The Future of EFL Teaching with the Evolution of AI Technology in Iraq

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ABSTRACT

As the generation keeps advancing, the sector of schooling is forced to evolve and evolve accordingly. In the case of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in Iraq, the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) generation gives countless opportunities for reinforcing traditional teaching strategies. This research explores the benefits and downsides of the use of the AI era in EFL teaching in Iraq, with particular emphasis at the ways in which it is able to rework the destiny of schooling in the country. It also evaluates the potential of AI in addressing some of the demanding situations that EFL instructors are currently facing in Iraq, which include a shortage of qualified teachers, a lack of resources, and difficulties in providing personalised instruction to students at varying proficiency levels.

To accomplish these goals, the researcher built a questionnaire and distributed it randomly online using Google forms to Iraqi 100 English Language teachers after validating it by exposing it to English language experts. The results were analysed according to the frequency of the respondents'' answers and show that Iraqi EFL tutors see that using AI in teaching and learning the language is a must and the English language curriculum needs to be updated to include AI technologies. Finally, the study reveals that teachers and learners in Iraq need to be trained how to use AI tools in a way that do not pass the ethical sides of the educational process.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence , Ai, EFL teaching, Iraqi teachers

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الملخص

مع تقدم الأجيال، يتطور قطاع التعليم إلى التطور والنمو لمواكبة هذا التقدم . وفي ما يخص تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، فإن ظهور ادوات الذكاء الاصطناعي يمنح فرصًا لا حصر لها لتعزيز وتنمية استراتيجيات و طرق و اساليب التدريس التقليدية المعتادة . يستعرض هذا البحث فوائد وعيوب استخدام ادوات الذكاء الاصطناعي في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على الطرق التي يمكنه من خلالها إعادة صياغة مصير التعليم في البلاد. التدريب ا. كما يقيم إمكانات الذكاء الاصطناعي في معالجة بعض المواقف الصعبة التي يواجهها مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حاليًا في العراق، والتي تشمل نقص المعلمين المؤهلين، ونقص الموارد، والصعوبات في تقديم تعليم شخصي للطلاب بمستويات كفاءة متفاوتة.

وللوصول الى هذه الأهداف، قامت الباحث ببناء و صياغة استبانة وتم توزيعها بشكل عشوائيَ من خلال الإنترنت باستخدام نماذج جوجل على ١٠٠ مدرس لغة إنجليزية عراقي. تم ذلك بعد التحقق من صدقها من خلال عرضها على خبراء اللغة الإنجليزية. وتم تحليل النتائج وفقًا لتكرار إجابات المستجيبين وأظهرت أن مدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية في العراق يرون أن استخدام الذكاء الاصطناعي في تعليم وتعلم اللغة أمر لا بد منه وأن مناهج اللغة الإنجليزية بحاجة إلى التحديث لتشمل تقنيات الذكاء الاصطناعي. وأخيرًا، تكشف الدراسة أن المعلمين والمتعلمين في العراق بحاجة إلى التدريب على كيفية استخدام أدوات الذكاء الاصطناعي بطريقة لا تتجاوز الركائز الأخلاقية للعملية التعليمية

كلمات مفتاحية : ذكاء اصطناعي. اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية . معلمي العراق

1.1 The problem of the study

In the current circumstances, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Iraq has numerous challenges. One of the main problems is teacher qualification. A lot of English teachers in Iraq have little or no training, nor sufficient proficiency in the English language to teach effectively. As a result, many teachers are unable or ill-prepared to teach English to learners, and learners are unable to advance in their language development further learning English from such teachers.

Another major difficulty within EFL in Iraq is the outdated instructional methods and materials, which follow old teaching styles in EFL classrooms. Rote memorization with an emphasis in grammar rules and vocabulary drills prevails in many Iraqi schools rather than communicative skills. Consequently, students are incapable of using English in reality nor are students developing to their full capacities as language learners.(Almuslimawy: 2023)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has advanced the educational field and changed how students learn and teachers instruct. AI has the potential to provide personalized learning experiences, rapid and immediate feedback, and better overall student engagement.

One of the key advantages of utilizing AI technology in education is its ability to adapt to each individual learner's learning style and pace. Specifically, AI can analyze a student's strengths, weaknesses, and classifications through algorithms and machine learning in order to instruct EFL based lessons to the learner. An individualized lesson structure can lead to improving learners' understanding of difficult concepts and learning content, while learners also remain increasingly motivated and engaged to learn. (Gillani et. al ,2024)

1.2 Aim of the study

 The current study aims at investigating the future of EFL teaching with the evolution of AI technology in Iraq.

