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The Teaching of English to Arabic-speaking
Students

by

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INTRODUCTION

English is probably the most widely spoken language in the world. To begin with it is spoken by 719 million of people living in four of the five continents of the globe, the primary reason being British expansion. It is spoken in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and all territories that have been under British political or commercial influence. 200 million people speak it as a mother tongue and 519 million speak it as a second language. (1) Since the end of the second world war and with the victory of the Allies headed by English speaking American and Britain, the importance of English as a world language has increased tremendously. The increase was not merely the result of commercial or political expediency or the admiration of weaker nations for the victor; commercial or political factors of course are partially responsible for this swing in the popularity of the English language, but more effective factors have been the abundance of English publications in every possible form and on every possible subject and the popularity of Hollywood films, not to mention the fact that there are a great number of schools and universities in the world using English as a medium of instruction.

In the Near East where French has been firmly entrenched as a second language, English is slowly but surely becoming, if not more popular than French, at least as popular as French. In Lebanon a fairly large section of the people is "plus royaliste que le roi" as far as French is concerned, but English is rapidly coming to the fore. With

(1) Mario Pei, The World's Chief Languages, 1951 Ed. New York.

American influence increasing and with the establishment of many British or American business and commercial firms in Beirut, there has grown a demand for English-speaking personnel. French alone is no longer considered adequate for office requirements. The same situation prevails in other parts of the Near and Middle East where American or British oil companies occupy a prominent place in the economy of this geographical area. Many more people in the Middle East are learning English and using it in their conversation and correspondence than ever before.

It is therefore understandable why the need for English language teaching has grown to its present proportions and why so many people use English for commercial, cultural, social or political purposes. Unfortunately, the expansion in the number of those people has not been accompanied by an expansion of schools with good teaching methods. The subtlety of the English language and the deceptive simplicity of its grammar require trained teachers to tackle the task in accordance with findings in the field of linguistic study in general and of English language teaching in particular.

A thorough analysis of the skills involved in learning a language and a knowledge of the differences between Arabic and English should be of great assistance to those engaged in teaching English to Arabic-speaking students. It is not enough to regard Arabic merely a language differing from English in the same way as for instance, Spanish, German and French. For these are Indo-European languages, bearing close affinity to English from the point of view of their history, structure, etymology and grammar. German is first cousin

to English. Though the Anglo-Saxon language which is the 'skeleton' of the English language is Teutonic in origin, English has through Latin a considerable number of resemblances to French and Spanish. But Arabic is a Semitic language and much older than these. Its history is vastly different from theirs and the language is the expression of a totally different turn of mind and attitude to life. Furthermore, as a result of the cultural breakdown in the Arab world that began in the fourteenth century and prevailed right down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, spoken Arabic has degenerated to an extremely low level of colloquialism wherein the fundamental principles of Arabic are ignored. The difference between colloquial English and written English is one of degree, not of kind. For practical purposes, however, the difference between colloquial Arabic and literary or written Arabic is one of kind.

Thus, it is much easier for an Englishman to give an extemporaneous speech in his native language than for an educated Arab in his, since few educated Arabs use the correct form of Arabic in every day speech. Consequently in addition to the expected problems created by the basic differences between English and Arabic at its best, linguists who are concerned with teaching English to Arabic-speaking students have to cope with additional problems arising from the use of colloquial Arabic. There can be no doubt that if all Arabs spoke the same Arabic as is used in current newspapers and periodicals, the task of teaching them English or any modern language, for that matter, would not be as complicated as it is now.

X
absolutely
wrong +
unscientific

Another point already mentioned is the deceptive simplicity and subtlety of the English language. "To the person trained in another tongue the English language seems to lack any logical sequence: it is not regular and leads to much confusion"⁽¹⁾ An Arabic-speaking adult learning English for the first time finds the first two years of English quite easy compared with German and French. The genders are easy to learn, conjugation of verbs is quite simple, there are no declensions to worry about, structure appears to be easy, and the student finds that he is making rapid progress. After the second or third year, however, the progress gets clogged by the subtleties and inconsistencies of the English language; the rules he has learnt are of little help to him. He comes up against a barrier which unless he is shown how to overcome it, will cause him to develop a deformed English, such as one hears spoken by the majority of undergraduates at the American University of Beirut. Here are a few examples of the typical errors one hears or reads on the American University of Beirut campus:

Do you know when is he going to arrive?

Yesterday I have seen an interesting film.

Why you laugh?

The shopkeeper who his shop was burnt I know him.

Why you don't eat from this?

You have a quiz tomorrow, isn't it?

The professor wanted us to read the lesson and memorized it.

(1) Grow Lester D., An Outline of Educational Psychology, Section V, p.203, Barnes & Noble Inc., New York 1951.

He gave me many informations and advices.

There are books some of them without no date.

I am too (very) tired.

There was a student three years ago I knew him.

My brother he is playing football very good.

I born in 1950.

I want to cut my hair and make a new suit.

Most plays at West Hall have not very good sceneries.

Errors in pronunciation are also very common. The vowels are frequently given a wrong sound. The distinction in pronunciation between bold and bald; hall and hole; leaving and living, is frequently not made. Accents are placed on the wrong syllables and stresses on the wrong word; no word-linking is made between each word and words are pronounced as a separate unit from the other with glottal stops interrupting the natural cadence of the phrase.

It is the aim of this thesis to study the basic problems of teaching English in the light of some outstanding contributions made by linguists in the field of language teaching, and to see how their analyses and findings have modified the methods of teaching English in general, and how they can be applied to the teaching of English to Arabic-speaking students in particular.

The thesis thus begins with an up-to-date analysis of language skills. Some of the basic differences between English and Arabic structure, grammar and idiom are then indicated. (Phonology is not included because it is not within the scope of this study and is a complete study by itself). The importance of intelligent 'teaching'

of grammar to Arabic-speaking students in its progressive meaning is stressed. Finally the meaning of method is discussed and practical examples illustrating some of the principles in the discussion are given.

An appendix deals with the teaching of English Freshman students at the American University of Beirut. It gives an outline of the syllabus and an evaluation of its contents and the procedures employed.

It should be pointed out that many of the examples given in this thesis have been collected by the writer during his teaching of English at Freshman and Sophomore level in the past three years at the American University of Beirut.

CHAPTER I

An Outline of Skills Needed in Learning English

General Principles

Knowing a language means being able to speak it, write it, read it and understand it when spoken. These are four distinct and separable activities. They may be learnt independently of each other, but they are so closely interwoven for the normal individual that he finds it difficult to think or talk about any one of them without analysis of the rest. It is very important to make a thorough analysis of the various factors involved in learning a language so that the teacher may achieve a happy balance in prescribing a course for learning it. A teacher, for example, who is in the habit of requiring his class to recite a piece of English poetry every week, should ask himself: "Precisely what skills does this exercise develop and how fundamental are they in the total task of mastering the language?"

It is generally agreed by linguists that, fundamentally, language is speech and that writing is a substitute for speech. ⁽¹⁾ Accordingly, the first basic skill in learning a language is related to sounds and sound patterns. The child begins to speak before he writes. Understanding a foreign language implies, therefore, first a correct response to the sounds of which the language is composed, and, second, to their written symbols. The mastery of a language, however, involves more than the relatively passive process of understanding what is said

(1) Bloomfield, L., Language, Henry Holt & Co. 1954, p.21
Carroll, J.B., The Study of Language, Harvard University Press, 1953, pp.10-12.
Gatenby, E.V., English Language Teaching, Vol. IV No.6, March 1950, p.149.
Cornelius, Edwin T., Language Teaching, Thomas Crowell Co. New York p.99.

or read. Command of a language implies also the ability to speak and write it. Mere imitation is not enough. The student has to be able to reproduce the sound patterns and written symbols in such a way as to convey his own meaning correctly to a native speaker or reader of the language. Ideally he should be able to express his thoughts as effectively as he could in his own tongue.

Thus the four fundamental skills involved in learning a language require the formation of four main types of association habits, namely:

1. Translating sound to meaning - understanding speech
2. Translating meaning to sound - oral expression
3. Translating written symbol to meaning - silent reading
4. Translating meaning to written symbols - written expression

It is generally accepted, however, that the sound of the words enters into both reading and writing. ⁽¹⁾ Most people, when they are reading silently, make reduced movements of the vocal organs showing that sound images are present. The beginner usually finds it necessary to read aloud and on hearing the sounds he realizes the meaning. A similar process accompanies writing. A child, for instance, mouths the words he writes, and, though the adult represses all outward signs, the process of writing is accompanied by auditory and kinesthetic images. A language can be learnt in its written form alone, but not without giving sound values to the words. If the language is a dead language, it does not matter very much what these values are. If, on the other hand, the language is in use, it is important to acquire as correct a pronunciation as possible from the first moment of contact

(1) Grow Lester D., An Outline of Educational Psychology, Section V, p.178
Barnes & Noble Inc., New York, 1951.

with the written form. In English the fact that the correspondence of sounds to the written symbol is erratic - that English spelling is "unphonetic" - creates certain problems that are of peculiar difficulty in English.

The Difference Between Spoken and Written Language

The difference between spoken language and written language is primarily a difference of medium which gives them different functions in society. Speech is ephemeral while written language is permanent. Spoken language is closely tied to the persons speaking at a given time and to the situation they find themselves in. Written language is much less tied to its immediate material surroundings; it can carry more complicated thoughts and argument than most people can take in by ear.

The effects of the medium on grammatical construction and vocabulary are considerable. The English language lost most of its inflexions after the Norman conquest because, for nearly four centuries, it was a spoken not a written language. (1) A similar occurrence happened to Arabic in the six centuries preceding the nineteenth century, a period characterized by political decay and national disintegration. (2) But whereas English was then in the process of formation and had not yet taken a definite shape, Arabic had already crystallized and had been the medium for a vast literature. In other words, the changes in spoken Arabic were symptoms of decay, whereas in English they were factors in the dynamic growth of the language.

(1) Leguis and Cazamian, History of English Literature, Macmillan's, p.145.

(2) Nicholson, R.A., Literary History of the Arabs, Cambridge University press, p.460, 1953.

The English we speak is the development of a standard language from the vernacular, while current Arabic is the disintegration of a standard language into the vernacular.

It used to be taken for granted that the only true form of a language was its written form and that the spoken language was considered to be a mere reflection. In Arab countries, this view is certainly held today in respect of the Arabic language. Contemporary linguistic scholarship led by Bloomfield, however, holds that in any language the spoken form is the true and basic form.

The latter view has had a beneficial influence on the teaching of modern languages - particularly in relation to pronunciation, sentence stress, rhythm, and intonation. Its importance, however, should not be exaggerated, particularly in the case of students who are aiming at higher levels of education. Foreign language teaching is almost exclusively concerned with literate members of literate communities. Is the spoken language still primary for them, and if so, which spoken language? Is it the spoken language of semi-educated classes in England or America, as the King's English or "standard" American English? A good portion of Arabic-speaking students learning English hope to complete their education in institutions at home or abroad, where the medium of instruction is English. The student who graduates from American or European universities in the Near East and wishes to study at graduate level will, in the majority of cases, do so either at a University in England or America. The people he meets and comes in contact with will be educated people speaking a language closer to the written language than, say, that of the Cockneys in London or of the lower East side of New York. It

would be silly and pointless to impose on him a vernacular that will handicap him educationally and socially. Consequently in teaching English to Arabic-speaking students, or any non-English speaker, we should aim at the language spoken by the educated classes in England or America. This particular dialect has the advantage of being more widely understood than others, and, therefore, to understand it opens to the learner a wider range of English speech than any other form.

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Two of the manifestations of language are concerned with a spoken form and two with a written form; furthermore, two are active, namely oral and written expression, and two relatively passive, namely listening and reading. It might be better to call them expressive and receptive.

The two relatively passive, or receptive, activities must come first. It is possible to learn to read, without learning to write, or understand speech without being able to speak, but it is not possible to write without having learned to read or to speak without understanding speech. Many people understand certain foreign languages and read them fluently, yet find it difficult to speak with the same ease and fluency. Young children, as is well known, understand a great deal of what is said around them before they start talking themselves. A young boy, for example, went to the College Protestant Francais as a child and could speak French fluently when his family moved to Jerusalem. There he was placed in an English school. It did not take him long to learn to read and to understand speech but

it was nearly two years before he began to speak English. The interesting thing about this case is that he began to talk suddenly and correctly without any previous attempts at talking. This supports the theory that a period of incubation is necessary before passing from the receptive to the expressive stage. (1) In other words although passive learning may have effects that are not outwardly apparent, it is a necessary preliminary to self-expression and should not be hurried.

When we know a language well, some parts of it remain relatively passive. Some words, for instance, are under full control and are regularly used in speech or writing. Others are known in the sense that they are recognized and understood in a context, but are seldom used, if at all. Pedagogically speaking a teacher should recognize the various stages in the learning of new words. The first step is recognition in a context and the final one is recall. Between the two there are various stages of recognition. It is easier to understand a word in a context than in isolation. In the early stages it is far more valuable, however, to possess a relatively small active vocabulary which is under complete control, than a large disorganized one. A small, active vocabulary, if well chosen, will be enough to cover a wide range of subjects. It is therefore best when teaching beginners to present to them for passive learning, a small well-chosen vocabulary the whole of which is suitable for later active use.

Similarly the teacher dealing with advanced pupils should keep this distinction in mind when setting exercises on sentence structure and grammar. The future perfect tense (He will have gone

(1) Eisenson, J., The Psychology of Speech, p.86, Harrap 1938.

away by June) should not be introduced too soon or required of the student at an active level. This tense is not so commonly used as others and the initial stages of dealing with it should be at a passive level.

Understanding Speech

In trying to understand a foreign language when it is spoken to us, two factors are involved. First, is the sensory basis of speech - the actual sounds and sound patterns which pass from one person to another. Second, is the meaning to be attached to the sound patterns by the listener. The first of these factors is concerned with sensations of sound and their correct identification. The second is a matter of perception, the sensations are interpreted in the light of previous experience. (1)

A. The Sensory Basis

We have usually little difficulty in identifying the sounds and sound patterns used when we listen to our mother tongue. In learning a foreign language, however, this identification of the sounds used is not always so simple. Four main obstacles make it difficult: (2)

1. The foreign language may present sounds or sound groups that may be entirely new to the listener. The "p" sounds in English are new to an Arab who has never heard a European language just as the 'th' (θ ð) is new to a Frenchman. (Oddly enough, Arabs educated

(1) Lewis, M. M., "Fundamental Skills in the Learning of a Second Language", *English Language Teaching*, Vol. II, No.7, May 1948.

(2) Bloomfield, L. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 81-84.

in French schools have the same difficulty with 'th', despite the fact that the sounds occur in Arabic (ث 'th'). That may be due to the fact that in colloquial Arabic we do not observe these sounds). Thus the tendency for the Arab learner is to hear "pig" as "big" and "pray" as "bray".

2. In other cases, the foreign language may require the listener to distinguish between pairs of sounds that are not clearly distinguished in his own language. For instance, to the untrained Arab ear, the vowel sound in "hall" sounds the same phoneme ⁽¹⁾ as "hole", and the vowel sound in "begun" ~~to~~ the same phoneme as "began". A native of Tripoli would pronounce the Arabic word for "ball" as "taubeh" (tɔb i) rather than "tahbe" (ta.bi), but he does not realize that he is pronouncing this differently. This explains why so many Arab students confuse "bald" and "bold" and why they mispronounce such words as "because" and "course".

a) Briefly in the first case the learner fails to estimate correctly the sound in the foreign language and identifies it with a sound of his own mother tongue.

(1) Pike, K. L., Phonemics, University of Michigan Press, 1947. A phoneme is a distinctive unit of sound which consists of submembers of sound. These are slightly different varieties which a trained foreigner might detect but which a native speaker may be unaware of. Each language has its own phonemes. The aspirated (pʰ) in "picture", the unaspirated "p" in "spent", the unreleased (p̚) in "cup" are submembers of the same phoneme.

b) In the second he fails to recognize the difference between certain shades of sound because in his language they are members of the same phoneme.
(1)

3. A third difficulty is related to the difficulty of adapting oneself to the rhythm and intonations of a foreign language. A language does not consist of isolated words but of groups of words. "Rhythm is a critical factor in intelligibility, and inability to reproduce. English rhythm is one of the most frequent reasons why foreigners are misunderstood. -- The intonation pattern is as essential to intelligibility as the rhythm."
(2) Two summers ago, in Italy the writer happened to be riding in the same bus as a group of West Africans. They were speaking a language which he thought was an African dialect, yet sounded vaguely familiar. As he got used to the lilt of their voices, he realized they were speaking English and very correct English it was too. Yet it was impossible to recognize it as such at first. In certain tone languages such as the Chinese, the same word changes in meaning if the tone with which it is uttered is raised or lowered.

(1) Lloyd James, A., The Broadcast Word, pp.157-8. Kegan Paul, 1935. Note: In Arabic, the heavy (t) modifies the vowel sound after it. Viz. (tin) (figs) and (tin) (mud). In English, the vowel (u) modifies the (t) in (tusk) and (a) in (task). In Arabic (t) and (t) are separate phonemes, but in English they are members of the same phoneme.

(2) Lloyd James, Op. Cit.

This is true of certain African dialects too. In English although the word "darling" uttered by an angry wife may mean just the opposite, we cannot regard English as a tone language. The change is rather due to the situation and emotional change of the tone.

4. The difficulty of speed of utterance. The student of English needs to be trained not only to hear the differences between the phonemes and intonations of English but to hear English speech at the speed normally used by English speakers. A teacher who accustoms his student to understand only slow speech is not fulfilling his task as he should.

