

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THE PATRIOTIC VALUES IN “ENGLISH FOR IRAQ” FIRST
INTERMEDIATE TEXTBOOK. AN ANALYTIC STUDY**

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Abstract

The present study aimed at analyzing the patriotic values in the Iraqi “English for Iraq” curriculum for the first intermediate school grade. The study analyzed the content of the two main textbooks namely the student’s book and the activity book. It considered lessons in the student’s book as a unit to be analyzed while in the activity book the unit was the exercises. The study reached to a conclusion that none of the two books contained any direct focus on patriotic values. It showed that 8% of the lessons in the student’s book contained topics that are related indirectly to patriotic values while less than 7% of the exercises in the activity book contained such topics.

The focus on Iraq in the two textbooks was not as it was expected to be, for the focus of England was so much bigger than it. The second country of focus was not Iraq either. It was Japan, and Iraq comes third.

The study stated some recommendations, the most important of which is to conduct a reform on the content of the whole “English for Iraq” curriculum taking into consideration the ethical, educational, as well as patriotic values of our homeland, Iraq.

Key Words: textbook, “English for Iraq”, patriotic values

القيم الوطنية في كتاب "الإنكليزية للعراق" للصف الأول المتوسط دراسة تحليلية

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المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تحليل القيم الوطنية في منهج "الإنكليزية للعراق" العراقي للصف الأول المتوسط حيث حلت الدراسة محتوى الكتابين الرئيسيين وهما كتاب الطالب وكتاب النشاط. وقد اعتبرت الدروس في كتاب الطالب وحدة لغرض تحليلها بينما في كتاب النشاط كانت الوحدة هي التمارين. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى استنتاج مفاده أن أيا من الكتابين لم يتضمن أي تركيز مباشر على القيم الوطنية. كما وأظهرت الدراسة أن 8% من الدروس في كتاب الطالب تحتوي على موضوعات تتعلق بشكل غير مباشر بالقيم الوطنية بينما كانت أقل من 7% من التمارين في كتاب النشاط تحتوي على مثل هذه المواضيع. لم يكن التركيز على العراق في الكتابين كما كان متوقعا ، الا ان التركيز على إنجلترا كان أكبر منه بكثير. وقد كانت الدولة الثانية التي تم التركيز عليها هي اليابان وليس العراق بينما حل العراق ثالثا من حيث كثافة المواضيع التي تعلق به وتنوعها. وقد خلصت الدراسة الى بعض التوصيات ، وأهمها إجراء إصلاح على محتوى منهج "الإنكليزية للعراق" بأكمله مع مراعاة القيم الأخلاقية والتربوية والوطنية لوطننا الحبيب، العراق.

1- Introduction

Iraq has suffered for a long period of time from the curricular developments whether the English Language curricula or other disciplines' curricula. And it is very obvious that one of the core issues related to the development of any curriculum is the evaluation. Curriculum evaluation comes at least in three phases, the first one is while developing the curriculum, the second comes when experimenting the curriculum and the last one which is the long lasting one is the one that starts after the implementation of that curriculum. And this phase of evaluation is the one is the most important because all the required reforms depend on it, in addition to all changing needs that require reform during the yours of its implementation.

The development of a curriculum in any kind of disciplines is not an information transferring issue. This means that there is another important part that needs to be considered other than the scientific content, one of which is the ethical content. We are not only teaching our children facts in their schools. Ethics are very important to them and must be taught to them as well. And one of the most important ethical issues that should be taught is the patriotic issues.

Our students in the Iraqi intermediate schools are in very critical age between childhood and adolescence. This requires lots of efforts to teach them sound ethical component to prepare them to be the next generation which is armed with ethics of loving their homeland that are suitable for the future of Iraq.

From this point the researcher starts his mission to seek for the ethical values related to patriotism in the first intermediate classes English curriculum, wishing that we give them enough patriotic values in this curriculum, and if else, this means that we need to reconsider the distribution of the ethical content especially those related to patriotic values in this curriculum.

2- Problem Statement

Curriculum content should not be limited to the scientific goals it was designed for only. It should contain moral content including the emphasis on the patriotic values in order to grow those values through education. Those values should be focused on during the late childhood and early adolescence stages, where the students start to think of abstract things such as ethics.

3- The Aim of the Study

This study aims at finding out the content that contains patriotic values in the English curriculum for the first intermediate classes.

4- Procedures:

- conducting an analytic study making of the content of each of the Student’s and Activity books.
- Analyzing the results to come to a conclusion.

4- Theoretical Framework

Many previous studies worked on the evaluation of school curricula from various angles using different methods and tools. The following studies dealt with ethical values directly or indirectly within their studies.

