THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
METHOD ADOPTED IN IRAQ

By
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THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY

AL-HAMASH
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ABSTRACT

A major problem facing education in Iraq is students' failure in English. Vocabulary teaching is one of the areas of difficulty that contribute to this problem.

This study investigates the latest advances in methods of teaching foreign languages with the aim of finding solutions for the problems that vocabulary teaching involves.

The purposes of this study are: (a) evaluating the Iraqi approach to vocabulary teaching, (b) making suggestions for the elimination of the shortcomings, and (c) acquainting Iraqi educators with the modern approaches to vocabulary teaching.

Chapter I states the problem, identifies the salient features of the Iraqi approach to the teaching of English and shows, through a brief review of methods, that the Iraqi approach is not up-to-date.

Chapter II states the prominent features of the Modern Linguistic Approach, discusses how linguists (as contrasted to pseudo-linguists) define and classify vocabulary, and points out how linguists conceive of the position of vocabulary in language learning.

Chapter III aims at: (a) stating the linguistic aspects of vocabulary teaching, (b) discussing the Linguistic Approach to vocabulary teaching, and (c) setting specific criteria for evaluating the Iraqi approach.
The discussion of the linguistic aspects that vocabulary teaching involves resulted in defining the vocabulary learning burden as any linguistic element that words contain and that necessitates some effort to be learned. The importance of this concept is shown in vocabulary selection, presentation and testing. In vocabulary selection it helps arrange words according to ease and difficulty. In vocabulary presentation it helps identify the words that need efficient techniques. In vocabulary testing it helps identify and weigh the problems that words contain and that examiners should consider.

In chapter IV, the Iraqi approach to vocabulary teaching is discussed. This is preceded by brief remarks on the educational system and the English program in order to help view English vocabulary teaching in its educational context and explain certain necessary terms.

Chapter V is a critique of the Iraqi approach to English vocabulary teaching. It is the outcome of the comparison between the criteria of chapter III and the features of the Iraqi approach.

In chapter VI recommendations for the elimination of the shortcomings of the Iraqi approach are made. The "general" recommendations include suggestions for applying linguistic analyses to vocabulary teaching and suggestions for dividing the seven-year English course into four progressive stages. The other suggestions are of a more practical nature. A more objective marking - scheme for
written compositions is suggested. An oral test that can be used in the General Ministerial Examinations is also devised. It is based on: (a) a comparison between the segmental phonemes of English and Iraqi Arabic, and (b) a scale for weighing the pronunciation learning burden of words.

The four appendices include: (a) specimen examination papers, (b) an often-quoted document stating aims and methods of teaching English in Iraq, (c) a list of current English textbooks of Iraqi schools, and (d) a discussion of English word lists. The latter helps in (a) explaining frequency and range principles, (b) pointing out the value of word counts in vocabulary selection, and (c) identifying the words, to whose importance all word-counts agree.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study has three main aims. First, we shall discuss the modern theories and analyses of the position of English vocabulary as it is related to the English language as a whole. We shall also discuss the modern approaches to the teaching of English as a foreign language. Emphasis will be laid on the teaching of English vocabulary. Secondly, we shall discuss how the selection and the teaching of English vocabulary is approached in Iraq; and finally, we shall end the study with conclusions and suggestions which will be drawn from comparing the modern approaches with the Iraqi approach. But before probing into any further details, it is necessary to state the assumptions underlying the study.

A- Assumptions:

It is generally felt in Iraq that there is always a high percentage of failure in English in the General Ministerial Examinations among students of all educational levels. English is considered by Iraqi students as the most "difficult" school subject, for which a student must work very hard, if he wants to pass the examination.

The problem of failure in English remains within the region of "general feelings," because no extensive or enlightening study or inquiry has ever been made to diagnose the factors contributing to the problem, or to offer possible solutions that would have practical benefit. In spite of the discouraging shortage of material in the field, this study aims at selecting one of the chief problem areas of the teaching of English in Iraq, and discussing it in the light of modern concepts of teaching foreign languages. But before doing so, we have to see how valid is the claim that there is a high percentage of failure in English.

The first question to be asked is: how "high" is
the percentage of failure among students in English compared with other school subjects? No official table of statistics, from which one can elicit an exact and a comprehensive answer, is available. The statistics published by the Iraqi Government state the percentage of "complete" failure of students in the General Ministerial Examinations, but no indication is made of the specific subjects in which the students failed.

A list of the grades of 1500 students in the General Ministerial Examination, of the primary level of the academic year 1959-1960 is obtained. The list contains grades of students (boys and girls,) from different areas of Iraq - rural and urban; inside and outside Baghdad. The results of these 1500 students are shown in table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Maths.</th>
<th>Social Studies</th>
<th>Science &amp; Hygiene</th>
<th>Civics &amp; Tel.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF FAILURES</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCENTAGE OF FAILURE</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author obtained the list of the grades from the Directorate of Education of Baghdad - Karkh Section. The list is available in the authors' private files. The 1500 students, mentioned in the list, are distributed as follows: (a) 1000 boys in 27 schools, and (b) 500 girls in 14 schools.
The number of students who failed in one subject or more is 732. This means that only 246 students did not fail because of English. 486 students failed completely or partially because of English. This number constitutes approximately 66.3% of the total number of students, who did not succeed in the General Ministerial Examination. (See table 2 below.)

**TABLE 2**

FAILURE IN ENGLISH AMONG 1500 STUDENTS COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND WITH THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO FAILED IN OTHER SUBJECTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>NUMBERS</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students who succeeded in all subjects</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who failed in one subject or more</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who failed in English, compared with the total number of students</td>
<td>486/1500</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who failed in English compared with the total number of students who failed completely or partially</td>
<td>486/732</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students whose failure was not due to English, compared with the total number of students</td>
<td>246/1500</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students whose failure was not due to English compared with the total number of students who failed completely or partially</td>
<td>246/732</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second question to be asked is: What contributes to such a high percentage of failure among students in English? Many reasons can be given in answer to this question. Discussing all the areas of difficulty that contribute to the failure
of students is beyond the scope of this study. Concentration must be made on one major area of difficulty, if our study is to be any real benefit.

The object of our consideration is the problem of the selection, preparation and presentation of English vocabulary in Iraq. The reasons why we have chosen vocabulary as the object of our study can be stated as follows:

1- Vocabulary constitutes a major and an unsolved problem for both teachers and students in Iraq. This can be seen in the following statement: "It is a great pity to find out that the answers of the teachers of English are not basically different from the answers of the learners of this language (English) in the general complaint of too many words."  

2- The tabulated findings of the questionnaire, which we have just quoted, indicate that the problem of vocabulary is not properly handled by the authors of the English textbooks in Iraq. (See Table 3.)

Out of thirty teachers only three answered that there are "too few words," while twenty-seven teachers answered that there are "too many words." This means that only one tenth of the teachers assert that they are capable of tackling all the vocabulary problems in the prescribed textbooks and they are asking for more.

Nine tenths of the teachers of English who answered the question, state that the textbooks contain too many words, or too many vocabulary problems.

**TABLE 3**

RESULTS OF 30 TEACHERS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION ON TEXTBOOKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Too Many Words</th>
<th>Too Few Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

3- It may be argued that vocabulary may constitute a problem for teachers, but it is not necessarily a major problem for students, and subsequently the failure of students in the General Ministerial Examinations is probably due to some other difficulties.

We are not assuming that vocabulary is the only factor behind the failure of students. What we are assuming is that vocabulary is a major problem area in the study of English in Iraqi schools, and so it constitutes one of the major factors behind the failure of students.

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3 Adapted from *ibid.*, p. 139. The original graph tabulates the teachers' responses to the following question: "What do you think of the prescribed textbooks in regard to the amount and quality of the material, the language, exercises, etc.? "We have taken the portion of the original graph, which is relevant to our study."
It is only natural that what is difficult for a teacher is difficult for his students.

To provide evidence for what we have said, we have analyzed the examination questions that were given to the students, whose results we have tabulated in Tables 1 and 2. There are six questions of which the student is asked to select four.\(^4\)

a) The first question consists of a short passage followed by five questions, presumably designed to test whether the students comprehend the passage or not. Vocabulary, here, helps or hinders the understanding of the passage by the students.

b) In the second question the students are asked to make questions for five answers provided in the question. It is designed to test the ability of the student to use question-words correctly.

c) The third question deals with placing words (supplied by the questioner) in blanks to complete sentences.

d) The fourth question deals with providing tail-questions for five statements.

e) The fifth question is concerned with placing words in blanks to complete lists of words.

f) The last question requires answers for five general questions.\(^5\)

Questions 3 and 5 are primarily concerned with vocabulary items. The mastery of a relatively extensive vocabulary is indirectly effective in answering the four remaining questions.

\(^{4}\)See Appendix A.

\(^{5}\)Ibid.
This means that vocabulary constitutes at least one third of the questions, and so we are justified in ascribing a large proportion of the factors that contributed to the failure of students in that examination to vocabulary difficulties.

4- A fourth reason why we have chosen vocabulary as the theme for this study is that it cuts across all aspects of a language. It is related to pronunciation, sentence - structure, spelling and syntax. Vocabulary problems hinder the acquisition of the linguistic skills at which a language teacher aims. Solving vocabulary problems helps towards the solution of problems in other aspects of the language.

5- One of the major problems that teachers of English have to face is the "bad" scholastic habits that students develop to cope with vocabulary problems. Every year various cheap publications, in which long lists of words taken from the prescribed textbooks and explained in Arabic, appear. Those publications are full of grammatical and spelling mistakes. The Ministry of Education prohibited the use of these books, but in spite of that, students are still buying them and using them.

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6 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Circular No. 16, (Baghdad: 12 Dec. 1955.) The circular states that one of these cheap books contains 113 spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes.

7 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Inspectorate General of Education, Circular No. 421, (Baghdad: 27 April, 1955.)

8 In the secondary school where the author was working, the students were warned several times against the harmful effect of such books. One month later, he inspected students' desks in search of such books, and it was discovered that almost every 9 out of 10 students possessed one of these books.
Younis mentions another "bad" habit that students have developed in Iraq. He states that "the stressing of the understanding of the textbooks only caused children to develop the habit of writing the meaning of words on the same page of the textbooks, and they gradually fail to express themselves verbally in other subjects."

One major consideration remains to be discussed in this section. We have the problem of the high percentage of failure in English in our schools, and naturally this indicates the failure of the Iraqi approach to enable students to acquire the required linguistic skills. To this - as we have seen - vocabulary problems contribute much. Because it is difficult to discuss vocabulary problems in isolation, the whole approach to foreign language teaching, which is adopted at present in Iraq, must be examined and evaluated in the light of other approaches, and especially modern scientific ones.

We shall start by examining very briefly the general features of the Iraqi approach.

1- The English Course. Students start studying English in the fifth elementary grade (around the age of eleven) and continue for seven years. The course is divided into three levels.

a) On the primary level, which includes the first two years of the English course, students are given oral practice in order to develop good English pronunciation. They are also trained in the habits of correct spelling and

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clear handwriting.10
b) On the intermediate level, which includes the next three years of the course, emphasis is shifted from oral works to reading and writing.

c) On the secondary level, which includes the last two years of the course, emphasis is laid on the study of the basic structures of the language and on training in independent work.11

2- The Method. The essential premises of what is called the Direct Method, which favours the complete elimination of the use of the mother tongue, are adopted in Iraq. On the whole, the general features of the prescribed method in Iraq can be summarized as follows:

a) "A modified Direct Method is used. That is, the native language is used as little as possible and every effort is made to establish direct association between objects and concepts on the one hand, and their expression in English on the other."12

b) The teaching of grammar rules especially in the early stages is excluded on the grounds that it may hinder fluency.13

c) In teaching vocabulary, explanations by using English synonyms, or Arabic equivalents are strongly rejected.

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10 Iraq, Ministry of Education  Directorate of Curricula and Books, The Curriculum of Primary Education, (Baghdad: Ministry of Education Press, 1960), p. 32. See also Appendix B.
11 Ibid., p. 33.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., p. 34.
Words must be explained through "direct association", because very few true synonyms exist in English, and because giving Arabic equivalents encourages mental translation.

d) The best way to teach pronunciation, according to the Iraqi approach, is by devoting the first few minutes of each lesson to pronunciation drills, and by correcting individual errors made by students.¹⁴

We are not assuming that the Modified Direct Method adopted at present in Iraq is faulty, but we are assuming that there are other more recently formulated approaches to the teaching of foreign languages. Teachers of English and educators ought to be acquainted with these new developments in methodology, if they are to be more objective and more "scientific".

In order to have an idea of the modern developments in linguistic theories and methodology, one must review very quickly the various methods used in teaching foreign languages. Here, we shall discuss them according to their chronological order.

1- The Grammar or Translation Method is the oldest method used in the teaching of foreign languages. The emphasis on the study and memorization of grammatical rules and paradigms (together with their exceptions) is an important feature of this method. Vocabulary is learnt through memorization of word lists from the foreign language with their "equivalents" in the native language of the learner. According to the advocates of this method learning grammatical rules and their exceptions, together with the memorization of word lists, lay the foundations of the language in the learner's mind. The learners' mastery of the language is tested through the translation of difficult

¹⁴Ibid., p. 36.
sentences and passages from the foreign language into the native language and vice versa. Pronunciation and speaking are very much neglected.\textsuperscript{15}

The method was used in the teaching of dead languages, and, later, in the teaching of living languages. It was supported by the, now outmoded, doctrine of "formal discipline" and "transfer of training."\textsuperscript{16}

2- The Direct Method is, on the whole, a more recent development than the traditional Grammar Method, but it must be understood that "there is no such thing as the Direct Method, when considered as one method. The term Direct Method is applied to all methods in which the students' native tongue is not used."\textsuperscript{17} The direct-method approach goes under several names of different "methods" with relatively little variations, but fundamentally similar bases.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, the revolt against the traditional translation method was named the natural method and was used with slight variations in private language schools, rather than in colleges and universities.\textsuperscript{18} Later, another version of the Direct Method appeared when Victor, of the University of Marburg, introduced the scientific use of phonetics in the teaching of pronunciation at the initial stages of foreign language courses. This is what is called today the phonetic method.\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19}Meras, op. cit., p. 34.
The fundamental premises on which the whole approach is based can be summarized as follows:

a) Pronunciation is stressed - with the help of phonetics - during the first weeks of the course.

b) During the first few weeks, the ear is trained. Reading would be introduced gradually after that.

c) A functional approach to grammar is adopted. It is taught inductively instead of presenting ready-made rules.

d) Composition exercises start after a sufficient amount of vocabulary and phraseology is mastered.

e) Vocabulary is explained through the use of objects, definition in the foreign tongue, and in context. Translation is completely eliminated.  

f) Listening and speaking come before reading and writing.

The Direct Method continued to be considered as the progressive approach to the study of foreign languages, up to the late 1930's. It stood in contrast to the traditional Grammar or Translation Method, which was greatly discredited. But, although still popular, and still considered a "modern" approach, the Direct Method is often criticized severely. Some of the points of criticism voiced against the Direct Method are the following:

a) The complete elimination of the use of the learners' mother tongue often results in wasting much of the time in circumlocutions and verbal explanations.  

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\[20\] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

b) The material — especially vocabulary — introduced in the early stages of the course is governed by what is demonstrable in the classroom, rather than by what is more frequent or what is more useful to the learner.  

c) The grading of the material according to the students' difficulties is not easy, since the new material is governed by what is demonstrable in the classroom.

d) The Direct Method teacher realizes the necessity of speaking to the students in the foreign language only. In so doing, the teacher is presenting a variety of structures for which the students are not adequately prepared. This results in confusion in the minds of the students, and subsequently in what teachers call "typical errors." 

e) Some of the devices that the direct methodists use in explaining vocabulary items are open to the following difficulties: 

1- Ambiguity — especially when the unknown is explained by the unknown.

2- The Direct Methodists believe that banning the use of the mother tongue in explaining new vocabulary items eliminates mental translation. Some believe that the Direct Method makes students indulge in mental translation, even more so than the Translation Method. The mental translation would be something like the following: foreign term — explanation in the foreign language — identification of concept — meaning equivalent in the native language.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p. 40.}\]
3- Progress in reading is often very slow, because all new vocabulary items have to be explained first.25

4- Students gain only a superficial knowledge of words, because most of the time is spent in presenting vocabulary, so that very little time is left for practice.

5- The explanation of a single word may take a whole period.

f) The Direct Method teacher is virtually the only "talker" in class. Students usually sit passively listening. But students often become restless and noisy. This calls for the use of compulsion and punishment.26

g) The Direct Method tires the teacher and saps most of the energy of the class.27

h) It places too much power in the hands of the temperamental teacher.28

3- The Linguistic Approach, which is sometimes called the Linguistic Method, had its beginnings toward the end of the nineteenth century, with the study of the phoneme, which was started by the Russian linguist Baudowin de Courtenay and his student Kruzweski. The linguistic studies during the early decades of the twentieth century were developed by the so-called Prague Circle.29

In America, the linguistic studies were started by William Dwight Whitney (1827 - 1894,) and a little later by Franz Boas.30 But the men, to whose works Modern Linguistics is greatly indebted for the fundamental premises and technical

25Ibid.
26Gauntlett, op. cit., p. 40.
27Ibid., p. 41.
28Ibid., p. 42.
29Carroll, op. cit., p. 19.
30Ibid.
terminology, are Edward Sapir and Leonard Bloomfield. They each published a book entitled language. Sapir's book was published in 1921, and Bloomfield's book was published in 1933.31

As we are going to discuss Modern Linguistics and its implications on vocabulary teaching with some details, later in this study, it would be sufficient here to say that the linguistic approach is a newer "method" than the Direct Method, and so we are called upon to investigate the solutions it offers to the problem of vocabulary selection and presentation. There is no reason why we should be stuck six decades back, in the popular idea of the Direct Method, and pay no attention to anything that has happened since the beginning of this century.

The Iraqi approach, in being confined only to the Direct Method is ignoring up-to-date studies. Whether it is missing much or little, it will be the purpose of this study to investigate, as will be seen in later chapters. Here, it is safe to say that there is no reason why the list of readings, which is recommended by the Ministry of Education for teachers of English, should be confined to selections from the works of French, Hornby, Morris, and Balmer. It should be supplemented by selections from the works of other investigators of the more "modern" approaches.32


H. E. Palmer, A Grammar of English Words (Longmans.)
H.E. Palmer, The Teaching of Oral English (Longmans.)
French, Hornby, Morris and Palmer are distinguished experts, and they certainly contributed much to the field of foreign language teaching, but they do not represent all the important points of view.

Younis classifies the teachers of English in the Iraqi secondary schools into: (a) those who teach English just because they know English, and who usually had no training in methods of teaching, and (b) those who are graduates of the Foreign Languages Department of the College of Education. He, also, states that "although these graduates are the best available for Iraq to employ for this purpose, they are schooled only in the use of the Direct Method of teaching."\(^{33}\) In the same study he comes to the conclusion that "it is vitally necessary to acquaint the graduates of the Foreign Languages Department with all linguistic approaches in order that they may apply the most advantageous method to the special situations as they arise."\(^{34}\)

In the next chapter, we shall be discussing modern approaches to foreign language teaching and particularly the Linguistic Approach. Concentration will be on the implications of these approaches on the selection and presentation of English vocabulary.

**Summary.** The assumptions underlying this thesis can be summarized as follows:

1- Schools in Iraq are facing a great problem, namely, the problem of the high percentage of failure of students in English.

\(^{33}\)Younis, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

\(^{34}\)Ibid., p. 40.
2- One of the chief problem areas contributing to the failure of students is the selection and presentation of vocabulary.

3- The Iraqi "Modified Direct Method" is only one of the approaches to the teaching of English as a second language, but it may not be the best one.

4- The Direct Method, on which the Iraqi approach is largely based, is not the latest innovation in the field of foreign language teaching. Since 1941 other innovations began to appear in the field of foreign language teaching, with which teachers and educators in Iraq ought to be acquainted.

5- The investigation of the findings of Modern Linguistics may result in valuable suggestions for the solution of the problem of the teaching of English vocabulary in Iraq.

B- Purposes of the study.

First of all, the chief purpose of the study is to satisfy a need felt by the author during the time he spent in the teaching of English in Iraq. The author felt that many Iraqi teachers of English in the primary and secondary schools, with whom he worked or talked, are also baffled by the problems of how to teach English vocabulary and sometimes what vocabulary items to teach.

In addition to that, the study is intended to serve the following purposes, when it will be completed:

1- To acquaint teachers of English and educators with the new developments in methodology in the teaching of the English language. Concentration will be on the progress beyond the Direct Method, and especially on the Linguistic Approach.

2- To acquaint educators and educational administrators with the techniques of vocabulary selection.

3- To show the defects and the points of excellence in the Modified Direct Method as it is related to the selection and the teaching of English vocabulary in Iraq. This will help teachers and administrators to avoid these defects and to maintain what is good.

4- As a theoretical study, to furnish a hypothesis or hypotheses to be tested practically later on.

5- To serve as a basis for further studies of the teaching of other aspects of the English language in Iraq.

C- Methods of Approach.

The following types of research are undertaken in the writing of this thesis:

1- In order to be able to have a clear idea of the problem, we began by reviewing the literature available on the teaching of vocabulary with concentration on the development in methodology and in the selection, preparation and presentation of vocabulary, during the last twenty years and especially what is called the Linguistic Approach.

2- This was followed by a study of vocabulary in a sequential series of Iraqi textbooks, together with the teaching methods prescribed by the Iraqi Ministry of Education.

3- The major task of the thesis is to evaluate what is prescribed in the field of vocabulary teaching in Iraq using as criteria the recent theory and practice of the Linguistic Approach to the teaching of vocabulary.
CHAPTER II
MODERN LINGUISTICS AND VOCABULARY

In chapter I, we have alluded to the beginnings of the Linguistic Approach in our brief review of the most prominent methods of teaching foreign languages. In this chapter we shall investigate more thoroughly what is meant by Modern Linguistics. Then, we shall attempt to point out how linguistic scientists define vocabulary, how they classify vocabulary, and finally how they conceive of the position of vocabulary, as it is related to other aspects of a language.


As we have seen in the previous chapter, modern linguistic science started to attract attention after the publication of the works of Sapir and Bloomfield. Before World War II, progress was limited to descriptive analyses of languages with little consideration for the application of these analyses to the teaching of foreign languages.

During, and after, World War II, the findings of linguistic science began to be applied in the field of teaching foreign languages when materials for intensive courses were developed in the United States of America.¹ Because the techniques developed for language teaching were largely based on the findings of the linguistic science, it is important, here, to summarize those findings as briefly as possible.

1- Language is fundamentally oral. The linguistic scientist believes that language is primarily formed of sounds, which

¹For a detailed discussion of the attempts to apply linguistic science in teaching foreign languages see: Carroll, op. cit., pp. 173-192.
are produced to signify or symbolize objects and ideas. Writing is only a representation or a means of recording a language, but writing is not language itself. This point is explained by Bloomfield thus:

Writing is merely an attempt, more or less, at making visual records of language utterances.... It is a great mistake to confuse the acquisition of literacy with the acquisition of speech; the two processes are entirely different.²

Furthermore, writing is not an accurate representation of language. One has only to examine words like to, too, two, or knit and nit to see how different symbols stand for the same sound. Conversely, one can examine words like read (present) and read (past) to see how different sounds are represented by the same symbol.

This is why modern linguistic scientists are so emphatic in asserting that writing is not language, but an inaccurate representation of language. In order to clear away the layman’s habit of confusing language and writing, linguists often refer to "spoken language" and "written language", but among themselves it is understood that language is nothing more than speech.³

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In support of this principle linguists often present examples of societies with relatively advanced oral literature. Those societies had no writing systems to record their literature. Or as Sapir says, "a wealth of anthropological evidence indicates with overwhelming certainty that phonetic language takes precedence over all other kinds of communicative symbols." 4

Language consists of arbitrary symbols of reality. This principle implies, first, that there is nothing logical about language, and, secondly, that language is only symbolizing or representing our experience of reality, but language is not reality itself. We speak of reality arbitrarily and as it looks to us.

Each community develops a set of symbols in order to explain the outside world in terms of the specific needs of the community itself. Take, for instance, the lexical structure of any language and compare it with that of another language. You will find that there are many words in one language that cannot be fitted into the lexical structure of another (i.e. many words have no equivalents in the other language.) Seemingly similar things may be seen differently by different people. This word /θo'l j/ (ءَلْجُ) in Iraqi Arabic covers both ice and snow in English. But an Eskimo has other more specific words about frozen water. 5 This is

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because he discerns features which look insignificant to an Iraqi or an Englishman, who are culturally "blind" to such features.

Another reason why the lexical structures of different languages are never the same is because the distribution of the vocabulary items of any language at different levels is, to a great extent, arbitrary. One cannot explain why the word /سبيح/ (سبح) in Iraqi Arabic covers the meaning of the three English words: finger, toe, and thumb.

In discussing the idiomatic expressions of a language, it is incorrect to call them "exceptions", because this gives the impression that the structure of one's own language is the same as the structure of the foreign language, except for these irregular "exceptions", while it is the other way round. A language structure rarely coincides with the structure of another, and it is exceptional when it coincides.7

As an example, one can take simple matters like greetings. In Iraqi Arabic /صباح الخير/ (صباح الخير) means good morning in English, but when translated literally it becomes morning the goodness. Conversely when good morning is translated literally into Iraqi Arabic, it becomes /زين صباح/ (زين صباح) which is perfectly meaningless.

6Ibid.

3- Language is a means of communication. Language enables man to live in a society. It is a social means of communication. But language has its individual aspect too, because the kind of society in which man lives will profoundly affect his language. Lexical structure and social structure are intimately connected, and this is why it is possible to know the social group to which a speaker of a language belongs, from the way he manipulates the language. It is sometimes possible to know even his profession, education and his whole personality. For instance, the author, or any other native speaker of Iraqi Arabic, is capable of identifying the district from which another Iraqi comes, from the way he uses the language (i.e. It is possible to know if he comes from the mountainous north, or from the marsh - districts of the south, or from the western desert.) It is also possible to know whether the speaker of the language is educated or not, from the frequency or scarcity of his use of Classical Arabic words.

A common misconception of the nature of language is that it is only composed of words arranged by a number of rules. This naive idea of language signifies that meaning is found in "words" only. Modern Linguistics points out that linguistic meaning is the "sum total" of different aspects of meanings, namely lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, intonational meaning and socio-cultural meaning. In order to be able to communicate effectively, one must have as complete a mastery as possible of all these meanings, which demand great care and accuracy to be mastered.

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8 See, for example, Abercrombie, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

9 Yorkey, op. cit., pp. 109-110. The different meanings will be discussed fully later in this chapter.
For instance, in words like shy, courageous, virtuous, gentleman, genteel, and whimsical, one must not look for lexical meaning only (i.e. what the dictionary says,) because such words can only be fully understood in their social context.\(^{10}\)

4- Language and culture are interrelated. In order to understand a language thoroughly, one must understand the culture of the speakers of that language. This is what Fries calls "contextual orientation," or "the study of words in their cultural familiarity,"\(^{11}\)

A study of the customs, the mores, and the life of the speakers of the language ought to accompany the study of the language itself, if our efforts are to be fruitful. For example, fat in Iraqi Arabic may be considered a compliment, while it may be an insult for an American (especially a lady.) Similarly, the word white in a sentence like, His face is white, signifies beauty in Arabic, but it may signify being sick or afraid for a native speaker of English.

Furthermore, one of the greatest obstacles to foreign language learning is that individuals always unconsciously tend to transfer the forms and meanings (including cultural meanings) of their native language to the foreign language which they are learning. They do so both productively, when speaking or writing, and receptively when attempting to understand the written or the spoken forms of a language.\(^{12}\)

\(^{10}\) Abercrombie, op. cit., p. 12.


5- Languages are constantly changing. "Written records of earlier speech, resemblances between languages, and the varieties of local dialects, all show that languages change in the course of time."¹³ This historical evidence puts modern linguistics in sharp contrast to the static or puristic attitude towards language. The purists maintain that the true meaning of a word is the "original" meaning, which sets the standard for "correctness," while modern linguistic scientists hold to the view that any language, as long as it is actually employed in communicating experience, changes and develops, and as soon as it stops to change, it becomes a dead language or a set of linguistic fossils.¹⁴

The original meaning of a word or an idiom was the "correct" meaning when it was in use, but for the present, the real meaning of any word must be determined, not by its etymological origin, but by the meaning of the word in actual present use.¹⁵

Of all aspects of a language the lexicon is the most dynamic. Words change in form and meaning more rapidly than pronunciation or grammar, "so that in matters of vocabulary more than elsewhere there is need for an appreciation of language as a living, developing, changing medium of communication."¹⁶


¹⁴For further explanation of this view see especially Charles C. Fries, Teaching of English, (Ann Arbor: George Wahr Publishing Co., 1949,) p. 86.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 84. See also Cornelius, op. cit., Chapter IX.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 172.
Bloomfield discusses fully the changes that occur in a language. According to him internal changes may involve phonetic changes, that is, changes in the sound of words, analogic changes that tend to smooth away irregularities in a language, and finally semantic changes (i.e. changes in the meanings of forms.) External changes involve cultural borrowing from other languages, which are culturally superior, or intimate borrowing when two languages are spoken in the same geographic area, and dialect borrowing (i.e. between two dialects of the same language.)

Sapir discusses linguistic changes and classifies them into phonetic changes, changes in form and vocabulary changes. The latter are due to:

a) the frequent use of a word, which may reduce it to a common place term, so that it needs to be replaced by a new word,

b) the changing of attitudes, which may render some words obsolete,

c) the creation of new words on analogies, which have spread from a few specific words, and

d) the borrowing of words, which takes place between two languages.

