

# E-textbooks in ESL classrooms: are learners on board?

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## Abstract

As publishers and academia swiftly head towards e-textbooks, it is important to understand how students feel about using e-textbooks as a primary learning tool. This paper discusses results of a small-scale study looking into how a group of language learners view and use e-textbooks as learning tools in ESL classrooms. The paper concludes by offering teaching implications that could ease integrating e-textbooks in language classrooms in a more effective and efficient manner.

## Introduction

As noted in Besser et al. (1998), textbooks form an essential pillar of a successful class because they form a foundation upon which teachers build their courses and on which students primarily depend for learning support. In a digital age, many publishing companies and higher education institutions are showing more interest in e-textbooks. This global trend has encouraged researchers to look into students' and/or teachers' attitudes towards e-textbooks in higher education institutions.

While many studies (e.g., Brown, 2013; Falc, 2013; Feldstein & Martin, 2013; O'Hare & Smith, 2012; Philip & Moon, 2013) report an existing ambivalence among students towards integrating e-textbooks in classrooms world-wide, this study aims at investigating what students think about using e-textbooks as their prescribed textbook in their language classrooms. Having a better understanding of students' attitudes can help direct teachers' attention to language learners' concerns about e-textbooks, and accordingly, help teachers identify issues that need to be considered and addressed to facilitate an efficient integration of e-textbooks.

### ***What are e-textbooks?***

According to Moorefield-Lang (2013), "an e-textbook is a book that is instructionally or educationally based and is provided in a digital format" (p. 13). Originally, e-textbooks started off as simple PDF versions of print books (McFall, 2005; Moorefield-Lang, 2013; Woody et al., 2010) which are now referred to as "digitized" books (Nelson, 2008); some of them had additional electronic activities to make them more appealing (Chesser, 2011). However, with the advent of tablet computers, many publishers are now heading towards creating e-textbooks that are uniquely designed to efficiently utilize the e-experience to its fullest potential, either by method of access (Moorefield-Lang, 2013; Lai & Rushikesh Ulhas, 2012) or by layout of content (Chesser, 2011; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2013). For example, many current e-textbooks offer a re-flowable layout, whereby content is not bound by page numbers or a fixed distribution of content; instead, the content is adaptable to each device and is presented in a way that best suits the size of the device's screen. Although this means that content is responsive and can be easily read regardless of screen size, it can make it difficult to maintain a point of reference for more than one device.

### ***Features of e-textbooks***

One of the biggest advantages of using e-textbooks is the abundance of interactive and accessible features they offer. For example, one of the main advantages of e-textbooks is the ability to integrate multimedia elements in an e-textbook. This allows users to watch and listen to non-written material along with the text (Bidal, 2013; Gisbert-Cervera et al., 2014; Feldstein & Martin, 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Walling, 2014). Such a feature is especially useful for language learning purposes as it offers the ability of listening to written content to support and develop reading and speaking skills. The search feature in e-textbooks has also been frequently cited to be one of the mostly appreciated features by users (Cassidy et al., 2012; Elias et al., 2012; Philip & Moon, 2013; Sun et al., 2012). In a study about e-textbook integration at Virginia Tech, faculty members found that the feature of adding notes to e-textbooks and keeping them for following semesters or other courses has helped transform books from “static items” to a “growing body of work” (Moorefield-Lang, 2013, p. 13). Although not reported in the literature, recent updates of some e-textbooks give instructors an ability to create customized table of contents to add direct links to specific pages and/or chapters in an e-textbook.

Many users also appreciate the fact that using e-textbooks helps avoid the physical fatigue caused by carrying heavy books around all day from and to school (Dundar & Akcayir, 2012; Elias et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2013; Walling, 2014). Also, as reported in Dundar & Akcayir (2012) and Nelson (2008), having the ability to access e-textbooks from a tablet has also made e-textbooks more desirable. In their study, Dundar and Akcayir reported their participants finding reading off of a tablet an easy process as compared to reading from a print book. The authors explain that students found tablet reading more pleasant as readings can be viewed “in both horizontal and vertical [orientations]” (2012, p. 447), which in turn made the text clearer; there was more space for words, and text size was adjusted accordingly.

Research has focused on e-textbooks dealing with communication (Falc, 2013), business (Feldstein & Martin, 2013; Weisberg, 2011), and other undergraduate courses (Hernon et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2013; Rose, 2011); but less attention has been paid to language e-textbooks. Discussing online reading in general, Vandenhoeck (2013) identifies availability of “vocabulary support” (p. 38) as a valuable feature that further facilitates a reader’s comprehension rates of e-texts. While such a feature may not be readily available within all e-textbooks, ease of access to dictionaries while reading from an e-textbook may well facilitate reading comprehension for learners. Another important language-related feature made feasible through e-textbooks is ease of access to audio versions of reading passages – a “text-to-speech function” (Lai & Rushikesh Ulhas, 2012, p. 323), allowing learners to listen to a passage before reading it aloud.

