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# The Hierarchy of Vocabularies in the Study of Foreign Languages

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Independent Professional Project

on

THE HIERARCHY OF VOCABULARIES IN THE STUDY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
(As Treated in The Silent Way)

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## Section 1

### INTRODUCTION

For a year at The School for International Training (S.I.T.), we have been involved with the study of teaching English as a Second Language.

Before I came to S.I.T., I had four years of working with Nursery and Kindergarten children. Being with very young children taught me that spontaneous learning is delighted by children. During the last year my work with older children and adults in Mexico confirmed this observation, and I think that age makes no difference in the enjoyment of learning.

At S.I.T., we were exposed to various methods and approaches of language teaching that are currently in use in classrooms. Since I had never taught foreign languages before, I was open to examining seriously all the methods and gaining insight in this area of study. As a student of language teaching I have become aware of the problems that exist in language teaching and the difficulties learners face as a result of these. In particular the question: "What is it that teachers need to be aware of so that languages can be taught effectively? (making language learning an "education" in itself)" has struck me.

Among the many problems met and that emerged from this study, the question: "Is there a hierarchy in the vocabulary that we should teach?" lent itself to investigation. This report only tells of what I found to date, but I intend to continue to research some of the problems of language teaching that fascinate me.

Having come in contact with the various methods of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) gave me an opportunity to choose the method I should adopt. I chose the Silent Way, because I feel that Dr. Gattegno has tackled the many aspects of language and language learning.

My association or acquaintance with the Silent Way came in Scotland in August, 1969, when I attended a seminar given for British teachers and scholars. The impact of a demonstration in Hindi given by Mrs. Gattegno stayed with me because those who were attending this seminar became able to read the Hindi script, a script totally alien to them, in that one lesson. Last year I attended a Gattegno workshop in August, his seminar at S.I.T. in

September, another given for M.A.T. students in New York, and I came closer to the understanding of "save an ogden" theory, that is, the knowledge of the economics of language teaching.

Practice teaching in Mexico reinforced my confidence in the Silent Way although my classes were at times difficult and I wasted many "ogdens." But I learned to catch myself doing it. I tried various techniques and used an eclectic approach but the feedback I picked up having used the Silent Way in most of the classes clearly indicated that the structures I had covered with the rods were better retained and that students had learned to use them as if they were their own.

For example: in the first few days of my teaching, I noticed that most of my students got very mixed up when using possessive pronouns. Talking of their families they made statements like, "your grandfather is dead," and "your father works in the factory." To work on possessive pronouns I used the rods as a model, and a week or ten days later when I took photographs of my family to show my class, they said "your father is sitting with his grandson."

Since my return from Mexico, I have been in very close touch with the Silent Way and throughout the summer attended as many seminars as was possible, three in Spanish, one in French, two workshops with Dr. Gattegno. I also studied his book "Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools," observed classes at the World Trade Institute and presently am undergoing training at Educational Solutions to become an expert in the Silent Way.

There are several reasons for my being attracted to this approach. In the teaching of foreign languages the Silent Way attempts to shift the learners from one mode of functioning to another, taking into account the learners at every step.

1. One of the important components of the Silent Way, is that perception is used as a tool to make clear to students in explicit situations that what they utter is true because they relate what they say to what they perceive.
2. No two lessons are alike, the rods though simple as a material, have such flexibility that they permit teachers to generate all kinds of situations and some games in no time.



3. All structures thus generated are those that will be needed constantly out of the classroom and on all occasions to express what things are like, how many of them there are, what was or is done to them, where and by whom.
4. From the beginning the learners are made aware of how to use their mouth and throat in a new way, i.e. to start producing consciously the sounds of the new language.
5. The learners start making corrections on their own by listening to others and to themselves. In this way all the students are helped.
6. Students can work at their own pace, once they have mastered some structures for example, if spatial relationships are being studied, each one is given some rods to construct something with, and he can construct as complicated or simple a structure he chooses according to his confidence to describe it as he feels comfortable in doing.
7. Since in the introduction of new structures the ones that have already been mastered will come up again and again in various forms, the teacher can get constant feedback in what they say, showing clearly where each learner is and in which direction or on which structure he needs help.
8. Some teachers argue and feel that there is too much emphasis on non-verbal gestures and that these can confuse students. But a good use of hand gestures can be extremely helpful to a student indicating clearly to him, when, for example, in a sentence he is uttering, either one word is missing or he is reversing a word-order or he is inserting an extra word.

