

An assessment of Testing Vocabulary in (RECL) Book -1- for the Fifth Grade of the primary stage

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Abstract

Learning vocabulary is a lengthy and complex process which requires adequate mastery of form, meaning and usage . It requires constant practice on the part of the learner and continuous assessment on the part of the teacher .

Vocabulary tests are intended to measure the comprehension and production of words used in speaking and writing . The type of vocabulary test chosen is related to how we teach it .

For these reason's , this study has been conducted to investigate the techniques of testing vocabulary for (RECL) Book -1- for the fifth grade of the primary stage .

A test of five parts has been conducted to a sample of (50) pupils at Al-Muqdadia schools for boys and girls for the academic year 2009-2010 to fulfill the aims of the study .

The test is exposed to a jury of specialists in the filed of English language teaching and linguistics who have agreed on its validity for administration.

The test reliability is computed by using the correlation coefficient of test-retest.

Chi – square has been used to find out the statistical significance of differences between each two techniques of testing vocabulary .

After analyzing the data statistically , it has been found out that the odd one out and classification techniques are considered more effective

ones in testing vocabulary at the primary stage . The study ends with some conclusions and suggestions for further studies .

Content	Page
Section one	
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. The problem and Its significance	2
1.3. Aims of the study	4
1.4. Limits of the study	4
1.5. Definitions of basic terms	4
1.6. Techniques in testing vocabulary	5
Section two	
Procedures	
2.1 An Introductory Note	7
2.2 population and sample selection	7
2.3construction of the test	7
2.4Validity of the test	8
2.5The pilot study	8
2.6Reliability of the test	9
2.7 The final Administration of test	10
Section Three	
Result analysis	
3.1. An Introductory Note	11
3.2. Result analysis	11-13
Section four	
Conclusion, Recommendations and suggestions	14
4.1. Conclusions	14
4.2. Recommendations and suggestion	

Section One

1-1 . Introduction

First of all , we have to agree that testing is a strategy in which teachers make use of the theoretical information and instructions , and actual situations for building up sound typical tests and that testing (MC Namara , 2000 : 73) can encourage good teaching and learning . The purpose behind tests , besides they are instruments of measurements , is to motivate learners towards the success and progress in teaching / learning process . Tests are not only a collection of test techniques but also principles which should be applied. So testing provides a form of feedback , for learners and teachers . (Thornbury , 2002 :129)

Madsen (1983 : 12) states that the purpose of vocabulary tests is to measure the comprehension and production of words used in speaking and writing . Al-mutawa & Al-Kailani (1989 : 67) show that vocabulary tests are necessary to see how pupils are progressing and to check their grasp of lexical items . So the teacher when designing a vocabulary test should be aware of what he is going to test , whether he is after understanding words , meaning , or producing other synonyms , or both comprehension and production of words .

In the academic year 2002-2003 , a new book for teaching English in Iraqi primary schools was put in practice as the first book in a new course called Rafidain English course for Iraq (hence forth RECI) .

It is worth mentioning that teaching English as a foreign language at the primary stage is a form of communication by information and ideas from the teacher to the pupils .

1-2. The problem and Its significance :

Vocabulary means all the words a person uses with understanding in his/ her own speech or writing (active vocabulary) or the larger number of words one can understand in the speech or writing of others (passive vocabulary). Tests of language subskills, such as vocabulary,, do not show exactly how well a person uses English, but they can help teachers diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses in oral or written communication. Al-Jarah & Darwesh (2000 :44) explain that vocabulary development requires constant practice on the part of the learner and continuous assessment on the part of the teacher .

Al- mutawa (1989:49) stresses that teaching English vocabulary to monolingual Arab learners present additional difficulty to the teacher because Arabic and English are

not cognate language . Both have different syntactic system and word formation ; So the teacher will not have the advantage of cognates which might facilitate his task of teaching new lexical items .

The new series (RECI) is designed according to the communicative approach instead of the audiolingual method of the previous series (NECI) . This new series put heavy emphasis on the natural communication (Al-Nassiri , 2001 : 23) . In communicative approach, the use of language is something the people enjoy, i.e , teaching with fun and games is the easiest and most effective way to teach language and encourage conversation . Communicative approach gives a chance to all the pupils to communicate inside the classroom in different language activities.

The techniques of the communicative approach give a chance to the pupils to be more active in language learning.

It is obvious that testing vocabulary of (RECI) Book -1- requires certain techniques for presenting new vocabulary items on the part of the teacher. So it is necessary to identify these techniques Iraqi teachers use in testing vocabulary at the primary stage . These techniques are considered the main instruments in examining pupils' new vocabularies.