### ***Pitfalls of e-textbooks***

Unlike e-books more generally, which have become a popular trend (Cassidy et al., 2012; Daniel & Woody, 2013; Marques de Oliveira, 2012; O’Hare & Smith, 2012), e-textbooks are yet to be fully accepted by many students (Marques de Oliveira, 2012; Elias et al., 2012; Falc, 2013; O’Hare & Smith, 2012; Philip & Moon, 2013; Stone & Baker-Eveleth, 2013; Woody et al., 2010). Philip & Moon (2013) attribute such reluctance to

the lack of significant benefits [which] outweigh the drawbacks particularly due to lack of naturalness in e-textbooks. (p. 295)

An e-textbook’s layout/design impacts students’ attitudes towards it and willingness to use it (Chong et al., 2009; Young, 2009; Woody et al., 2010). Chong et al. (2009) identify a few elements that define a user’s experience with an e-textbook layout, namely navigation design, page layout, and content design. Although several studies reported no significant differences in grades or learning outcomes between

students using e-textbooks and print books (Daniel & Woody, 2013; Falc, 2013; Feldstein & Martin, 2013; McFall, 2011; Philip & Moon, 2013; Rockinson-Szapkiw et al., 2013; Weisberg, 2011), Falc (2013) reported that some e-textbooks' layout, or content design as identified by Chong et al (2009), could "hinder reading comprehension" (p. 3). This happens due to students' inability to properly engage in active reading while using e-textbooks. Active reading

includes techniques such as highlighting and note taking, as well as elaborative activities such as rewriting concepts in your own words and identifying the key points in a text. (McFall, 2005, p. 74).

Falc (2013) explains that the layout of many e-textbooks does not give learners a chance to maintain track of text "landmarks, such as headings and illustrations" (2013, p. 4), negatively affecting their reading comprehension. Also, Hernon et al.'s (2007) and Vandenhoeck's (2013) studies of e-reading habits concluded that learners still find it difficult to interact with an electronic text for study purposes as annotation becomes more difficult and less desirable when depending on electronic means only. Participants mostly preferred using paper/non-electronic means of annotation and note taking.

Health issues, like eye strain (Jeong, 2012; Stone & Baker-Eveleth, 2013; Sun et al., 2012; Woody et al., 2010), are also a noteworthy concern expressed by users in different studies. Users, for example, find difficulties in spending a lot of time reading on a screen (Daniel & Woody, 2013; Falc, 2013; Stone and Baker-Eveleth, 2013). Although Vandenhoeck (2013) states that e-reading has become a common practice, Buzzetto-More et al. (2007) explain that e-reading can actually be up to 30% slower than reading print material. In their controlled study, Daniel & Woody (2013) also found that despite comprehension rates being similar between readers of print and e-textbooks, learners who depended on electronic reading spent more time achieving the same tasks. They speculate that slower reading speeds could be due to different reading strategies applied by students when reading electronically. These findings could be supported by Hernon et al. (2007), who report in their study of e-reading habits that students do employ unique reading patterns when reading ebooks or ejournals as compared to print versions. Sellen & Harper (2002), Shepperd et al. (2008), and Thayer (2011) state that some readers face difficulties while reading complex material on an electronic device because of the lack of sufficient supportive annotation features in current e-textbooks.

### ***Integrating e-textbooks***

Students' lack of exposure to electronic books adds to the importance of giving clear and direct instructions on how e-textbooks can be used to their full potential. Numerous studies stress that students' familiarity with print textbooks or tech-savviness does not make it a given that students automatically know how to properly use technologies, such as e-textbooks, for learning purposes (Al-Ali, 2014; Thompson, 2013; Vandenhoeck, 2013; Young, 2009): "there is an inevitable learning curve associated with digital content delivery" (Feldstein & Martin, 2013, p. 179). Accordingly, teachers who have reason to use such methods need to ensure that they provide their students with sufficient training at the beginning of the semester.

Similarly, one cannot assume that students are already aware of all available features in an e-textbook. Woody et al. (2010) found that learners were not utilizing "interactive elements in e-books" (p. 947) as much as expected, and as a result, interactivity of e-textbooks was not as helpful as expected in improving attitudes towards e-textbooks. It is true that, as Elias et al. (2012) point out, students' immersion in technology for general use in their daily lives will probably contribute to a fuller integration of e-textbooks. However, this process could be facilitated if students were directly taught how to use them. Philip & Moon (2013) explain that learners' awareness of how e-textbooks could improve their performance and learning outcomes affects their attitudes towards e-textbooks.

## Research focus

Although there has been a number of studies investigating e-textbooks and learners' attitudes towards them, few if any look into the use of e-textbooks in language programs specifically. ESL e-textbooks are unique in their nature as they aim to present not only new content, but also new language with its spoken and written components. Hence, this study seeks to investigate ESL learners' attitudes and perceptions towards using e-textbooks, as compared to print textbooks, as a language learning tool. The focus of this study is on the e-textbook experience in a pre-university setting (rather than the actual content of the textbook). Accordingly, this study attempted to investigate language learner's attitudes towards using e-textbooks as a learning tool in general, and more specifically towards using e-textbooks to develop their language skills.

## Context

The study took place in a language 'bridge' program at a higher education institution in the Middle East. In this program, students take extensive second/foreign language classes, 16-18 hours a week. The program is built on five levels to prepare students for studying in the institution which delivers almost all of its courses in English. Students are required to score a band 5 in IELTS to exit the language program and to join a degree program.

Since 2012, iPads have been used in this bridge program as the main tool of instruction, as part of a national government strategy to facilitate learning (Gitsaki et al., 2013). Although e-textbooks were introduced as soon as iPads were integrated into the curriculum, the e-textbooks gradually evolved from static PDF duplicates of print textbooks to dynamic e-textbooks that are designed to properly utilize the iPads' various features (such as handwriting) which are the focus of this study.

Students who participated in this study were 86 female ESL learners (17-22 years old) in two different levels of the same program: beginner and intermediate. 50 participants identified themselves as intermediate students and 34 as beginners; two participants did not identify their level. Although the two groups used two different e-textbooks, they all accessed the material using the same app from the same publisher, which offered the same features for both e-textbooks. These e-textbooks were used to teach reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary.