9. It brings learners closer to how they learn and function. Having been put in the position of a learner, I know how I felt this: there is a sense of working together, of watching oneself get frustrated or making mistakes or dropping out but always coming back again.
10. Unlike other methods, the Silent Way does not base learning on memory.
11. Continuous mastery is the aim, rather than mastery at the end. This approach abandons the idea of one difficulty at a time and replaces it by awareness and alertness of what is taking place in the learner's mind. Learners will use their own powers continually and know that they do not have to rely on their teacher for approval, but on themselves from the beginning.
12. It generates in the students or at least gives them an awareness and a feel of the new language, making them sense where it works and sounds differently from their native tongue. From the beginning a sense of the melody, the intonation and stresses and pauses that form the cadences of the new language are part of the teaching.
13. What matters is put in a framework and presented in a variety of ways through manipulation of rods, reference to wall charts, pictures, film strips, books, etc.
14. There is definitely a hierarchy of vocabulary in the Silent Way of teaching, and although it may not be a panacea for language learning, I chose it as my approach for teaching, because it is the only method that "subordinates teaching to learning."

Rather than hand out knowledge of certain restricted situations through texts, dialogues, guided conversations, narratives, drills as other methods do -- thereby letting the elements outside of the language form barriers and not letting students use it as their own -- the Silent Way puts the responsibility of the learning on the learners making them function differently but adequately.

It has been necessary to give the "whys" and "wherefores" of the Silent Way since it was because of my close association with it and other methods that the question of "hierarchies" in vocabularies came about.

The problem became more apparent when, this summer, I had the opportunity of observing advanced English classes at some language institutes whose teachers were using eclectic approaches. The observations led me to see that although many students had a large vocabulary in terms of nouns and spoke with a certain amount of fluency, most had retained the melody of their native language, they also either left out articles or inserted them when unnecessary, the prepositions were mixed up at times, as was word-order, some could not even make the correct changes in the verbs when wanting to indicate past tenses for example. In short they had not really managed a good grasp or a feel, of the English language.

Since our main concern is with learners and whether they are given the opportunity to do all the learning by themselves it would be valuable to examine the issue of the order in which the subject matter is given to them. Is it given at random or is it given with the purpose of aiding those who are learning? Is there a need to reach a certain level of competence before one can afford to acquire the special? Is there room for a re-classification of vocabulary related to the purpose of teaching?

## SECTION 2

Different Criteria For The Selection Of Vocabulary

There could be several kinds of criteria for the selection of vocabulary to be presented to students of a foreign language. One criterion could be the aim students have in mind.

If it is for travel the vocabulary would be of a special kind covering for example:

Asking for one's way:

- asking for directions to particular places such as hotels stations, post offices, restaurants, travel agents, theaters.

The vocabulary included would enable them to ask for:

- a single or double bedroom at a hotel,
- schedules, enabling them to buy tickets or make reservations at airports or stations,
- to order food and ask for the bill at restaurants.

The vocabulary would also include asking for:

- prices at markets or stores,
- the time, also in terms of days of the week, and yesterday, today and tomorrow.

It would cover numeration and many questions forms like:

- where is...? when is...? how much...?  
how many...? would you.. please...?  
do you have...?

If it is for business, the vocabulary would include the terms of the special kind of business one is in, the commercial terms, the legal and financial terms as they apply to the business in question.

The vocabulary would make it possible for them to ask for appointments, or to attend meetings and conferences.

It would include terms of politeness, of introduction, (self as well as others), and a number of formulae for greeting and invitation, etc.

