Teaching Arabic Vocabulary in Cultural Context:

- The Elementary Level -

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문화적 맥락에서의 아랍어 어휘 교수:
- 초급 단계를 중심으로 -

최근 들어 외국어 교육 연구가들은 언어와 문화의 긴밀한 관계에 주목하고 보다 효율적인 외국어 교육을 수행하기 위해서 언어의 내 가지 기능인 듣기, 말하기, 읽기, 쓰기에 문화 기능을 추가해야 한다고 강조하고 있다. 외국어 학습의 필수적 요소인 어휘 역시 문화적 맥락 내에서 교수될 때 학습자들이 어휘의 진정한 의미와 사 용법을 이해하여 의사소통 맥락에 적합하게 활용할 수 있을 것이 다. 따라서 본 연구는 먼저 문헌 검토를 통해서 어휘와 문화의 긴 밀한 관계를 살펴보았다. 특히 초급단계의 학습자들에게 어휘 지식 이 매우 중요하다는 사실을 규명하였으며, 모국어 단어 대 목표 외 국어 단어라는 일대 일 대응의 알기 방식에서 탈피하여 사회-문화 적 맥락 내에서 어휘를 제시할 때 보다 효과적인 교육이 이루어질 수 있음을 확인하였다. 이러한 근거에 따라서 아랍어 초급단계 학 생들에게 필요한 어휘를 선택하기 위한 이론적 방안을 제시하였고 문화적 맥락 내에서 어휘를 교수할 수 있는 방법을 제안하였다.
[주제어: 아랍어 어휘 교육, 아랍 문화, 아랍어 교수법]

I. Introduction

Understanding foreign culture and learning vocabulary in the cultural context are two important elements of effective communication by means of a foreign language. Knowing a word involves a great deal more than being able to establish a one-to-one relationship between words and real-world objects (Lewis 1999, 119) or between words in the student’s native language and the target language.

It is not enough for students of foreign languages to learn the
meanings of a certain vocabulary. In addition, it would be better for them to know its usage, with which word it is used and with which word it is not used. This brings us to the need to teach vocabulary in the context. So, many foreign languages educators suggest that teaching vocabulary in the given cultural context contribute to enhancing the communicative competence of their students.

According to Carter (1998, 240), teaching words in discourse or context fosters the development of advanced skills of production and encourages appreciation of the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic functions of lexical items at all levels. In particular, skills of negotiating, meaning and marking attitudes can be extended if attention is given to lexical items in texts and discourse contexts. Too great a focus on learning vocabulary as individual decontextualized items may lead to neglect of these skills. Halverson (1985, 329) also says that by having vocabulary presented within its cultural context, students are able to glean a more accurate image of the conceptual field of the foreign word, which will allow them to communicate more effectively within the structure of the foreign culture.

This research aims to put forward some theoretical foundations for selecting Arabic vocabulary at beginners level and to make some suggestions to teach Arabic vocabulary in conjunction with cultural context, which would contribute to teaching Korean students Arabic effectively.

II. Vocabulary and Culture

2.1 Role of Vocabulary in Foreign Languages Teaching
Sim Bong-Sup(1997, 582) derives the importance of systematic vocabulary teaching from the following points. First, vocabularies are the basic tools for all kinds of language-related activities. Second, they have a good representation of traditional cultures. Third, they are the departure point for acquiring structures of foreign languages. Fourth, they trigger interests of learners. Last and fifth, they facilitate language learning on a bigger scale.

In spite of that, for many years foreign languages educators did not focus on teaching target languages' vocabulary while they made every effort to teaching pronunciation and grammar in the classrooms. This neglect has been in part due to a specialization in linguistic research on syntax and phonology which may have fostered a climate in which vocabulary was felt to be a less important element in learning a second language.(Carter 1998, 184)

To review the changing roles of vocabulary in Foreign Languages Teaching, the Grammar-Translation Method, whose goal is the reading of literature, viewed vocabulary as a tool for reading literary texts. Frequently vocabulary was assumed, either explicitly or more covertly, that students would pick up the necessary vocabulary by reading, and while concentrating on the serious business of mastering the grammatical system.(Lewis 1999, 117) Therefore, little importance was placed on vocabulary presentation or drill. Most textbooks merely provided a bilingual list of new words and phrases needed to decode the reading selection of a given lesson.