The main tool of research (a survey explained in detail in the next section), was administered mid-semester to ensure that students had some familiarity with the surveyed e-textbooks. In their responses to the survey, most participants identified themselves as extensive users of smart devices (see Table 1). Their frequent use of these smart devices reduces the likelihood of unfamiliarity with the iPad affecting their attitudes and perceptions of e-textbooks.

**Table 1: Participants' reported use of smart devices.**

Hours a day	Using smartphone (N)		Using iPad for learning (N)		Using iPad for fun (N)	
<b>0-3 hours a day</b>	19%	(16)	37%	(31)	47%	(40)
<b>4-7 hours a day</b>	46%	(39)	57%	(47)	37%	(32)
<b>8-10 hours a day</b>	35%	(30)	6%	(5)	16%	(14)

## Methodology

### ***Main data: survey***

An attitudinal survey was utilized as the main research tool for this study. It was designed and made electronically available through SurveyMonkey. The survey was administered mid-semester, in week 8 of the course. It was anonymous and voluntary, and asked for students' perceptions and attitudes towards using e-textbooks as a learning tool in general and for language learning purposes in particular (see Appendix A). In addition to a few general questions about students' technological skills, the survey contained questions about usability, access, features, and language-learning suitability. Questions were a combination of open-ended and closed questions. To gain more insight into participants' attitudes, one question included some general statements about the use of e-textbooks as learning tools in language classrooms, which students were asked to either agree or disagree with. They were instructed to leave a statement blank if they were not sure about it; additionally, to minimize any language difficulties or confusions, questions and choices were written in both English and Arabic, the learners' mother tongue. A total of 85 surveys were filled out voluntarily and anonymously; and the results were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

### ***Background data: focus group***

After a preliminary analysis of the results (See Al-Ali & Ahmed, 2014), the teacher conducted one focus group session with one of the surveyed classes, beginner level, (n=24) to discuss a few noteworthy trends. Notes concluded from this focus group were informally discussed with the other group, intermediate level, to ensure consistency. Both groups were in general agreement. Discussion prompts (see Appendix B) were mainly geared towards understanding some of the unclear trends that were found in the survey. The main themes that were targeted were: students' use of e-textbooks prior to joining the college, their current use of e-textbooks, and features they would like to see integrated in future updates. Information collected from the focus group was not the main focus of the study, hence remarks that were made by students in that focus group are not reported here in the findings; rather they are integrated in the discussion section to further explain the survey findings

### ***E-textbooks surveyed***

As e-textbooks differ in means of delivery, content presentation, and incorporated tools, it is important to identify the kind of e-textbooks examined in this study. Participants in this study had access to Oxford's language skills e-textbooks only, namely *Q Skills* for the intermediate group (58% of students, n=50) and Headway Plus for the beginner group (40% of students, n=34). These e-textbooks are accessible via iPads only using the publisher's app, *Oxford Books*. The app's interface resembles the layout of a traditional textbook (see Figure 1); a user can choose to zoom in to one page or view two pages at a time. As can be seen in Figure 2, tools offered in these e-textbooks include search capabilities,

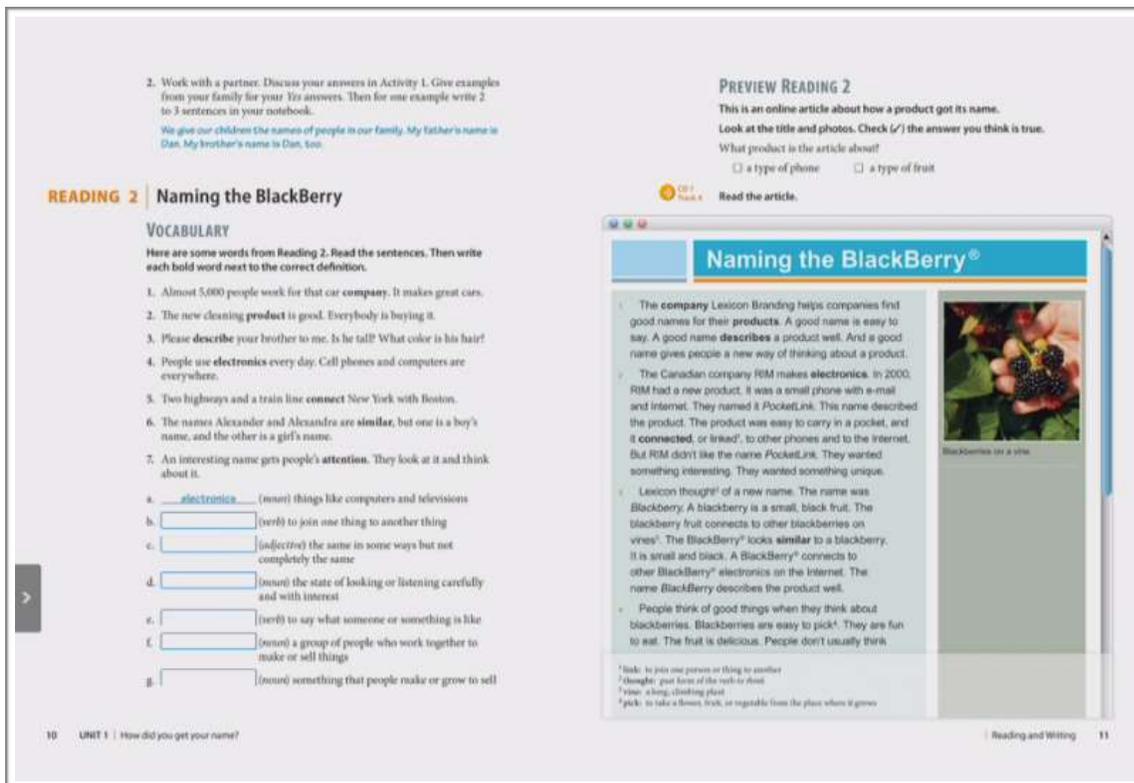


Figure 1: E-book layout (two-page spread).