If it is for scientific purposes, the importance of understanding and use of the language depends on whether one learns the fundamentals of a science or widens one's knowledge of one's own field. In the first case the basics of the language will be required, in the second enough key words in the field one is in and an acquaintance with the structure of the language may be sufficient. Nouns such as, "experiment" "data" and "research" will surely be included.

If it is for translation or interpretation,

for political or legal matters, then much more will have to be learned before attempting to use it. Especially in the case of interpreting, where mastery and fluency in the mother tongue as well as in the foreign language, will have to be of the same quality.

The classifications above indicate that the purpose for learning the foreign language is based on social requirements and that the bias is in favor of social needs. But as teachers, since our aim and interest lies in education our bias would be in favor of pedagogical needs and necessity.

Are there criteria which teachers can find when they want, above all, to succeed in making their students into comfortable and fluent users of the language?

Obviously to become fluent in a language, learners must be at ease and sure of the use of utterance and be with it as they are in their own language. To be comfortable in the new language they must count on the correct flow of words while they are concentrating on their thinking.

Let us examine the role perception can play in language learning. If examples of explicit situations



are presented to students they will use their perception to draw out the meaning while using themselves to generate utterances from what they hear and see. In this way their attention will not be divided in trying to make a guess at what is being said nor will they need to translate. Since the meaning will be in the situation they contemplate, working with situations they can understand and perceive, will help students retain better no matter which language they are learning.

An example of a dialogue taken from the Spanish (E.I.L.) text will make clear how ambiguous and uncertain situations or structures can be and therefore get in the way of the learners. At the same time it will prove the significance of presenting "perceptual situations." (The grammar drills included are similar to the ones given in the text but may not coincide exactly with what was in the text.)

Part of Conversation I, Lesson I:

Julio: Hola Mario como estas?

Mario: Muy bien gracias y tu?

Julio: Sabes que mañana yo voy a ir a Sur America

Mario: Verdad, estas contento?

Julio: Porsupuesto, tengo muchas ganas a ir a...

The translation of the conversation was given below.

Role play done by teacher to help students get the meaning.

Who were then asked to repeat sentence by sentence and

to do a "backward" build-up of each sentence. After this,

the drills given took up some of the grammatical structures

found in the conversation.

Example:

Person substitution:

Yo voy a ir a sur America

Ud. va a " " "

Ellos van a ir a Sur America

Ellas " " "

Uds, " " "

Nosotros vamos a ir a Sur America.

Item Substitution:

Yo voy a ir a la casa

" " " cama

" " " playa

" " " escuela

When teachers give a lesson like the above dialogue they believe that words that merge together in speech can be recognized for what they are by those who do not know them. Teachers assume that meaning is reached by acting it out or role play and that meaning can hold strange words. Instead, a conversation of this kind or, in fact, any kind, would trigger words in the native language of students and hinder them in the learning of the vocabulary. Even if a translation is provided, the students would not understand which words referred to which meaning since structures are not exactly translatable. Also, since words do not stick together there would be an inevitable call for drill, resulting in boredom and a possible drop in interest to pursue the study of the language. Repeating the sentences five or ten times over and doing a "backward buildup" would ensure nothing. If perception is used as a tool in teaching it will enable the students to associate sounds with what they experience and use their listening and intelligence in producing utterances of situations they see for themselves. So a way of working would be to relate language and perception so as to allow the students to concentrate their mental powers in sorting out what is new rather than in finding out what is implied in a statement heard.

In this way if perception, listening and speaking are linked together, what we will have as a result will be that students will know what the matter is and will feel freer to utter their own words. Since words have no meaning of their own and cannot be taught per se, one has to select the vocabulary presented and choose statements which may have nothing to do with needs and everyday life but are essentially capable of making the students aware of new requirements for their linguistic functionings...the Silent Way approach to teaching languages recognizes this and respects the relation of perception to language. The first many structures are presented using colored rods as a model. In this approach, one grammatical structure leads to another, giving the students full opportunity to move further with what they already have. For example possessive adjectives are presented as: my rod is, your rod is, his, hers.. mine.. yours... Certain prepositions such as: on, under, in, next to, in front of, behind, against, etc., are shown and named by using the rods in some structures, placing some, one on top of another or one to the left of another or in front of it or against it and so on. The responses one expects would be like "her rod is on top of his which is in front of mine which is against yours." Negatives could be brought in "his rod is not

next to hers." Examples of other "perceptual situations" could easily be produced when introducing demonstrative adjectives: This rod is green, that rod is red, (pointing to the red one placed at the further end of the table away from the students). Plurals and question forms could be brought in also.

