Vocabulary Teaching in an EFL Context:

Selecting the Appropriate Words

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C O N T E N T S

Introduction

It has been a long time since 'Communicative Language Teaching' was introduced to Japan in 1970s. With the spread of publications on the innovative theories, many researchers and teachers have begun to assert that more emphasis should be put on communication. Accordingly the views of the English scholastic ability has changed. One of the latest trends toward the 'fundamental command of English' which attach importance to communication is, for instance, illustrated clearly in a newly published book. To begin with, we will look at the model which Sano et al. (9) formulate on the basis of CLT in a broad sense. Their concept of 'fundamental command of English' is shown as follows:

Fundamental Command of English =

(Fundamental Judgment of Grammaticality +

Creativity of New Sentences) × Fundamental Vocabulary

× Command of Functional Use of Language

= Fundamental Command of English for Communicative

Purposes

The dated idea of 'basic command of English' regarded as being tantamount to the ability in grammatical accuracy is denied here, and some new concepts are adopted in this model. Among them is 'fundamental vocabulary'. Theoretically, as is shown above, 'vocabulary' is counted as an indispensable aspect of

'fundamental command of English for communicative purposes'.
According to Sano et al., vocabulary should be more emphasized
as the central element for meaningful communication, and,
unlike the audiolingual approach, content words should not be
neglected any more (9). The idea of 'fundamental vocabulary',
therefore, implies the necessity of more content words than
before.

As regards the practical aspect, on the other hand,
vocabulary has received "unfair treatment" (Takefuta, Nihon-
jin 95), especially in 'school English'. Take textbooks used
in shools, for example. Indeed more pages have come to be
given to dialogues in junior high textbooks, and, at a glance,
they might appear to be making a gradual progress concerned
with communication. But a textbook with many dialogues does
not necessarily bring students a good communicative ability.
Communication by means of a language, in a natural sense,
should be an activity of exchanging information between
senders and receivers, using their own self-expressions. It
is desirable, too, that the topics be concerned with their
everyday matters, and that words and sentences in teaching
materials be related closely to the learners' real lives.
Nevertheless, textbooks used at present do little to create an
atmosphere of real life. In this respect, they leave much to
be desired, and thus require critical reexamination. Since
they are organized with an overemphasis on grammatical and
structural items, vocabulary items associated with situations
appear to be of secondary importance. Also, strictly limited

content words in textbooks are no more than tools of presenting structural items.

In fact, there are a number of learners of English who have very poor vocabulary needed for daily communication. As might be expected, they cannot say a single word in English, in spite of having considerable knowledge of grammar. As Wilkins points out that "while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (Linguistics 111), getting grammatical knowledge itself is far from sufficient. All the learners have to learn a considerable vocabulary items for the purpose of exchanging information. And, what is more important, the items should be properly provided. Now is the time to improve the present system by reconsidering vocabulary as a component of 'communicative competence', and teaching materials should be compiled including appropriate vocabulary items selected from this standpoint.

The aim of this thesis is, therefore, to reexamine selected vocabulary for teaching materials in the light of the principles of selection, especially for the learners in an EFL context. It is certain that 'communication' should be the ultimate goal for most of the learners of English in Japan. Vocabulary items which are properly chosen for them could be of great effect on improving their communicative ability.

In Chapter], before a consideration of the proper selection, a historical sketch of vocabulary counts and controls is given, not in strict chronological order, but

rather in terms of the principles adopted in ELT various times. This will give us the background knowledge necessary for devising criteria for the selection of vocabulary items so as to construct more appropriate teaching materials. Chapter Ⅱ will examine the current issues of 'vocabulary selection' in the context of Japan. Some problems in existing textbooks are pointed out here with the examples the present writer has obtained through experimental research. After considering both the past and the present issues, some proposals for the future will be made in Chapter Ⅲ .

It is hoped that this will make a point of departure to look at vocabulary teaching from a different angle for the sake of the improvement of ELT in Japan.

Chapter I

A Historical Sketch of Vocabulary Selection

1. The aim of vocabulary selection

It seems that memorizing a large number of words is a burden to most learners. It is impossible for even native speakers of a certain language to learn all of the words, to say nothing of for learners who intend to master it as a foreign language. In The Practical Study of Languages, now considered one of the great classics in the field of language teaching, Sweet mentions that "the real intrinsic difficulty of learning a foreign language lies in that of having to master its vocabulary" (66). Judging from his words, we can easily imagine that the effort to relieve the pain is--or at least should be--necessary for effective language teaching.

It is not perfectly true that if you master a certain number of vocabulary items of a language, you can use this language as a tool of communication. A person who has been learning for several years, for example, may be required to use the language in a natural context for the first time and find that he lacks the very vocabulary that he most needs. This would be remedied if 'selection' was adequately conducted.

Fries and Traver quote West's view on the aim of vocabulary selection as follows:

The aim of vocabulary selection amounts to this,

that, instead of teaching a large number of

relatively useless words, we try to teach a small

number of useful words, or else that we try to teach

a small number of words well rather than a large

number badly. (168)

In brief, a selected vocabulary enables teachers to give

learners only useful words, and moreover, it makes the

learning process a more efficient one. It can be safely said

that 'maximum effect' is achieved through 'minimum effort'.

Here arises the question of how we can distinguish

'useful' words from 'useless' ones. Jespersen states that

"the most everyday words" are more necessary than the

vocabulary of poetry or even of more elevated prose (19).

However, the term 'everyday words' is as ambiguous as 'useful

words'. Hornby shows how the solution to this problem was

attempted initially by word frequency. In his opinion,

extensive word counts, or frequency lists, "appeared to

provide an answer" (16). But problems with this approach were

soon revealed. Those will be discussed below. The problem of

defining usefulness of words will be gradually made clear

during the following discussion on principles of selection.

2. Principles in selecting vocabulary

Most of the existing word lists are constructed based on

at least one or more criteria. The selectional criteria, or

principles taken as a standard in choosing, are decided by the aims of teaching, and various kinds of criteria can be perceived. However, they might be briefly characterized. Mackey (176) and Kelly (184), for example, both characterize these under the following five principles: frequency, range, availability, coverage, and learnability (facility).

We will examine these five criteria with some examples which represent the major characteristics of each criterion. For the sake of convenience, however, 'range' is discussed together with 'frequency'. Frequency counts, as Kelly points out, are necessarily bound by range (188).

Some criteria are often combined together and, consequently, a prominent word list can be established. One good example is Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection provided during the 'vocabulary control movement' in 1930s. It is dealt with separately from the discussion of each principle. This section is thus divided into five heads; frequency/range, availability, coverage, learnability, and 'Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection'.

2.1. Frequency / Range

Selection by frequency, which is made by counting the number of items that occur in materials, appears to give us a guarantee of usefulness. It is because the items occurring the most frequently are those which the learner is most likely to meet. Howatt demonstrates the usefulness of frequent words

as follows:

> The general assumption was that, if the original
> texts were varied and general enough, the frequency
> of the words in the texts would reflect their
> frequency in 'the language as a whole'. And
> frequent words were held to be useful words for
> foreign learners to know. (Background 8)

Word lists based on frequency have been conducted and
used throughout the world. Probably the best known of these
is Thorndike's work. Stern evaluates Thorndike's The
Teacher's Word Book (1921) as "a landmark in word count
studies" (100). Although this work was intended as a basis
for the reading curriculum in the teaching of English as the
first language, it was influential, Stern states, as "a
prototype" for similar investigations undertaken in the
interest of foreign language teaching.

According to Fries and Traver, Thorndike selected 41
different sources, including nearly 4,000,000 running words,
in compiling his original list. The actual sources were as
follows:

1. 10 chapters of Black Beauty.

2. 3 chapters of Little Women.

3. Irving's Sleepy Hollow.

4. One issue of Youth's Companion.

5. 30 school readers.

6. 2 arithmetics.

7. 2 histories.

8. Vocabularies of 25 high school texts in foreign language.

9. Concordances of the Bible, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Cowper, Pope, and Milton.

10. The Constitution of the United States.

11. Garden and Farm Almanac for 1914.

12. Newspapers, private and business correspondence.

(125)

Based on credits for both occurrences and sources, Thorndike reported 10,000 words in serial numbers, '1a' for the commonest 500, '1b' for the next commonest 500, and so on to 10 for the words that ranked 9,001 to 10,000. Besides the huge number of running words, his contribution to the technique of word counting was the addition of the range credit to the frequency credit (Fries and Traver 125). 'Range' is counted by the number of samples or texts in which an item is found, and, by using a special counting system, Thorndike gave each word a credit number. The relationship between the credit number and the position of the word can be illustrated as follows:

CREDIT-NUMBER	POSITION OF WORD
49 or over	1 to 1000
29 to 48	1001 to 2000
19 to 28	2001 to 3000
14 to 18	3001 to 4000
10 to 13	4001 to 5144
9	5145 to 5544
8	5545 to 6047
7	6048 to 6618
6	6619 to 7262
5	7263 to 8145
4	8146 to 9190
3	9191 to 10000

(Faucett and Maki 3)

After publishing in 1931 a list of 20,000 words as an extension of the original list, Thorndike published The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words in 1944 with the help of Lorge. This volume is a greatly improved extension of the previous works. In the latest list, adding the Lorge magazine count, the Thorndike count of 120 juvenile books, and the Lorge-Thorndike semantic count to the Thorndike general count, the total number of running words has swollen to 18,000,000. Thorndike himself explains the advantage of using this list.

> The list tells anyone who wishes to know whether to use a word in writing, speaking, or teaching how common the word is in standard English reading matter. (x)

But he does not regard this book as a final frequency count of English reading. He points out that new words, the vocabulary of modern fiction and new war terms, for example, will become important and the list will need to be extended and amended in the future (v).