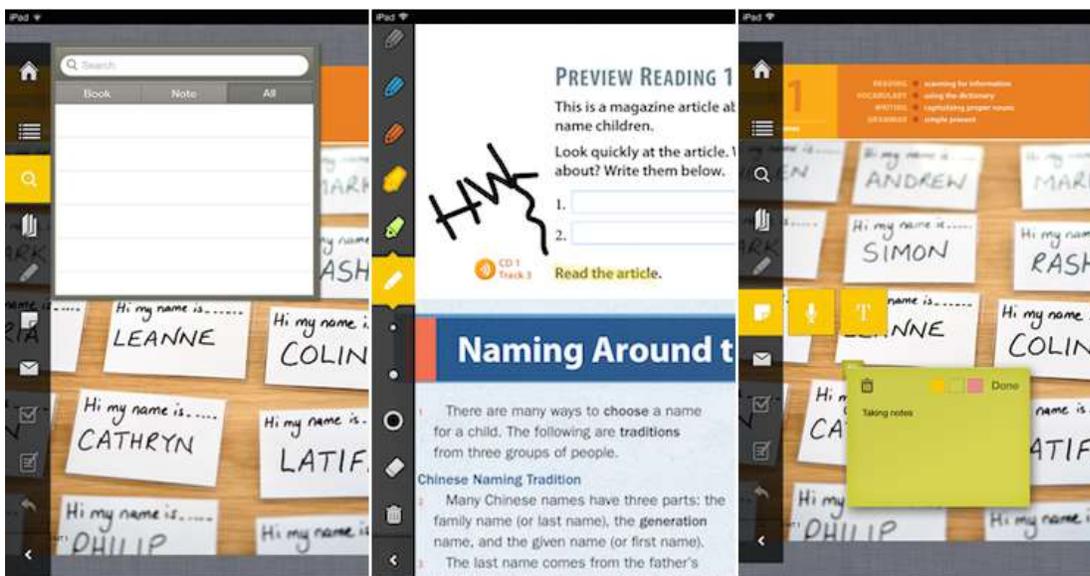


Figure 2: Screenshots: search, pen tool and user notes.

multiple navigation options, a pen tool, sticky-notes, ability to email watermarked screenshots of single pages, and hyperlinks. As can be seen in Figure 3, the app also allows learners to continuously check their answers and receive immediate basic feedback; using this feature, learners input their answers to

three kinds of questions (blank-filling, multiple choice, or matching) and tap a check button on the sidebar to know whether their answers are correct or not.

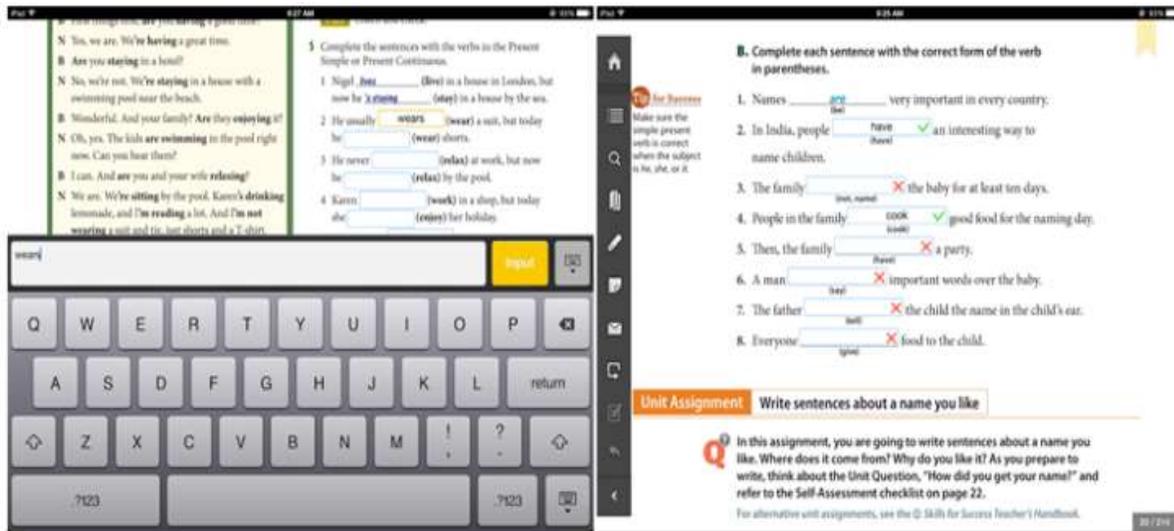


Figure 3: Exercise with learner input.

