This is particularly relevant in Iraq, where English is not the primary language spoken, and students may have limited exposure to the language.

However, despite these challenges, there are also opportunities to improve the quality of English literature instruction in Iraq. By incorporating supplementary materials and using interactive teaching methods, teachers can provide students with a more engaging and comprehensive learning experience (Mohamed & Halim, 2023). Furthermore, focusing on the development of foundational language skills can also help students better understand and appreciate the literary works presented in the textbook. Overall, while there are challenges in teaching literature in “English for Iraq,” there are also opportunities to improve the quality of instruction. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the available opportunities, teachers can provide students with a more effective and engaging educational experience.

According to the questionnaire's findings, teachers thought that the book's look attracted pupils and that the graphics were age-appropriate, demonstrating that English for Iraq is a suitable book in terms of its outward appearance. The majority of teachers also agreed that the content is arranged to meet the language needs of the pupils and that each page of the book has adequate information. Additionally, participants thought that the textbook's sections covered four primary skills as well as additional sub-skills. This issue demonstrates how English for Iraq aids students in concentrating on all language skills, which improves learning. The writing activities in the textbook are ideal for enhancing students' writing abilities, according to several teachers. This implies that English for Iraq encourages students to write more effectively and to collaborate with one another when completing writing assignments.

The results of the interviews showed that the teacher participants had a positive attitude toward teaching English in Iraq and that they thought the vocabulary items were regulated to ensure a logical progression from simple to complicated, although some did not understand this claim. The teacher should be able to choose an appropriate textbook using established or trustworthy checklists (Hamidi & Alizadeh, 2015). All of the teachers claimed that the exercises encourage meaningful dialogue by making use of real-world scenarios, which shows that the exercises for English for Iraq aid students in their learning and give them a positive outlook on the subject. The participants felt that the photos used in the book are acceptable and appealing for learners (Jamil et al., 2024), so English for Iraq has a significant impact on students' attention in terms of physical appearance and structure. The majority of instructors also stated that the textbook had a clear organization and order. Finally, most teachers agreed that there are enough review sections and activities. Overall, based on the results of the questionnaire

and interview, it can be said that participants believed favorably in the presentation, structure, and substance of English for Iraq.

The current study's findings are consistent with those of Azizifar and Baghelani (2014), who looked into the Top-Notch text books which are currently being used at language institutes in Iran. The results of the current study concur with those of (Tu et al., 2013), who investigated the benefits and drawbacks of the textbook American English File.

The current study's findings disagree with those of Khansir and Mahammadifard (2015), who assessed the English school textbook Prospect 1. Their analysis revealed that the Prospect 1 has fallen short of its goals in some respects. This book's subject matter is beyond the level of the students' English language proficiency. The difficulty of the assignments and the students' engagement in the activities are both negatively impacted by this issue. Other issues with this book include the separation of English culture and English language, the lack of student enthusiasm in the lesson material, and graphics that have nothing to do with the activities. In contrast, prospect 1 is based on the communicative method and primarily focuses on helping learners understand and learn English through their participation in pair or group activities.

The results of this study also showed that in the English for Iraq book, meaning is more important than form because one of the book's goals is to foster the development of communicative ability. The oral communicative will spark students' interest in naturally expressing their ideas in oral form (Rashidova, 2023) which is accomplished by improving language comprehension, and improving language comprehension necessitates focusing on meaning. Regarding the physical look and structure, it became clear that there are many instructive and appealing elements in the activities, and many teachers felt that the textbook cover is instructive and appealing to young students.

It was established that there is a balance between written and oral forms of expected output from learners in tasks and that both the oral and written form received equal attention. Additionally, it was shown that students contribute the least number of resources to the activities in the English for Iraq textbook, which serves as their primary source of information. The more assignments and exercises the textbook offers, the more obvious point this makes.

The absence of activities or conversations that introduce new words or vocabularies is one of the disadvantages. In order to introduce new terminology, textbooks need to be improved by including more activities or dialogues. The second flaw is that writing is used as a significant source of production for students (Siregar et al., 2024), as seen by evaluation scores.

In other words, writing is emphasized more in Iraqi English as an input. Oral words and phrases, on the other hand, are scarcer. It is thought that the ratio of written to vocal input should be balanced. The fact that the series does not use students or even teachers as a source for its content is its third flaw. More significantly, it should be noted that teachers typically assign these projects rather than students. In addition, the majority of tasks in the English for Iraq program call for students to reply rather than initiate language use. If we want to have an active class, this is not ideal. According to the researchers, the majority of the requirements were completed by the English for Iraq. Despite flaws and drawbacks, it is generally regarded as an effective educational resource, largely because the positive aspects have outweighed the bad ones.

7. Conclusions and Implications

Teachers should consider the following generalizations in light of the current findings: who the learners are, what their current level of proficiency is, what types of communicative needs they have, the contexts in which they will use English in the future, etc. In other words, no single approach could provide fruitful outcomes. The communicative technique used in the Iraqi preparatory schools represents a significant improvement over the way education is now carried out. The results of the questionnaire show that, logically speaking, every change, even one that is initially meant to produce better results, is typically accompanied by a number of issues.

Instructors' performance is hampered by the fact that they deal with specific issues, and it is certain that pupils, who are ultimately the goal of the process, will be impacted by instructors' issues (Rezaei & Mohammad Hosseinpur, 2011). As teachers, the researchers' goal in highlighting these issues is a straightforward attempt to address any factors that might prevent teachers from advancing with a better comprehension of the course. Those with the power to change, adjust, and reform things related to our educational process must take a close look at all that is happening in the new circumstances.

Content could be chosen in accordance with the broad and diversified area, while still respecting the weaknesses and strengths of the textbook that are usually acknowledged. Overall, the quality of education can be improved by a sustainable, affordable, and accessible textbook policy. Additionally, programmers and those responsible for creating syllabi might be given helpful advice regarding the strengths and shortcomings of the English for Iraq book in light of the study's findings. Additionally, using an assessment system for the English for Iraq book encourages more textbook evaluations and improves instructor outcomes. If the teachers decide that English for Iraq is a suitable textbook to utilize in their teaching program, they will be aware of the book's advantages and disadvantages.

The findings of this study can also be helpful for all language learners utilizing English for Iraq to understand the function of their textbooks in their educational process and to identify any areas in which their textbooks fall short so that they can fill them in by researching additional sources. All EFL learners who want to utilize English for Iraq and learn a foreign language can also benefit from this study. Researchers should consider examining the significance of the majors chosen by EFL students and the degree to which their cultural perspectives may influence the outcomes.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have conducted the study, collected data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and written up the manuscript.

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Competing Interests

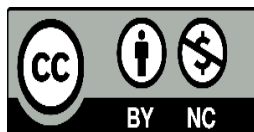
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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