As an example of cultural borrowing between Arabic and European languages, we shall take the word /m ə 2 i ə n/ (لا يوجد ) which means "any kind of store." The word was

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17 Bloomfield, Language. See chapters 20-27.
18 Sapir, "Language", Selected Writings of Edward Sapir.
19 Ibid., pp. 23-24.
borrowed by the English language in the form of magazine, and by the French in the form of magasin. The word has been taken back by Iraqi Arabic, not in its original form, but, with a French flavour in the form of /mɑɡɑzɪn/ (ماطیس) meaning "a draper's store." Thus, the word was given to Europe and then taken back in a new sense and form, quite different from the original, which is still used as it was used originally in Classical Arabic.

Changes in the meaning of words take several directions. One of these directions is the narrowing of the meaning of the word. The word hund in old English was used to mean dog. The meaning of the word hound, which is derived from hund, is narrowed down to mean a hunting-dog of a particular breed. The second kind of semantic change is the widening of the meaning of a word. The word bridde in Middle English was used to mean "young birdling." The term bird in Modern English has a much wider meaning than the original bridde.²⁰

Semantic changes may take the direction of degeneration of the meaning of a word. For instance, the word canafa in old English was used to mean boy. The word changed into knave in Modern English. Conversely, the meaning of a word may be elevated. For instance, the word cniht in old English was used to mean servant. In Modern English the meaning is elevated into knight.²¹

6- System is at the basis of all languages. Although linguistic forms are used arbitrarily; that is, without any logical reason, they are systematic. There is a system or a set of patterns at the basis of their arrangement.

²⁰ The former examples are taken from Bloomfield, Language, pp. 426-427.
²¹ Ibid.
In his discussion of the importance of teaching grammar, Fries points out the inaccuracy of the view that children learn the language only by imitating what they hear. He points out that children often make mistakes like: He knewed it, or three mens, without having the slightest chance of hearing them said by anybody. He believes that children produce forms like knewed or mens, because they have unconsciously grasped the pattern which English uses regularly in expressions of past time and plural, and have extended it to words that are exceptions to the pattern. When learning a language, the child does not only imitate others, but he also grasps the patterns, which "are the grammar of the language and although a child or a native speaker is not conscious of them, they are nevertheless there, fashioning the utterances."\textsuperscript{22}

Linguistic scientists, then, conceive of language as basically systematic, in spite of the fact that the language system may have exceptions, but this does not alter the fact that there is some kind of system.

This idea is of great importance for both teachers and linguists. If languages were only masses of haphazard utterances, it would be impossible or impracticable to compare two languages. But when each language is described as a self-contained structural system, it is possible to compare and contrast similarities and differences between linguistic systems. The outcome of this comparison is of great importance for a teacher of a foreign language.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 28.

\textsuperscript{23}Yorkey, op. cit., p. 90.
B - The General Features of the Modern Linguistic Approach to the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language.

In the previous section we have discussed briefly the general premises of Modern Linguistics, but no indication was made of the implications of these principles to pedagogy or to foreign language teaching. This will be the task of this section, but before doing so, we have to point out the relation between the linguistic scientist and the language teacher, and how the latter can utilize the findings of the former.

The linguist, first, concerns himself with what we call "the differential meaning", that is, the difference in meaning between various sounds, such as the difference between pin and bin. Then, having completed the description of the language, the linguist concerns himself with what may be called "referential meaning", that is, the relation of the language to the total culture. 24

Trager gives the field of linguistics the name "Macro - Linguistics", which can be divided into:

1- Pre-linguistics, which includes the statements gathered in the first stages of study, that is, those furnished by the physicist and the psychologist;

2- Micro-linguistics or linguistics proper, which includes the descriptive analyses of any given language, and

3- Meta-linguistics, which is the study of meanings and levels in the language in relation to the culture, and includes studies in pedagogy, semantics and other later studies. 25

24 Cornelius, op. cit., p. 63.
25 Ibid., p. 85.
In this way the "linguistic analysis does not provide a method of instruction." We can also say that it is a half-truth to assert that the programs, developed so far, are fundamentally based on linguistic science.

The chief contribution of linguistic analyses is not in how to teach, but in what to teach. The linguist can help in the teaching of a foreign language by showing the teacher the right things to be taught. For example, the linguistic scientist can help the teacher see the points of similarity and difference between two language systems by presenting him with descriptive analyses of both languages. He can also help the teacher see which vocabulary items are essential to the basic structures of the language, and so on. Beyond that the teacher can utilize the findings of educational psychology or any other science.

The following are the chief points where linguistic science can be utilized in teaching foreign languages. Emphasis is laid on the points which are relevant to the teaching of English vocabulary.

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26 Camdl, op. cit., p. 191.

27 Ibid., p. 190.

28 Ibid., p. 191.


1- Accuracy comes first, not the learning of an extensive vocabulary. The accuracy to be achieved here includes:
   a) the mastery of the sound system, and
   b) the mastery of the features of arrangement.

2- The teacher must aim at making the sound system and the features of arrangement automatic habits.

3- During the initial stages of the program, a minimum vocabulary must be used, but sufficient enough to operate the structures and represent the sound system in actual use.

4- After achieving accuracy and ability to produce automatically the sound system and the basic structures of the language, the learner's vocabulary can be expanded.

5- In so far as possible, all aspects of teaching must proceed by contrasts of items in structure (i.e. not in the form of isolated items.)

6- The practice of patterns must not be simply repetitive drill. Other devices, such as the productive conscious choice among several patterns, can be utilized.

7- The material presented in the classroom or prepared in a textbook ought to be based on: (a) a descriptive analysis of the language to be learned, (b) a descriptive analysis of the native language of the learner, and (c) a systematic comparison of the two previous analyses.

   The last step is the most important for the teacher, for on the basis of the contrasting similarities and differences, the teacher will be able to diagnose the points of difficulty in the foreign language, and thus prepare efficient teaching materials and procedures that will not waste time on those features, which are similar in both languages. Instead,
concentration will be made on features which are different and which constitute real learning problems.\footnote{Yorkey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 93.}

8- Concentration should not be on lexical meaning only, but phonemic patterns and contrastive differences of forms and arrangements of words should be emphasized, if we want the learner to be able to communicate effectively with the speakers of the language he is learning.

9- The teacher must speak in the classroom as "naturally" as possible. He must avoid what is called "the classroom dialect", in which unnaturally slow, carefully enunciated speech is used.\footnote{Cornelius, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 87.}

10- Recognition precedes production, and so the passive skills (i.e. listening and reading) should be developed before the active skills (i.e. speaking and writing.)

Teachers often tend to overlook the importance of the listening skill. The Modern Linguistic Approach stresses the importance of developing this skill at the very beginning of learning the language.

11- The learners' own language must be avoided as much as possible, but in explaining directions, in places where it is believed that it will prevent confusion and when it saves time, the vernacular must be used.

\section{What is meant by vocabulary?}

To have a clear idea of how words are scientifically defined and classified is very important for language teachers. In order to be exact, the teacher must free himself from the layman's conception of a \textit{word} as a group of letters. He must appeal to the linguist for a scientific exposition of the nature of the units of utterances he is manipulating in his teaching.
This will greatly help him in the selection of the vocabulary items needed for the language course.

A teacher can also benefit from the findings of linguistic science in the field of word-classification. For instance, classification of words according to their functions indicates the "value" of a word. This shows the teacher which words are the most important for a specific stage of learning.

1 - The word. To the layman a word is a group of letters or a group of sounds. Pseudo-linguistic definitions of a word are not much better than the layman's definition, as we shall see.\(^\text{32}\)

As early as 1917, Palmer had discussed the matter of defining a word. Palmer realized that the term is vague and impossible of definition, but later, he called it a monolog (something that is neither more nor less than a word; a pliolog is something more than a word (e.g. Independence day); and the micolog is something less than a word (e.g. life - from lifelike).\(^\text{33}\)

In other words, Palmer tells us that a word is a monolog and a monolog is a word, but he does not tell us what exactly is meant by a word in terms of its components or its behaviour, except that it is smaller than a pliolog and bigger than a micolog.


Another pseudo-linguistic definition is the one attempted by West. He starts by defining a word thus: "In reference to spelling ... a word is a group of letters." From the standpoint of reading he defines it as follows:

In reference to reading a word is a certain root meaning plus its field of inferability. This "Field of Inferability" is an important idea. If you know the word mouth (part of the body) you may readily in a meaning context guess the meaning of mouth of a cave and a shade less readily mouth of a river. So, in a reading vocabulary we count the word mouth as 1. If we have already taught-ful, we count mouthful as 0; but since a reader cannot be expected to guess the meaning of mouthpiece that would count as an extra 1.  

West defines the term word not as a linguist, but as a textbook writer, who is interested in the grading of vocabulary. This kind of definition can be helpful at times, but it is also misleading. For instance, according to his definition, forms like come came, comes, coming and has come are all one word, because they are within the field of inferability of the root word come. Besides, the field of inferability of a root word is very difficult to decide. For example, analogous to the example he gave of the field of inferability, when we teach the meaning

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of - ly, we do not count the word quickly as a word, because it falls within the field of inferability of the word quick, but he does not tell us how to count a word like hardly.

The most widely adopted linguistic definition of a word is given by Bloomfield in Language. To understand his definition of a word one must understand how he classifies linguistic forms first. In his discussion of linguistic forms, he classifies them into two kinds: (a) bound forms, which "are genuine forms and which convey a meaning, but they occur only in construction, as part of a larger form," 36 like -ish in boyish, and (b) free forms, which are the forms that can be used as sentences. Free forms are divided into: (1) phrases, which are free forms consisting of two or more lesser free forms, such as Poor Tom, John ran away, and (2) words, which are not phrases. 37

From the previous analysis he concludes that "a word is ... a free form which does not consist entirely of (two or more) lesser free forms; in brief a word is a minimum free form."

According to Bloomfield, we are accustomed to analyzing linguistic forms into words because of our customs of leaving spaces between words in our writing and printing. This is why it is more difficult for an illiterate person to make word - division than it is for a literate person. 39

36 Bloomfield, Language, pp. 177-178.
37 Ibid., pp. 170-171.
38 Ibid., p. 178.
39 Ibid.
People often speak of words like go, goes, gone, went as different forms of the same word. According to Bloomfield, this is inaccurate. Since they are different linguistic forms, they are different words. He cites the following examples to illustrate his point. John's ready (three words); John's hat (two words); the, a, is, and (four words); teens, isms, ologies (on the borderline between words and bound forms); blackbird (one word); black bird (two words); devil - may - care - ish (one word.)

Distinguishing between a phrase and a compound word is often difficult for many people, but the following criteria will help one to make clear distinctions.

a) Stress. In compound words, the second word (e.g. - bird in blackbird) has a weaker stress than the one on the first.

b) Semantic difference. Blackbird is more specialized in meaning than black bird.

c) Words like quick-method in a sentence like: The quick-method approach is useful, can be distinguished from a phrase like quick method in a sentence like: The quick method is useful, by examining the difference in function between the two. The word, here, has the function of an adjective, while the phrase is a modified subject of the sentence.

d) The indivisibility of the word distinguishes it from a phrase. For example, we cannot insert the word big in front of pulpit in a word like Jack - in - the - pulpit.

Distinguishing between a phrase and a word is very useful for a language teacher. First, it directs his attention to the different functions they fulfil, and to the different meanings they convey. Secondly, they direct his attention

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40 Ibid., pp. 178-179.
41 Ibid., pp. 179-181.
to subtle matters like the shift of maximum stress. For instance, the difference in pronunciation between blackbird and black bird is often overlooked by Iraqi teachers.

2- Classes of words. The study of word - classification is very useful in language teaching. Classifying words according to the "elements" from which they are built helps the teacher understand the different ways of forming words. Classification of words according to their function reveals to the teacher the relative importance of different words, and thus helps him to select the right material to be included in the teaching program. In this section, we shall examine how linguists classify words according to their immediate constituents (i.e. morphologically,) and to their function.

a) Classification of words according to their immediate constituents. When we speak we utter combinations of sounds grouped in certain ways peculiar to the language we are using. In English we may utter linguistic forms like: (1) dogs, (2) dogfish, (3) birds, and (4) fish. Some parts of these utterances are similar, and some are different. Dog in (1) and (2) is a common element, -s in (1) and (3) is also a common element. When a linguistic form partially coincides (phonetically and semantically) with another linguistic form, it is called a complex form. Thus, in our example, (1), (2) and (3) are complex while (4) is simple. When two or more complex forms have a common part, this part is called a constituent. Thus, dog - , - fish, - s, and bird - are constituents of these forms. The immediate constituents of dogs are dog - and - s. Linguistic forms (whether they are forming parts of

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42 For a detailed discussion of what is meant by "immediate constituents", see Bloomfield, Language, pp. 158-162, and Hockett, op. cit., pp. 147-156.
other forms or not) which do not bear any partial phonetic -
semantic resemblance to other forms are called morphemes. 
Thus, a morpheme can be defined as "the smallest unit of 
structure, which embody grammatical or lexical structure." 43

Bloomfield classified words according to their 
immediate constituents in the following manner:

"A- Secondary words, containing free forms, 
1- Compound words, containing more than one free 
form: door - knob, wild - animal - tamer. The 
included free forms are the members of the 
compound word; in our example, the members are 
the words door, knob, tamer; and the phrase 
wild animal.

2- Derived secondary words, containing one free 
form: boyish, old - maidish; in our examples the 
underlying forms are the word boy and the phrase 
old maid.

B- Primary words, not containing a free form. 
1- Derived primary words, containing more than one 
bound form: re - ceive, de - ceive, re - tain, de - tain, 
con - tain.

2- Morpheme words, consisting of a single (free) 
morpheme: man, boy, cat, run, red, big, etc. 44

Words like gentlemanly and door - knobs are derived 
secondary words, but they may be called de - compound words, 
because they consist of the bound forms - by and - s plus 
the compound words gentleman and door - knob. 45

b) Classification of words according to function. The most 
common classification of words according to their functions 
is the traditional way of dividing speech into eight parts

43 Carro1, op. cit., p. 24.
(noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition, conjunction and interjection.) A noun is defined as "the name of a person, place or thing." An adjective is defined as "a word that qualifies a noun, or a pronoun." 46

This way of classifying words is useful, but in several instances, it is defective. A noun is not always a name of a person, a place or a thing. An adjective does not always qualify a noun or a pronoun. Furthermore, this kind of classification is inaccurate and superficial. While English words are classified into eight kinds, Arabic words, for instance, are classified into three kinds (i.e. nouns, verbs, and particles.) This does not mean that Arabic does not contain adjectives or pronouns or prepositions. On the contrary, Arabic contains as many pronouns and prepositions as any other language if not more.

The conventional way of classifying words into eight parts and which was elaborated by Joseph Priestly in the eighteenth century 47 did not go unchallenged. Among those who attempted a new classification of words was Jeremy Bentham in his "Theory of Fiction", upon which Ogden's linguistic philosophy was based. The linguistic aspect in Bentham's theory is summarized by Ogden as follows:

Some words point at things, as the hands of a clock point at hours. Others, such as right, or notion.


47 Fries, The Structure of English, p. 66.
or of, or liberty (i.e. "Fiction") are like simple parts of a particular clock ... in its place the part helps to perform some operation, and you can see what sort of a job it does .... In language, some words are not even parts .... They are accelerators and lubricants. 48

Ogden adopted Bentham's theory in his Basic English of 850 words. He eliminated the verbs (i.e. the unnecessary lubricants) and used only ten operators with twenty special directives, which replace them in universal grammar. Ogden's approach is purely philosophical, but it may be useful in the selection of words as we shall see later.

The second important classification of words is the one elaborated by West, 49 who divides words into:
1- heavy words, or words we talk with, which are not more than 300 in number, and
2- light words, or subject words. They are the words we talk about.

He, them, subdivides the "light words" into:

a) Words that everyone talks about. They are the common subject words (food, sheep, houses, etc.)

b) Words that only some people talk about. They include the highly specialized or technical words.


c) Definers, or words used in explaining what one means when one does not know a specific word. They can be divided as follows:

1- Words expressing shape (square, oval, etc.)
2- States of matter (liquid, jelly, powder, etc.)
3- Class names (animal, creature, fish, etc.)
4- Vague non-committed words which are applicable to a wide range of similar objects (container, instrument, tool, substance, fibre, etc.)
5- A set of key words without which one cannot express a certain important range of ideas (net, bake or oven; daily or rose, tube or pipe, or both; seizure or fit etc.)

In discussing "heavy words," West subdivides them into:

a) framework words, which include common verbs like: do, make, put, set, etc. and all prepositions, and
b) the very common words, such as: arm, ask, back, bear, etc.

The two previous ways of classifying English words can be helpful, but on the whole, they are defective. Bentham's classification is based upon philosophical grounds and pays no attention to the actual description of the language. West's classification is more comprehensive and detailed than Bentham's. Even though, it is still defective. Again it represents the point of view of the textbook writer, who is not very much concerned with the description of the language. The categories, which he makes words fall into, are vague.

He uses terms like "common words" or "common verbs" or "key words," which are indistinct and difficult to decide.

Perhaps the most widely adopted classification of English words is the one elaborated by Fries. Since we are going to refer to the categories into which he classifies words throughout the study, we shall follow his classification with some details.

Fries divides English words into four main categories. 51

1- Function words. They primarily operate as means of expressing grammatical structure. But some of them may have full-word meaning content. They can be divided under the following headings:

a) Auxiliaries, such as: have, shall, will, should, would, may, get (in a variety of uses,) keep (for repetitive or continued action,) be, etc.

b) Preposition – adverbs, that are used with substantives and which include the following:

1- The nine or ten most important prepositions (at, by, for, from, in, into, of, on, to, and with.)

2- Around twenty prepositions that express grammatical relationships and which can be classified as follows:

a) Place, such as: behind, in front of, over, under, alone, below, beside, beyond, around.

b) Direction, such as: through, into, out of, toward, away from, up, down, across.

c) Time such as: before, after, during, since, until.

d) Comparison, such as: like, different, from, as ... as, ... than.

51 Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, pp. 44-50.
c) Conjunctions or "function words used with word-groups."\textsuperscript{52} They can be classified as follows:

1- The twelve most frequently used conjunctions (and, that, which, if, as, but, so, who, when, while, what, where.)

2- Others that express such relationships as:
   a) time: after, before, since, until,
   b) cause: for, because, since,
   c) purpose: in order that, so that,
   d) comparison: as ... as, ... than,
   e) condition: unless, whether, and
   f) conclusion: therefore.

d) A miscellaneous group consisting of:
   1- Interrogative particles such as: who, whose, which, what, when, where, why, how.
   2- The articles: the, a, an.
   3- Degree words: more, most.
   4- Generalizing particles: ever.
   5- Special uses of: there, it, one.

2- Substitute words. They "function as substitutes for whole form - classes of words."\textsuperscript{53} and they can be divided as follows:

   a) Personal pronouns: I, me, we, us, you, he, him, she, her, it, they, them, my, our, your, his, its, their, mine, ours, yours, theirs.
   b) The indefinites, anyone, everybody, everything, everywhere, someone, somebody, something, somewhere.
   c) Negatives: none, nobody, nothing, nowhere.
   d) Of quantity and number: each, both, all, some, any, few, many, several, much, one, ones, two, etc.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 44.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., pp. 44-45.
e) The word *do* provides a substitute for any verb expression that has just been mentioned, as: "They work just as well as others do."

f) The word *so* functions as a substitute for a whole predication of verbs *(think, say, tell, do, seem, hope, believe, fear, guess, reckon.)*

"They think John is hurt, but I don't think *so.*"

3- The third kind of words are those "distributed in use according to such grammatical matters as the presence or absence of a negative:" 54

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>some</td>
<td>any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>too (also)</td>
<td>either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>too</td>
<td>either</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>already</td>
<td>yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>still</td>
<td>anything more (any longer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quite (very)</td>
<td>quite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4- **Content words** constitute the majority of English words and they can be grouped into:

a) Class I words (things)

1- Simple forms: *leg, arm, eye, etc.*

2- Compound forms: *goldfish, door - knob.*

3- Words for "actions" used in grammatical structures as "thing" words are used:

a) *arrival, refusal, etc.*

b) *dosage, departure, etc.*

c) *delivery, discovery, etc.*

d) *acceptance, acquaintance, etc.*

e) *abasement, etc.*

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f) deformity, obscurity, etc.
g) admission, etc.
h) appendage, etc.
i) growth, etc.
j) blessing, etc.
k) behaviour, etc.
l) accountant, etc.

4- Words for "qualities" used in grammatical structures as "thing" words are used:
   a) goodness, brightness, etc.
   b) activity, purity, etc.

b) Class II, "action" words: 55
   1- Simple forms: run, walk, etc.
   2- Compound forms: call up, go over, etc.
   3- Words or "things" used in grammatical structures as "action" words are used:
      a) soften, harden, brighten, etc.
      b) enrich, enlarge, enable, etc.
      c) enlighten, enliven, etc.

c) Class III - "quality" words: 56
   1- Simple forms: true, false, cold, etc.
   2- Words for "things" used in grammatical structures as "quality" words are used:
      a) misty, dirty, glassy, etc.
      b) manly, friendly, costly, etc.
      c) childish, mannish, etc.
      d) national, colonial, etc.

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55 Ibid., p. 49.
56 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
3- Words for "actions" used in grammatical structures as "quality" words are used:
   a) broken, swollen, etc.
   b) learned, blessed, etc.
   c) running, jumping, etc.
   d) dependent, inherent, etc.
   e) laughable, usable, etc.

d) Class IV words like: 57
   1- noisily, socially, frequently, etc.
   2- abroad, around, aloud, etc.
   3- away, afoot, apart, etc.
   4- daily, yearly, weekly, etc.
   5- seaward, homeward, etc.
   6- anywhere, nowhere, etc.

   Finally, it must be understood that such classifications of words, however elaborate and realistic they may be, are not ends in themselves. They are merely aids to a good mastery of the language, but they are not the language. 58
   A teacher, for instance, can utilize such devices to estimate the importance and the function of words, but he must not make it his aim to teach such things to his students.

D- Position of Vocabulary in Language Learning:

   In order to be able to understand exactly how important vocabulary is in the learning of any language, one must clarify some of the popular misconceptions concerning the position and importance of vocabulary in the acquisition of linguistic skills. Once this is done, it becomes much easier to state more accurately the basic principles to be born in

57 Fries, The Structure of English, pp. 132-141.

mind concerning the teaching of English vocabulary.
1. Popular misconceptions concerning the position of Vocabulary in language learning:

Vocabulary is probably the most misunderstood linguistic aspect. Popular and naive misconceptions, which almost always tend to stress vocabulary, resulted in much abuse in methodology of language teaching. Many of these misconceptions are at the basis of the traditional methods of teaching foreign languages. In this section, we shall deal with some of the prominent and persistent misconceptions.

a) The first and probably the most common of these misconceptions is the tendency to associate between learning a language and learning the "words" of that language. In other words, people often believe that the more words one "knows," the better command over the language one has.

Learning the meanings of words does not necessarily mean that one has mastered the language. Fries says that "a person has learned a foreign language when he has thus first, within a limited vocabulary mastered the sound system ... and has second, made the structural devices (that is, the basic arrangements of utterance) patterns of automatic habits." 59

Learning many isolated words and their meanings is useless, because it does not contribute to the mastery of a language. In the initial stages, only a limited vocabulary must be used. Expansion of the learner's vocabulary comes later and is usually decided by the learner's experience.

59 Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 2.
b) People often believe that words are the only linguistic symbols that contain meaning. This of course, is a gross mistake. In English there are at least four levels of meaning.

1- There is the syntactical meaning, that is, the meaning indicated by word order. In the following two sentences,

   The boy killed the wolf, and
   The wolf killed the boy,

the word wolf in both sentences did not change (i.e. it is the same word,) but in the first sentence it signifies being killed, while in the second it signifies being a killer. The difference between the two meanings is brought about by the difference in the position of the word wolf. Word order is very important in English, because English, unlike Arabic or Latin, is not an inflected language. The following example may illustrate this point:

   English: He only pushed me.
   He pushed me only.

   Iraqi Arabic: /dɪfɔchi bɔs/ (بى دفتشي بى)
   /bɔs ɗifɔni/ (بى دفتشي)

The change of the position of only in English makes a great difference in meaning, while the change of the position of /boy/ in Iraqi Arabic makes no difference in meaning. This is why the importance of word order in English is often overlooked by Arabic speakers.

2- There is also the morphological meaning or the meaning of word forms. In the sentences:

   The boy killed the wolf, and
   The boys killed the wolf,

the difference between "one boy" and "more than one boy" is indicated by the morpheme -s.
3- The third kind of meaning is the intonational meaning. For example, when the word \textit{wolf} is said with a sudden raising of the voice and then suddenly dropping it, it indicates \underline{w o l f} a call for help, because the speaker, probably, saw a wolf. Again, the word \textit{wolf} can be said with a low tone of voice, which ends high to indicate a question. \underline{w o l f}

4- Finally, there is the lexical meaning which is carried by the words themselves.

c) The third misconception lies in the belief that languages are media for information containing symbols for actions and things. The learner, therefore, has only to know the foreign symbols for these actions and things in order to learn the foreign language. This leads to the idea of the existence of word - for - word equivalents in different languages.

Foreign language learning would be a very easy task if this idea were true. This attractive and simple assumption, together with the preceding two, is at the basis of the traditional grammar and translation method. One has to learn lists of words with their foreign equivalents, if one wants to master a language. Grammar is just a device to arrange words in the form of sentences. On this assumption, also, the two - language dictionaries are compiled to help students learn the "meaning" of words. 60

This misconception is one of the major sources of difficulty in foreign language learning. Many people fail to understand that there are no such things as word - for - word equivalents in two languages. In Iraq, for instance, students often fail to use the English verb \textit{kill} in a correct sentence.

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60 Morris, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 4-5. See especially chapter I.
This results from the idea that the verb kill is equivalent to the verb /كِتَال/ in Iraqi Arabic. Let us examine the meanings of kill and those of /كِتَال/ to see if the two are equivalent to each other or not.

In English some of the meanings of kill are:
1- put to death. Tom killed the wolf.
2- put an end to. The disease killed the plants.
3- get rid of. She has killed her affection.
4- pass (time.) Reading helps one kill time.
5- animal killed. When hunting was over, we began to count our kill.

In Iraqi Arabic some of the meanings of /كِتَال/ are:
1- put of death. /كِتَالِتَ َ / (كلمة)
2- hit. /كِتَالِتَ َ بِ ِ / (كلمة بنصاً)
3- /كِتَالِتَنِ / (كلماتي) means: He bored me.
4- /كِتَالِنِن مِلِ دُحْكًا / (كلماتي من الفعل) means: He made me laugh heartily.
5- /كِتَالِنِنِ بَ يِمُ َ / (كلماتي بجمالها) means: Her beauty fascinated me.

The only point where the meanings of the two verbs coincide is in the area of "put to death". In all other areas they are different. This explains why many Iraqi students use the verb kill in sentences like the following:

"The teacher killed the student, because he is lazy."
Of course, they mean, "The teacher hit the student ...." 

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A quick look at some words in one of the unabridged dictionaries reveals how far from the truth such a belief is. The total number of different meanings recorded and illustrated in the Oxford English Dictionary for the first 500 words of the Thorndike Word List is 14,070, and for the first 1000 it is nearly 25,000.62

We often think of words as having precise points of meaning, while we should think of them as having areas of meaning, some of which are extensive and some are limited, but nevertheless they are areas and not points. Sometimes, areas of meanings can be described in terms of a central meaning and several peripheral meanings. The central meaning of the verb kill may be described as "put to death" and all other meanings as peripheral.63

e) The fifth misconception has at its basis the assumption that words have only one "real" meaning or one "correct" use. All other deviations from this "basic" meaning are incorrect or illegitimate. This implies that the authority which decides whether a word is used correctly or incorrectly is the dictionary or the etymological origin of the word.

This view ignores the fact that languages in order to be living have to change. It also ignores the fact that the chief function of a language is to be an effective means of communication in the changing situations and circumstances of life.

As we have seen in the beginning of this chapter, vocabulary is a dynamic aspect of any language, because, as Sapir says, "vocabulary is a very sensitive index to the culture of a people."64 The vocabulary of any language can

62 Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language, p. 40

63 Eugene A. Nida, Learning a Foreign Language, pp. 216-217. For a fuller treatment of meanings see especially chapter 7.

64 Sapir, op. cit., p. 72.
be considered as a complete inventory of all ideas and interests that occupy the attention of the community at a given time. Since time changes and needs change, new words and new meanings will be introduced. This is why it is impracticable to stick to the original meanings of words.

According to modern linguists, the true meaning of a word is determined by the situation in which it is used. But, sometimes a word, like jaw, is used in two situations. One is called "standard" English and the second is slang. Which one of the two meanings will be adopted by the teacher of English? Micro-linguistics considers both meanings "the lower part of the face," which is called "standard" English, and "scold," which is called slang, as two English speech systems. There is nothing correct or incorrect about them. But the meta-linguist recommends that the form of speech that will get a maximum of cooperation and that will not call attention to the speaker, is the one that will be adopted by the teacher. Since using the word jaw meaning "scold" will call attention to the speaker at present, it will be left out, but whenever it gets maximum cooperation it must be adopted by the teacher. 65

f) The other common misconception is the belief that languages contain exact synonyms (i.e. several symbols for one action, idea or a thing.)

It is, probably, incorrect to deny the existence of synonyms in English, but we can say with certainty that there are very few true synonyms. Two words may be partially synonymous, but never completely. Sometimes, even when the meanings of two words seem to coincide, there is an inexplicable shade of difference. For example, truth and verity are considered as synonyms, but we can say: He spoke the truth.