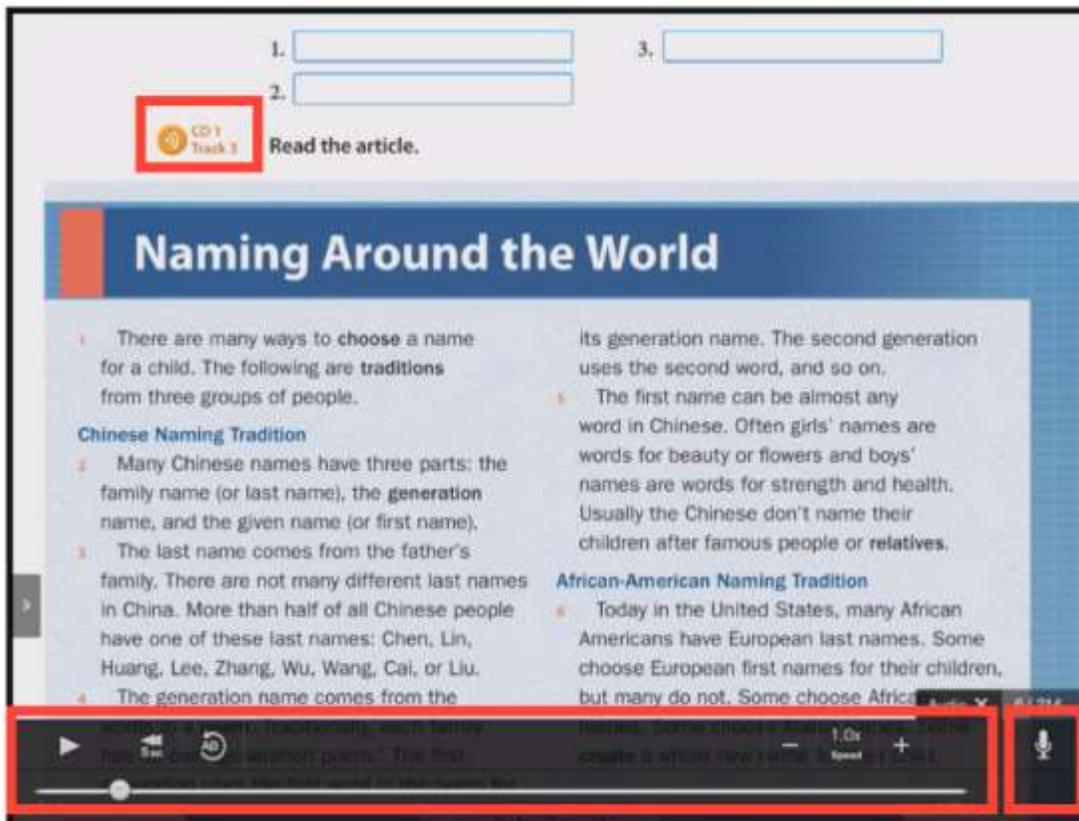


Figure 4: Playing/ recording a spoken version of a reading passage.

In terms of language-specific features, the app offers a variety of useful options. Firstly, for each reading text, the app offers an audio version of the text. This audio can be played, paused, and rewound at any

point (see Figure 4); its speed can also be adjusted to suit learners' proficiency levels. To further facilitate learners' ability to read texts accurately, the app allows learners to record their own reading of the text and compare it to the model audio offered by the app. Finally, audio parts for listening activities and lessons are integrated in each student's book to allow them to listen as many times as needed to a certain track, with an ability to adjust speed. There is no need for any additional apps or documents to play these audios; they are played within the app. A teacher also has the option to play the audio for the whole class via projecting her/his iPad to the projector; and the listening and speaking version of the *Q-Skills* book provides learners with a relevant video (with comprehension questions) before the beginning of each chapter.

### **Terminology**

Some of the terms used to present and discuss our findings might be defined differently in different contexts. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the term *e-textbook* is used to refer to the actual textbook that is accessed electronically via an app. An *e-book* is an electronic book that is not intended for educational purposes. The terms *app* and *publisher's app* are used interchangeably to refer to the app that is used to access these textbooks, that is: *Oxford Books*.

## **Findings**

### **General use**

To better understand students' attitudes towards e-textbooks, the questionnaire asked students about their general use of iPads, the main tool used to access e-textbooks. As shown above in

Table 1, students mostly (57%) spend an average of 4-7 hours a day using their iPads for learning purposes; the three most common apps mentioned were Quizlet (72%), Safari (72%), and Notes (59%). The e-textbooks app ranked fifth, with 37% choosing it as one of the common apps they use to learn. Participants have daily English classes, and 63% reported using e-textbooks on a daily basis in class. However, very few (4%) use their e-textbooks at home every day, and 47% use it only if required by their teacher.

### **Language skills**

Almost all respondents (95%) liked using e-textbooks to learn English, and thought their teachers were using e-textbooks suitably in class. Almost all participants (98%) believed that e-textbooks helped them improve their reading and listening skills the most. A somewhat smaller proportion (89%) thought that their writing and speaking skills were improved using e-textbooks (see Table 2). In open-ended responses, a few students identified lack of grammar focus as a reason to dislike e-textbooks, while some thought that the listening and reading content made e-textbooks useful.

A few learners (n=4) did not favour using e-textbooks to learn English; their answers to open-ended questions revealed that they believe e-textbooks are not more useful than print books, e-textbooks do not help them study more at home, and e-textbooks do not help them learn better. These learners also identified the publisher's app and difficulty of writing (also app-related) as features they do not like about e-textbooks. In one of their comments, a student explained, "*there are things that are better on paper*" (italics indicate quotations translated by the authors of this paper).

**Table 2: Students' perceptions of use of e-textbooks for language learning (n=83)**

Statements	Agree	Mean	SD
I like using e-textbooks to learn English.	95%	1.05	0.21
E-textbooks helped me improve my speaking skills.	89%	1.11	0.32
E-textbooks helped me improve my reading skills.	98%	1.02	0.16
E-textbooks helped me improve my listening skills.	94%	1.06	0.24
E-textbooks helped me improve my writing skills.	89%	1.11	0.32

### **Features**

As mentioned in a preliminary report of this study (See Al-Ali & Ahmed, 2014), students' answers to open-ended questions in the survey were insightful. Table 3 and Table 4 classify and summarize features that students mentioned liking and disliking about their e-textbooks. Students appreciated ease of use, ease of navigation, modernity, reading and listening content, instant feedback to answers, creativity, and interesting presentation. Other features that they liked about e-textbooks were "everything," "easy," "condensed and for entertainment," "not losing the book," and "change and avoiding boredom."