The Direct Method became popular throughout the early years of the 20th century.(Finocchiaro&Brumfit 1983, 5) This method insists on exclusive use of the target language in classroom instruction and assumes that students will learn vocabulary in context as an integral part of each lesson. Sequence of materials and vocabularies were not based on realistic spoken speech, and
some of the materials used in direct method classes have remained as classic examples of artificially constructed sentences. Typically, the class begins by teaching vocabulary that provides the framework for the particular unit being studied.

With the advent of structural linguistics and the audio-lingual methodology of the 1950s and the early 1960s, vocabulary building became subordinate to the learning of grammatical structures. Little importance was placed on using vocabulary, except as an incidental vehicle for teaching structure. Writers of audiolingual materials believed that the number of vocabulary items per lesson should be kept to the minimum so that learners would concentrate on pronunciation and grammar. (Hatch & Brown 1995, 406) Since contrastive analysis was important during this period, vocabulary was also selected to show contrasts.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, communicative approaches have generally replaced the audio-lingual methodology. The goals of these approaches, which include the ability to function accurately and appropriately in a variety of professional and social situations, predominate instructional materials. Vocabulary is viewed as an essential element for carrying meaning, and thus, vocabulary acquisition is emphasized, particularly in the early stages of language learning. Indeed a proficiency orientation emphasizes the teaching of language in context, in particular, its sociolinguistic and cultural contexts.

During this period, the focus of teaching materials was given to the actual usage of foreign languages in real situations. English education took the approaches such as Survival English, Contextual English, and Situational Reinforcement. These approaches helped the learners to distinguish the context in which they could use the target languages and naturally gave priority to the contexts in which the learners would use the target languages.
For examples, teaching materials were configured in order to prepare the learners for actual situations such as house hunting, banking, shopping and acquiring driving licenses. So was the vocabulary selection.

The influence of communicative approaches continued into the 1980s and 1990s and especially enhanced the interests in authentic materials used by native speakers of target languages. The elementary level usually handled subject matters such as menus, labels, advertisements, various types of forms to be filled out, taped news broadcasts, or soap operas. Authentic language approaches made selection of vocabularies catered to the needs and interests of students.

2.2 Current Views on Vocabulary and Culture

According to anthropologists, difficulties in the process of learning foreign languages are highly related to the cultural gap which exists between native languages and target languages. Fluency depends on the level of knowledge and understanding of the related cultures. For instance, understanding of a poem or song is not only dependent upon comprehension of vocabularies and expressions but also upon understanding of the society and culture in which the poem is versed or the song is sung. This highlights the close relevance between language and culture.

Ross said that "every word, every expression we use has a cultural dimension. Culture is the means by which members of a community communicate with each other. Speakers of a language share not only a particular vocabulary and structure of the language; they share the perceptions of reality represented by that vocabulary and structure."(Ross 1990, 1) The word 'pub' serves as an example. Although 'pub' refers to the same kind of facility
in both Arabic and English, it means, in Britain, nothing more than a place where people drink and socialize, but it suggests in the Muslim Arabic world a place where people sin against God and morality (Laufer 1990, 582).

Language and culture are closely related and interactive. Culture is transmitted in great part through language; cultural patterns in turn are reflected in language. (Damen 1987, 89) Cultural features of a country are the natural reflection of daily life style of its people. Naturally, vocabularies related to daily life and patterns of living hold more strong cultural connotations. (Kim Jin Woo 1996, 313) For instance, al-ṣibīl (camels) can be one of the unique representatives in the Arab culture. This is so because they played the pivotal role in the early settlements of Bedouins. (al-Ḍin 2001, 70) The word is closely linked with various cultural units which include breeding, maintenance and travel preparations, drinking camel milk, butchery for meat, leather and fur consumption. Camels could be traded in kind. They could be the replacement of dowry, blood money or offering for religious events. Camels have also class implications in the Arab society. Social status of men is usually dependent upon the number of camels possessed. To sum up, hundreds of vocabularies and expressions related to a camel can be taken as an evidence to show how much significance camels held for the early Arab society.