A lot of works afterward are influenced by Thorndike's frequency count. The list conducted by Faucett and Maki is one of them. They combined the Thorndike list (based on reading texts) and the Horn list (based on writing vocabulary), for Faucett and Maki considered both of the two lists are far more thorough and complete than any previous counts (1). Their purpose was to decide the universally indispensable and essential words by means of the statistical method. In order to combine two lists compiled on different

plans, they invented the method as follows:

> (1) to put the derivatives in Horn [Horn's list
> (1926)] under the primacy form as done by Thorndike,
> and to work out the new credit-number for the
> primary plus the derivatives;
>
> (2) to work out a new method of giving credit-
> numbers on a common basis.   (3-4)

One of the greatest contribution of their work is that they found the so-called 'turning point'. Studying closely the graph of frequency-range credits of words in the Horn and Thorndike lists (8, See Fig. 1), they reached a significant conclusion that after about 1,500 words, wide-range words rapidly give way to narrow-range words. Faucett and Maki states about this 'turning point' as follows:

> It seems to the compilers of this book that the most
> useful result that has come from the Thorndike and
> Horn word-counts is the fixing with a fairly high
> degree of accuracy of the dividing line between
> wide-range words and narrow-range words.   (11)

It needs to be explained here why the principle of 'range' is important. According to Hornby, a word is said to have a wide range if it is found to occur once in each of fifty different texts and to have a narrow range if it occurs perhaps fifty times in one particular text and not at all in the other forty-nine (18). Needless to say, wide-range words as a whole have more possibility to present themselves to a student. Regarding this point as important, Faucett and Maki provide a

list of wide-range words, consisting of 1,534 words (credit-
number 1 to 34), which are "almost 100 per cent authentic and
reliable" (7). The 24 words with a final credit-number of 1
are enumerated below. They are words of unusually high
frequency and wide range and may be looked on as words of
maximum usefulness and of first importance for practical
language learning and teaching purposes:

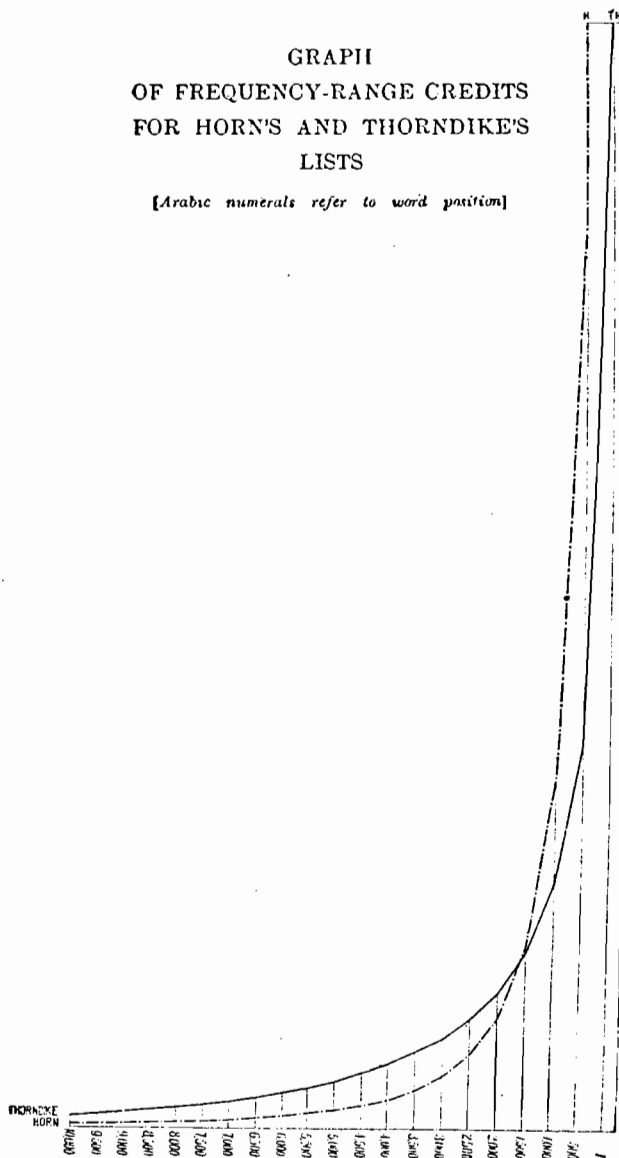> a   and   are   as   at   be   but   for   have   in   is   it
>
> not   of   on   that   the   this   to   we   will   with
>
> you   your   (Appendix 1)

Fig. 1.

GRAPH
OF FREQUENCY-RANGE CREDITS
FOR HORN'S AND THORNDIKE'S
LISTS

[Arabic numerals refer to word position]

Modern computer-based techniques, which have recently developed, make it easier to get information of word frequency from a multi-million-word corpus. As Meara mentions, the use of computers to carry out simple statistical analyses of texts is a development which is likely to be of some importance to language teachers, because it has considerable implications for the preparation of teaching materials (102). Carrol et al., for example, have compiled a computer-based word count. Their Word Frequency Book (1971) provides both the alphabetical and the rank list of the 86,741 different words (word types) found in the 5,088,721 words of running text (tokens). Texts are chosen to represent the range of required and recommended reading to which students are exposed in school grades 3 through 9 in the United States. They include textbooks, workbooks, novels, poetry, general nonfiction, encyclopedias, and magazines (Carrol et al. xiii). The word occuring most frequently in the corpus is, as we can predict easily, 'the'. According to the rank list, 'the' is followed by such words as 'of', 'and', 'a', 'to', 'in', 'is', 'you', 'that', and 'it'. These top ten words in the rank list account for about 23 per cent. In addition to letting us know the most frequent words, the lexical data given by Carrol et al. has been made use of for editorial purposes in preparing a learners' dictionary; that is The American Heritage School Dictionary (1972).

In Japan, recently, the publication of many kinds of learners' dictionaries has proliferated. Among them is

Proceed English-Japanese Dictionary (1988), which takes a new line in editing. The innovation is 'Key Word 5,000' selected on computer-based counting. Takefuta, one of the editors of this dictionary, combines two well-known word lists compiled by Kucera et al.(1967) and Carroll et al.(1971). As a result, an unbiased list consisting of 7,300 items has been made. It is what is named 'The White Vocabulary'. Takefuta has continued to amend the list, adding the other six lists based on vocabulary items from both written and spoken discourse, to select 5,000 words. Twenty-nine issues of TIME, the magazine, and twelve paperbacks are also included as the samples. The total number of words analysed is 9,128,733. The selected words are ranked among each 500 items, from the first 500 to the tenth 500.

Unlike Thorndike's counting method, which was carried out by hand and accordingly both expensive and slow to reach completion, the computer-based counting method has enabled us to get such information much easier and faster. However, although the way to count has advanced, the same problems seem to remain. One of the unavoidable limitations of word frequency is pointed out by Mackey.

> Although a passive vocabulary can be based on
> frequency, an active vocabulary must take other
> sources into account. For while it is possible to
> predict what a person will have to read, it is
> impossible to know everyting he may want to say.
> (181)

Since a passive and an active vocabulary are two sides of the same coin, frequency lists provide us with only one-sided information for communicative purposes. Carter and McCarthy mention the same point by saying that high frequency words are not automatically those which the learner needs (9). It is clear that all the lists based on frequency, including the four lists shown above, have this limitation. If the textbook was tried to compile based entirely on the high frequency words, its content would be dull and not motivating, because most of them are what we call 'function words' which are used to establish grammatical relations, and very polysemous common words. Therefore, if we intend to construct an appropriate teaching materials for production, some lower frequency items must be included. The principles of selection other than frequency should be adopted for the purpose.

2.2. Availability

As was already discussed, high-frequency words are not always the most appropriate and necessary, whether for production or for recognition, especially in certain situations. Take the words 'pint' and 'petrol', for example. Although these words would not come very high on a frequency-count of 'the language as a whole', the first one is useful in a pub and the second is available in a garage (Howatt, History 258). It is said that this conception was initially developed in France to establish Le Français Fondamental, or 'basic

French', by Michéa and others in 1950s. Wilkins explains the
procedure of the research based on this principle as follows:

> Given 16 'centres of interest', more than 900 French
> schoolchildren were asked to write down the twenty
> words that they thought would be most useful to
> them. There was apparently a large measure of
> agreement as to what constituted the most disponible
> or available items and the results were used to
> supplement frequency scores in establishing a word
> list. (117)

One of the most noticeable characteristics of this research is
that the focus was put on concrete nouns. Although they
exists independently of frequency of occurrence, people
obviously know a great many words of this kind. These words
are regarded as available for use and as easier to recall than
non-concrete items. It is considered, therefore, that some
concrete nouns should not be excluded from the basic teaching
vocabulary. Since the use of such words depends very closely
upon the situation in which the speech is taking place, the
most relevant situations for the foreign learners are chosen
by the research team. The following sixteen are regarded as a
minimum list for the researchers' purpose:

> parts of the body   clothing
>
> the house   furniture
>
> food and drink   the kitchen
>
> things put on the table at mealtimes
>
> heating and lighting

the school and the classroom	the city
the country town	transport
farming	animals
games	occupations

<div align="right">(Halliday et al. 194)</div>

The conception of 'availability', or the criterion of social need, has been working for communicative purpose. Two vocabularies listed according to topics are discussed below; one is West's Minimum Adequate Speech Vocabulary, and the other is the lexical content of van Ek's Threshold Level. Their selection is, however, done by intuition, rather than statistics.

Under the term 'The Minimum Adequate Speech Vocabulary', West chooses about 1,200 words as "a usable first stage" (Teaching 38). In order to discover and select the minimum vocabulary for speech, he adopted the following method:

> I took an obviously inadequate initial vocabulary
> (from the reading course) and deleted from it all
> words of merely reading value. . . . The list was
> then classified in order to show up gaps: thus one
> might easily have all the numbers except Eleven, all
> the colours except Grey. . . . The principle of
> Negative Selection was employed: a word or item
> should not be included unless it was such as to be
> useful to boys and girls, in town and country.
> (Teaching 39)

The vocabulary items are classified under the following

topics. These topics are divided into the following bracketed

topics respectively.

    A. The Earth

        (1.geographical features, 2.time, 3.the weather

        4.agriculture and farming, 5.animals and living

        things, 6.trees and flowers)

    B. The Self

        (7.the body, 8.the care of the body, 9.health and

        illness, 10.dress, 11.colour, dyes and paint, 12.the

        emotions, 13.religion and morality)

    C. The Home

        (14.houses and buildings, 15.furniture, domestic

        duties and staff, 16.domestic electricity and radio,

        17.food and cooking, 18.the family and facts of life)

    D. The Intellect

        (19.the intellect, 20.education, 21.arithmetic,

        22.geometry, 23.grammar)

    E. Business

        (24.business, shops, trades and professions, 25.money,

        banking and accounts, 26.materials and forms of

        matter, 27.the motor-car, tools and machinery, 28.

        receptacles, packing and despatching, 29.travel, 30.

        peoples and places)

    F. Relaxation

        (31.games, athletics and sport, 32.entertainments,

        sociability, visiting, 33.communication and

        publicity, 34.literature, 35.sound and music, 36.art

and photography)

    G. Public Life

        (37.government, law and taxation, 38.rank, 39.defence

        and fighting, 40.history)

                                                (<u>Teaching</u> 113-14)

Several words and phrases are listed in each topic. The items

selected under 'food and cookies' (C.17), for example, are

'bad', 'to go bad', 'bake', 'bell', 'bite', 'bitter', etc. In

West's opinion, a minimum adequate vocabulary is not a caravan

which can be lived in but cannot be added on to, nor a set of

foundations in the ground which may be built on later but

cannot be lived in now (<u>Teaching</u> 38). This means that it is

complete and workable in itself and that it can be amplified

while being used by learners.

    Howatt refers to the establishment of the lexicon for

Threshold level English as "much the same approach" as <u>Le</u>

<u>Français Fondamental</u> (<u>History</u> 258). 'Threshold level' (T-

level) stands for the minimal level of language proficiency

which is needed to achieve functional ability in a foreign

language (Richards, et al. 293). And the aim of establishing

this level is to make the free movement of men and ideas in

the European area easier by increasing the scale and

effectiveness of language learning (van Ek ix). van Ek, one

of the experts charged with the development of this project,

draws up topics and notions, and determines the actual

vocabulary items on the basis of the characteristics of T-

level learners. However, unlike the research conducted by

Michéa, the method for the selection is to a very large extent subjective; it is based on introspection, intuition, experience (van Ek 41). The list of topics van Ek has drawn up are as follows:

1. Personal identification

2. House and home

3. Trade, profession, occupation

4. Free time, entertainment

5. Travel

6. Relations with other people

7. Health and welfare

8. Education

9. Shopping

10. Food and drink

11. Services

12. Places

13. Foreign language

14. Weather   (21-23)

Each topic has sub-topics. Under the topic of 'personal identification', such headings as 'name', 'address', 'telephone number', etc. are enumerated. Words and phrases selected for T-level learners under the heading of 'telephone number' are 'telephone (P)', 'phone (R)', 'to telephone (P)', 'to call (R)', 'to ring up (R)', 'to make a call (R)', 'telephone number (P)'. The total number of vocabulary items is about 1,500. In addition to selecting items, van Ek distinguishes the words for both productive and receptive use

(1,050 items) from the vocabulary for receptive use only (450 items). The words marked (P) above are meant for receptive and productive use; those marked (R) are words which the learners will have to be able to understand when others use them.