**Table 3: E-textbook features liked by participants (open-ended questions).**

Feature	Percentage of students
accessibility	31%
content	19%
ease of navigation	11%
facilitating learning	9%
modernity and creativity	8%
display and layout	3%
feedback to answers	3%
other	16%

On the other hand, as summarized in Table 4, students noted that they found it disturbing that the app did not provide extra space for their personal notes and free writing. Also, many were bothered by the fact that their answers are easily erased, whether when they try to correct one of the wrong answers or when they press on a button by mistake. A few other comments included difficulty in noting translations of new words, time lag issues, and the constant need for a charger.

**Table 4: E-textbook features disliked by participants (open-ended questions).**

Features	Percentage of students
taking notes/writing	31%
inputting answers	24%
app-related	21%
content	17%
other	7%

Content provided in e-textbooks was noted as a feature that is to both liked and disliked. Upon further analysis, listening and reading content seemed to be favorable as noted by 9 participants. Other participants liked pictures in the book, vocabulary and writing content, and the content's simplicity. Content-related features that were disliked included listening, grammar, and pictures of people.

Additionally, some students offered creative ideas to enhance their e-textbook experience. A student suggested adding animated pictures to reading passages to make reading more interesting and help learners remember information. This suggestion ("enjoyable stimuli": Lai & Rushikesh Ulhas (2012, p.332), has previously been reported to increase learners' willingness to use e-textbooks. Other suggestions for improvement included adding more footnotes to explain difficult words, and linking the text to a dictionary that allows learners to easily look up words. Although the iPad generally allows users to look up definitions of words, students cannot select text in the e-books and accordingly cannot utilize this feature. A few suggested adding more space and/or features to ease taking their own notes and on the book. When asked for clarification in the focus group, students noted that they sometimes need to add their teachers' explanation to their own remarks for future reference. Lack of white space prevents them from doing that. They also noted that the pen feature could be improved to make taking notes easier and more feasible.

### ***Print textbooks***

Around 60% of participants agreed that e-textbooks in general are more useful than print textbooks and have contributed to learning more than print textbooks would; moreover, 88% agreed that using e-textbooks in language classrooms facilitated learning a foreign language. Despite this, however, 63% believe that they would study better if they had print books. Comments added by some students in related questions could explain this preference: one of the common difficulties they faced was an inability to take notes on e-textbooks as one would on a print textbook. Also, some noted that health concerns, like eye strain, are a reason to prefer print books. Due to difficulties faced when inputting answers, participants also preferred to use using print textbooks to write answers.

When asked what kind of textbooks they would prefer to use if given the choice, 48% would choose e-textbooks, and 39% would rather use both print and e-textbooks. Participants were asked to explain their choices. Those who preferred to use only e-textbooks explained that e-textbooks are easy to use and carry around, electronically advanced, helpful in studying, and friendly to the environment. Students who would prefer to use both print textbooks and e-textbooks explained that a print textbook helps them take notes or write tasks faster and more easily. They also thought that a print textbook can be used as a 'plan B' if something happens to their iPads (e.g. if it runs out of charge or is forgotten), and

to reduce eye strain. Only one added, “some information should be noted down by students to last longer” (own translation). Similar reasons were provided by those who chose only print books.

Out of the 19 participants (23%) who had not liked using e-textbooks at the beginning of the semester, five students reported that they still did not like using at the time of the survey (mid-semester), and only two students had changed their minds from liking e-textbooks to not liking them. Students who revealed their loyalty to print textbooks believe that print books are an important study aid. Their answers to other questions show that their primary concern regarding e-textbooks was difficulties they face when inputting answers or taking notes.

## Discussion

### *Learners’ perceptions of e-textbooks as a learning tool*

Most participants’ lack of prior experience using ebooks or e-textbooks does not seem to have an effect on their willingness to adopt the new technology. Most learners had generally positive attitudes towards using e-textbooks as a learning tool. It also seems that users’ positive attitude towards the iPad, which offers the only way to access their e-textbooks, has shaped a better e-textbook experience: their ability to interact freely with an iPad as compared to a laptop and/or desktop PC might have eased handling e-textbooks.