To sum up the teacher of English should make one of his chief targets in the early stages the development of the student's ability to identify the sounds of the foreign language correctly. The difficulty of hearing correctly the sounds produced is a very real one for students of a foreign language, unless they have particularly fine ears. The chief difficulty with Arabic-speaking students in this connection is related to vowel sounds. For instance, the vowel sounds in must and mast belong to the same phoneme in Arabic, but they are separate phonemes in English. The student's attention should be drawn to this difference and he should be trained to hear the difference between these and other English phonemes, both singly and in words.

A list of pairs of words which are likely to be mispronounced by Arabs because of their inability to distinguish English phonemes illustrates difficulty in phonemics.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|--------|--------|-------|------|-------|---------|-----|
| (a) | distraction | last | mast | sack | lamp | slam | rapture | |
| (a) | destruction | lust | must | suck | lump | slum | rupture | |
| (o) | bold | scold | cold | foal | hole | choke | bowl | low |
| (o) | bald | scald | called | fall | hall | chalk | ball | law |
| (o) | coast | boat | though | sow | goal | | | |
| (o) | cost | bought | thaw | saw | gall | | | |
| (i) | read | beat | sheep | leave | keel | seat | beach | |
| (i) | rid | bit | ship | live | kill | sit | bitch | |
| (c) | cheap | chair | cheat | chin | chip | watch | | |
| (s) | sheep | share | sheet | shin | ship | wash | | |

B. The Perceptual Basis

The second main factor affecting the understanding of speech is perceptual - namely, the correct interpretation of the sensations received through the ear. Assuming that the student has heard the sounds correctly we have to be sure that he attaches the correct meanings to the sounds he receives, the meaning that the speaker intends to convey. The speaker has in mind certain experiences associated with particular patterns of sounds. These can have no meaning for the listener unless he has some similar experience associated with the sounds. Children born during the last war in England had never seen oranges until a year or so after the war was over. Oranges meant nothing to them, because they had never entered into their experience. Things found in a European house are entirely different from those found in a simple Arab peasant's house.

The teacher may explain the meanings of the word connected with the equipment of the home, but the lack of common experience remains a barrier to complete understanding. Equally, if not more, difficult to explain are the differences in the social environment - behavior, customs, manners, what is "done" and what is not "done", not to mention the ideas and ideals that underlie social behavior.

Thus to understand a foreign language is not simply a matter of attaching the corresponding meaning in one's own language to a word in the foreign language. It is much more, it involves entering the whole way of life and trying to understand the total culture of the foreign nation. For instance, stories about King Arthur and his Knights, Robin Hood and legendary figures in British or American history, not to mention such fairy tales and myths as British or American children and adolescents are exposed to, open up a new world to the Arabic-speaking student which help in promoting community of experience.

C. The Sentence

It is difficult to find a satisfactory definition for a sentence. Here are some definitions by leading language teachers:

(1)

"The sentence is the unit of speech"

"A sentence is a combination of words which express a
(2)
thought with intelligibility and completeness".

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- (1) Gardiner, A.H., The Theory of Speech and Language, p.88, Clarendon, Press, 1932.
- (2) Low and Hollingworth, Matriculation English Course, p.165, University Tutorial Press, 1950.

"A sentence is a group of words that makes complete
(1)
sense".

"A sentence is a group of words containing a complete,
independent thought or a group of closely related
(2)
thoughts."

"An English sentence is not a group of words as words
but rather a structure made up of form-classes or parts
(3)
of speech".

The writer would modify these definitions by adding that a sentence must contain a finite verb, stated or implied (as an elliptical sentence).

To understand a sentence, however, the listener must know the meaning of all the single words used, or be able to infer some of them from the context. This includes also the ability to understand the significance of inflected forms of the words, such as the tenses of the verbs, plurals and so on. But this is not enough. The question of syntax or word order must be fully appreciated by the student. In English the order of the words is an essential part of the whole meaning of the sentence. For instance, in Arabic the meaning of the sentence is independent of word order:

qatal-ar-rajulu ath-thawra rajul = man

-
- (1) Olipant, L., A General Certificate English Course, p.33, Cassel & W. Ltd. London, 1953.
 - (2) Shaw, Harry, A Complete Course in Freshman English, Harper & Bros. 1951.
 - (3) Fries, Charles, The Structure of English, University of Michigan, 1953, p.64.

killed the man the ox thawr = ox
would still mean the same thing even if we invert
the position of thawr and rajul, thus

gatal - ath - thawra ar - rajulu

This is because the suffix (u) at the end of rajul indicates that it is the subject and the suffix (a) in thawra indicates that it is an object. English having lost almost all its inflections, depends entirely for such distinctions on the order of the words in the sentence. Furthermore in such sentences as:

He only pushed me. He pushed only me.

more than a knowledge of the meaning of all the words is required. A pupil may know the meaning of all the words, but he is still unable to understand the sentence. To understand connected speech, the listener must be familiar with the significance of the common sentence patterns used in English, including the various types of complex sentences. The modern trends in language-teaching emphasize the practice of sentence types and of words in sentences rather than drill on the meanings of isolated words. Thus when these various elements associated with the patterns of sound penetrate the listener's consciousness, he reorganizes them into a whole thought. In other words, listening is an active process of response to the sound
(1)
images that reach the brain.

(1) Eisenson, Jon. Op. Cit., p.75.

D. The Auditory Memory Span

Since the interpretation put upon many sounds depends upon words that come later in the sentence, the meaning of the word spoken dawns gradually after the sentence is completed. The process of interpretation does not always keep pace with the sound but runs backward from some points. (1) That is why in giving speeches and public addresses the speaker makes a point of repeating his ideas and using shorter sentences than he would in writing. In listening to a rather long and complex sentence, the listener has to hold the earlier parts of the sentence in mind while still receiving the later parts in order to grasp the complete thought of the speaker. Ability to do this depends largely on the hearer's familiarity with the material heard both in its vocabulary and content. It is obvious that when one listens to a foreign language, the memory span is probably a good deal shorter than when one listens to one's native language. In the early stages of study, the teacher must be careful to use very short simple sentences. As the student progresses he can take in longer sentences. This shows the importance of grading the material presented and systematic drill.

Understanding written Symbols

The process of interpreting written or printed symbols in one's own language involves three stages:

A. The Beginning Stage

When the stimulus of the written or printed symbols reaches

(1) Phillipsbury, W.B. and Meader, C.L., The Psychology of Language, Appleton, 1928, p.45.

the brain, it arouses various associations. The primary association is that of the sound of the word. In the early stages of learning to read, the pupil usually finds it necessary to say the word aloud. On hearing the actual sound of the word, or on perceiving the auditory images called up by the visual stimulus, the reader recognizes the word. That is, the sound calls up associations which have previously become attached to that sound pattern.⁽¹⁾ A child, before he comes to school knows what the sound [tebl] stands for. When he sees the printed symbol table, he knows that it refers to an object at home. As he hears and says the sound, the teacher recalls to his mind his previous association with that sound pattern. Thus, at the most elementary stage learning to read necessitates forming a new associative bond between a printed symbol and a sound where the sound is already associated with some object or action. The child already knows the word in its spoken form, and learning to read involves forming new associations between the familiar auditory image and the new visual image representing the word in its written or printed form.

B. The Transition from Oral to Silent Reading

As the printed symbols become more familiar in course of practice, the visual symbol by itself becomes a sufficient stimulus to call up the meanings associated with the spoken

(1) Grow, Lester D., Op. Cit., p.178

word. Young readers may often be observed 'mouthing' the words, articulating without actually producing the sounds, but as speed of recognition of words increases this habit becomes less and less necessary and eventually fades out. The original oral reading habit is gradually replaced by inner speech.⁽¹⁾ Silent reading can be much more rapid than oral reading, because the eye can move more rapidly in taking in words than the tongue can move in articulating them.

C. Reading by Word Groups

⁽²⁾

According to Vernon, it has been established that the more experienced and efficient reader takes in groups of words between each movement of the eye, unless occasionally, he encounters a new word or expression. It is the poor reader who reads word by word. The better the reader, the greater his eye span. Thus reading is not merely producing the appropriate sound at the sight of the word. It is a process of reconstructing the thoughts of the writer according to the visual pattern presented, and into that reconstruction something of the reader's own personal reactions are bound to enter, thus colouring his understanding of what he reads.

So much for analyzing the process of reading one's own language, where the student approaches reading with some command of the spoken language.

(1) Grow, Lester D., Op. Cit., p.179.

(2) Vernon, M.D., The Experimental Study of Reading, Chap. IV, Cambridge University Press, 1931.

D. Learning to Read a Foreign Language

The above analysis throws light on the process of learning to read a language, other than one's own native language. In learning to read a foreign language there are various possible ways of attaching meaning to the printed symbol:

1. The Deciphering Stage

At the lowest level a student, with the aid of a bilingual dictionary finds the meaning in his language for each or most of the words in the foreign sentence, and by piecing them together he arrives at an approximation of the meaning. This is not proper reading. It is deciphering, where the individual words are not necessarily identified as sounds, and so will leave very little impression on the learner's memory. Furthermore it is not always possible to find exact equivalents in the native language for each word in the foreign language. For instance, there are no English equivalents for Mabrook, daymeh or Sahtein. Unfortunately the English-Arabic dictionaries that exist are, at their best, unsatisfactory and are responsible for some of the poor English one frequently hears. At any rate, the meaning of a sentence is often more than the sum of its parts. It is only the process of comprehending meaning that can properly be considered as reading.

This refutes the theory advanced by some teachers of English that comprehension tests are mere tests of vocabulary.

Efficient reading involves more skills than the mere knowledge of meanings of individual words. Comprehension tests show the student's grasp of sentence structure, grammar, syntax and idiom.

2. The Translating Stage

This represents a stage in advance of deciphering, for it is concerned with the complete thoughts rather than the individual words of the writer. The reader learns to pronounce the words in the foreign language, but the sound of the foreign word is linked primarily to the corresponding word in his own language, and so indirectly to the meaning. In reading he will produce approximately the appropriate sounds and in some cases these will convey the meaning directly to him, but whenever difficulty in understanding arises, he will try to express the thought of the writer in his own language. Bad teaching of English in elementary schools, where the teacher translates literally from English into Arabic, rather than give the equivalent expression in Arabic, is directly responsible for some of those weaknesses in English which the English staff of the Freshman class at the American University of Beirut have to overcome.

A practical illustration is concerned with the verb-preposition combinations which are so prevalent in English. In isolation a verb has a certain meaning, when it is followed by a preposition (used as an adverb) a different meaning, and when it is followed by a different preposition the meaning will

will change again. Consider the different meanings obtained with the verb get when we change the 'adverb' after it.

- It is dangerous to get rich quickly - become
We got to London by the early train - arrive
This clever boy is sure to get on - progress
She lived alone as she could not get on with her family - to agree with
He will soon get over his illness - recover from
He was so obstinate that no one could get round him - persuade

Now most Arabic-speaking teachers teaching English in elementary and secondary grades overlook this fact and give only one meaning for the verb. Admittedly, the student's mind would be confused if all the verb-preposition combinations were taught in one lesson. Only a few need be introduced, but he should be made aware of the existence of other combinations.

(1)

West maintains that it is possible for the translation process to be dispensed with by the teacher's insisting on speed in silent reading of material which contains no new words. In such conditions the reader no longer feels the need for reference to his own language.

3. The Direct Process

At this level the teacher attempts to reproduce the same conditions as in the case of the child learning to read his native

(2)

language. Words which are to be read are first taught as

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- (1) West, M., How to Use the New Method Readers: A Teacher's Handbook p. 40, Longmans Green, 1946.
(2) Anderson, D.F., "Learning English" English Language Teaching p.182, August 1953.

speech so as to build new direct associations between familiar objects and actions and their foreign names. Only when these associations have been so well established that the child can think about these objects or actions in the foreign language will he be taught to read the symbols for them. This method should help in promoting greater fluency in reading and more perfect comprehension, because the student does not have to keep referring to another series of auditory symbols in his own language. It is also more possible for him to understand whole thoughts as represented by the sentence patterns of the foreign language. It is interesting to note that by means of this system, the foreign reader passes through stages similar to those of the native child learning to read - viz. (1) oral reading with emphasis on correct word recognition; (2) oral reading with emphasis on reading by word groups; (3) suppression of full articulation until the words are perceived as clues to the meaning of the passage as a whole.

Finally, it should be noted that the amount of transfer from the understanding of printed material to the understanding of spoken material is frequently rather small. A foreign student of English who has learnt entirely by reading and translation methods, will have great difficulty in understanding spoken English. He may have a wide vocabulary and a good understanding of English constructions as he has met them in books, but he is tied to the printed symbol. In listening to a speech he may understand very little and yet be quite capable of

understanding the newspaper report the next day. Part of this difficulty is that in reading the learner can set his own pace, whereas in listening he has to follow the pace of the speaker.

On the other hand, students who learn English by means of a method that is largely devoted to aural drills, will have corresponding difficulty in reading. Part of this difficulty will be due to the fact that the sentence structure is more complicated than what he has been used to listen to, while the vocabulary is more extensive.

Aural drills should be complemented by, or should be a complement to, training in graded comprehension exercises and precis writing. The claim that comprehension tests are merely tests in vocabulary is not sound, since a passage, long or short, does not consist of isolated words strung together at random. The question of sentence-structure and patterns - of relating the subjects to its verb, even when they are separated by a series of parenthetical statements, the selection of the main points - surely requires more than the knowledge of the meanings of isolated words. Furthermore, the meaning of a word cannot always be isolated from the context. Consequently in determining an English course, especially for adult students, one should not over-stress the aural-oral approach at the expense of reading and writing, but keep a happy balance between the two.

Expression in Language

In understanding speech and reading, the pupil is required to respond to limited, objective stimuli, namely sound and print, but in trying to express himself orally or in writing, he responds to a different stimulus - the total situation in which he finds himself in relation to his total knowledge of the language.

A. Stimulus Leading to Expression

The following elements which are parts of the total stimulus should be taken into consideration:

1. The person the learner is addressing. His teacher, his mother, his classmates will evoke a different type of speech.
2. His purpose in speaking or writing, e.g., to ask for a meal at home or in a restaurant, to suggest going to the cinema to a fellow, to answer an examination question in school, or to write an essay on a given subject.
3. The thoughts and ideas he has in mind to express.
4. His power of selecting and arranging his ideas in coherent form and correct order. Certain situations will probably require some degree of logical analysis.
5. His knowledge of sentence forms and word patterns that he can use in order to relate his thoughts in proper sequence.
6. His "active vocabulary" or the words he can quickly recall to meet the needs of the total situation, as distinguished from his "passive vocabulary" consisting of the words whose meaning he recognizes in reading or lie-

tening, but which he does not normally use in his own speech or writing.

7. The affective elements in the situation as they influence expression. The speech of a person who is upset or annoyed for instance, is bound to be conditioned by his feelings. Furthermore, the same phrase could have different meanings by merely changing the emotional tone with which it is expressed.

B. Requisites for Linguistic Expression

The two major requisites for linguistic expression are:

1. Have something to say.
2. Know how to say it.

In the case of the child learning his own mother tongue these two aspects of expression develop side by side. For the foreign learner, if he is an adult, the difficulty is primarily one of expression. ⁽¹⁾ He starts with a store of ideas already acquired through his own tongue, and the greater the store, the greater the difficulty in expressing them in the new language. He is handicapped by the habit of his native speech and the complexity of the ideas he wants to express.

To express his ideas he needs to acquire a whole stock of new words for things, actions and qualities with which he is already familiar. Here are two examples taken from essays of two Freshmen students. An American or an Englishman reading these essays would be at a loss to understand

(1) Huse, H.R., Reading and Speaking Foreign Languages, p.9.
University of North Carolina Press, 1945.

what these sentences meant, especially the first one.

"He carried a great deal on them."

"It did not come to my taste to join the Syrian Army".

The first sentence is a literal translation from the Arabic expression meaning: He launched an attack against them or, He maligned them.

The second, again a literal translation from the Arabic, is easier to decipher. The student wishes to say that it did not suit him to join the Syrian Army!

As meanings in many cases do not correspond exactly in the two languages and the student must always remember that they do not, difficulties will arise over new words which do not correspond exactly to the old ideas.

To give a simple example, students sometimes ask me about the English equivalent for certain expressions such as

نعيم (na'im) which is said to someone after he's had a bath, a shave or a haircut. They are told that the idea does not exist in English. The word is derived from "na'im" which means 'paradise'.

On the other hand the new language is almost certain to bring to his notion a number of new concepts for which his own language may have no single counterpart at all. This is particularly true in the scientific field. In the socio-cultural field current in Britain such as an "airing cupboard" or "airing one's shirts" symbolize concepts that are not found in Arabic even though a literal translation can be given.

Then there is the question of new words, idioms, such as prepositional phrases, prepositions used with verbs and so on.

1. Vocabulary

There are three stages in learning a new word. First there is recognition, second there is recall, and third there is selection. The recognition stage is of various degrees. To recognize a word in the right context is easier than supplying the right word to fill a blank in a sentence. For purposes of expression, however, a further degree of mastery is required. The student should be able to recall the words or phrases needed to express his ideas. Sometimes this will involve making a choice from two or more words from among several synonyms such as: hate, dislike, loathe, detest. The correct choice in such cases will be based upon a wider acquaintance with the language. A choice has also to be made in suiting the style of writing or speaking to the requirements of the social situation. Mastery of expression necessitates recognizing and applying different types of speech appropriate, for example, to the lecture hall, the drawing room, and the beach. This means that the speaker or writer must have at his command different styles of expression suited to both the formal and the informal occasion. Students at this university tend to use either of two extremes - the formal (bookish and old-fashioned expressions) or slang.