1.3 The hypotheses of the study

It is hypothesized that the future of AI role in EFL teaching in Iraq is limited and traditional teaching keeps controlling the scene

1.4Definitions of basic terms:

1.4.1 EFL it is an acronym that stands for English as a foreign language, that means English is not the mother tongue of the country but it is taught for different reasons. (Cor, et. al, 2014)

1.4.2 Teaching

Teaching is the process of instructing and training someone in order to learn new information or skills. It also includes measuring and evaluation processes. It requires three basic components: teacher, learner and teaching materials. (Bruner,1960)

1.4.3 Evolution

Quick development and continuous change due to enormous innovation and discoveries is what best explains the word evolution. (NIH, 2024)

1.4..4 AI

It is an abbreviation for artificial intelligence. It is like giving a machine a brain—or at least something that tries to act like one. Imagine a computer that can learn from its experiences, understand human language, and even make decisions, much like we do. It's not just about following a set of instructions; AI is about adapting, predicting, and improving over time. (Britannica, 2024)

1.4.5 Technology

Technology refers to the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, particularly in industry. It encompasses tools, machines, systems, and methods that are used to solve problems, improve processes, and perform tasks more efficiently. Technology can be tangible, like machinery and equipment, or intangible, like software, digital platforms, and methods.(Britannica, 2024)

1.5 Methods and procedures of the study

The researcher adopts descriptive research design to fulfill the aim of the study. Also, the researcher constructed a questionnaire and, after exposing it to the English language experts for validation issues, it was administered online randomly by using Google forms to 100 Iraqi English Language teachers. The data were analyzed according to the frequency of the responses received. The recommendations and results were provided according to the data analysis.

2. AI Integration of EFL teaching in Iraq

Firstly, and according to the researcher's observations as an English language teaching specialist for more than 10 years, the use of advanced technology in the Iraqi teaching environment has increased during the last 5 years. The existence of private schooling creates a competitive atmosphere to attract the parents attention to the and one of these competitive issues is the use of modern technology in both teaching and organizing learning processes. Corona pandemic lockdown , also, played a vital role in training both the teachers and learners on how to use modern technologies and interactive teaching and learning tools and platforms to communicate and to accomplish the learning journey. The traditional ways of learning are suitable for traditional learners (the previous generation of learners) but now learners have been raised on smartphones and the internet and they can travel using their phones from one world to another in a glance! So do you think they will be satisfied enough in traditional teaching using paper, pen, board and a marker? We need to level up teaching methods, strategies and tools so we can provide them with a pleasant learning experience that fits their digital and technical awareness and expectations. In public schools, this can be shown in shady attempts in the shift of the Iraqi curriculum of teaching English language to the communicative approach. Here starts the use of computers ,CDs, loudspeakers and stuff like this.

Some gifted students' schools start using interactive boards and learning management tools. In the last year the researcher noticed that many public and private schools were using chat boats that depend on AI to train their students and even the teaching crew to be more familiar and fluent with English language which is an experience that needs to be highly used in our schools for different reasons that would be dealt with later in tha advantages of using AI tools

Note: 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 information are gathered from a 3 questions survey constructed by the researcher and distributed online using google forms to 60 Iraqi teachers of English language.the survey contains three questions: what are the advantages of using AI in English language teaching in Iraq? 2. What are the challenges of using AI in Iraq Educational environment? What are the highly used AI tools for learning English in Iraq?

2.2 Advantages of using AI in English language teaching in Iraq

Artificial intelligence tools have many advantages if used in the field of teaching and learning the English language, especially in Iraq, as shown below

1- Saving time and effort for the teacher and the learner

2- Providing a spoken linguistic example similar to the native speaker due to the lack of native English language teachers.

3- Flexibility in time and place, enabling the learner to use the learning tool at the time and place that suits him

4- Identifying errors directly and giving appropriate correction to them immediately

5- The ability to interact directly with fellow learners or teachers

6- Getting out of the routine frameworks of education and breaking the barriers of boredom

7- Developing additional skills in addition to linguistic skills such as technical and programming skills

8- Linking the educational process to reality, which enhances it more, as our reality is now linked to smart devices and the Internet more than it is linked to papers and pens!

2.3 AI and challenges in Iraq Educational environment

The use of artificial intelligence tools may face some challenges and obstacles in Iraq, the most prominent of which are summarized as follows:

1- The lack of modern technical devices in most public schools.

