A Lexical Analysis of Iraqi First Level of Intermediate School English Textbook

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Abstract:

Learning vocabulary of any language has great impact on the acquiring of that language. Many linguists and scholars have emphasized the importance of vocabulary in communicative competence, so that some of them consider it the heart of language. One of the best methods of learning vocabulary is to focus on words of high frequency.

This is a corpus-based study and the method of analysis used in this study is the method of using computer software program equipped with lists prepared from reliable corpora in order to compare them with corpora prepared from the texts to be analyzed. In the present study, a lexical analysis of First Iraqi intermediate school English textbook (hence forth FIETB) was conducted. The software program (AntWordProfiler) as main instrument and (Range) programme as supported instrument, in order to analyze the corpora of the textbook to find out whether this course provides the student with the required vocabulary without using low frequency words which causes extra burden for student. In addition, investigation for coverage, word families and the appropriateness of recycling for vocabulary was done.

The findings of this study revealed that the FIETB (English for Iraq) contains numerous number of vocabulary with low frequency, low number of word families, an average around 90% of coverage, and no/ or insufficient recycling. Finally, some conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions have been presented

Key words: Lexical analysis, Intermediate school, Textbook, High Frequency Words.

Introduction

The role of vocabulary in learning Foreign Language (FL) is essential issue since, as Schmitt (2000, p. 55) affirm, that knowledge of lexis is the core to both, communicative competence and to acquire FL, where the limitation of vocabulary impedes the flow of communication. Likewise, Cameron (2001) stated that as a

language knowledge aspect, vocabulary plays an eminent role in acquiring a language. Also Harmon et al. (2009) emphasis that the development of learners' vocabulary is crucial to the development of their language, while Lewis, M. (1993, p. 89) announced that "lexis is the core or heart of language".

For Nation, I.S.P. (2013), the matter of controlling and presenting items of vocabulary is neglected during the process of developing materials of language learning and teaching, Nation, I.S.P. (2006) also insure that more than 1,500 Words of High Frequency (hence forth WHF) need to have more attention and to be learnt early in learning vocabulary.

This study is a corpus-based lexical analysis that tended to explore FIETB words' frequency, word families, coverage, and recycling which depends on the use of official and reliable corpora.

Limits

The study is limited to:

1- "English for Iraq" English course by O'Neill and Snow, (2014) for Iraqi first intermediate level.

2- The reference corpora of Paul Nations' lists and Academic Word List (AWL).

Questions of the Study

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1- Do FIETB provide the threshold and quality of English words to the students?

2- Does "English for Iraq" course is well formed concerning vocabulary?

3- Do FIETB reach the standard WHF of the official and reliable corpuses?

Literature Review

It is helpful to be able to create learning goals to allow using the language in the hopeful manner, whether developing a language course or organizing course of study. According to Nation, I.S.P. (2001, pp 7-8), there are a few options for determining which words will be counted:

a)Tokens (Running Words): One method is to simply count every word form in a text, and if the same word form appears several times, each occurrence is counted. b) Types: another approach to count the words is that the same word is not counted if it

is encountered again. c) Lemmas (Groups): A headword and some of its inflected and abbreviated forms make up a lemma. d) Word Families: a head word and its affixes.

Among word types, the word families are the most suitable for receptive vocabulary measurement due to the fact that Learners who have progressed above a basic level of competency have some control over word construction devices and can recognize that there is a formal and a semantic relationship among regularly affixed elements of a word family. In addition, there is growing evidence that the term "family" refers to a psychologically genuine entity (Bertram, Laine. & Virkkala, 2000).

Nation, I.S.P. (2006, p.59) declared that learners in need for vocabulary amount reaching 8000 word families in order to reach 98% of text coverage to have an adequate self depended comprehension.

High-Frequency Words

WHF are words that occur repeatedly in a corpus of written or spoken texts, a word frequency list contains those words (Richards, Jack C & Richard Smith, 2010, p. 261). They are a small group of words but are extremely important because they cover a great amount of the running words in texts that are written or spoken; they also take place in all sorts of usage of a language (Nation, I.S.P., 2001, p. 13). It has been set that the uttermost suitable limit for high frequency words is 2,000- word which is proofed with evidence by Nation, I.S.P. and Kyongho, H. (1995) to be the best decision for academic study learners. WHF include function words such as "in, for, the, of, a" and so on. It also comprises a large number of content words, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives that are occurred repeatedly in a text. Michael West's (1953) A General Service List (GSL) of English Words is the classic list that comprises about 2,000 word families of WHF. In sum, WHF account for about 80% over all running words in academic text and about 90% over interaction and novels (Chung & Nation, I.S.P., 2003).