"Is that guy in the corner your brother?" a student asked a young woman at a West Hall function.

"May I have the pleasure of escorting you to the college", said another.

Sometimes the wrong word is used: "We decided to procrastinate the game".

2. Construction

Another very important requirement of expression is that the student has to learn to put together the words he has learnt in new patterns of speech or writing. This is more difficult to learn than the new vocabulary, for many reasons:

- a) Word order. English syntax differs greatly from Arabic syntax.
- b) Tenses of verbs follow a totally different system.
- c) In Arabic it is possible to construct sentences without a finite verb.
- d) Verbs do not always agree with their subjects in Arabic.
- e) The frequent use of the definite article in Arabic.
- f) Subordination of thought is less frequent in Arabic and therefore sentences in Arabic tend to be a series of short clauses joined together by "and".
- g) In Arabic there are only three parts of speech, the Noun, the Verb, and the "Letter" (Al-Harf). Adjectives, Adverbs, Relative pronouns, Pronouns belong to the

Noun group to which can be attached the definite article, which then becomes a sort of prefix. In the "Letter" group we have prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. These differences will be fully discussed in a later chapter. Meanwhile they should serve as an indication of the many obstacles which the Arabic-speaking student comes up against in his study of the English language.

3. Co-ordination and Subordination of Thought

A third skill is required of the writer or speaker - namely to order his thoughts in such a way as to give prominence to the basic idea and subordinate the secondary ideas. This requires as much mental training in trying to discriminate between the relative importance of the ideas as it does linguistic training.

Drill in analysis and synthesis of sentences is one of the methods employed to cultivate this skill. In England analysis of sentences into clauses (not detailed analysis) is taught in all secondary schools and there is always a question dealing with analysis in all the General Certificate Examinations. It has been found from experience that analysis of sentences has, indirectly, a marked effect on raising the standard of precis writing, comprehension and essay writing.

(1) First hand information obtained from discussions with English teachers at special conferences held at Stratford-On-Avon in the summers of 1950 and 1951 and from personal observations drawn from personal experience while teaching at Millfield School, Somerset, where the author taught for two years and a half, not to mention statements repeatedly made by the Headmaster.

In short the mastery of any language requires two main elements: Construction and Vocabulary.

In the older methods of teaching a language, one began with the new vocabulary, then studied the rules of grammar, then tried to use the words in sentences according to the rules. Such is the method used in all government schools in Jordan, for instance, where English language teaching is in a pitiful state.

The new methods, however, emphasize the importance of analogy as one of the basic processes in expression. The pupils are made to learn type sentences by heart and to practice them by the use of substitution tables. At the same time the effort is made to build up by extensive reading of easy material a feeling for the right form or pattern, based partly on unconscious assimilation and to a lesser extent on grammatical analysis. This method aims to reproduce the processes by which we check the correctness of expression in using our native language. When we correct ourselves or others in speaking our own language, we do so because of a sense of dissatisfaction (1) we get when we hear an error. In fact frequently when we are not sure of the correctness of an expression, we test it by uttering the two or more alternatives aloud and discard those that do not "sound right" to us. A corresponding process occurs when we are not sure of the spelling of a word.

(1) Phillipsbury, W.B., Op. Cit., pp.197-199.

(1)

Samples of Substitution Tables

A man who TEACHES is a teacher.

A man whom I TEACH is a student.

Key example: the lessons which we ATTEND give us practice in English.

Observe patterns I and II:

| | | | | | |
|----|----------------|------|---------|------|-------------------|
| I | The man | WHO | VISITED | John | |
| | The man | WHO | VISITED | me | is from New York. |
| II | The man (WHOM) | JOHN | VISITED | | lives in Paris. |
| | The man (WHOM) | I | VISITED | | lives in Paris. |

COMMENTS

- The difference in word order indicates an important difference in meaning in these two patterns.
In Pattern I, THE MAN visited John (or me).
In Pattern II, JOHN (or I) visited the man.
- "Whom" is frequently omitted in Pattern II.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF PATTERN I

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| The book | THAT | CONTAINS | those exercises is at the bookstore |
| The books | THAT | CONTAIN | those exercises are at the store. |
| The books | WHICH | CONTAIN | those exercises are in the office. |
| The book | WHICH | CONTAINS | those exercises is in the library. |
| The professor | WHO | TEACHES | is my friend. |
| The girl | WHOSE FATHER | TEACHES | is in the office. |

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF PATTERN II

| | | | |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| The student | (whom) | YOU VISITED | is feeling well. |
| The books | (that) | YOU ORDERED | came yesterday. |
| The books | (which) | YOU ORDERED | came yesterday. |
| The place | (where) | I LEARNED | English is near here. |
| The student | whose father | YOU VISITED | is in the office |
| The student | whose books | YOU HAVE | wants them now. |

(1) Fries, Charles, Patterns of English Sentences, pp.119-121
University of Michigan, 1953.

PRACTICE

EXERCISE. (to contrast patterns I and II at the end of statements). Listen to the statements and combine the information by using these patterns. For example, "I know the boy. The boy spoke to you"; I know the boy who spoke to you. "I know the boy. You spoke to the boy": I know the boy whom you spoke to. "I saw the man. The man helped us": I saw the man that helped us. "I saw the man. We helped the man": I saw the man that we helped. (continue):

1. I read the book. The book describes our system of government
2. I read the book. You described the book.

3. This is the building. The building is 500 years old.
4. This is the building. We like the building.

5. Mr. Brown is the man. The man spoke to you.
6. Mr. White is the man. You spoke to the man.

7. I read the book. The book tells about the history of medicine
8. I read the book. You told me about the book.

9. This is the exercise. The exercise is the most important.
10. This is the exercise. We must write the exercise.

11. I saw the man. The man wrote the book.
12. I saw the man. You described the man.

EXERCISE. (to reproduce and establish pattern II in various positions). Answer the questions. Include the information of the first statement in the answer. For example, "Mary sang a song. Was it beautiful"? The song that Mary sang was beautiful. "You heard the program. Did you like it?" I liked the program that I heard. "You listened to the program. Did you like it? I liked the program that I listened to. "John lives in a new house. Is this the house?" This is the house that John lives in. "Paul visits a class. How many students does the class have?" The class that Paul visits has a lot of students. "John lives in a new house. Where is it?"

1. I met the boy's father. Did you talk to the boy?
2. I am studying a famous writer's book. Do you know the writer?
3. That is the boy's book. Do you know the boy?
4. The teacher pronounced the words. Did you repeat them?
5. You read the book. Was it interesting?
6. I saw the letter. Was it from your mother?
7. I described the book. Did you read it?
8. I spoke to the boy. Do you know him?
9. I spoke about the man. Do you know him?
10. Professor Brown wrote the book. How much does it cost?
11. Professor Brown wrote the book. Should I buy it?

4. Accuracy and Fluency

Good pronunciation of English means more than the correct production of individual sound of vowels and consonants. It involves distribution of stress in individual words and in whole phrases and sentences as well as correct intonation. Stress is a major factor in the rhythm of English speech, and correct rhythm is quite essential for intelligibility. The English spoken by educated people in the Gold Coast, judging by the author's experience, is at first unintelligible because of the unusual rhythm and intonation they use.

Correct rhythm is closely bound with fluency of pronunciation. To reproduce the correct rhythm and intonations of English speech, the student should have achieved a certain degree of speed in the automatic or subconscious production of English speech sounds. There should be no conscious calculation on the part of the student to reproduce the correct sounds. Furthermore, words that need to be connected in a continuous stream of speech should be linked smoothly. The glottal stop which is a feature of Arabic pronunciation, is one of the factors responsible for the disconnected speech of Arabic-speaking students. Another factor is the fact that words are regarded as separate units of speech rather than part of a continuous chain of sounds forming the phrase or
(1)
breath unit.

(1) Lunsden, Milne B., English Speech for Asiatic Students, pp.13-16, Heffer, Cambridge, 1935.

Fluency is not required only in respect of pronunciation but also in respect of constructions and idiomatic usage of prepositions and verb-adverb combinations. The words and sentence patterns needed to express ideas must be on the tip of the tongue. They should be at the subconscious level, and responses to situations must be immediate and automatic. At first the fixed habits of the pupil^p in his native tongue produce a kind of resistance to the formation of the new habits required for the mastery of the foreign language. Learning is successful when the new language habit becomes firmly fixed, when it sinks to the subconscious level. The speed with which boys and girls begin to speak French fluently at the College Protestant Francais, for instance, is an indication that the methods used are in accordance with the above principle.

In summary of this chapter it would be useful to enumerate the practical advantages arising from the new analysis of language learning skills.

1. The new analysis has brought out the difference between responding to language and using language.
2. It has led to a better grading of exercises in which the easier tasks of listening and reading predominate at first over the more complex tasks of speaking and writing.
3. It has promoted the idea that in the early stages of reading and writing, what has to^{be} "expressed" (controlled composition) had better be given first, so that the learner does not have to cope with producing both the meanings and symbols.

Thus the best material for expression in the beginning should consist of stories, information or the content of a passage in a reader, which can be 'given' and then discussed and explained before the learner attempts to reproduce it in the new symbols.

A fifth skill ought to be added to the four skills in language learning - namely that of clear thinking. Frequently a student fails to communicate his thoughts not because his language is weak, but because his thinking is confused. This problem, however is not peculiar to Arabic-speaking students only but it applies to native English speakers as well. Part of language instruction, therefore, should include training in clear thinking.

CHAPTER II

The Importance of Knowing the "Peculiarities" of the Native and Foreign Languages

It is a fact that in learning a new language, we tend to impose the habits and characteristics of our native tongue on the new language. These habits have to be unlearned before any real progress can be made in acquiring a grasp of the new language. Since an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, it would be well to contrast some general characteristics of Arabic and English in order that the teacher may anticipate the occurrence of the mistakes and take measures to avoid them. It is not the purpose of this study to analyse the features of English and Arabic in detail; only some of the outstanding differences are presented for illustrative purposes. Certain features in Arabic strike the English speaking person learning Arabic as being "peculiar" while certain features in English structure and idiom strike the Arabic-speaking man as being peculiar. It is the aim of this chapter to discuss problems arising from these "peculiarities".

I. Peculiarities of the Arabic Language.

Compared with Western Languages Arabic has certain "peculiarities" which are responsible for many of the mistakes made by Arabic-speaking students. The question of idiomatic use of prepositions does not enter into this discussion, since every language has its own individual use of prepositions, which one has to learn by correct usage. Nor do the phonological differences, already touched upon, between the two languages enter into this discussion either, since they constitute a study in themselves.

- A. The first and most important peculiarity in Arabic is the fact that in Arabic a sentence can be constructed without a finite verb. The time element implied in such sentences is always present.

Ex. The man tall (Arabic) - The man is tall

The man coming (Arabic) - The man is coming

The window broken (Arabic) - The window is broken

If the time is past, the past tense of the verb has to be used as an auxiliary.

The man was tall (Arabic)

The man was coming (Arabic)

Note that the auxiliary in all the corresponding English sentences is the verb to be.

B. Subject and Verb Do Not Always Agree in Number

In Arabic the subject and the verb agree, as a rule, in number but there are certain instances where this does not obtain. For instance, broken plurals ⁽¹⁾ are considered as singular in number and feminine in gender and the verb agrees accordingly, unless the noun refers to male human beings.

The author's analysis of Freshman papers and Senior secondary classes has revealed that in 80% of the cases where a noun in the plural is given a singular verb, the Arabic equivalent was either a broken plural or one of those instances where the plural is regarded as singular in the mother tongue. Subconsciously the student has considered the English plural as singular in number as well. Here are a few examples collected from Freshman English papers.

1. Wars was the means for averting economic depression.
2. Civilised nations encourage sports because she believes that it is essential for progress.
3. Fertilizers, which is another factors is of two kinds.

(1) There are two plural forms for each of the masculine and feminine genders: The sound plural and the broken plural. The sound plural is formed by merely adding a suffix to the singular without changing its form. In the broken plural the form is changed and, or, a suffix is added.

4. Crowded places and its consequences should be controlled.
5. They have different ideas which is borrowed from the Greeks.
6. Another method is to write on posters especially designed for this purpose, and is placed where people can see them.
7. If radio advertising is abolished, many broadcasting stations will close down because its income is from advertising.

C. Subordination of Thought

In Arabic speech, particularly the colloquial dialect, subordination of thought seldom occurs, and consequently sentences tend to be a series of phrases strung loosely together by and or but. For example:

I walked and walked and then I heard someone singing and then I looked up and I saw a beautiful girl and she was wearing a beautiful robe and the robe shone in the sun, and then I spoke to her, but she did not answer and came towards me.

Certain writers, like Ernest Hemingway, do this deliberately in English to obtain certain effects, but in Arabic it is the traditional way. The author who has taught English to English students at a "public school" (that is a secondary school not run by the State) in England found that even English-born students have difficulty in manipulating subordinate clauses. It can be imagined how much greater this difficulty is in the case of Arab students.

It is essential therefore that the students be introduced to analysis as soon as they are ready for it ⁽¹⁾ so that they may get trained in identifying the various clauses in a sentence and describing their function. Drill in analysis will give the student mastery in playing about with sentences to suit his purposes. Here are a few typical sentences taken from Freshman papers illustrating this point:

(1) Usually three years before the Freshman year.

I went to the Syrian University, I studied one year in it.
(instead of)

I went to the Syrian University where I studied for one year.

Bismark had many enemies in Prussia most of them were liberals.
(instead of)

Bismark had many enemies in Prussia most of whom were liberals.

The road was very slippery and he fell down.
(instead of)

The road was so slippery that he fell down.

He worked very hard and he passed
(instead of)

He worked so hard that he passed.

D. The Definite and Indefinite Articles

1. There is no indefinite article in Arabic. The singular noun with the 'tanween' suffix corresponds to the singular noun plus the indefinite article in English. Thus:

I bought new house (Arabic construction)

Ishteraytu baytan jadidan

is equivalent to 'I bought a new house.' Generally words in the Noun Group are preceded by the definite article, if there is no 'tanween'.

2. In English, if the definite article precedes an adjective, the adjective becomes a noun in the plural sense,

The poor (al-fuqara) = The poor people

In Arabic the adjective is already in the Noun Group and the definite article does not change the number of the adjective.

Thus:

The poor (al faqir) = The poor man

3. In Arabic, all abstract nouns are preceded by the definite article unless they are specified or restricted. In English the opposite obtains. Thus the Arabic equivalent for:

Honesty is the best policy and

The honesty of the officer was remarkable

is:

The honesty is the best policy) Arabic
Honesty of the officer was remarkable) Construction

This being the case it can be imagined the amount of drill required by the Arab student to re-orientate himself to the new idiom. Mr. Brackenbury in his "English Idioms" gives a number of very useful exercises in this respect. Here are some typical sentences selected from them: (1)

EXERCISE. Fill in the spaces if necessary with the.

1. _____ houses of _____ peasants of this country are made of _____ mud.
2. In _____ desert it is difficult to find _____ water.
3. _____ children are a great blessing to _____ parents.

(Note that in sentence 3 the definite article would be inserted in Arabic)

4. _____ radium is one of the most remarkable of _____ recent discoveries.
5. _____ science has now enabled us to announce _____ time by firing a gun by _____ electricity.
6. Before _____ clocks were invented _____ people were obliged to tell _____ time by such instruments as _____ sundials or water-clocks.

(1) Brackenbury, G., Studies in English Idiom, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1949.

7. _____ insects are attracted to _____ flowers by _____ scent they give out, and by _____ bright colours they possess.

E. Relative Pronouns

Closely tied with subordinate clauses is the distinctive treatment of relative pronouns in Arabic.

1. In relative clauses in English, the relative pronoun is part of its own clause and may act as a subject or object, or may be governed by a preposition:

The man whom I saw. (whom is object of "saw").

The man who came here is an officer. (Who is subject of "came").

But in Arabic the function of the relative pronoun ("the connected noun") is purely connective. Consequently the Arabic equivalent of such sentences as

The man whom I saw is your brother
is The man who I saw him is your brother.

This may be simply formulated by saying that there is no Arabic equivalent for "whom".

It takes many years before the Arabic-speaking student ceases to give a personal pronoun as well as a relative pronoun in sentences based on the above pattern. Of course when he is reminded he knows what to do, but it is the formation of consistently correct habit that requires time and practice to establish.

2. There is no Arabic equivalent for whose or of which.

Thus: The policeman whose gun was stolen was imprisoned.
becomes in Arabic: The policeman who his gun was stolen
was imprisoned.

Drills modelled on the following exercises should help
in establishing the use of whose, whom and which.

EXERCISE. Complete the following sentences by adding a
relative clause of which the word in italics is the antecedent.

1. This is the man (whose) _____
2. Let us praise the Creator by _____
3. The boy whose _____ was taken to hospital
4. We went to see the ship whose _____
5. Where are the athletes of _____
6. He sold me a camera _____ was broken.

F. The Use of the Cognate Object

Frequency of the use of the cognate object - the noun corresponding to the verb of the sentence - is a characteristic of the Arabic language. In English this is discouraged in general. Such expressions as

She sang a song.

He dreamt a dream.

are unavoidable.

The following sentences are taken from Freshman papers of students who came from secondary schools where English is not the medium of instruction:

I felt a wonderful feeling when I saw the beautiful sceneries

He wrote very bad writing against me

The party, after walking a long walk, decided to rest.

II. "Peculiarities" of the English Language

From the Arab point of view, the English language possesses certain characteristics in structure and grammar, which may be regarded for our purposes as "peculiarities". Teachers of English, engaged in the instruction of Arabic-speaking students would do well to familiarize themselves with those "peculiarities".