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65 For a further discussion of what forms of speech should be adopted by the teacher of English as a second language see: Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 40, and Cornelius, op. cit., pp. 111-112.
but we cannot say: He spoke the verity.

g) The last faulty assumption that will be discussed here is the belief that some languages are devoid of ambiguities, because they possess a great wealth of "accurate" words that enable one to express the finest meanings desirable. French and Greek are often believed to be superior in this respect.

Modern linguistic science has revealed the fact that no language is perfect and that ambiguities occur in all languages. One can be as exact as one wants in any language. 66

2- Basic Principles Concerning the Position of Vocabulary in Language Learning.

Some of the principles that we are going to mention in this section have been discussed in the previous section in the process of clarifying the misconceptions. These will be mentioned briefly, while others will be discussed a little more fully:

a) Vocabulary is "the subject matter of a language," 67 but vocabulary is not everything in a language. Bricks, for instance, may be the subject matter of a house, but piling bricks does not make a house; other devices are needed to construct a habitable abode. Similarly, learning the meanings of a great multitude of isolated words does not result in learning a language. To master a language necessitates the mastery of other more important devices of constructing utterances. First of all one must make the structural patterns of a language automatic habits and then one can expand one's vocabulary to the extent that one's experience and interest decide.

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66 Nida, Learning a Foreign Language, p. 214. For a further explanation of this principle, see chapter 7.

67 Sapir op. cit., p. 95.
b) There are no exact equivalents between two languages. Every vocabulary item in any language has its unique areas of meanings.  

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c) Very few words have one meaning. Words usually have areas of meaning, but some words usually have central points of meaning and peripheral meanings.  

69

d) Vocabulary is a dynamic aspect of a language. Words are constantly changing in meaning and in form according to the changing social and physical environment of the native speakers of the language.

e) There can be no one true or correct meaning of a word. The only true and correct meanings of words are the situations in which they are used.

f) There are no exact synonyms within a language. Meanings of words may coincide partially, but never completely.

g) Ambiguities occur in all languages. There is no such a thing as a language with "accurate" words or "inaccurate" words.

h) The linguistic meaning is not confined to the meaning of words or lexical meaning. It is the sum total of lexical, syntactical, intonational and socio-cultural meaning.  

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i) Vocabulary mastery is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end. The mastery of a wide range of vocabulary, if properly assimilated, may fulfill the following functions:

1- The first basic function of vocabulary is to help operate the structures of the language.

69 Ibid., p. 217.

2- It enables the learner to be more accurate in expressing himself in the productive linguistic skills (speaking and writing) by offering a wide choice of words.

3- It helps enrich one's style in writing and speaking.

4- It can be very helpful in the passive linguistic skills by enabling the learner to understand more thoroughly what he reads or hears.
CHAPTER III
MODERN LINGUISTICS AND THE TEACHING
OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the solutions that the Modern Linguistic Approach offers to the problems of vocabulary selection and presentation. Out of this, we shall try to set specific criteria for evaluating the Iraqi approach to the solution of vocabulary problems.

Before embarking on the discussion concerning the selection, preparation, presentation and testing of vocabulary, we have to point out the relation between vocabulary and the other aspects of a language.

A- The Linguistic Aspects of Vocabulary Teaching.

When a teacher presents a new word, he does not present it in a vacuum. He must pronounce it or explain its meaning or write it on the board. He may also drill his students in the use of the word in a sentence or in sentences. This is why when we speak of vocabulary we cannot conceive of it as a water-tight compartment.

A teacher may come across a word in a lesson devoted to reading or writing or pronunciation. Here, the teaching of that word, though very important, is only a by-product of the teacher's efforts. As we have stated in chapter II, the study of words is not always an end in itself. It is often a means through which one can come to a satisfactory mastery of the linguistic skills.

In general, when thinking of individual vocabulary items, the teacher must concern himself with three important aspects of words.
1- The form of words. This includes the following:

a) Pronunciation of words. Phonologically, words consist of phonemes, which are segmental (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental (stress, pitch, and juncture.) In English, individual words must have one or more segmental phonemes. Words also have suprasegmental phonemes and especially stress.¹

Stress is the most important class of suprasegmental phonemes in the study of vocabulary, and especially in the study of words of two syllables and more. Many linguists recognize four degrees of stress:

a) primary / / / , b) secondary / œ œ / , c) tertiary / œ ee / , and d) weak / œ / . The compound word elevator - operator is an example in which all the degrees of stress are found.²

¹A phoneme is a class of phonetically similar sounds which are called allophones. For example, in the words pin and spin the phoneme /p/ occurs as an aspirated sound in pin and as an unaspirated sound in spin. Each of these is called an allophone. But since these two allophones do not contrast with each other, that is, they do not cause any difference in meaning, they are classified as belonging to one phoneme. Segmental phonemes include fourteen vowel sounds and twenty-four consonant sounds. Suprasegmental phonemes include four stress phonemes, four pitch phonemes and four juncture phonemes.

The placement of stress is of great importance in the study of words. Some of the functions of stress are the following:

1- In spoken English, stress distinguishes between words otherwise of identical speech-sound shape, such as below and billow.

2- Stress placement distinguishes compound words from noun groups: clubhouse (compound word), club house (noun group.)

3- Stress placement differentiates two-syllable nouns from their corresponding verbs: address (noun), address (verb)

Pitch and juncture need not be discussed here, because they are usually characteristic of word-groups and sentences. Occasionally a single word may be uttered in a different pitch to signify a different intonational meaning.

An important aspect of word-form is the changing pronunciation of words according to the situations in which they occur. The word and is pronounced /ænd/ or /ɔnd/ or /nd/ and sometimes /n/ depending on the context where the word is placed.

A word occurring in different contexts with different levels of stress will have different meanings. The word cut in the following sentences will illustrate this point.

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4 Lado, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
I had to cut the grass. (verb)
The cut in my hand healed. (noun)
My cut hand healed. (modifier)

Finally, there is the problem of consonant clusters. Some English words have two-element consonant clusters like /bl/ in blame. Some have three-element consonant clusters like /nstr/ in instinct, and some have four-element consonant clusters like /m?st/ in glimpsed. Consonant clusters may be initial like /spring/ or final like /gulf/, or in hundred, or final like /gulf/ in guls.

b) Spelling is the second important aspect of word-forms. Modern English spelling does not spell modern English. "What it does spell is the English of the late Middle English period around 1740 A.D. It represents the pronunciation of that period with such accuracy that a student of the English language can tell from the spelling of today exactly how words were uttered in the London area of England during the late fifteenth century." Nevertheless, there are English words whose spelling is quite regular like hit, rim, bit, bat, rat, fun, and sit. There are also English words whose spelling can be considered semi-regular like writer, summer, line, mile, shine, etc. The rest are words whose spelling is irregular like foreign, rough, national, and so on.

c) Word-formation. Words can be classified according to their immediate constituents into "primary words" and "secondary words." The latter class consists of words that are built up from different elements.

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5 Whiteball, op. cit., p. 134.
In selecting or in teaching vocabulary items of a given language, the teacher ought to have an idea of the ways in which words are formed. This will help him diagnose certain patterns of word formation.

In English, the chief ways of word-formation can be summarized as follows:  

1- Combining words together to form compound words, such as: **blackboard** and **brother-in-law**.

2- Adding affixes, which can be divided into:
   a) suffixes, which are either (1) derivational, such as **-ance** in performance and **-less** in careless, or (2) inflectional such as **-s** in boys and **-ed** in walked, and
   b) prefixes, which are always derivational such as **en-** in enrich and **re-** in retell.

3- Internal modification. Phonemes within a word may be replaced by others to convey changes of meaning or function. Thus **gold** can be changed into **gild**, **goose** into **geese** and so on.

4- Stress modification. Changing the stress (as we have seen in discussing pronunciation) results in changes in meaning of words and in the creation of new words.

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8 Derivational suffixes are usually bound forms which limit the word or the linguistic form into a specific part of speech. The form **quiet** (modifier) is changed into **quietness** (noun) by the addition of the derivational suffix - **ness**. Derivational suffixes are often arbitrarily distributed. For example, **quiet** and **formal** are both modifiers, but when they change into nouns the first becomes **quietness** and the second **formality**.
5- Raduplication. In some languages, morphemes are systematically doubled to indicate number, tense and the like. In English, such doubling is rare and always combined with internal modification. The following are examples of reduplication: tip-top, pitter-patter, riff-raff, criss-cross, wishy-washy, and namby-pamby.  

2- The meaning of words. Words are not the only linguistic devices that contain meaning. But words, in addition to their lexical meanings, contain socio-cultural meaning. The word gentleman, for instance, is used in English and occasionally in Iraqi Arabic. In English it signifies belonging to a specific social class and sticking to certain modes of behaviour peculiar to the English or American societies. In Iraqi Arabic it is often used to mean a well-dressed, thickly-built aristocrat. The word pork may create a feeling of aversion for an Iraqi Moslem, and something different for an Englishman or an American.

3- The distribution of words. Three aspects of distribution of words are important, namely, grammatical restrictions; geographical and social distribution; and finally stylistic distribution.

Grammatical restrictions determine the use and meaning of a word. The word pocket is used in three different contexts in three different meanings:

The pocket of my jacket. (noun)
He may pocket the money. (verb)
I gave him pocket money. (modifier)

9 Whiteball, op. cit., pp. 141-146.

10 See chapter II, pp. 48-49.
Words may have geographical restrictions (i.e. used only in special areas of a country.) For example, kirk and church both mean the same thing, but the first is used in Scotland only, while the second is used both in England and in America.

Some words are socially restricted, that is, they are peculiar to a certain social group of the native speakers. The word yous, for instance, is peculiar to a certain social group in American society. The same word is replaced by you in other social classes of the same community.

Some words are usually peculiar to the "spoken language," while others are peculiar to the "written language." The word mad meaning "very angry" is rarely used in written language, which is an "elevated" dialect of English. Conversely, the word whom is rarely used in the "spoken language" of America to-day. It is usually used in the dialect we call "written language." 11

Understanding the linguistic aspects involved in the teaching of vocabulary is essential for both the selection and the presentation of vocabulary, because it helps the teacher and the textbook writer to know the learning burden or the difficulties that the learning of a word involves.

The learning burden in vocabulary can be defined as any new linguistic element which demands some effort to be learnt. For instance, the different meanings of one word or one linguistic form constitute different learning burdens. The word bear meaning "carry" constitutes a different learning burden than the same form meaning "a heavy, thick-furred animal." The former involves a heavier learning...

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11 For a more extensive elaboration of this point see: Whiteball, op. cit., chapter I.
burden than the latter, because it involves a wider stretch of meaning and use and because when it is presented, it needs more complicated teaching devices in order to be understood thoroughly.

Words like talking, talks and talked do not involve any learning burden provided the learner has grasped the pattern of their formation and use. Words like goes, went, gone involve some learning burden, because the pattern cannot be applied here. Similarly say, says; let (present), and let (past) involve some learning burden because they do not conform to the pattern of inflection and subsequently demand some effort to be learnt.

The heaviness and lightness of the learning burden that a word involves is determined by many factors. Sometimes, it is determined by the degree of similarity and difference between the foreign language and the native language of the learner. For instance, a word like jug involves a lighter learning burden for an Iraqi than the word measure for the following reasons:

1- The word jug is used in Iraqi Arabic in almost the same meaning and pronunciation of the English word, while measure is not.

2- The spelling of jug is more regular than the spelling of measure.

3- The phonemes, of which the word jug is formed, exist in Iraqi Arabic, while the word measure contains the phoneme / ɔː / which does not exist in Iraqi Arabic.

4- Since measure consists of two syllables, it involves the problem of the placement of maximum stress, while jug does not have such a problem.
The heaviness of the learning burden that a word involves is also determined by the degree of deviation from the norm, pattern or paradigm manifest in the word. Thus, the word bigger as a comparative degree of big involves a lighter learning burden than better, but heavier than nicer.

The concept of the learning burden is very important in the selection and presentation of vocabulary items for a language course. Every word involving an extra "amount" of learning burden can be considered a new vocabulary item. This stands in contrast to the common view of taking root words as the units of selection and presentation. Consideration must not be given to lexical meaning alone, but also to pronunciation, spelling, formation and distribution of words.

B- Vocabulary Selection and Preparation.

The problem of what words to choose for a course, how many words to choose for a specific stage of learning and how to go about choosing these words constitutes one of the major areas of difficulty both for teachers of English and for English text-book writers. In spite of the fact that the Lexicon, in contrast to other aspects of a language, stands as most accessible to statistical analysis, little agreement is found among experts concerned with vocabulary selection.

Besides, whatever approach is adopted, the following considerations are necessary to be attended to when the selection and preparation of vocabulary is attempted.

1- The pupil, his age, motivation, mental ability, literacy and interest.

2- The language of the community in which the learner is living.
3- The nature of the lexical structure of the language to be taught.

4- The teacher who will undertake the actual teaching in the classroom, his training in methodology and his mastery of the language to be taught.

5- The school, the curriculum, the number of hours devoted to the study of the language, and the kinds of examinations that students are expected to sit for.

6- The community in which the learner is living (the socio-economic conditions of the community as a whole.)

Since all the conditions that we have just stated should be considered, it would be impossible to find any ready-made vocabulary arrangement that can be applied to all situations. All that the Linguistic Approach can do is to set certain criteria and suggestions for selecting words for different groups of students in different stages of learning and in different communities.

1- Modern Linguistics and Vocabulary Selection.

The fundamental feature of the Modern Linguistic Approach to the teaching of foreign languages is the new basis upon which the teaching material is to be built. The selection of material should be based upon "(a) a scientific analysis of the language to be learned, (b) a similar scientific descriptive analysis of the language of the learner, and (c) a systematic comparison of these two descriptive analyses in order to bring out completely the differences of structural patterning of the two language systems."

This principle clearly sets the procedure to be followed in selecting vocabulary items. The procedure of selection should be guided by the aim that modern linguistics sets for any language teaching program. Naturally, every method or approach aims at achieving effective mastery of the language to be taught. But different approaches define the mastery of a language differently. Linguists define the mastery of a language as the learner’s success in mastering the sound system of the language and making the structural devices matters of automatic habit. A minimum of words must be included in the program. The purpose of including these words is chiefly to help operate the basic structures of the language.  

English words, as we have seen, can be classified into four categories. The first three classes of words, namely, function words, substitute words and grammatically distributed words, are indispensable for any language program. Although some words that belong to these three classes have full-word meaning content, their chief function is to operate as means of expressing relations of grammatical structure. This is why they are often termed "structure words."

As to the "content words", which form the fourth class of English words, a very limited number of them should be introduced in the initial stages of learning English. They should be as simple and easy to learn as possible. This is very important, because when many content words are introduced, the program becomes vocabulary-centered to the neglect of the basic structures of the language. Usually, content words

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13 See Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, chapter 4.

14 See chapter II, pp. 42-46.
in the first stages of the English course should be drawn from among words that have the following characteristics:

a) Words that are related to the immediate classroom environment of the learner, such as: pen, desk, window, book, cap, map, read and pencil.

b) Words representing demonstrable objects, which may or may not be related to the immediate environment, such as: stand (up), sit (down), one, two, big, small, river, mountain, hand, arm, and hit.

c) Words of regular spelling. Such words could be helpful to the learner when the time comes for him to learn to read and write. In the initial stages of learning "we must train the child to respond vocally to the sight of letters and this can be done by presenting words with regular spelling."\(^{15}\) Later, words of irregular spelling will be introduced systematically. Words like pin, her, box, lamp, pot, hit, ten and bed have regular spelling and should be introduced earlier than irregular words like knit, anat, neighbour, yacht, and slaughter.

Only after the learner has mastered the sound system and the basic structures of English, and has become able to produce them automatically and with ease, shall we attempt to expand his vocabulary. Here, words are selected from the main body of English vocabulary which is called "content words."

Any language program is capable of enabling the student to learn only a limited number of words, because the mastery of all the words of English is impossible. Usually a person can master the vocabulary related to his field of experience. All a language course can do is to teach a limited number of the most useful words to serve as a solid basis for later

\(^{15}\) Leonard Bloomfield, "Linguistics and Reading", p. 102.
endeavour in the study of the language.

The number of words to be taught in a specific course to a specific group of learners depends upon:

a) the age of the learners and their level of education,
b) the number of hours devoted to the study of English, and
c) the amount of similarity between English and the learner’s native language. Native speakers of French and Spanish find many cognate words in English. This facilitates their learning the language. Speakers of Oriental languages will have little help in recognizing English vocabulary items.¹⁶

Two criteria can be set for the selection of words for the purpose of expanding the learner’s vocabulary.

a) Words must have maximum utility for the learner.
b) Words selected should be arranged according to considerations of ease and difficulty, that is, words that contain a heavy learning burden must come after words that contain a smaller learning burden.

Utility of a word is determined, to some extent, by the range and frequency of the word. The General Service List of English Words is the best available authority on this.¹⁷ Words should not be included in the course with all their semantic variations. Only useful meanings of words should be taught.

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For example, the word *call* is used to mean, among other things, "to name" (verb) as in *The Young Prince is called Charles*, and "visit" (noun) as in *Port of call*. According to the *General Service List* the first meaning involves 56% of the occurrences of the word *call*, while the second meaning involves only 1% of the occurrences of *call*. This means that the first meaning is more useful for learners than the second.

The study of the community and the socio-economic conditions and needs of the people with whom the learner is living, also helps in determining what words are useful. For example, the word *canoe* is more useful to an inhabitant of the south-east marsh-areas of Iraq than the word *train*. This is because he uses the canoe every day, even when he goes to visit his neighbours, while it is most likely that has never seen a train in his life.

Finally, a study of English words in their cultural context would afford some help in choosing useful words for a foreign learner. Some English words are used only in certain geographical areas of England or America. Some words are characteristic of certain social classes of the native speakers of English, and finally, some words belong to the "written language," while others belong to the "spoken language." Words, in order to have maximum utility for the learner, should be selected from among those words that get maximum cooperation. They should

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18 *Ibid.*, p. 67. For the definition of frequency and range principles and how the *General Service List* can be utilized see Appendix D.
not call attention to the speaker. But, care must be taken that most of the words selected, should be drawn from the actual "spoken language." 19

To arrange words according to their ease and difficulty, several criteria can be utilized.

a) A scientific analysis of the phonological, morphological and syntactical features of English and the native language (i.e. Iraqi Arabic) and a systematic comparison of these features will help diagnose the major differences between the two language systems. Words, in which such differences are manifested, are what we call the "difficult" words. There should not be too many of them in the very beginning of the course, and when they are introduced, efficient teaching devices should be prepared for that purpose. For example, after comparing the sound systems of both languages, we can understand why Iraqi students find it difficult to pronounce the word spring, because initial three-element consonant clusters do not exist in Iraqi Arabic.

b) Comparing the lexican of English with the native language of the learner will diagnose the points of similarity (e.g. cognates.) Such words are usually easy to learn and so they should be introduced early in the course. 20

c) A study of the lexicon of English will help the teacher to select words which are of regular spelling. Such words should be included early in the course.

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19 See chapter II, pp. 51-52.

d) The nearer a word to the learner's immediate and home environment, the easier it is to teach. For instance, words like 
baseball, underground(traffic), and cricket cannot be easily understood by an ordinary Iraqi student.

e) Some words can be easily demonstrated through the use of pictures and gestures. Such words should be introduced early in the course.

f) In the initial stages the number of "action" words should be kept at a minimum, because verbs usually involve a bigger learning burden than other kinds of content words.  

2- Distribution of Vocabulary according to different stages of learning.

There are two ways of arranging vocabulary in accordance with the progress of the learner. The first is to arrange vocabulary in such a way that the teacher will start with the teaching of the commonest words and then proceed without interruption to the second group of common words and so on. The second way of vocabulary arrangement is the division of vocabulary items into zones or plateaus according to the stages of progress that the learner is making.

Pedagogically, the first approach is impracticable, because schools all over the world almost always conceive of students' progress in terms of stages or levels, which can be subdivided into units of time such as years or months or even weeks. The second approach, then, is the

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21 See Fries and Traver, *English Word Lists*, Chapter IX.
practical one for our purpose. But it must be understood that when speaking of vocabulary plateaus, one cannot conceive of such divisions in terms of specific units of time, say years or months, because the period required for the mastery of a given number of vocabulary items depends upon the circumstances of the learners and the number of clock hours devoted to the study of the language each week. The great advantage of dividing vocabulary into zones is that it helps the teacher to set goals and subgoals for his teaching. He must make the time units fit goals rather than subordinate the latter to considerations of time.

Vocabulary can be divided into four zones or stages according to the learner's progress in the mastery of English.\(^{23}\)

a) The first stage begins with the beginning of the course and ends when a sufficient mastery of the sound system and the basic structures of English is achieved.

The chief aim of this stage is to enable the learner to produce automatically and recognize instantly the basic structures of English. The vocabulary included in this stage consists of:

1- the most important structure words, that is, function words, substitute words and words with negative and affirmative distribution, and

2- some content words, which should be,
  a) sufficient in number to operate the structures that are being practiced,
  b) sufficient in number to represent the sound system,

\(^{23}\) See Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, pp. 50-51.
c) containing, among them, a sufficient number of words representing the "actions" performed by or with the "things" that are represented by the content words, and

d) drawn from the students' immediate environment.

b) In the second stage the following types of vocabulary items are included:

1- More structural words for production.
2- Content words selected from:
   a) the immediate environment in which the language is being learned,
   b) the chief areas of living like the house, with its furniture, 24
   c) time - hours of the day, the months, the seasons, and the weather,
   d) food including both the places where food is served and the necessary utensils, 25
   e) clothes and parts of the body, and
   f) words which are useful in describing the physical characteristics of things, such as: size, shape, colour, weight and flavour.

Among the principles that direct the selection of such useful items are:

1- frequency of occurrence, and
2- elements of similarity in the foreign and native languages (e.g. cognates.)

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24 Ibid., p. 50.

25 Ibid.
c) "For the third stage, vocabulary mastery for recognition is extended more completely over the general areas of experience covered during the second stage."\(^{26}\)

Selection of vocabulary items is determined by:

1- frequency counts, which can be supplemented by materials of a colloquial nature, and

2- the selection of the chief meanings of words.

d) In the fourth stage vocabulary selection is determined by the special area of the learners' experience.

C- Vocabulary Learning:

Methods of teaching should be based on accurate analyses of the learning process. Similarly, discussing how vocabulary should be presented and practiced must be preceded by a description of how a student learns vocabulary items. In this section we shall concentrate on two aspects of vocabulary learning. First, we shall discuss vocabulary learning as it is related to learning a language as a whole and how it differs from learning other aspects of the language; and second, we shall explain what is meant by active and passive vocabulary.

1- Vocabulary learning as it is related to learning the language

Linguists and modern educationists, all over the world, agree that language is a skill. For instance, at an international seminar organized by UNESCO to discuss the teaching of modern languages, one of the general principles subscribed to by the majority of the delegates and printed in the official UNESCO Report of the Conference issued in 1953 is worded as

\(^{26}\text{Ibid.}, p. 51.\)
follows: "The teaching of a language should be considered more as the imparting of a skill than as the provision of information about forms of the language." This principle is of paramount importance for both teachers and learners. English, as a school subject, is often considered, like history or geography, a set of facts that can be learned within a month or two and especially before examination time.

Learning a language, like learning to swim or to play the piano, is a skill. A child learns his native language first by listening to the spoken words. He identifies the prominent features of a sound and tries to associate these features with objects and actions. Then, gradually, the child begins to distinguish more subtle features of the spoken word when it is repeated several times and when he tries to produce it himself. As the child's experience expands and as he learns more and more words and utterances, his mastery over the language expands.

Learning a foreign language follows roughly the same lines of learning the native language, except for the following differences:

a) Learning a foreign language consists in developing a new set of linguistic habits against a background of different native linguistic habits.  

b) The learner of a foreign language has the disadvantage of not learning the language spoken constantly.


\[28\] Lado, op. cit., (Forward by Charles G. Fries,) p. iv.
c) The learner of a foreign language has the advantage of being more mature and usually better educated than the child in learning his native language.

d) Learning a foreign language is usually introduced systematically, while the child learns his native language rather randomly.

Conceiving of language learning as acquiring a skill does not mean that there is no hope in quickening the learning process. As a matter of fact, short cuts are possible. An intensive language course is a kind of short cut. In addition, modern psychology does offer some help in facilitating the process of learning a language.

Modern psychological principles that are relevant to language learning can be summarized as follows:

a) The principle of "reinforcement" or reward. This implies that a person learns (i.e. changes his behaviour) quicker when he is encouraged or rewarded. One of the ways of reinforcing learning is by making the learner know that he is right. For instance, when we teach a student the pronunciation of window and we make him pronounce it, he will learn the pronunciation better if we encourage him by letting him know that his pronunciation is acceptable.\(^{29}\)

Among the distinguished proponents of this theory are B.F. Skinner and, to some extent, J.B. Carroll. Skinner gives the example of the pigeon pecking and being rewarded by food. He also points out that "spontaneous verbal behaviour in the child undergoes a somewhat similar process of reinforcement, but in this case the reinforcement is

\(^{29}\) See John D. Davis, "Recent Development in Teaching Machines," (American University of Beirut: A lecture delivered at the Eighth Creative Learning Conference, March, 1961.)
Skinner constructed what is called the "teaching machine," which enables the learner to know if his answer is correct or not, and thus supply him, not merely with reinforcement, but with immediate reinforcement which is most helpful.\(^{31}\)

b) The second important psychological principle is the law of exercise and use. Behaviour can be learned only when it is emitted and reinforced. This implies that the learners must be given ample opportunity to participate actively in learning the language. In other words, the teacher must not be the only "talker" in class. Students, in order to strengthen the stimulus - response bond, must practice what they have learned. This can best be done through drill.\(^{32}\)

c) The third important psychological principle is the principle of gradual modification of behaviour. A learner must be given the chance to focus his attention on only one aspect of the language at a time. We should present the learner with meaningful units of the linguistic materials arranged progressively with only one aspect changing at a time.

\(^{30}\)Carroll, op. cit., p. 78.


For instance, we teach the student a sentence or a pattern and then we repeat the same pattern with only one word changed.\textsuperscript{33}

What is true of learning a language as a whole is, to a great extent, true of learning the vocabulary of that language. This is because vocabulary is an integral part of the language where all the linguistic aspects are manifested. Nevertheless, learning vocabulary differs from learning other linguistic aspects in the following points:

a) Learning all the words of a language is impossible, while it is relatively much easier to master all the main features of the grammatical structure and the sound system of that language.

b) When we learn to speak our native language, we unconsciously assimilate the sound system and basic structures of the language. But as we grow older and as our experience extends over new areas of life, our vocabulary grows. We are conscious of its growth and we can feel that new words are being added to our vocabulary. This is why we often tend to associate between the growth in the mastery of the language and the growth of vocabulary. Moreover, we tend to transfer this feeling into the foreign language we are learning.

c) Because learning vocabulary is bound to one's experience in life, short cuts in learning the words of a language is much more difficult than in learning the grammatical structures and the sound system of that language.\textsuperscript{34}


\textsuperscript{34}For a fuller discussion of the difference between learning vocabulary and learning other aspects of a language, see Times, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language pp. 2-3.
2. Passive and Active Vocabulary:

When we first come across a word, we probably look it up in a dictionary, or have its meaning explained to us by the teacher. Sometimes, we hear it pronounced and used in a sentence. When we come across the word again, we recognize it and remember what we have learned about it. But when we have the chance of using it in writing and speech, probably with a great deal of hesitation and uncertainty at first, we gradually begin to use it in our speech and in our writing quite automatically. Then, and only then, can we say that we have learned the word thoroughly.

The first level of learning a vocabulary item is called the recognition level or the passive level, while the second is called the production or the active level. Words that one can only recognize constitute one's passive vocabulary. Words that one uses automatically and with ease in speech and writing constitute one's active vocabulary.

An important fact must be born in mind, namely, that a word cannot be integrated into our active vocabulary unless it is already in our passive vocabulary. In other words, a word cannot be mastered thoroughly unless it is presented and explained first, and then the learner is given a chance to use it in expressing himself. Many words are known to us, but fewer still are the words that we can use in our everyday life. This is why it is often said that a person's passive vocabulary is much larger than his active vocabulary.

In learning about a word for the first time, we learn to distinguish only the major features of the meaning, use and pronunciation of that word, but as we come across
it again and again, we begin to make finer distinctions and learn smaller things about the word. Often these subtle features escape us at first. For instance, when we come across the word too, we have the feeling that it is similar to very, but as we come across it again in different contexts we begin to notice that too is different from very. It even has an element of negation, which very does not have.

The teacher's role in teaching vocabulary consists in bringing words from the unknown to the recognition level. Then when the learner is given a chance to practice the new words, they are gradually moved into the production level.\footnote{For a fuller discussion of active and passive vocabulary see the following: Yorkey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 150. Fibachiero, \textit{op. cit.}, p.116. Lado, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 80-81. Abercrombie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18.}

D- Teaching Vocabulary.

In the previous section we have seen that the teacher's role in vocabulary teaching is twofold. He first presents the new vocabulary items to acquaint the students with their meanings, pronunciation and use. Second, he drills the students in the use and pronunciation of these items.