Adverbs of place: "The black rod is here," or "put the black rod here!" "The green rod is there," or "put the green rod there (near and far from, also).

Different verb tenses could be introduced in a similar manner: "I'm going to place the rods in the bag, I am placing the rods in the bag, I placed the rods in the bag. The same could be done with imperatives of give, take, drop. To present the conditional for example, the following can be extended to many other exchanges: "If I gave you my rod, would you give me yours?" In this manner structures are introduced, worked on and continual mastery obtained. This places a new kind of responsibility on the teacher that alerts her (him) to think of the learner all the time, since it is not as easy to create in the classroom perceptual situations through which new forms and new structures can be recognized for what they refer to.

It is important to offer distinctive situations which ensure that no ambiguity distracts the students and to give the vocabulary connected with these situations so that students use themselves spontaneously and meaning -- fully; whatever they utter is the outcome of their functionings. It would also serve them if they were given an opportunity to concentrate on their behavior, for students would gain something that would stay with them for good rather than be only used in very specific social situations such as traveling or eating. "Something" would stay with them because conscious learning will have taken place during the study of the foreign language. They will have used, through their will, their mouths and throats consciously to making the sounds of the new language, and not their habits and unconscious behavior linked with their mother tongue -- learned so long ago.

Since "the meaning of the situation," will already have been grasped by the learners in what they can perceive it will give an opportunity to the teacher to concentrate in presenting other important components of the language. Learners will simultaneously be made aware of how to use their throats differently in making the sounds of the new language while learning some words. For instance, students will be made aware of the different vowel

combinations, the pauses and stresses, the intonation and phrasing, and the melody that exists in the new language.

The choice of vocabulary with which to begin the introduction of a language may be decided on this basis: making students fluent and comfortable all the time in the oral uses -- and later in the written uses -- of the new language.

Although languages differ considerably in many respects, natives in the new language use themselves just as the learners do in their native language. Therefore students already know a great deal that may ease their way into the new language. As learners of their first language they have had to master the coordination of the ear and the throat and know either how to duplicate or transform what they hear. They have learned how to handle their instruments and made use of their intelligence to gain mastery of their language. They know what languages are for, hence no one has to make them aware that words are a medium through which impressions, intentions, feelings, orders etc., are conveyed. As learners they also know that words do not convey feelings, but that some non-verbal element such as the raising of one's voice in anger for example, does. Hence they already know

that stress and intonation that are not words, are important components of any language.

From their mother tongue learners already suspect that there may be tenses and moods for verbs in the new language or pronouns and adjectives. What we must bring to their notice is the different ways of using themselves. By carefully -

1. clearly uttering some sounds of this language until all are known,
2. to string sounds in such a way or to show the stress in words that natives put in them, to string words to produce the melody the natives produce,
3. to notice characteristics of the language that make it functional, i.e. notice those elements which affect words and in which ways; genders, numbers, location, time, that may have perceptive attributes.

Only when students have mastered these components will they feel comfortable and show fluency even if they cannot say everything. With such pedagogical criteria it is easy to organize the presentation of vocabulary to students, producing mastery at every stage rather than at the end.



## Section 3

### The Existence of Hierarchies in Vocabularies

The study of the following examples will help make the existence of hierarchies in vocabularies clear and also that in most statements not all words are equally loaded for meaning. It is still possible that all are needed to convey the exact meaning intended.

If we want to classify vocabularies according to their significance, we must see that words can be classified according to a number of distinct features.

Let us take the above statement and blot out words so that we can produce a telegram. We get -

1. want classify vocabularies according to significance, see words classified according to number distinct features.
2. If we --- to --- --- --- --- their --- we must --- that --- can be --- --- --- a --- of ---- ---.