The finding of the study is expected to be of value especially for the educationists in the ministry of education who are concerned with teaching English as a foreign language at the primary stage .

1.3. Aims of the study :

This study aims at assessing the effectiveness of the techniques that are used in testing vocabulary for Book-1- (RECI) to see which of these techniques is considered an effective one in learning vocabulary for the pupils at the primary stage

1.4. Limits of the study :

1. The study is limited to fifth class of the primary stage .
2. The sample of the study is limited to (50) pupils at Al-Muqdadia schools for boys and girls in the Ministry of Education / Diyala for the academic year 2009-2010 .

1.5- Definitions of Basic Terms.

1-5-1. Assessment:

Assessment means thinking about something carefully and making a judgement about it . (macmillan, 2003:3)

From the researcher's view point , assessment is “giving a judgement of the pupils' ability while they are exposed to English language pointing out their weakness and strength of that language” .

1.5.2- primary stage :

A primary stage is a stage in which the duration of cycle is six years covering the age group 6-11 . (Ramadan , 2001:10)

1.6. Techniques in Testing vocabulary.

Book -1- of Rafidain English course for Iraq (RECI) for fifth grade of the primary stage puts heavy emphasis on certain techniques for testing vocabulary. The most important techniques are :

1.6.1 Supply technique: This technique is of two types:

a. Supply type completion:

This technique means a group of words is given that is followed by incomplete sentences and requires from the pupils to supply the most appropriate words that can fill the blanks.

B. Simple completion words: This is a test of word formation. The pupils are asked to fill the missing parts of certain words. (Madsen, 1983 : 27)

1.6.2. Odd one out technique.

This technique requires from the pupils to eliminate one exponent from a list of exponents and it can be done either by eliminating the exponent because it is of a different degree of formality to the others or by eliminating it because it has a different function from the others. (Al-Jarah , 1991 : 26)

1.6.3. Matching technique .

A from of item in an objective test which consists of two lists of items where the pupil has to choose from a set of words the one that matches a given word. (Darwesh & Al- Jarah , 2000 : 45)

1.6.4. Classification technique.

It is another technique for testing vocabulary in which the teacher provides the pupils with a list of words then asks them to classify the words under headings . This technique of testing vocabulary is used for measuring pupil's familiarity with a range of associations. (Al-Jiboury , 1985:57)

Section Two

Procedures

2.1. An Introductory Note:

This section provides a description of the main steps and procedures followed in the selecting of the population and the sample of the study as well as constructing the test.

2.2. Population and sample selection.

The population of the study is the pupils of Al-Muqdadiya primary school for boys and girls from the directorate – general of education for the academic year 2009-2010. The researcher has chosen fifth grade as a sample for applying the test. The total number of the pupils is (50) .

2.3. Construction of the test .

The test of the present study has been constructed to meet the aims of the study. It seeks to answer the following questions: What are the techniques used in testing vocabulary and which of these techniques are considered externally an effective one in learning vocabulary for the pupils.

All the items of the test have been selected from the pupil's book (1) and workbook & manual (1) . It consists of five questions each question in this test presents a different technique.

2.4. Validity of the test.

Validity of the test should begin when we start to plan the test and continue until we analyze the results of the test. Gronlund (1968 : 190) states that validity refers to whether or not a test measures what it claims to measure . Lehmann & Mehrens (1973 : 135) assert that the most important types of validity in relation to the construction of a test are face and content validity . The items are authentic as they have been taken from the pupil's workbook which means that their content validity is already confirmed.

In order to find out face validity of the test, the items of the test have been exposed to* jury and experts in English language teaching and linguistics.

2.5. The pilot study.

After constructing the test, a pilot study was required to find out exactly whether the test is well constructed or not . The result of the pilot study can be a good indicator for making any necessary modifications in the final version of the test and to estimate the time allotted for answering all the items of the test as a whole. To achieve these aims (30) pupils were chosen randomly to constitute the subjects for the pilot study

The finding of the pilot study indicated that the time required to complete the test is (40) minutes .¹

2.6. Reliability of the test:

Reliability of the test is a necessary characteristic of any good test . Lado (1962 : 31) states that reliability is measured by a correlation between the scores of the same set of the student on two consecutive administrations of the test . This is know as the re-testing coefficient of reliability. The test has been administrated to a sample of (30) pupils twice . *person's formula fo correlation coefficient was used to measure reliability of the test .

After correcting the test papers of the sample the correlation coefficient is (0.78) , and this is considered acceptable , see table (1) .

Table (1)

The mean standard . Deviation and correlation coefficient of Test – Retest scores .

	No . of sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient
Test	30	66.36	10.626	0.78
Re-test	30	66.23	10.956	

2.7. The final Administration of the test:

The test has been administered empirically on 13th April 2009 to fifth class. The test lasted (40) minutes. After answering the testes were asked to deliver their sheets to the researcher to be corrected and marked .