1- Presenting vocabulary items. The first problem the teacher should concern himself with, is how to present new words. Is it better to present them in context or in isolation? Both direct methodists and linguists agree to the importance of presenting words in context. This has the following advantages:

a) Grammatical contexts control the meaning of the word. Content words in particular have several areas of meaning
and the teacher should concentrate on one of these areas at a time. The only way to indicate this area of meaning is by presenting the word in context. For example, the word book can be used in several different meanings and the best way to show these meanings is by using it in one of the following sentences:

He is busy with his books.
He books a passage to London.
The clerk keeps books for the firm.

b) Context furnishes the learner with an example of the actual use of the word. This is a step forward in the process of teaching the student to produce the word.

c) Context makes it possible for the learner to hear the pronunciation of a word when it is actually used in a meaningful utterance. Consider, for instance, the different pronunciations of is in the following sentence: It's the verb is, which is important.

d) Sometimes, meaningful contexts do not only indicate the meaning of the word, but also explain its meaning. For example, if the learner knows the meaning of thief, a sentence like the following can explain one of the areas of meaning of the verb steal.

He is a thief. He steals money.

e) Teaching words in context eliminates the influence of the mother tongue. For instance, Iraqi students often say: He is afraid from. This results from the teaching of afraid in isolation, because students tend to consider it as an equivalent to /a'if/ which is usually followed by /mani/ meaning from.
This can be avoided by teaching afraid of as a unit in a meaningful context. 36

The meanings of words cannot be always explained by inference from context. The teacher has to invent other devices to explain meanings. Here, we shall mention some of these devices and comment on them.

a) The use of objects is very helpful especially in the initial stages of learning the language, when the words taught are drawn chiefly from the immediate classroom environment. But the use of objects has a very limited use, because very few objects can be brought to class.

b) The use of pictures is one of the most successful devices in teaching vocabulary. Pictures help connect new and unfamiliar terms with the ideas or concepts represented by such terms. Pictures taken from magazines or drawn by students do not only help in explaining the meanings of "thing" words, but also help in explaining "action" words. In general, pictures make, at least, three main contributions to language teaching.

1- They help teachers suggest new topics and contexts which are outside the classroom setting.

2- They also help teachers avoid intricate verbalism in explaining meanings.

36 For a fuller discussion of the use of context see: Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, pp. 54-55. See also Fries et.al., Lessons in Vocabulary: Ten Lessons from an Intensive Course in English, (Michigan: University of Michigan, English Language Institute, 1954.)
3- They help teachers change topics and contexts quickly and easily.  

c) Actions of the teacher in the classroom can help explain the meaning of "action" words and the use of prepositions in particular. The verbs sit, walk, turn, etc., and the prepositions on, in, over, above etc. can be explained through actions and gestures.

d) The use of synonyms is rarely useful, partly because there are very few true synonyms in English, and partly because there is always the danger of explaining the unknown by the unknown.

For example, teachers in Iraq often explain sink as a synonym of drawn. This results in errors like: The ship was drawing, instead of The ship was sinking.

e) The use of antonyms is also dangerous. Teaching a word in terms of its antonym may result in confusion in the learner's mind as to which is which. The use of antonyms can only be helpful when the antonym is thoroughly mastered. Thus, we cannot teach right as the opposite of left, unless students have mastered the meaning of left thoroughly. Another shortcoming of the use of antonyms is the difficulty of finding exact antonyms. Misuse of opposites often results in persistent errors, as is the case with old when it is taught as the opposite of new and young. Similarly lend is often taught as the opposite of borrow. This results in the typical errors I lend money from him or He borrowed me one dinar.

f) The use of the blackboard can be very helpful in vocabulary teaching. Sketches and illustrations drawn quickly by the teacher are often very useful. Words like mountain, valley, road and bank (of a river) can be explained through simple illustrations drawn on the board. Even the meaning and use of prepositions can be explained through the use of simple illustrations. 38

g) The use of definition in English can also be helpful, but care must be taken that the wording of the definition should be simple and familiar to the students. Overuse of definition results in verbalism and often in ambiguity and complication of the learning process.

h) The use of the mother tongue is probably the most widely debated aspect of foreign language teaching. Many things have been said for and against its use. On the whole, translation seldom furnishes the best method of indicating meaning. This is why "we must go as far as it is possible in a monolingual approach." 39 On the other hand, completely banning the use of the mother tongue in English classes is impracticable, because there are certain occasions when the use of the students' native language is effective and saves much time and effort. This is why nowadays the use of the native language in the classroom is not opposed violently, provided it is used with discretion. 40

When there is a shortage of visual aids, teachers often lapse into verbalism and tedious circumlocutions, which only results in complications of the learning process.

38 For such devices see Whiteball, op. cit., p. 58.
39 Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 25.
A single word from the vernacular can be given to explain one of the meanings of an English word. Here, time is saved and simplicity is achieved. To strain oneself in preparing an "efficient" teaching device in order to present the word tiger by verbal explanation like "a large striped feline beast of prey proverbial for ferocity" is extremely useless. The word /'tɪɡər/ (طير) can explain the meaning clearly and easily. But the teacher should not get into the habit of writing Arabic equivalents on the blackboard. The Arabic word, when used, has a specific service to perform and after having done so, it should not be mentioned again.

Students of English as a foreign language naturally think in their native language. Overuse of translation in explaining English words develops in the students' minds the habit of equating English words with Arabic words. Since very few exact equivalents exist in two languages, students transfer Arabic meanings when speaking English. Iraqi students often say: It is too hot, when they mean It is very hot. This is because there is no exact Arabic equivalent to the word too.

Another proper place for using Arabic words in English lessons is their use in checking the pupils', understanding. When reading an English text, the teacher sometimes wants to see if the student understands what he is reading. He may ask him to explain a difficult word in Arabic.41

In the beginning of the course, and in explaining directions for oral drill, the use of the mother tongue is unavoidable. This will serve only as a means of preparing students for a better control of the use of vocabulary.

The use of the dictionary. In the initial stages of the course, students do not need dictionaries, but the teacher should warn them, and make sure that no two-language dictionary is used. When the time comes for them to use the dictionary, only English-English dictionaries should be used. The teacher must teach the students how to use the dictionary, by explaining the organization, pronunciation symbols, abbreviations and so on. The teacher must also give exercises in the use of the dictionary in order that proper dictionary habits are inculcated.

Sometimes even in advanced classes, students do not know the proper time for using the dictionary. The trouble is often not caused by words that students do not know, but with seemingly simple words which they know in one—but the wrong definition. Sometimes students do not realize that they do not know the required meaning of a word. The task of the teacher, here, is to make his students aware of the lexical difficulty first, and then he must show them with semantic exercises, the danger of taking the first meaning that they recall.

42 Beyond the stage devoted to the mastery of the sound system and basic structures of the foreign language.

43 For "typical errors" caused by the use of English-Arabic dictionaries see Al-Hamash, op. cit., One student said that the word messenger means amount, because he had looked up both words in a dictionary. The dictionary gives the word (مُبَالَط) without any orthographical signs to explain both English words. But students could not realize that for messenger the Arabic word was meant to be /مَبَالَط/ (مُبَالَط) and for amount it was meant to be /مَبَالَط/ (مُبَالَط).

From this discussion an important conclusion can be drawn, namely, there is not single technique that can be considered as an open sesame to the problem of presenting vocabulary items. The teacher should be acquainted with all the techniques (their advantages and disadvantages) and he must be given freedom to utilize the technique that is most effective in the special teaching situation he is facing. Here, more than anywhere else, flexibility is most needed.

2- Practicing vocabulary

Explaining the meaning of a word only makes the learner recognize it. To be raised to the habit level, the word must be practiced. Any technique devised to practice vocabulary items should be constructed in accordance with the following principles:

a) Adequate repetition of the vocabulary items to be taught.  
"Experience has shown that for a quick and a thorough mastery of vocabulary the repetition of identical wording in the same phonetic form ... is of great value." 45

b) Practice techniques must be devised in such a manner that students' errors are made apparent and therefore, can be immediately corrected.

c) Immediate reinforcement of learning should be provided for.

d) Any vocabulary - practice device should give every student a minimum of fifteen to twenty minutes of practice in speaking the foreign language and uttering the vocabulary items during a single class period. 46

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e) Words should be practiced not as separate items, but as integral parts of meaningful utterances. Because the meaning of any word depends on the situation in which it is used, words must be taught in context.  

f) In practicing vocabulary items, the teacher should avoid presenting too many items in too different patterns. Students should be enabled to listen to one feature or one set of features at a time.

Some of the techniques devised to practice vocabulary items are the following:

a) Conversation dialogues. These are useful in practicing words or expressions that are related to recurrent situations, such as greetings, buying things, and talking about addresses.

b) Oral meaning pattern practice. "These practices are conversations rigidly controlled by the teacher and repeated by the student until the material practiced has become part of the complex of language habits of the student." The following is an example of the oral meaning pattern practice.

Suppose that the general area, in which the class is working, is food and meals. Suppose that the following items have already been presented and explained and are now to be practiced.

---

47 Yorkey, op. cit., p. 152
48 See Fries, et. al., Lessons in Vocabulary Introduction, p. iii.
49 Ibid.
I. Items explained and practiced in previous work.
   a) The subject pronouns (e.g. he, I, she, etc.)
   b) The word eat, the third person -s.

II. Items explained in the previous lessons, to be practiced here.
   a) at six, seven, eight, etc.
   b) breakfast, lunch, dinner, supper.

   The teacher should begin with what the students are familiar with (i.e. he eats.) One expression from list II\(a\) can be added. The subject can be varied, since the subject pronouns have already been established. The exercise can be carried out orally thus:

   **Teacher:** He eats in the evening.
   **Student A:** He eats in the evening.
   **Teacher:** She
   **Student B:** She eats in the evening.
   **Teacher:** We
   **Student C:** We eat in the evening.

   After this has been practiced, in the evening can be replaced by other expressions from II\(a\). Having practiced the list in II \(a\), the teacher turns to the list of verbs in II \(b\) and proceed thus:

   **Teacher:** He eats breakfast.
   **Student A:** He eats breakfast.
   **Teacher:** She
   **Student B:** She eats breakfast.

   This can be continued until all items of list II \(b\) are practiced.

   This exercise does not enable the teacher to see whether the students understand what they say or not. To force students to understand what they say, the teacher can take the sentence He eats breakfast at seven in the morning as a basic frame. He can, then, vary any of the
three expressions breakfast, at seven and in the morning. This necessitates other changes that students must make if they understand the meaning of what they are saying. The teacher can proceed thus:

**Teacher:** He eats breakfast at seven in the morning.

**Student A:** He eats breakfast at seven in the morning.

**Teacher:** in the evening

**Student B:** He eats dinner at seven in the evening.

Changing breakfast into dinner was demanded by using in the evening. When the students respond to the change by using dinner, it means that they understand what they are saying.

3- The automatic, alternation technique can be used to practice function words in the following manner:  

**Teacher:** He came in 1950.

**Student A:** He came in 1950.

**Teacher:** on

**Student B:** He came on Monday.

**Teacher:** at

**Student C:** He came at six O'clock.

The above-mentioned techniques have the following advantages:

a) The class time is not wasted in discussion of reasons and explanations.

b) No more than 15% of the time is devoted to directions.

---

a) The student does not meet a multiplicity of choices all at once. He can concentrate on one lexical item at a time.

d) All students are given the opportunity to repeat words several times, both in unison and individually.

e) Even a teacher who does not have a great command over English can teach vocabulary with confidence.

f) Words are presented in context.

g) Errors in the use of words can be discovered and corrected. They can be discovered through individual repetition or shift of meaning.

The greatest disadvantage that such a method has, is the noise that students are likely to make during the time of unison drill. This may disturb other classes in the school, but the teacher can solve the problem by dividing the class into small groups and drill one group at a time, or if the class is not too big the teacher can insist on having students repeat very quietly.

3- Vocabulary Testing.

One of the fundamental principles that must be taken into consideration in testing vocabulary in the classroom is that teachers should never test the students' knowledge of "words" before the class has thoroughly mastered or "overlearned" these words. In testing vocabulary, in general, teachers must differentiate between the testing of active vocabulary and the testing of passive vocabulary.

In testing active vocabulary, words should not be tested in isolation, but in context, or as they are related to the productive skills (i.e. speaking and written composition.) One of the means of testing active vocabulary is the use of
oral tests. But, it must be remembered, that such tests have many shortcomings. The following are some of these shortcomings:

a) The student's personality often influences the examiner and sometimes distracts him from measuring the student's ability to speak.

b) The student often feels some kind of strain, which results in non-typical manifestation of ability.

c) It is difficult to score oral tests.

d) Oral tests are usually administered in the form of individual interviews, which consume much time.\textsuperscript{53}

Written composition is another means of testing active vocabulary. Like oral tests, the written composition is difficult to score. It also has the serious defect of giving no indication of the students' mastery of the pronunciation of words. Besides, a single composition is very limited in scope and, therefore, it is a poor sampling of the students, range of active vocabulary.\textsuperscript{54}

The best way to measure a student's active vocabulary is by utilizing both oral tests and written compositions. Lado stresses the idea that language tests should aim at the measurement of the students' problem areas, and especially those areas where his native language differs from the foreign


\textsuperscript{54}Lado, "English Language Testing," pp. 156-158.
language he is learning. True, tests must not be vague and aimless, but overemphasizing problem areas results in tricky and sometimes too difficult examinations.

In testing passive vocabulary, the use of synonyms, antonyms and translation into the mother tongue should be avoided. Examinations of this kind, in addition to the false idea they give about the language, encourage unfavourable linguistic habits.

Asking students to use words in sentences is often vague and difficult to grade. Dictation is another way of testing passive vocabulary. Although it does not test vocabulary recall, it does test spelling, sound perception and some matters of inflection.

Testing passive vocabulary can be done in the form of objective tests or in the form of games which are both interesting for the student and easy to grade by the teacher.

Vocabulary tests should not be used only for the sake of measuring the students' abilities. They can be, and should be, used as devices to help the students' learning of vocabulary. When clearly marked and quickly handed back to students, a test can be an excellent means of reinforcement and correction. The teacher should discuss the answers with the students and point out the areas where they have excelled and the areas in which they are defective. Insisting on having the students write down the teachers' corrections of their errors several times is a useful device.

Finally, when devising a vocabulary test, three things should be kept in mind:

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55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 155.
a) The particular aspect or aspects of the learning burden that vocabulary involves and which we want to test should be decided before the test is designed.

b) A marking scheme should also be decided. It should be as objective as possible.

c) Testing vocabulary in context is preferable to testing isolated words.


A- Vocabulary Selection.

1- Vocabulary selection should be based on a careful analysis of Iraqi Arabic, a similar analysis of English, and a scientific comparison of the two language systems. This has the following implications:

a) The analysis of English vocabulary helps in pointing out the essential structure words that must be our chief concern in the initial stages of the course.

b) Comparing the two language systems will diagnose the areas of difference between the two. This will indicate the learning burden that words contain. This is useful in the arrangement of vocabulary according to matters of ease and difficulty.

c) Detecting the elements of lexical similarity between the native language and the foreign language can be very helpful. In case the similarity is found to be insignificant, it is necessary to be very sparing in introducing new words in the English course, otherwise the course will be vocabulary-centered.

2- We should be as sparing as possible in introducing content words in the initial stages of the course.
3. The selection of content words in the initial stages should be guided by the simplicity of the word, its regularity of spelling, and its nearness to the immediate environment of the learner.

4. Later in the course, the learner's vocabulary can be expanded. Selection of words in this stage is determined by the frequency of the word, its range, and its utility to the learner.

5. In the advanced stages of the course, the selection of vocabulary should be determined by the area of the learner's experience.

6. Our list of selected words should contain more "thing" words than "quality" or "adverbial" words, and more "quality" words than "action" words.

7. Selection of individual vocabulary items should not be in terms of root words, but in terms of the learning burden (e.g. different meanings of one form and changes of form that demands some effort to be learned are counted as new vocabulary items.)

B. Vocabulary Teaching

1. Vocabulary teaching should be based on a scientific analysis of the process of learning the language in general and learning vocabulary in particular.

2. Efficient teaching devices should be prepared for the teaching of words in which differences between the native language and the foreign language are manifested.

3. It is essential to differentiate between active vocabulary and passive vocabulary. This implies that distinction must be made between vocabulary presentation and vocabulary practice.

58 See Appendix D.
4- In presenting vocabulary the teacher must be given freedom to utilize the techniques suitable for the special teaching situations he is facing. However, two criteria are essential here:

a) The use of Arabic equivalents should be avoided as much as possible.

b) In so far as possible, words should be presented in context.

5- Techniques of practicing vocabulary should be devised in accordance with the following principles:

a) Vocabulary items should be repeated several times.

b) The practice technique must enable the teacher to detect students' errors.

c) The technique must provide opportunities for reinforcing learning.

d) Students should be given ample opportunity to utter the vocabulary items in meaningful contexts.

e) The technique must enable the learner to concentrate on one aspect of the language at a time.

C- Vocabulary Testing:

1- We must differentiate between the testing of active vocabulary and the testing of passive vocabulary.

2- The teacher should not attempt to test words unless students have mastered them first.

3- Tests should be used not only as means of measurement, but also as teaching devices.

4- When devising a test we must:

a) decide the specific area of the vocabulary learning burden we want to test,

b) devise a marking scheme, and

c) test vocabulary in context.
CHAPTER IV
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH
VOCABULARY IN IRAQ

Having set the criteria for evaluating the Iraqi approach to the selection, presentation and testing of English vocabulary, we shall proceed to discuss how English vocabulary is selected, presented and tested in Iraq. However, certain notes on the educational system of the country and the English language program are necessary preliminaries.

A- The Educational System.

After four centuries of foreign rule and almost complete neglect of education, Iraq achieved independence in 1921. The educational institutions and facilities available now in Iraq, were chiefly established during the last forty years, starting with the year of independence. In that year, there were only 88 primary schools and three secondary schools, with 486 teachers, and about 8000 students.\(^1\) During the Academic Year 1959-1960 there were 3579 primary and secondary schools, with 23,460 teachers and 722,414 students.\(^2\) This progress in the provision of means of education in such a short time indicates the amount of effort and money spent on education. It is believed that such progress could not have happened had the provision of education, for the illiterate masses of adults and youngsters, been allowed to progress haphazardly and without the control


\(^2\) Iraq, Ministry of Education, Directorate of Educational Statistics, "Public, Foreign and Private Schools, 1959-1960". This unpublished document is in the Author’s personal files.
of a central authority.

The Iraqi modern system of education was from the start, and is still, highly centralized. The Ministry of Education is the central authority in whose hands all the resources are pooled and then distributed on educational facilities throughout the country. 3

One of the chief factors in favour of centralization of education in Iraq is that "the local communities, except tribal groups and religious minorities, are so inexperienced in local control of affairs," 4 that it has been unfeasible to charge municipalities and local groups with the provision of education for the different localities.

The Minister of Education is the supreme head of the educational machinery. Under him there are six Director Generals and the Inspector General. Each Director General has a number of Departmental Directors under his control. The Director General of Education has fifteen Local Directors of Education under his immediate control. Each of these Directors is responsible for carrying out the Ministry's instructions in his Liwa (county.) The Inspector General has a number of Specialist Inspectors under him, and a number of local inspectors in the different Liwas of Iraq.

The planning of curricula and the selection of textbook - materials (including English textbooks) is decided

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by an ad hoc committee appointed by the Minister of Education. The Directorate of Curricula and Books carries out the instructions of the committee, by issuing instructions and printing or purchasing the prescribed books.

The supervision of the teaching of English in different schools is in the hands of the Chief Specialist Inspector of English, who is assisted by a number of Specialist Inspectors and some local inspectors. Specialist Inspectors supervise the teaching of English in schools above the Primary Level (i.e. intermediate schools, preparatory schools and vocational schools.) The teaching of English in primary schools is supervised by local inspectors, who are usually less "qualified" than the Specialist Inspectors.

The educational ladder is divided into three levels. The Primary Level begins with the age of seven and continues for six years, that is, up to the age of thirteen (unless the student fails once or twice.) The Secondary Level is subdivided into the Intermediate Stage, which includes three years after the primary school, and the Preparatory Stage, which includes the last two years, and which is in turn subdivided into the Literary Section, the Scientific Section and the Trade Section. The third educational level is the University or Higher Education.

The English program, on both the primary and the Secondary Levels, lasts for seven years, starting with the fifth year of the Primary Level, and ending with the end of the Preparatory Stage. (See Tables 4 and 5.)

B- The English Program.

In chapter I, we alluded to some of the general features of the English program in Iraq. Here, we shall discuss the features of the program with more details.
1- General aims of the program. The program aims at the development of the four linguistic skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students must be trained to understand spoken English, to speak English at a reasonable speed, to read different texts with understanding and to write plain and correct composition. 7

In the fifth and sixth primary classes, the oral foundations of the language are laid. In the first, second and third intermediate classes, reading and writing are emphasized, while in the fourth and fifth preparatory classes the students are trained in independent work. 8

2- The general features of the approach to the teaching of English.

a) A modified Direct Method is prescribed. 9

b) The textbook materials (vocabulary, sentence - patterns and structure) are selected and progressively graded. The teacher must teach all that the textbooks contain, but the textbook material should not be exceeded. 10

c) "Much more attention should be given to correct construction of sentences and especially to the correct use of verb tenses, than to the mere meanings of separate words. The structure of the language is more important than its vocabulary." 11

7 See Appendix B, 1.
8 See chapter 1, pp. 8-9.
9 See ibid., p. 9.
10 See Appendix B, 3.1.
11 Ibid., 3.3.
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\(^5\text{Iraq, Ministry of Education, The Primary Educational Curriculum, p. 4. Numbers refer to the hours assigned weekly to each subject.}\)
### Courses of Study - Public Secondary Schools, Iraq - 1960\(^6\)

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**Total (boys)**

30  | 30  | 30  | 30  | 30  | 30  | 30  |

**Total (girls)**

32  | 32  | 32  | 32  | 32  | 32  | 32  |

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d) Teachers are supplied with detailed "Notes" and instructions concerning the method of teaching every individual lesson.

3- The syllabus. Before 1954, Faucett's series, The Oxford Alternative Books, was prescribed. Later, new series of books began to be introduced. New progressive writing books, crossword puzzles and simple supplementary readers were also introduced.  

From the standpoint of the syllabus, the seven-year course can be divided into three stages: (a) the first thirty-six oral lessons, during which no textbooks are used; (b) the first five years of the course, (excluding the first thirty-six lessons) which include the last two years of the primary school and the three years of the intermediate school, where the five books of the Oxford English Course for Iraq series are taught; and (c) the two years of the preparatory school, during which different and more advanced textbooks are introduced.

4- Examinations. In English, there are four kinds of examinations. First, there are the monthly examinations that the teacher gives to his students to estimate their progress during the year. Such examinations are usually written, but some teachers give oral and written monthly examinations. One third of the students' final grade is determined by these examinations.

Secondly, there are the mid-year examinations, which are completely written, and which decide one sixth

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13 For a complete list of the prescribed books in Iraq, see Appendix C.
of the students' final grade. There are also the final examinations that are given at the end of the school year. The monthly examinations and the mid-year examinations together decide only one half of the final grade. The final examination alone decides the other half. Final examinations include oral and written tests, but the written test is much more important than the oral test. The portion of the grade allotted for the oral test is 20%, while the written test decides 80% of the grade.

All these examinations are called "school examinations", because they are designed and carried out in the school itself, and by the teachers of the school, and because they decide the students' promotion from class to class within the school itself.

In order to be promoted from one educational level to another, the student must pass the General Ministerial Examination for that level. These examinations are devised and conducted by the Ministry of Education. They are completely written, and the questions included are the same all over the country.\footnote{I4}

C- The Selection of English Vocabulary in Iraq.

The basic features of the policy adopted in selection of English vocabulary in Iraq is that the vocabulary for the initial stages of the course should include a general purpose vocabulary.\footnote{I5} Beyond that, the learner's vocabulary can be expanded on two levels, namely, the recognition level and the production level.


\footnote{I5}Iraq, Ministry of Education, English Inspectorate, \textit{Notes for Teachers of English No. (20)}, (Baghdad: 11 July, 1956.) All the notes bearing numbers are issued during the time when Mr. C. W. Morris was Chief Specialist Inspector of English in Iraq.
In order to see how these important principles are practically applied, we shall examine how vocabulary is selected for every stage and sub-stage of teaching English in Iraq.

1- The first thirty-six oral lessons. These are the very first lessons in English. Their chief objective is to lay the oral foundations of the language by presenting the students with linguistic forms where most of the English consonants and vowels are found. Although they are called "oral" lessons, they are not completely oral. Writing is introduced after the third lesson; and the use of reading cards starts from the very beginning. 16

Most of these thirty-six lessons are divided into four parts:

a) Sounds and Letters.
b) Listening, Doing and Saying.
c) Commands or a Game.
d) Writing.

In the first part of the lesson, students learn two things. First, they learn how the different English vowels, diphthongs and consonants (as manifested in individual words) are pronounced. Second, they learn to "connect the sound of the word with the written form." 17

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17 Ibid., p. 4.
For this section, words are selected on two bases:

a) Words selected must contain most of the twenty-four English consonants, the twelve vowel sounds and the eight diphthongs of the International Phonetic System.

b) In order to facilitate the process of connecting the sound with the written form, words of regular spelling must be selected.

The words selected for the first three lessons are:

fat, fate; rat, rate; mad, made; man, mane; can, cane;
bet, beat; met, meat; net, neat; and set, seat.

18 Consonant sounds, except /z/, are presented in the following sequence: /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /r/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /k/, /b/, /s/, /p/, /h/, /l/, /θ/, /r/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /h/, /ŋ/, /š/, /ʃ/, /z/, /dʒ/, /j/, and /z/. Consonant clusters are presented in the following order: /ŋ/ as in and, /ŋk/ as in thank, /bl/ as in blame, /pl/ as in plate, /ns/ as in pencil /sk/ as in desk, /kl/ as in milk, /ks/ as in box, /st/ as in stop, /ɔ/ as in appon and /θ/ as in fifth.

19 Vowels and diphthongs are presented in the following order: /ʌ/ as in fat, /e/ as infate, /ə/ as in bet, /i/ as in beat, /ɪ/ as in bit, /ʌt/ as in bits, /ə/ as in not, /ɔ/ as in note, /ɔ/ as in cub /u/ as in tube, /u/ as in but, /ɔ/ as in point, /ɔ/ as in all, and /au/ as in how.

In the second part, which is the **Listening, Doing, and Saying** section, students learn to understand and to use simple question and answer patterns. This necessitates the selection of structure words and some content words. The structure words chosen for this section include the following:

a) Question words like *what, where, how, many, and whose.*
b) The auxiliaries *is, am, are, have and has.*
c) The personal pronouns, some possessive adjectives, and the words: *this, these, that, and those.*
d) Words like *and, or, on, in, under, of, to, into, from, a, an, and the.*

Content words selected include the following types of items:

a) Verbs like *show, give and put.*
b) Adjectives of number, size and colour.
c) Nouns that can be demonstrated through the use of Teaching Aids, which include: (a) things connected with the home, especially with the activities of eating and drinking, (b) things seen in the classroom, and (c) pictures and coloured squares.  

In the third part of the lesson, simple commands like *Stand up, Hands up, and Arms up* are taught. Words selected for this section include the following:

a) Verbs connected with movements: *stand, sit, clap, stop, shut, open and turn.*
b) Nouns related to parts of the body: *arms, hands, heads, shoulders, eyes, and leg.*

---

c) The two nouns: desk* and books.
d) Function words like up, down, on, and you.
e) Words like: left, right, and and front.

Before stating the number of words selected for the first thirty-six oral lessons, we have to point out the criteria according to which we count vocabulary items throughout the study.

a) Different words are different vocabulary items. Here we follow Bloomfield's definition of words as minimum free forms. Bound forms like -ness, -ment, and en are not counted as words when they occur in isolation.

b) Compound words are counted as new vocabulary items. Their immediate constituents are counted as new vocabulary items when they occur as separate free forms. For example, the word gentleman is counted as a new vocabulary item. Its immediate constituents gentle and man are counted as new words when they occur alone.

c) Different areas of meaning and use of one form are counted as different vocabulary items. For example, the word hand is used to mean "a part of the body" and "give". Each of these is considered a separate vocabulary item.

d) When a previously introduced word occurs for the second time with a shift of maximum stress, the latter is

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22 See chapter II, p. 35.

23 See ibid., p. 36.

24 For the definition of "immediate constituents", see ibid, pp. 37-38.

25 For an explanation of the importance of stress in vocabulary, see chapter III, pp. 57-58.
counted as a new vocabulary item. Thus import, and import constitute different items.

e) The addition of affixes (both inflectional and derivational) often necessitates the counting of the words in which these affixes occur as new vocabulary items. When a previously introduced root word like care occurs with one of the affixes (as in careless) and follows a pattern that has been presented to students, such words are not counted as new vocabulary items. Any deviation from the pattern or norm that involves some extra learning burden is counted as a new vocabulary item. For example, the root word lie is counted as a vocabulary item. Lying is another vocabulary item, because the addition of ing has brought about some deviation from the norm (i.e. the change of ie into y) and subsequently some extra learning burden is involved.

f) Any other modification in word-forms (e.g., internal modification and reduplication) necessitates the counting of words in which such modifications are manifest as new vocabulary items.

g) Words in which Zeroing occurs are counted as new vocabulary items. This is because Zeroing involves deviations from patterns.

h) Proper nouns, which are exact reproductions of native names of people and places, are not counted as new vocabulary items. Others are counted as new items. Thus, Ahmad and Basra are not counted, but Tigris, Egypt and Europe are counted as new words.

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26 See ibid., p. 60.

27 Zeroing here is meant to be the change in the use and meaning of a word without any change in its form. For example, the word sheep is used as singular. When it is used as plural the same form is used. The latter is counted as a new vocabulary item.
According to these criteria, the total number of words introduced during the first thirty-six lessons is 190. In each lesson an average of approximately 5.3 words is taught. (For the distribution of the 190 words to different classes, see Table 6.)