West and van Ek, the two proponents of topic-centered selection we have seen above, are both contented with their own works. As van Ek's selection "will suit the needs of the average man rather better than any competing equivalent selection" (xi), so the Minimum Adequate vocabulary is, West believes, "a fairly satisfactory piece of work" (Teaching 93). These two lists might be useful for communicative purpose just as they believe, for the topic-centered selection can provide learners for social reality. However, it is doubtful to what extent the learners' individual needs are taken into consideration.

More than half a century before West and van Ek, Jespersen had already mentioned the subject-centered approach to vocabulary teaching as follows, though there had been no direct suggestion about selection.

> The teacher may give the pupil a certain subject
> (the human body, war, a railway journey) about which
> he is to collect all the words and expressions
> which he can remember--or which occurred in the last
> narrative read--and he may also arrange them in
> various subdivisions. (137)

An idea of this kind can also be found in Palmer's 3,000 words

established for teaching English in Japan. As a starting

point, his list was based on such frequency word lists as

Thorndike's. However, he was not satisfied these lists for

the following reasons:

> (1) the literature analyzed for the counts is chosen
>   subjectively
>
> (2) semantic varieties are not determined
>
> (3) "environmental" terms are lacking
>
> (4) at best, they represent only a limited amount of
>   material

(Fries and Traver 164)

'Environmental' words are the vocabulary items which are

useful in a specific situation, even though they are far less

frequent. 'Blackboard', for instance, is useful only in a

classroom situation, while students might scarcely meet the

word elsewhere. Such words should be included in the teaching

material for learners to use in the classroom. Based on this

idea, Palmer added many environmental words to the list by

means of subjective and empirical approaches. Afterward, he

divided the 3,000 word vocabulary into five lists of 600

words. They were based on word frequency supplemented by

classroom requirements. In the first 600 list, we can find

242 items which do not appear in the first 500 most frequently

used English words (Fries and Traver 165).

It might be wrong to say that 'environmental' words are

identical with 'available' words. But certainly, both of

these ideas will make up for the neglected aspect of word

frequency. And this dimention can be valued as a more "sophisticated" approach to vocabulary selection (Halliday et al. 198).

2.3. Coverage

Kelly states that while availability deals largely with the utility of a unit in a social situation, coverage is rather a linguistic issue (201). To start with, we will see definitions of 'dictionary' from two dictionaries. One is West's The New Method English Dictionary and the other is The General Basic English Dictionary by Ogden.

(1) a book containing a list of words in A.B.C. order, with their meanings (this book is a dictionary).

(New Method 89)

(2) Book in ABC etc. order, giving the sense of words, or their parallels in another language.

(General Basic 101)

Even though statements are given to the same word, we can observe a gap between them. They are provided by means of different sets of limited vocabulary, namely 'definition vocabulary'. They can be used to talk about other things. For the purpose of definition, words of wide coverage are selected. Words which have 'coverage' are common or central enough to stand for other words. West includes 1,490 words (not including 'parallel') in his definition vocabulary, while Ogden uses only 850 items (not including 'contain').

Mackey classifies the ways to displace other words into four groups. These are, 1) inclusion, 2) extension, 3) combination, and 4) definition (184). The four principles are embodied in the notion of 'coverage', which can be measured by the number of other items that a certain word can displace. We can make out what 'coverage' means through Mackey's examples as follows:

    (1) Inclusion

        'Seat' includes 'chair', 'bench', 'stool', and 'place'.

    (2) Extension

        'Branch' and 'arm', whose meanings are easily extended metaphorically, can be used to eliminate a word like 'tributary' (of a river).

    (3) Combination

        'Journalist' can be made unnecessary by the combination 'news'+'paper'+'man'.

    (4) Definition

        As is shown above, certain words can be replaced by simple definition. 'Breakfast' can be difined as the 'morning meal', for example.

(184-85)

As Mackey points out, rigid application of these principles of coverage through a logical analysis of a language can result in a small self-contained or island language, the best known example of which is BASIC English (185). The term BASIC does not mean 'basic'. It is an

acronym which stands for British American Scientific
International Commercial. Fries and Traver cite the basic
priciple of BASIC English from Ogden as follows:

> . . . a careful and systematic selection of 850
> English words which will cover those needs of every
> day life for which a vocabulary of 20,000 words is
> frequently employed. These words are not the words
> most commonly used as determined by word counts; but
> all of them are common, and more than 600 of them
> are constantly used by any English or American
> child. (158)

The items of the BASIC English vocabulary are made up of 200
names of 'picturable objects', 400 'general' names, 150
'qualities' and 100 'words that put these names and adjectives
into operation' (Fries and Traver 159). One of the remarkable
characteristics of this system is that only sixteen verbs and
two modal verbs are included. They are 'come', 'get', 'give',
'go', 'keep', 'let', 'make', 'put', 'seem', 'take', 'be',
'do', 'have', 'say', 'see', 'send', and 'may', 'will'.
However, using other items especially the rest 82 operation
items, BASIC can represent a great deal of meanings of English
verbs. Although 'ask' and 'want' are excluded, the meanings
of them can be expressed like 'put a question to' and like
'have a desire for'. The relationship between 'ask' and 'put
a question to', for example, is somewhat akin to the Chomskyan
contrast between the surface structure and the deep structure
(Howatt, History 252).

The advantages of BASIC English, as stated by Ogden, are
summarized by Fries and Taver as follows:

(1) An elimination of sound confusions.

(2) Simple grammatical structure.

(3) Analytical nature resulting in "high
translatability."

(4) Great flexibility (intelligibility is the only
criterion).

(5) Many European language affinities.

(6) Basic carries forward to a further analytic stage the
habits of the past.

(7) It is specially designed for mechanical transmission.

(8) There are no supersigns (accents).

(9) The spelling difficulties of English are eliminated
because the vocabulary is small.

(10) There is no case system.

(11) The vocabulary consists of short words. Only 16 have
more than 3 syllables. (161-62)

It appears that learner's memory burden of words can be
lightened, but BASIC has widely been criticized in that the
systems often produce unnatural English. Such phrases
expressing social interaction as 'good-bye' or 'thank you'
cannot be used, and wordy phrases can possibly make
communication a clumsy affair.

On the other hand, as is illustrated above, West
established the different system of definition vocabulary.
This contribution is based on his text-writing work. Using

Thorndike's Teacher's Word Book, West constructed readers with a controlled vocabulary and regular repetition of new words (Stern 460). The 1,779 word vocabulary used in his New Method Readers was taken as a starting point in preparing the dictionary. Then he added desirable words to and excluded words with lower value from the original list (Fries and Traver 175). As a result, the number of definition vocabulary settled 1,490. His theory was that in order to survive in a foreign language environment, a person needs to ask questions about a very broad range of necessities of daily life, not merely to make remarks about the commonplaces at the head of the frequency lists (Kelly 29). Therefore, a set of vocabulary of this kind can make a useful instrument.

West's notion of a limited defining vocabulary is one of the main informing design principles of the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1978) (hereafter LDOCE). As we shall see below, West's idea of defining vocabulary underlies A General Service List of English Words (1953) (hereafter GSL). And GSL has laid the foundation for LDOCE. Procter, the Editor-in-Chief of LDOCE, explains the use of defining vocabulary as follows:

> All the definitions and examples in the dictionary
> are written in a controlled vocabulary of
> approximately 2,000 words which were selected by a
> thorough study of a number of frequency and
> pedagogic lists of English, particular reference
> having been made to A General Service List of

English Words by Michael West. (viii-ix)

Defining or restricted vocabularies, however, are not without

problems. Carter points out the following three problems.

First, there is no guarantee that 'definition words' will be

known by the learner, and some words, such as 'arch',

'bitter', 'determine', for example, are not particularly

common. Secondly, defining vocabularies can achieve

simplicity at the expense of accuracy. Without the pertinent

words, definitions would sometimes result in the use of a

large number of unnecessary words to express an idea needing

fewer words. Thirdly, defining vocabularies work better in

the explanation of concrete words than abstract ones (127).

2.4. Learnability

Words which can be easily learned might be selected for

beginners. While the term 'learnability' is used by Mackey,

Kelly calls the principle 'facility' (205). This principle

can be subdivided into the following five headings; 1)

similarity, 2) clarity, 3) brevity, 4) regularity, 5) learning

load (Mackey 187).

It is difficult to identify a certain word list based

only on this principle. These five factors might be somehow

taken into account in the subjective, empirical approach of

selection. Instead of presenting a word list, we shall see

the examples Mackey takes as follows:

(1) Similarity

English 'mother' is similar German equivalent

'Mutter'. It can, therefore, be remembered easily.

(2) Clarity

A name of a thing, such as 'radiator', seems to be

easier to teach and to learn than an abstract word,

because we can point to it and make the meaning

clear.

(3) Brevity

Even though 'enemy' is more frequent, 'foe' might

be selected because a short word is considered easy

to recognize or to pronounce.

(4) Regularity

Regular verbs, for example, might be preferred to

items which follow the irregular pattern.

(5) Learning Load

The learners who already know the words 'hand' and

'bag', for instance, can easily learn the word

'handbag' without much learning load. (187-88)

One of the drawbacks of this criterion is that facility and

utility do not often coincide (Kelly 205). Take the word

'hound', for example. It is true that this word is easy to

learn for the German student because German 'Hund' is similar

to it in form and meaning. But 'hound' is not so useful as

'Hund', and the German student has to learn the word 'dog' in

order to use English correctly. What we have to recognize in

adopting this principle is that trying to ease the student's

burden may result in falsifying the language.

2.5. 'Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection'

In 1930s, during the period of activity called 'vocabulary control movement' (Carter and McCarthy 1), a lot of groundwork on vocabulary selection was done. As we have already seen, several principles were adopted in the construction of word lists in several ways during this period. But the works were chiefly private achievements. The time had clearly come for co-ordinating the efforts of individual workers, evaluating results so far achieved, and for exploring the possibilities of a joint discussion in a field of work (Palmer et al. 2). On West's initiative, a co-ordinated enterprise started in 1934 under the auspices of the Carnegie Corporation. The main workers concerned, other than West, were Thorndike, Faucett and Palmer. All of them were well-known as experts of vocabulary selection. At first, the following nine purposes or standpoints were stated in connection with the preparation of limited or selected vocabularies.

(1) The Vocabulary "Island."

(2) The "Foundation" Standpoint.

(3) The "Standardised Examination" Standpoint.

(4) Purification of Style.

(5) The Standpoint of the Practical Teacher.

(6) The Standpoint of the Educationist.

(7) Standpoint of the Textbook Simplifier.

(8) The Standpoint of English as a Lingua Franca.

(9) The Tourist and Traveller Standpoint.