10

$$r^2 = \frac{N \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{[N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2] [N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}$$

(Glass & Stanley , 1970 : 114)

Section Three

Result Analysis

3.1. An Introductory Note .

This section demonstrates and discusses the results that have been obtained in reference to the aim of the study which is assessing the effectiveness of the techniques that are used in testing vocabulary for (RECI) Book-1- to see which of these techniques is considered an effective one in learning vocabulary for the pupils at the primary stage .

3.2. Result analysis .

In order to achieve the aim of the present study , the students' responses to the items of the test are collected and processed statistically . The test itself presents five techniques namely multiple choice technique , supply technique , odd one out technique , matching technique and classification technique . The researcher gives each technique in this study certain symbol to deal with the results simply . so the symbols A,B,C,D and E represent multiple choice , supply , odd one out , matching and classification techniques respectively .

After counting the frequencies of the correct responses for each technique with their percentages a general picture of the performance of the pupils has become evident .Table (2) shows the frequencies and the percentages of the correct responses made by the pupils for each technique are distributed .

Table (2) Frequencies of correct responses and percentages .³

No . of students	Techniques of the test	Frequency of the correct responses	Percentage
50	Multiple – choice (A)	156	31.2
	Supply (B)	167	33.4
	Odd one out (C)	225	45
	Matching (D)	198	39.6
	Classification (E)	219	43.8

- Chi-Square has been used to determine the statistical significance for each two techniques of the test , , (AB) , (AC) , (AD) , (AE) , (BC), (BD), (BE) , (CE) and (CD) techniques respectively .

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows :

1- The results show that there is no difference of statistical significance at $p < (0.05)$ for the techniques (A) and (B) since the calculated X^2 . value is (1.056) which is less than the tabulated value which is 3.84 at $df = 1$.

2- The findings reveal that there is signification difference between (A) and (D , C , E) techniques as the calculated X^2 . value for the latter are (17.064 , 52.504 , 42.336) respectively which are more than the tabulated X^2 . value which is 7.88 at $p < (0.05)$ and $df = 1$ for the highest frequency .

3- There is statistical significant difference between (B) technique and (D , C , E) techniques since the calculated X^2 . value are 9.75 , 39.728 , and 30.722) which are more than the tabulated X^2 . value

which is (7.88) at $p < 0.01$ and at $df = 1$ for the highest frequency .

4- There is no difference of statistical significance at $p < (0.05)$ between (E) and (C) techniques as the calculated X^2 . value is 0.722 which is less than the tabulated X^2 . value which is 3.84 at $df = 1$.

It is obvious from the above discussion of the findings that (C) odd one out , (D) matching and (E) classification techniques are considered better than the (A) multiple – choice and (B) supply techniques .The odd one out (C) and classification (E) techniques are considered more effective techniques in testing vocabulary for the pupils at the primary stage since these techniques are presented from the beginning of the units of the book and are most commonly used in our schools .

Notes to section three :

¹ It is worthy mentioning that Chi-square has been used for calculating the results depending on results in table (2) to avoid reptetion .

Section four

Conclusions, Recommendations and suggestions

4.1. Conclusions.

In the light of the results obtained from the study , the following conclusions are drawn :

2. The odd one out and classification techniques are considered more effective ones in testing vocabulary at the primary stage as these techniques are presented from the beginning of the course to the pupils and required only recognition than production .
3. Matching technique is proved to be better than the multiple – choice and supply techniques .

4.2. Recommendations and suggestions.

In the light of the results and conclusions , the researcher recommends and suggests the following :

- 1- Great attention should be paid to the construction of vocabulary test , since most of the pupils face difficulty in learning English vocabulary .
- 2- In testing vocabulary , the teacher need to avoid presenting words in isolation . simply choosing random list of words does not make much sense . Instead the teachers teach the pupils to find the meaning of words through context of the sentences .
- 3- A great deal of attention should be paid for the techniques in testing vocabulary which are problematic to Iraqi pupils.
- 4- An experiment al study can be conducted to investigate some new techniques of testing vocabulary at the intermediate level .
- 5- The researcher suggests a study of the assessment of the techniques of testing grammar for the primary stage .

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A letter to Jury members

**To **

The researcher intends to carry out a study entitled

" An assessment of Testing vocabulary in (RECI) Book -1- for the fifth grade of the primary stage " This study attempts to assess the effectiveness of the techniques Iraqi teachers of English use in testing vocabulary at the primary stage to see which of these techniques is considered an affective one in learning vocabulary .