**TABLE 6**

**TYPES OF NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS INTRODUCED DURING THE FIRST 36 LESSONS OF THE ENGLISH COURSE IN IRAQ.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong> words</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I, &quot;thing&quot; words</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II, &quot;action&quot; words</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III, &quot;quality&quot; words</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV, &quot;adverbial&quot; words</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

28 For a complete list of words introduced during the first 36 lessons see: Miller and Hakim, The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Introductory Oral Lessons and Teacher's Notes to Book One, pp. 172-178.

29 The classification of words adopted in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 is the one elaborated by Fries. See chapter II, pp. 42-46.
2- The Oxford English Course for Iraq - Book One.

The chief objectives of this book are to revise what the students have studied in the initial thirty-six lessons, and to train them in silent reading and in the beginnings of writing. The vocabulary introduced in this book includes the following items:

a) Content words, including:
1- nouns like cat, boy, drum, kite, basket, ball, and apple,
2- the plurals of these nouns and the nouns studied during the thirty-six oral lessons,
3- verbs in the present progressive tense like hitting, kicking, looking, playing, and
4- numeral adjectives (one to sixteen) and ordinals (first to sixth.)

b) Structure words including:
1- the possessive pronouns mine, your, his, and hers,
2- words like these, this, that (used as adjectives,) to (followed by an indirect object) and at (used with certain phrases) and
3- some structure words in their full and short forms, like what's (what is), he's (he is) and they're (they are.)

Three hundred vocabulary items are introduced in this book. (For the distribution of the 300 words to different classes of words see Table 7.)

30 Miller and Hakim, Introductory Oral Lessons and Teacher's Notes to Book One, pp. 71-74.
TABLE 7

TYPES OF NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS INTRODUCED IN THE OXFORD ENGLISH COURSE FOR IRAQ - BOOK ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure Words</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I, &quot;thing&quot; words</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II, &quot;action&quot; words</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III, &quot;quality&quot; words</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV, &quot;adverbial&quot; words</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31 For a complete list of the words introduced in Book One see, ibid., pp. 172-178.
3- The Oxford English Course for Iraq - Book Two.

The objectives of this book are almost similar to those of Book One. A more extensive study of verb tenses is introduced and a wider range of vocabulary is included. The vocabulary includes the following types of words:

a) The auxiliary verbs can, must, going to, shall, will and has,

b) common prepositions and conjunctions,

c) pronouns, including reflexive pronouns,

d) words like some, any, no, much, many, a lot of, a few, a little, all, both, and one of,

e) important structural words like just, already, still, and ago,

f) degrees of comparison,

g) besides content words which can be explained through the use of actual objects, more difficult words which necessitate the use of verbal explanation or the use of Arabic,

h) more uses of verbs like write, call, clean, ask and eat,

i) about thirty-nine grammatical terms like noun, reflexive, adverb and plural,

j) about twenty-nine proper names such as Europe, French, Paris and Italian, and

k) forty-eight words occurring in short rhymes like pretty, wise, curl and heaven.

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32 S. Hakim et. al., The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Teacher's Notes to Book Two, (London: Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1954,) pp. 1-3

The total number of the new vocabulary items introduced in Book Two is 755. (See Table 8.)

4- The Oxford English Course for Iraq - Book Three.

In the third year of the English course, emphasis is shifted from extensive oral work to silent reading. With this objective, the teacher must spend less time on vocabulary and structure than he had spent in the previous books.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TYPES OF NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS INTRODUCED IN THE OXFORD ENGLISH COURSE FOR IRAQ - BOOK TWO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure Words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I, &quot;thing&quot; words</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II, &quot;action&quot; words</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III, &quot;quality&quot; words</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV, &quot;adverbial&quot; words</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


35 For a complete list of words introduced in Book Two see: Hakim et. al., *The Oxford Course for Western Asia: Teacher's Notes to Book Two*, pp. 160-173.
The number of structure words in Book Three decreases noticeably. This is accompanied by a noticeable increase in the number of content words and especially "thing" words. (See Table 9.) The most important structure words introduced in this book are the relative pronouns and especially that and who.

The Book provides a number of topics related to oriental and Iraqi culture. These include subjects like "The camel that was lost", which is an old Arab story, "The Dates of Iraq", "Letters from Layla", "The Dishonest Merchant of Khasro," and "Abul - Quasim el-Tamburi and His Shoes." These topics introduce words like Quadi, Caliph, Camel, Cotton, mosque, minaret, mattress and dates.

The total number of new vocabulary items introduced in this book is 925, including fifty-two proper names like Arabic, Egypt, Greece, United States, Tigris, and Euphrates. Nine new grammatical terms like conditional, gerund, exclamation, and infinitive are also introduced.

**TABLE 9**

**TYPES OF NEW VOCABULARY ITEMS INTRODUCED IN THE OXFORD ENGLISH COURSE FOR IRAQ - BOOK THREE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure Words</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Words</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I, &quot;thing&quot; words</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II, &quot;action&quot; words</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III, &quot;quality&quot; words</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV, &quot;adverbial&quot; words</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a complete list of words introduced in Book Three, see ibid., pp. 165-179.
5- The Oxford English Course for Iraq - Books Four and Five.

The first three books, namely, Book one, Book two, and Book three, are intended to give the learner a vocabulary that includes the important structural words of the language and a useful general purpose vocabulary. They introduce the most important verb tenses and the commonest sentence patterns. 37

Book Four aims at: (a) revising and fixing in the memory what was studied in the first three books, and (b) extending the vocabulary. There is very little grammatical material. Instead of the simple and short pieces of descriptive writing dealing with activities that are likely to hold the students' interest, Book Four provides reading - texts of a more advanced kind. 38

The 908 new vocabulary items introduced in Book Four include the following types of words:

a) A small number of new patterns and phrases such as: according to, at first, at last, by means of, by this (that) means, would rather, and in turn. 39

b) Words that illustrate the formation of derivatives such as: cultivate, cultivation, photograph, photographer; irrigate, irrigation; and other examples illustrating the use of suffixes and prefixes like un-, in-, im-, ir-, dis-, -ly, -ment, and -tion. 40

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37 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Notes for Teachers of English No. (20.)

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.
c) Content words dealing with technical subjects such as road-building, irrigation, and hydro-electric power. Some of these words are excavator, radio-telephone, runway, barrage, air-conditioned, bulldozer, and combined - harvester. These words are not intended to be included in the learner's active vocabulary, but for his passive vocabulary. They are introduced for two reasons:

1- Although they are long words, they are easy to learn, because most of them have only one meaning.

2- The things that these words represent are being gradually introduced into the life of modern Iraq.


e) "Words that are liable to confusion by Arabic-speaking learners" are introduced in pairs like climate, weather; habit, custom; invent, discover; rob and steal.

Book Five has two main objectives, namely, to introduce the use of long and complex sentences, and to enable the learner to reach the stage of complete self-reliance. The 800 new vocabulary items occurring in the book include the following:

41 Ibid.


43 Ibid., p. VI.

a) about 67 grammatical terms like imperative, superlative, verbal and voice,
b) about 70 proper names like Olympic, Pacific, Rialto, Venice, and
c) about 560 general words, which include:
   1- more words illustrating ways of word-formation such as inexcusable, responsible, merciful, manhood and fifth,
   2- more words related to technical subjects, ordinary conversations, story-telling and simplified specimens of literature,
   3- different uses of verbs like get, break, buy, leave, make, lend, show, set, tell, offer, give, hope, think, lie, lay, and
   4- some structure words like so, fairly, rather, either, and neither.

6- Supplementary Readers. The purpose of the Oxford English Course is the basic study of the language, while Supplementary Readers are intended to widen the student's knowledge of English. On the Primary Level, no Supplementary Readers are prescribed, but on the Intermediate Level, three simple story-books are used to accompany Books Three, Four and Five.

The Supplementary Readers are introduced in order to serve the following purposes: "(a) to give the pupils a feeling of mastery over the language, and the pleasure of reading a story without hard work, (b) to widen the pupils' experience of the language, (c) to prepare pupils for using library books, and (d) to prepare pupils for the study of texts in the fifth Secondary Classes."  

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45 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Inspection Department, Notes for Teachers of English (6), (Baghdad: 1st May, 1954,) p. 3.
In other words, Supplementary Readers are intended to widen the student's passive vocabulary, and to train him in understanding the general meaning of what he reads, with as little help as possible.

The three Supplementary Readers of the Intermediate Stage are very simple and very short. New words are either explained in footnotes or through the use of pictures. For example, in Emil and the Detectives,\textsuperscript{46} words like statue and horse - tram are explained through the use of pictures, while words like hotel and traffic are explained in footnotes.

7- Crossword Puzzles. On the Primary Level, two books of crossword puzzles are used, for the purpose of giving students an opportunity to revise what they have already learnt.\textsuperscript{47} The vocabulary revised by these books is graded according to the vocabulary in Books One and Two of the Oxford English Course for Iraq.\textsuperscript{48}

8- Vocabulary in the Preparatory Stage. The two-year course of the Preparatory Stage has two chief aims, namely, "to begin a systematic study of the structure of the language, and to read works of English literature, chiefly modern, very slightly simplified, and study the vocabulary and patterns found in them."\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} By Erich Kastner, Simplified by E.A. Attwood, New Method Supplementary Readers, Stage 3, (Longmans, 1960.)

\textsuperscript{47} Iraq, Ministry of Education, Instructions to Teachers of English No. (8), (Baghdad: December, 1955), p. 1.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., pp. 1-2.

The program includes the following types of studies:

a) The study of grammar, including a systematic study of structure words like: he, have, do, can, could, used to, will, shall, going to, there is, there are. The textbook prescribed for this purpose and for both the Fourth and Fifth classes of the Preparatory Stage is *Grammar and Idiom.*

b) Comprehension and Precis. Some of the purposes of this kind of study are:

1. to stimulate the study of the exact meanings of words in context, and
2. to widen the active and passive vocabulary of the learner.

c) Composition. Short essays are written by the students under the supervision of the teacher. This helps to strengthen the students' productive vocabulary.

d) Literature. From the standpoint of vocabulary, two kinds of textbooks of literature are prescribed. The first is intended for the close study of subject-matter, vocabulary and idiom. It is intended for widening the students' active vocabulary. The second is easy and is intended to widen the students' passive vocabulary.

The first is "based on 1000 words of structural and general utility, their derivatives, compounds and shifts

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51 For a current list of Iraqi Textbooks of English see Appendix C.
of meaning. To these have been added a proportionate number of general story-telling words and expressions, together with the special words needed for ... story."52 The second consists of very simple short stories retold from Shakespeare. Their vocabulary is limited and can be easily inferred from context. Some words are explained in footnotes and some through the use of pictures.

D- The Teaching of Vocabulary.

In order to have a clear idea of how English vocabulary is taught in Iraqi schools, we must investigate the principles formulating the philosophy behind the method of teaching English vocabulary, and then, we shall proceed to summarize the steps of the prescribed method of teaching English vocabulary.

1- Principles adopted concerning the teaching of vocabulary.

a) "The secret of teaching language is repetition."53 This necessitates constant review of work previously done.

b) Since students can learn only a little new material at a time, only a part of a lesson should be devoted to the teaching of new vocabulary items.54

c) The teacher cannot teach several things at a time. When a portion of a lesson is devoted to vocabulary, nothing else should be taught.55

53 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Notes for Teachers of English No. (7,) (Baghdad: (no date),) p. 2.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
d) One of the most important points that the teacher must bear in mind is that all words and sentences should be learned in English only.  

56

e) The purpose of teaching vocabulary is to enable the student to be independent of his teacher. This means that a teacher must gradually train his students to use English-English dictionaries and to develop in the students the ability to guess the meanings of new words.  

57

f) The best way to teach a student new words, is not through conscious memorization of meanings or synonyms of words, but through unconscious assimilation, which is similar to the way in which a child learns his mother tongue.  

58

g) The best way to present vocabulary is, not by explaining isolated words through the use of their synonyms, but to present them in sentences (except names of simple objects like chair, or elephant.) The Direct Method aims at establishing a link in the students' minds between the word and the object, idea or action for which it stands. The use of synonyms only establishes a link between a word and another word.  

59

56 Iraq, Ministry of Education, English Inspectorate, Notes for Teachers of English No. (16), (Baghdad: 12-12-1955.)

57 Iraq, Ministry of Education, The Curriculum of Secondary Education, pp. 3-4

58 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

2- The Method of Teaching Vocabulary. In presenting vocabulary items the teacher of English should follow the following steps.60

(a) Making use of the "Notes" on the lesson, the teacher must prepare a list of the new words he intends to teach in the lesson.

(b) Before he comes to class, the teacher must plan a "conversation" through which all the new words he prepared should be introduced and explained orally BEFORE the text in which the words occur is read. The conversation that the teacher plans can be about the same subject of the passage of the textbook, similar to it, or different from it.61

(c) The teacher can utilize all the teaching aids he has at his disposal during the time when the conversation takes place. The teacher should draw the students into the conversation as much as he can.

(d) When the word is introduced, through the conversation, the teacher must write it on the blackboard so that the students will see how it is spelt.

(e) When the words are introduced and written on the blackboard in sentences, the students ought to copy them into their notebooks, but students should not be permitted to copy synonyms or definitions of words.

(f) When the teacher introduces and writes all the words on the board, he must discuss them and use them in other examples orally.

60 Ibid., pp. 2-4

61 Ibid., p. 1.
g) The teacher then reads aloud the passage in the textbook in which the new words occur. Only brilliant students, who are capable of reading reasonably well, should be permitted to read aloud.

h) After that has been completed, the teacher should start asking questions about things outside the subject of the text, and particularly from the students' experience. 62

i) The teacher, then, asks the students to close their books, and begins to ask them questions, in order to test their comprehension of the passage in which the words occur.

The following is an example of how the prescribed method ought to be put into practice:

New words: another, made, usually. The names of substances: glass, leather, paper, rubber, steel, wood. Note the new use of some in contrast with other. Begin by teaching the words wood, paper, glass, leather, rubber, and steel. Use small pieces of these materials, not complete things made of them, for example, pieces of rubber from an old tyre, small pieces of paper torn out of an old magazine or newspaper, one or two pieces of broken glass (be careful with these,) a few small pieces of steel and leather. If you show your pupils several rough pieces of wood, they will understand that wood is the name of the substance. If you show them a wooden ruler and say This is wood, they may think that wood means the same as ruler. If you hold up a drinking glass and say This is glass, you will confuse your pupils. They know the word glass in the sense of something to drink out of. But if you point to some pieces of glass and say This is glass, they will not confuse the two meanings of the word. First, therefore, use small pieces of the different substances to teach their names.

62 Ibid., p. 3.
Next go round the room and touch and point to various things, saying This is wood, This is glass, This is leather, etc. When the pupils clearly see the difference between the name of a thing (desk) and the name of the substance of which it is made (wood,) you can introduce the phrase made of. 63

Towards the end of the lesson period and when the teacher presents the new words, reads the text and asks questions, the class must turn to exercises, which are answered orally first and then the answers are written down. The purpose of the exercises is to give the students practice in using the patterns they have learnt. 64 Students can also be given some of these exercises as a homework assignment.

In the "For Study" sections, which summarize the rules of grammar and present examples of patterns that have occurred in the text, substitution frames are sometimes provided. Those frames are intended to give students a chance to practice and repeat some of the vocabulary items they have learned in the text.

E- Vocabulary Testing:

English language tests prescribed or recommended by the Ministry of Education can be classified into two main types:

1- Small - scale tests, include the following techniques:
   a) Dictations. They can be used occasionally to test students' ability to understand spoken English and to spell correctly the words studied previously. Dictation tests must not contain words that the

63 Hakim, et. al., The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Teacher's Notes to Book Two, pp. 41-42.

students are not familiar with, and they must be given at a reasonable speed (neither too slow nor too fast). 65

b) After the teacher introduces new vocabulary items, and after he reads the text in which the words occur, he must ask students to close their books. He then begins to test their assimilation of the new words through the use of questions that test comprehension of the passage as a whole. In answering such questions, students in the primary school, or the first and second grades of the intermediate school, should use the exact words of the passage. Later, students are encouraged to answer, not in one sentence, but in several sentences that explain the theme of the question. 66

2- Large-scale examinations. These include:

a) mid-year examinations and final examinations, for which the teacher himself is responsible, and which must be grammatically correct and following definite marking schemes designed by the teacher; and

b) The General Ministerial Examinations, which are given at the end of every stage of schooling.

Vocabulary constitutes one of the major areas that such examinations test. For example, out of the six questions that the 1960 General Ministerial Examination for primary schools included, two questions were completely on vocabulary. 67


67 See chapter I, p. 6.
The 1960 General Ministerial Examination for Intermediate Schools contained six questions. Two of those questions were on vocabulary. A third question, which is a short written composition, tests productive vocabulary.

In 1960, the General Ministerial Examination for Secondary Schools contained two questions (out of six) on vocabulary. They constitute 33% of the total grade of the examination.

On the whole, vocabulary in the General Ministerial Examination of the different stages of schooling is either tested directly through objective questions or indirectly through written compositions and occasionally through oral self-expression. Objective questions test passive vocabulary, while written and oral compositions test active vocabulary. 68

**Summary.** The main features of the Iraqi approach to vocabulary teaching can be summarized as follows:

A- **Vocabulary Selection.**

1- The 190 vocabulary items selected for the first 36 oral lessons include the following types of words.

   a) Words that represent the main features of the sound system of English.

   b) Words that have regular spelling.

   c) Some important structure words.

   d) Content words that can be easily demonstrated in class.

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68 For an exact reproduction of the questions of the 1960 General Ministerial Examinations of all educational levels in Iraq, see Appendix A.
2- The 300 new vocabulary items selected in Book One include the following types of words:
   a) Content words that can be easily demonstrated in class.
   b) The plurals of the nouns selected.
   c) Verbs in the present progressive tense.
   d) Numerical adjectives.
   e) Some important structure words like possessive pronouns and demonstrative adjectives.

3- The 755 new vocabulary items selected in Book Two include the following types of words:
   a) Structure words – auxiliaries, common prepositions and conjunctions and reflexive pronouns.
   b) Content words that need verbal explanation when taught.
   c) 39 grammatical terms, 29 proper names and 48 words occurring in rhymes.

4- The 925 new vocabulary items selected in Book Three include the following:
   a) 35 structure words.
   b) Words related to Iraqi and Oriental culture.
   c) Some grammatical terms.
   d) 52 proper names.

5- The 908 new vocabulary items introduced in Book Four include the following:
   a) A small number of patterns and phrases.
   b) Words that illustrate word – formation.
c) Content words dealing with technical subjects.

d) 160 proper names.

e) Words that are often confused by Arabic-speaking learners.

6- The 800 new vocabulary items introduced in Book Five include the following:

a) 560 general words.
b) 17 grammatical terms.
c) 70 proper names.
d) More words illustrating word-formation.
e) A small number of structure words.
f) Words related to technical subjects.

7- Supplementary Readers are introduced in the third year of the English course for the purpose of widening the students' passive vocabulary. Crossword puzzles are used to review the vocabulary previously studied.

8- Vocabulary in the Preparatory Stage includes:

a) Words related to the structure of English (repeated here) and some grammatical terms.
b) Words included in original or semi-abridged English novels or short stories.
c) The vocabulary of an easy supplementary reader.

B- Vocabulary Teaching.

1- The principles adopted in the teaching of vocabulary stress repetition of vocabulary, presenting vocabulary orally before reading a text, teaching words in English, using English-English dictionaries, learning through unconscious assimilation and presenting words in context.
2- Words are presented through an oral conversation devised by the teacher.

3- Exercises and "For Study" sections are used for the practicing of vocabulary.

C- Vocabulary Testing:

1- Small-scale tests include: (a) instantaneous techniques devised by the teacher in the classroom and (b) dictation.

2- Large-scale examinations include: (a) mid-year exams, (b) final exams, and (c) the General Ministerial Examinations.

3- The testing of vocabulary through objectives questions is emphasized.

4- The General Ministerial Examinations are confined to written tests.
CHAPTER V
A CRITIQUE OF THE IRAQI APPROACH
TO THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH VOCABULARY

This chapter is the outcome of the comparison between chapter III, in which we have reviewed the main features of the Modern Linguistic Approach, and chapter IV, in which the Iraqi approach to the teaching and selection of vocabulary is reviewed. This chapter has the major task of evaluating the Iraqi approach on the basis of the findings of Modern Linguistics as well as the application of those findings to practical teaching.

In chapter I, we have reviewed very briefly the developments in methods of teaching foreign languages. From that we were able to come to the conclusion that the Direct Method, on which the Iraqi Modified Direct Method is largely based, is not the latest innovation in the field of teaching foreign languages. This does not mean that the whole approach adopted in Iraq should be discarded on the grounds that it is obsolete. There may be some points where the Iraqi approach excels, and there may also be other points which are defective or not validated by scientific studies. The first points should be maintained and the second should be reconsidered and modified.

Here, we shall point out both the points of excellence and the shortcomings of the Iraqi approach to the selection, teaching and testing of English vocabulary. The procedure of evaluation consists in following the criteria we have set in chapter III step by step and examining the conformity of the features of the Iraqi approach to these criteria. Features of the Iraqi approach that conform with the criteria are discussed under the heading

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¹See chapter I, p. 15.
of "Points of excellence". Features which deviate from the criteria or that partially coincide with them are discussed under "Shortcomings."

A- Vocabulary Selection.

The what of vocabulary teaching is probably the most important aspect of foreign language teaching to whose improvement Modern Linguistics has contributed much. The Iraqi textbooks of English were published during the period from 1953 to 1957, that is during a period of time when Modern Linguistics had many adherents and advocates. It is highly improbable that the writers of the Iraqi textbooks were not influenced by the Modern Linguistic approach. Such influence can be considered, to a great extent, responsible for the agreement between some of the features of the Iraqi approach to vocabulary selection and the criteria we have set in chapter III.

1- Points of excellence. The following are the main points where the Iraqi approach excels.

a) One of the features of the Iraqi approach is the dedication of the first thirty-six lessons to the mastery of the sound system and the selection of words for this purpose on the basis of regularity of form. On the whole, this is a sound approach.²

The arrangement of these words in the form of contrastive pairs, rather than as isolated items is in agreement with the Modern Linguistic Approach.

b) The second important feature of the Iraqi approach which conforms with modern innovations is the importance given to function words during the first year of the course. This indicates the importance given to the mastery of the basic structure of the language. This idea is

not only in agreement with the Modern Linguistic Approach, but also in agreement with all the word counts that are available and especially those related to the teaching of English as a foreign language.

c) The third point where the Iraqi approach excels is the selection of content words, particularly in the initial stages of the program, on the basis of their nearness to the immediate environment of the learner and especially those words that can be demonstrated through the use of actual objects that can be brought to class.

d) The fourth sound premise, upon which the Iraqi policy if vocabulary selection is based, is the general tendency to distinguish between production vocabulary and recognition vocabulary. The former is provided for by the Oxford Books, while the latter is provided for by the Supplementary Readers, which are introduced in the first year of the Intermediate Stage. Vocabulary in the initial stages of the program, and particularly during the first two years of the Primary Level, is selected chiefly for productive use.

e) The fifth important point where the Iraqi approach excels is that the linguistic material is not drawn exclusively from the written language. Here and there specimens of actual every day conversations are introduced in the textbooks. For instance, Book Five starts with

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3Ibid.

4See Appendix D. See also Fries and Traver, English Word Lists, p. 92.

5See Miller and Hakim, Introductory Oral Lessons and Teacher's Notes to Book One, p. 17.
short pieces of ordinary conversations that usually take place in an English home. These provide examples of ordinary conversational style. They also introduce words and expressions commonly used in the daily life of an English home, such as mustn't, I'll, they're, aren't, wasn't, shan't, won't, can't and who (used instead of whom).

2- The Shortcomings.

In spite of these good features, the Iraqi approach to vocabulary selection is not without serious defects. The following are the main defective areas, which need to be reconsidered and improved.

a) What the Iraqi approach to vocabulary selection lacks is an awareness of the elements of similarity and the areas of difference between the lexicon of English and that of the native language.

Elements of similarity between the English lexicon and the Iraqi Arabic lexicon can be classified into three main categories:

1- Classical Arabic words which were in use at present in Iraqi Arabic and which are borrowed by the English language during the time of the Levantine trade through Greek and Italian, or by way of Spain and France, or through the Crusades. These words can be classified into the following categories:

a) Names of articles of commerce like sugar, coffee, curry, cotton and amber.

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b) Words related to the sciences of the Middle Ages such as *alchemy*, *elixir*, *algebra*, and *cipher*.

c) Words that are typically oriental and which are not related to Western culture such as *sahara*, *minaret*, *mufti*, *sheikh* and *khan*.  

2- Some international terms which are neither Arabic nor English in origin, but which both languages have borrowed and have integrated into their lexical structures. Some of these words are *amen* (Hebrew), *caftan* (Turkish), *paradise* (Persian), *cigar* (Spanish) and *philosophy* (Greek).

3- A number of English words that are borrowed by Iraqi Arabic through the contact with the British during and after World War I. Some of these words (which cannot exceed two hundred in number) are *glass*, *cake*, *beer*, *bottle*, *radio* and *battery*.

The vocabulary of the Iraqi Oxford Books includes around 141 words chosen on the basis of their similarity to Arabic words. That is, they are either Classical Arabic words borrowed by English or English words borrowed by Iraqi Arabic or common international words.

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8 See Walt Taylor, *Etymological List of Arabic Words in English* (Cairo: The Egyptian University, Noury Press, 1934.)

9 See Skeat, *op. cit.*, chapters XVII, XX and XXI.

10 The author, with the help of another native speaker of Iraqi Arabic, was able to list only 120 such words.

11 Book One contains 12 words like *bus*, *cup*, *orange*, and *sugar*. Book Two contains 25 words like *camel*, *doctor*, and *coffee*. Book Three contains 33 words like *automatic*, *caliph*, and *zero*. Book Four contains 47 words like *bar*, *asphalt*, *concrete*, and *khan*. Book Five contains 24 words like *cinema*, *alphabet*, *neon* and *bazaar*. 
A few of these words like cinema, jug, potato, lemon, battery and cement are useful for the purpose of teaching English, but the majority of them are not. They are either infrequent or so typically oriental that their introduction contributes very little to the learning of English. For example, words like dhow, nadir, jerboa, monsoon and bazaar are both infrequent\(^{12}\) and unrecognizable. Words like caliph, Emir, minaret, camel and mosque are typically oriental and are useful only when the life of the East is discussed.

Introducing such words just because they have some elements of similarity to other Arabic words results in straining the language of the textbook beyond its natural limits and in creating artificiality. Besides, their inclusion does not lighten the learning burden of the vocabulary of the textbooks. This is due to the following reasons:

1- Arabic words borrowed by English changed their pronunciation so that it became very difficult to identify their origin. It needs a well-informed etymologist to know that the origin of arsenal is /d̪ar əlt ʃɪnæːt / (دير الصناعة) meaning "workshop," or to know that assassin is derived from /hæˈʃənɪn / (عاصم) who were famous for assassinating their political foes.

2- Most Arabic words borrowed by English changed their meanings and use completely. The word mufti is used in Classical Arabic to mean "a chief religious judge,"

\(^{12}\) None of them occur in the General Service List of English Words. They occur once or twice per million words according to Thorndike's Junior Dictionary of 25000 words.
while in English it is used now to mean "plain or ordinary clothes worn by someone ... who has the right to wear uniform." Similarly the word nadir, which means in Classical Arabic "something that can be contrasted with something else," is now used in English to mean "the lowest point ... as at the nadir of one's hopes."

3- The meaning and use of English words borrowed by Iraqi Arabic also changed a great deal. Their meaning is usually limited to only one sense of the original English word. For example, the word glass is used in Iraqi Arabic to mean "a drinking vessel," the word mode is used to mean "the latest fashion of ladies', hair-cuts and clothes."

4- The majority of English words borrowed by Iraqi Arabic changed their pronunciation. Some of them are even unrecognizable. The word dozen is pronounced /dɔːzn/ (دوزن), the word cup is pronounced /ˈkʌp/ (كوب), and the word driver is pronounced /ˈdɹɪvər/ (دير). (A.S. Hornby, E.V. Gatenby and W.H. Wakefield, The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 823.

5- In addition to that, a large proportion of the English words borrowed by Iraqi Arabic is useless for a teaching course, because the majority of these words are highly technical. Words like gear, clutch, bonnet, body (of a car,) syringe, oxygen, valve and stencil are so technical that there is no point of introducing them even for advanced English courses.

13 Ibid., p. 823.
Besides being useless, such words increase the vocabulary learning burden. When they are selected they should not be introduced with the view of lightening the vocabulary learning burden, but with efficient teaching devices that would eliminate the interference of the habitual way of using and pronouncing such words in the native language.

The teacher must be prepared to cope with errors resulting from the unconscious transfer the students usually make from Iraqi Arabic pronunciation and use of borrowed English words to the English words themselves. For instance, Iraqi students often pronounce the word film as /fil'm/ because it is pronounced like that in Iraqi Arabic. They often use the word globe to mean an electric lamp only.

From this analysis one can come to the important conclusion that what are considered as elements of similarity between Iraqi Arabic and English lexicon are not only insignificant, but also troublesome. Out of the 141 words included in the Iraqi English textbooks on the basis of the similarity between English and Iraqi Arabic, very few are useful. The majority of these words are either useless or burdensome.

b) Realizing the fact that Iraqi Arabic lexicon, in contrast to French or Spanish lexicon, does not have much in common with English lexicon is very important for vocabulary selection.15

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15 Even the learning of English proper names necessitates some "extra" effort on the part of Iraqi students. English proper names used now in Iraqi Arabic are mostly taken from the French. This is probably due to the fact that the first modern large-scale contact that took place between the West and the Arab World is through the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. For instance /Ingliz/ (ینگلیز) is nearer to Anglaise than to English. Similarly /Injit or o / (ینجیت) is nearer to Angleterre than to England. Obviously /Allame / (اَلَّمَانِ) is taken from Allemagne.
It implies that Arabic speaking students will not be assisted by the existence of many cognates and so we must be very sparing in introducing new words (particularly content words) in an English language course. When many vocabulary items are introduced, the course is bound to become vocabulary-centered and the process of learning the language is neglected.