(Palmer et al. 9-11)

Each of these was considered carefully, and in the course of discussion, these general attitudes became crystallised into detailed principles in regard to certain criteria of word valuation as follows:

(1) Word-frequency.

(2) Structural value.

(3) Universality in respect of geographic area.

(4) Range of applicability to varieties of subject, or subject-range.

(5) Value for purposes of definition of the meaning of other words.

(6) Value for word-building.

(7) Stylistic function of a word (its suitability for colloquial, common, ceremonial, or the types of discourse).   (Palmer et al. 13)

In compiling the actual word list, the several previous word lists were taken into consideration as the basis of selection. These are:

(1) The 1,500 words of highest rating in the Faucett-Maki-Thorndike-Horn word list.

(2) The First and Second Interim Reports on Vocabulary Selection (Palmer's 3,000 words).

(3) West's Defining Vocabulary.

(4) Ten other selected word lists

(Fries and Traver 177)

According to Fries and Traver, the BASIC words are said to be included in the other ten lists. These lists shown above laid foundation for the choice of words. Careful selection aiming at basic use of English, both for production and for reading, had been made, and the tentative word list was compiled. The outcome was called the Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection for English as a Foreign Language (1936), usually referred to as 'The Carnegie Report'.

The list consists of 2,060 entries representing a foundation vocabulary for school use in the teaching of English to non-English-speaking pupils from twelve to eighteen years of age (Palmer et al. 30). It is claimed that knowing these words gives access to about 80 per cent of the words in any written text and thus stimulates motivation since the words acquired can be seen by learners to have a demonstrably quick return (Carter 163). Another advantage is that the headwords are sub-classified according to their grammatical status and their semantic meanings. These sub-categories were a major advance on previous word lists and greatly increased the pedagogical value of the work (Howatt, History 256). And also the headwords are briefly defined by means of illustrative sentences shown as follows:

R I G H T (a)	(*left)
right, adj. & n.	My right hand and my left hand
	Turn to the right
	On the right
	On my right
	Phrase :
	Right-hand
	My right-hand side
	On the right-hand side

RIGHT (b)	(*wrong)
right, adj.	(1) (correct, suitable)
	The right clothes for this occasion
	That's not the right book
	His judgement is always right
	Phrase :
	That's right
	(2) (normal, healthy, in order)
	The doctor will soon put you right
	Get the engine right
	Phrase :
	In his right mind
	(3) (just, moral)
	It's not right to steal
	Do the right thing
all right	*Phrases :*
	I'm all right (now) (well)
	All right (I'll do it) (assent)
right, n.	(1) (justice)
	Be in the right
	Fight for the right
	(2) (just claim)
	Get one's rights
	I have a right to laugh
	Phrase :
	By rights

RIGHT (c)	
right, adv.	(completely)
	Go right to the end
	Turn right round, over
	Phrase :
	A right angle

(Palmer et al. 395-96)

It is also said that although the list suits its basic purposes very well but, it is less appropriate for other purposes such as the words needed by visitors to England or new residents, for example, for use in everyday situations (Howatt, History 256). This point has already suggested in the list itself like this; a learner speaking within this list would tend to be coulourless (Palmer et al. 87).

The Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection, which was revised in 1953 by West, eventually became A General Service List of English Words. The improved list made particular use of the semantic count conducted by Thorndike and Lorge, and consequently West's revision makes a volume that gives the

vocabulary of the Carnegie Report plus semantic frequencies. Each headword is provided a number of occurrence in five million words and the percentage of each meaning, if it has more than one meaning:

RIGHT	2370c		
right, adj.	A.	(1) *(morally right)*	
		It wouldn't be right to do that	2%
		(2a) *(suitable)*	
		Right use of	
		Right-sized	8%
right, adj. *(continued)*		(2b) *(correct)*	
		You were quite right; it was as you said	
		Get the answer right	9%
		Phrases:	
		I feel all right; I'm all right *(= not tired or ill)*	
		All right! *(= I will do as you ask)*	2%
		[In his right mind, 0.3%]	
right, n.		(1) *(moral)*	
		Do right	
		Be in the right	3%
		(2) *(legal right; notifiable claim)*	
		Have the right to; have no right to	
		The right of (wearing a hat in the king's presence)	
		By right of (conquest)	
		He should be the heir, by rights	
		The people's rights	44%
right, adv.		(1) *(morally, correctly)*	
		Guess right	
		Hold it right	
		Am I doing all right?	4%
		(2) *(entirely)*	
		Go right up, on, through, out	
		Turn right round, over	
		It's right at the end, — at the foot of the stairs	4%
		[Right here, now, away, 2%; right royally, 3%; Right Honourable, 0.3%]	
right (hand), adj. & adv.	B.	My right hand; lands right of the river	8%
right, n. and adv.		Turn to the right; turn right	6%
		[*political use*, 1%]	

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

right angle, n.	30c	

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

rightly, adv.	52c	Act rightly
		Rightly so called
		If I understand you rightly

(West, General Service 412-13)

As Howatt points out, GSL is not a frequency list as is
sometimes supposed, though the evidence from frequency
statistics was available to the team (256). It is the
flowering of vocabulary selection at that time based on both
subjective and objective selectional criteria.

Jeffery looked up to West for the energy and experience
he had brought to the task (vi). His GSL was regarded as a
'culmination' those days. But it is not without
disadvantages; the list is to some extent outdated. Such
common 1980s words as 'television' and 'computer', for
example, do not appear in the list based on a written corpus
in 1930s or earlier. However, it remains one of the most
innovative examples of foreign language pedagogy and
lexicometric research this century (Carter and McCarthy 9).

3. Summary

We have so far discussed the characteristic of each
principle with some examples. A historical sketch like this
has revealed that no word list is without drawbacks. In order
to compensate for each weakness, there seem to be two types of
solutions.

One of these is that more than one list should be
provided according to the aims of instruction. Fries and
Traver, for example, suggest that there should be two distinct
lists for two fundamentally different purposes; one for the
productive use of the language and one for the receptive use

(202). In order to do so, different criteria have to be taken into consideration. Mackey suggests that we should adopt the principle of selection according to the purpose. If the course stresses comprehension, frequency and range within the sort of material used will take precedence. If it is mainly for expression, coverage and availability take precedence (189).

Another solution is the integration of word lists. According to Fries and Traver, it is taken for granted that two vocabularies, one for production and the other for reception, should be made to overlap as far as is practically possible (202-03). One of the lists which seem to have made progress in that direction is Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection. The investigation shows that the 2,060 items in the list contains 93 percent of the Basic English vocabulary and 98.4 percent of Thorndike's first thousand, i.e. both a vacabulary chosen on logical grounds (based on coverage) and one determined by frequency and range. At a glance, this selection appears to be crystallized by the fusion of principles both for productive use and receptive use. However, such a list compiled by 'eclectic approach', tends to be rather 'colourless'. This problem was noted by Eckersley in 1940s when he came to prepare his Essential English textbooks. He intended to include everyday dialogues with the language needed to talk about English, and aimed at a more relaxed and livelier atmosphere than the dull, pedagogical texts. Eckersley was not satisfied with the Carnegie Report,

and the choice of words was not restricted to the list; his textbooks contained such everyday items as 'bacon', 'beef', 'cabbage', and 'luggage', which were ignored by Interim Report (Howatt, History 216). This problem has also pointed out by Carter and McCarthy. They mention that GSL can be criticized for not giving adequate consideration to the notions of the 'availability' of words, though no current research was available to West at that time (9).

These statements have an implication that even the most sophisticated-looking list still leaves something to be desired, however carefully the words may be chosen. If we intend to construct a textbook suitable for learners, it is absolutely unavoidable to come up against the lack of certain vocabulary items.

Finally, the present author would like to conclude this chapter by saying that each of the above-mentioned principles seems to be sound on vocabulary selection, but not sound on vocabulary limitation. The list in limited number could be possibly attacked, no matter how perfect it may seem, if a certain item was not included. It is true that such a list is indeed useful for foreign learners, but learning should not be confined to these items. Wilkins asserts that if the textbook writer was simply aware of such notions as frequency, range, usefulness, teachability, etc., the mistakes of uncontrolled introduction of vocabulary could be avoided, and that it is unnecessary to draw up an inventory of lexical items beforehand (Linguistics 118). For the most part, this idea

can be accepted.

One more comment should be added here. Howatt mentions
that such criteria as frequency, coverage and availability are
all useful, but we should not be unaware of the most important
idea, i.e., the idea of 'appropriate' language (Background
10). The following example will illuminate this idea:

> For example, the language of winter sports is not
>
> going to appear high on any numerically determined
>
> list of 'useful words in English'. But to a
>
> Norwegian or a Swiss learner, it is especially
>
> important to their interests and to the situations
>
> where they are likely to use their English, e.g.
>
> talking to foreign visitors at ski resorts and so
>
> on. (Background 10-11).

Therefore we need to teach language that matches the interests
of the pupil and the situations in which he might possibly use
his linguistic knowledge.

A similar point is suggested by Sinclair and Renouf.
They state that to base a selection of words on a study of
native-speaker usage is not to imply that there is an identity
between the worlds of the learner and the native speaker
(150). As we saw, the word lists so far conducted seem to
have been native-centered selection. This means that the
items are mostly selected by native speakers of the language
or counted on the basis of English texts, and they result in
being reflected more by American or British society than the
learners' circumstances. As far as 'everyday words' in the

lists are concerned, they are just the words for native speakers' daily use. No doubt that these words are not completely useful in expressing the learners' real lives. The specialized corpora should therefore be established to provide appropriate language for learners in the particular ELT communities. The notion of 'appropriateness' will be discussed later in the last chapter.

We shall now move on to the problems of vocabulary in the textbooks in the following chapter.

Chapter Ⅱ

Problems of Vocabulary Selection in Japan

In the TEFL context of Japan, one of the most well-known
vocabulary controls is prescribed in the present Course of
Study. As is shown below, the number of new words are
restricted in each grade:

[Junior High Level]			[Senior High Level]		
Grade 1	300 ～	350	English Ⅰ	400 ～	500
Grade 2	300 ～	350	English Ⅱ	600 ～	700
Grade 3	300 ～	350	English Ⅱ B	400 ～	700
total	900 ～ 1,050		total	1,400 ～ 1,900	

Among the total of 900～1,050 junior high level words, only
490 items (See Appendix A) are clearly designated, while there
is no stipulation of compulsory items at senior high level.
Four hundred and ninety words are prescribed as the most
fundamental and indispensable items, and as the words which
should be taught in any of Grade 1, 2, and 3 (Monbu-sho,
Chugakko 57-58). Textbooks used in junior high schools are
therefore compiled using 900～1,050 items including these 490.
In Japan six kinds of lower secondary textbooks, all of which
consist of Book 1, 2, and 3, are approved by the Ministry of
Education. There are more varieties of textbooks at senior
high level. In any case they are, as it were, based on their
own vocabulary selection.

Thus regarding the words employed in the textbook as

selected vocabulary in itself, we will examine the problems of the selection. The problems which are discussed in this chapter consist of two aspects: one is the total number of vocabulary items, and the other is the way to select these items.