Costumes can be another distinctive cultural indicator. Costumes, influenced by topography and climate as well as tradition, form a long list of relevant vocabularies and expressions in each and every cultural realm. Neckties are a cultural unit to represent the western costume patterns. In the meantime, al-ṣiqāl is a unit to represent the Arab men’s in the Arabian peninsula and the surrounding regions. In the same fashion, shirts, jackets, trousers,
vests, socks, shoes and handkerchieves serve as a cultural unit in the West. The same can be said of al-ṣiqāl, al-kūfiyah or al-jilbāb, al-ṣāḥah, al-naṣl, al-maṣlah in the Arab area. (al-Dīn 2001, 68)

From the above it follows that no two languages show a one-to-one correspondence between vocabulary items or grammatical structures. It is also obvious that knowledge of lexical meaning is not sufficient to produce a correct usage. Therefore, students should be exposed to vocabulary along with an authentic linguistic and cultural context in order to get real communicative competence in the target languages.

In his discussion of lexical competence, Richards (1976, 83) identifies a number of areas where knowledge of culture is crucial for an appropriate vocabulary usage. In particular, he states that knowing a word means:

1) knowing the limitations imposed on the use of the word according to temporal, geographical, social variations of function and situation.
2) knowledge of the network of associations between that word and other words in the language.
3) knowing the semantic (denotative and connotative) value of a word
4) knowing many of the different meanings associated with a word.

Richards' discussion of lexical competence in the above could be a good springboard to present vocabularies in cultural context in foreign languages classrooms.
III. Vocabulary For the Elementary Level

3.1 Actual Relative Contribution Model

In 1978, the Research Committee of the Interagency Language Roundtable began investigating the relative contribution of various components or subskills to global language proficiency. The hypothesis under consideration was that the relative contribution of factors such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency and sociolinguistic competence was not constant across proficiency ranges. In order to verify the hypothesis, some 50 foreign language teachers representing 17 of the languages taught at the CIA Language School were asked to judge the relative importance of each of the model’s components for each proficiency model. The results of their collective judgements are represented in the Actual Relative Contribution Model.(Omaggio 1986, 24) (Refer to Illustration 1)

If the goal of the curriculum is to produce Level 3 speakers of a language, then the concentration on language subskills in the curriculum should be representative of their relative importance in performing Level 3 tasks. Grammar skills would be an important part of the curriculum. If the goal is to produce students with Level 1, survival skills, then the optimum curriculum mix would be entirely different, with a primary emphasis in the teaching and practice of vocabulary.(Higgs&Clifford 1982, 73)
Another research into the significance of six items (culture, grammar, reading, speaking, writing and vocabulary) in Arabic learning shows that Korean students at the beginners and intermediary levels commonly first rate speaking, followed by culture, vocabulary, writing, reading and grammar. According to the analysis, the elementary level students rank speaking first with 19.6%, culture with 18%, vocabulary with 17.7%, reading with 15.5%, writing with 15.3% and grammar with 14%. (Kong Ji Hyun 2001, 113) This suggests that on the part of learners, vocabulary presentation combined with cultural information is an instructive method to cater to the needs of students and to satisfy their interests.
3.2 Lexical Foundations for Language Teaching

How many words provide a working or basic vocabulary in a foreign language? The question of how many words to learn is considered as an important question. Constant efforts have been made to provide answers to this question since the early 20th century.

Following dictionaries have been published in the Arabic speaking world. (Abdu 1979, j–z)

1) The Arabic Press Dictionary (1940) : It collected about 136,000 words from the two dailies of Egyptian 'al-?ahrām and Palestinian 'al-filasṭīn' issued in the years between 1937 and 1939. It is limited to the coverage of major events.

2) The List of Modern Arabic Words (no date) : It collected about 200,000 words from 6 dailies and 3 weeklies in Egypt. It gathered every and each word excluding proper noun.