Academic Words

If a text comes from an academic textbook, it will contain a large number of words that are found in a variety of academic literature. These words typically account for roughly 9% of all running words in a text. The Academic Word List (hence forth AWL) (Coxhead, 1998) is the most comprehensive list of them. For

everyone who uses English for academic purposes, this short collection of 570 headwords in AWL list is essential (Nation, I.S.P., 2001, p. 14).

Recycling Vocabulary

Recycling or repetition of vocabulary plays essential role in the compound process of vocabulary learning. Consequently, recycling vocabulary items grow to be cognitive factor in learning.

Memory audit and redundancy play a critical role in the complicated interaction of learning a word .in this manner, word reusing turns into a determinant during the time spent learning. As indicated by Nation, I.S.P. (2001) repetition is fundamental for vocabulary learning on the grounds that there is such a great amount to think about word, meeting with it for one time is not enough to have this knowledge, and on the grounds that vocabulary should not exclusively be known, they should be realized well so they can be easily gained.

Repetition experiences cause word to show up in various settings. Each experience gives new data about the word meaning and makes it easy to acquisition to occur. Schmitt, et al. (2011) declare that facing great amount of repletion is what a learner needs in order not only to solidify a word, in addition to master the different sort of word information. Ellis, R. (1999) also confirms that the acquisition is raised when the amount of setting in which the word show up is raised.

Although, there is no definite amount of word repetition that guarantees learning it (Huckin & Coady, 1999), nevertheless researches such as Nation, I.S.P. and Wang (1999), in addition to Webb, (2007) suggest that ten repetitions could be the target for learning new vocabulary item. According to the present study the target of five repetitions was suggested in an assumption that words could have further repetition in the ActivityBook.

Text Coverage

The amount of text coverage considered to be an important issue in vocabulary size. Nation, I.S.P. (2006) defined coverage as the percentage of vocabulary in a text which is known by the reader, therefore, if the reader reached 90% of text coverage that means the reader understand 90% of the running text.

A study by Hirsh and Nation, I.S.P. (1992) to investigate the connection within text coverage and reading comprehension for English non- native speakers with teenagers oriented novels. Their outcomes show that 2000 to 3000 of WHF supply superb foundation for language use. Nevertheless the 3rd 1000 WHF and AWL words are more suitable for upper secondary school and university texts. (Heatley, et al., 2002).

In the present study the coverage percentage refers to how much the target corpus of FIETB conformable to the lists of WHF, which means how much this corpus has of WHF; the higher the percentage is, the higher occurrence WHF is, and the higher beneficial for learners, the FIETB is.

Corpus Linguistics

Corpus Linguistics is a strong tool for analyzing natural language, and it may reveal great deal of facts about how language is used differently in different circumstances, such as spoken against written communication or formal versus casual interaction. Although computerized corpora and methodologies are now almost associated with Corpus Linguistics and the word "corpus," this was not always the case, and prior corpora were generally not digitized. Many empirical linguists who were interested in function and usage conducted basically what is now known as Corpus Linguistics before the introduction of computers, or at least before the spread of personal computers.

Previous Related Studies

Shin and Chon (2011)

This study aimed at comparing the vocabulary of primary and secondary English textbooks to items from West's (1953) 2,000 GSL, a list before NGSL, words from Coxhead's (2000) AWL, with vocabulary from three main corpora of English. The sample contained 140 textbooks of elementary and secondary Korean Schools. To obtain the required data Range software programme was used. The study found out that 68% of the terms in the textbooks were not on the GSL, with a high percentage of academic vocabulary. When the vocabulary of the textbooks was compared to the items in the three corpora, it was discovered that the textbooks contained a high number of words that are rarely employed in ordinary language output.

Jahan et al. (2019)

The study aimed at comparing words' frequency and coverage of English textbooks to the BNC and AWL. The samples of the study were four intermediate schools' English textbooks that were approved by "Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board". The instruments, that were used to obtain data, were AntConc 3.5.7 version and complete lexical tutor. The study declared that the presentation of vocabulary items in intermediate English course textbooks was highly complicated and there was relatively little coverage.

Foster and Mackie (2013)

In This study, vocabulary in children's literature was the subject. The study aimed at building a corpus of Dr. Seuss' works in order to analyze them from a vocabulary point of view. To assess the suitability of utilizing Dr. Suess' works in an EFL environment, Foster and Mackie compared the frequency of vocabulary and coverage of the words in the books with the lexical coverage within VP-Kids corpus and BNC. As mentioned, the samples were Dr. Suess' works and the instrument was Wordsmith software. The researchers came to the conclusion that the books were a good representation of both children's and general language creation. When comparing the Suess corpus to the VP-Kids corpus and BNC corpus, the frequency coverage was nearly identical; 86 and 84 percent of the items in the Suess corpus found among the 1st 1,000 WHF within both corpora. They also compared the highest frequent nouns, adjectives and lexical verbs in Dr. Suess' books to the same word classes in a corpus of children's literature (the CLLIP corpus). This comparison also revealed a reasonable level of correspondence, especially for adjectives and verbs.