To Fulfill the aim of this study a written test has been constructed . I would be grateful if you , as an expert in the field of teaching English as a foreign language , pass judgment on the items of the test .

Any comments , modification or suggestions would be highly regarded and appreciated . Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation .

Yours

Q1 \ complete with words from the following list . (choose 5 only)

(اختر لـ 5 فقط) (اكمل الجمل الآتية من خلال الكلمات المعطاة في القائمة اعلاه)

(food - want - ones – love – fruit – spell – turn)

1. We Iraq .
2. Do you like Iraqi? yes , I like Kebab and Kubba .
3. Do you like Iraqi? Yes, I like dates very much.
4. I an apple and five oranges . Here you are .
5. I want five oranges . Do you want these?
6. What's your name . Scott. it , please .

Q2\ Fill in the blanks

(choose 5 only)

(أملأ الفراغات لـ 5 فقط)

- 1-..... كتاب
- 2-S..... N سبعة
- 3-..... حقيقية
- 4-..... بيضة
- 5-F..... er أب
- 6-..... قلم حبر

Q3\ Odd one out (choose 5 only) (استخرج الكلمة الغريبة لـ 5 فقط)

1. Nose – mouth – eye –door
2. Bird – horse – tiger – ball
3. One – fourteen – three – two
4. Board – pencil – elephant – desk
5. Nada – Ahmed – Ali – Mazin
6. Ice-cream – bed – apple – orange

Q4\ Match between list "A" and list "B" (choose 5 only)

طابق بين رقم الفقرة من القائمة A وحرف الفقرة المناسبة من القائمة B لـ 5 فقط

A	B
1. What's your name ?	A. Good morning .
2. Good morning	b. Face , leg , hand .
3. How are you	c. Day s of the week
4. I'm sorry .	d. That's all right .
5. Parts of the body	e. Fine thanks
6. April , July , May	f. Ali
	g. Are months of the year
	h. Nine

Q5\ classify each word in the correct column .

(صنف الكلمات الآتية في العمود الصحيح الخاص بها)

1. Ice-cream 2-lion 3-apple 4-rabbit 5-pencil
 6- orange 7- Cat 8- duster 9-banana 10- ruler 11- Kubba
 12- copybook 13- basket 14-Camel 15- dishes
 16- horse 17-Map

Things We eat	Things We use	Animals

الخلاصة :

تهدف الدراسة الى تقويم التقنيات المستخدمة لاختبار المفردات اللغوية في كتاب سلسلة الرافدين (RECI) للصف الخامس الابتدائي .
 ولتحقيق هذه الدراسة أخذت عينة مكونة من (٥٠) تلميذ وتلميذة من مرحلة التعليم الابتدائي من مديرية التربية في محافظة ديالى . تم تصميم اختبار مكون من خمس أجزاء وطبق على عينة البحث خلال هذه السنة ٢٠٠٩-٢٠١٠ .
 لقد تم الحكم على صدق الاختبار من خلال عرضه على عدد من المختصين في مجال تدريس اللغة الانكليزية من أساتذة الجامعات العراقية وبعض المعلمين في وزارة التربية للوقوف على وجهات نظرهم من حيث ملائمة فقرات الاختبار وفي ضوء آرائهم ومقترحاتهم تم تصميم النسخة النهائية من الاختبار .
 بعد استخدام الوسائل الإحصائية والتي منها مربع كاي لمعرفة اي التقنيات تعطي نتائج أفضل اظهرت الدراسة ان تقنية التصنيف وتقنية استخراج الغريب اعتبرت افضل من التقنيات الاخرى لتعليم المفردات اللغوية وانتهت الدراسة بمجموعة من الاستنتاجات والتوصيات والمقترحات .

Notes to section two

- ¹ - The jury consists of :
 - 1- Khalil . Al-Hadidi (ph . D) college of education / Al-assmaee – university of diyala .
 2. Zainb Abbas J. (ph.D.) college of education / Al-assmaee – university of diyala .
 3. Arwa Abdul R.(ph.D.) college of education / Al-assmaee – university of diyala .
 4. Zahra M. Jaafer (ph.D.) college of education / Al-assmaee – university of diyala .
 5. Mrs. Afaf A. Mehdi . / A teacher of English , ministry of education .
 6. Thikra M. Hussen / teacher of English m ministry of education .
 7. Qudis Kalil A.(Dip.) ministry of Education.
 8. Ina'am Tariq S.(Dip.) ministry of Education
 9. ¹ N = number of sample
 10. $\sum x$ = sum of variables x
 11. $\sum y$ = sum of variables y
 12. $\sum x^2$ = sum of square variables x
 13. $\sum y^2$ = sum of square variables y
 14. $\sum xy$ = sum of variable x by y

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