1. Vocabulary limitation in textbooks

Vocabulary items are strictly limited at both junior and senior high levels. It is true that memorizing a number of words inconsistently may be of no use, but strictly controlled vocabulary brings about some problems in a classroom situation. First, structural drills impose an unnatural limitation on vocabulary selection. Secondly, it proves to be impossible to use a mastered structure in an actual discourse. Thirdly, students have to pay the penalty for having neglected vocabulary in the earlier stages; later they must struggle with a large number of new words (Sano et al. 107). These three problems are to some extent derived from the textbooks influenced largely by structuralism.

The problems of vocabulary selection entailed by the structuralist approach are discussed in Fries' Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (1945). Fries believes that the problem of learning a new language is not learning its vocabulary, but mastering its sound system and its grammatical structure (3). It is not, of course, that he does not have any interest in vocabulary. He classifies English

words into four groups: 1) function words, 2) substitute words, 3) words with negative and affirmative distribution, and 4) content words. At the beginning, Fries remarks, the first three groups of words should be emphasized to the point of mastery (50). The three groups--function words, substitute words, and words with negative and affirmative distribution-- play an important role for the structural operation. At the same time learners must master the fundamentals of the sound system. Content words, on the other hand, should be strictly limited until the mastery of structure and sound has completed. The only items that operate the structures and that represent the sound system are introduced in this stage.

Fries' attitude toward vocabulary is somewhat similar to the exponents of 'the structural school' (West, Present Position 435) of vocabulary selection, whose theory is that non-structural words do not matter. West points out the problem of their attitudes as follows:

> In actual life we tend, in the earlier stage of
> learning a foreign language, to pick up a large
> number of naming words together with an absolute
> minimum of structure. Indeed in the earliest stage
> the tourist merely points and names; he speaks
> without structure. Later he adds a little
> structure, but the acquisition of content words
> tends for a long time to go ahead of the learning of
> a structural vocabulary fit to contain them.
> Whereas the exponents of this school of thought

follow an opposite procedure--a linguistically

correct but psychologically wrong word-order.

(<u>Present Position</u> 435)

West regards content words, which tend to be neglected under

the influence of structuralism, as "the major problem" in a

reading and a speaking vocabulary (<u>Teaching</u> 38-39). Like

Wilkins, one of the exponents of Communicative theory, West

puts emphasis on content words as the indispensable component

in communicating with others.

One can express oneself using content words only,

but it is not possible to speak using structures

only. . . . One cannot be realistic and speak

language (not mere words) without an adequate set of

names of things to talk about. (<u>Teaching</u> 48)

In Japan, such experts of ELT as Ogawa (91) and Shimizu (241)

agree with West's idea and state that content words should be

more emphasized in the Japanese ELT situation. In fact,

however, their assertion seem to have so far never been given

any consideration. The present textbooks still seem to cling

too much to the following belief as stated in <u>Suggested Course</u>

<u>of Study in English for Lower and Upper Secondary Schools</u> <u>Ⅰ</u>

(1951).

The grading vocabulary items (e.g. from concrete to

abstract) is of particular importance in the lower

secondary school, because in the beginning and the

early stages any over-burdening of pupils in the

acquisition of a vocabulary will hamper the learning

of English as "speech" in which emphasis is laid on
the learning of structural patterns. (Ohmura et al.
454)

As a result, in order to avoid 'over-burdening' of students,
textbooks for junior high students must be compiled using only
about 1,000 items. What is worse, declensional and
conjugational forms should be counted separately. For
example, 'man' and 'men' are regarded as two words, so are
'write' and 'wrote' (Monbu-sho, Chugakko 55-56). Textbook
compilers are therefore forced to write stories and dialogues
within a very small vocabulary, which might result in poor
content. As for senior high level, the problems are not much
different. Textbooks of higher secondary English Ⅰ , for
example, should be written within only around 1,500 words.

Limited vocabulary sometimes brings about strangely
troublesome phenomena. Compared with learners' mental
development, vocabulary items in junior high textbooks are
rather low level. Paradoxically, especially at higher
secondary level, learners have to stuff themselves with
intellectually high level, abstract words including some items
useless for daily conversation.

More serious problems can be observed in regard to
learners' self-expression. Because of the lack of vocabulary
items, especially those used to talk about daily life,
learners cannot discuss their experiences in English. In the
next section, we will examine the failure of textbooks to
address this issue, drawing on experimental research.

2. Problems as seen from the communicative perspective

In English classrooms, students often ask questions about English vocabulary. Most of the questions are, in fact, about daily words which occur in students' everyday conversation in Japanese. "Tell me the English words for shapen no shin (lead)," for example. It can be easily seen from this example that students are interested to know the English equivalents of everyday Japanese words. As a matter of fact, judging from the writer's experience, students do not have sufficient knowledge of vocabulary to utter anything which relates to their everyday, personal matters in English. Although this fact is likely to be overlooked in a classroom situation, it is a serious problem in respect to the facilitation of communication.

This fact motivated the present writer to undertake research into the 'mismatch' between the words provided by the authorities (i.e. textbook writers sanctioned and controlled by the Ministry of Education) for learners and the words the learners themselves felt they needed. What follows is a report on this research.

A questionnaire survey of first-year male students at a certain high school was conducted in June, 1988. The total number of subjects was 108. They were asked to write ten Japanese words which they wanted to express in English on each topic. From a previously conducted pilot survey, four topics had been derived: 1) school life, 2) clothing, 3) food, and 4)

living. The total number of words collected amounted to
4,320. The words which were specified by five or more
students are listed in Table 1, and the number of students is
shown in parentheses. As will be seen, various kinds of words
are listed. It can be guessed that this is because students
vary largely in their communicative needs.

Roughly speaking, the words listed in Table 1 derive from
the students' daily life. 'Kokuban', 'bushitsu', 'jipan', 'T-
shatsu', 'misoshiru', 'okonomiyaki', 'benjo', 'gomibako', for
example. These L1 words seem to be familiar to the learners.

However, there are some other words with little
relationship to their real lives. Words peculiar to Japanese
'traditional' clothes (e.g. 'fundoshi', 'suteteko'),
historical objects (e.g. 'tateanashiki-jukyo'), and words
reflected by their interest in sexual matters (e.g. 'love
hotel', 'brassiere') are also observed. They might not be
related directly with their everyday lives as a matter of
fact. But it can be easily guessed that not every student has
interest in expressing his world in English. Indeed some boys
listed 10 required words on the assumption that they use them
in writing and conversation, but others may have filled the
blank with words only reflected by their interests. This is
probably one of the weak points of such analyses of needs
expressed by learners' themselves, since the hierarchy of
interest is not revealed. Nevertheless, it is the learner's
interest that is the first step of his self-expression. In
this sense taking account of the words listed in Table 1 is

worthwhile.

Table 1.

GAKKOSEIKATSU (school life)	I (clothing)	SHOKU (food)	JU (living)
1. kokuban (27)	1. geta (42)	1. natto (30)	1. tatami (34)
2. kokubankeshi (25)	2. fundoshi (33)	2. udon (28)	2. hashira (29)
3. taiikukan (20)	3. kutsushita (32)	3. tofu (23)	3. tansu (22)
4. kosha (18)	4. kimono (31)	4. ramen (23)	4. shoji (19)
5. ijime (14)	5. katsura (30)	5. misoshiru (20)	5. tenjyo (17)
6. choku (14)	6. tabi (27)	6. sushi (19)	6. oshiire (16)
7. roka (14)	7. haramaki (25)	7. umeboshi (15)	7. fusuma (16)
8. kyotaku (13)	8. nekutai (24)	8. okonomiyaki (13)	8. kaidan (15)
9. keikoto (12)	9. zubon (23)	9. soba (13)	9. genkan (15)
10. shokuinshitu (12)	10. gakuseifuku (22)	10. takuan (13)	10. tateanashiki jukyo (15)
11. chorei (12)	11. zori (22)	11. yakiniku (13)	11. benjyo (15)
12. shokudo (11)	12. nagagutsu (22)	12. kyuri (12)	12. suido (13)
13. taiiku (11)	13. hakama (22)	13. senbei (11)	13. reizoko (13)
14. bushitsu (11)	14. tebukuro (19)	14. mochi (11)	14. jutan (12)
15. okujo (9)	15. yukata (19)	15. gyudon (10)	15. futon (11)
16. kyokasho (9)	16. yoroi (16)	16. gyoza (10)	16. kotatsu (10)
17. kocho (9)	17. kutsu (14)	17. somen (10)	17. sentakuki (10)
18. kotei (9)	18. shatsu (14)	18. takoyaki (10)	18. tokonoma (10)
19. gomibako (9)	19. hachimaki (14)	19. sake (9)	19. yane (10)
20. chiritori (9)	20. pantsu (13)	20. sashimi (9)	20. apato (9)
21. hoki (9)	21. megane (13)	21. suika (9)	21. ie (9)
22. kosoku (8)	22. jipan (12)	22. tsukemono (9)	22. kawara (9)
23. jitenshaokiba (8)	23. junihitoe (11)	23. negi (9)	23. senpuki (9)
24. tsukue (8)	24. taisofuku (11)	24. omusubi (8)	24. yuka (9)
25. isu (7)	25. T-shatsu (11)	25. katsudon (8)	25. isu (7)
26. kyodan (7)	26. beruto (11)	26. tai (8)	26. kabe (7)
27. shugakuryoko (7)	27. kawagutsu (10)	27. tenpura (8)	27. koya (7)
28. suido (7)	28. botan (10)	28. kamaboko (7)	28. zokin (7)
29. seishun (7)	29. oshime (9)	29. gohan (7)	29. furo (7)
30. taigaku (7)	30. judogi (9)	30. daikon (7)	30. betto (7)
31. teigaku (7)	31. chanchanko (9)	31. chikuwa (7)	31. hocho (7)
32. furyo (7)	32. ireba (8)	32. tendon (7)	32. makura (7)
33. hoshu (7)	33. kattashatsu (8)	33. nasu (7)	33. keikoto (6)
34. kasatate (6)	34. kegawa (8)	34. ika (6)	34. gotei (6)
35. kyukei (6)	35. sarashi (8)	35. konbu (6)	35. zabuton (6)
36. ketten (6)	36. obi (7)	36. sukiyaki (6)	36. daikokubashira (6)
37. koishitsu (6)	37. kutsuhimo (7)	37. daizu (6)	37. denchu (6)
38. konaiboryoku (6)	38. saifu (7)	38. tako (6)	38. hashi (6)
39. shakaika (6)	39. suteteko (7)	39. tarako (6)	39. besso (6)
40. judogi (6)	40. bontan (7)	40. nori (6)	40. manaita (6)
41. jugyo (6)	41. kaisuipantsu (6)	41. hamachi (6)	41. manshon (6)
42. senpai (6)	42. kabuto (6)	42. maguro (6)	42. yaneura (6)
43. bijutsu (6)	43. sagyogi (6)	43. manju (6)	43. roka (6)
44. monosashi (6)	44. jaji (6)	44. wakame (6)	44. kaitenbetto (5)
45. koten (5)	45. torena (6)	45. okayu (5)	45. gomibako (5)
46. shokaki (5)	46. buraja (6)	46. osechi (5)	46. senmenjyo (5)
47. sotsugyoshiki (5)	47. waraji (6)	47. kabocha (5)	47. sutobu (5)
48. taisofuku (5)	48. kappa (5)	48. takenoko (5)	48. daidokoro (5)
49. tuchihyo (5)	49. sebiro (5)	49. tamanegi (5)	49. tsukue (5)
50. tetsubo (5)	50. tsukehige (5)	50. chukasoba (5)	50. densen (5)
51. nyugakushiki (5)	51. nizugi (5)	51. ninjin (5)	51. butsudan (5)
52. butsuri (5)		52. mugi (5)	52. heya (5)
53. bunkasai (5)		53. yakisoba (5)	53. hoki (5)
		54. yokan (5)	54. beranda (5)
			55. rabuhoteru (5)

These Japanese words were put into English by the present author, using several English-Japanese and Japanese-English dictionaries. With some native speakers' help, the most suitable corresponding English word or phrase was chosen. As is shown below, in the case of words peculiar to Japanese culture, some are translated like definitions in a dictionary, others remain in their original form, but written in the Roman alphabet.

Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show these translations and how they are dealt with in Japanese textbooks. Take 'blackboard', at the top of the Table 2, for example. Under column (J), '1' means that among six junior high textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, one of them use this word in the body of the text and in the tables of the target sentences. The words in exercises and the other appendant pages are neglected. The bracketed word like '(board)' indicates that a certain textbook deals with this word as the English equivalent for 'kokuban' in Japanese. In this case, the number '1' means that only one textbook lists 'board' in this meaning. These numbers are given on the basis of computer-based text research work by Miura et al.(1987).

Table 2.

SCHOOL LIFE	J	S
1. blackboard	1	-
(board)	(1)	*
2. eraser	1	
3. gym	4	
4. school building	0	
5. bullying	0	
6. chalk	0	
7. corridor	0	
8. teacher's desk	0	
9. fluorescent lamp	0	
10. teachers' room	0	
11. assembly	1	
12. cafeteria	1	
13. P.E.	1	
14. clubroom	0	
15. roof	1	-
16. textbook	1	-
17. principal	1	
18. playground	2	
19. trash can	0	
20. dustpan	0	
21. broom	1	
22. school rules	0	
23. bicycle shed	0	
24. desk	6	-
25. chair	5	-
26. platform	0	
27. school excursion	0	
(graduation trip)	(1)	
28. faucet	0	
(tap)	(1)	
29. youth	0	
30. dropout	0	
31. suspension from school	0	
32. delinquent	0	
33. supplementary lesson	0	
34. umbrella-stand	0	
35. break	1	-
(rest)	(2)	-
36. F mark	0	
37. locker room	0	
38. school violence	0	
39. social studies	0	
40. suit for judo practice	0	
41. class	6	-
(lesson)	(6)	-
42. senior	1	
43. art	2	-
44. ruler	2	
45. classical literature	0	
46. fire extinguisher	0	
47. graduation	1	
48. training uniform	0	
49. report card	2	
50. horizontal bar	0	
51. entrance ceremony	0	
52. physics	0	*
53. school festival	1	

Table 3.

CLOTHING	J	S
1. geta	0	
2. loincloth	0	
3. socks	0	*
4. kimono	0	
5. wig	0	
6. tabi	0	
7. belly band	0	
8. tie	1	-
9. trousers	0	
10. school uniform	0	-
(uniform)	(1)	-
11. sandals	0	
12. boots	0	
13. hakama	0	
14. gloves	1	-
15. yukata	0	
16. armor	0	
17. shoes	3	-
18. undershirt	0	
19. headband	0	
20. underpants	0	
21. glasses	1	-
22. jeans	0	
23. ceremonial dress of a Japanese court lady	0	
24. training uniform	0	
25. T-shirt	1	
26. belt	3	
27. shoes	3	-
28. button	0	
29. diaper	0	
30. suit for judo practice	0	
31. padded sleeveless coat	0	
32. false teeth	0	
33. shirt	1	*
34. fur	1	
35. sarashi	0	
36. obi	0	
37. shoelace	0	
38. wallet	0	
39. suteteko	0	
40. baggy trousers	0	
41. swimming trunks	0	
42. helmet	1	
43. working clothes	0	
44. training suit	0	
45. sweat shirt	0	
46. brassiere	0	
47. sandals	0	
48. raincoat	1	
49. suit	0	
50. false mustache	0	
51. swimsuit	0	

Table 4.

FOOD	J	S
1. fermented soybeans	0	
2. noodles	1	
3. bean curd	0	
(tofu)	(1)	.
4. ramen	0	
5. miso soup	0	
(miso-shiru)	(1)	
6. sushi	3	
7. pickled plum	0	
(ume pickles)	(1)	
8. okonomiyaki	0	
9. buckwheat noodles	0	
10. pickled radish	0	
11. Korean barbecue	0	
12. cucumber	1	
13. rice cracker	0	
14. rice cake	1	
15. gyudon	0	
16. Chinese meat dumpling	0	
17. somen	0	
18. takoyaki	0	
19. sake	0	
20. raw fish	0	
(sashimi)	(1)	
21. watermelon	0	
22. pickles	1	
23. leek	0	
24. rice ball	0	
(onigiri)	(3)	
25. katsudon	0	
26. sea bream	0	
27. tempura	3	
28. boiled fish paste	0	
29. rice	1	-
30. radish	0	
31. chikuwa	0	
32. tendon	0	
33. eggplant	1	
34. squid	0	
35. kelp	0	
36. sukiyaki	1	
37. soybean	0	
38. octopus	0	
39. cod roe	0	
40. dried sheets of seaweed	0	
41. young yellowtail	0	
42. tuna	0	
43. bean-jam bun	0	
44. seaweed	0	
45. rice porridge	0	
46. osechi	0	
47. pumpkin	0	
48. bamboo shoots	0	
49. onion	0	
50. Chinese noodles	0	
51. carrot	1	
52. wheat	0	
53. chow mein	0	
54. yokan	0	

Table 5.

LIVING	J	S
1. tatami	1	
2. pillar	0	
3. chest of drawers	0	
4. shoji	1	
5. ceiling	2	
6. closet	0	
7. fusuma	0	
8. stairs	1	
9. front door	0	
10. dugout	0	
11. bathroom	1	
(rest room)	(1)	
12. faucet	0	
(tap)	(1)	
13. refrigerator	1	
14. carpet	0	
15. futon	0	
16. kotatsu	0	
17. washing machine	0	
18. alcove	0	
19. roof	1	-
20. apartment	2	*
21. house	6	-
22. tile	0	
23. fan	0	
24. floor	4	-
25. chair	5	-
26. wall	6	-
27. cabin	1	*
28. floorcloth	0	
29. bath	1	-
30. bed	6	-
31. cooking knife	0	
32. pillow	0	
33. fluorescent lamp	0	
34. mansion	0	
35. cushion	0	
36. central pillar	0	
37. utility pole	0	
38. chopsticks	1	
39. cottage	0	
40. cutting board	0	
41. condominium	0	
42. attic	0	
43. corridor	0	
44. revolving bed	0	
45. trash can	0	
46. bathroom	1	
47. heater	0	*
48. kitchen	6	-
49. desk	6	-
50. electric wire	0	
51. Buddhist family altar	0	
52. room	6	-
53. broom	1	
54. veranda	0	
55. no-tell motel	0	

Column (S) is given based on the word list at the back of English Ⅰ textbook which the subjects use at school now. Here two kinds of symbols are seen. (-) means that the word is treated in the textbook as already learned at junior high level. (*) means that the textbook introduces this word as a new word. For example, 'socks' in Table 3 is one of new words for them, while 'tie' is treated as a word students already know. A blank implies that the word is not listed.

As these tables show, a lot of words the students want to know appear rarely in textbooks. Take 'tap' or 'faucet', for instance. In Japanese conversation, we usually use 'suido' instead of 'jaguchi', which is installed in almost all the houses and schools. We use it every day. However, the Enlish equivalent can be seen in only one textbook at junior high level. Also the higher secondary textbook of English Ⅰ , which the students are using now, deals with neither as a new word nor as a already learned word. Another example is 'bicycle shed'. In their school life they have much opportunity to use the Japanese equivalent 'jitensha-okiba'. Nonetheless, students can never find the English counterpart in their textbooks for at least four years. In addition to these two examples, such daily words as 'trousers', 'trash can', 'closet', 'noodles' seem to be made little of. We can find a lot of words like these in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5.

This problem is so serious that it cannot be neglected from the standpoint of communication. Thus far the fact has been pointed out that English textbooks are short of everyday

words (Takefuta, _Tango-ryoku_ 53; Kyokasho Kenkyu Center 194).
These previous suggestions have been made by so-called the
top-down research. It can be also asserted by the present
research, which is conducted by the bottom-up method, that the
daily words drawn by the learners' needs are lacking in
textbooks.

In fact, learners may find rather little satisfaction in
learning English through the present textbooks. We can
therefore conclude by saying that as far as vocabulary items
are concerned, there exists a gap between the learners' needs
and the input they receive from textbooks. In order to fill
the gap, the 'vocabulary selection' of textbooks should be
taken into reconsideration.

3. Summary

In this chapter we have seen the problems which our
textbooks hold with respect to vocabulary. The main problems,
which can be briefly stated, are:

> (1) Vocabulary load is too light, especially in the early
> stages.

> (2) Learners' communicative needs cannot be served by the
> words provided by the authorities.

From the standpoint of TEFL in Japan, we should seek for a key
to solution of these problems. In the next chapter we will go
on to make some proposals concerning appropriate communicative
vocabulary.

Chapter Ⅱ

Appropriate Vocabulary in the TEFL Context of Japan

As was pointed out in the previous chapter, the fact that students cannot express themselves using daily words in English should not be dismissed as a trivial issue. It is obvious that the intellectual level of teenagers is considerably high, and that they have a great stock of L1 vocabulary. It is also obvious that they have much need to express themselves as a matter of course. That is why we should not neglect the lack of daily vocabulary in textbooks. Without a large vocabulary, it would be impossible to satisfy their communicative needs with the teaching material (Ozasa, Notional Syllabus 25). Nevertheless, the limitation by the authorities is still in full force, which may result in the glaring discrepancy between restricted textbooks and learners' needs. The outcome of the experimental research which has been discussed before is only the tip of a huge iceberg of problems. The more we aim at serving learners' needs, the more lively vocabulary we should fill the textbooks with. And also, instead of haphazard expansion, good design criteria should be taken into consideration. We shall make some proposals in this chapter for the solution of these problems.

1. Increasing Vocabulary Load

From the communicative point of view, it is clear that more words are necessary for textbooks to meet learners' needs. But we will immediately have to run against another problem; that is, the learning burden of students. As we have discussed in Chapter Ⅰ , the history of vocabulary selection started aiming at lightening learners' heavy burden. If so, enlarging vocabulary in textbooks might decrease the learning efficiency. The question here is, therefore, whether or not the learning efficiency would be certainly cut down by increasing the number of vocabulary items.

In the light of mnemonic aspect, Meara expresses doubts about the figure of limited vocabulary. He indicates that a vocabulary of 2,000 words could be learned in 11 months if new words were acquired at a rate of six per day and that this figure does not appear to be wildly excessive (103). Nevertheless, he complains, most teachers would undoubtedly consider 2,000 words to be well beyond the capacity of many learners, even over a five-year course of instruction. This figure is said to be set up based on experience without any clear theoretical basis for this agreement.