4-1 Yousif (2012) Study

(Yousif, 2012) constructed a standards-based evaluation checklist for the previous ‘Iraq Opportunities’ curriculum. He constructed an evaluation checklist based upon draft content standards that he constructed and evaluated before writing the checklist. He worked within seven dimensions namely: listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, structure and communication. The study was distributed among four levels representing the three Iraqi school divisions (primary, intermediate, preparatory) dividing the primary into two levels for pre-writing and writing levels. The study was content-rich but as related to the values, the researcher mentioned the semantics content (vocabulary dimension without taking into consideration the values existence in his thesis. This might be because the thesis itself has dealt with the whole curriculum and the construction of the checklist and the draft content standards took a lot of effort.

4-2 Rajab (2013) Study

(Rajab, 2013) tried to study the Iraqi textbook “Sunrise series” that is taught in Kurdistan, Iraq to find out the availability of cultural content and whether it is enough or not. Another aim of this study was to find out to what extent the teachers of English are aware of the importance of the cultural component. The researcher designed a questionnaire as a procedure to elicit information from 60 teachers within 25 schools in

Duhok, Iraq. Despite the fact that the research area is Iraqi, but the curriculum was different from what is intended to be studied in this study.

4-3 Shaat (2017) Study

(Shaat, 2017) analyzed the educational values in ninth grade English textbook in Palestine. He used two instruments for this study: the first one was content analysis while for the second he designed a questionnaire to find out the teachers’ perspectives on values existing in the studied textbook. The results of the study revealed that there are 14 main educational values in the studied textbook. Those educational values are: cooperation, environment preserving, home loving, respecting ancient heritage, greeting, defending homeland, respecting spiritual rituals, admiration of religious places, welcoming guests, generosity, visiting relatives, patience, honesty, and admiration of national foundations. We can notice that five of those values lay within the field of this study, but the studied curriculum is different and even the homeland of the study is also different

None of the studies covered the same area of interest for this study, and as related to what the researcher found, that the studies related to curriculum evaluation in Iraq are considerably rear, and the need for such studies is very urgent.

Why to Teach Patriotic Values

Educators expected that English textbooks should contain variety of ethical and educational values that engage students into their own society and make them active individuals in life. (Richard, 2001:13) noted that teaching a language is a complex system, which also includes teaching cultural customs, values, ways of thinking, and feeling of people. Singh & Nath, (2007:2) arguments that every human action is the reflection of an individual value and every human institution is the outgrowth of a social value, while Ahmed (1986) defined values as "a set of laws and standards established in a group where they take it as a criteria for judging the physical and moral acts and it has the power of influence on the group so that it has the property of binding, necessity and generalization and any trends deviation becomes an exodus from the community principles, objectives and ideals.”.

5- The Analysis of the curriculum

English for Iraq curriculum consists of a student’s book, an activity book, the teacher’s book and the audio. The audio is so related to both the student’s book and the activity book. The teacher’s book is a constructions book directed to the teachers. For this reason, the researcher decided to focus on the student’s book as well as the activity book.

5-1- The Student’s Book

This book consists of eight units, the units one, two, three, five, six and seven contain the main topics, while the units four and eight are review units. As it is shown in the table (1-1) below, none of the subjects of the six units are related to patriotic values, directly or indirectly, except for an indirect indications found in the main topic of unit five that is related to “Names of countries, industries and products, and unit six that contained a main topic related to “Nationalities” and “customs”(O’neill & Snow, 2014b)

Unit	Content
Unit One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The holiday • Spare-time activities and hobbies • Routine activities
Unit Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather words • Months • Seasons • Ordinals
Unit Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjectives and adverbs describing moods and feelings • Activities
Unit Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of countries, industries and products
Unit Six	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal description • Costumes • Nationalities
Unit Seven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangers in the home and in the street

Table (1-1). The main topic of the Student’s book.

As related to lessons, the Student’s book contained 73 lessons. Ten in each of units one, two, three, five, six and seven, while unit four consisted of 7 lessons and unit eight had only 6 lessons. Among those 73 lessons only six lessons dealt with patriotic values directly, and none of them had any direct focus on the patriotic values. Table (1-2) below shows the lessons of the Student’s book that contain direct or indirect patriotic values.

Unit	Number of lessons	The lessons containing patriotic values	Direct/ indirect
1	10	Richard in Iraq	indirect
		A letter from Australia	indirect
		The birdwatcher	indirect
2	10	Different schools	indirect
		Eid al-Fitr	indirect
3	10	Nothing	
4	7	Nothing	
5	10	Nothing	
6	10	Nothing	

7	10	Nothing	
8	6	A different kind of Holiday	Indirect
Sum	73	6 indirect	

Table (1-2). The lessons of the Student’s book that contain direct or indirect patriotic values.

Other things to be noticed in the Student’s book is that it contained one map that didn’t show Iraq with its ordinary borders the students in this grade are supposed to know. There was only the name of Iraq with no borders or even a distinguishing color that might refer to the student’s homeland.

Another note is that some countries like England and Japan were mentioned with much more details as compared to Iraq.