- A. To begin with, no sentence can be constructed in English without one finite verb at least. In the early stages the Arab student has to overcome a tendency to express himself in "sentences" that have no finite verbs, if the Arabic equivalents of those sentences are without finite verbs. Indeed, even at Freshman level, the writer has come across English sentences without finite verbs, showing that the habits of the mother tongue still dominate. Such a problem never arises, for instance, in the case of a Spanish, French, Italian or German student learning English, since in their own language the same rule applies. It is, therefore, essential for the student to know not only what a finite verb is, but also the difference between a finite verb and the two participles which are infinite verbs. Students in the eighth or ninth grades should be able to cope with this - that is to say, three or four years before Freshman. The teacher, on the other hand should make sure that the students know that a finite verb is limited by tense, number and person, and that a sentence must have at least one finite verb.

Since English verbs have lost almost all their inflections it is advisable, when introducing the finite verbs to a class, to begin

by writing on the blackboard a verb in the third person, singular, present tense, thus:

speaks

The teacher then calls upon students to describe that verb from the point of view of tense, number and person. It is eventually established that the verb is present in tense, singular in number, third of person. Next the teacher writes the infinitive form of the same verb on the blackboard:

to speak

and repeats the same questions as above in respect of the infinitive.

(1)
The students will soon see that it has no tense or number or person. It should also be explained to them that the infinitive is sometimes written without to - namely as part of a compound verb after, will, shall, may, might, can, do, etc. and that in such cases the infinitive never changes even when the verbs have to be put in the past. (In French the infinitive is always recognizable by virtue of its one-word form: parler, ecrire, cannot be mistaken for anything else). The Arabic-speaking student must fully appreciate that the infinitive as part of a compound verb remains unchanged. Otherwise, he will be writing such expressions as,

He did not came, He does not comes

He would spoke

Furthermore, when he realizes that a sentence must have not

-
- (1) Strictly speaking the infinitive has two tenses: the present and the perfect, to see, to have seen, but for practical purposes at this stage, it would be advisable to regard to speak as having no tense.

only a verb, but a finite verb, to make it a sentence, he will not write,

The enemy advancing on us for The enemy is advancing on us
or

The table broken for The table is broken

B. There are four infinite verbs in English.

1. The infinitive. There is nothing in the Arabic language to correspond to the infinitive.

2. The present participle. In Arabic it is known as Ism-il-fa'il (اسم الفاعل) and is considered a noun.

3. The past participle. In Arabic it is known as ism-il-maf'oul (اسم المفعول) and is also considered a noun. Both participles may be used as adjectives.

4. The gerund or verbal noun. In Arabic it is known as al-musdar (المصدر).

C. Great Variety of Tenses

Although Otto Jespersen says that there are really only two tenses in English, the present and the preterite, for our purposes we must accept the fact that a great variety of tenses is obtained in English by having one or more auxiliary verbs precede the infinitive, the present participle or the past participle. In Arabic it is only the simple future tense that is formed by placing an auxiliary before the present tense of the verb. The Arabic equivalent of,

He will come is Will he comes.

Of the above tenses the present continuous, the present perfect the past perfect and the future perfect take longest time to

master. Furthermore the use of the present tense covers more than is covered by the present tense in Arabic. He plays tennis, for instance, means He knows how to play tennis and not He is playing tennis now. He leaves tomorrow refers to the future.

The Arabic has really only two tense forms - the present and the past. The time element of the various English tenses is indicated by the use of adverbs and adverbial phrases.

D. Sequence of Tenses

Tenses in English do not always coincide with the time element⁽¹⁾ - a point which should always be stressed - nor are they always logical. The sequence of tenses sounds illogical to the Arab-speaking student. He finds it difficult to accept such expressions as:

He told me that he would be arriving tomorrow
instead of

He told me that he will be arriving tomorrow
since we are referring to the future.

The same thing applies to

He said that he had not yet seen her.

Students cannot understand how we can use the past perfect to indicate a future time, or

What did you say your name was?⁽²⁾

How did you know I was here?

I didn't know you knew Bright.

(1) Hornby, A.S., Op. Cit., p. 75.

(2) Jespersen: The Philosophy of Grammar, p. 247, George Allen and Ltd. London, 1948.

where all the underlined verbs refer to the present.

It takes students considerable mental effort to get used to a system of tenses which is independent of the time element and to accept the rule that if the main verb in the sentence is past tense, all the other subordinate verbs must be past.

E. Indirect Speech

In reporting conversations or dialogue of any kind in Arabic, direct speech is employed as a rule. Indirect speech with all its concomitants of changes in tense, person and reporting verbs does not exist. In English, however, indirect or reported speech is generally used for reporting dialogue, unless the reporter wishes to add dramatic colour to his story, in which case he resorts to direct speech.

The following changes are usually made in changing direct to indirect speech.

1. Tenses. Generally the reporting verb is past and so all other verbs must be past since the reporting verb is past. Verbs in the past tense become past perfect.

He asked whether _____

I ordered _____

She begged him to _____

2. Persons. Changes have to be made in the pronouns. This is a purely logical process and should be easy to learn.

I said: "How many books have you read?"

He asked how many books they had read.

3. Reporting Verb. The tone of the direct speech may imply a request or a threat, or contain words that cannot be used in the indirect speech. In such cases a reporting verb must be so selected as to give the same meaning.

For instance,

I said: "Please bring me my books"
becomes,
He requested them to bring him his books

The thief said to me: "Move one inch and I will kill you"
becomes
The thief threatened to kill him if he moved one inch.

4. Changes in words denoting time and place. Since indirect speech is farther away from us than direct speech in time and place, words like this, now, here, tomorrow, yesterday, must be changed to: that, then, there, the following day, the previous day, respectively.
5. Word order. The indirect question is one aspect of indirect speech which Arab students take a long time to master because of a shift in the word order. In the direct question the verb or the auxiliary part of the verb comes before the subject, but with questions in indirect speech the subject generally comes before the verb thus:

"Who is she?" becomes He asked who she was.

"How can I bear to look any of them in the face?"
becomes
"He wondered how he could bear to look any of them in the face.

Sometimes the indirect question has the same order as the direct. For example:

I said to her: What is the matter?
becomes He asked her what was the matter.
To the general ear it may sound pedantic to say: He asked her what the matter was, or what the time was.
Whether or if is placed after the reporting verb, if the direct question does not begin with how, why, when, where, or other interrogatives.

I do not know if he will come
Arabic speaking students should get plenty of drill in turning direct questions into indirect speech. The following
(1)
exercise taken from Brackenbury's English Idioms serves as a good model for planning exercises for drill, both oral and written or forming indirect questions.

EXERCISE. Turn into indirect speech:

1. He said to me: "How are you?"
2. I shall ask him: "Have you bought what you intended?"
3. I said to the miser: "Are you satisfied with your gold?"
4. I asked my pupils: "Did you visit the Pyramids last Friday?"
5. The boy said to his father: "Have you brought me the present you promised me this morning?"
6. I asked the gardener: "Do you think these flowers will grow?"
7. The student asked: "Are light waves transmitted in the same way as sound waves?"
8. I said to my servant: "Do you think you can remember to post this letter before you go home?"

(1) Brackenbury, G., Op. Cit., pp.86-87.

9. I said to the shopkeeper: "What is the price of the cheapest cloth you have?"

10. You have not answered my question: "Is geography an optional subject in the examination?"

F. Three Genders

There are three genders in English as compared with two in Arabic, where everything is either masculine or feminine. This characteristic does not present serious difficulty to the Arabic-speaking student because masculinity or femininity is generally concerned with human beings and animals. He may refer to a government as she and find it strange to refer to an infant as it. He will be slightly puzzled when a ship is referred to as she by a sailor, yet it does not take him long to make the necessary adjustments in his thinking. In Arabic sun is feminine and moon is masculine, whereas in English poetic usage the opposite obtains.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that knowing the "peculiarities" of the mother language and the English language is very important to the English teacher. It throws light on the process of selecting material to be taught and what particular aspects to be stressed.

CHAPTER III

The Meaning and Role of Grammar

The effectiveness of the study of grammar, whether that of the mother tongue or foreign language has been a controversial subject for many decades and the views of linguists have swung to both extremes. On the one hand there have been people who have advocated the doing away with grammar and learning the language in the 'natural' way, and on the other hand there have been those who have insisted that grammar is an indispensable tool in learning a language. Twenty years ago in England, for instance, grammar was ignored in the secondary schools on the false assumption that children learn to speak their own language at home without knowing any grammar. Since the end of the second World War, however, grammar with certain modifications has been restored to the schools, partly because of a definite drop in the standard of English performance in the public examination and partly out of a modified conception of grammar and the psychological principles underlying it. It is interesting to note that in the public English examinations, there is always one question at least dealing with analysis and parsing. The theory that grammar must be learned in learning a language seems to be rapidly gaining ground.

(1)

In the U.S.A. Charles Fries writes that it is impossible to learn a new language without learning its grammar, and by grammar he means the patterns of form and arrangement (syntax, word order). A native speaker may not be conscious of them, but they are nevertheless

(1) Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, pp.28-29, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1953.

(2) By form, Dr. Fries includes such aspects of grammar as number, tense and person.

there, shaping his utterances. It is not, therefore, a question of whether one should learn grammar to learn a new language, but whether, for an adult the guiding of his practice through one pattern at a time and a conscious grasping of these patterns as a summary of that practice will not make more rapid and efficient his mastery of a new language. The author's view after ten years of experience as a teacher of English in Palestine, England and Lebanon is that it does. If the teacher does not formulate or describe the patterns of the foreign language for the learner, the learner will try to grasp them for himself. An adult will be helped considerably if the linguist states the essentials of the language in generalizations for his guidance.

To go back to the validity of the assumption that children learn their language without any grammar, let us consider the following sentences:

He gave the driver five pounds,

My brother sent me his car

It is obvious to any one, even without formal grammatical training that they are analogous, that is, they are made after the same pattern. In both we have the same type. The words that make up the sentences are variable but the type is fixed. (1)

Now, how do such types come into existence in the mind of a speaker? An infant is not taught the grammatical rule that the subject is to be placed first, or that the indirect object regularly

(1) Jespersen, Op. Cit., p.19.

precedes the direct object. Yet, without any grammatical instruction, he can subconsciously abstract from innumerable sentences, heard and understood, some notion of their structure which guides him in framing sentences of his own. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to state what that notion is without the use of such technical terms such as subject, verb and so on. Grammar is really nothing but an organized collection of abstractions based on usage. Whether we are aware of it or not, it is grammar that guides us in formulating our expressions. What was wrong with grammar in the past was chiefly in the timing of it and in the inability of teachers to discriminate between essential abstractions and those irrelevant abstractions which, instead of helping the student, serve only to confuse him. Still worse, some teachers regarded grammar as an end rather than a means to an end. In the elementary stages, therefore, the mind of the pupil should not be cluttered up with too many rules and regulations. It is more useful to begin with the specific and end up with the general. Let the pupils themselves form their own abstractions, from several instances illustrating a certain point. The teacher can then establish these abstractions by expressing them in a single rule. If on the other hand, he thinks that by stating a rule or asking his young pupils to learn it by heart, they will be able to apply it correctly in their speech, he makes a very serious educational mistake. In the case of adult students, however, knowing the rule can be of great help, since they are mature enough to be guided by it, but in the final analysis it is drill and practice that establish correct usage in the student. There is one

person who ought to know his grammar well, and that is the teacher. Without it he will be lost and will not know how to plan or organize his lesson. He may use a different terminology, as Charles Fries (1) does in his book The Structure of English and not call an adjective and adjective or a verb a verb. But the class of words designated by the term adjective remains the same in function and in use.

Some grammarians object to the traditional terminology in (2) grammar, but as Mr. Hornby points out in his review of Fries' book what has been wrong with this terminology does not lie in the terms themselves but in the definitions given to them. On the other hand, some of the "progressive" terms used in grammar are very misleading, certainly to Arabic-speaking students. It is difficult to see why the term "to plus the present form of a verb" is better than the term infinitive. To begin with, it is unwieldy, but what is more serious it is erroneous and misleading and such expressions as My father did not came or does not comes appear justifiable. The term infinitive is not only briefer but it stands closer to what it designates - namely a verb that is not limited by subject, person or tense - than the above long term. Arabic-speaking students, who are subjected to a great deal of grammar in their language, are quite capable of taking in at least some of the long established terminology such as the bare infinitive for instance and the basic generalizations in grammar. The teacher should always bear in mind, however, that rules by themselves achieve very little in learning a foreign language and that it

(1) He calls verbs, class 2 words, and adjectives, class 3 words. In my opinion this tends to confuse rather than help the student.

(2) English Language Teaching, Oct. 1954, Published by the British Council, London.

But the
is not worth
the student
it is the tea
duty to app
the findings
Fries to
classroom
me th

is preferable to arrive at the rule after being given several examples which illustrate it. Furthermore, grammar should be reviewed from time to time in the light of the current usage to see whether any modifications have to be made, if the language is to retain its plasticity and dynamism. When grammar becomes too rigid, as is the case with the French language or Arabic, the language loses some of its vitality. That is why in modern Arabic plays, whether original or translated, the dialogue sounds very stilted and unnatural. The formal language employed has not made any concessions to current usage - namely colloquial Arabic. It's me in English is, strictly speaking, wrong, but it is in current use, and modern grammar books permit it.

Among the characteristics of the English language are its dynamic quality and flexibility, two qualities that are helping to spread its use in the world. It would be unwise therefore, to let it be governed by a rigid code of grammatical rules and regulations unresponsive to the changing attitudes and developments of modern living.

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The Meaning and Application of Grammar

At this point it is appropriate to elucidate the meaning of the term grammar, and determine the best way of teaching it.

Does grammar stand for a systematic description in technical terms of the make-up of the language? If that is so, it should be noted that it is quite possible to have a sound knowledge of the grammar of a language without being able to speak a word of it.

It would mean learning about the language rather than learning the language. Honours students of the Jerusalem Arab College ⁽¹⁾ for instance, were remarkably good at grammar as it is defined above. They could enumerate the uses of the infinitives and give correct examples; they could tell how many kinds of adjectives there are, they could tell the various uses of "that"; but they found great difficulty in speaking English. It is certain, however, that in order to know the essential grammar of the language, the pupil will have to learn a few technical terms. If the adult or adolescent learner is going to be put off by such expressions how will he cope with the many terms that he is bound to come across in any field of study?

A more pragmatic and useful definition of grammar is that it is working knowledge of the role which various inflections, words and structures (including sentence patterns) play in the communication of meaning. ⁽²⁾ This view involves knowing how the English language expresses continuous action, interrogation, necessity, condition and so on. Every native speaker of English possesses this grammatical knowledge, and every foreigner to the language needs to learn it.

(1) A college founded by the British Mandatory Government in Palestine, in which only picked honours students from Government schools were admitted. The language of instruction was Arabic and English was taught as a language. The college ceased to exist in 1948.

(2) Bright, A. J. "Grammar in the English Syllabus", English Language Teaching, Vol. 1, No.7, June 1947, p.173. Published by the British Council, London.

"Grammar is a surgery for cutting round acute or chronic linguistic corruptions. Like other logical constructions, it brings a heightened interest to situations in which we are already interested It offers means of interfering with bad linguistic habits too ingrained to yield to lenitive treatment."⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, the teacher's first task is to teach mastery of the simplest structures, to build up correct habits, to make the right form come to the lips automatically. He must have a sound knowledge of grammar, since his course will be determined by those rules or abstractions which he wishes to teach. But he should teach the usages and not the rules - a point that cannot be over-emphasized. The rules can be deduced afterwards. The method will include substitution tables to fix patterns, exercises to drill the form of tenses, and action chains to practice their use in genuine situations in the classroom. Mechanical instruction should be avoided.

Here is another sample of substitution tables designed to fix a verb pattern.⁽²⁾ The verb is used with a noun or pronoun as an object, and with a present participle at the end of the sentence.

| Subject plus Verb | Object-Noun or Pronoun | Present Participle |
|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. I saw | the thief | running away |
| 2. We watch | the train | steaming past |
| 3. I heard | him | giving orders |
| 4. Can you smell | something | ----- |
| 5. She could feel | her heart | ----- |
| 6. Did you notice | anyone | ----- |
| 7. We listened to | the band | ----- |
| 8. Just look at | the rain | ----- |

(1) Hopper, S.H., "The Psychology of Skill and its Application to Language Learning" English Language Teaching, p.37, Vol. IV, No.2 Nov. 1949.

(2) Hornby, A.S., A Guide to Patterns of Usage in English, p.29, 1954, Oxford University Press.

The blanks in the column of present participles, should be filled by the student. The process could be repeated in respect of the second column after removing all the words from it.

Arabic and English Tenses

It has been seen from a comparison of the English and Arabic tenses, that, whereas strictly speaking Arabic verb has two tense-forms, English has twelve tenses to express time relations. Though Arabic-speaking students do not realize that in their language time and tense do not always coincide, they should be warned against confusing time and tense in English verbs. Nevertheless to give the Arabic-speaking student a good grasp of English tenses is a formidable task and there is no easy way out. Well chosen methods, would, however, increase the efficacy of instruction.

The two tenses that deserve the early attention of the instructor are the Present Perfect and Present Continuous tenses. Of the two the usage of the Present Perfect is particularly difficult to master. It is even difficult for European people.

A. The Present Perfect Tense

In the case of adolescent ^{Arabic-speaking} pupils an effective way ⁽¹⁾ of introducing it to them is by writing a full conjugation on the blackboard and then calling upon them individually to conjugate other verbs by substituting one past participle for another. It is advisable to begin with strong verbs since their past participles have a different form from the past tense. When the instructor is sure that his students know what Present Perfect stands for, he can then proceed with the usage.