While the first statement could convey the meaning of the whole sentence above, the second conveys nothing of it. We can see that we can drop to before classify but not

after according in No. 1. and because one is implied in all infinitives and when they become imperatives they still make sense while "according to" and "according" change altogether the meaning of the sentence.

Let us take any other example:

"While on my way to Vermont, I was involved in an accident and although I have been hospitalized, there are no serious injuries."

Let us telegraph this statement, we get:

"Accident. Not serious. Hospitalized."

In this form the noun, adjective and verb tense are sufficient to convey the meaning.

And another -

Arriving. Sunday. Swissair 110.

Again the verb tense, noun and adjective are enough to convey the meaning.

In the next example we could study the role of nouns and prepositions in the English language and discover which vocabulary should be presented first to the learners of a new language.

"The aspiration of our time for wholeness, empathy and depth of awareness is a natural adjunct of electric technology. The age of mechanical industry that preceded us found vehement assertion of private out-look the natural mode of expression. Every culture and every age has its favorite model of perception and knowledge that is inclined to prescribe for everybody and everything." (McLuhan)

One can notice in the above paragraph how often the same prepositions recur and the nouns keep changing. It can also be noticed that there are very few prepositions as compared to nouns but that prepositions are important in holding sentences together. If presented in the first few lessons and once mastered by the learners, the same words will be used constantly in almost every statement they make with new nouns being added all the time as they go along. Since there is a one to one correspondence for translation of nouns in most languages, nouns are not difficult to learn, while if prepositions are used incorrectly, that would not only make a statement grammatically incorrect but also could make it meaningless. In most methods of language teaching, many nouns are taught in the first few

classes, with the result that most students, although in advanced classes and having a good mastery over nouns make sentences like: "he sat down for on armchair," "he comes for to see" "I'm very keen for engineering" "he's sitting in the floor."

Let us see what articles do in the English language. We have eliminated some in the following statement:

"Anthropological film showed Melanesian carver cutting out decorated drum with such skill, co-ordination, and ease that audience broke into applause -- it became song, ballet."

A generous reader will extract the meaning from the above sentence being as generous as the natives who accept all sorts of mistakes from foreigners who are visiting their country. This does not reduce the role articles play in the English language: for instance if someone picks up a fruit and says "the fruit" he makes a mistake. Mistakes such as "he's a Spanish" or "she hit the Bill's head" are frequently made by "advanced." students who have not been made aware in the beginning of the role of articles in English.

A possible lesson showing clearly the difference between definite and indefinite could be the following: Take the rods, pick up each one saying "a rod" when holding each of them. This would make clear that "a" is applicable to all the colors of the rods except the orange one for which "an" is needed. Assuming that the students have already worked with the imperative "take" \_\_\_\_\_ place a red rod among six or seven blue ones and say "take the red rod and a <sup>blue</sup> ~~green~~ one."

Emphasis could be placed on "the" to make clear to students that when there is only one of a different color among several of the same, the definite article "the" is needed, and it would be the other way round for the indefinite.

As mentioned earlier these examples point to the existence of hierarchies in vocabulary. After having found criteria which aim at the choices of words to be practiced by students from the points of view of usefulness of learning, teachers will surely select the hierarchy that makes sense to the students in terms of evocation. They will choose a hierarchy that does not require a dependence on memory or on translation, but those that make the students function in the new language as if it were their own. Although every teacher would want to help students in such a way, it usually happens that the approach used

does not lead very many to a mastery of the language  
being learned.

## Section 4

### The Three Layers in Vocabulary



Let us make a model of the hierarchy we propose and look at the vocabulary as made of successive layers in time. The layer at the bottom contains the restricted language whose function is to mobilize students so that they pay attention to:

- a) how they listen and hear,
- b) how they utter statements and correct their utterances,
- c) how they connect perception and the system of the sounds uttered,
- d) how they speed up their utterances in the new language and develop the melodic phrases of this language without losing contact with the content and themselves.