2- The difficulty of providing personal smart devices for each learner in the Iraqi family and home

3- The lack of technical competence of some teachers to use artificial intelligence tools

4- The lack of provision of paid artificial intelligence tools by higher educational institutions who are within the scope of responsibility.

5- The language factor may constitute another obstacle if self-learning using these tools and the learner is young in age or has low language skills

2.3 AI tools for learning English that are highly used in Iraq

In Iraq, there are numerous useful Ai enabled teaching and tutoring tools available to learn English. Here is a list of some of the best.

2.31 Duolingo: Duolingo is one of the most well-known gamification based pedagogue for language learning, that uses Ai technology to customize lessons tailored to your learning speed and style. Duolingo allows students to utilize its services for free, and or upgrade to Duolingo Plus for an ad-free service and offline lessons (Duolingo: online).

2.3.2 Rosetta Stone: Rosetta Stone is known for its immersion in lessons focusing on pronunciation and speaking in constraints of real-world conversations. This Ai responsive platform also customizes lessons comparative to your level of proficiency. Rosetta is equipped

with a speech recognition feature called TruAccent, which helps optimize pronunciation practice through authentic speaking lessons. (Rosetta Stone :online)

2.3.3 Babbel: Babbel provides structure on real-life based conversation. This Ai secure platform enables all lesson processes to cater aspects of the learner's progress. Lessons are structured around practical conversation and conversational styles making this accessible for communication in real-life no-hassle-English. (World English : online)

2.3.4 Busuu: Busuu provides a hybrid between Ai technology and social-based learning models. Learners can connect with native speakers and practice real-life conversation. This platform is hot on community-based feedback and personalized learning plans allowing for some of the most unique feedback. (Wikipedia:online)

2.3.5 Memrise: This app is certain 'experiential' learning. Memrise shares experiential models simulating the practice of real-world language usage and ongoing vocabulary and idiomatic phrases. The app features short video clips of a diversity of speakers so that learners can experience English in real, authentic, situations. (Wikipedia :online)

 Each of these tools is effective for both beginner and advanced learners, and all have a range of 'features' from basic grammar checks to interactive conversations with native speakers.

3.1 Conducting data collection

The researcher prepared a closed-ended questionnaire for the purpose of collecting and analyzing data according to the frequency and repetition of the recipients' answers. The validity of the questionnaire paragraphs was verified by presenting them to a group of English language experts and their amendments and advice were taken into account. The questionnaire included ten paragraphs and the answer to each paragraph was yes or no. Yes takes one point and no takes zero points. The questionnaire was distributed electronically on 4/9/2023 to

100 English language teachers from different parts of Iraq, and their answers were reported in the following percentages as shown in the questionnaire table

No.	Item	yes	no
1	As a teacher, Im familiar with AI powered tools	68	32
2	students are familiar with AI powered tools	31	69
3	AI tools are powerful in improving language skills	88	22
4	AI powered tools are more engaging than the traditional ways of teaching	71	29
5	AI powered tool may provide false language models	33	67
6	AI powered tools are affordable in Iraq	34	66
7	AI powered tools provide customized learning experience	78	22
8	AI powered tools are useful in teaching complex skills	41	59
9	I recommend teachers to use AI tools	71	29
10	I think that AI powered tools can replace traditional English teachers in the future	43	57

3.2 Data Analysis

Presented below is a comprehensive analysis of the data collected regarding the implementation of AI tools in the context of teaching the English language:

1. Teacher Familiarity with AI Tools

- 68% of teachers are familiar, while 32% are not.

Most educators are aware of AI tools, yet almost one-third of them are not familiar. While issues of mode and use are complex, there is a potential for us to increase the number of teachers who are aware of AI tools by training and providing information.

2. Student Familiarity with AIT Tools

Only 31% of students are familiar, while 69% are not.

Clearly there is a great deal of student unfamiliarity with the use of AI tools; this could perhaps be a product of lack of access, experience, or resources. Training students to be more familiar and comfortable with AI tools would ease them into the water, and AI tools would drastically improve their overall approach to learning.

3. AI Tools Are Effective in Helping Language Skills

88% agree, while 22% disagree .

Despite a small minority of teachers finding AI tools unhelpful in enhancing language proficiency, a vast majority, 88%, see value in using AI tools. This is a support to the claim of benefit to using AI tools for second language acquisition.

4. AI Tools Engage Compare with Traditional Teaching

- AI tools are more engaging 71% of the time, while 29% of the time they are not engaging.