(1) The writer has taught English for over ten years in Palestine, England and Beirut. He bases this statement on the successful results obtained by him in the three countries.

This introductory stage is tedious, but it cannot be dispensed with. Students from Western Europe would not need the first step since by direct analogy they would know what it is. Thus, 'I have eaten' is equivalent to 'J'ai mangé'. The difference between English and European languages in this respect lies not in the form but in the usage.

There is nothing like the Present Perfect tense in Arabic. A French or an Italian student could be told that I have written is equivalent in form of j'ai écrit or Io ho scritto, where every word in each sentence is the equivalent of the other in the same position. There is simply no equivalent to I have written in Arabic.

The use of the English Present Perfect is so distinctive that it requires a special effort on the part of the instructor to teach and the learner to master it. What makes the use of the Present Perfect so distinctive?

1. The English Present Perfect tense is used to denote past time only when the time is not fixed, I have gone to the cinema yesterday is correct in French, Italian or German, but it is wrong in English. When the time is fixed then the Simple Past must be used. This erroneous use of the Present Perfect is typical of the mistakes made by foreigners to the language.
2. The use of the Present Perfect tense after or before the since clause, and in referring to actions begun in

the past and continuing until the present time, but may still be incomplete.

I have been ill since you left us
I have been in Beirut for five years.
(meaning I am still here)

3. The Present Perfect tense is used when the chief thought is not for the past but of the effect of the event in the present. For instance, I have written a letter refers more to the fact that the letter is written, than to the past action of writing it. In short it is used to describe quite recent actions, as:

The train has arrived (It is here)

In Arabic the Past tense is used in all of these cases.

B. The Present Continuous and the Present Tense

Neither Arabic nor any of the Western languages, apart from English have the Present Continuous tense form. In French the simple present tense is used to indicate actions or states that are going on at the time of speaking. In Arabic a word like "Ammal" (colloquial) is placed before the Present tense. The English Present tense is used to indicate habit or knowledge.

He plays tennis = He knows how to play tennis or
He is in the habit of playing tennis

With verbs of perception, however, we use the simple Present
(1)
tense to denote an activity or state that continues.

(1) Hornby, A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English, p.89.

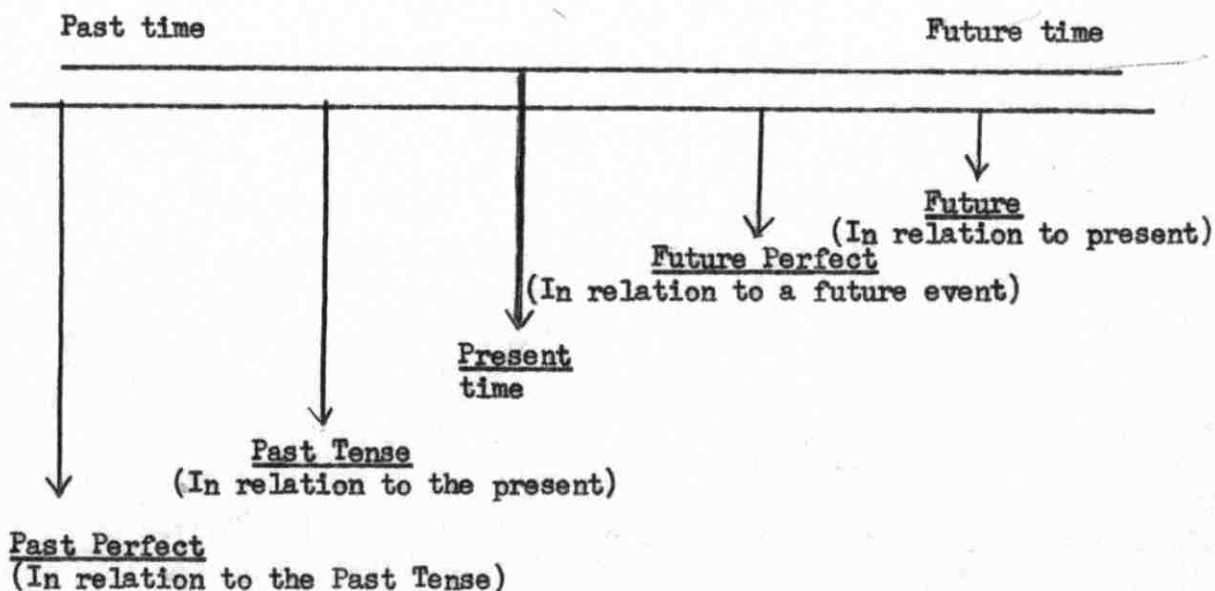
Do you hear a strange noise? (Not 'Are you hearing a strange noise?')

On the other hand the Present Continuous is used for a more extended present. For instance,

Mr. Smith is writing another novel. (This means that he has started it but has not yet finished it. It does not indicate that Mr. Smith is, at this moment, sitting at his type-writer).⁽¹⁾

C. The Past Perfect Tense and the Future Perfect Tense

Arabic-speaking students find these tenses quite elusive to use correctly. In Arabic these time relations are expressed in both cases by phrases with the Past Tense. The author has found a graphic representation very helpful. The point to stress is that these tenses are relative to a certain point in time.



(1) Hornby, Op. Cit., p. 88.

A short drill in the conjugation of these tenses would ensure that the learners are familiar with the tense form. Exercises modelled on the following sample (despite historical inaccuracies) have proved very effective in giving the student a working knowledge of the Past Perfect. (1)

The Retreat From Moscow

In 1912 Napoleon (determine) to advance on Moscow. For many years before that he (be) at war with different nations. He (win) and (lose) many important battles. His fleet (be) destroyed at Trafalgar, but he (win) brilliant victories at Austerlitz, Jena and other places and he (dethrone) kings and (place) his marshals and his relatives in their places. Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, all (fall) under his power, but Russia he not (attack) as yet. He therefore (advance) confidently through Russia, where he (find) but little opposition, and (make) his way towards Moscow. When at last he (reach) the town he (see) it in flames. In a short time all (be) destroyed, and his army (find) no means of subsistence. The winter (come) on and he (have) no course but to retreat. His army (suffer) terribly on the way. His men and horses (die) in thousands in the snow, and (lie) where they (fall). Of all that splendid army which he (lead) to Moscow, only a few (live) to reach Paris.

A similar procedure could be used in respect of the Future Perfect Tense.

The purpose of these remarks on tenses is not to provide a manual for the teacher to use in class, but rather to show how wide the gulf is between the Arabic and English languages in their treatment of time regulations and the ways in which they express them. The instructor of English who does not appreciate these facts and modify his techniques accordingly is bound to be a partial success with adult Arab students learning the language.

(1) Brackenbury, Op. Cit., p.209.

Analysis

An effective tool used by the writer in Palestine and England for increasing the learner's comprehension of English is analysis of sentences into main and subordinate clauses and determining their function. It is easy to read a short simple sentence, but the learner may get lost when he comes across a sentence with a series of subordinate clauses separating the subject of the main clause from its verb, such as the following: (1)

The knowledge that a new typewriter at ten pounds will do all the work that I want of it as well as the machine, for which but for the advertisement, I should have paid twenty, is worth whatever may have been added to the cost of the cheaper machine; if, indeed, one can properly say that anything has been added, since the cheaper machine has only been rendered possible by large-scale, standardized production, which in its turn has only been rendered possible by the wide dissemination of its merits.

During the summer the author taught English to the first year students of the Technical Vocational Training Department of the Engineering School. Their English, although it is supposed to be of Freshman standard, is really one year behind. A few students among them could not understand the above sentence. It was too long. There were too many subordinate clauses and the subject of the main verb, the knowledge, is separated from its predicate, is worth, by three subordinate clauses, while the addition of a conditional clause involving two dependent clauses after the main clause complicated matters further. If those students had had practice in analysis they would have understood such a sentence easily. Analysis should begin three years before the Freshman class, two years at the latest.

(1) Sir Norman Angell, The Press and the Organization of Society, pp.39, 40.

Analysis is a skill which, by enabling the student to discriminate between the main clauses and the subordinate clauses and relating the subject to its verb, not only improves his comprehension but helps him to pick out automatically the significant points in a chapter or article. It is also valuable in precis-writing. A student who can analyse quickly and correctly the sentence below, should have no problems in coping with long assignments at Freshman level.

"The temptation that we should resort to armed conflict is obviously reduced if defense is strengthened at the expense of attack, and since our common object is to diminish the sum total of armaments and their expense, it follows that we must attend to such limitation as will weaken the attack and so remove temptation for aggression." (1)

Technique of Teaching Analysis

A useful method for teaching analysis, to both Arab and English students is a method used by Mr. Cook, who taught English for many years at St. George's School, Jerusalem, a school noted for the high standard of English performance of its students. The method consists of the following steps:

1. Underline the finite verbs.
2. Put rings round connectives (words connecting or introducing clauses)
3. Find out the subject of each verb.
4. Write out the clauses separately.
5. Find out the main clause or clauses.
6. Determine the function of the subordinate clauses.
(This last step could be omitted.)

(1) Clay, Norman L., School Certificate English Practice, p.21, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Bedford St., London, 1948.

Example:

Although the wind was cold the precautions which they had
taken prevented them from realizing that the temperature
was below freezing point.

Although the wind was cold - Adv. clause of concession
qualifying prevented.
They had taken - Adj. clause describing precautions
The precautions prevented them from realizing - main clause
that the temperature was below freezing point - noun clause
object of realizing.

The author has used this method in coaching students from such public examinations as the London Matriculation, the Oxford and Cambridge and their equivalent, the General Certificate of Education, with very gratifying results in Palestine and in England - not only in questions dealing directly with analysis, but also in their performance in essay and precis-writing. Arabic and English-speaking students have passed with credit and distinction.

The advantages of including analysis in the English syllabus of the upper secondary classes are many. Indeed the author feels, after his last two years teaching Freshman English at the American University of Beirut, that analysis should be given to the Freshman class as well.

1. To begin with, analysis establishes in the mind of the Arabic-speaking student that a clause must have a finite verb, and that without it there can be no clause.
2. It trains him to recognize subordinate clauses either in relation to the main clause or to another subordinate clause. In other words, the student will be able to recognize at a glance the relation of the parts of the sentence to one another and pick up the main idea which is found, as a rule, in the main clause.

3. By subconscious analogy, analysis helps the student to write complex sentences without getting confused.
4. Analysis is a great asset in precis-writing in that it strengthens the student's confidence in handling of sentence structure. Precis-writing involves reducing a whole clause into one word or phrase, or compressing two or three sentences into one sentence.

One of the most controversial subjects in language teaching is method. This is partly due to the impact of linguistics on our knowledge of languages, partly due to wilful ignorance of the work of language teachers in the past, partly due to interests vested in method, but mainly due to the complexity of the nature of method. There are some who advocate the "direct method" and others who advocate the "reading method", some are in favor of the "Substitution method" and others of the "film method". These terms, however, tell us little about method; they merely stress different types of presentation, which anyway are not mutually exclusive.

The aim of this chapter is to probe into the meaning of method as advocated by leading experts in the field of language teaching.

Before determining what a method should include, Mackey ⁽¹⁾ recommends that a selection be made of what aspects of the language should be taught, how much of them should be taught and when ~~they~~ should be taught. After the structures, inflexional forms, the words and meanings have been selected in accordance with the age, the needs and aims of the learner, the material should be graded in order of difficulty, so as to know what appropriate progression of material should come before what in presenting the material to the learner. A guiding principle in this step is: Do not ask the learner to attempt to do anything that he cannot do reasonably well. ⁽²⁾

(1) English Language Teaching, Vol. V, 1950, p.3

(2) Leavitt, L.W. The Teaching of English to Foreign Students
Longmans, Green & Co. 1946, p.14

There must be selection, because the teacher cannot teach the whole field of knowledge, and he has, therefore, to select the particular part he wishes to teach. There must be grading because it is impossible to teach all of what has been selected at one time. Certain aspects must precede others. In introducing new items one should move from the familiar to the less familiar. In other words, new material must be introduced only when the student is ready for it. The difference between the old and new must not be so great as to discourage the learner, nor so negligible as to remove the feeling of challenge to the student. "Real difficulty is only relative to the learner's state of readiness."

Linguistic analysis, however, has thrown a great deal of light on the questions of selection and gradation and of presentation. The techniques of presentation will naturally be based on the results of our selection and grading and on how we answer the following questions.

1. Which should be presented first, the written form or the spoken form?

Since the revolutionary contribution in the field of linguistics of H.E. Palmer who insisted that language is basically speech, there has been a growing tendency to present the spoken form first. This is particularly recommended in the case of young learners. For adults, however, the written word often comes first. Considering their experience with books and the printed word, it may be better so.

2. What proportion of the teaching is to be devoted to the spoken form and what to the written form, and how are they to be related?

The answer lies in the age, needs and aims of the learner. Up to the lowest secondary classes, experts recommend that more time should be devoted to the spoken form.⁽¹⁾ In the case of adults, it is essential to begin with some careful and precise aural training, but later reading and writing should go together. For university students going through an intensive course in English, it is important to develop their silent reading ability, if English is going to be the medium of instruction. Otherwise they will be unable to cope with long assignments.

As for aims and needs, it is one thing to teach English as a language only and it is another thing to teach it as a medium of instruction. Ideally there should be no difference. Unfortunately human nature being what it is, students do not work with the same enthusiasm at a language if it is merely a subject in the curriculum.

From the instructor's point of view more time and effort should be given to teaching English, if it is eventually going to be the medium of instruction at secondary and university level. Nevertheless, even in state schools in Arab countries where English is taught as ~~one~~ subject only and not used as a medium of instruction for other subjects, there is room for a great deal of improvement in the methods employed in teaching it, if not a complete overhaul of them.

(1) Carroll, J.B., Op.Cit. p.184.

3. Should one use translation and/or situation in presenting meaning?

This will be answered later.

4. How does the method make the language a habit? How much speaking, listening, reading and writing is done by the learner, and when and how is it done?

Substitution tables and drill in sentence patterns aim at habit formation. Many examples have already been given of them but more will be said in the next section about the questions raised immediately above.

Method Techniques

Getting the language into the minds of the learners depends on the technique of presentation peculiar to the method; it also depends upon the teaching technique of the individual teacher.⁽¹⁾ Teaching a language involves the presentation of both meaning and form and their fusion into language habits.

I. Meaning

In this technique the teacher is chiefly concerned in the meaning of words rather than the way they are pronounced or written.

There are several types of meaning and several ways of conveying each type. There are meanings which include the meaning of concrete words, (orange, chair) of various types of abstract words (large, quick, good) and of verbs (give, make, see) and there are structural meanings, conveyed by the structural words, by the various types of word-order, and by grammar.

To get these different types of meaning across to the very young or adolescent Arabic-speaking student, several methods can be employed: The Arabic language, objects, actions and situations, pictures, and finally words in context.

A. Meaning through the Arabic language.

Some methods make no use of the mother tongue whatsoever, while the "reading method" teaches meaning through the mother tongue. Between these two extremes there are methods which use the mother tongue to a greater or lesser extent.

(1) Mackey, W.F. "What to look for in a Method", English Language Teaching, Vol. IX, No2, p.41.

The methods which make use of translation assume that the learner will translate any way in his mind, and that it is useless to try to prevent him from doing so. Other methods, while avoiding translation as much as possible, are forced to use it for certain words and structures, either to save time or because they cannot be taught otherwise. These methods add the caution that if translation leads to mistakes, avoid it, but if it helps avoiding mistakes, use it.

Methods, such as the "direct method", which make no use of the mother tongue, argue that many English words have not exact equivalent in the learner's own language and vice versa. This is especially true for structural words like whose, and phrases like: How do you do? which cannot be translated word for word into Arabic. The same situation may call for one structure in Arabic and for an entirely different structure in English. And how does one translate " اهلا وسهلا " (1) or " تفضلوا " (2) into English. A literal translation is puerile. Translation is, therefore, a complex process which may result in mental confusion. Moreover, any use of the Arabic encourages the Arabic-speaking learner to think in it and to impose its structural habits on the English structures he is trying to learn, and the result will be Broken English.

The "direct method", or "oral method", since the "direct method" is best exemplified in the oral method, is essentially a

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- (1) "Ahlan wa sahlān" corresponds to "How nice to see you" but means literally: Kinsmen and ease
 - (2) "Tafaddalu" corresponds to: "Come right in" or "Help yourself" but means literally: Do us the favor of.

principle, not a teaching method; a system that operates through many methods; a way of handling the new language, and of presenting it to the class. It demands a direct bond, that is a direct association, between word and thing and between sentence and idea - instead of an indirect one through the mother tongue. The mother tongue should not be used, except in very rare cases, and everything must be expressed in the new language. Indeed it is not only unnecessary to use the mother tongue, but it is far better not to do so when teaching beginners.⁽¹⁾

To implement the "direct method" two factors are essential:

1. For teaching the youngest pupils, only the best teacher with specialized training should take charge of the work.⁽²⁾
2. The school should be equipped with the latest audio-visual aids available, such as pictures, photographs, films, filmstrips, tape-recorders and recordings, not to mention cheerful-looking blackboards, charts, maps and so on. The "direct method" principle underlies the techniques of presentation described below.

B. Meaning Through Objects, Actions and Situations

Here it is essential to make clear which words refer to which object and actions, otherwise the learner gets confused. The teacher should not make the mistake that if he talks and gesticulates a great deal that some link will be formed in the learner's mind

(1) Gurrey, P. The Teaching of Modern Languages, UNESCO, Chap. III, pp. 65-67.

(2) Gatenby, E.V. "Conditions for Success in Learning," English Language Teaching, Vol. IV, No. 7, p. 180.

between what is said and what is done. This "hosepipe technique" succeeds in teaching the meaning of a number of concrete nouns, but it often fails to teach the meaning of abstract words, verbs, structural words, forms and structures. To teach English successfully without the use of Arabic one must take into consideration the nature of meaning.

