The bases of writing Appropriate English Curricula for Iraqi Students in Primary, Middle, and Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

First of all, I'd like to say that wondering what is being learned first in a second language, definitely English, is the first question among many ones that teachers arise and ask. In other words, the priorities of choosing English content in the course of the teaching processes as well as the most suitable teaching ways are continuously under discussion and I think this regard needs lots of hypotheses and experiments. Preparing a curriculum for teaching English to Iraqi students includes various levels, stages, methods, modifications, and fields commensurate with students' interests and passion for learning, which leads to the optimal result for achieving academic and educational goals alike and at the same time. In addition, preparing the best English curriculum for students by selecting the very suitable methods of teaching by teachers can result in an exemplary learning environment. This paper can be useful, not only in Iraq, but I think to all teachers and students who live in the Middle East. This paper is a serious and actual attempt of mentioning a number of criteria within the teaching-learning processes for the benefit of both teachers and students, concerning preparing the best curricula for teaching and learning English in primary, middle, and secondary schools.

Keywords: curriculum (curricula), teaching-learning process(es), Standard English (SE), Arabic.

1.1 Introduction

First, I would like to say that writing curricula for teaching-learning English to Eastern students, more specifically, Iraqi ones, is not as easy a task as one can think or imagine. The problem triggered I noticed, I learned or taught in the previous English Iraqi curricula in my primary, middle, and secondary schools, definitely in the years (1993-2000); I graduated in ability to write English very well and I speak the language mentioned without reaching native-like performance or with no satisfied fluency. The reasons for writing this paper were simply that the old curricula of English were focused on writing on account of neglecting the drills or exercises which are devoted to speaking or conversations. So, what I mentioned pushed me to write this paper and I think that is worthy of discussion in detail. Although the Iraqi curricula of English have changed a lot or are updated nowadays, this paper, I hope, is going to cover very many matters not focused on before. Moreover, it is going to put some bases or fundamentals concerning preparing English curricula that are very suitable to Iraqi students on one hand and suitable to Eastern students on the other in general.

1.2 Educational curriculum and Standard English (SE)

Defining the word curriculum isn't a simple task because there are a lot of definitions in the literature for this concept which is, and was taken into consideration by various fields; I chose the academic, semantic, and psychological sides of teaching-learning processes at the same time. This paper doesn't deal with the types of the word curriculum and their prolonged branches in boring detail, so, this study is limited in scope. According to Tanner (1980), curriculum is defined as "the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experiences under auspices of the school, for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal social competence (p.13). Pinar (2003) introduced a definition in terms of historical and social view rather than epistemological one as follows "The curriculum is a culture construction and its meanings depend on the way in which a political-educative tradition is built." Schubert (1987) defines curriculum as the contents of a subject, concepts and tasks to be acquired, planned activities, the desired learning outcomes and experiences, product of culture and an agenda to reform society [see: Phillips (2008)]. Whereas Pratt (1980) defines curriculum as a written document that systematically describes goals planned, objectives, content, learning activities, evaluation procedures and so forth (Ibid). Goodlad and Su (1992) define it as a plan that consists of learning opportunities for a specific time frame and place, a tool that aims to bring about changes of behaviour in students as a result of planned activities and includes all learning experiences received by students with the guidance of the school (Ibid). Furthermore, Cronbleth (1992) built the definition of curriculum by answering three questions: What knowledge, skills and values are most worthwhile? Why are they most worthwhile? How should the young acquire them? (Ibid). While Wojtczak (2002) defines it as an educational plan that points

out the goals and objectives to be achieved, topics to be covered and methods to be used for learning, teaching and evaluation[1].

Other definitions [2]:

Important Definitions

"Curriculum is the tool in the hands of the artist (teacher) to mold his material (pupil) according to his ideas (objectives) in his studio (school)." – CUNNINGHAM

"The curriculum may be considered as the vehicle whereby and through which we hope to enable children to achieve the objectives of education." – HENRY J.OTTO

"Curriculum includes all those activities which are utilized by the school to attend the aims of education." – MUNROE

"Curriculum is all the experiences a learner has under the guidance of the school." – FOSHAY

From all the definitions above, one can conclude that curricula include all the activities or actions which could be applied in schools to get the goals of education. The curriculum is the whole experience students have under the guidance of teachers. So, defining this concept with its details is not only limited to courses or materials to study; but to a broader meaning, it includes many activities and experiments that are met by students in schools under the supervision of teachers in schools as well. As education is an organized and triggered effort, some planning is needed to systematize this effort. The term curriculum, on all occasions in the educational regard, comes back largely to planning. In short, the way the curriculum is interpreted embodies a considerable evaluation concerning the nature of education in a country. For others, it is an active phenomenon that illustrates the contextual influence and need, especially for the society it represents. The definitions, overall, represent curriculum as a deeply personal and dynamic phenomenon, strongly influenced by the environmental and personal factors that impact curriculum, especially in its design and implementation.