3) A Basic Vocabulary for Elementary Reading (1953) : It gathered about 188,000 words from 18 volumes of reading textbooks for elementary schools in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

4) A Word Count of Modern Arabic Prose of Modern Arabic Prose (1959) : It collected about 136,000 words from 60 books of varying subjects including novel, literature, literary critic, travelogue, history, education, economy, society, politics, philosophy, Islam, marital life.

5) Changes Needed in Egyptian Readers to Increase Their Value (1948) : It collected about 35,000 words from kindergarten textbooks and Grade 1 and 2 textbooks for elementary schools in Egypt.

6) Common Vocabulary List in Arabic Language (1955) : It selected 1,000 most frequently used words from the above (1), (2) and (5), and in (3)'s Egyptian reading textbooks.
Among others stand Basic Vocabulary for the Elementary Students (1969) issued in Morocco, The List of Vocabulary for Grade 1 and 2 at elementary schools in Libya and Vocabulary List for the Elementary Students (1965) in Egypt.

Following is the list of the collection of children's vocabulary.

7) The Speech Vocabulary of Egyptian Children Entering School (1952) : It collected about 38,000 words mentioned in 200 kindergarteners' conversation.

8) Children's Language Treasure through Their Tales (1973) : It collected about 20,000 words from 120 tales told by 120 Iraqi children.

9) Common Words to the Elementary School Students (1974) : It covered about 40,000 words from the oral speeches by 240 students of the elementary Grade 1 to 3.

It is beyond doubt that the aforementioned lists provide precious material of the development of vocabulary. The lists are a bit outdated. Most of them were formulated in the 1950s or before. These lists do not include the present-day vocabularies such as computers, internet, data base and cellular phones. This problem requires a careful reading into these materials, no matter how valuable they are. One also needs to set up appropriate educational standards in terms of their usage.

3.3 Arabic Vocabulary Selection for the Elementary Level

Each language contains a myriad of words but not all of them are as useful as any other. A small number of the words of a certain language occur very frequently and if a learner knows these words, that learner will know a very large proportion of the running words in a written or spoken text. Usefulness of a word reflects the concept of word frequency. The word frequency
serves as a barometer for foreign language teachers to select vocabularies so as to enhance effectiveness of language teaching within the given lesson schedules. It will also give extra boost to learners since they could more easily find the effects of high frequency words in the daily environment.

Here is a figure showing what proportion of a text is covered by certain numbers of high frequency words in English.

(Table 1 : Vocabulary size and text coverage in the Brown corpus (quoted by Nation&Waring 1997, 9))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary size</th>
<th>Text Coverage</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>72.0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>79.7 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>84.0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>86.8 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>88.7 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>89.9 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,851</td>
<td>97.8 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is another figure showing what proportion of a text is covered by certain numbers of high frequency words in Arabic.

( Table 2 : Vocabulary Frequency in ΩAbdu’s list (ΩAbdu 1979, z) )

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary size</th>
<th>Text Coverage</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>56.5 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>67.0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>74.0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>78.5 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>81.5 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>84.0 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 1 and 2, with a vocabulary size of 2,000 words, a learner knows about 80 percent of the words in a text which means that one word in every five are unknown.

However, the concept of frequency has its limitations. A problem associated with frequency lists is that words are counted out of context with no consideration of the various meanings or parts of speech that a word might have. (Alish 1997, 262) For example, the word 'right' in English has different meanings when it is noun and when it is adjective. Likewise, the word 'hadith' in Arabic represent several parts of speech and meanings. The latter may be a noun or an adjective. As a noun, it has two meanings: 'talk, conversation, discussion' and 'prophetic tradition'. As an adjective, it means 'modern, new, recent'.

Choice of vocabulary should depend on a set of criteria. There exist a number of measures to control the content. These Controlling devices may be summarized as follows (Alish 1997, 261-263):

1. Frequency: This concept is the earliest language controlling device in which words are most frequently used and are consequently more useful to the learner. It refers to how frequently words and structures occur in a sample of texts representative of the language to be taught. Words are to be selected according to the barometer of how frequently learners would read and listen to in learning materials. The words which learners would most frequently come across should be first taught. Frequently used words could be more easily understood than less frequent ones.

