

Al-Quds University
The Education Department

English Lexical Achievement Among the Tenth Grade
Students in the Government Schools of Hebron.

Master Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
of the Degree of Master of Education.

By
Nisrine Yaser Hasan Amro.

Supervised by
Dr. Hanna Yousef Tushyeh.

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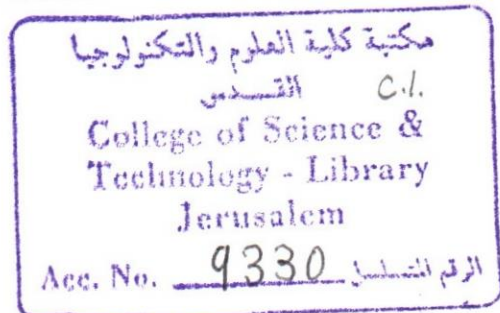
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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate the lexical achievement among the tenth grade students in the Government schools of Hebron. It also aims at investigating if there are any significant differences in the means of the students' achievement due to sex.

The population of the study consists of all the tenth grade students in the Government Schools of Hebron which belong to the Directorate of Education in Hebron. The number of the students (male and female) enrolled in the tenth grade at the end of the academic year (2000-2001) was (2311) .

The sample of this study is (274) students, (120) males and (154) females aged between 16-17 years. The (274) students form (11.8 %) of the whole population.

The study aims at answering the following questions:

- 1- Are the results of the test on word knowledge as a whole satisfactory or not?
- 2- What is the lexical achievement order on the five aspects (translation / synonyms / sentence completion / antonyms /

either. First comes the translation category, then antonyms, sentence completion, derivation and finally the last one is the synonyms.

- 3- There are statistical significant differences between male and female students in the general lexical achievement.
- 4- There is a statistically significant difference in the students' achievement level on each aspect of the five of the lexical knowledge due to sex.

In light of the results of the study , it is recommended that the Ministry of Education review the instructional approach of PETRA textbooks so that English teachers pay more attention to what to teach and how to teach. It is also recommended that teachers should emphasize lexis as much as grammar and the four language skills, focus on explicit vocabulary acquisition skills' improvement and adopt teaching methods and evaluation techniques that encourage students' vocabulary-learning techniques. Other researchers are urged to carry out similar studies on other classes and levels in other districts in Palestine.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

English is one of the most important languages of international communication. As, pupils should have effective access to its' teachers should develop the thinking of pupils through English. The pupils must be actively involved in the learning process and must be aware of the relevance of English to their needs and interests.

Foreign language teaching implies a totally different situation from that of teaching the first language. Unlike the latter, foreign language teaching and learning assume no previous knowledge or use of the language to be taught. Pupils starting to learn English in Arab countries, for example, have little or no knowledge of English when they are in their fifth year of schooling; some start English two years later. English is not the language they will be using outside school, certainly, not as extensively as Arabic, nor is it the medium of instruction in other subjects in the school curriculum. In other words, there is little, if any, immediate use of English out of school reinforcement. Motivation to learn the new language is not very high especially in the early stages. There is also the possibility of negative transfer from the first language, Arabic, which is learnt earlier at home, and later taught at school. So,

reinforcement, motivation and positive transfer have to be provided by the foreign language program together with the teacher.

The teacher of English has an important task within the classroom context. He needs, among other things, a wide theoretical background (e.g. knowledge of teaching methodology) and considerable skill along with reasonable linguistic competence. Teaching is both a science and an art. The teaching process is more than giving information . It is how to teach, how to design activities and how to involve pupils all the time in these activities. Empirical evidence has shown that pupils cannot communicate in English adequately because they are not given sufficient opportunity to express themselves meaningfully through speaking and writing.

To be proficient in English requires more than structural competence and good vocabulary . English language teaching in Arab countries generally concentrates far too much on structure, on functional grammar, on referential meaning. One of the most important characteristics of English is its use of implicature. To use the language effectively and to understand the real meaning of a message, we need to be far more aware of pragmatics . We need to learn how to choose a style that is appropriate to the situation. It is more difficult to learn these aspects of language because they overlap with the cultural background in

which the language is embedded. In this respect, English is particularly variable according to the variety you are speaking. British English in general is more indirect than the English spoken in the United States. Speakers of British English prefer indirect forms in order to fulfill a need for politeness, diplomacy or modesty.

The most common classroom procedures are for the teacher to ask questions for which he/she already knows the answers, and for the pupils to listen, repeat and respond without being able to create new utterances. Such mode of teaching-learning English does not help pupils develop communicative competence. The challenge confronting the EFL teacher becomes designing techniques and activities that encourage natural communicative practice. This is of particular significance in foreign language context simply because the classroom constitutes a setting for learning and practising the language. The EFL teacher should, therefore, carry out his task effectively in order to cultivate competence in his pupils.

Contrary to what is supposed to go on in the classroom, students spend most of their time hearing the language. They have either to respond to words or movements or repeat what the teacher says. For the students to acquire the speaking skill, they should be given the appropriate opportunity to practise the language in situations where they

are required to produce it , use the correct vocabulary, not just to mimic it.

The Palestinian Ministry of Education is doing its best to upgrade the English language teachers' proficiency, update English language curricula and learning programs in Palestine as well as to give validity to the English teaching process. PETRA (Practical English Through Relevant Activities) book series that is used in our government schools has a goal which is to enable the pupils to communicate effectively and to make them actively involved in the learning process through various techniques used by the teachers to suit the learners' needs as well as their interests. The General Examination tests the students ability to use the correct structure, correct vocabulary and to write pieces of composition. As a result of this, there is a continuous dissatisfaction from their teachers with their proficiency that is not in the appropriate level . This is also felt by the dissatisfaction with their performance in the General Examination that is held yearly by the Ministry of Education at the end of the Second Secondary Class.

Rivers (1968) says that students in a foreign language class will not learn to speak fluently merely by hearing speech, although this is important in familiarizing them with the acceptable forms of the code. The teacher will need to give the students many opportunities to practise

the speaking skill. He will need to use his imagination in devising situations which provoke the student to the use of the language in the expression of his own meaning, within the limits of what he has been learning.

Judd (1978) stresses that it is the lexical fluency by which people's ability is judged when communicating effectively in the specific social circumstances in which they need to function. That's why it is of great importance to evaluate the lexical achievement of our students after studying English for 6 years using the PETRA series so as to shed light on this neglected aspect of language competence.

The importance of learning vocabulary:

Vocabulary is of utmost importance to language learning .Without vocabulary, one cannot communicate with others whether in writing, speaking, listening or reading. Vocabulary provides learners with content of thoughts while grammar and phonology give the framework through which this content is conveyed. In addition, learners' inability to communicate through language as well as the difficulties they face may be ascribed to their deficiency of lexical input. This is why there is a general consensus among researchers on the crucial role of vocabulary in language learning.