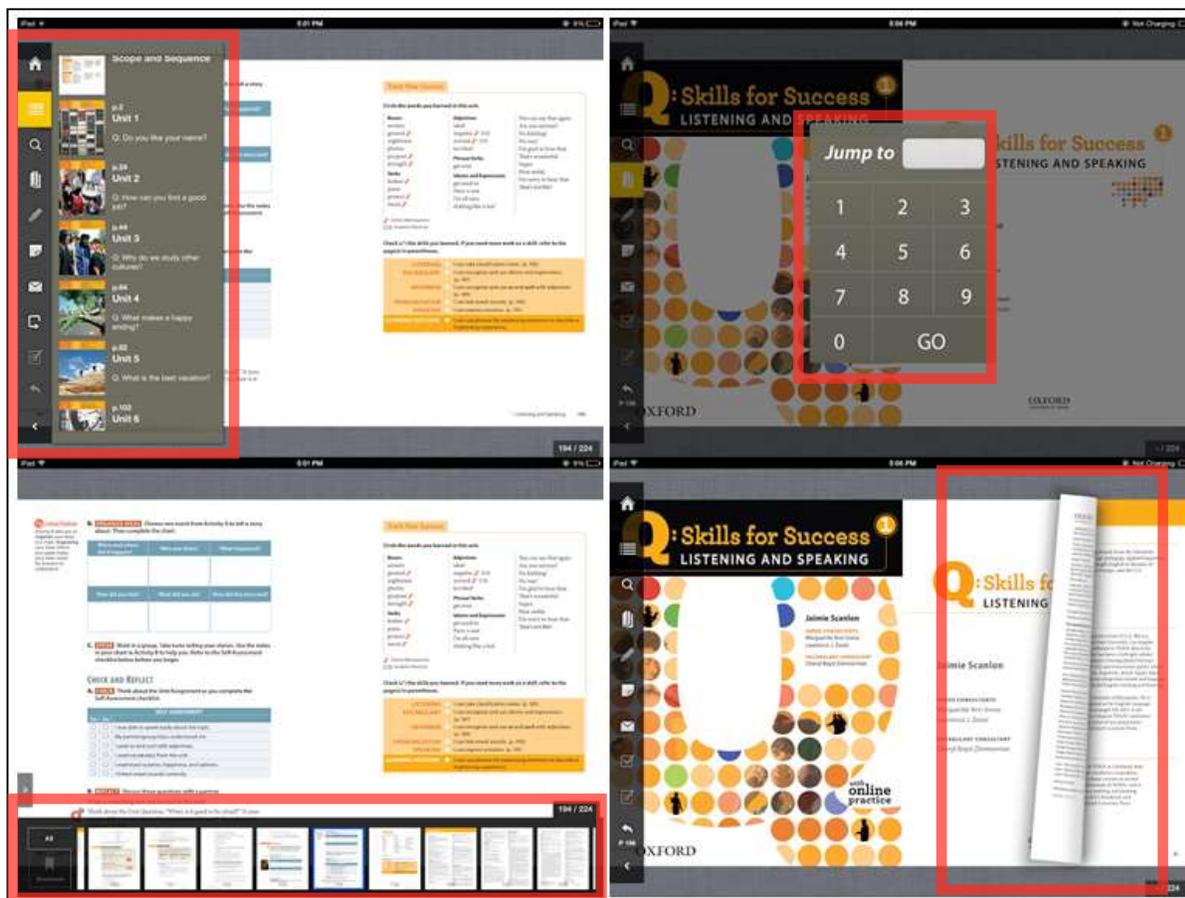


Figure 5: Screenshots showing different navigation options offered in the app.

While McKay (2011) reported users finding difficulty navigating e-textbooks, many participants in this study noted ease of navigation as a favorable feature. The current app design could explain this preference as it allows for various navigation options (see Figure 5): one can choose a unit from a side bar, browse through pages from a bottom bar, jump to a certain page and flip pages manually, as well as bookmark certain pages for future reference.

Participants' negative attitudes towards e-textbooks seemed to be mainly due to limitations they faced when interacting with the app. For example, learners noted that the inability to freely take notes wherever they need was problematic. In the focus group, few students said that they were not aware of the notes feature that is available in the app. However, the majority pointed out that the available feature was not as practical as taking notes on print books; one student said, "*I'm not free to write what I want where I want; there is no space.*" Also, although learners' ability to check if their answers were correct was seen positively, the feature came with its downsides: retries erased all previous answers (correct or not), and feedback was basic without any explanation to guide students. It was observed in classes that students easily became demotivated and rather than trying to understand the question, many resorted to guessing and/or copying correct answers from each other. As students discussed their dislikes about e-textbooks, they admitted that because they get "*so frustrated*" with their answers being erased after each attempt, they always depend on each other to answer different blanks, even if their teacher does not approve.

### ***Learners' perceptions of e-textbooks to develop their language skills***

Learners were generally happy with using e-textbooks to learn English. Their attitudes towards the role e-textbooks play in improving their language skills were more positive regarding reading and listening skills than for writing or speaking. This preference could be explained by the options and language-specific features that are offered for each skill in the surveyed e-textbooks. Reading passages are equipped with a spoken version that can be controlled to suit each learner's proficiency level. Support for listening skills is also advanced as students easily tap a button to listen to an audio track and repeat as needed; the speed of these audios can also be adjusted as per learners' preferences. A few of the high-achieving students in the beginner level explained that they used the audio to practice reading a passage before class. It gave them confidence to actively participate in class if they were asked to read out loud. In addition, the format of activities for reading and listening skills tend to be more iPad-friendly (see Figure 6). In contrast, writing activities are in a format that is open-ended but not interactive; that is, they require students to either add their answers using a pen or type a block of text, and neither can be checked, for example against model answers.

## **Implications**

Results from this study and observations from our classrooms suggest a few implications for ESL classrooms specifically, and for other classrooms that utilize e-textbooks in general. First, current e-textbooks often come equipped with a variety of features that can enable independent learning and encourage students to move along at their own pace. Among these features are: spoken versions of reading passages, immediate access to listening tracks, and an ability to check answers for interactive questions and to receive immediate but basic feedback. As seen in this study, students seemed to appreciate these features and believed that they contributed to their learning. However, as noticed by students, such iPad-friendly support is not fully available for more extended speaking and writing; hence, a teacher might need to supplement and provide additional materials to support certain skills. Certain apps can be used to assist in this; for example Voice Record Pro, a free app that allows users to

record their voice and store it on their iPads or email it, can be used to gather students' spoken responses for feedback by the teacher or by other students.

**MAIN IDEAS**  
Read the statements. Write T (true) or F (false).

1. People all over the world name children the same way.
2. People in the same family usually share the same last name.
3. A person's name can tell a story about that person's family.
4. Most naming traditions are the same.