2. Availability: The notion of availability concerns the readiness with which a word comes to mind in a particular context. This criterion was developed in France to identify contextually useful vocabularies and to compensate for the deficiency in frequency
counts. Some words, regardless of frequency, are needed to be used in given and specific conditions. Highly available words effectively trigger the learners’ motivation. Word availability relies upon regions, jobs and personal interests. Availability is closely related with the situation in which conversation takes place. In case of the Arabic teaching, Islam should be given top priority since it exerts immense influence in every walk of life. The word ‘?allah’(God) in Arabic could be presented to the students on the first day of a class when the expression ‘al-?am?d li-?allah’ (Thanks be to God) was introduced. The teacher could made some comments on the importance of the word ‘?allah’ in the culture and provides further comments on the expressions introduced and the situations in which they are used. (eg.: ‘?in ša?a ?allah’, ‘bi-?ism ?allah’, ‘?ti ?aman ?allah’, ‘?allah ma?ak’, etc.)

3. Coverage: The criterion of coverage refers to the fact that one word can do the work of several others. Three criteria are used to determine the coverage of a word. They are:
Definition: One word can be used to define other words (e.g., man)
Inclusion: One word can replace several others (e.g., ‘?ax?la’ used for ‘ḥāza wa ḥaṣṣala’, ‘tanāwala’, ‘?amsaka bi’)
Combination: By combining high-frequency words such as ‘rajul yāy? mutazawwij’ (unmarried man), we can avoid the use of the lower frequency word ‘?a?zab’(bachelor).
Extension: Words with many meanings rate higher than words with a few meanings.

4. Range: The concept refers to the distribution of a word over an entire corpus of texts.(McCarthy 2000, 69) For example, a word with high frequency in only one or two texts of a corpus of 20 texts has a narrow range. A word with a wide range has
high frequency in most texts of a corpus and is, therefore, more likely to occur in different contexts. Information about range can be presented in the form of statistical comparisons between the occurrence of a word in one part of a corpus (e.g. just the scientific texts in the corpus) and its occurrences of a word in the corpus as a whole.

5. Learners' needs: To grasp the needs of learners is quintessential to stimulating the learner's motivation. It helps to set up an objective and to choose what to learn. In order for language teaching to run at the communicative level, learners should be aware of their part of participation. To this end, vocabularies should assume high probability and be closely related to real life of learners. Teaching communicative competence means that teachers understand the needs of learners and teach vocabularies and expressions catered to their needs and expectations.

Allen (1983, 108) suggests four questions that need to be answered in order to predict learners' vocabulary needs:

- Which words must students know in order to talk about people, things, and events in the place where they study and live? (When such words are learnt, the new language can immediately be put to use.)

- Which words must the students know in order to respond to routine directions and commands? (The Vocabulary for 'itabih ilayya' and 'Uktub hādīh al-jumal' and other routine instructions should be learnt early, so that such frequently repeated directions can always be given in Arabic.)

- Which words are required for certain classroom experiences? (describing, comparing, and classifying various vehicles, for example, or taking imaginary travels to Arab countries or
writing letters to pen pals.)
- Which words are needed in connection with the students' particular academic lists? (Those will specialize in Arabic Linguistics need vocabulary that is different from those who study Arabic just to enjoy travel to Arab countries.)

Concerning the vocabulary numbers proper to the elementary level students, there are rough agreements among scholars in the profession. The Heinemann Guided Readers Handbook, for example, suggests that beginner-level texts have approximately 600 basic words, elementary level texts have 1,100, intermediate level texts have 1,600, and upper level texts have 2,200. (Hatch&Brown 1995, 408) William Collins and Sons used a slightly different approach to vocabulary adjustments in its guided readers. Collins’ six levels of readers have 300, 600, 1000, 1,500, 2,000, and 2,500 headwords respectively. (quoted by Hatch&Brown 1995, 409)

From the above it follows that language teaching at the elementary level should restrict the number of words to 1,000-1,100 and take the aforementioned criteria into account. In addition, Arabic teachers in Korea need to consider the essential Arabic vocabulary lists for the Korean middle and high school students issued by the Korean Bureau for Human Resources in order to select and teach vocabularies at the elementary level in Arabic.