Another question in this regard should be taken into account: Does the curriculum in English include a standard or slang language? The answer needs clarification on this point; if teachers or specialists prepare a curriculum of Standard English (SE) 100%, learners mostly will have a shock when they see an American movie or film, for example, they'll get frustrated as their comprehension is very little. In other words, I'd like to say that Men on the Street language is highly different from Standard English (SE) concerning using vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, and there are lots of idioms[3] that cannot be

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[1] This definition is taken from the following web: https://educarepk.com/the-definition-of-curriculum.html

[2] https://educarepk.com/the-definition-of-curriculum.html

[3] Idiom is an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements (such as up in the

understood without living between native English speakers, so, (SE) is far from real-world usage nowadays. In my point of view, curricula in English should have either Standard English or Standard American English, and these curricula can include or be decorated by lots of slang expressions that are used a lot by Men on the Street language, for example, the words (dad and mum), with reference to (father and mother), and telling students about the fact that the first two words are colloquial and the second ones are standard.

After giving lots of explanations in this regard, one can feel that there are many philosophical, social, and academic trends in this field. This variation in expressing or explaining the concept of curriculum indicates that it is dynamic activities that can be modified occasionally. Thus, "Despite varying definitions of curriculum, there seems to be a consensus that it is a statement:

- of what students should know (knowledge or content),
- be able to do (skills),
- how it is taught (instruction),
- how it is measured (assessment), and
- how the educational system is organised (context)."

Phillips, (2008).

1.2.1 Curricula, age groups, and gender

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, an age group is "a segment of a population that is of approximately the same age or is within a specified range of ages"; whereas gender means sex (definitely: a male or a female one).

There is no doubt that age groups and gender should be taken into consideration when one is going to prepare an English syllabus or curriculum [4]. In other words, an educational model of curricula should be academically suitable to and very common to the whole age group in a specific class; at the same time, the ranking in this regard should lead to the success of scholastic achievement, as for teaching-learning processes or activities and this is the main objective in the academic fields.

Furthermore, no one can deny that male students have interests in learning, relatively different from female students at all stages of school grades, i.e. primary, intermediate, and secondary schools. As far as female ones are concerned, Thompson (2017) pointed out many factors as follows: "pre-compulsory and post-compulsory education; 'early years' and 'lifelong' education; educational (dis)engagements of pupils, students, and staff; trajectories and intersectional

air for "undecided") or in its grammatically atypical use of words (such as give way) Merriam Webster Dictionary (Last Updating online). https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/idiom

[4] Syllabus refers to the subjects in addition to the topics covered in the course of a giving study. On the other hand, curriculum includes the chapters (or sections) and educational (or academic) content taught in schools or colleges. It also indicates the knowledge, skills, and competencies students should learn during their studies [Sebhi, (2017)].

inequalities including race, class, sexuality, age, and disability; policy and practice across educational landscapes; diversity and difference, including institutional (schools, colleges, universities), locational and embodied (in 'teacher'–'learner' positions)". However, Dwyer et al., (2001) demonstrated that gender in and of itself does not necessarily enable (or not) second language learning.

It is totally different when a teacher prepares English curricula for students in the early years of their school life (Grades 1, 2, and 3 for example), in the same way as those who are students in secondary schools (grades 10, 11, and 12 for instance). In other words, the teacher should imagine himself/herself as if he/she were a child who wants to learn, or at least, comes back in years when he/she was a child; this is in the course of preparing an English curriculum for students in grade 2 for example and so on. This strategy should be applied so as to make passages, dialogues, drills, questions, … etc. in accordance with students' abilities and their brains' sizes to comprehend or understand the content successfully and thus, the educational process can pass half of the way of achieving its goals in this regard[5].

1.2.1.1. Considering individual differences

All of us know that students and people, in general, aren't as same as each other in having skills and learning quickly (theoretically and practically). Thus, the following question arises strongly: Does the curriculum of English (for any grade) be prepared for very intelligent (very clever), mediocre, or stupid ones (who have relatively slow learning) [6]? One can simply answer that curricula of English should be suitable for the classes above at the same time and should be as comprehensive as possible. In more detail, the curriculum in English for instance, can include simple, difficult, and in-between English sentences and passages; and so the same thing should be applied in dialogues and all exercises. In other words, there should be a mixture of simplicity and difficulty, melted in a systematic template in harmony with individual differences of the Iraqi student in general. In order to know much more about individual differences, we should learn the academic and exact definition of the expression of individual differences. Simsek(2012), defines individual differences as personal characteristics that distinguish learners from each other in the teaching and learning processes. Learners are unique individuals who bring a critical set of variables to each learning situation, including delicate traits as indicators of their potential and the history of

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[5] The other side of success concerning the educational process is the way teachers explain the curriculum under study, i.e., choosing very suitable teaching methods which are in harmony with students' receiving information. For more details in this regard see: Listening and Different Age Groups, Guvendir, E. and Hardacre, B (2018).