The engagement of AI-powered learning tools in comparison to teaching methods by store is apparent based on responses from educators. This can potentially lead to better retention and student motivation.

5. AI tools may present false language models

- 33% are concerned, while 67% are not.

While again referring to possible partiality, the student body was below one-third in seeing AI practices as affecting learning ("unhelpful" and "not engaging"). However, these respondents serve to suggest that AI models may occasionally not represent truth models for each noun in a

sentence. Nonetheless, the faults that model could present may not hinder the students' English-learner proficiency.

6. The affordability of AI Tools in Iraq

Overall return depicts that 34% consider AI tools to be affordable, whereas 66% do not. This informational return indicates that there are a true cost barriers that limit the use of AI tools and widespread application. If cost could be reduced or access was subsidized, the utilization of AI tools may increase.

7. Customization of Learning Experiences via AI Tools through Teacher perceived personalization if learning experiences are equally important to teachers and should be seen be a benefit of using AI tools in Educational contexts.

8. Usefulness of Teaching of Complex Teaching Skills

Only 41% of teachers feel AI tools are useful for teaching complex skills while 59% do not. This data indicates that teacher accountability _educators view AI tools as less useful for teaching complex or Advanced skills while determining there is perhaps an opportunity to create more learning opportunities for higher levels of language education.

9. Recommendations to Other Teachers

71% would recommend AI tools to other Teachers volunteers limn /loopers would not. Most teachers believed webpreferences suggests that most teachers would willing to suggest the use of the AI Tools to other teachers, Based on overall notion of the Ai tools with some are unwilling to try out After to the benefits of not only customizing learning experiences have a sense of trust in overall meaning but this does not

mean they would change. Also a diminishing of referendum items regarding how confident they feel working with AI tools in general is also.

10. Potential for AI to Replace Traditional Teacher Method

43% agree that AI will replace traditional teaching and will disagree with 57% non-agreement. There is a significant portion of teachers who believe there is but a less or decreased reliance on the importance of the human educator within teaching methods. qualified educators still see value in educators utilizing Ai Trs to enhance teaching and learning situations.

3.4 Results

The findings indicate that teachers are generally familiar with AI, it has been recognized that language skills improved with AI tools, and teachers were mostly satisfied with the engagement and personalization that AI added to their classrooms. Issues of affordability, student familiarity with AI, and complex skill development remain challenges. It is acknowledged that AI is a useful tool, but the belief in it fully replacing teachers is not popular. The hypothesis of the research was rejected and replaced by the following : the future of EFL teaching in Iraq is promising and will bring a lot to the educational process .

3.5 Recommendation

AI powered tools are still something new all around the globe especially in the Iraqi educational scene. according to the results the researcher recommend the followings:

1.Do more researches on AI tools on different educational elements and variables.

2. Establishing a new unit in the Iraqi ministry of education that concerns AI issues.

3. Affording financial support from the government to train teachers on these tools by offering full subscriptions for AI powered tools and courses.

4. Enrolling a new course that concerns AI powered tools in colleges of education and basic education in Iraq.

3.5 conclusion

The objective of this study, "The Future of EFL Teaching with the Evolution of AI Technology in Iraq," was to highlight the transformative capabilities that AI will bring to EFL instruction in Iraq. This potential comes both through opportunities and challenges for students and teachers in the classroom.

As previously noted, many teachers are familiar with AI-powered tools, although students have a long way to go to ensure they are aware of AI's possibilities. AI-enabled tools were said to be more effective than old-school approaches at improving language skills and engagement, with 88% of teachers agreeing AI would improve language learning experiences. Concerns still linger about affordability, and AI tools being able to teach more advanced skills, which was indicated with just 34% of respondents viewing AI-powered tools as affordable in Iraq, and 41% recognizing AI tools as being able to teach to deeper topics.

Another area of concern was the potential of inaccurate language models, as some educators voiced fear about their students contemplating, or thinking it, impeded their progress. While there are serious concerns about AI, in general, 71% of teachers recommended using AI tools, even if many still felt that AI could not possible replace the traditional English teacher.

Overall, AI technology capability in EFL teaching has many promises of a more personalized, flexible, and more engaging learning experience. However, much work is required to efficiently respond to significant barriers, including affordability of the tools, teacher

knowledge, and equitable access to the tools. In conclusion, the study finished with some recommendations for future research, policy, and funding, so that through kids, the role of AI is heightened in the educational landscape in Iraq.

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