IV. Arabic Vocabulary Presentation in Cultural Context

4.1 Arabic Vocabulary through Functions and Situations
In order to respond to the goals of communicative curricular, classroom materials should provide and distinguish those vocabulary items that are practically appropriate to the target culture from those which refer to native culture behavior, institutions and referents. Major functions identified and listed along with related vocabulary domains (Hatch & Brown 1995, 406-07) are:

1. **Exchanging factual information**
   Vocabulary domains: identify, ask, report, say, think X, etc.

2. **Exchanging intellectual information**
   Vocabulary domains: agree, disagree, know, remember, etc.

3. **Exchanging emotional attitudes**
   Vocabulary domains: surprise, hope, disappointment, fear, worry, preference, gratitude, sympathy, want, desire, etc.

4. **Exchanging moral attitudes**
   Vocabulary domains: apology, forgiveness, approval, disapproval, appreciation, regret, indifference, etc.

5. **Suasion**
   Vocabulary domains: suggest, request, invite, instruct, advise, warn, offer or request assistance, etc.

6. **Socializing**
   Vocabulary domains: greetings, leave-takings, holiday sayings, toasts, etc.

People, time, setting (place), and topic discussed in a particular speech act are included in the term 'situation'. Situation is extra-linguistic but still helps determine the vocabulary we select and present in foreign languages classrooms.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit suggest that the following points should be contemplated.

1. Social roles (stranger/stranger, friend/friend, private person/
official, patient/doctor, etc.)
2. Psychological roles (neutrality, equality, sympathy, antipathy)
3. Settings
   A. Geographical location (foreign country where the target language is the native language, foreign country where the target language is not the native language, one's own country)
   B. Place
      a. outdoors (park, street, seaside)
      b. indoors: private life (House, apartment, room, kitchen):
         public life (purchases, eating and drinking),
         accommodation (hotel, camping site, etc.),
         transport (gas station, lost and found),
         religion, physical services (hospital, pharmacy or chemist's),
         learning site, displays (museum, art gallery),
         entertainment, communication, finances, work,
         means of transport
4. Surroundings (human) family, friends, acquaintances, strangers.
   (Finocchiaro & Brumfit 1983, 68)

What is said in the above can be a theoretical foundation for vocabulary selection at the elementary level.

The following test can be useful to check a learner's functional and situational competence.
* Recognition of an appropriate function:
Question) Select the appropriate response to this utterance:
- ?Ismi ?Ahmad Boustanī [My name is Ahmad Boustanly.]
1. al-Salam ṭalaykum [Peace be upon you]
2. Tašarrafnā [how do you do]
3. Maʃa al-ssalāmah [good bye]
4. Şabāh al-xayr [good morning]

* Recognition of a contextual feature (setting):
Question) Where would you hear this utterance?
- yurjā min ḥadarat al-rrukab al-musafirin ?ilā al-Qahirah al-tawajjuh ?ilā al-bawābah raqm 14. [ Passengers traveling to Cairo are kindly requested to proceed to Gate number 14.]
1. In a lecture
2. At a theater
3. In an airport
4. On the radio
(taken from Alish 1997, 295)

4.2 Arabic Vocabulary through Semantic Field

Many foreign language educators suggest that retention is optimal when vocabulary items are presented grouped by semantic field, clusters or groupings of words that are conceptually related or subsumed under a generation term. One method is to present words in groups such as units of clothes, weather, transportation and etc., which helps students to link words and to extend their vocabulary.

1) It refers to an area of meaning covered by a set of related lexical items. (Michael McCarthy, op.cit., p. 159.)
To develop the semantic competence of learners can be helped by the following test.

*Recognition of semantic field :
Question) Select a different semantic word.
1. θalj [snow(n.)]  
2. barid [mail(n.)]
3. barid [cold(adj.)]  
4. bard [cold(n.)]
** The answer is ② which has nothing to do with weather and coldness.

Making a domain list of semantic field is a strategy that could help students in the future. The habit of searching a semantic field for related terms develops a strategy they can continue to use. Getting used to making fine distinctions in meaning can also prepare students to use thesaurus and even dictionaries better.