1. Meaning Through Objects

Objects or models of them may be used to teach not only vocabulary and structure as well. For instance:

- (a) Names of things like pencils, pens, tables and books may be taught by a pointing-and-naming technique, the success of which lies in making clear what is being pointed at.
- (b) Certain abstract words like metal, plant and substance, may be taught by grouping together a number of objects, models or samples of material belonging to the same class. For example, bits of tin, lead and iron may be used to teach metal.
- (c) Quality words have meanings which may be effectively presented in contrast with their opposites by means of objects which best bring out their opposing qualities. For example, long is clearer when contrasted with short, and taught by means of contrasting pairs such as long and short lines, pencils and sticks.
- (d) Structural words which indicate relationship in space - words like on, in and under - may first be presented through

objects which illustrate their particular type of relationship. The clarity of the first meaning of such words depends on the type of object used. A book on the table, a bottle on a shelf, or a pencil on the floor, should make the meaning of on quite clear to the beginner. For position in time, objects like calendar and clocks may be used to teach such structural meanings as on Friday and at noon, now and then, and the present, past and future tenses.

2. Actions

Meaning cannot be taught through ^{objects} action only. Much has to be taught through gestures like pointing and touching, and actions like giving and taking. These may be used alone or with objects to convey the meaning of such words as demonstratives (this, that) directional prepositions (to, from) and nouns of action (a fall, a smile).

3. Situations

Situations may or may not include actions. They may be examined from the points of view of variation and dramatization.

(a) Variation: Some methods teach structural meaning by varying the situation together with sentence. Take the sentence:

I am giving my pencil to Tom.

(i) The teacher first does what he says: 'I am giving my pencil to Tom'.

(ii) He then points to a learner to do the same action and say what he is doing. Learner (giving pencil to his neighbour): 'I am giving my pencil to Mary'.

- (iii) The teacher repeats his first action with other objects while the learner says what the teacher is doing:
'You are giving your book to Tom'.
- (iv) The teacher says what the other learners are doing:
'Tom is getting my book from me. John is giving his pencil to Mary. Mary is getting his pencil from him.'
- (v) The learners say what the other learners are doing:
'Tom is getting your book from you. John is giving his pencil to Mary'. And so on, varying each element of the situation with the corresponding elements of the sentence. John B. Carroll of Harvard University⁽¹⁾ favors a "problem-solving situation" in which the student must find, by inquiry of either the teacher or the dictionary, appropriate verbal responses for solving the problem - which might be, for example, finding a hidden subject, or getting a window closed, or choosing a satisfying meal from a foreign-language menu. At later stages, the problems set would be of a more purely verbal character. Mr. Carroll feels that in this way the student would early be forced to learn to communicate rather than merely to utter the speech patterns set down in the lesson plans. Instruction conducted in this way would

(1) Carroll, John B., The Study of Language, pp.187-188, Harvard University Press, 1953.

parallel more realistically the student's actual or potential needs. The writer's experience in teaching English in a progressive school in England supports the above claim.

- (b) **Dramatization:** To arouse and maintain interest a situation may be dramatized or presented in the form of a game. Situations may be dramatized quite early in the course. One method dramatizes material from its first lesson by having the learners introduce one another with the simple form, 'Tom, this is Bob Smith. Bob, this is Tom Brown'. Later, as structure and vocabulary permit, the course dramatizes more complex daily activities like shopping and posting a letter. At a higher level, the classroom could be transformed into, say, a court room, in which the students play the roles of judge, plaintiff, defendant, attorney and so on. A short play dealing with a certain period in history could be cast whereby the students learn their lines and act the play to the rest of the class.

C. Meaning Through Pictures.

Presenting meaning in a limited vocabulary through controlled gestures consumes a great amount of time, and limits the situations to what can be produced in the classroom. These limitations may be overcome, however, by the right use of pictures.

1. **Pictures in the Text:**

Pictures in the text may be functional or illustrative. If the pictures are functional - if they are the means

of teaching meaning - we may examine them for the amount of meaning they teach and their efficiency in teaching it. Some methods teach all meaning through pictures. Some use pictures to teach content words only; others teach all structural meaning through pictures. One method uses a number of pictures to teach the meaning of a single word - in the very first lesson of its beginners' text it has ten different pictures of heads of persons and animals in order to teach the word head. Another method has a picture for almost every sentence, and makes the structure of the picture parallel to the structure of the sentence.

When a picture is used for the teaching of meaning it is important to make sure that the picture is not ambiguous. For purposes of clarity, a drawing is often better than a photograph; a simple drawing better than a complex one. If the meaning of a picture is to be clear all irrelevant detail must be removed; otherwise the picture is merely illustrative.

A picture may illustrate the text of a lesson in order to focus the attention of the learner on what the text says by helping him imagine it. If pictures are simply illustrative we may analyse them for their appropriateness, atmosphere, liveliness, technical perfection, and their appearance to the type of learner we have in mind.

2. Picture in the Classroom:

Pictures large enough for the entire class to see may be used in place of objects which are impossible to bring into the classroom - things such as clouds, mountains, the sun, the sea, and the sky. Some methods supply their own classroom pictures. One method includes a large classroom picture for every concrete noun in its vocabulary, including pictures of objects obtainable in the classroom. Other methods supply a series of conventional wall pictures - often crowded scenes, too confused to teach meaning, but good for practice in oral composition, conversation, and question-and-answer drill.

3. Film Strips and Slides

Pictures may be supplied in the form of film strips or slides, for the purpose of teaching meaning, of teaching reading, or as aids in oral and written composition.

The advantage of film strips and slides is that they direct the attention of the class to the screen and to the pictures and words on it. The pictures may be photographs or drawings, with or without captions. The superiority of film strips over slides is that:

- (1) The order of their pictures is fixed and follows the grading of the method.
- (ii) Film strips free the teacher from the reality of the situation, which he must completely control if he is going to make his meaning clear.

- (iii) The film strips control the situation, leaving the teacher free to control the class. For film strips can picture not only those situations which the teacher can present in class, but also all those which he cannot; and they can present these situations more rapidly than the teacher can act them.
- (iv) Moreover, a situation pictured on a film strip can be shown again and again without tiring the teacher and without changing the quality of the presentation.

The disadvantages of film strips and slides is that they are not real situations and that they are seldom flexible enough to vary the situation to meet the difficulties which are liable to arise at any moment in the mind of the learner. Only the teacher can give the learner the individual attention he needs. Yet in a large class where the learner gets little or no individual attention anyway, film strips may be the best means of getting the meaning across.

4. Films

Sound films can do all that film strips can do - and more. They can teach more in a shorter time because of the high degree of attention which they compel, partly through isolation of context, partly through movement.

The sound film can reduce a situation to its essentials and prevent anything irrelevant from distracting the learner's attention. Whereas a teacher can teach the word hand by pointing to his hand and saying, 'This is my hand', the camera can make it even clearer by filling the entire screen with a picture

of a hand. It can present any situation which can be demonstrated in class; and, which is more important, it can also show the world outside the classroom. It can show a plane crashing, a house going up in smoke, and it can do all these things with a vividness impossible in ordinary classroom teaching. This very vividness of sound films may increase the meaning of the accompanying language. Moreover the sound film can give a much more continuous series of actions than can a teacher and also a variety of speaking voices.

D. Words in Context.

The extent to which pictures, objects, actions and situations are used in order to convey meaning may depend on the language level at which it is taught. The smaller the vocabulary of the learner, the more will objects and/or pictures be needed in order to get the meaning across. But once the learner has acquired a certain vocabulary, known words may be used to teach the meaning of new words and structures. This is done by putting the new words in verbal contexts which give them meaning. These verbal contexts include: definition, enumeration, metaphor, substitution, opposition, and multiple context.

1. Definition:

New words may be defined by words already known. For example: Breakfast is the meal we have in the morning. Some words are more useful for defining than are others. A method may intentionally teach a good number of such words early in the course so as to be able later to expand vocabulary by definition.

2. Enumeration:

A meaning may be taught by listing what it includes. For example: Dogs, cats, cows, horses, pigs and sheep are animals. Pens, books, tables, pins, hats and coats are things.

3. Metaphor:

If two or more things have a common feature, the same word may be used for them; and if one is already known, we may assume that the learner will see the analogy with the other. For example, if the learner already knows the names for the main parts of the body, it would not be too difficult to have him identify the legs of a table, the foot of a mountain, or the mouth of a river. He may also understand what part of an aeroplane we are referring to when we speak of the nose of the plane, the tail, the body and the wings. Some methods teach structural meanings through a similar but more abstract process. They may teach the main adverbs of time, for example, in opposing pairs as metaphorical extensions of words for space and matter already taught in the context of situation, since:

THIS and THAT are to matter
what HERE and THERE are to space
what NOW and THEN are to time.

4. Opposition:

If the learner knows the meaning of a word, he need simply be told that another word is its opposite in order to get an idea of its meaning. For example: Peace is the opposite of war. Easy is the opposite of difficult. There are many types and degrees of opposition; some are more teachable than others.

5. Multiple Context:

The meaning of a new word may be inferred from its use in a number of different sentences. For instance, if a student sees the sentence: 'Squirrels X from tree to tree' he may get the idea that X means some sort of movement like running, jumping or hopping. Later when he sees the sentence 'The horse X over the fence', he will conclude that the movement must be some sort of jump or hop. Still later with sentences like 'How high did he X? Four feet three, he is almost certain that the meaning is that of the word jump. In such series of contexts the first sentence may give only a general idea of the meaning; the second makes it more specific, the third makes it even more precise.

It is in this way, by using words in many different contexts, that their meaning becomes clearer, more specific, and more complete. This technique is particularly helpful at higher secondary levels and at Freshman and even Sophomore levels.

The meaning is clearest when all the words except the new one are already known. The more general the meaning, the greater the number of contexts needed to cover it; the more particular the meaning, the fewer the contexts needed.

II. Form.

In this technique, the teacher is concerned with the sounds of words and with the written symbols.

A language is usually presented to the learner as speech and as writing. He may be required to express himself in these two forms of the language or simply to understand them. An understanding or passive knowledge of the language (listening and reading) is the sole aim of some methods; an active knowledge of the language (speaking and writing) is the main aim of others. Many methods teach all the language skills - listening and speaking, reading, and writing - either together or in stages. But when they are taught together only one skill at a time is stressed. (1)

A. Listening and Speaking.

Speech involves not only the expression of meaning - the unconscious choice of words with correct endings and their simultaneous arrangement in the right order - but also the instantaneous use of the right sounds in the right patterns of tone and rhythm.

Students are required at first to recognize significant sounds, stress and intonation before they begin to use them.

In other words the course begins with a series of lessons on

(1) Mackey, W. F., Op. Cit., p. 49.

pronunciation, sometimes given in the learner's own language. It may also include the learning of phonetic symbols and the phonetic transcription of texts dictated by the teacher. Later, after a series of lessons in which the learner is taught to produce the sounds of English, he may be introduced to texts in phonetic notation. The first year textbooks of some courses are entirely in phonetic notation - learners being introduced to conventional spelling only in their second year.

In addition to lessons in pronunciation, or instead of them, there may be periods of systematic imitation. The model may be the pronunciation of the teacher and/or gramophone records. For this purpose some methods include records as part of the course. The same technique is now used on double-track tape enabling the learner to record his imitation of the sentence and then to listen to both to see how close he comes to the original.

Singing may also be used to help teach pronunciation; but much depends on the songs. The teacher should avoid songs which contain rare or archaic words not worth teaching, especially to beginners. The teacher should make sure that his pupils put the stress on words and syllables in the right places. Finally any selection of songs should not contain elements that conflict with what is being taught in the other parts of the course.

It is a long way from simple pronunciation exercises to the ability to converse fluently in a language. Some conversation courses lead gradually from simple action chains to questions

on pictures, questions on texts, anecdotes to be retold, various devices for oral composition, and model dialogues for memorizing.

B. Reading and Comprehension.

Reading involves the recognition of words and structures. For persons who have not yet mastered the alphabet it may also involve the recognition of letters. The course may include a series of lessons on the alphabet, or teach it either by a phonic or a look-and-say technique.

Heretofore reading was based on the premise that given letters are pronounced in a number of ways, but it would be more proper to say that sounds may be graphically represented in a number of ways.⁽¹⁾

The course may also supply a set of reading cards or filmstrips of words and word-groups graded in length and difficulty, for exposure by the teacher for shorter and shorter periods as the reading speed of the class increases. Some of the cards may be simple commands to be performed by the learner; these enable the teacher to find out whether the learner has read and understood them. Reading cards and film strips may also be used to encourage silent, reading, which some methods insist on from the very beginning, since it makes for more speed and fewer bad habits both of reading and of pronunciation.

(1) Carrol, J, B., Op.Cit., P.147.

Most of the reading, however, is done in the reading books, When examining these, one should first find out whether they contain only the words which have already been taught. Some courses teach all the words orally first, so that the learner reads only what he understands. Others teach all new vocabulary and structure in the reading books through contexts and pictures.

Reading books should also be checked for content in order to make sure that they contain the sort of material which is likely to interest the learner. Some reading courses are full of dull 'grammatical' sentences and later of equally dull stories. Others offer material written within the mental and linguistic level of the learner and include anecdotes, folk-tales, short stories and short plays which appeal to his attitudes and stimulate his imagination, the sort of material he would read for pleasure in his own language.

The more emotion the reading arouses, the deeper the impression on the learner, the longer will he remember the story and its language, and the more quickly will he recall it. We should therefore examine the contents of the reading books for their appeal to the emotions of the learner. There may, for example, be the appeal to suspense by the use of conflict, competition, and incomplete situations such as we find in mystery stories. But different types of learners have different types of interests. Adolescent boys, for example, are more likely, than are girls, to be interested in stories of mystery and adventure. Some learners may prefer factual and

informative reading. To take care of these differences some courses offer a wide choice of supplementary readers at various vocabulary levels, ranging from about a 500-word level to beyond a 3,000-word level. These include collections of short stories, plays, abridged novels, short biographies, and a variety of factual and cultural reading - giving the learner a more or less wide choice of books in words he understands.

C. Writing.

A method may require the learners to do written work from the very first lesson, or it may wait until they have some knowledge of spoken English. For learners who do not know the Roman alphabet the method may include a course in penmanship to accompany the reading course. The principle of grading according to difficulty enters into the picture, for both courses should be based on a graded alphabet which starts with a few letters in simple words and sentences and gradually adds one new letter at a time.

Written work begins with the vocabulary and structure which the learner has already learned to use orally. Spelling may be taught and checked through dictation or specially designed exercises.

Written exercises may be of various types:

1. Filling in blanks. Useful for prepositions and the use of the articles.
2. Adding the right word to a picture in the lesson.
3. Converting statements into questions or negations.
4. Changing tenses.
5. Answering questions on a given text and so on.

Hornby believes that written composition exercises should be a part of every foreign language course, except for very young learners. Written work fixes in the mind the work that has been done through oral work and reading. He is of the opinion that the conversion type of exercise is more valuable than filling in blanks and understandably so.

Here are some specimen exercises with notes: ⁽¹⁾

EXERCISE I

Purpose: To cause the learner to associate the Past Tense with an adverbial (i.e., adverb, adverb phrase or adverbial clause) of past time, and the Present Perfect Tense with the adverb just.

Instructions (to be given in the learner's mother tongue): 'Rewrite the sentences below replacing the words printed in italic type by the word just and the Preterite Tense by the Present Perfect Tense.'

Example: The manager left five minutes ago.

The manager has just left.

1. Mr. Smith went out two minutes ago.
2. The bell rang a few minutes ago.
3. The servant broke your best china teapot a minute ago, etc. etc.

The exercise may consist of ten to twenty sentences. Pupils, by reading these and writing out the answers to them, are caused (1) to form associations between tense and adverbial (2) to learn to place adverb just in its correct position, i.e., between have/ has and the participle, and (3) to learn the past participle forms (gone, rung, broken) not in isolation, but in combination with an auxiliary verb, which is the way in which they should be learnt.

(1) Hornby, A.S., English Language Teaching, Vol. IV, No.1, pp. 23-27.

EXERCISE 2

Purpose: To cause the learner to associate the pattern going to plus infinitive with future intention (when there is no dependence upon external circumstances).

Instructions: 'Rewrite the sentences below using the construction going instead of the verb intend.'

Example: I intend to be an engine-driver when I grow up.

I am going to be an engine-driver when I grow up.

1. They intend to spend their holidays at the seaside.
2. Mr. Green told me that he intended to sell his old car and buy a new one.
3. I hope you intend to pay back the money you borrowed, (etc.etc.)

EXERCISE 3

Purpose: To contrast the tenses used for conditions which may be fulfilled in the future and conditions which were not fulfilled in past.

Instructions: 'Rewrite the sentences below so that they express unfulfilled conditions in the past'.

Example: If you studied hard, you would pass the examination.

If you had studied hard, you would have passed the examination.

1. If you asked him to come, he would do so.
2. If you dropped that basket of eggs, most of the eggs would break.
3. If we had enough money, we could have a holiday in Switzerland.

(Note the connection between this and Exercise 2.)

EXERCISE 4

Purpose: To provide opportunities for pupils to frame questions (in class it is almost always the teacher who does this!) and so learn to choose the right interrogative word.

Instructions: 'Write questions to which those portions of the sentences below printed in italic type are the answers.'

Example: Tom met Mary in the park.

Where did Tom meet Mary?

1. They spent the evening at the cinema.
2. It was the Odeon cinema.
3. They got home at eleven o'clock.
4. They go to the cinema about twice a month.
5. They usually sit in the half-crown seats.