[6] Students who learn very slowly aren't necessarily stupid; they might suffer from a physical handicap like deafness or poor eyesight. Thus, they learn slowly, but this never means that they can't learn or never develop themselves in learning quickly. There are many ways to tackle these physical handicaps which are out of our discussion in this paper.

achievement as signs of previous accomplishments and predictors of future performance. In addition, Kuzgun and Deryakulu (2004) argue that there are a number of individual differences that affect the performance and attitudes of learners during teaching and learning; the most prevalent ones concerning learners are gender, age, intelligence, ability, interest, prior knowledge, learning style, motivation, locus of control, self-efficacy, and epistemological beliefs. However, I will not digress in detail to explain these concepts, I will only address individual differences with respect to setting suitable curricula of English to all levels of Iraqi students. Nevertheless, teachers' strategies in choosing the very suitable way of teaching method can remove lots of obstacles or barriers in this field. For example, a repetitive teaching method can be useful for those students who are always busy-minded or suffering from psychosis. Encouraging teaching methods can also make students interact and express themselves with self-confidence and this is also helping teachers to know more and more about the difficulties or obstacles students face in their learning English (and in other materials). Furthermore, I think teachers can identify individual differences between students when there is communicative, continuous, and increased interaction between teachers, students, and genuine interest in the educational curriculum this is from hand. Teachers can also overcome all the problems in teaching that exist due to individual differences by dealing differently with each student (whether smart, lazy, or mediocre); in other words, dealing with each student in terms of his/her abilities to learn and his/her personal traits and that is from another hand. For more details on personality traits see Kieron (2008) cited in Boyle et al (2008); see also Dörnyei (2005). Accordingly, understanding student perceptions are very important with respect to the pedagogical process. Pedagogical content knowledge requires an understanding of where students are coming from in reference to the subject being taught. That's because, in order to teach the material well, teachers have to know what the students bring to the table as far as prior conceptions, feelings, and strategies.

1.2.2. Curriculum and gradient in difficulty

Before one is going to talk about the gradient in difficulty concerning an English curriculum, we should, I think, submit the following question: Who is deciding what is easy or difficult? I think this question is answered by both teachers and students in general and in other words, the answer can be in an interactive way between teachers and students. Mercer (2008), for example, conceded this fact by saying that: In general, it is equally important to recognize the significance of improving self-esteem, engaging the whole person, and guiding learners intellectually, imaginatively, and effectively, as well as literally. The gradient is a very urgent need for learners or students to go on correctly in learning, as Blidi (2017) says "Perceiving learning environment as an inseparable entity from their personal experience represents an important step learners take in the gradual development of learner autonomy". As we see, gradual development in learning plays a vital role in students' autonomy in learning as well. But how can students and teachers decide the difficulty? The answer is simply by looking at the general

extent of students' development in learning English, by looking at the marks of oral and written exams, and finally through the annual, monthly, and weekly (or even daily) evaluation, of students' performance and their achievements within the pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers should bear in mind that they are dealing with second language acquisition (L2), not with the first one (L1). All of us know that the overwhelming majority of students in Iraq speak Arabic (i.e. their mother tongue language is Arabic) and relatively fewer speak Kurdish [7]. The other question of how languages are learned also involves several concepts related to the use of the term (acquisition). A second language can be learned consciously, such as in a formal classroom setting, or subconsciously through interaction and daily use of the language in real-life contexts or a combination of both [Krashen(1982) cited in Murray and Christison (2011)]. I think that there should be contrastive studies in the curricula to show the faces of similarities and differences between English and Arabic. It is seen that similarities between the two languages facilitate students' learning process and most errors in learning are happening because of features found in the second language, not found in the student's mother tongue language. For example, Most Arabs (as learners or students) may make a mistake in pronouncing the letter (p) /b/ instead of /p/, simply, as this sound isn't found in Arabic, and at the same time, they have no problem during pronouncing the letter (b) /b/ since this sound is found in Arabic and English. This fact is recognized by specialists in this regard, for example, Selinker (1972) coined the term interlanguage to refer to features of both one's first native language (mother tongue) and the target or foreign language. [For more details see: Selinker(1972) p.209-231].