4.3 Idiom's Denotations and Connotations

Denotations of many words are equivalent across cultures. However, cultural connotations of many words are very different. 'Muqaddam' ( [it is] presented [to you] ) is one formulaic expression that is particularly troublesome to non-native Arabic speakers. For non-native Arabic speakers, the illocutionary force of the utterance is ambiguous; (does Speaker want listener to take the object or not?) However, for native Arabic speakers in most contexts, 'muqaddam' is a polite ritualistic expression, not a genuine offer of the object.2) This means that in order to achieve pragmatic competence in Arabic, Non-native arabic speakers need

2) In response to 'muqaddam', listener needs to respond with an appropriate expression such as ‘qala sahibatih qahla’ ['It looks much nicer on its owner']
to learn the specific formulas in responding to compliments on particular attributes.

Presenting a word's denotation and connotation is admittedly a difficult and ambitious task for a beginner. But the vocabulary presented as part of a total cultural system enables a beginning student to conceive a more conceptually accurate image of the word's meaning in a foreign society.

### 4.4 Visuals and Documentation

According to Spinelli & Siskin (1992, 308), visuals have two purposes in vocabulary presentation. They may be used to avoid recourse to native language equivalents for such common, concrete items as classroom objects, body parts or clothing, particularly in the Direct Method and other approaches that seek to avoid students' native language at all costs. The second purpose is to present vocabulary with its culture referents that differ from native culture referents or to illustrate target language referents that have no equivalent in the native language.

Visuals help learners to visualize abstract concepts in their mind and therefore provide a chance to have indirect communication. They are more effective than oral explanations by teachers. They have also lingering effects in the minds of learners as well as stimulating motivation. Visuals help students by overcoming the time and spatial barricades in the class environment and make up for the lack of experience on the part of learners.

Let's take an example of the word 'bread'. Koreans and Arabs have different associations with bread. Koreans may imagine a soft and round shaped bread or square-angled and sliced lump of bread while Arabs would probably think of a rough, thin and round shaped bread. This is due to the fact that the two peoples
experience different kinds and forms of bread within their respective cultures. To provide various visuals, documentation and samples in kind will help to bridge this cultural gap.

Several authentic text types also may be used for the elementary level students, such as menus, weather forecasts, filled out application forms, library cards, identification card, radio and television listings, advertisements, news stories and literary excerpts.

To help a student to achieve a simple word or phrase recognition, reading vocabulary words along with culturally authentic materials like entry card used at the airport is highly beneficial by providing the sense of success and boosting motivation.

V. Conclusion

When communication happens between peoples with different world views, special skills are required to make the messages received resemble the messages sent. The most important overriding skill is understanding the context within which the communication takes place. This context is to a large extent culturally determined. (Seelye 1992, 1)

As with grammar instruction, vocabulary in general should be taught within the context. Vocabulary should be exercised in sufficient social and cultural context. Vocabulary Learning must emerge from lessons that aim to help students develop communicative competence.

The key in all vocabulary teaching is to keep motivation high while encouraging students to develop strategies that they can continue to use once they leave the classroom. The effectiveness
of these strategies for individual teachers and learners depends on many factors, and language educators must approach decisions about methods and materials systematically, using principles to help us make wise decisions. (Hatch & Brown 1995, 422)

Arabic teachers should highlight all the culturally loaded words\(^3\) by explaining not only their different cultural connotations but also the consequences of misusing them. Arabic teaching material writers should make an effort to include in their texts culturally loaded words as points of discussion and learning.

More studies need to be conducted to identify culturally loaded words, especially those whose unique cultural connotations are difficult to detect by intuition and those that easily escape our attention due to their low frequency of occurrence. [Key Word: Arabic Vocabulary Teaching, Arab Culture, Arabic Teaching Method]

Reference

\(^3\) Culturally loaded words refer to those lexical items that are similar in primary meaning [in both L1 and L2] but different in connotation - R. Lado "Patterns of Difficulty in Vocabulary" in H.B. Allen and R.N. Campbell, eds., Teaching English As a Second Language. New York, McGraw-Hill, 1972, p. 286.


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