In the English course in Iraq, the average number of new vocabulary items introduced per lesson period ranges from 4.41 words to 7.26 words. (See Table 10.)

The average number of new vocabulary items introduced in Book One, Book Four and Book Five is, on the whole, acceptable. In Book One the number of new words (4.41) introduced every lesson is quite manageable, because many words are chosen from the immediate environment of the learner.

In Book Four and Five, although Supplementary Readers are introduced, the number of words introduced every lesson is acceptable, because students are supposed to have mastered the main features of the sound system and structure of the language and are ready to have their vocabulary expanded.

The relatively unmanageable numbers of words are those introduced during the first thirty-six oral lessons and in Books Two and Three. During the first thirty-six lessons the objective is to master the sound system. This is why a minimum number of words should be introduced so that the attention of the teacher and class should not be distracted from this fundamental objective.
The increase in the number of words in Books Two and Three represents an unusual jump. (i.e. from 4.41 words to 7.26 words and 5.93 plus the vocabulary of the Supplementary Reader.) During the second and third years of the course, we should be sparing in introducing new words, because the objective is not the expansion of the students' vocabulary, but the mastery of the basic structures of the language.

TABLE 10
THE DISTRIBUTION OF VOCABULARY ITEMS OF THE IRAQI TEXT-BOOKS TO INDIVIDUAL LESSON PERIODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Units</th>
<th>Number of new vocabulary items</th>
<th>Number of hours per week</th>
<th>Maximum number of weeks</th>
<th>Maximum number of hours per school year</th>
<th>Average number of new vocabulary items per lesson period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First 36 lessons</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book One</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Two</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>7.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Three</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Four</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Five</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 Fractions here are approximated.
Sometimes even in a small section of a lesson or a relatively short paragraph in Book Three, nine or ten new words are introduced. For instance, in one of the sections the following new words are introduced: 

branch, leaf, leaves, cluster, soft, gold, seed, stone, ripe and taste.\(^{17}\) Ten new words introduced in a passage of 62 words\(^{18}\) make the passage very difficult to understand.

Besides, the teacher may spend the whole lesson period explaining these words and finally no time is left to study the language or even to read and write.

c) In the initial stages of the course, the mastery of the sound system is stressed, but the emphasis laid on this fundamental aspect of the language is not strong enough. First, the period devoted to the oral study of the language is not long enough. Thirty-six lessons cannot bring about effective mastery of the sound system. Secondly, the selection of words for the teaching of pronunciation is not based on a scientific analysis of the differences between the sound system of English and that of Iraqi Arabic. For example, the first word to be included in the pronunciation drill is fat. This word contains the vowel phoneme /ɒ/\(^{11}\), which does not exist in Iraqi Arabic. Similarly, in the pronunciation drills words like bet, and bite with the vowel phoneme /ə/ and the diphthong /aɪ/ occur before words like tube, put and point. The former contain vowel phonemes which are not familiar to Arabic-speaking students, while the latter have no such difficulties.

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\(^{17}\)Hornby and Hakim, The Oxford English Course for Iraq: Teacher's Notes to Book Three, Reading - Text Five, Section 3, p. 63.

Words that contain the phonemes /æ/, /ɔ/, /o/ and the diphthong /aI/ should come later and when they are introduced, efficient techniques should be prepared for them. In the selection of words representing consonant phonemes, the word thank, which contains the "troublesome" consonant phoneme /ŋ/, occurs in the pronunciation drills of the first thirty-six lessons before words like jug, show, chalk, and these, which do not contain such a phoneme.

Thirdly, due to the inadequacy of the time devoted to the mastery of the sound system, many of the words that constitute pronunciation difficulties for an Iraqi learner of English are left out. For example, words representing the phoneme /ɔ/, three-element and four-element consonant clusters and the shift of maximum stress are not included in the pronunciation drills.

d) Structure words, which are the backbone of the language receive their proper emphasis during the first year of the course only (i.e., during the first thirty-six oral lessons and in Book One.) But although a little more than 26% of the words introduced during the first year are structural words, some of the basic function words such as from, which, if, as, so, when, and while are not even mentioned during the first year of the course, which is supposed to lay the structural foundations of the language. Word counts and linguists consider such words as the most important conjunctions and prepositions.19 They are so important that any English course should include them among the first vocabulary items to be selected. While these

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19 See chapter II, pp. 42-43.
words are excluded, unnecessary content words like egg-cup, fork, combing, science, geography, violet, umbrella and ground are included.

During the second and third years of the course, the number of structure words decreases noticeably. In the second year, they constitute a little more than 16% of the total number of words and in the third year their proportion goes down to a little less than 4% of the total number of words. (See Table 11.)

On the whole, except for the first year, the English program in Iraq can be considered as content-word centered. What is needed is more emphasis on structure words especially during the second and third years of the program.

**TABLE 11**

**COMPARISON BETWEEN STRUCTURE WORDS AND CONTENT WORDS**
**DURING THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE ENGLISH COURSE IN IRAQ.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Units</th>
<th>Content words</th>
<th>Structure words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>number</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First 36 lessons</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>71.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book One</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>71.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Two</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Three</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>96.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 Egg-cup and fork are probably introduced because they are related to eating, but the textbook writers do not seem to realize that egg-cups and forks are very rarely used in ordinary Iraqi homes.
e) In Books Four and Five, the number of structure words as well as the grammatical material decreases noticeably. The number of content words is greatly expanded. One of the important directions that this expansion takes is towards the inclusion of technical words, which are of very low frequency and very narrow range. 21

Technical words like runway, ultra - short, walkie - talkie, earphones, switchboard, buzzer, excavator, bulldozer, hydro - electric, tanker, pylon, glider, air - screw, gas - turbine, and rotor are not included in the General Service List of English Words. They occur only once or twice each per million words. Some of them are not even within Thorndike's first 25000 words. 22

Two reasons are given for the selection of these technical words. First, they are considered easy, because each of them has only one meaning. Secondly, they are considered to be important, because it is believed that the things they represent are being introduced into the life of modern Iraq.

The first reason given to justify their inclusion in the course can be easily defeated. When we select a word, we do not have to teach all the meanings of that word, because each area of meaning of that word constitutes a different learning burden. When we choose a word we must treat the different meanings of that word as different entities. Thus, it is very much the same to select one word that has just one area of meaning or to select one meaning area of a word that has several meaning areas.

21 See Hornby and Hakim, The Oxford English Course for Iraq: Teacher's Notes to Book Four, pp. V-VII
From the standpoint of learning burden, comparison, between a word that has one area of meaning and a word that has several meaning areas is impracticable, because the latter involves different entities. Comparison is possible between entities that involve relatively different learning burdens. Thus, it is impracticable to compare between combined - harvester and game, but it is possible to compare combined - harvester which has one area of meaning, with "the flesh of wild animals," which is one meaning area of game. What determines the selection of vocabulary items, here, is not only the relative lightness of the learning burden, but also the usefulness of the word (i.e. its frequency, range and nearness to the needs of the learner.)

The claim that these technical words are becoming needed in modern Iraq, is not a well-established claim. For example, most Iraqis know nothing about hydro-electricity or walkie - talkies or gliders, because these things have not been introduced into their lives yet. There is not a single hydro-electric plant in Iraq and there are very few people who are concerned with things like rotors and air-screws.

Such technical terms are useful only in specific fields of specialization. Students who are studying Book Four, and Book Five have not reached the stage of specialization yet. They are students of different abilities and interests. Some of them will go to the scientific section of the preparatory school; others to the literary or the trade sections and the rest will either leave school or go to vocational and technical schools. When they reach the age of specialization, it is helpful to teach them technical terms related to their field of interest. But
in the Intermediate Stage, we are not justified in forcing all the students to study things that are going to be useless for most of them.

The text-book writers and the responsible officials state that these technical words are not intended for the students' active vocabulary, but for their passive vocabulary. This is incompatible with the aim set for for the Books of the Oxford English Course, namely, the basic study of the language. The language books should be primarily concerned with words that are intended for the active vocabulary of the students. The Supplementary Readers are concerned with the widening of the students' passive vocabulary. When technical words are considered useful, the Supplementary Readers are the more suitable place for their inclusion.

f) In Book Two, 39 grammatical terms are introduced. These terms are very unnecessary and troublesome, although teachers are permitted to explain their meaning in Arabic.

Grammatical terms are unnecessary, because they are not the language, but they are terms about the language. In the first and second years of the course, the teacher's chief aim should be the teaching of the main features of the sound system and the basic structures of the language. Words like voice, degree, active, and

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24 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Instructions for the Teachers of English, No. (8.)

25 Hakim, et. al., The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Teacher's Notes to Book Two, pp. 28-29.
superlative would require a complete lesson period each in order to be fully understood. The use of Arabic does not help in teaching these terms, because most of them have no equivalents in Arabic grammar.

In the Direct - Method Approach, conventional grammar is taught inductively, that is, the rules are used to summarize what has been studied in the text. Instead of reinforcing the study of the language, such practice would distract the students' attention from what they have studied in the text, because students concentrate on rules of grammar and neglect the patterns and useful vocabulary they have studied.

The best way to reinforce the study of the language is by more study of the language through drill and repetition of what has been already presented.

g) During the first and the second years we must be relatively sparing in introducing "action" words in the language program. Since the chief function of "action" words is to express relations, they usually have wider stretches of meaning even within one meaning area of a verb) than "thing" or "quality" words. This means that they usually involve a heavier learning burden than other content words. "Action" words in the first thirty-six lessons, in Book One and in Book Two exceed the number of "quality" words or "adverbial" words.

h) In selecting vocabulary items, the textbook writers do not consider the meaning of a word as the unit of selection. Instead, the word with almost all its areas

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26Ibid., p. 28.
27Fries and Traver, English Word Lists, p. 90.
28See Tables 7, 8 and 9.
of meaning is taken as a unit. Once the word is selected, it is often presented, not in its most useful or teachable meaning, but in different meanings and uses. For example, in Book Two, the word make is introduced for the first time in Lesson Thirteen in the following patterns.\textsuperscript{29}

Yousif and his father made a fire.
My shoes are made of leather.
The hare made the men laugh.
I can't make the cow come out of the water.

To teach He made a fire, does not result in the students' learning of \textit{I can't make the cow come out}. The latter needs extra effort on the part of the learner to be understood even when the former is thoroughly mastered. In other words, it involves extra learning burden and so it is a new vocabulary item.

In Book Three the word order is first introduced in Reading - Text Nine in the following patterns\textsuperscript{30}:
We come to school in order to learn.
The books on that shelf are out of order.
The officer gave an order to the soldiers.
The Governor ordered the soldiers to follow him.
He ordered (asked for) three yards of cloth.

In Book Four the word late is not only introduced with all its areas of meaning, but also with other forms like later and latest.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29}Hakim, et. al., The Oxford English Course for Iraq: Book Two, p. 71.


\textsuperscript{31}Hornby and Hakim, The Oxford English Course for Iraq: Book Four, pp. 103-104.
Similar examples can be presented from other books. The idea that different meanings and different forms of one root word constitute different items is almost completely neglected by the Iraqi approach. When we choose a word, we must choose only the most useful and teachable area of meaning first and then we introduce another and so on. Presenting one word in all its areas of meaning results in confusion and lack of concentration.

i) In the advanced stages of learning, the selection of vocabulary must suit the learner's field of experience. It is impossible to master all the words of a language, but it is possible to master the vocabulary related to one's field of specialization.

In the Preparatory Stage, students in Iraq must choose one of three sections, namely, the literary, the scientific and the trade sections. But students, regardless of their field of specialization, are required to study the same material and the same vocabulary.

The first unfavorable result of the lack of differentiation in language material, is that some students, to whose field of specialization the vocabulary of the prescribed books is related, find it very easy and are able to concentrate not only on the subject matter of the prescribed books, but also on the language material that the books contain. Others, whose field of specialization is not related to the vocabulary of the textbooks, find it difficult to understand most of the words. They, therefore, spend most of the time grappling with meanings of words. This results in the neglect of the study of the language and even the study of the subject-matter of the textbook.

In 1957, Louis Pasteur\(^{32}\) was one of the prescribed

\(^{32}\)Translated and abridged by Evlyn Attwood.
text-books for the Preparatory Stage. Since the vocabulary of the book is related to science, the majority of the students of the scientific section did not find much difficulty in understanding and assimilating the subject matter and the language material of the text. Students of the literary section found it difficult to understand words like tartaric, acid, molecule, and crystallization, which are essential to the understanding of the text.

In 1960, Jules Verne's *Round the World in Eighty Days* is prescribed for all students of the Preparatory Stage. Although the story is less specialized than *Louis Pasteur*, it does not answer the needs of all the students equally. Its vocabulary is largely related to travels and places and subsequently it is more suitable for the literary students, who are better acquainted with geography, than the students of other sections. Students of the scientific and trade sections would naturally find some difficulty in understanding the meaning of many words. But even if they do understand the meanings and use of the vocabulary, they will soon forget them, because it is most likely that they will never need to use such words in their later studies or in their practical life.

j) One final point, which is related both to the selection and to the presentation of vocabulary, remains to be mentioned here. The Iraqi textbooks contain some excellent passages and poems where new words are frequently repeated. For instance, when the relative pronouns that and who are selected, they are introduced in a simple poem entitled *The House That Jack Built*. The word that is repeated 54 times and the word who is repeated 11 times.

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33 Translated and abridged by H.E. Palmer.
34 See Table 7.
In spite of these excellent examples, the important principle of repeating vocabulary items is often overlooked. For instance, the word difficult is first introduced on page 9 in Book Three. The second time it occurs is on page 46. The word agree is first introduced on page 15, but the second time it occurs is on page 167. In Book Four, the word whatever is introduced for the first time on page 1 and the second time it occurs is on page 40. The same thing happens with words like add, toe, size and pain.

B- Vocabulary Teaching

In our evaluation of the Iraqi method of vocabulary teaching, we shall concentrate on the two main sources that formulate the Iraqi approach to the teaching of English vocabulary, namely, the general instructions issued by the Ministry of Education and the detailed "Notes" that the teachers' handbooks contain.

1- Points of Excellence.

a) One of the principles that the Iraqi prescribed method of teaching English takes into consideration is the principle of repetition. Although the textbook writers often violate this principle by not providing enough opportunities to repeat the new vocabulary items, the prescribed method makes it clear that "language is learnt by constant repetition and revision."\(^{36}\)

b) Connected with this principle is the principle of unconscious assimilation. The Iraqi approach favours the learning of new words, not through conscious memorization of lists of words, but through constant review.\(^{37}\) The first

\(^{36}\) Appendix B, 9.1

\(^{37}\) See ibid, 12.2
sixteen lessons of Book One are devoted to reviewing the vocabulary and patterns studied in the first thirty-six introductory oral lessons. 38 The study of every Book should be preceded by a brief review of the vocabulary and patterns studied in the previous Book in the series. In addition to that, every new lesson should begin with a brief introduction in which the material studied in the previous lesson is reviewed.39 

c) The third important principle adopted in Iraq and which conforms with the Modern Linguistic Approach is the principle of presenting words not as isolated items, but as parts of meaningful contexts. 40 The teacher in presenting new words must devise a "conversation" that would enable him to provide the necessary context for the new words.

In the textbooks, words (both content words and structure words) are presented in context. The "For Study" sections are devoted to the study of structure words and content words. For example, the content words succeed, success, and successful are presented in sentences like: 41

They succeeded in reaching the top,
They succeeded in their attempt,
Their success ... made them famous, and Captain Web was successful in his attempt.

38 See Miller and Hakim, The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Introductory Oral Lessons and Teacher's Notes to Book One, p. 71.
39 Iraq, Ministry of Education, Notes to Teachers of English, No. (12,) p. 3.
40 See Appendix B, 12.7.
41 Hornby and Hakim, The Oxford English Course for Iraq: Book Four, p. 79.
d) A number of substitution frames are provided in the textbooks. For example, the structure words none, both, several, then, these, etc. are presented in a substitution frame, which when utilized properly can provide the necessary context for words. It can also provide adequate repetition of the new words. (See Table 12.)

### TABLE 12

A SUBSTITUTION FRAME FROM THE IRAQI TEXT-BOOKS OF ENGLISH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>them</th>
<th>these</th>
<th>those</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very few</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the</td>
<td>these</td>
<td>eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>those</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>my(Your, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

42 Ibid., p. 102.
e) In presenting words, the use of synonyms is greatly condemned by the Iraqi approach. This is based on the sound premise that very few true synonyms exist in English. Again, context is preferable to other means of presenting new vocabulary items.

f) Concerning the use of the mother tongue, the Iraqi approach is not so rigid as the "traditional" Direct-Method approach. In this respect the Iraqi method is more flexible. It is permissible for the teacher to use Arabic "occasionally, to explain the meaning of an English word, when it would be impossible, or very clumsy, to explain it by any other means."

2- The shortcomings.
a) The greatest defect that the Iraqi prescribed method of vocabulary teaching has is its failure to distinguish between presenting vocabulary items and practicing vocabulary items. This is probably due to the hazy distinction that the Iraqi approach makes between active vocabulary and passive vocabulary in the selection of words for the English course.

The prescribed steps for the teaching of vocabulary which have been summarized in chapter IV, stress the presentation of new words to the neglect of practicing these new words. Again this is connected with vocabulary selection. When too many words are selected and presented, there will be little time left for the teacher to devise effective techniques through which a word is raised from the passive level to the active level. When the teacher is baffled by "too many words," he will direct all his energy to prepare techniques that would make his students

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43 See Appendix B, 5.1.
44 See Ibid., 6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.
recognize the word. Making the students able to use the word in productive self-expression is left to chance, instead of being consciously and effectively provided for.

b) Although the Iraqi Modified Direct Method is more flexible than the "traditional" pure Direct Method concerning the use of the mother tongue, it does favour circumlocutions and complicated ways of presenting words. First of all, the Iraqi Modified Direct Method insists on establishing direct association between objects and ideas on one hand and their symbols on the other.\textsuperscript{45} This necessitates the exclusion of the use of the mother tongue. Arabic can be used in explaining English words only when it is impossible or clumsy to do so by any other means. But when it saves time and when it enables the teacher to concentrate on some basic features of the language, the use of Arabic is not encouraged.

c) The insistence on presenting new vocabulary items through devising a conversation has many defects:

1- Devising such a conversation needs considerable ability in English. Many Iraqi teachers, particularly primary school teachers, are incapable of devising an effective and a "correct" conversation. The method should take into consideration the special circumstances of the teachers who undertake the actual teaching of the language.

Primary school teachers are either secondary school graduates, who have had no training in methodology of any kind, or graduates of primary training colleges and one-year teachers' courses. Their mastery of the language is usually inadequate and their training in the teaching of English

\textsuperscript{45}See Appendix B, 3.1.
is superficial.\footnote{46}

2- Even when a "correct" and an effective conversation is designed, the teacher cannot avoid presenting students with a multiplicity of language patterns, for which the students are not prepared. This results in confusion and lack of concentration.

3- The teacher is usually the only "talker" in class. He conducts the conversation so that it would lead to introducing all the new words. As a by-product of that, the teacher must try to "draw" the students into the conversation. First of all, the technique of enabling all the students to participate in the conversation demands a very skilful teacher. Secondly, even the most skilful of teachers cannot make every student say more than three or four sentences during the whole lesson period and especially in classes of forty or fifty students.

d) Starting a conversation, conducting it so that all the new words are introduced, writing the new words on the blackboard, making students copy them and giving more examples on the use of the words need a great deal of time. A fragment of a lesson is not enough to teach five or six new words in this way. This is one of the factors contributing to the general complaint of "too many words."

47

e) The Iraqi method of presenting new vocabulary items does not provide immediate reinforcement of learning, simply because students are not given sufficient opportunity to practice what they have learned.

\footnote{46} Usually only the last year of the primary training college program is devoted to training in methods of teaching all school subjects, including English.

\footnote{47} See chapter I, p. 5.
Even in reading the text, where the new words occur, only a few students (the best ones) are allowed to read. The others are passively listening. In addition to the unfavorable psychological consequences that such a practice would lead to, only a few students are given the chance to pronounce the new words and to have their pronunciation corrected or reinforced. The others are almost completely neglected.

C- Vocabulary Testing.

Although there are no specific examinations devoted completely to the testing of English vocabulary in Iraqi schools, vocabulary, particularly passive vocabulary, occupies a prominent place in the General Ministerial Examinations of all levels of schooling. 48

1- Points of Excellence.

a) The Iraqi approach tends to distinguish between the testing of passive vocabulary and the testing of active vocabulary. The former is tested through the use of objective questions and the latter is tested through written composition and occasionally through oral tests.

b) Teachers are urged to distinguish between presenting vocabulary and testing vocabulary. Every lesson must begin with a review of the vocabulary studied in the previous lesson. After the new words are presented, the lesson must end with a few questions designed by the teacher to test the students' mastery of the newly presented items.

2- The shortcomings.

a) Although a distinction is made between the testing of active vocabulary and the testing of passive vocabulary, the latter receives too much emphasis to the neglect of

48 See Appendix A.
the former. Objective questions, intended to test passive vocabulary, occupy one third of the General Ministerial Examination papers of all school levels. As a matter of fact, the General Ministerial Examination papers of the Primary Level rarely contain questions that test active vocabulary, except some general questions that need to be answered in one sentence each.

In addition to that, the General Ministerial Examinations of all levels consist exclusively of written tests. The testing of active vocabulary through oral production is completely neglected.

b) Objective tests used in Iraq are often defective. For instance, in 1960 the following question occurs in the General Ministerial Examination for Intermediate schools:

"Use only FIVE of these in sentences:
so that, happier, brave, until, possible, correctly, ripen, spend, transport, reference, ambition, numerous." In a question like this a student may use the word brave in a sentence like: Ali is brave. This does not indicate whether the student understands the meaning of the word or not. It does not indicate his ability to use the word in a correct sentence. Yet his answer is grammatically correct and should receive full mark, because the questioner does not insist on using the words in sentences that indicate their meanings.

Another kind of objective questions demand the changing of words like: absent, strong, blind, dangerous, difficult, amuse, appear, attempt, improve, and practice

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49 See *ibid.*

into nouns.\textsuperscript{51} Again this does not indicate the students' ability to use these words correctly or to know their meanings, even if he is able to present forms like absence, strength, blindness, and danger. Besides, such questions would compel the student to concentrate during the school year on memorizing lists of adjectives and their nouns and vice versa.

c) The most defective and even harmful vocabulary questions are the ones that demand definitions of words or their English equivalents. On the Preparatory Level, students are often asked to give the meanings of words and phrases like in the end, rescue, miserable, and a lot of.\textsuperscript{52} This drives students to concentrate on memorizing lists of words like the following:

\begin{itemize}
  \item in the end = finally
  \item rescue = save
  \item miserable = unhappy
  \item a lot of = much, etc.
\end{itemize}

First, this contradicts one of the major assumptions of the Iraqi approach itself, namely, that there are few true synonyms in English.\textsuperscript{53} Secondly, it distracts the students' attention from learning the language, which is something more than the mastery of meanings of words.

d) Stressing passive vocabulary too much and neglecting oral use of English make students consider the mastery of meanings of words in the written text the true mastery of English and subsequently they will develop the habit

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{53}See Appendix B, 5.1.
of writing the meanings on the same page of the prescribed books. They can do nothing else since they know beforehand that the mastery of meanings is a sure passport to success.

e) Oral tests used in the final examinations are often defective. Some of their shortcomings are the following:

1- Since they are conducted in the form of individual interviews, they are time-consuming.

2- They are essentially subjective, because no objective way of evaluation has ever been suggested or prescribed in Iraq.

3- They do not take into consideration the native language factor and they are usually not based on any scientific analysis of the spoken language.

4- Students are usually asked to read passages from the textbook or from some simplified novel and then they are asked questions about the text. Teachers usually give the students pictures that they must describe. In this way the test deals with several features of the language at once. No concentration is made on one linguistic feature at a time.

f) Written compositions, like oral tests, are defective. Besides being subjective, they constitute poor samplings of students' vocabulary.

g) Tests, in addition to their being the chief available means of measuring students' abilities, can be utilized as aids to learning. When students' answers and their mistakes are discussed a short time or immediately after the test takes place, they can serve as means of reinforcing

54 See chapter I, p. 8.
the good points and correcting errors. The General Ministerial Examinations, the final school examinations and the mid-year examinations are defective in this respect, because students' answers are not discussed in class, but kept in the school's archives.

h) Tests that are instantaneously designed by the teacher to test the students' mastery of the new vocabulary items presented in the beginning of the lesson period constitute the best means of immediate reinforcement and correction. But, in spite of that, they have the serious defect of attempting the testing of vocabulary items which have not been adequately drilled and overlearned.
CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapter, we pointed out the shortcomings and the points of excellence of the Iraqi approach to the teaching of English vocabulary. This chapter is largely based on the previous chapter, that is, the recommendations made here are made with the view of eliminating the shortcomings pointed out in chapter V.

Making recommendations can be approached in different ways. One way is to accept a system as it is, but to try to "tinker" at it by making specific suggestions that aim at making minor modifications. The second approach is to make "large-scale" recommendations that would call for a complete overhauling of the system. Specific recommendations are, then, made on the assumption that these large-scale recommendations are put to practice.

Here, we shall utilize both approaches. First, we shall start with general suggestions that, when put to practice, would affect the Iraqi approach as a whole. Then, we shall take every aspect of teaching vocabulary in Iraq and make specific recommendations for its improvement.

A- General Suggestions.

1- All aspects of English vocabulary selection and presentation in Iraq should be approached with an awareness of the differences and similarities between English and Iraqi Arabic. First, we are in a great need of a systematic
and a scientific descriptive analysis of Iraqi Arabic.\(^1\) Second, there must be a systematic comparison of the phonological, morphological and syntactical features of Iraqi Arabic with those of the English language.

Such studies would be of great value for vocabulary selection, because they point out the words in which the differences between Iraqi Arabic and English are manifested and which subsequently involve heavy learning burdens. Such words should be excluded from the very first stages of the English course, but they should be presented gradually and systematically in later stages.

Scientific analyses and systematic comparisons of the linguistic features and lexical structures of the two languages are valuable for the presentation and practice of vocabulary, because they point out the words for which efficient teaching devices should be prepared. For testing vocabulary, they help diagnose the problem areas that should be tested.

For example, comparing Iraqi Arabic and American English segmental phonemes (as is shown in Tables 13 and 14\(^2\)) yields the following results:

a) The consonant phonemes /\!/; /\^\!/; and /\\!/ do not exist in Iraqi Arabic. This implies that words like valve, television, measure, going and pink constitute pronunciation problems for an Iraqi learner of English.

\(^1\)Al-Toma Dissertation, op. cit., can be considered a pioneer, but very brief description of the main phonological, morphological and syntactical features of Iraqi Arabic as contrasted to those of Classical Arabic.

\(^2\)Phonemic symbols of Tables 13 and 14 are the ones adopted throughout the study.
### Table 13

**A List of American English and Iraqi Arabic Consonant Phonemes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Iraqi Arabic</th>
<th>Arabic Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>rub</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ð</td>
<td>thin</td>
<td>ð</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>judge</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>fodder</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>rat</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>zeal</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>cats</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>shell</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>fin</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>rock</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>hill</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>hammer</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>ten</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>win</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
<td>٣</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 In this Table and in Table 14 we have adopted the pronunciation of the Baghdadi dialect.

4 Symbols for phonemes shared by English and Iraqi Arabic are taken from Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, pp. 11-12.

5 Symbols for consonant phonemes which are peculiar to Iraqi Arabic are taken from al-Toma, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Iraqi Arabic</th>
<th>Arabic Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>č</td>
<td>chest</td>
<td>٢</td>
<td>غ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>girl</td>
<td>١</td>
<td>ك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>pen</td>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>very</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ž</td>
<td>azure</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>long</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 14**

A List of American English and Iraqi Arabic Vowel Phonemes and Diphthongs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Iraqi Arabic</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>beat</td>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>/امير/ (امیر)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>bit</td>
<td>/i/</td>
<td>/ركب/ (رکب)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>mate</td>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>/بيت/ (پیت)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>met</td>
<td>/e/</td>
<td>/بيت/ (پیت)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ</td>
<td>mat</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/دوم/ (دوم)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>cool</td>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>/خوش/ (خوش)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>pull</td>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>/بطول/ (بطول)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>note</td>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>/بطول/ (بطول)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>autumn</td>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>/بطول/ (بطول)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>father, hot</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/ابا/ (ابا)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ</td>
<td>cup, above</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>/ابنه/ (ابنه)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ice</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/أم/ (أم)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>house</td>
<td>/u/</td>
<td>/عشت/ (عشت)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>boy</td>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>/ابني/ (ابني)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) American vowel phonemes /i, /e, /o/ and the diphthong /æ/ do not exist in Iraqi Arabic. Words like met, get, pen, hat, rat, note, hole, ice and kite
involve pronunciation difficulties for an Iraqi learner of English.⁶

A systematic comparison of Iraqi Arabic and American English consonant clusters yielded the following results:⁷

a) Initial three - element consonant clusters do not exist in Iraqi Arabic.

b) Final three - element consonant clusters do not exist in Iraqi Arabic.

c) Final four - element consonant clusters do not exist in Iraqi Arabic.

d) Most of the medial consonant combinations (except C - C and cc - c)³ constitute pronunciation problems for Iraqi learners of English.

e) Most of the two - element consonant clusters do not constitute pronunciation problems. Only a few of them do.⁹

For pedagogical purposes, this study reveals that native speakers of Iraqi Arabic find it difficult to pronounce words like splash, depths, tempts and combinations of words like get through, been strongly, just through, first forty and worked through.¹⁰

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⁶Iraqi students tend to pronounce words like get man, note, and ice as /gʌt/, /mʌn/, /nɔt/ and /əs/ respectively.