Teachers can help students understand how to overpass word problems to make them clearer and see them from a different aspect. If students have certain strategies that they have been applying, teachers through them can know what those are, and how they may need to be altered. In pedagogical content knowledge, teachers must have good control over which perspectives of their subjects are typically not hard for students and which are typically not easy or more difficult. This is a way by which they can invent lesson plans that move through the easier subject quickly and supply enough time for the difficult topics. This can help students completely master the more difficult subjects during their study, so they will be better prepared to go ahead correctly. In brief, the learning process here happens like the growth of a tree, which begins as a seed, after that, it becomes a bush, and then ends up becoming a tree with thick stems and branches, complete leaves, and fruits.

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[7] There are very few other nationalities compared to the Arabs and the Kurds, and they are the Turkmen, Assyrians, Persians, and others. Those races don't affect the teaching-learning processes as they are able to speak Arabic and their customs and traditions are very near to Arabs in Iraq nowadays.

1.2.2 Curriculum content, and stimulation

This is the most important part of this paper, although, I think, the other concepts are closely related, in addition to the importance of Educational content in preparing curricula in English that are exciting and make students very interested or at least, not feel bored. When I was a Senior Teacher at two international schools in Istanbul/Turkey, I noticed that most students feel bored because of the syllabuses of English. I surfed some of these pedagogical contents, and I found the following question for example, in one of the advanced grades, definitely in the secondary level: When was the Panama Canal opened? This question, undoubtedly, isn't attracting eastern students' interest in general. Another question I read and taught my students in one of the Educational book series called Tiger Time, Book 6 in grade 6th (If my memory does not betray me), as follows: Guess what people in Jamaica eat? And there are photos of foods and the student should guess?! In fact, I told the manager, at that time, I, personally, don't know what Jamaican people eat?! As these cultures aren't attracting our students (Eastern) very much. So, I repeat, the contents of Western curricula in English aren't suitable for Eastern students [8]. So, how can teachers tackle this dilemma? The answer is simply by making comparisons between our cultures and the others'; more specifically, those who talk about Panama Canal for instance should mention Suez Canal or the reverse; and as such, those who prepare English curricula can mention foods that are common in Middle East regions with reference to the foods found in Canada, Australia, U.K. …etc., or the reverse. In brief, mentioning one culture without the other ones, I think, is giving us not the full picture or it can give us a distorted one and that may lead to boring lessons.

As far as the curriculum and stimulation are concerned, I did two academic experiments; the first one was in one of the middle schools in Iraq. This academic experiment was achieved in a class containing 29 male students (whose ages were 14-16 years old); in the first interview, I gave each student a paper that has two groups of vocabulary, one is about carpentry vocabulary and the other one is about sex (in a literary moral way). For about 30 minutes, I asked the students to look at and meditate on this vocabulary and I allowed them to ask what they want about every ambiguous word or expression. After seven days, I came back to that school and I told the same students that I'd like to do a memory test; I asked them to write all that they can remember of vocabulary from the last week. The result was 65.5% of students wrote about sex vocabulary, 24.1% remembered carpentry vocabulary, and 10.3% were neutral (remembered the same number of vocabulary compared to the two groups). Other experiment was at two secondary schools, (one is for 47 male students and the other is for 42 females ones), the students' ages were from 16

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[8] This doesn't mean that the curricula of English that are prepared in the U.K. and the U.S.A. aren't authentic or bad, I mean the topics in these curricula are well designed for students who live there (i.e. in U.K. and U.S.A), not suitable for students who live in the countries of Middle East in Asia for instance.