As for the limitation of vocabulary in Japan, 2,950 words, which have been calculated by multiplying the number of words recommended to teach an hour and the number of hours, is the upper limit of six-year course. The establishment of the upper limit by including all the words would be open to

question. At junior high level, teaching three words per hour

is considered reasonable based on experience (Monbu-sho,

Chugakko 54), while the number of words which should be taught

in an hour goes a little up to three or four on average at

senior high level (Monbu-sho, Kotogakko 31). No clear basis

of these numbers, except 'experience', can be found in the

present Course of Study. This is obviously an area in which

further research would be most useful, and attention should be

paid to the psychological aspects of learners in establishing

the upper limit.

Needless to say, each of the words has different function

from others. Words classification can be done into two; words

we talk with and words we talk about (Morris 40). The former

words are called 'structure' or 'function words', the latter

are 'content words'. These two lexical subclasses made by

contrasting conceptual categories are lucidly charted by Bowen

et al. as follows:

[Structure Words]	[Content Words]
few (some two hundred)	many (well over a million)
closed category	open category
part of the grammar	pure lexicon
reflect language structure	reflect culture
mostly high frequency	mostly low frequency
need for grammatical elegance	need for linguistic survival

(200)

These two kinds of words cannot be dealt with equally, nor can

we consider that they give pupils the same learning burden.

Hornby discusses this problem by taking such structure words
as 'already', 'yet' and 'still', for example. He states that
the student of English can learn a score of content words in
much less time than it will take him to learn the correct use
of these three (20). Generally speaking, as Morris suggests,
structure words call for the most extensive practice (44), and
learning structure words is probably a more complex process
than learning content words. It might be unreasonable,
therefore, to count these words equally and place a restricted
upper limit on the number. If students can learn three
structure words in an hour, for example, they might be able to
memorize ten or more content words within the same time-frame.

Besides, it is said that learning burden of words can be
lightened by teaching them with synonyms (Tsuboi 56). And if
a certain student has to learn 10 words, giving him 100 word
input seems to be more correct psychologically, and it would
reduce his learning load (Horiuchi 5). It is doubtful whether
learning burden is proportional to the number of words, and
thus the upper limit is full of question.

Judging from the discussions above, it is safe to say
that the number of words--especially content words--could be,
or should be, increased drastically in the textbooks.
However, as a matter of course, the consideration of learning
burden requires circumspection to much extent.

There is one more point which we should discuss here;
that is the distinction between active and passive vocabulary.
Thus far, the restriction by the authorities has been

influenced by the structuralist idea that at the beginning stage vocabulary items should be strictly limited and include only the most useful items for practice. As a result only three or four words on average can be recommended to be taught within one period, so that students could master all of them both actively and passively. Naturally, however, native speakers of English (and presumably speakers of all languages) respond to a wider range of vocabulary than they themselves use when speaking. This condition should therefore be quite acceptable linguistic behavior for foreign language speakers from the beginning. In Japanese EFL context, however, it is only accepted later at senior high English Ⅱ B, whose purpose is concentrated on improving reading proficiency.

Bowen et al. suggest how teachers should deal with the distinction between active and passive vocabulary as follows:

> She [a teacher] introduces the vocabulary in meaningful contexts, but leaves the students to make their own active/passive choices. This procedure is consistent with the assumption that the words in a student's passive vocabulary, when the need for them arises, will move into the active vocabulary. (200)

This procedure may be out of step with the philosophy of the Course of Study. But without this tolerance, the number of students suffering from 'English phobia' would continue to increase (Kitao 7). If it is true that passive status is one route to full acquisition, giving learners a lot of words is necessary for improving their productive skill.

The purpose of this section has been to seek for possibility to increase the number of vocabulary items. We can assert that the number of content words can be increased if we do not force learners to use these immediately as part of their active vocabulary. We need not adhere to perfectionism from the beginning. However, expanding content words through making a random selection will do more harm than good for students. We should adopt a sound principle in choosing these items, keeping our eyes firmly fixed on communicative purpose.

2. The way to select appropriate vocabulary for learners in
   Japan

In the Japanese schooling system, most of the learners begin to study English after acquiring Japanese language almost thoroughly. Mastering L1 seems to be equal to formulating their concept in their native language world. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the EFL learners in Japan can think everything in English (Oka 63). And thus one of the moderate goals for learners might be to acquire the ability to say in English what they conceive in their own language. For students at junior high and senior high level, it is desirable to master the target language to express at least what they usually say in their daily L1 conversation. Nevertheless, because of the strict limitation of vocabulary, English equivalents for Japanese everyday words are seriously lacking.

In this section, therefore, we shall seek for a key to the appropriate vocabulary from the viewpoint of the learners who speak Japanese and already have various concepts in the language. As Sapir suggests, what we first need is words in a limited range of meanings, not all the senses in which these words may function for the native's use of the language (Fries and Traver 200). This statement has an implication, especially for productive use, that we need to learn some words which function for expressing our L1 concepts. It does not mean that a certain Japanese-English dictionary is sufficient as a teaching material. Instead, what the present authour would like to say here is that learners in an EFL context must have their own brand of logic in learning English. In this sense, Japanese words and concepts already acquired by them might be useful for the decision as to which vocabulary items should be included.

2.1. Selectional Criteria

In discussing principles of selection and expansion, the distinction between structure words and content words may be effective. Fries and Traver suggest that a word list should contain primarily the symbols for things and next the symbols for qualities by citing Sapir's words as follows:

> What, then, are the absolutely essential concepts in
> speech, the concepts that must be expressed if
> language is to be a satisfactory means of

communication? Clearly we must have, first of all,

a large stock of basic or radical concepts, the

concrete wherewithal of speech. We must have

objects, actions, qualities to talk about, and these

must have their corresponding symbols in independent

words or in radical elements. No proposition,

however abstract its intent, is humanly possible

without a tying on at one or more points to the

concrete world of sense. (200)

They also mention that it would seem sound to separate all

structure words from the list of content words (representing

things and qualities) and treat them not as vocabulary matter

(202).

Taking the idea of Fries and Traver in account, we shall

now discuss what is to be considered in selecting content

words. No particular principles, other than frequency and

range, seem to be necessary for structure words as almost all

of them appear with high frequency in any of the frequency-

range list from the outset.

We shall reexamine some of the principles already

discussed in Chapter I , and try to adopt them as selectional

principles for content words. The criteria discussed below

are 'availability', 'coverage' and 'learnability'.

2.2. Availability

'Availability' is the very criterion that the present

writer has adopted in undertaking research already dicussed in
Chapter Ⅱ . The basic idea of this criterion seems to be
identical to selectional principles of lexical items of
'notional syllabus'. This position coincides with that of
Wilkins, who remarks that the lexical content of learning can
be largely derived from an analysis of the topics likely to
occur in the language use of a given group (Notional 76). The
notion of availability can make practical sense to both
teachers and learners, and provide them with more realistic
and more motivating word lists. It is true that they seem to
be sophisticated word lists, but at the same time they provide
no sufficient guarantee of success, especially in the ELT
community of Japan. The following comparison, made between
the list established in Europe and the result of the
experimental research in the previous chapter, will reveal
some keys to appropriate vocabulary for the particular
learning situation.

From the ESL standpoint, van Ek's list is influential in
the field of material development of CLT. The items are
selected for Threshold level learners to achieve a reasonable
degree of communicative poficiency. As has already explained
in Chapter Ⅰ , the items are enumerated under several topics.
For example, van Ek selected the following nouns under the
topic of 'types of food and drink':

        meal, food, soup, meat, bacon, sausage, steak, beef,

        pork, veal, lamb, fish, chicken, omelette, ham,

        mushrooms, vegetables, cabbage, peas, beans,

potatoes, chips, salad, tomato, egg, spaghetti,

rice, salt, pepper, mustard, bread, butter, cheese,

dessert, sweet, fruit, apple, pear, strawberry, nut,

orange, ice-cream, vanilla, chocolate, cake, pastry,

jam, coffee, tea, cream, milk, sugar, wine, beer,

mineral water, fruit juice, water, sandwich (105-07)

All of the items seem to be quite basic, and they have to be

learned by all the learners of English. The problem is,

however, whether or not we should apply these items directly

to the threshold level students in Japanese schools. First,

naturally, there is a very large gap between these items and

the previously listed items in Table 4 (See Chapter Ⅱ).

Compared these two sets of vocabulary, some questions have

been arisen. Are 'veal' and 'lamb' more useful for the

learners in Japan than 'octopus', 'squid' and 'tuna'? Is not

'watermelon' more available than 'pear'? In addition, some

might insist that 'rice cracker', rather than 'pastry', be

more realistic in the learners' circumstances. It goes

without saying that such gaps are derived from the big

difference of the dietary habits. These provincial

characteristics, however, should not be ignored to select a

more appropriate vocabulary, for, in terms of the actual

communication, the particular items might be reflected by the

learners' real needs. That is one of the biggest reason why

the items in van Ek's list cannot be most suitable for our

learners' productive use.

There is another problem to be discussed. As we already

saw, the list of T-level lexicon was conducted by van Ek's intuition. Although Wilkins states that the lexical need is predicted from the situational analysis (Notional 76), what items learners really want to use cannot be easily seen in a crystal ball. Needless to say, the use of questionnaire techniques to establish what learners want from their language courses is a useful departure, but, as Howatt points out, it is largely a matter of local initiative (History 284). However, unless we adopt this selectional procedure, we will never escape from the native-centered teacher-provided materials.

It is certain that 'availability' has been somewhat neglected in textbooks in Japan thus far and that it should be taken into consideration. Such topic-centered selection combined with learners' needs will provide appropriateness for the word list.

2.3. Coverage

This criterion was established to cover the meanings of other words. Words which cover a wide range of meanings are useful and helpful if the learner do not know the pertinent word in a particular situation. For example, if the leaner wants to find a 'faucet' to survive in a foreign language environment, he will ask for 'something that water comes out of when you turn a handle' (Kelly 29). This principle is suggestive not only to vocabulary selection but also to how we

should explain the meanings of other words.

One of the appropriate ways to adopt this principle is to explain the daily words peculiar to Japanese situation. There are a large number of words which have no English equivalent and which we use almost everyday. While we are talking to foreign people, these words usually creates nuisances. If they could easily defined, the conversation would become lively. And also it would become easier for learners to give self-expressions in English.

As is shown in Table 4 (Chapter Ⅱ), the Japanese common word 'onigiri' is put into the English phrase 'rice ball'. Although 'rice ball' is given in most of the Japanese-English dictionaries as the definition of 'onigiri', Yamagishi deplores such translation. He says that it is misleading because the shape of an onigiri is not always like a ball. In his opinion, 'onigiri' should be explained like this: Onigiri is cooked rice pressed into the shape of a triangle, a ball or a rice bale and it is often seasoned with a sprinkling of salt (46).

Another example is 'oshiire'. This word has been replaced with 'closet' in Table 5. However, according to Yamagishi, there exists a large gap between 'oshiire' and 'closet'. He recommends such definition as follows: Oshiire is a kind of (built-in) cupboard used chiefly to store bedding during the day (47). He also states that such definitions are useful for both learners and foreign people living in Japan.

Since ELT in Japan has recently attached more importance

to sending message in English than before, more research should be conducted to provide the appropriate vocabulary for the correct definition of Japanese words. In this way, the principle of 'coverage' demands more serious consideration.

2.4. Learnability

The principle of 'learnability' can be adopted for the purpose of expanding vocabulary in textbooks. Two factors among five of Mackey's classification, 'similarity' and 'clarity', are discussed here.