This vocabulary will of course be maintained as further layers are added but it will change its character by being integrated in the expanded, but still restricted vocabularies that follow. There will be a gaining of more mobility as they can be used with more words showed by the spontaneity of expression that puts them in statements never heard before.

The vocabulary of the beginning aims at ensuring functioning not to link students and external goals,

therefore, whichever it is, it is pedagogically sound and should be the choice of the teacher concerned with teaching.

The structuration of the following layers will continue in time but the end product will have an existence of its own and will be known as one unit, dynamic and in many ways functioning automatically as does the native language in the learner. In the lessons teachers will provide exercises through which the vocabulary stays with the students without drill, and allows them to move from statement to statement as required by perception or by the intentions.

What exactly is the content of the restricted vocabulary, calling it "restricted" maybe inappropriate in a sense, because this restricted vocabulary would actually be very wide. It would not only convey the spirit and sense of the language but give experiences of the structures of the language.

The vocabulary presented could be the following:

1. articles; the, an, a
2. some conjunctions, and, but, either, or, neither, nor;
3. pronouns, possessive, demonstrative, relative, personal;

4. verbs in their forms and tenses. The choice could be, take, give, put, drop, place, throw, come, go, to have, to be, tell, can, will, like, hold, pick, say, ask, see, show, speak, look, listen, will, should, do, thank, count, leave, etc.;
5. prepositions: to, back of, for, front of, apart, together, on, by, with, in, next, under, between, before, after, further, beside, across, towards, behind, left, right, from, down, into, etc.;
6. plurals;
7. negatives;
8. question forms;
9. comparatives and superlatives; lighter, darker, shorter, longer, lightest, heaviest, higher, lower;
10. adjectives: colors, tall, big, each, most, new, old, little, small, more, any, none, enough, once, twice, all, lot, thin, good, dark, both, different, same, this, that, these, those, etc.;
11. nouns; name, colors, lengths, rods;
12. adverbs: here, there, too, also, slowly, quickly, alternately, etc.

The specific purpose for providing this restricted vocabulary is that it will give a firm basis to students enabling them to put things naturally, in the correct word order, using the right intonation and melody. It will also enable them to respond spontaneously by using transformations.

This vocabulary will be like the "core" of the language, aiding them to move on further, once this "core" is obtained.

Once the learners understand the meaning of a controlled linguistic situation what can one get from it? The learners will meet the foreign language as a language, meant to be used for expression and communication, with the possibilities and limitations of one's own. If the learner has developed the sense of the language he will know that a statement like "a purple yellow dress" is no more acceptable in the foreign language than in his own. He will know that unless "and" is inserted between "purple" and "yellow" the above sentence would only be a string of words.

This and more would be the content of the first layer. A mastery over the vocabulary of this kind would be gained with the help of perception in explicit situations.

Once this foundation is established, additional layers can be provided which could have the same properties although may have less mobility because the stimuli may be less required in every day life. These vocabularies can be called "semi-functional" or "semi-luxury" according to whether one wants to stress they are functional in certain circumstances or to stress that now students are sufficiently

well equipped to be able to afford getting these words.

Since so few nouns are presented in the 'functional stage,' the emphasis in the 'semi-luxury' vocabulary would be on introducing a lot of nouns. For this purpose, texts, pictures, films, radio and television programs could be included. The inclusion of those would enable the students to use the vocabulary they already have to integrate it with the new in creative ways. Two examples taken from "Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools" will make it explicit.

1. The poor little rabbit was caught by the leg  
in the trap.  
(Trap will be the 'new' noun introduced in  
this sentence).
2. That fat man lost all his money and is now  
bankrupt.  
(Bankrupt is the 'new' noun in this sentence.)

The semi-luxury category could include words we need to get along with natives in the business of day-to-day life, which include food, clothing, travel, family life, outings, and the kind of vocabularies mentioned earlier in the Second Section (pages 9-11 - vocabulary for social needs).