**DETAILS**  
Read the statements. For each statement, check (✓) the tradition(s) the reading talks about.

	Chinese	African American	Spanish
1. The sound of the name is important.		✓	
2. The first name means something in the language.			
3. The first name is from a relative.			
4. Family members in the same generation share a name.			
5. The last name is from the father.			
6. The last names are from the mother and father.			
7. The parents create a name for the child.			

**Reading Skill** Scanning for information  
Scanning is reading very quickly to find pieces of information in a text. For example, you scan a phone book for a name or number. You move your eyes quickly over the text. You do not read every word. You look for the words or information you want. Scanning can help you answer questions quickly. Follow these steps.  
1. Read the question. Underline the important word or words in the question.  
2. Scan the reading text for the words you underlined.  
3. Circle the information you need in the reading text.  
4. Write the answer to the question.

**What Do You Think?**  
Complete the activities.  
1. Read each statement. Is it true for your family? Check (✓) Yes or No.

	Yes	No
1. We give our children the names of people in our family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. We give each child a unique name.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. We give our children the mother's family name.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. We give our children the father's family name.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. We make new names.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. We choose names in a different way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Scan Reading 1** to answer each question. Scan for the underlined words in the questions and circle the information in the text. Then write your answer.

1. What are the three parts of a Spanish name?  
(1) the given name  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is an example of an African American boy's name? \_\_\_\_\_

**Scan Reading 1** again to answer the questions. Remember to underline the important words in the questions and to scan for them in the text.

1. What are two Chinese relatives with the same generation name?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are two examples of African American girls' names?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are two examples of Spanish family names?  
\_\_\_\_\_

UNIT 1 | How did you get your name? | Reading and Writing 9 | 8 / 214

Figure 6: iPad-friendly, interactive activities to support reading skills.

Most of the unfavorable responses towards e-textbooks were expressing some kind of dissatisfaction not with the concept of e-textbooks themselves, but rather with features (or lack of) offered in currently used e-textbooks/ app (a similar conclusion was reached by Falc (2013) and Rose (2011)). As Falc (2013) suggests, teachers need to address these limitations early on in the semester to make students aware of their possibility, and to develop alternative methods to help provide students with all they need through other apps available on their iPads. For example, while students reported a common frustration with their inability to take notes on their e-textbooks, 59% (48) of them reported using Notes as one of the most commonly used apps. Notes is a free, built-in iPad app that allows for basic note taking and offers ample space for that; students can be directed to this app when they need extra space. As Notes currently permits users to add pictures, students could take a screenshot of certain page on their e-textbook, add it to Notes, and add their notes beneath it.

## Limitations

A few limitations to the present study should be borne in mind, and could be further investigated in future. Notably, the surveyed e-textbooks were accessed by iPads only. As noted earlier, students' positive attitudes towards using an iPad for learning purposes could have shaped their answers and

perceptions of using language e-textbooks. Furthermore, results may differ if the students used a different app or device.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined learners' perceptions and attitudes towards using e-textbooks in their language classrooms. Participants in this study mainly displayed positive attitudes towards using e-textbooks as a primary learning tool in their classrooms. However, there still seems some kind of loyalty to print textbooks probably due to this experience being their first encounter with e-textbooks. In terms of language specific results, learners were almost unanimous about their positive attitude towards using e-textbooks to learn English in general. They were also content with e-textbooks' ability to develop their listening and reading skills, with somewhat lower satisfaction for writing and speaking skills. These findings highlighted some teaching implications that might enable a smooth and efficient integration of e-textbooks in language classrooms.

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## Appendix A

### Survey questions

1. What kind of phones do you currently use? Please list all
2. How many hours do you approximately spend using your phone?
3. How many hours do you approximately spend using your iPad for fun?
4. Did you use the iPad as a learning tool before this semester?
5. Did you use e-textbooks as they are used now before this semester?
6. How many hours do you spend using your iPad for learning?
7. What kind of apps do you most commonly use for learning?
8. What do you like about the e-textbooks you currently use?
9. What don't you like about the e-textbooks you currently use?
10. If you were asked to add a few features to your e-textbooks, what would they be?
11. How often are e-textbooks used in your classes?
12. Do you think e-textbooks are suitably used in class?
13. Did you like using e-textbooks at the beginning of the semester?
14. Do you like using e-textbooks now?
15. Do you use e-textbooks at home?
16. If you were given the option, what would you prefer to use in your class: a print textbook, an e-textbook, or both?
17. Determine whether you agree or not with the following statements:
  - E-textbooks are more useful than print books.
  - I like using e-textbooks to learn English.
  - E-textbooks encouraged me to study more at home.
  - It was easy for me to learn how to use e-textbooks.
  - My teacher(s) explained to me how I can use e-textbooks.
  - iPads make it easier to use e-textbooks.
  - I would study better if I had a print book instead of an e-textbook.
  - E-textbooks are easy to use for anyone.
  - Using e-textbooks in my classroom helped me learn better.
  - I would like to use e-textbooks in my major courses.
  - E-textbooks helped me improve my speaking skills.
  - E-textbooks helped me improve my reading skills.
  - E-textbooks helped me improve my listening skills.

E-textbooks helped me improve my writing skills.

I am happy with the way iPads are used in class.

My teacher uses e-textbooks in a useful way.

18. Comments? Suggestions?

## **Appendix B**

### **Focus Group Items**

1. Did you use the iPad as a learning tool before this semester?
2. Did you use e-textbooks as they are used now before this semester?
3. What kind of apps do you most commonly use for learning?
4. What do you like about the e-textbooks you currently use?
5. What don't you like about the e-textbooks you currently use?
6. If you were asked to add a few features to your e-textbooks, what would they be?
7. If you were given the option, what would you prefer to use in your class: a print textbook, an e-textbook, or both?