By designing this type of exercise carefully, practice in all the interrogatives can be given. Thus, the five sentences above require in the answers (1) where or how, (2) which (3) what time, (4) how often and (5) which. This type of exercise, therefore, is much more useful than the traditional 'convert from affirmative to negative' type, (though this is useful and important in the elementary stage.)

EXERCISE 5

Purpose: To cause the learner to use the more colloquial equivalents of much and many in affirmative sentences and so avoid such unidiomatic sentences as 'that man has much money'.

Instructions: 'Rewrite the sentences below in the affirmative and replace many and much by such phrases as a lot (of) a large number (of), a good deal (of) etc.'

Example: Does Great Britain import much meat from Argenina?

Great Britain imports large quantities of meat from Argenina.

1. Did he meet many people he knew in the park?
2. I haven't seen much of my friend Green lately.
3. You don't smoke many cigarettes, do you?
4. I haven't got much work to do today.
5. We haven't had much rain this summer.

The teacher should give the class information on the degrees of colloquialism in the various phrases to be used. Thus, in No. 1 above, 'large quantities of meat' is suitable for a written essay, and 'a lot of meat' for a conversation. A similar exercise may be devised for the difference between far (negative and interrogative) and a long way, only a short way, etc. (for affirmative statements).

EXERCISE 6

Purpose: To give practice in the use of to plus infinitive after certain adjectives.

Instructions: 'Rewrite the sentences below replacing the words in italic type by to and the infinitive'.

Example: We were glad when we got away so early.

We were glad to get away so early.

1. I was sorry when I heard that you were ill.
2. Old Mr. Brown was pleased when he saw his sons again.
3. Which of them was the first who reached the top?

4. They were fortunate if they escaped being killed.
5. It's time we made a start.
6. You are lucky because you are living in such a fine house.

This exercise may be followed by one requiring the composition of sentences in which the adjective followed by a to-infinitive is modified by the adverb of degree too. Thus the sentences:

You are very young. You cannot go out alone may be combined into the single sentence:

You are too young to go out alone.

Similarly:

This dictionary is quite small. It will go into my pocket.

This dictionary is small enough to go in my pocket.

It is by the recomposition and joining of sentences in this way that the pupil learns to use English constructions naturally.

Making the language a Habit.

"The ultimate aim of a language teaching course is to teach the learner to use the language accurately, fluently and independently. To achieve accuracy, errors of repetition must be avoided; to achieve fluency a great amount of practice is needed".⁽¹⁾ To progress from controlled accuracy and fluency to independent use of the language, ^{is} to move the process of expression from the conscious to the subconscious level in many types of repetition, including those which force the learner to think in the new language. Thus habit formation lies at the roof of language skills. Logical reasoning is inadequate if it is not accompanied by drill and practice. Indeed in the lower grades it should be reduced to a minimum.

(1) Mackey, Op.Cit., Vol. IX, N.2, P.54

The task of the teacher is to obtain from the learners the maximum amount of repetition with the minimum number of mistakes. The correct form must therefore be uttered more often than the incorrect form. In this connection it would be unwise of the teacher to repeat the mistake after the learner. Supposing a boy gives "tached" as the past tense of "teach". The teacher should not repeat "tached" on a rising tone in order to draw the boy's attention to his mistake, for then the boy will be hearing the wrong form of the verb than the correct one.

Preventing mistakes is better than correcting them. Mistakes may be prevented through careful selection, good grading and clear presentation. The selection must be small enough to control, and productive enough to use; the grading, gradual enough to be absorbed and systematic enough to avoid confusion; the presentation, clear enough to be understood and varied enough to be interesting. With regard to grading, the teacher must guard himself against over-zeal and thus-^{prepared}ing at his pupils material they ~~are~~ not to cope with.

Fluency is a matter of repetition. There are two ways of repeating a language: By rote and by substitution.

The rote memorizing of songs, poems and model dialogues may fix in the mind certain patterns of structure and intonation, certain idioms which the learner may draw upon in conversation or oral composition.

Substitution, such as is found in substitution tables, may be used in such a way that each repetition requires an effort in expression which eventually leads to the habit of thinking.

A substitution table/^{which} aims at fixing prepositions very firmly to their verbs. (1)

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|----|-------------------------|
| I. What do we | sit on? | We | Sit on chairs |
| | write with? | | write with pens |
| | look at? | | look at pictures |
| | think about? | | think about our lessons |
| | etc. | | look for our books |
| | | | etc. |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| II. What don't we | sit on? | We don't | sit on nails |
| | write with? | | write with mud |
| | etc. | | etc. |

| | | |
|------------|--------------------|--------------|
| III. Do we | sit on chairs? | Yes, we do |
| | sit on nails? | No, we don't |
| | write with pens? | Yes, we do |
| | write with walking | No, we don't |
| | sticks? | |
| | etc. | etc. |

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| IV The head of the school | is sitting on a chair |
| | sat on a chair. |
| | won't sit on that chair |
| | has been sitting on this chair. |
| Your friend | writes with my pen |
| somebody over there | is writing with a gold pen |
| etc. | will write with this pen. |
| | etc. |

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|
| V | My uncle | looked for me |
| | The man who brought the | took care of me |
| | money | sat on a chair |
| | The captain of the | agreed with me |
| | merchant ship | |
| | etc. | etc. |

| | | | |
|----|------------|--------------------|---------------|
| VI | who(m) did | my uncle | ask for? |
| | | the man who | take care of? |
| | | brought the money | |
| | | The captain of the | agree with? |
| | | merchant ship | look for? |
| | | etc. | etc. |

Various exercises can be done with each of those six tables:

- (i) Read the sentences.
- (ii) Give new subjects:
 - What do (cats) look for?
 - What don't (elephants) look for?
 - Do (monkeys) look for nuts?
- (iii) Give new objects:
 - We sit on (benches/ forms/ the floor)
 - My uncle took care of (my dog/ the money)
 - Did the captain of the merchant ship write with
 a piece of chalk/ a paint brush)?

It is much more enjoyable if the question forms are asked by the pupils, and the teacher has to answer them. The pupils will try hard to think of forms to trip him.

In the case of a child learning a language, it is vital to retain his interest, since psychology tells us that his efficiency to learn increases when his interest is aroused. Too much drill and too much insistence upon accuracy in all aspects of his work may kill his interest. To prevent boredom the teacher may vary this technique of presentation. For example, he may first demonstrate a new teaching point with objects and actions while his class listens. The same point may then be presented through films, each sequence being repeated a number of times. The learners may then be asked to re-enact in class what they have just seen on film, doing what they say and saying what they do. At home the learner may go over the same teaching point in the form of a story in his reader and do some written exercises. It must also be remembered that the child can digest only so much at a time. For instance, if the task is putting verbs in the Past tense, accuracy should be applied in respect to this requirement only, the child should not be expected to give an accurate performance in respect of the prepositions, choice of words and spelling all at one time. If that is done, the child gets confused and bewildered. From time to time, after careful preparation, however, a task may be given to pupils where they are expected to attend to all aspects of the language. That is what tests and final examinations are for.

While aiming to hold the pupil's interest teachers should be careful not to let this degenerate into sugar-coating. In certain

schools particularly in the United States there has been a tendency towards too much sugar-coating. For however much it is desirable to hold the pupil's interest, certain aspects of the language require solid hard work which may be tedious to the pupil. Conjugation of verbs is not as elaborate in English as it is in French, but before discussing the use^{of} the Present Continuous tense or the Present Perfect, for instance, the teacher should make sure that pupils can conjugate them. In dealing with conditional clauses the writer has found it necessary to call upon students to conjugate the past perfect tense and the perfect conditional (I should have broken, etc) with strong and weak verbs, before explaining, for instance, that the Impossible Condition as in "If he had lost his purse, he would have informed the police" should have a Past perfect verb in the 'if' - clause and perfect conditional in the main clause. To use conditional clauses accurately a certain amount of tedious drill is indispensable.

On the other hand, it is helpful for the teacher to share his objectives with his students so as to make the task in hand more meaningful and significant. In introducing precis-writing to his students, the writer has always found it stimulating to them to preface the lesson with a word about the practical aspects of such training. A newspaper reporter is sent to attend a lecture or a debate in Parliament and is required to give a resume of what he has heard; or he might be a director of a firm sending his own reports which are based on a number of reports submitted to him by his juniors; and finally it enables them to quickly recognize the more important facts of any reading assignment set for them.

Another factor for sustaining the interest of the student is that he should be 'conscious of his progress',⁽¹⁾ The gradations of difficulty again come into the picture. If the teacher in his anxiety takes a sudden jump and gives the student a task that is well beyond his ability, the student will feel lost and discouraged, even though in the long run the new task proves to be very useful. This principle is particularly important in the early stages of language teaching.

For concluding this chapter on methods for teaching English nothing could be more apt than the words of John B. Carroll of Harvard University⁽²⁾ on which is the best method for teaching a language.

"After careful investigation, no method has emerged as clearly the best method. Under reasonably favorable conditions, each of the methods clearly produces significant amounts of learning. Oral-aural approaches produce considerable speaking knowledge and aural comprehension of the language; the reading method produces considerable reading knowledge in the student. But the direct method often seems to produce some speaking knowledge. It is difficult, therefore, to find clear differences in the results achieved by the two presumably contrasting methods. Finally, no method succeeds with all students. No method, as far as we know, is able to iron out the large individual differences in rate of learning which are always encountered. In the matter of technique, contrasting methods cannot be differentiated solely in terms of their over-all results, what is needed is a more

(1) Leavitt, Op.Cit.P.

(2) The Study of Language pp.186-187.

precise knowledge of the conditions under which the various methods succeed."

In this discussion of methods, several factors have been made manifest.

All teaching must include some sort of selection, some sort of grading and some sort of presentation. Successful teaching is the result of choosing a method combining careful selection and grading with a variety of presentation techniques which effectively promote correct habit formation while sustaining the interest of the learner. With regard to presentation, the teacher has more scope for originality than in grading and selection. He can invent his own situations, make his own wall pictures, or draw the pictures on the blackboard, make his own recording with tape, even write his own texts and readers and have them mimeographed. Naturally this calls for a skilled teacher with the necessary time and training. A method, however excellent, may be useless in the hands of those who do not know how to use it, while a skilled teacher can create methods to meet the demands of his learners.

The learning of a language can be compared to the growth of a tree. This is a gradual process. The right climate and soil will help in giving a healthier specimen and will slightly accelerate the rate of growth, but you cannot appreciably shorten the period which a seedling requires to become a tree. An analytical study of language skills serves to guide the teacher in placing the right emphasis at the right time on the various skills involved in learning a language and in making the best use of time and material at his disposal, in order that the student may acquire a thorough grasp of the language in question. One should realize, however, that no short cuts are possible.

The process of learning may be intensified and quicker results may be obtained, but knowledge gained in this way is only ephemeral and can be forgotten just as quickly. Indeed one summer holiday is enough to make a student forget much of what he has learnt during an intensive six or twelve months study. Retention requires longer time than that. Drill, which at one time was considered old-fashioned, is indispensable especially in cases where the student does not have the opportunity to use the language outside the classroom with native speakers. But drill alone is not enough. There must be a period of receptiveness before command of the language is established. During that period the teacher should see to it that the student continues to read and write, listen and converse in English. The division of a language into skills does not mean that there is a sharp line of distinction between them. Two years ago a student studying under the intensive Michigan System was heard to say: "My construction and patterns are perfect; I need only vocabulary to complete the course." Unfortunately the problem is not as simple as all that. A brilliant student with a mathematical mind can learn trigonometry in three months and pass an examination with flying colors. That is because in this case learning is entirely a question of logic and ability to make quick deductions. But with the inconsistencies and illogicalities that prevail in languages and which become all the more apparent to the foreign learner, such mathematical brilliance cannot achieve equally quick results in language learning.

Although modern linguistic techniques based on careful analysis of languages and audio-visual aids increase the efficiency of the teacher and help him to save time which otherwise might have

been wasted in groping for the right methods at the expense of the learner, and guide him in making first things ~~come~~ first, a new language takes time to grow in the student's mind.

APPENDIX

Freshman English at the American University of
Beirut

Freshman English at the American University of Beirut, - described in the catalogue as English 101, a course in communication skills - presents a complexity of problems which the English Department has been struggling to solve. Some of these problems have been created by the teaching staff and some by the students themselves.

The fact that instructors of Freshman English have tended to be young men with little or no previous teaching experience, or teacher training, who come here for a short term from one to three years, has naturally reduced the efficiency of English teaching at the Freshman level. It is hard enough for men with training and experience to teach English to natives of the language; how much harder the task is for a raw graduate to teach English as a foreign language, can be readily imagined. What aggravates matters is that these instructors seldom stay long enough at the University for their students to reap the benefit of the experience they have gained during their time here. Consequently the English Department has had in the past to employ fresh graduates every two or three years - sometimes even one year - who come here to start from scratch and who have to leave just at the time when they are really ready to teach effectively.

A minor problem is created by the fact that occasionally a freshly arrived instructor finds it amazing that Arab students should speak a second language in what seems to him a wonderful way. He is ignorant of the educational background of his students and does not immediately realize the amount of English they have had in the past nor the standard which they are supposed to have attained by the time they are Freshmen.

So long as they manage to make themselves understood in writing or speech, the new instructor feels quite pleased, and his grading, at least in the first semester, tends to be rather high.

One of the major causes of the problems of teaching Freshman English, however, is that out of the 340 students who are admitted to the Freshman class every year, the English teaching staff has found after the first few weeks of teaching, that not more than three fourths of that number are up to the standard expected by the English Department for the successful completion of the Freshman English course. While all Freshmen students are supposed to have sat for and passed the English Entrance Examination, the entirely objective nature of the examination and the fact that it does not test the student's ability at written expression, make it possible for a number of weak students to scrape through. Accordingly the English Department has found it necessary to introduce a further screening test consisting of an essay written in class, after the students have been admitted by the University. Three or four sections consisting of about 15 students each are set up for those students who, in the opinion of the examiners, would need twice as many periods per week as the rest of the divisions to cover the Freshman syllabus. This course was given the name of English 101 A. Yet even after this sifting has been made, about 17 per cent of the Freshmen students fail the course in February. Altogether the total number of divisions taking English 101 and 101A varies from sixteen to eighteen divisions. Students taking English 101 are expected to cover the syllabus at the rate of three periods of week. In 1951 a fourth period, called 'conference period' was added for which no extra credit was given, but it was meant to give individual attention to those who needed it at the rate of five minutes each. During these

brief conferences the student's mistakes in written expression are discussed.

This year, however, the Freshman English staff has found it necessary to use conference periods as ordinary classroom periods, thus showing that three periods of English a week were inadequate for covering the syllabus and the remedial work that inevitably has to be tackled, either because the student has forgotten or because he has never been taught. Indeed as Freshman English is concerned, experience has proved that more than three periods are required to cope with all the difficulties encountered in that class and bring up the students to a reasonably good standard whereby they will be able to read their assignments quickly and express themselves fluently. This point becomes more important when it is remembered that for those ^{who} plan to enter the Schools of Engineering or Agriculture, it is the only formal course they will ever have for developing their general power of oral and written expression in English. (1) It, therefore, becomes vital for them to acquire a thorough grasp of English, the medium of instructions, before they embark on their professional training.

Freshman Syllabus at the American
University of Beirut

The Freshman syllabus at the American University of Beirut is designed to bring up the standard of the student to a level where he will find little or no difficulty in comprehending his reading assignments and lectures and in expressing himself with a reasonable

(1) Students are admitted into the schools of Engineering and Agriculture after the Freshman year. B.B.A. students take a course in business correspondence in the Sophomore year, but this is really a technical course.

degree of fluency, accuracy and correctness. It is a two-semester course in communication skills. No literature is taught per se. Poetry is excluded and any literary prose that is given serves only as a means to an end.

The syllabus is divided into five sections:

1. Comprehension
2. Grammar and idiom
3. Essay writing
4. Precis writing
5. Writing a research paper

Comprehension

The comprehension of the student is developed through the reading of prescribed essays and short stories in A Collection of Readings for writers edited by Harry Shaw, Harper. Every student is required to read the essay before coming to class. A discussion follows. This is begun by a carefully planned question by the instructor regarding some significant point in the essay. After drawing the students out he lets them carry on the discussion and does not - or should not - interfere unless he finds that it is getting out of hand or that there is some faulty comprehension of what is being discussed. When the point is exhausted the instructor proceeds to another, until the whole assignment is completed.

With regard to vocabulary, the students are expected to find the meanings of the difficult words they come across. Some instructors like to make sure that certain words are properly understood in the context by discussing their various uses. Occasionally the idiosyncrasies of the effect of prefixes on the meanings are explained.

For instance, whereas immoral is the opposite of moral in meaning, impertinent is not the opposite of pertinent in meaning. The difference between economic and economical is pointed out, and so on.

No grades are given during these discussions, but the teacher can form an opinion as to which student has worked seriously.

The essays cover a variety of subjects and always contain controversial ideas that help to stimulate discussion. Some are long and involved in meaning and structure and some are more directly and succinctly expressed.

Grammar and Idiom

This part of the language is the most difficult to teach and the one in which the students are particularly weak. From the point of view of the teacher, the main difficulty has been to find the right text book. So far, the ideal text book, if it exists, has not been found, although the books set for 1955-56 have so far been more suitable of the books that were used in the preceding five years. In 1953-54 the Freshman section of the English Department used a book by Harry Shaw. The book is entitled A Complete Course in Freshman English and is really three books bound in one. The first two dealing with grammar, idiom, vocabulary and essay and research-paper-writing had to be discarded as it was found they were written for American students, so that they dealt with certain problems peculiar only to American students and naturally ignored the difficulties of Arab-speaking learners. In 1954-55 only the third section, which contained essays and short stories and which is published separately

as well, was kept on the syllabus. A new book by Oliphant entitled General Certificate English Course, and Hornby's A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English and published by Longmans and O.U.P. respectively were assigned to replace the first two sections. Both books were discarded at the end of the year. Just as Shaw's two sections were too American, Oliphant's book was too English for local needs. Hornby's book, excellent as it is, is really a useful handbook for teachers, ~~not~~ students. There is too much detail in it for Freshman students, so much that it tends to confuse rather than help, particularly as there are no exercises in it for drill.