Pictures, made for the purpose of controlling the items in them may be used to cover such vocabulary. For example, if

a picture of a dining room is shown the vocabulary for the crockery and the cutlery will be introduced. This allows the emphasis on the vocabulary necessary in every day life and not on objects that one may not encounter in every day life. The distinction between armchair, rocking chair and dining room chair will be made, as well as between a ceiling light, a bedside lamp and a floor light. Teachers will see to it that functional and semi-luxury vocabulary be integrated in statements that the students can understand. Let us take for example the picture of a bedroom. The statements: 'there's a picture hanging against the wall' and 'the slippers are near the bed, on the rug, next to the ..... ' involve words learned when using the rods and now with the pictures. Each picture provides opportunities to meet a wide and varied vocabulary as can be seen in picture number 8.

(see next page)

Number 8 shows seven members of a family dressed to go out. The father is wearing a black suit, and is holding a hat in his hand. The mother is dressed in blue, wears a hat, and is carrying a large black handbag. All the children are hatless. There are two girls and three boys. The eldest boy has long trousers, the other two shorts. One of the girls has long fair hair and the other short auburn hair; both have small handbags. The colours of their dresses are different. Two of the boys are dark haired and the other is fair. All the children have blue eyes like their mother's, but their father's are grey.

The picture can be used in such a way that the functional vocabulary already met can be practised in new situations, but the main aim is to introduce the following vocabulary in any language.

This is the——*family*. The *father*, the *mother*, their two *daughters* and three sons. The *girls' names* are . . . , the *boys' names* are . . . . They are going out for a *walk*, or perhaps to *church* or for a *visit*. Mother's *dress* is . . . , her *hat* is . . . ; Father's *suit* is . . . , his *hat* is . . . . There are *buttons* on mother's dress: they are *made of glass*. Her *handbag* is large and new. Father's suit has three *pieces*: a *coat*, a *waistcoat* and a *pair of trousers*. In the *buttonhole* of his coat there is a *red rose*. On mother's hat there are *feathers*. She also has *earrings* and *wears gloves*. The girls both have *tidy hair*, and each has a *ribbon* on her *head*. Their *handbags* are small—there may be a *handkerchief* in each. Each girl has a *belt* at the *waist* of her dress and one has a *bracelet* on her right *wrist*, while the other has a *wristwatch* on her left *arm*. They too have gloves but they are holding them in their left *hands*. The *eldest* boy has a new suit. He has a *sweater* under his coat, and his two brothers each have one too: one *buttons up* in the middle, and the other has long *sleeves* that can be seen under his coat sleeves. The smallest boy has short hair, the eldest has his *parted* at the side, and the other has a *crew-cut*. They each have a *tie* of a different colour. Father's is black. The *shoes* of all of them are *shining*—they have been *polished* with *care* just before *leaving*. It is not possible to see Father's *socks* nor those of the eldest boy, because of their trousers;

An example of how students can be made to use their creativity is the following:

The question: which of the words in this sentence can be removed without altering the main meaning conveyed, and which cannot? will give such experience. For example:

"I have a very lovely harpsichord which I play very badly" can become, "I have a harpsichord which I play badly."

The second question is: make sentences having exactly the same pattern as the one above, but using very different words and conveying a different thought. In that case the above sentence could become:

"Mrs. Miller has a very old maid whom she treats very well."