³Like have gone and desk pen.

⁹Like horn and warn.

¹⁰Native speakers of Iraqi Arabic tend to insert the sound /ɪ/ through the components of the consonant clusters. For example, they pronounce splash and tempts as /sɪpləs/ and /tempəts/.
Similar studies and comparisons of the morphological and syntactical aspects of English and Iraqi Arabic would point out other areas of difficulty and subsequently help the teacher formulate a more accurate idea of the learning burden that English words involve. For example, comparing the relative pronouns of English and Iraqi Arabic would reveal that the relatively many English relative pronouns (which, who, whom, that etc.) have no equivalents in Iraqi Arabic except the word /الّاً/ (الّاً). This explains why Iraqi learners of English find it difficult to master the use of English relative pronouns.

Such studies help us apply one of the main criteria of word selection and preparation, namely, that we must start with words that are as devoid of the differences with the mother tongue as possible. Words that constitute learning problems should be introduced systematically, but sparingly, to give students and teachers ample opportunity to overcome the difficulties involved in such words.

From the standpoint of presentation and practice of vocabulary, such studies would point out the areas to which most of the teachers' efforts should be directed. Instead of wasting much time on words that do not constitute difficult learning problems, the teacher should prepare efficient techniques of presentation and practice for words that need such techniques to be mastered. Because the Iraqi approach pays little attention to this fundamental point, "persistent errors" continue to be persistent.

\(^{11}\) Al-Toma, op. cit., p. 50.
2- From the standpoint of vocabulary selection and presentation, the seven-year program should be divided into four stages.

a) The first stage should include the first year of the course, that is, the fifth primary grade. The whole year should be devoted to oral work and no textbook of any kind should be used.

   This stage has two main aims:

1- to enable students to master the sound system of English, and

2- to enable students to master the fundamentals of the structure of English.

   The first aim is being partially provided for in Iraq by the first thirty-six oral lessons, but the second aim receives less attention than the first. As a matter of fact, the systematic study of the basic structure of the language is being postponed to the Preparatory Stage.\(^{12}\)

   What we recommend here is that more emphasis should be laid on oral work and mastery of the sound system, and a more systematic study of the basic structure of English.

b) The second stage comprises the second and third years of the course, that is, the sixth primary grade and the first intermediate grade.

\(^{12}\)See Appendix B, 2.3.
Although written work and text-books are introduced here, the emphasis should continue to be laid on oral work and the mastery of the basic structures of English. In so far as possible, writing and reading should be made to contribute to these two major aims.

The language materials prepared for this stage should be intended chiefly for productive use. The non-linguistic materials should be as simple and as near to the immediate environment of the student as possible.

c) The third stage includes the fourth and fifth years of the course, that is, the second and third intermediate grades.

Although oral work and the study of English structure continue to occupy prominent places in the course, reading and writing begin to be emphasized.

Clear distinctions must be made here between the language materials prepared for productive use and the language materials prepared for recognition. The language text-book should be concerned chiefly with materials to be thoroughly assimilated and utilized in oral and written self-expression. Some kind of easy supplementary readers should be selected for the introduction of the language materials intended for recognition.

d) The fourth and last stage includes the last two years of the course, namely, the fourth and fifth grades of the preparatory school.
Self-expression, both written and oral, is stressed here. The study of "real" and unsimplified specimens of modern English writing should be introduced. The language materials, and especially vocabulary, should be selected according to the different fields of interest and specialization of the students.

B—Recommendations Concerning Vocabulary Selection.

Some of the important recommendations that can be made for vocabulary selection have been alluded to or discussed in chapters III and V. Here, we shall concentrate in our recommendations on the aspects of vocabulary selection that are peculiar to the situation in Iraq, that is, taking into consideration the native language factor and the educational status of the country.

1—Vocabulary for the first year of the English course.

Three types of vocabulary items should be selected for this stage:

a) Vocabulary related to the mastery of the sound system of English. The first group of words to be selected should be as devoid of pronunciation problems as possible. For example, words like bus, buzz, quick, and queen are composed of phonemes shared by English and Iraqi Arabic. They, therefore, should come first. Later, words that involve "small" pronunciation problems should be introduced. For example, a word

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These words occur in the twenty-fifth lesson of the thirty-six introductory oral lessons. See Hakim and Miller, The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Introductory Oral Lessons and Teachers' Notes to Book One, p. 52.
like visit must be introduced before vision, because the first contains a single phoneme with which Iraqi learners of English are not familiar (i.e. /\ /) while the second contains two such phonemes, namely, /\ /, and /\ /.

b) Vocabulary related to the basic structure of English. Here, the most important structure words should be selected. Auxiliaries like shall, will, have, had, has; forms of be, may, must; can, could; get, keep and do; the most important preposition - adverbs\footnote{See chapter II, p. 42.} at, by, for, from, into, of etc., the most important conjunctions like and, that, which, if, as and or; interrogative words like who, what, how; personal pronouns like I, me, he, she, it, we, you and they; and words like some and any should be included in the course.

c) Content words should be as few in number and as simple and easy to teach as possible.\footnote{See chapter III, p. 66.} However, the proportion of content words should not exceed 60\% of the total number of vocabulary items introduced during the year.\footnote{This proportion is recommended on the grounds that the basic structures of the language can be operated with a relatively small number of content words. For example, in a sentence like This is a book, three structure words are used with one content word only. The word book can also be used when structure words like I and have are taught in a sentence like I have a book. Introducing a fresh set of content words with every new group of structure words is not only unnecessary, but also troublesome.}
2- Vocabulary for the second and third years of the English course.

Vocabulary for this stage falls into the same categories as those of the previous stage.

a) Vocabulary for pronunciation should be drawn chiefly from those items that constitute pronunciation problems. For example, the phoneme /n/ constitutes a pronunciation problem for Iraqi students. Therefore, words like eating, bank, and thinking that represent different allaphones of this phoneme should be selected for pronunciation drills. Similarly, words that represent shift of stress like record, record; import and import should also be selected.

b) Words related to the basic structure should include all structure words that have not been introduced in the first stage.

c) Content words should be selected on the same bases adopted in the selection of content words in the first stage. The proportion of content words should not exceed 70% of the total number of words selected for this stage.

3- Vocabulary for the fourth and fifth years of the English course.

In addition to the three types of vocabulary selected for the two previous stages, a fourth type of vocabulary items is added here, namely, vocabulary for recognition or the vocabulary of the supplementary
readers. Range, frequency and utility of a word in general are the criteria that determine the selection of this kind of vocabulary items. Care must be taken that the number of items selected for recognition should not be too big. Introducing new words at the rate of one new word to every 100 familiar running words and then repeating the new word several times after that is an acceptable criterion.

4- Vocabulary for the last two years of the English course.

Vocabulary selection in this stage is determined by the field of experience of the students. For example, a book like Louis Pasteur is suitable for the Scientific Section, A Tale of Two Cities is suitable for the Literary Section and so on.

The purpose of selecting such books is not to teach students science or history, but (a) to provide vocabulary items that are going to be useful for students in their practical life or advanced studies, (b) to enable students to appreciate the work instead of wasting their time grappling with meanings of words, and (c) to enable them to assimilate the language patterns that the books contain.

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17 See Appendix D.

18 West's New Method Readers, which introduce new words at the rate of one new word to every 60 running words, tend to be vocabulary-centered. New words are introduced at the rate of four or five words per page.

19 See Appendix C. These books are mentioned here because they have been among the prescribed English books in Iraq. We are in favour of selecting more modern works than A Tale of Two Cities.
The teacher, here, gradually withdraws his help and trains students to be independent and to be able to use the dictionary and make out the meanings of passages for themselves.

C- Recommendations Concerning the Method of Vocabulary Teaching.

First of all, teaching vocabulary must be recognized as a twofold process. Distinction must be made between presenting vocabulary and practicing vocabulary.

Since we cannot anticipate the special situation that the teacher will find himself in when presenting a word, we cannot prescribe a technique of presentation to be applied in the teaching of every word. For example, in the teaching of the word room the technique of presentation to be adopted in an urban-area school differs from the technique to be adopted in a bedouin school, which consists of one tent, or a marsh-area school, which consists of two or three bamboo huts. In the urban-area school, the teacher can use the different rooms of the school as visual aids or he can use the room where he is teaching to explain the meaning of the word. In the bedouin and marsh-area schools, the teacher has to use the blackboard to draw a sketch of a room or to use a picture if possible.

Rigidity and prescription, here, are most harmful and impracticable. All we can do is to suggest methods and techniques of presentation and give the teacher complete freedom to utilize what is within his means.
to present words as effectively as he can.

In the practice techniques the teacher’s freedom is more limited. He must be acquainted with the purposes, principles and mechanism of such techniques. The teacher’s handbook or "Notes", as they are called in Iraq, should contain as many examples of how to practice words as possible.

For example, suppose that the teacher wants to drill his students in the use and meanings of the words comfortable, beautiful, wake (up) and woke (up) of Lesson twenty-two in Book Two. 20 The Teacher’s Notes should contain the following steps:

I Vocabulary items explained and practiced previously: 21

a) Personal pronouns: I, we, you, they.
b) The verb have.
c) The words: room, house, chair, school, villa.
d) The words: garden, house, flower, picture, book.
e) Word groups: every day, every morning, every Sunday, every Monday, every other day.
f) Word groups: at six O'clock, at eight O'clock, very late, very early.
g) The word yesterday and the word groups last Monday, last Friday, the other day.

II- Words explained and to be practiced:

a) comfortable, beautiful.
b) wake (up), woke (up).

20Hakim, et. al., The Oxford English Course for Western Asia: Teacher’s Notes to Book Two, p. 121.

21Words and word-groups mentioned here actually occur in lessons that precede Lesson Twenty-two.
III- a) comfortable

1- **Teacher**: We have a comfortable room.
   **Student A**: We have a comfortable room.
   **Teacher**: I
   **Student B**: I have a comfortable room.

This can be continued until all words of list I a are used.

2- **Teacher**: They have a comfortable house.
   **Student A**: They have a comfortable house.
   **Teacher**: chair.
   **Student B**: They have a comfortable chair.

This can be continued until all words of List I c are used.

b) Beautiful

1- **Teacher**: We have a beautiful picture.
   **Student A**: We have a beautiful picture.
   **Teacher**: You
   **Student B**: You have a beautiful picture.

This can be continued until all words of list I d are used.

IV- In case the teacher wants to test the students' understanding of what they are saying, he can use the following technique:
Teacher: We have a comfortable room.
Student A: We have a comfortable room.
Teacher: picture.
Student B: We have a beautiful picture.

V- a) *wake (up)*

1- Teacher: I wake up at six O'clock every day.
   Student A: I wake up at six O'clock every day.
   Teacher: At eight O'clock.
   Student B: I wake up at eight O'clock every day.

   This can be continued until all word groups of list If are used.

2- Teacher: They wake up at nine O'clock every day.
   Student A: They wake up at nine O'clock every day.
   Teacher: every morning.
   Student B: They wake up at nine O'clock every morning.

   This can be continued until all word groups of list Ie are used.

b) *woke up*

   Teacher: We woke up very early yesterday.
   Student A: We woke up very early yesterday.
   Teacher: last Monday.
   Student B: We woke up very early last Monday.

   This can be continued until all items of list Ig are used.

VI- The students' comprehension of the meanings of *wake up* and *woke up* can be tested thus:
Teacher: I wake up at five O'clock every day.
Student A: I wake up at five O'clock every day.
Teacher: yesterday.
Student B: I woke up at five O'clock yesterday.

The native language factor is often a source of difficulty in learning vocabulary. Students tend to equate (unconsciously perhaps) English meanings with Arabic meanings. Because the lexical structures of the two languages are different, students often make mistakes. For example, Iraqi students often confuse the word **quality** with the word **adjective**, because the Arabic word /سِلَف/ (سلف) almost covers both meanings. Similarly, the two English words **even** and **until** are often confused, because the word /هَتتَ/ (هتت) also covers both meanings. Students in Iraq often make sentences like: He waited even six O'clock or They all went until Ali.

Such problems can be tackled by teaching the two words, say **even** and **until**, in context as separate lexical units. When the students assimilate the meanings and use of both words, an exercise aiming at making the production of the two items automatic must follow.

Such exercise can be done by choosing a pattern in which both vocabulary items can be used. For example, in the teaching of **even** and **until** we can use the following two sentences:

---

22 For a similar technique see Anthony, "The Importance of the Native Language in Teaching Vocabulary," p. 110.
Everybody worked until noon.
Everybody worked, even the lazy Ali.

The teacher can make the students repeat the first sentence with the word noon being replaced by expressions like midnight, six O'clock, and ten O'clock. The exercise can be carried out thus:
Teacher: Everybody worked until noon.
Student A: Everybody worked until noon.
Teacher: Six O'clock.
Student B: Everybody worked until six O'clock.

In a similar way the teacher, then, introduces the second sentence substituting Ali with Hassan, Zeki, boy, and girl. The exercise can continue until the teacher feels that students are able to use the word even automatically. Then, the teacher can mix the two words in an exercise like the following:
Teacher: Everybody worked until noon.
Student A: Everybody worked until noon.
Teacher: Ali.
Student B: Everybody worked, even Ali.

When the teacher feels that the students have reached a high degree of proficiency in the automatic production of the two words, he can widen the scope of substitution in the following manner:
Teacher: even.
Students: Everybody worked, even Ali.
Teacher: until.
Students: Everybody worked until six O'clock.
Teacher: noon.

Students: Everybody worked until noon.

Teacher: John.

Students: Everybody worked, even John.

Care must be taken that such techniques should not occupy the whole lesson period. Confining the class activities to individual and unison drills would result in boredom on the part of students and exhaustion on the part of the teacher. Besides, students have a limited capacity to concentrate on one theme and to assimilate material presented in one technique. There should be variety of activities for the sake of renewing the students' interest in the lesson. The Iraqi approach, in dividing the lesson period into four parts, is excellent in this respect.

D- Recommendations Concerning Vocabulary Testing.

Some of the recommendations concerning objective vocabulary tests and the testing of passive vocabulary have been discussed in chapters III and V.23 Here, a few remarks on objective tests will, therefore, suffice. Emphasis will be laid chiefly on the testing of active vocabulary.

1- Objective tests. Concerning the General Ministerial Examinations, we recommend less emphasis on objective vocabulary tests and more emphasis on testing vocabulary through oral and written self-expression. Instead

of devoting one third of the examination paper to the testing of passive vocabulary\textsuperscript{24} through objective questions, we recommend the reduction of this proportion to one sixth, that is, one question out of six should be devoted to testing passive vocabulary.

Too much emphasis on isolated words and their meanings would drive students to regard the mastery of the "meanings" of words as the chief end of the course. As a practical translation of this feeling, students would concentrate on memorizing meanings and synonyms of lists of words to the neglect of the actual use of these words in speaking and writing.

As we have stated in chapters III and V, objective tests should not be vague and aimless. Asking students to use words in sentences without insisting on having these sentences indicate the meanings of words, or asking students to define words, often does not reveal any linguistic ability. Perhaps the best kinds of objective tests are the ones that require the placement of words in contexts supplied by the examiner. The following is an example: Fill in the blanks with words selected from the following list:

through, above, by, at, below, in, on, past, to,

1- We went ... their home ... car.
2- We left Rome ... half ... six ... the morning.
3- Our plane was going ... the clouds.
4- There were clouds ... us and ... us.

\textsuperscript{24}See Appendix A.
5- The children were glad to be ... the ground

2- **Testing active vocabulary.**

Before devising vocabulary tests we must decide what aspect or aspects of the vocabulary learning burden we are going to test. Written composition tests are capable of testing vocabulary, spelling, some elements of inflection, the students' general comprehension of the meaning of words and their ability to use words in meaningful contexts. Oral tests are the only effective tools of testing word pronunciation. They can also be utilized to test reading and vocabulary comprehension.

Written compositions alone do not constitute reliable tests of the students' active vocabulary.\footnote{See chapter III, \p. 91.} In addition to that, written compositions do not indicate the students' ability to pronounce words correctly.

To test active vocabulary more effectively, both oral and written examinations should be utilized. The Iraqi General Ministerial Examinations in being confined to written tests are defective. In addition to the written paper we recommend an oral test of pronunciation and reading.

a) **Testing vocabulary in written composition.**

In the classroom, the teacher can utilize certain techniques partly to test vocabulary and partly to teach composition. In the early stages of the beginning of the third year of the English course.\footnote{With the beginning of the third year of the English course.}
composition teaching a short paragraph with some words missing can be given to students to fill in the blanks with suitable words. Later, a familiar and an easy topic can be chosen and discussed in class. The vocabulary related to the topic should be explained and written on the board. Then, the students are asked to write short compositions on the subject using the words that have been explained. Large pictures representing everyday activities can be posted in prominent places in the classroom and discussed. Then, students are asked to describe the picture. This would lead to the use of the words, which the pictures represent, in context.

In all cases, the length of the composition test should be decided beforehand by the teacher. He must set limits for the maximum and minimum number of words (e.g. 100-150) that the composition should include. After correcting the composition test, the teacher must hand the answers back to the students as soon as he can.27 He must also discuss the students' answers and he must point out their errors and their points of excellence. In marking mistakes, a clear indication must be made to the exact word or words where the mistake occurs. Whenever possible, the correction of the mistake must be written clearly either in the margin or above the word itself.

In the General Ministerial Examinations, topics should not be vague and general. They should be selected from specific areas of students' experiences and preferably from among topics that have been studied and discussed during the school year.

27 Preferably the next day.
One of the problems that teachers are facing is the problem of grading composition tests. Often, the teacher's attitude towards a written essay is influenced by the first sentence or the last sentence of that essay. The grade he gives reflects his personal view of the written composition.

Complete objectivity in grading composition is impossible, but the following scheme, when utilized, may help in making the teacher's grade more objective.

1- The examiner should determine the length of the composition by stating the maximum and minimum number of words.

2- Students must count the words used in their compositions and they should write the number of words at the bottom of the last page of the composition.

3- The teacher should read the composition twice. The first reading is for the purpose of evaluating the whole work. The teacher must look for coherence, unity, directness and conformity with the title. 50% of the final grade is determined by this reading.

4- In the second reading, which determines the other half of the final grade, the teacher marks every individual mistake (e.g. spelling, punctuation, misuse, wrong inflection, etc.) If the composition is meant to be returned to students, corrections should be clearly written somewhere near the mistakes. In examinations which are not intended to be given back to students, clear signs (e.g. underlining) must be made to indicate errors.
5- The teacher, then, counts the number of errors occurring in the whole composition.

6- The grade for the second reading is determined by the following equation:

\[
\frac{\text{number of errors} \times 100}{\text{number of words}} = n
\]

\[100 - n = \text{the grade for the second reading.}\]

Sometimes, in advanced or semi-advanced stages the equation can be multiplied by 2 or 1\(\frac{1}{2}\). For example, in the advanced stages of the course the grade is determined thus:

\[
\frac{\text{number of errors} \times 100}{\text{number of words}} \times 2 = 2n
\]

\[100 - 2n = \text{the grade for the second reading.}\]

Suppose that a student in the fourth grade of the Preparatory Stage has written a composition of 162 words, and that the number of errors has been found to be 50. His grade is determined as follows:

\[
\frac{50 \times 100}{162} \times 2 = 62
\]

\[100 - 62 = 38. \text{ The grade for the second reading.}\]

Suppose that the students' grade for the general evaluation of the composition is 26, the final grade is determined thus:

\[
\frac{26 + 38}{2} = 32/100. \text{ The final grade.}\]
This scheme may look intricate, but when constantly used it becomes very quick and automatic.  

b) Testing vocabulary through oral examinations.

Oral examinations are capable of testing reading, comprehension and pronunciation. Since written compositions are also capable of testing the students' comprehension of vocabulary, we recommend that oral tests should be chiefly devoted to testing pronunciation. But reading and pronunciation usually go hand in hand, so that the best way to test a student's pronunciation of words is by making him read a short passage especially selected or designed for this purpose.

The reading passage used in oral tests must contain words that represent a certain "amount" of the pronunciation learning burden of words. A definite scale for "weighing" this learning burden should be developed. For example, suppose that the following passage is selected for an oral test:

At about six O'clock in the morning, Tom woke up, washed his face and put on his clothes. Since the weather was extremely nice, he decided to take a walk first. On his way back, he met a very tall man. "I think, he's looking for someone in our street," said Tom to himself. The man looked at Tom and said, "Do you know where Mr. Smith lives, son?" "Oh! That's his house, Sir," answered Tom pointing to Mr. Smith's villa.

---

28 The author utilized this scheme during the time he spent in teaching English in Iraqi secondary schools.
The pronunciation learning burden of this passage can be weighed in different ways according to the purpose of the examination. Different scales can be developed according to the linguistic aspects that the examiner is interested in testing. But care must be taken that all aspects cannot be tested at once. Concentration must be made on one aspect at a time.

In testing vocabulary, we are usually interested in the pronunciation of individual words and their components, namely, segmental phonemes and stress. But even in testing the pronunciation of segmental phonemes and stress, the examiner cannot test how they are pronounced in every word. The best way is to concentrate on the pronunciation of words that constitute the most difficult pronunciation problems, namely, those words that involve some difference between English and Iraqi Arabic. 29

In this way, the pronunciation learning burden that this passage involves for Iraqi learners of English is shown in Table 15.

29 In oral tests we agree with Lado in stressing the native language factor, but in written composition we believe that this criterion is impracticable.
### TABLE 15

**THE PRONUNCIATION LEARNING BURDEN OF A READING PASSAGE DECIDED IN TERMS OF THE NATIVE LANGUAGE FACTOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Learning Burden Items</th>
<th>Grades $^{30}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about</td>
<td>placement of stress</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six</td>
<td>2-element consonant cluster</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’clock</td>
<td>placement of stress</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morning</td>
<td>/ə/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woke</td>
<td>/o/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothes</td>
<td>/o/ and 2-element consonant cluster</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weather</td>
<td>/ʌ/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extremely</td>
<td>4-element consonant cluster and placement of stress</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nice</td>
<td>/ʌl/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decided</td>
<td>/ʌl/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first</td>
<td>3-element consonant cluster</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>back</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>met</td>
<td>/ə/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very</td>
<td>/ʌ/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>/æ/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think</td>
<td>/ʊ/</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looking</td>
<td>/ʊ/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone</td>
<td>placement of stress</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^{30}$ The pronunciation learning burden in this passage is weighed according to the following scale:

1- Two-element consonant clusters that are often difficult to pronounce by Iraqi students are given 1 grade each.

2- Placement of stress, individual "difficult" segmental phonemes are given 2 grades each.

3- Three-element consonant clusters and four-element consonant clusters are given 3 and 4 grades respectively.

4- Three-element and four-element medial consonant clusters are given 3 grades each.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>our street</td>
<td>4-element medial consonant cluster</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself</td>
<td>placement of stress</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>/ 0 /</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr.</td>
<td>placement of stress</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oh</td>
<td>/ 0 /</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Smith's</td>
<td>3-element medial consonant cluster</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered</td>
<td>placement of stress</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pointing</td>
<td>/ŋ/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>villa</td>
<td>/ə/ and placement of stress</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**  
75

For the purpose of grading, the student must read the passage twice. After the first reading, the examiner gives the student a grade for matters of intonation and rhythm. In the second reading, the examiner must have a sheet of paper on which a list of the "difficult" words and the grades for every individual word are printed. As the student reads the examiner puts some kind of mark near every individual word printed in the list, indicating that the students' pronunciation of the word is right or wrong. After that the grades of the correctly pronounced words are counted and so we get the grade for the second reading.

31 In a word like morning, which involves the troublesome phoneme /ŋ/ and the problem of placing the maximum stress, the examiner can make a sign like (  ) indicating that both the phoneme /ŋ/ and the placement of stress are pronounced correctly. He can give the mark (  ) indicating that only one of them is pronounced correctly.
We recommend 25% of the final grade to be decided by the first reading. For the General Ministerial Examination a number of such passages should be prepared, but the pronunciation learning burden should be carefully "weighed." The learning burden of the passage can also be varied according to the different stages of learning the language.

Every examination center must be supplied with a number of such printed sheets that exceeds the number of examinees of that center. This enables the examiner or examiners to assign a sheet for every student.

Tape-recorders, though expensive, can be very helpful in such a test. In case they are used, students' readings of one passage or of a number of similar passages can be recorded in the examination centers and then the tapes are sent to the marking centers exactly as the written answers are sent.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
SPECIMEN ENGLISH PAPERS OF
THE GENERAL MINISTERIAL EXAMINATIONS
1- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS
MAY 1960
------------------------------------------ TIME: 2½ Hours.

ANSWER FOUR QUESTIONS.

1. Read this and answer the questions.
   It is night now. Yousif is sleeping in his bed.
   The window is open but the door is shut. The room is not dark. The moon is shining through the window. Yousif's clothes are on the chair and his shoes are on the floor.
   1. Where is Yousif sleeping?
   2. Is the door open or shut?
   3. What is shining through the window?
   4. Are Yousif's clothes on the chair?
   5. His shoes are on the floor, aren't they?

2. Make questions for these answers:
   1. There are seven days in a week. (How many...?)
   2. The cat is sleeping under the table. (Where .......?)
   3. A butcher sells meat. (What ...... ?)
   4. The moon and the stars shine during the night. (When ... ?)
   5. Zeki posted the letter yesterday. (Who........?)

3. Copy these sentences and fill the spaces with these words:
   buy, are, without, age, so, much, on, saw, in, for.
   1. There is ---- water ---- the glass.
   2. The girls went --- a walk --- Friday.
   3. Dogs --- animals. --- are cats.
   4. We cannot --- things --- money.
   5. I --- my teacher two days ----.
4. Add tails — questions:
   1. This glass is nearly empty, ......?
   2. Layla has not a bicycle, ........?
   3. Zeki and Yousif are learning English, ...?
   4. The teacher comes to school early, ......?
   5. The train was going fast, ......?

5. Fill in the spaces:
   1. first, second, ----, fourth, ----, sixth.
   2. boy, boys; man, ----; knife, ----.
   3. up, down; large, ----; next, ----.
   4. drink, drinks; go, ----; have, ----.
   5. Friday, ------, Sunday, ------, Tuesday.

6. Answer these questions:
   1. Is milk white or black?
   2. What are books made of?
   3. How many legs has a dog?
   4. Can you draw a map?
   5. Where did the children go in their holidays?

2- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS.

TIME: 3 Hours.

ANSWER FOUR QUESTIONS ONLY.

1. Read this passage and then answer the questions that follow:

   We came out of school at five o'clock. A long line of horses was coming down the road with soldiers guarding them. The horses were carrying goods. We all ran to the gate to see the horses and the soldiers pass. While we were crowding and pushing at the gate one of the boys, named Robin Snel, hit me in the stomach. I was angry and hit him on the face. Just then a man with horses came round the corner. The man was, John Fry, he was our servant. I went forward and spoke
to him. "Why have you come at this time John?" I asked
"School does not end until next month."

1. What were the horses carrying?
2. Why did the boys run to the gate?
3. What did Robin Snel do?
4. When does school end?

2. Use only FIVE of these in sentences:-
   So that, happier, brave, until, possible, correctly, ripen, spend, transport, reference, ambition, numerous.

3. a. Give the nouns for only FIVE of these:-
   absent, strong, blind, dangerous, difficult, amuse, appear, attempt, improve, practise.

   b. Write questions for these answers:-
   1. This road is ten miles long.
   2. The price of this book is six pounds.
   3. The thief had stolen my money.
   4. It always rains in winter.
   5. Zeki came to school late because he was ill.

4. a. Change these sentences into passive voice:-
   1. God helps us in everything.
   2. That man saved the little boy from the fire.
   3. We must do everything good for our friends.

   b. Complete the following sentences:-
   1. If you work hard, ...........
   2. If the man knew how to drive, ........

5. Answer the following questions:-
   1. What was the first balloon filled with?
   2. How can we get information when we have no teacher?
   3. How was oil brought to Baghdad for the first time?
   4. How much pocket-money do you get every week?
   5. Was Jim's Hawkins's father a sailor or an innkeeper?
6. Write a composition about (30) words on ONE of these:-
1. Shylock (The Merchant of Venice)
2. Learning a foreign language.

3- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION.
EXAMINATION IN ENGLISH FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.
SEPT. 1960

TIME: 3 Hours.

ANSWER FOUR QUESTIONS ONLY.