to 19 years old. All students were given the same papers that have a question of two parts, i.e. A and B. The question was as the following:
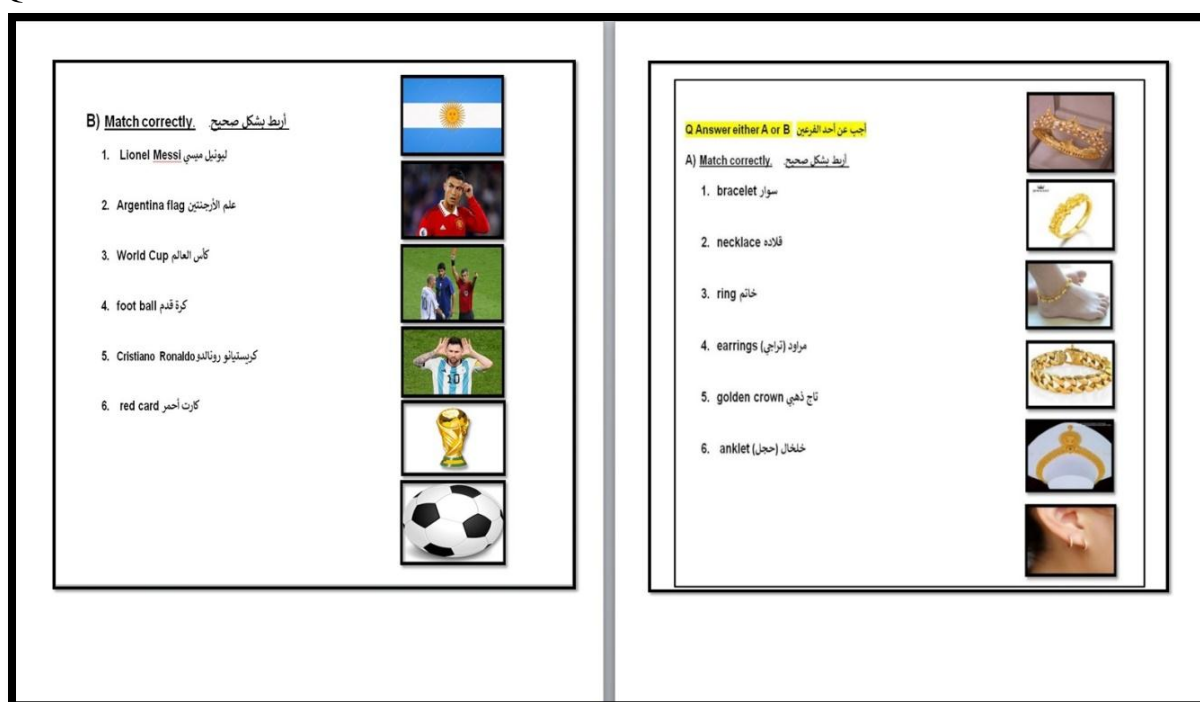
Q/ Answer either A or B.

Figure 1, shows two groups of vocabulary, students answered, in male and female secondary schools.

Within less than ten minutes, the students answered. In fact, I expected that most female students will choose the vocabulary of gold and the male will choose vocabulary concerning the world cup (Sport). But part of the results was unexpected. The results in percentage were as follows:

Table (1): Male and female students' tendency for choosing vocabs.

Gender	Vocabulary of gold	Vocabulary of sports
Male students	6.38%	93.61%
Females students	33.33%	66.66%

In fact, it wasn't expected that female students will choose sports vocabulary on account of the vocabulary of gold!

In general, looking at both experiments, one can conclude that many **contents** in the teaching-learning process can highly stimulate students' interest and eagerness compared to other contents. In addition, there may be common factors between the interests of male and female students regarding personal tendencies in reading.

As far as young students in primary schools are concerned, I believe that teaching the basics of English (like A, B, C; days of the week, months of the year, the names of fruits, vegetables, animals, and greeting expressions, etc.) is very necessary at this stage or level. These basics or essentials are given gradually (little by little) as educational doses. But the most important thing with regard to those little students is the way these basics of English are given by teachers as a whole. [For more details, see: 1.3.Visual or audio? , and see also: 1.5.The best teaching method].

1.2.5 Writing is finally

This title never means that learning writing isn't important. Essberger (2011) pointed out that ''In one sense, speaking is the "real" language and writing is only a representation of speaking. However, for centuries, people have regarded writing as superior to speaking. It has a higher "status". This is perhaps because in the past almost everybody could speak but only a few people could write''. All of us know that there are four pivots by which everyone should meet in second language acquisition, L2, (even in L1), which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. I think we have to know two of Chomsky's concepts (2002) in this regard, i.e. input vs. output. The term (input) is used in psycholinguistics to refer to the external linguistic data available to speakers in the course of acquiring a language, whereas the term (output) refers to a sentence that is produced after the application of a rule or set of rules (Crystal, 2008, pages: 247, 345). Thus, the term input refers to the language the learners are exposed to, in the course of listening or reading, and this embodies receptive skills, i.e. listening and reading. Whereas, the output refers to the language people produce and this embodies the productive skills, i.e. speaking or writing. One can notice that four of the human limbs are forming the interactive way concerning learning and producing a language, i.e. ear for listening, mouth for speaking, eye for reading, and hand for writing.
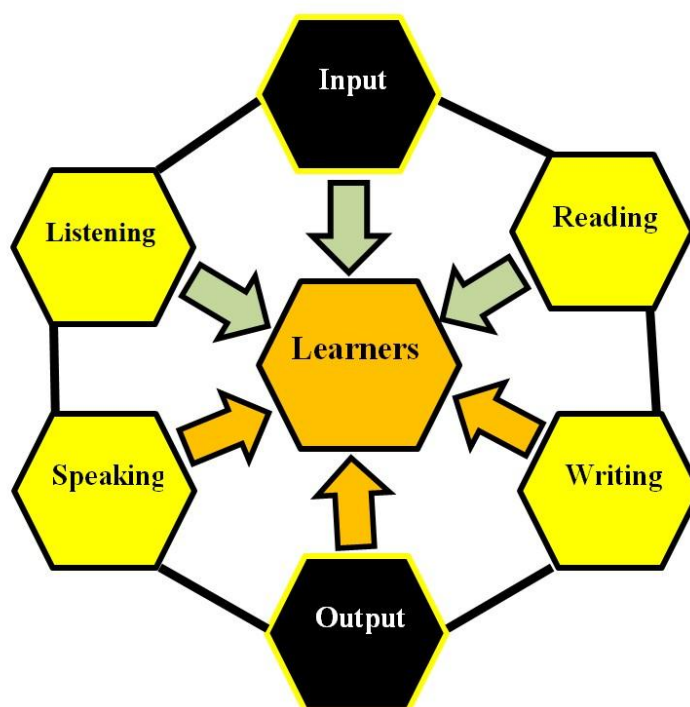
Figure 2 shows the relationships between input, output, and the other skills of learning L2 (i.e. listening, reading, speaking, and writing).