The book mentions the Army day once and showed photos of some places in Iraq with no discussions that relate those pictures to the patriotic issues that students should see in this textbook. In addition to that, the weather had nothing to do with the Iraqi weather. All the focus was on the weather in England.

5-1- The Activity Book

The activity book is built upon the student’s book and this means that the main topics should not be expected to be much different from the student’s book. (O’neill & Snow, 2014a)

In the activity book, the researcher considered exercises to be the unit to depend on in evaluating the content. It is of course divided into the same units of the student’s book, but the lessons are less for many of the student’s book lessons did not have their representation in the activity book.

Unit	Number of exercises	The patriotic values existence	Direct/ indirect
1	32	Lesson2:A, lesson3:C, lesson 9:C,	3 indirect
2	33	Lesson 7:C, lesson 7:D, Lesson 8:A, lesson 8:C	4 indirect
3	36	None	
4	16	None	
5	31	Lesson 6:C, lesson 8:D, extra activities: D	3 indirect
6	35	Lesson 6:A, lesson 6:C, lesson 7:B, extra activities: G	4 indirect
7	28	Extra activities: E	1 indirect
8	18	Lesson 6:A	1 indirect
sum	229	16 exercises that dealt with patriotic values indirectly.	

Table (1-3). The exercises of the activity book that contain direct or indirect patriotic values.

As it is shown in table (1-3), the activity book consisted of 229 exercises, but only 16 of them dealt with patriotic values indirectly, while none of them focused on direct patriotic values.

Furthermore, the activity book, unlike the student’s book, contained a single map for Iraq, but the topic was not related to patriotic values.

6- Countries mentioned in both books.

The two textbooks contained a number of countries and dealt with their values, places, customs and the like. The mostly mentioned country with so many details about its weather, well-known places, habits and many other details was England. The second country that was mentioned but in a less repetition is Japan, while Iraq came as a third country with just a slight difference between it and Oman.

Most of the information given about Iraq are related to the Iraqi ancient heritage, with a slight mention of one industry from Iraq, that is oil.

7- Results Discussion

The Iraqi “English for Iraq” curriculum for the first intermediate school grade contains two main textbooks that seem to lack for any sight of patriotic values, and if there are any, they belong to a country other than Iraq. It is England that seems to be the main interest of the two books that seemed to be England-centered books.

The numbers discussed below will show the clear situation of each textbook.

7-1- Student’s Book Results Discussion

The student’s Book is the main textbook that should contain the most important content, but the numbers show that none of its main topics contain any reference to any patriotic value. In more details, the book contained 73 lessons, 6 of them dealt with topics that can be related to patriotic values in an indirect way while none of them dealt with such topics directly. This means that only 8% of its lessons dealt with topics that are directly related to the patriotic values and 0% focused on them directly.

The book is full of colorful pictures, but about 5 of them only belonged to Iraqi heritage, while the only map in this book shows Iraq as a name only with no borders, no focus and no reference for its being the homeland of the students.

Values like loving homeland, fellow citizens participations and other patriotic values are completely absent from the whole book.

The reader of the book can hardly guess to what country this textbook belongs, and if he/she tries to do so, he/she might choose England, or even Japan, but not Iraq.

7-2- Activity Book Results Discussion

The activity book is the second textbook that is built upon the student book, and just like the first one, it contains but a very little number of topics that are related to the patriotic values. Furthermore, it doesn't focus at all on the patriotic values and if there any patriotic values, they are related to England, or maybe Japan rather than Iraq.

The book contained 229 exercises, only 16 of them dealt with topics related indirectly to patriotic values and none of them has any type of focus on patriotic values. This means that only about 7% of the exercises dealt with topics indirectly related to patriotic values and 0% focused on them directly.

8- Conclusion

The Iraqi “English for Iraq” curriculum for the first intermediate school grade, in its two main textbooks contain no direct focus on patriotic values and a very little focus on topics that are related indirectly to them. And this is a very dangerous situation with a curriculum that is supposed to be dealing with students in early adolescent who need more focus on values in general and patriotic values in specific.

“English for Iraq”, from its country of concern seems to be more likely to be “English for England” due to the focus on England other than any other place in the world, and even if the justification is that the books are teaching English, it is still too much concern, for there are countries other than England whose mother tongue is English. And even if we neglect this extraordinary focus, there is still another focus on Japan which makes the reader of the book ask if it is intended to teach the students in Japan. It is good for the students to know about other countries, but in the absence of any respectful focus on the students' homeland, this will no longer be acceptable and needs to be fixed.

9- Recommendations

- The researcher recommends that the Iraqi ministry of Iraq re-evaluates the content of the “English for Iraq” curriculum as a whole and make a big reform that focuses more on Iraq and its values.
- The researcher recommends more studies that cover other textbooks of the other eleven grades in the Iraqi schools.
- The researcher recommends that more studies are to be conducted on other values such as ethical values and educational values.

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