1. a. Here are three words. Make a noun from each, and use each noun in a sentence which shows its meaning clearly:—
   succeed; land; die.
   (9 marks)

   b. Use four of the following in sentences of your own:—
      in time; at once; politely; take off; besides; broken.
      (8 marks)

   c. Give the meaning of four of the following words or phrases:—
      in the end; rescue; miserable; a lot of; by accident; unnoticed; made up his mind; at first sight.
      (8 marks)

2. a. Put into indirect speech:—
   1. He said, "We are very hungry. What can you give us to eat?"
   2. The pupil said to the teacher, "Please allow me to leave the room."
   (9 marks)

   b. Complete four of the following with a suitable clause:—
      1. However hard he works........
2. When the school opens........
3. He ended his speech while......
4. They are so clever........
5. Less than an hour ago........
6. Unless a letter comes to day....... (9 marks)

c. Fill in the blanks in these sentences with words chosen from this list:-(What, who, whom, when, that, where)
1. The man to ---- I spoke could not hear well.
2. All ---- I have I owe to my father.
3. I can not understand ---- you say.
4. I am not sure ---- their train arrives. (8 marks)

3. Here is a passage taken from "Round the World In Eighty Days."
Read it carefully and answer the questions on it very briefly:--
A few moments after Fix had left the drinking-hall two Chinese saw Passepartout sleeping on the floor. They lifted him up and laid him on the bed among the other sleeping men. But three hours later, remembering even in his dreams that there was a duty that he had left undone, the poor fellow woke up and fought against his sleepiness and the poison of the drink in his blood. He got up. Half walking and half crawling, holding himself up by keeping close to the walls, he managed to find his way into the street.

a. How did it happen that Passepartout went to the drinking-hall?
b. Why was he found sleeping on the floor?
c. What was the duty that Passepartout had left undone?
d. Who gave him too much wine to drink? Why?
e. Where was Passepartout trying to go?

(25 marks)

4. Write about (100) words on one of the following:
   a. The different means of travelling used by phileas Fogg in his journey round the world.
   b. Describe two of the attempts made by Fix to prevent phileas Fogg from continuing his journey.

(25 marks)

"The Stories of Shakespeare's Plays"

5. Write a composition of about (100) words on one of the following:
   a. Describe the accidents which led to the death of Romeo and Juliet.
   b. Explain how the four lovers in the story, "A Midsummer Night's Dream", were brought together in the wood.
   c. The love story between Orlando and Rosalind. (As you like it)
   d. Describe how Sebastian married Olivia, and Orsino married Viola. (Twelfth Night).

(25 marks)

6. Read this and answer the questions below:

   The School was closed for the holiday, and the children could not find enough to do. At least, we rented a house in the mountains for two weeks. We decided to take the children, and said we would spend our time swimming, walking, and enjoying the air of the mountains.
It was a very clean house, standing in a beautiful garden. We stood in the garden for half an hour before unpacking our things from the car, enjoying the peace and coolness and watching the sunset. Then we went in to turn on the light—but there was no electricity! we found several oil lamps—but we had no oil! At last I went down the road to the little village store and bought some candles. When I go back I found out that there was no water. I took a candle and followed a pipe out of the house. It led to a pump and well. I pumped for a quarter of an hour, and so got very cold water. My wife and I did not even wash. We do not like cold water.

1. What did the writer and his family plan to do in their holiday?

2. What did they do before they unpacked their things from the car?

3. Why had they to use candles?

4. How did they get water at last?

5. Why did the writer and his wife not wash on their first night in the mountains?
APPENDIX B
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ENGLISH INSPECTORATE
THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN IRAQ:
AIMS AND METHODS

1. GENERAL AIM

The ultimate aim of the English Course is to train students:
(a) to understand English spoken at normal conversational
speed on non-technical subject within a limited vocabulary
(See 3.3);
(b) to speak English at a reasonable speed, correctly and
clearly enough to be understood by other speakers of English,
and without gross errors (See 7.1);
(c) to read and understand with ease a text within their
vocabulary; and to read more difficult texts with the help
of a Dictionary (See 5.3);
(d) to write plain narratives, descriptions and letters
in simple, correct English (See 10.2).

2. THE ENGLISH COURSE

2.1 The English Course begins in the Fifth Primary Class.
It is necessarily a continuous Course of seven years until the
end of the Fifth Secondary Class. It is most desirable that
each Class should have at least one English lesson every day,
so as to ensure frequency and continuity of practice.

2.2 Fifth and Sixth Primary Classes. In the Primary school,
the oral foundations of the language are laid. Great care should
be given to good pronunciation, correct spelling and neat, clear
handwriting.

2.3 Intermediate Classes. In the Intermediate school, the
emphasis gradually moves from oral work to reading for understanding
and written expression. New material, however, must still be
introduced orally, and practice in speaking English must play a
large part throughout. The transition is made from script to a
cursive handwriting. (See 10.3).
2.4 Secondary Classes. In the Secondary school:
(a) there should be a systematic study of the basic structure of English;
(b) students must be trained to depend more on their own efforts, and less on the teacher. They must read for themselves, and attempt to understand unsimplified texts. They must be able to use a Dictionary.

3. METHOD IN GENERAL

3.1 A modified Direct Method is used. That is, the native language is used as little as possible and every effort is made to establish direct association between objects and concepts on the one hand and their expression in English on the other. (See 6).

3.2 The sentence-patterns and structures of English and a carefully selected vocabulary are taught progressively according to a systematic scheme. This scheme is provided by the textbooks. The vocabulary and patterns in the textbook for each year must be thoroughly taught, but not exceeded.

3.3 Much more attention should be given to the correct construction of sentences, and especially to the correct use of the verb Tenses, than to the mere meanings of separate words. The structure of the language is more important than its vocabulary. (See 5).

4. GRAMMAR

4.1 English is a language of usage or habits more than of rules. For example, the supposed "rule" that in English a preposition governs a noun or pronoun in the Accusative (or Objective) Case, and that a preposition must not end a sentence, does not apply to spoken English nor to informal
written English. "Who did you give that book to?" is
good everyday English. This is not the only example.
Therefore, to teach grammar rules in the early stages is
not only valueless, but is a hindrance to fluency.

4.2 Instead of copying and learning grammar rules,
students should have plenty of practice in using the dif-
ferent sentence-patterns which make up written and spoken
English, especially the verb Tenses. They should practice
these patterns in many different situations, some real,
some artificially created by the teacher. In this way
they should acquire correct language habits. The sentence-
patterns are set out in the second book recommended under
AIDS TO TEACHERS (14.3). The Oxford English Course for Iraq
is based on a progressive scheme for teaching these patterns.
Ample practice is provided, and detailed suggestions for
presentation are given in the Teacher's Notes to each Book
of the Course. All the English language given in the Teacher's
Notes must be taught by the methods suggested, and all the
Exercises must be worked by the students. (See lo. 1).

4.3 The study of structural grammar is valuable at
the end of the Course, when the students have learnt examples
of the chief patterns and are able to speak and write English
with some fluency.

5. VOCABULARY

5.1 It is easy to teach and to learn one "meaning"
for each new word; but this does not lead to real understanding
of the language, nor to ability to use it correctly. Because
it is easy, there is a danger that too much time and effort
is given to vocabulary work, instead of to pattern and Tense
drills. The attempt to give one so-called "synonym" for
each word is futile, for there are few true synonyms in English, and few of these are fully interchangeable. For example, wish and want, stop and cease, opposite and contrary are pairs of words of similar meaning, but one of the pair cannot usually be used in place of the other. Many of the "synonyms" given to students are positively incorrect. For example, damp does not mean wet, too does not mean very.

5.2 To give equivalents of English words in Arabic is even worse. It encourages mental translation (which takes place to some extent anyway) and fails to establish the direct association between the concept and the English word. Moreover, the habits of the two languages are so different that translation in the early stages inevitably leads to errors.

5.3 The purpose of vocabulary study should be ultimately to make students independent of their teachers. To this end, they must be trained (a) to guess the meanings of new words from the words they know and the general sense of the passage, and (b) to use an English-English Dictionary. From the Third Intermediate Class the English-Reader's Dictionary is a prescribed book. Lessons must be given on how to use it, and the students must practice using it under the teacher's supervision.

6. THE USE OF ARABIC

6.1 Students must not speak or write Arabic during an English lesson. (See 5.2).

6.2 Teachers may use Arabic (or the language of the students):

(a) for the explanation of grammatical difficulties;
(b) to make clear what the students have to do in an exercise;
(c) occasionally, to explain the meaning of an English word, when it would be impossible, or very clumsy, to explain it by any other means. The occasions when Arabic may be used are clearly stated in the Teacher's Notes.

6.3 The frequent use of Arabic in teaching English, and especially translating the reading texts into Arabic, or giving Arabic summaries of them, not only does not help the students to learn English, but actually hinders them from doing so.

6.4 Arabic "Companions", and "Companions" of all kinds are forbidden.

7. PRONUNCIATION

7.1 The aim is to teach a clear speech, based on Standard English as spoken by educated Englishmen. It should be correct enough to be understood by other speakers of English, and free from gross errors. In particular, errors of pronunciation which cause misunderstanding, or lead to mistakes in grammar or spelling, must be eliminated. For example, the differences in pronunciation between such pairs of words as the following should be clear: hit and heat, walk and work, can and can't, there and they're. Omission of consonants when their sounding is required, especially the consonant "t" in words like water and twenty, must be avoided. The correct values of the English "r" must be taught.

7.2 Pronunciation is best taught by (a) pronunciation drill for a few minutes at the beginning of each lesson; (b) correction of individual errors. Reading aloud by students is a means of testing pronunciation, not of teaching it, and much reading aloud is a waste of time. Some reading aloud by teacher and students, however, may be useful in teaching rhythm and intonation; but it should not occupy much time in
any lesson. When teachers read aloud, they should do so naturally, without exaggeration. Very slow reading, with distorted pronunciation, is bad and does not help comprehension.

8. LESSON PLANNING AND PREPARATIONS

8.1 The Teacher's Notes to the Oxford Course set out clearly the English to be taught in each year; the pupils' Book for the year provides the necessary practice in speaking, reading and writing. It is the responsibility of the teacher to decide how much material is to be covered in each lesson period, each week, and each month, according to the teaching time available and the varying difficulty of the work to be done.

8.2 Each lesson must be carefully prepared, with reference to the Teacher's Notes, before the classroom is entered. Lessons should not all follow the same plan, nor should any lesson period usually be devoted to one activity only. (See 7. 2 and 9. 1).

9. TEACHING NEW MATERIAL

9.1 The amount of new material which a student can learn at one time is limited. A language is learnt by constant repetition and revision. Therefore only a part of any lesson period should be given to teaching new material. The rest of the lesson should be taken up by revision and practice.

9.2 In Primary and Intermediate Classes, new material must always be introduced orally before the reading-text is read. This does not apply, of course to the Supplementary Readers nor to certain easy reading-texts which are intended for silent reading and which contain little new material. The Teacher's Notes give guidance about these.
9.3 In Secondary Classes, students may frequently be required to attempt to make out the sense of passages for themselves, with the help of a Dictionary; but there will still be occasions when oral teaching by the teacher is required.

9.4 Question and Answer work should aim at giving practice in the use of sentence-patterns, not at teaching the subject-matter of the reading-texts. A few carefully worded questions will test comprehension. After that, the questions should lead away from the reading-texts, though based on the patterns and vocabulary which have to be learnt.

10. WRITTEN WORK

10.1 The exercises in the textbook should be done by the students, after the teacher has thoroughly taught the material upon which they are based. Often the exercises will be prepared orally in class. They should not be written on the blackboard and copied by the students. The object of written exercises is to give students independent practice. Only the answers, not the questions, should usually be spoken and written. If a large number of students make similar mistakes in working an exercise, the pattern must be taught again. The teacher will then write one or two examples of correct answers on the blackboard, but these should be cleaned off before the students repeat the exercise.

10.2 Composition. The exercises provide sufficient written work for the early stages. Free Composition should not be attempted in Intermediate Classes, unless towards the end of the year with good students. During the Second and Third Classes, students may be guided towards free composition by writing one sentence at a time in class under the teacher's supervision on simple, concrete themes within their experience. The emphasis must be on correctness of expression, not on subject-matter. In the Secondary Classes
Free Composition should be strictly limited in length, and writing should usually be preceded by oral discussion of the vocabulary and patterns to be used.

10.3 Attention should be paid to spelling and to neat, clear handwriting. It is the responsibility of the teachers of the First Intermediate Class to teach the students to make the change from script to a cursive hand, based on the letter shapes in the last of the Progressive Writing Books.

11. MARKING

11.1 Marking is an important duty of the teacher of English which must not be neglected. All written work done by students should be looked at by the teacher. Some of it should be marked thoroughly; some of it should be read through rapidly, and only important mistakes marked; but students should know that whatever they write will come under the teacher's eye. Whenever the teacher marks a mistake, the student should write a correction of it, as briefly as possible. Students should not be required to rewrite work which is correct. Time and effort should be directed towards productive work, not copying.

12. LEARNING BY HEART

12.1 Memory is of great importance in learning a language. But teachers must be careful that it is the language that their students learn by heart, not facts about the language, or about history, geography and so on. The following things must not be learned by heart:

(a) Grammatical rules.
(b) Definitions or synonyms.
(c) Summaries or character-sketches.
(d) Questions and answers about the reading-texts.
(e) "Model" compositions.

12.2 There are two kinds of memory work in learning a language: unconscious assimilation and conscious learning by heart. The more that a student learns by unconscious assimilation the better: it is the chief way in which he learns his own language. He memorises almost unconsciously by repeatedly hearing, saying and later reading the same patterns and words, in a meaningful context.

12.3 This must be supplemented, however, by conscious learning by heart. The student must make an effort to learn spelling and sentence-patterns. He may learn by heart sentences which contain examples of different sentence-patterns, as models for framing other sentences.

12.4 Many students enjoy learning poetry by heart, provided the pieces are interesting and not too long. This is also good for fixing patterns in the memory. Verse-speaking should be encouraged: it often leads naturally to learning of poetry.

13. OUT-OF-CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

13.1 It is not possible for students to reach the desired degree of fluency in the use of English, in seven years of classroom work alone. They must have other opportunities of practising spoken English. This is especially important when classes are large. They also need opportunities of writing English for some real purpose in which they are interested. Enterprising teachers will find many ways of bringing their students together, outside the classroom, to speak and sometimes to write English. Visits, picnics, parties, debates, lectures, talks by English visitors, are possible ways.
13.2 The English Society or Club. Many of these out-of-classroom activities may be arranged through an English Society or Club. It should be properly constituted, with the usual officers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer) and a Committee. Not only does such an organisation give many opportunities for speaking and writing English, but it also provides a practical demonstration of democratic management. For this reason the English teachers, while watching over it and giving all the help they can, should leave as much of the actual working of the Society as possible to the students.

13.3 The English Magazine. Every school where English is taught should have an English magazine. It might be in the form of a periodical to be distributed to the students, or of a wall sheet placed where all can read it. It will be of value only if it is truly the work of the students. The teachers should point out errors in the manuscripts submitted, and see that they are corrected before being published; but teachers should not write the magazine. Nor should articles or jokes be published which are merely copied from some book or periodical, unless the fact is plainly stated. Students should learn that it is not honest to pass off as their own work the work of someone else. Well-drawn illustrations are an advantage, but a high standard of writing and drawing should be insisted upon. Sometimes several schools might combine to produce a magazine.

13.4 The Acting of Plays in English. There is a value in the acting of plays as an aid to learning a language, provided that the plays are suitable, in difficulty and in subject-matter, to the age and ability of the students, and that as many students as possible take part in them. There is not much value in a few students acting a play which they
do not understand, in order to impress visitors. A great deal of valuable dramatisation goes on in the classroom of a good language teacher, without an invited audience. An annual performance in public of a good short play in English is an admirable thing, and every Secondary school at least should aim at doing it. But it can only be genuine if it is based on good dramatic work in the classroom during the year.

14. AIDS TO TEACHERS

14.1 The Teacher's Notes to each Book of the Oxford English Course. These are essential.

14.2 Notes for Teachers of English (Secondary) and Instructions to Teachers of English (Primary) issued by the English Inspectorate. Every teacher of English should have a complete set of either the Secondary or the Primary series. It is not enough for teachers to look at a school copy, or to share a copy with other teachers. Various parts of this Syllabus are dealt with in detail in these Notes and Instructions.
APPENDIX C
LIST OF PRESCRIBED BOOKS FOR ENGLISH, IRAQ, 1960.

I- The Primary Level

A- Fifth Year
2- Teacher's Notes to Book I.
3- Progressive Writing Books, Book I.
4- Progressive Writing Books, Book II.
5- Crosswords for Beginners I
6- Reading Cards for use in oral lessons (teacher).

B- Sixth Year
1- Oxford English Course for Iraq, Book II.
2- Teacher's Notes to Book II.
3- Progressive Writing Book, Book III.

II- The Intermediate Stage

A- First Year
1- Oxford English Course for Iraq, Book III.
2- Teacher's Notes to Book III.
3- Tom and Carl (Supplementary Reader).
4- Progressive Writing Book, Book IV.

B- Second Year
1- Oxford English Course for Iraq, Book IV.
2- Teacher's Notes to Book IV.
3- In Search of Aladdin's Lamp (Supplementary Reader).

C- Third Year
1- Oxford English Course for Iraq, Book V.
2- Teacher's Notes to Book V.
3- Emil and the Detectives (Supplementary Reader).
4- English Reader's Dictionary.

III- Preparatory Stage

A- Fourth Year
1- A Tale of Two Cities (simplified).
2- Tales Retold for Easy Reading - The Stories of Shakespeare's Plays, Vol. 1. (Supplementary Reader).
3- Grammar and Idiom (the first half).
4- English Reader's Dictionary.

B- Fifth Year

1- Round the World in Eighty Days. (Translated and abridged).
2- Tales Retold for Easy Reading - The Stories of Shakespeare's Plays, Vol. II. (Supplementary Reader).
3- Grammar and Idiom (The second half).
4- Bright and Nicholson's Precis Practice for Overseas Students.
5- English Reader's Dictionary.
APPENDIX D
DISCUSSION OF ENGLISH WORD LISTS

The assumption that the most important vocabulary items are those which are used commonly and frequently led to the establishment of word lists based on frequency counts. The frequency principle became fashionable not only in English, but also in several other languages, including Arabic.¹ But frequency counts have incurred severe criticism. Some writers have criticised the material from which the words were counted, while others pointed out the failure of frequency counts to meet environmental factors of the learners of the language. This led to the idea of establishing a minimum vocabulary, which can be extended or supplemented by words related to special branches of interest.

The idea of selecting common words for the use of the language learners goes back to the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, frequency counts were made for the sake of constructing word lists to help stenographers and the blind. Timothe Bright's 559 word list of the sixteenth century was a great step forward in the establishment of the technique of word-counting. Bright's contribution was the introduction of the technique of using a wide range of material to serve as a source for word counts.²


²Fries and Traver, English Word Lists, p. 5.
Thorndike, in his word list, *The Thorndike Word-Book of 10,000 words* (later expanded to 30,000 words), made a great contribution to the technique of word counting by introducing the range credit. He selected forty-one different sources to be used for counting the number of times the word occurs (i.e., frequency) and the number of sources in which the word is found (i.e., range).

In 1932 Faucett and Maki attempted the compilation of a combined word list with the aim of ascertaining objectivity in the value of a word. They used the two counts of Thorndike and Horn as source material. They took into consideration both frequency and range of words.

Before the second World War a number of lists appeared. Some of these lists were based on personal letters, some on school readers and some on students' compositions. The chief defect of those lists was their neglect of the meanings of the words they were counting. Two different meanings of one form are often as widely different from one another as two different words are. In 1934, Thorndike and Large started a new semantic count in which different meanings of words were taken as the unit to be counted.

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3 For a fuller discussion of the different principles and techniques of word-counting see: Lott, op. cit., pp. 3-12; West, General Service List of English Words; and West, Vocabulary Selection for Speech and Writing, pp. 41-45.


5 See: Lott, op. cit., p. 4. "Ernest Horn began with two lists of words used respectively in bankers' correspondence and in highly personal letters and ended with a compilation of the 10,000 words which he found most commonly used in somewhat more than five million running words of written English. As Horn's main aim was to help in the teaching of spelling, words of less than four letters and some very common words are not included."

6 Ibid., p. 6.
On the whole, word lists can be classified into: (a) objective word lists, which are based on frequency, or an both frequency and range grading, and (b) subjective word lists, which are based on what is believed to be necessary or basic. English word lists can also be classified according to the purpose for which a list is compiled. Some lists are intended for the determination of the reading vocabulary, while some are compiled to help in the teaching of spelling.

Out of this big number of English word lists, we shall concentrate in our discussion on those lists that are related to the teaching of English as a second language.

A—Ogden's Basic English.

In 1930, C.K. Ogden compiled his list of 850 words on purely logical and philosophical grounds. His chief aim was to establish an international language. The chief principles, which Ogden had laid down, for the selection of words are the following:

1—The elimination of verbs, because they are considered as "unessentials."

2—A systematic theory of definition. Root words that can be used in defining other words are selected. For example, the word dog can be used to define words like puppy, hutch, kennel, etc.

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3- Utilizing Bentham's "Theory of Fiction".8

The 850 words listed in Ogden's basic English are classified as follows:9

200 names of picturable objects,
400 general names,
50 qualities, and
100 words that can operate the other 750 words. They include 18 verbs, 82 prepositions and a number of pronouns, verbs, etc.

Basic English stirred the imagination of many language experts and was supported by some, but Basic English failed to fulfill the purpose for which it was established. The following are some of the reasons for its failure.

a) Basic English aims at simplifying the language, but such simplicity is exercised at the expense of structural directness. Confining one's vocabulary to 850 words only results in artificiality and inaccuracy of expression. One has to use intricate circumlocutions in order to express a very simple idea. For instance, instead of saying those who heard, one has to say those who gave ear to:10

b) The almost complete elimination of verbs results in dependence upon prepositions to express meanings. The mastery of the use of prepositions is one of the most difficult aspects of the English language.

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8See Chapter II, "Classes of Words". See also C.K. Ogden, Bentham's Theory of Fiction, (London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1932.)


10See Lott, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
c) The small number of words of Basic English gives a false picture of simplicity. The meanings of the 850 Basic words are about 12,425. This is a tremendous learning burden. The average number of meanings per Basic word is about 14.7.\textsuperscript{11}

Basic English may be considered a failure in establishing an international language, but for the purpose of teaching English as a foreign language it is very useful in determining what words are most worthy of selection, especially in the initial stages of the course.

B- Palmer's General List of 3000 Vocabulary Units.

It was partially based on the frequency lists of Thorndike, Horn and Dewey.\textsuperscript{12} Palmer believes that the frequency lists are valuable in deciding the first 500 words only, beyond that, they must be supplemented by words selected on empirical grounds or from the teacher's practical experience. For practical use in the classroom, Palmer believes that special lists with environmental words should be compiled.\textsuperscript{13}

The first 500 words of Palmer's list are chosen chiefly on objective frequency bases, but range is preferred to frequency. Words of high frequency, but narrow range are dropped and replaced by words of lower frequency but wider range.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11}Fries and Traver, \textit{English Word Lists}, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{12}See Lott, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7. G. Dewey has given frequency counts of about a thousand root words based upon a critical sampling of source material, which are claimed to be representative of modern written and spoken English usage.

\textsuperscript{13}Fries and Traver, \textit{English Word Lists}, pp. 56-58.
C. West's List of 2500 Words.

In his *New Method English for the Arab World*, West divides his 2500 words into six stages.\(^{15}\)

1. Stage One - Oral Introduction - about 100 words.
2. Stage Two - The Primer - to 500 words.
3. Stage Three - Classbook 1 - to 850 words.
4. Stage Four - Classbook 2 - to 1350 words.
5. Stage Five - Classbook 3 - to 2000 words.
6. Stage Six - Classbook 4 - to 2500 words.

West believes that after completing classbook 4, the student will be able to (a) read simplified versions of well-known novels written within the vocabulary of the series, and (b) to read some books whose vocabulary is not entirely within the series. This necessitates the use of West's *New Method Dictionary* and the students' ability to split up words into their component parts and to guess meanings.\(^{16}\)

West classifies words according to their importance into (a) essential words, (b) general words, (c) common environmental words, and (d) specific environmental words. The first 500 words in his list include essential words and common environmental words. The second 500 words include general words and common environmental words. Specific environmental words appear in the second thousand words of West's list. According to him, a vocabulary of 7000 words will enable the learner to read anything, and a vocabulary of 1779 words will enable the learner to express almost anything.\(^{17}\)


\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{17}\)Fries and Traver, *English Word Lists*, pp. 63-64.
D-The General Service List of English Words.

In 1934, under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation a conference for discussing vocabulary problems was held in New York. The conference was attended by thirteen eminent linguists and experts like Edward Lee Thorndike, Michael West, Lawrence Faucett, Harold Palmer, Edward Sapir and Janet Aiken. The outcome of the conference was the publication of the Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, which was re-issued under the title of A General Service List of English Words.18

The Report shows a selection of 2000 words considered as a basic list of vocabulary to be used in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

The following is a summary of the proceedings followed by the committee, which was formed by the conference:19

1- The idea of a vocabulary island is ruled out.

2- The idea of establishing a limited vocabulary as a nucleus from which the student can proceed to further knowledge of English is accepted.20

3- The "standardized Examination" standpoint is carefully considered. The committee ruled out the idea, prevalent among some teachers, of using tricky words.21

4- Words necessary for a simple, straightforward style in productive work are included. Words of relative value such as those used in expressing elementary feelings and emotional states are also included.

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18 London: Longmans, 1953.


20 Ibid., p. 9.

21 Ibid.
5- The committee accepted the criteria of selecting words that will ensure an adequate structural basis for any specialized use that may be required.²²

6- From the educational point of view the committee considered equally the somewhat conflicting points of view of those who want English in order to be able to know about the native speakers', lives, and those who need English, in order to be able to speak about their own lives.

7- The committee decided to list separately the words needed for the simplification of textbooks.

8- The structural bases for the establishment of English as a *Lingua Franca* are provided for.

9- The tourist and the traveller standpoint received little consideration.

Words are selected according to the following criteria.²³

1- Frequency.
   a) Stylistic words²⁴ should be included only if they are of reasonably high frequency.
   b) Within the first 1500 words a close correspondence between the judgement of the committee and the judgement of objective word counts is noted.

2- Structural value.

3- Universality or the geographical distribution of words.

4- Subject range.


²⁴Words that are more precise than the more common variant, or possessing a special emotive value.
a) Classroom words are listed separately.
b) Business words that are of value to the general public are included.
c) Words related to application for employment are included.
d) Words related to private letter-writing, common agricultural words, words related to mechanics, and words related to trades and professions are included.
e) Special consideration is given to words related to the customs of the Far East and the tropical areas.

5- Definition words. The following kinds of words are included:
   a) words of value for a pupil in expressing what he cannot state directly, 25
   b) words that are of value for a teacher in explanation of unknown words,
   c) words necessary for using a dictionary, and
   d) root words.

6- The elements of word-building are listed separately.

7- Style. The following kinds of words are included:
   a) words necessary for conversation,
   b) an adequate number of words of precision,
   c) synonyms of the highest frequency, and
   d) a reasonable number of words expressing emotions.

As an example of how words are listed and arranged in the General Service List, we shall take the word model. 26

MODEL 210e

1- (Solid representation)
   A model of the thing to be made.
   Working model.
   Clay model. 8%

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25Ibid., p. 17.

26For a fuller idea of how words are listed in the General Service List of English Words, see Michael West, Learning to Read a Foreign Language, pp. 53-54, or the Introduction to the General Service List itself.
2- (Design)
The latest model of Morris car. 32%

3- (Person or a thing to be imitated)
Let him be your model.
A model father.
Quite a model school. 42%

[Artists' model, 9%. Verb 9%]

The number (210e) means that the word would have been met approximately 210 times in five million words. The square brackets and the question mark show a suggestion that these meanings may perhaps be excluded from a teaching course, because they are infrequent and of doubtful value.

Conclusions. From this brief discussion of the chief English word lists the following conclusions are drawn. 27

1- Within the first 500 words almost all English word lists seem to agree. Beyond that word lists differ considerably.

2- One must not be deceived by the small number of words that some lists contain and especially the first 500 words. The more frequent a word, the heavier the learning burden it involves.

3- Word counts and word lists are basically theoretical studies. For a teacher of English or for a textbook writer, such studies are valuable only in the suggestions they offer. This is because teaching is a practical matter and it has to meet the different needs of the learners, their age levels and their different environments. No word list is applicable to all circumstances and to all types of learners.

27 For a critical evaluation of various English word lists see Fries and Traver, English Word Lists, pp. 87-93.
4- A word list, in order to be useful for practical purposes, must have the following characteristics:

a) It must contain only a limited number of the most useful words.

b) Only the useful meanings of words should be included in the list. Meanings should be clearly indicated in the list.

c) The list should contain more "things" words than "quality" words.

5- Classifying verbs as "operators" and excluding them from the first stages of learning English is, on the whole, a sound approach. Verbs contain a tremendous learning burden and their exclusion facilitates learning English. The 850 words of Basic English have 12,425 senses, while the first 350 words from Thorndike's word list have 21,120 senses. The great difference (i.e. 8,695 senses) in the learning burden is due to the many verbs included in Thorndike's list.\(^{28}\)

Two things should be remembered here. First, verbs should not be completely eliminated. The number of verbs selected should be sufficient enough to prevent circumlocutions and complete dependence upon prepositions and conjunctions to express relations. Secondly, the exclusion of verbs should be done only in the initial stages of the course.

6- Differentiating between recognition vocabulary and production vocabulary is a sound approach. Two word lists must be provided for the learners of English:

\(^{28}\)Ibid., pp. 89-90.
a) The first list must be prepared for the productive use of the language. Such a list need not be subjected to frequency or range considerations.

b) The second list must be intended for the receptive use of the language. Such a list has to be dominated by frequency principles.

7- English word-counts are not based on linguistic analysis. This is why they are deficient in many respects:

a) Their inclusion of "structure words" is unnecessary. Such words are so essential to the learner, that it is a waste of time and energy to include them in a word-count.

b) They are all marked with undue emphasis on written English. This resulted in the exclusion of so many basic words that English speakers use in their everyday life.29

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29 Ibid., p. 92.
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