There is no doubt that when one learns his/her own first or second language, the first stage is listening, and then, speaking comes before learning to write and I don't know any linguist who says the reverse. Also, no one can deny the truth that everyone learns to speak his/her mother tongue language almost automatically. Undoubtedly, this happens naturally and innately. But learning to write is not a natural phenomenon. In other words, we must be taught how to write. As far as this paper is concerned, I'm not going to explain or cite the differences between writing and speaking as I wouldn't like to make digression out of the points of discussion. However, I'd like to say that speaking and writing are two sides of the same coin with regard to the importance of learning a language, but the priority should be given to speaking and not the reverse[9]. Unfortunately, I studied the old Iraqi curriculum of English when I was a student in primary and secondary schools, definitely in the 1990s, the interest in written exercises, at that time, was relatively big compared to speaking (or even listening); in other words, the priority was given to writing on account of teaching other skills (like speaking). Accordingly, most Iraqi students write in English very well after their graduation from secondary

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[9] I repeat, I never heard or read about a linguist says that writing is taught before speaking "Because letters represent sounds, not vice versa". [See: Delahunty and Garvey (2010) page: 30] .

school and have problems when they are going to speak English at the same time, all this happens as a result of that. This result isn't satisfactory for the specialists who are interested in developing pedagogical processes, as the main objective of learning English or any other language is communication. Today, the new curricula of English in Iraq for primary, middle, and secondary schools gave priority to learning speaking and listening skills and never neglected to learn writing from one hand, and learning English began at grade 1st from the other; as opposed the old curricula which started at grade 5th [10].

1.3 Visual or audio?

Beginner teachers might ask themselves the following question: Which are better teaching aids, visual or audio ones? If one is going to answer this question scientifically and academically, he/she must take into account many points like students' level and stage, i.e. in which grade they are, age, gender, individual differences, and what are available teaching aids in the curricula of English. I talked about age, gender, and individual differences; but there are additional points of explanation here that should be mentioned in detail. As far as age is concerned, no one can deny that the physiological structure of students' minds isn't complete enough for students in grades 1, 2, and 3 respectively, therefore, it isn't suitable for students, whose ages are around 6-8 years old, to be taught by lecturing teaching methods for example (explanation of the curriculum by verbal indoctrination); visual standards of teaching are better for children. In other words, if a teacher draws a car on the board for instance (to give its meaning in English), that will be better than only saying (car) verbally with respect to those age groups of students specifically. In brief, for the first three (or might be four) grades of students whose ages are from 5 - to 8 years old, the visual teaching aids are better for them in general; and the audio method of teaching is more suitable for students who are 15 years old and above. This doesn't mean that the lecturing way of teaching is suitable for all adult students exclusively, nor means that visual standards are suitable for very young students only. In fact, there are individual differences as I mentioned previously in this paper, but I talk in this regard in general.