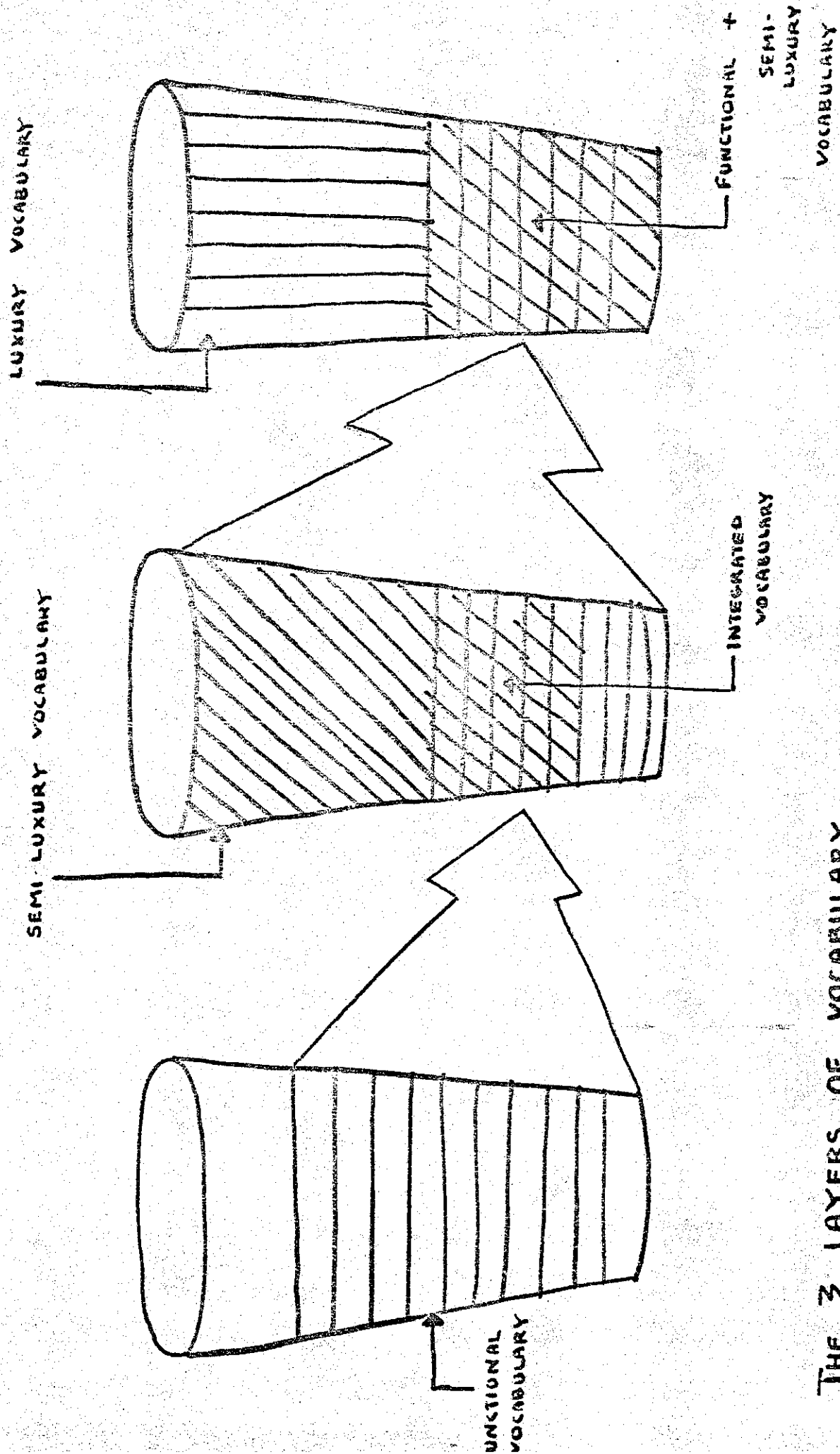
The exercises for the "semi-luxury" vocabulary may be very different from those which make the "functional" vocabulary second nature. This is both because solid foundations now exist and also because the attributes of the words require another kind of illustration. For instance while pictures



or books would be useless for the first layers, they can now make their appearance to the extent they serve the purpose.

Finally, for a language to be known as serving one's purposes, i.e. if these go beyond learning a language, one must feel that most areas of expression which are open to one's native tongue, could also be open for expression in the new language. One can only really say I know that language when one is in this position. Therefore as time goes by emphasis changes too and the need for expanded vocabularies is felt. To own a "luxury" vocabulary at the same time as the functional one, surely tells that one is comfortable in that language, but to own the first without the second is useless.

Hence there are criteria for considering a hierarchy in vocabulary. A model can be offered. To make the illustration explicit a simile can be made. Words are like grains of coffee in a cup of coffee, they can move about by their own dynamics and be found anywhere in the cup once they reach the "semi-luxury" stage or beyond.



THE 3 LAYERS OF VOCABULARY