The notes in Shaw on the Research paper, however, were passed to the students in stencilled form, after some modifications had been made.

In October 1955-56 three new books were assigned in addition to Shaw's collection of essays. The first two were English Idioms by Brackenbury, published by Macmillan. The second was A. Bright's English for Arab students published by Longmans. Brackenbury's English Idioms, written by an Englishman who lived in Egypt for many years, is a very useful book, giving just the right amount of grammar and expression and containing a fund of carefully worked out exercises for oral drill in class and written work at home. It emphasizes the difficulties and peculiarities in expression of Arabic-speaking students.

Experience has shown that it is necessary in the Freshman class of the American University of Beirut to go over all the fundamentals of English grammar which the students are supposed to have

had in their secondary schools. The uses of the tenses, the sequence of tenses, the indirect question are common pitfalls to students, and require constant attention and drilling. Needless to say the pace is much faster and what had been learnt in four or five years or more is covered in a semester. The necessity for grammar in the syllabus arose from the fact that students had either been inadequately taught, or if they had been taught well, they had forgotten much of the material in the three summer months. Accordingly this part of the English course helps to bring to mind what has been forgotten and fills any gaps that have been left by the schools.

It takes some time for Arabic-speaking students to get used to sequence of tenses, and instructors can never give too much drill in that. Brackenbury's English Idioms fortunately contains a great number of exercises dealing with this point and once the student learns not to confuse tense with time, he is well on the way to remembering sequence of tenses **when** he writes or speaks.

Conditional clauses, the uses of tenses, especially the Present Perfect, are not mastered easily and these are given their due importance in the syllabus. The ultimate test of having learnt all these things is in the essays and precis which the students submit during the semester and in their oral expression in class.

Essay Writing

During the first semester the student is expected to submit four essays for correction which he is asked to write in class. While this may prove to be frustrating to keen students with

initiative and creativeness, it is the only means by which the instructor is absolutely certain that what he corrects is the student's own work and that no cheating or plagiarism have occurred. Fifty minutes should be enough time for the student to write 300-400 words - many students manage to write more - on a set topic a brief outline of which is handed to him at the beginning of the period. After the essays have been corrected they are given back. The method used by the writer in correction requires that any one receiving less than 80 should rewrite the whole essay with the corrections inserted. He is firmly convinced that unless this is done, the correction has been futile, and steady improvement in these written performances has confirmed his belief in the method. Essays that are particularly poor call for a short conference between the student and his instructor. Mistakes that are common to all and are repeated, are discussed before the whole class. For instance, in any essay on atomic energy, more than 80% of the students in the writer's divisions kept placing the definite article, as they would in Arabic, before atomic energy. Thus: "The atomic energy is neither good or bad; the atomic energy helps to cure cancer, and so on". Accordingly he took a few minutes from the period to explain to the whole class why the cannot be used in this context.

In the second Semester, since the student has to write a term paper, only two essays are assigned in the syllabus, following the same procedure as before.

The errors in the essays can be broadly divided into two kinds: errors of language and errors of thinking. Under errors of

language come all grammatical, punctuation and spelling mistakes as well as mistakes in idiom and expression, where the grammar is correct but the meaning is not clear, because the student has translated word for word from his mother tongue.

For instance a sentence such as "He carried on them", is essentially an error in expression which a knowledge of Arabic explains at once. It is a literal translation from an Arabic expression meaning "He maligned them ". The same applies to this sentence. "I never waited such beautiful harmonies from you", said by a student after he had attended a choral concert conducted by the writer. In Arabic the same word is used for expect and wait. The student meant to say of course "I never expected your choir to be so good".

Punctuation seems to elude some students, particularly the full stop (period). They just do not know when to use one. Their essays sound more like rambling letters from a maiden aunt, where the commas made to do the work of all punctuation marks. Fortunately the number of these students is small. Modern sensational novels, especially by young American writers, are perhaps partly responsible for this. These students do not realize that these writers, in violating the rules of punctuation do so deliberately, in the same way that Picasso paints distorted faces and objects. The semi-colon, though little used nowadays, presents another difficulty. Question marks are frequently omitted because in Arabic they are seldom observed. Indeed the punctuation used in modern Arabic newspapers and periodicals is an importation, which as yet, has not been firmly established.

Many of the mistakes made in the essays are due to muddled thinking. This weakness is not restricted to Arabic-speaking students but is universal. American-born or English-born students manifest the same weakness, and it is to be found just as much in England and America. The best remedy is to take the student individually and explain to him precisely why his sentence has failed to convey the meaning to the reader. The instructor realizes what the student is trying to say, and can draw out the correct expression from him by a series of questions relating to the point. When the right expression is finally made it indicates that unconsciously the student has clarified his process of thinking. The conference periods were designed for such cases, and it was a pity that in 1955-56 they had to be devoted to classroom teaching. Explanation by marginal comments on the essay paper of any faults in coherence and thinking - even at the expense of fifteen minutes correction - is an inadequate substitute for direct discussion.

The use of and is deceptively simple. Frequently a main clause is joined to a noun clause, or a present participle to a finite verb. The student must remember that and is a co-ordinate conjunction which joins two or more things of the same kind and degree - namely a main clause to a main clause, an adjective to an adjective, a present participle to a present participle and so on. Absence of clear thinking of course lies at the root of such errors. Accordingly the instructor cannot overemphasize the importance of clear thinking as a requisite for good writing.

Monotony of structure should be avoided. While short simple sentences, with the subject coming first and the predicate afterwards, are recommended in the initial stages, at the Freshman level the student should be able to vary his sentences by such devices as beginning with a sub-ordinate clause, or a participle phrase and leaving the main clause till the end. In other words he should employ a judicious mixture between periodic and loose sentences.

Precis Writing

Precis is important because of the many skills involved in it. A student, who can tackle a fairly long passage such as those assigned in standard school certificate text books on precis writing and produce a readable summary that keeps all the main points is well on the way towards mastery of the language. For in producing such a summary the student has to mobilize every device of the language. To be able to substitute a word for a phrase or a clause he has to have an extensive vocabulary: to be able to knock three sentences into one he has to be sure of knowing how to handle the structure of sentences: finally he has to have a thorough comprehension of the passage and ability to discriminate between the essentials and the non-essentials, the relevant from the irrelevant.

"The value of **precis** writing as a mental discipline and as an exercise in expression needs no elaboration. Precis writing provides a valuable corrective to muddled thinking and loose, vague and verbose expression. Ability to grasp the aim and to follow the thought and structure of a passage is the first step towards a clear understanding of its meaning and thus towards the detection of gaps or

faults in the development of its theme. The compression and re-statement of a theme in concise terms, with due respect to the true value of words, is not only a further test of comprehension but is also an indispensable part of language training." (1)

The Arabic style of writing has a marked tendency towards tautology, and though, under western influence, this tendency is gradually disappearing in such well-written newspapers as the Egyptian Al-Ahram, it is still a feature of Arabic writing and speech. Furthermore, in Arabic colloquial speech repetition of a word is used to indicate emphasis or insistence. For instance, the Arabic colloquial equivalent of "Why do you insist that I should come"? is Why do you tell me come, come, come? And of An exceedingly tall man is A man, tall, tall, tall. The Arab peoples boast of the vastness of the Arabic language. Unfortunately this vastness is the reason why it lacks precision. Dormant for many years, it has not quite caught the spirit of the times we live in. Accordingly precis writing is not only valuable as a linguistic exercise but as means for imbuing the Arab student with the spirit of the modern age in respect of conciseness and precision.

To make a precis of a passage the student must know how a paragraph is constructed and what constitutes a well-written paragraph. He should learn that a paragraph deals with a sub-topic of the main essay and that all the sentences are knit together, with the theme generally stated in the first or second sentence or sometimes in the

(1) Jepson, R.W. Op. Cit., (Introduction p.5)

last above and that the rest of the sentences are an explanation, an amplification or illustration of the topic sentence. (1) A very useful exercise in this connection is to give the class a paragraph in which all the sentences are jumbled up and to ask them, after finding a title for it, to rewrite the paragraph with the sentences in the right order. Here is an example:

Directions: This passage has the sentences in the wrong order. Read through it carefully, suggest a title, and rearrange the sentences in the proper order.

It is better than the silver spoon in the mouth. He could not preserve his hostility in the presence of the other's disarming smile and gay good-humour. It will carry you anywhere and win you anything, including the silver spoon. He just yielded up his sword and sunned himself in the pleasant weather that the other carried with him like an atmosphere. There is nothing so irresistible as the right kind of smile. It was the flash of sunshine that did it for him. If I were to be born into this world again and had the choice of my endowments, I should arrange very carefully about a smile. It disarms your enemies and makes them forget that they have a grudge against you. 'I have a great many reasons for disliking you', said a man to my friend the other day, 'but when I am with you I can never remember what they are.' (2)

By rearranging the sentences correctly the student will see for himself that explanatory sentences in a paragraph can be easily left out in a precis and that the topic sentence is really a very brief summary of a paragraph. He also begins to see that figurative language should be avoided in a precis, e.g. It was the flash of sunshine that did it for him.

(1) Low and Hollingworth, Matriculation English course. University Tutorial Press, p.105.

(2) Clay Norman, op. Cit., p.45

Precis writing as already stated involves the ability to combine two or three sentences into one. The following two examples will illustrate what I mean:

- a) This incident took place the other day. I was rushing to the Bank. The doors were about to be closed. I was trying to get there first. I came into collision with a woman. The collision was violent. The woman was little. She was old. Her face was puckered with wrinkles. She wore a bonnet. The bonnet belonged to the fashion of many years ago. She was carrying an umbrella. The umbrella had been green. The colour was now faded. She was going down the steps. Her descent was slow.
- b) The other day as I was rushing to the Bank in an endeavour to get there before closing time, I collided violently with a little wrinkled old woman, wearing an old-fashioned bonnet and carrying a faded green umbrella, who was slowly descending the steps. (1)

The style in (a) is typical of Arabic colloquial speech the habits of which are more strongly felt by Arabic-speaking people learning foreign languages than correct Arabic written expression. In (b) several devices are used,

1. One adjective replaced a clause, e.g., old fashioned replaced belonging to the fashion of many years ago.
2. A clause replaced by a phrase, e.g. The doors were about to be closed replaced by 'before closing time.'
3. A simple sentence becomes an adverbial clause of time; e.g. I was rushing to the Bank, becomes As I was rushing to the Bank.

Until recently the Freshman English syllabus suffered from the grave defect that precis-writing was not included in it. It is gratifying to note that precis writing has gradually been established

(1) Jepson, R.W., A New Guide to Precis Writing, p. 12, Longman Green and Co., London 1954.

as part of the requirements for Freshman English. In the year 1955-56 more time, organization, and study were spent on that than ever before and it is hoped that this will continue.

An admirable text book by R.W. Jepson was assigned this year, and it has facilitated the task of both instructor and student. After two preliminary and very useful chapters, there are passages for oral drill, followed by long extracts of varying lengths for written work. These come under the headings of Narrative, Character Description, Exposition and Argument, and Dialogue, each set being preceded by specific directions. The variety in the selections increases the usefulness of the book, since at least two or three of each set are suitable for American University of Beirut students.

Four passages, ranging from 500-800 words, were assigned for the first Semester, and these were summarized in class. In the case of the longer passages the students were told in advance to read them before coming to class. Furthermore the English examination before the Christmas holiday consisted solely of writing a precis of a passage of 700 words. In the second Semester students are required to make a summary of three of the set essays and short stories, while the writing of a research paper call for all the skills in which the student had been trained in the first semester.

The Research Paper

The Research Paper is one of the requirements of English 102, which is really a continuation of English 101. The main aims of this assignment are to acquaint the students with the methods of collecting information from different sources and to train them in the mechanics

of presenting a paper in a scholarly way. Few secondary schools give attention to this aspect of English teaching and as university students are required to write a number of papers before they graduate, this training meets a need long felt by the departments in the University. There was a time, when Senior students could not present an acceptable paper to their professors because they had never had the necessary training.

Until three years ago English 101 and 102 formed a one year course since the nature of the syllabus was more or less the same; so that any one failing at the end of the year had to repeat English 101 and 102 even though he might have passed at Mid-year. With the new arrangement, if a student passes English 101 and fails 102, he has to repeat the latter course only. Conversely if he fails English 101 he is not allowed to take 102 until he has passed the former. This is a sensible arrangement since the student who has not succeeded in the first course is really not qualified to cope with a research paper, which forms a distinctive feature of the course in the second semester.

Procedure Involved in "The Research Paper".

1. The unit begins with a lecture on the significance of this training and an explanation of all the steps involved in writing a paper. Mimeographed sheets containing all this information are passed to the students.
2. All divisions have to attend four weekly meetings in the library where library personnel indicate all available sources of information in any library - catalogued books, reference books and periodicals - and explain how these can be reached and explored.

3. The student is taught to "decipher" all the information which appears in the catalogue cards in order that he may be able to decide quickly for himself whether a certain book will be useful to him before he gets it out. He is also shown how to look for information in old magazines, periodicals and newspapers. Then he has to submit two carefully tabulated bibliographies, one of all the books, and one of all periodicals in which he is likely to get some information on his subject. Having done that satisfactorily he then proceeds to write an outline of his paper. Concurrently he is expected to start taking notes on cards.

The technique of using footnotes will have been explained by now and when he has collected all his notes and digested them, he is ready to draft his paper.

Owing to the limited resources of the American University of Beirut library and the British Council and U.S.I.S. libraries, and to avoid duplication, the topics of the research paper are assigned to the students by the instructor from a carefully prepared list. Ideally the student should select his own topic, but experience has shown that is not practicable, and a compromise has had to be made. At any rate at this stage the student will not have formed strong preferences for a particular subject. Only sources in English are allowed to be used unless it is proved that they are not available in that language. In that case the student has to translate into English the notes he takes on his cards from non-English sources.

Papers are expected to be submitted in the second week in April which gives the student seven weeks to write them.

Organization and Administration

Freshman English is a special section of the English Department which has been given local autonomy by virtue of the large number of students involved and the complexity of the task. Since 1954-55 it has been in the hands of an assistant professor who has appointed a syllabus committee and an examination committee to assist him in his work. Instruction is carried out by six instructors and one assistant professor.

The Syllabus Committee

The Syllabus Committee is not only responsible for drawing up the syllabus for Courses English 101-102 and deciding what text books should be used, but also for preparing a sort of a teacher's manual, consisting of detailed lesson plans covering every assignment, which are circulated amongst the teaching staff. The object of these directions is to insure uniformity of instruction and to guide newcomers or inexperienced instructors.

The syllabus allows for a certain degree of flexibility depending on the progress of the students or, and, suggestions by the staff.

The Examination Committee

The Examination Committee prepares the examinations for all the general quizzes and the two final examinations given during the year. As a rule a draft is read by the staff and alterations are made according to any suggestions that are unanimously approved.

Entrance Examination

Every student wishing to be admitted to the Freshman class has

to sit for an aptitude test in English and, at least theoretically, if he fails to attain a certain grade, he must either go to Special Form or leave the University. Oddly enough, holders of the Syrian or Lebanese or French Baccalaureat ⁽¹⁾ are admitted into the Sophomore Class if they get a certain score in the same examination as the Freshmen. This is not satisfactory since experience has proved that the English of these students leaves much to be desired - a fact which partly explains the number of undergraduates who speak an appalling kind of English and present lamentably expressed reports and term papers to their professors - and that they need English 101-102 as much as, if not more, than the Freshmen. Furthermore some students are occasionally accepted into the Freshman class even though their English fails to meet the necessary requirements. These ⁽²⁾ invariably end up in 101A, and only a few manage to pass the course in February.

Students holding the Baccalaureat are admitted into the Sophomore class if they get a certain score in the Freshman entrance examination, and therefore do not take the essential course English 101-102. The writer would suggest a new entrance examination in English for such cases - which could be called Sophomore Entrance Examination - of the same standard in difficulty as the Final Examinations in 101-102 and including an essay or a precis. Those who do not pass it should then take a year's course in English, which could be called English 203-204 and which would have the same standard as English 101-102. The text

(1) See American University of Beirut Catalogue 1955-56, p.27.

(2) See page 104 .

books would have to be different of course. I feel that this is the only answer to the increasing pressure brought upon the University by local governments, who refuse to admit that the Baccalaureat English for instance, is not up to Sophomore level.

Summing Up

Freshman English is an indispensable subject and all students entering the University should be required to take it unless they have taken an equivalent course which the American University of Beirut recognizes as being of the same standard.

The number of periods allotted to this course are three a week and a corresponding number of credit-hours with a conference period which frequently has had to be used as a full-dress lesson. This number is inadequate to give the desired grounding in the language. The number should be raised to four periods a week with a conference period thrown in. English being the medium of instruction should be given more time and credit hours. That may mean that other courses have to be curtailed, and more staff engaged for instruction. Such steps would be justifiable, since the efficiency of the student is bound to increase in any subject, if he has a good command of English. His comprehension would increase and he would be able to cover his assignments in a much shorter time and write his reports with less effort and wasting of time.

It is sincerely hoped that these suggestions will materialize in the near future.

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