I think the best solution to cover all students' tastes in learning English is activating what is called: Audiovisual Education or multimedia-based Education (MBE). Dike (1993) defines "Audio Visual Resources are those materials which do not depend solely upon reading to convey meaning and present information through the sense of hearing as audio resources or through a combination of both senses." Thus, audio-visual materials is defined as "training or educational materials directed at both the senses of hearing and the sense of sight, films, recordings, photographs, etc. used in classroom instructions, library collections or

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[10] There are many common studies show that children learn a second language better than adults and others try to prove the reverse; for example see: Suryantari (2018).

the likes" (Webster's Dictionary cited in Wikipedia Encyclopedia[11]. The purpose of audio-visual aids is to reinforce teachers' abilities to present the lesson, in a not-very difficult, effective, and comprehensive way to make students understand correctly. Audiovisual materials can make learning not stop, as students gain information in more than one sense. It is significant to send our awareness (as teachers) to the ministry of education, to activate the existence of audio-visual aids (and updating them occasionally) in primary, middle, and secondary schools, as a key factor of teaching in pedagogical curricula. Without a doubt, the outcomes are to promote or develop English materials in schools (primary, middle, and secondary) within the teaching-learning processes. Visual or graphic representation makes abstract ideas more comprehended or tangible for students. So, audiovisual resources should be availed, encouraged, and supported by those who are responsible for teaching in Iraq. Furthermore, studies and research have shown that there are big differences between using and not using audiovisual materials with respect to learners; for more details see: Aggarwal (2009); Akram et al.(2012); Ode (2014); Mishra (2004); and DeBernardes and Olsen (1948).

1.4. Incorporating technology into curricula

All of us know what happened in our world, of changes in the last decades, because of the revolution of new technology and its very rapid development which changes the way people live today. In regard to me, in the past, I was getting bored as soon as l was consuming time (perhaps several minutes), searching for the meaning of an English word in paper dictionaries. Nowadays, time-consuming lessened as a result of prevailing electronic dictionaries. Thus, modern technologies in education made teaching-learning processes very easy, quick, and comfortable, in addition to its efficiency. Students can exploit modern technology in favor of their developing themselves in learning English for example (and in other materials). The internet and its endless websites are one of these amazing inventions in the field of education. Other tools or devices, I talked about previously in this paper, audiovisual materials like projectors, Smart Board applications (connected to the Internet), microforms, slides, DVDs, flashcards, and perhaps others, aren't mentioned[12]. In our digital world nowadays, audiovisual aids have developed a lot and are found in several multi-social media like educational DVDs, PowerPoint programs, educational series on Youtube and TV, and other very many educational-online materials. Recently, teachers and students have lived during the epidemic of COVID-19 and nevertheless, academic study didn't stop at schools and universities as distance study programs were activated at that time over the internet and other social media. Although distance learning isn't like face-to-face learning concerning competence, I can say that students learn something better than those who learn nothing. So, we should thank technology for making study

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([11]) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audiovisual_education
([12])There are other appliances and tools that do not exist nowadays, such as audio tape recorders, videotapes, film tapes, and cassettes, as they are regarded as old technologies.

continuous. The great advantages of learning through modern technology can give us as specialists in this regard: 1) Enhanced Teaching and Learning, 2) Globalization (of learning), and 3) No Geographical Limitations (See: Journal of Applied and Advanced Research 3(S1):33-34)[13].

1.5. The best teaching method

Sequeira (2012) defines **Teaching** as "a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning. Teaching (Instruction) is outside the learner. Learning is internal to learners. You cannot motivate others if you are not self-motivated. Motives are not seen, but, behaviors are seen. Is learning a motive or behavior? Learning is both a motive and behavior but only behavior is seen, learning is internal, performance is external". In the previous citation, there are allusions to what is called (input) and (output) that I talked about previously in this paper. Furthermore, I'd like to say that there are close and mutual relationships between the two concepts, i.e. teaching and learning and thus, teaching and learning processes go hand in hand in the course of achieving the aims of education. One might ask himself/herself the following: Which is the best teaching method or strategy that can be very useful to students or learners with regard to learning English in an appropriate and enjoyable way? The answer is multifaceted in this regard, as teachers and students are mostly dealing with learning a second or foreign language. First, teachers should bear in mind that strategies for teaching and learning English are totally different from those in other materials, such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry, History, etc. Second, the best teachers can promote a weak educational curriculum through their excellent performance and incompetent teachers can add failure to the best English curriculum. Third, all teaching ways whatever their descriptions are, move around three perspectives: teachers-centered focus (like lecturing way), learners-centered effort (like silence way and self-learning), and teachers-learners-participating performance (like discussion teaching method and asking questions).

The aims of all teaching ways from the past till now are to give students knowledge and reach it in an effective, appropriate, very interesting, and easy way. In brief, I think that those teaching ways and methods are like transportation, people, for example, like to travel by sea (ships), by air (planes), or by land (cars). The most important thing to those travelers is to reach a specific place, town or city for example. The matter is alike in educational processes; the main objective is achieving what teachers want and what students should have. So, there is no super one way of teaching, in other words, this matter is relative (i.e. what is suitable for most students, isn't necessarily suitable for all). As far as teachers of English in

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[13] For more details, there are many books that can be very useful in this field, such as: Integrating Technology in the Classroom: Tools to Meet the Need of Every Student by Boni Hamilton (2018); The Classroom Teacher's Technology Survival Guide by Doug Johnson, (2012), and others if you look for in this domain.