1) Similarity. It is not too much to say there is such a flood of loan words that we can not live without them. Most of them are reported to be from the English language. By the time learners begin to learn English at school, they have already learned a considerable amount of words which are of English origin. In this respect, these loan words form a set of rather 'learnable' words.

West points out that one of the most effective solutions of the problem of the dearth of content words in the initial stages is to make use of the adopted words. These are very numerous and have the added advantage of emphasizing the difference between the phonetic system of the mother tongue and that of English (Teaching 49). Igarashi makes a similar suggestion to West, when he states that textbooks should include more loan words whose pronunciation and spelling are relatively easy to master, especially as passive vocabulary at

junior high level (<u>Gaikoku-go</u> 178-79). Spelling similarity to Japanese words refers, of course, to similarity between the original English spelling and the <u>Romaji</u> spelling of the same word. Igarashi also asserts that in order to improve learners' ability both in production and recognition, the total number of vocabulary items should be increased.

Although the usefulness of loan words has been widely discussed, textbooks have yet to respond to the suggestions put forward by experts in the field of ELT. Osa lists words which are well known but made little use of in textbooks. These are given below:

> gram, clarinet, caffeine, lens, anchor, antenna,
> unbalance, ear-phone, ace, escalator, etiquette,
> elete, stereo, vinyl, macaroni, mascot, baton,
> doughnut, toaster, popcorn, trophy, lettuce,
> manicure, yacht (10)

All of the words are often used in learners' daily conversation and learners would find it easy to understand these items. But such disregard means that students can never learn the accurate spellings and pronunciations of these words in their school days.

One of the more recent research reported by Nation suggests that similarities in sound, morphology or etymology can assist word memorization (Carter 156). He also says that more memorizable still would be words which are international loan words such as 'telephone', 'radio', 'television', which have many close cognate forms in other languages. In actual

teaching circumstances, teachers have to pay attention to interference of L1, but, on the contrary, the very difference, however slight, between the two forms may stimulate the interest of the learners.

2) Clarity. Names of things, as Mackey points out, seem to be easier to teach and to learn than abstract words, because we can point to them and make the meanings clear (188). Nevertheless, learners in Japan usually, and sometimes teachers, have little knowledge about these English concrete nouns. Asao says that most Japanese, despite six years of English education, do not know 'easy words', such as concrete nouns, which any English-speaking child would know (iv). A lot of examples can be found in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 (See Chapter Ⅱ): 'eraser', 'corridor', 'pillar', 'ceiling', 'trousers', etc. One of the reasons which we can imagine is the strict limitation of words at the beginning stage. Textbooks rarely employ these items. Similarly, teachers only teach a few names of things which students can see around them. Traditionaly, introduction of new words ostensively is one of the most popular methods of vocabulary teaching since a cornucopia of objects can be found in the immediate environment. Should we not, then, make better use of naturally-provided teaching materials? In addition to their ability to be represented visually or demonstrated simply, concrete items always have L1 equivalents. For the purpose of explanation of meanings, translation can often be a useful shortcut (Gairns and Redman 68). In this respect, concrete

nouns are also 'learnable' and deserve to be selected.

3. Summary

We have dealt with problems pointed out in the previous chapter and tried to make some proposals. In the discussion, some guidance has been provided.

For the purpose of increasing vocabulary to be taught, some classifications will be effective in deciding what words are to be learned with lighter load. For example, as was stated, content words give less learning burden than structure words. Another example is the distinction between active and passive vocabulary. Since it is obvious that words are normally known passively before being actively used, students should not be expected to master every word completely. According to Krashen and Terrell, learners, while being able to acquire more than fifty new words in an hour as passive vocabulary, will experience a sharp drop in the number of words they have learned if they are forced to use them immediately as active vocabulary (198). It can be considered, therefore, that a lot of content words can and, perhaps, should be given as input from the beginning.

Some of the sound principles discussed in Chapter I should be taken into account so that these content words might be chosen to meet the learners' communicative needs. To provide an appropriate vocabulary, the following criteria can be adapted to the Japanese EFL context in ways which meet the

needs of the students.

    1) Availability

        Available words for particular daily topics should
be really 'available' for learners. L1 can be used
to determine what words are available for learners'
real lives. By this principle, a lot of concrete
items familiar to learners will be selected.

    2) Coverage

        Knowing how to replace or paraphrase other words is
helpful for us to communicate with others. When
learners want to express themselves, some of daily
Japanese words, as well as unknown English words,
might be desired to be explained by means of other
defining words. For this purpose, some items with
utility and power (i.e. coverage) should be
provided.

    3) Learnability

        <u>Similarity</u>. Since a large number of English words
have been imported into Japanese as kata-kana words,
students can probably learn them with less
difficulty.

        <u>Clarity</u>. Generally speaking, students have very
little knowledge of concrete naming words. These
items can be dealt with more economically than
abstract items, and more of them should be included
in our teaching materials.

These proposals, related as they are to vocabulary selection,

should be taken up in conjunction with other proposals which
stem from empirical research, and which deal with other
aspects of language teaching.

Conclusion

If we now finally return to the history of vocabulary
selection, it will be clear that the previously-conducted word
lists as a whole have been based on the pedagogical standpoint
of teachers and text writers. The object of compilers was to
determine what words are to be taught, not to find out how
words were actually learned (Meara 103). It is true that the
criteria discussed in Chapter Ⅰ are all sound in a sense.
However, most of the lists based on these principles cannot
escape criticism from the users' point of view.

Textbooks in Japan, as sources of vocabulary input, also
appear to be problematic, if examined in the light of
learners' needs. As was mentioned in the second chapter,
vocabulary controlled by the authorities is far from
sufficient. The very problem that should be taken seriously
is the inappropriateness of selection in terms of the
interests or needs of the leraners.

It is expressly stated, in the report submitted by the
Curriculum Council in 1987, that keeping up with the
internationalized society is one of the main problems of
Japanese education. The authorities are working on a plan to
introduce 'Oral Communication' at senior high level in
response to new trends in ELT, and, at the same time, the
three hours per week allocated to English in junior high
schools will increase to four hours. There is every
indication that efforts might be made to improve learners'

communicative proficiency. Clearly the social needs seem to be somewhat changing in Japan from pedagogical virtue to communicative usefulness. Therefore, as Wilkins suggests, proper consideration will have to be given from the beginning to the appropriate vocabulary, whose appropriateness will depend on the social needs of the learners (Linguistics 112).

However, if we think about when and where learners have opportunity to 'use' their L2 communicative ability, we will immediately find these difficult to specify. More often than not, learners' communicative needs will vary with the individual, and also they will be ambiguous. Indeed, as far as 'school English' is concerned, it might not matter whether they have specific purpose or not. But, if school pupils do not learn English for living use, they can never acquire it as a 'living' language. Therefore textbooks should not be too 'colourless' even for beginners. That is why the present writer has suggested that daily items concerned with particular learners should be included in teaching materials. These items are indispensable not only as a component of their communicative competence but also as a motivating factor. Learning words in another language connot be easily divorced from motivational factors such as how important or useful lexical items are perceived to be by learners themselves (Carter and McCarthy 17).

A caution is needed here against the idea that learners should study the language for a few years at school and learn only about "jolly outings to the seaside" (Howatt, Background

11). We also have to see to it that too much cultural ethnocentricity will not cause an inappropriate selection. We should pay attention to the balance between pedagogical and motivational aspect, and some compromise must be sought as a matter of course.

In this thesis, the author has adopted the technique of 'needs analysis' to do the experimental research. The research had to be conducted within severe limits, and thus leaving much to be desired. Nonetheless, it is believed, the results of such research have an important implication for the assessment of learners' real needs and interests. In this respect, further research properly connected with sound principles is needed so that we can decide what words are to be learned by the learners in the particular EFL context.

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Appendix

A. The Compulsory vocabulary items

Four hundred and ninety items designated by the Ministry of Education, which are provided in the Attached List 1, can be classified into the following headings (Monbu-sho, Chugakko 58-64).

[Attached List 1]

a. Article (3)

    a   an   the

b. Personal Pronoun, Demonstrative Pronoun (34)

anyone anything both everyone everything he her hers him his I it its me mine my our ours she someone something that their theirs them these they this those us we you your yours

c. Interogative Pronoun, Relative Pronoun (9)

how what when where which who whom whose why

d. Auxiliary Verb (9)

can do does may must shall should will would

e. Quantity, Degree (16)

about   all   any   each   enough   every   few   half   many   more

most   much   only   so   some   very

f. Conjunction (6)

and   because   but   if   or   than

g. Time, Position, Relationship (63)

across   after   again   ago   along   already   also   always

among   another   as   at   away   back   before   between   by

down   during   early   either   ever   far   for   from   here

in   into   just   late   near   never   next   not   now   o'clock

of   off   often   on   once   other   out   over   past   same

since   sometimes   soon   still   such   then   there   through

to   together   too   under   until (or till)   up   with

without   yet

h. Noun (196)

(a) Person (30)

ear   eye   face   foot   hair   hand   head   mouth   nose   aunt

boy   brother   child   daughter   family   father   friend   girl

man   Miss   mother   Mr.   Mrs.   people   sister   son   student

teacher   uncle   woman

(b) Family Life (25)

breakfast   dinner   lunch   bread   food   milk   box   chair

desk   picture   table   cup   glass   door   garden   home   house

kitchen   room   wall   window   yard   letter   newspaper   paper

(c) School Life (18)

book   classroom   dictionary   library   notebook   pen   pencil
school   class   club   name   page   question   word   game
sport   music   story

(d) Social Life (10)

boat   bus   car   plane   building   money   park   shop   station
store

(e) Numeral (41)

one   two   three   four   five   six   seven   eight   nine   ten
eleven   twelve   thirteen   fourteen   fifteen   sixteen
seventeen   eighteen   nineteen   twenty   thirty   forty   fifty
sixty   seventy   eighty   ninety   hundred   thousand   first
second   third   fourth   fifth   sixth   seventh   eighth   ninth
tenth   eleventh   twelfth

(f) Season, Month, Week, Time (40)

year   season   spring   summer   fall   winter   month   January
February   March   April   May   June   July   August   September
October   November   December   week   Sunday   Monday   Tuesday
Wednesday   Thursday   Friday   Saturday   day   today
yesterday   tomorrow   holiday   morning   noon   afternoon
evening   night   time   hour   minute

(g) Country, Area (10)

English   Japan   Japanese   city   country   street   town
village   way   world

(h) Nature (22)

animal   bird   fish   flower   fruit   tree   moon   sky   star
sun   cloud   rain   snow   wind   farm   ground   hill   lake
mountain   river   sea   water

i. Quality (50)

bad big busy cold cool dark dear easy fast fine
glad good great happy hard high hot interesting
kind large last left light little long new nice
old poor pretty quickly ready rich right short sick
slowly small sorry strong tall warm well young
black blue green red white yellow

j. Action (100)

am are be is has have answer arrive ask become
begin break bring build buy call carry catch clean
close come cook cry cut draw drink drive eat find
finish fly forget get give go grow hear help hope
invite keep know learn leave lend let like listen
live look lose love make meet need open play
please put read ride rise run say see sell send
shout show sing sit sleep smile speak spend stand
start stay stop study swim take talk teach tell
thank think throw try turn understand use visit
wait walk want wash watch work write

k. Others (4)

colo(u)r goodby(e) no yes