Iraq are concerned, definitely in the 1990s, I noticed that most teachers of English had catastrophic mistakes in pronouncing English words (because of their first language, i.e. Arabic) for instance (simply because of the bad conditions during the period of the economic blockade on Iraq, and there is no keeping in touch with native English speakers, in addition to unavailable services of the internet). This lead to wrong learning for students or spreading what is called phonological fossilization [14]. Today, despite the lack of scholarships and coexistence outside Iraq, I think that social media allowed teachers to communicate with those whose first language is English and thus, develop their performance.

1.6 Updating and assessment

All linguists know that all human languages are in a state of flux, one of them is English. These changes occur in many things, like pronunciation, word structures, syntax, and semantics, in addition to changes resulting from language contact; in brief, old English is very different from modern English [See: Hock, and Joseph (2009), (p.3-14)]. Some words fade away over history and new ones appear instead, in our daily life and so on. Accordingly, Curricula in English (with its contents) should be updated occasionally in all books concerning the syllabuses and for all students' levels and grades. For example, it isn't suitable for students to read only about wire telephones without mentioning smartphones, as wire telephones aren't found nowadays [15].

Whereas the assessment of curricula in English can be made in general by seeing the answers to the following questions:
➢ Do these curricula fit all Iraqi students' and teachers' needs?
➢ Do students speak English fluently and in an excellent way after grade 12 (i.e. before entering universities)?
➢ Do these curricula achieve the final outcomes of the educational processes with convincing results?
If the answers to these questions appear in a transparent and objective manner, then the assessment will show the true extent of the benefit obtained in teaching English in the Iraqi curricula. In the past, Iraqi teachers of English describe English (by focusing on the structure) more than the call for using it. In other words, describing English without using it can prevent learners to speak it spontaneously (automatically), this is about the old curricula in English in Iraq in the 1990s. Today, the specialists in putting English curricula in Iraq gave priority to listening

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[14] There are also lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic fossilization. For more details about (fossilization), see: Gau, (2020). "Analysis of Fossilization Process of the Second Language Vocabulary from the Perspective of Memetics". Theory and Practice in Language Studies. 10 (10): 1326–1331.

[15] Wire telephones can be mentioned in historical passages with reference to the development of phones today.

and conversation, in addition to developing students' imagination and writing skills. Nevertheless, I think these curricula need additional updating for the semantic content of English passages because of the appearance of new inventions that became familiar to Iraqi teachers and students at the same time.

1.7 Conclusions

1- Standard English (SE) should be the essence of the Iraqi curricula of English and colloquial English accents and dialects should follow the (SE) and not the reverse.

2- Students' age group and gender should be taken into account in the course of preparing curricula of English as the physiological structure of students' brains isn't complete (they are not adult humans). However, there are many common factors in males' and females' tendencies in reading, interests, and academic contents of learning.

3- The curricula of English should be suitable for the intelligent, mediocre (mid-level students), and those who learn slowly at the same time. In other words, these curricula in English must take into account individual differences among students and not be designed for a specific group of students at the expense of neglecting the other.

4- There must be academic progression in developing the educational curriculum in English, step by step, from easy to difficult in each grade and level.

5- Students in primary schools learn the basics of English gradually; the way students are given the contents is crucial.

6- The educational content in learning English should also be stimulating and interesting for students to read it and not boring.

7- The priority should be given to the skills of listening, reading, and speaking English within the teaching-learning processes (concerning activities and exercises) and then, writing comes after.

8- Mostly, students whose ages are from 5 to 8 need visual ways to learn quickly and students, who are older, need audio methods to learn. Nevertheless, teachers and students of all ages and levels are in urgent need of modern audiovisual aids that facilitate both teachers' jobs and students' learning at the same time.

9-   Incorporating modern technology (like audiovisual teaching aids) is an inseparable part of the teaching-learning process so as to achieve all the educational aims successfully and efficiently.

10- There is no super-exclusive way of teaching students that can give teachers very excellent results within the teaching-learning process. In other words, students' trends are various and thus, what is suitable for most students isn't necessarily suitable for all of them.

11- Curricula for learning English should be updated occasionally to be more suitable for students' needs in learning since English (like all languages) is in a state of flux. Also, these curricula should be assessed every year or every month by looking at students' level of learning and by teachers' and students' performance and interaction in this regard.

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