Thompson and Sealey (2007)

This study, as well, performed a corpus-based research to examine vocabulary in children's books. The study aimed at analysing fiction text written for children which were taken out from BNC. The samples were 30 fiction texts from CLLIP. The instruments that are used to obtain data were TextPipe Pro programme and Oxford Wordsmith Tools, Version 4. The study examined the word profile of CLLIP corpus to adult's corpus of newspaper and fiction texts to see if children's writing had distinct linguistic characteristics than the adult oriented texts. The study came to the conclusion that children's fiction vocabulary shared many of features as adult fiction vocabulary, but not as much as newspaper's text vocabulary. There was considerable

overlapping between the top 10 highest frequent nouns, adjectives, and lexical verbs in both corpora.

Konstantakis and Alexiou's (2012)

This study aimed at looking into the type and scope of vocabulary of course books that were given in Junior A and B. The samples were five EFL textbooks used in Greece in the first two years of primary school. The study instrument was Range programme. The study came out that the Greek texts were insufficiently packed with mid and low frequency words. Based on a comparison to the BNC 2,000 word list, they found that the books include around 74% and 85 % of the WHF of BNC list. A vocabulary of this small, as the study claimed, was insufficient for anything except the most fundamental kind of communication.

Milton and Vassiliu (2000)

This study aimed at investigating the lexis of textbooks that were oriented to low level learners and the vocabulary knowledge of these learners. The samples were three course books for fist year EFL students in Greece. The study instrument was a concordancer. The study emphasized that frequency lists were not categorized according to themes or subjects. Many words representing animals, for example, were unlikely to be among the 2,000 WHF in general English, but they were essential in children's world. The outcomes of the study were similar to Konstantakis and Alexiou (2012), which emphasized that the vocabulary in Greek books varied greatly in length and word selection.

Catalán and Francisco (2008)

This study aimed at investigating if there was a systematic or random approach to word input in textbooks of the similar and diverse educational levels. The samples were four books of Span schools, two of primary and two of secondary schools. The instrument of gathering data was WordSmith Tools. According to the findings of the study, there was lack of uniformed systematic method to the selection of vocabulary in EFL textbooks of Span schools. Thus, the students might be exposed to verity type and amount of vocabulary input.

The Procedures

Since there were no electronic copies of the sample of the present study, the textbook was scanned and exposed to OCR (Optical Character Recognition) scanner application then all the outcomes gathered in one text and manually check out for mistakes that caused either by the quality of photos especially in the margins or by miss read the words of handwriting within images inside the pages.

AntWordProfiler software programme was used to analyse data. The programme has two tools: The essential one is general vocabulary profiler which appears at the main window of the programme. This tool generates statistics of vocabulary frequency of a corpus of texts which are loaded into the programme. This tool compares the loaded corpus with the levelled lists of the programme

The second tool in this programme is file viewer and editor, this tool views the loaded corpus of a text and highlight, in a colour code, the level of vocabulary (according to its existence in the three level lists; level 1= red, level 2 = green, level 3 = blue, level 0 = black). Furthermore, it views the general coverage of the vocabulary in the different levels.

As the electronic version was set down, it had to be put in plain text form to be readable by the programme. However, before that, there have to be some preparations which are set as steps in the following:

In the first step a detecting for proper nouns was done to eliminate them all because the lists do not contains proper nouns.

The second step was to get rid of punctuation marks and numbers because they were not included in the lists and if they remain they will affect the final result since the programme considers them as "words" of low frequency. Cardinal numbers were changed into words and abbreviated words were written in complete form. The next step was to split compound words which were not in the lists.

The final step resulted after putting the text corpus into the programme. Words of countries, cities and nationalities appeared in black, except for "English" as a language not as nationality, which means either the lists did not find them of high frequency or they were treated as proper nouns. Therefore, the researcher tended to treat them as both, which means they would be in the text one time then would be omitted the other time to see their effect on the final coverage result. The same

procedure was applied on the compound words. After doing all these preparations the final text corpus was put into the software programme for analysing.

In order to investigate the recycling of vocabulary, the researcher tended to count down the number of words that are not/or insufficiently recycled which were those with zero to less than five times repeated (not less than ten times as Nation, I.S.P. & Wang, 1999; Webb, 2007 suggested) in an assumption that these words had to be recycled more in the ActivityBook.

Results:

In spite of considering being the first book in the Intermediate level, this book comes after six textbooks of the primary school, and that makes the material in this book a result of a cumulative material from the primary school in addition to the new material presented in this book. Depending on counting the lists of words in each English textbook of this course for the primary level, it was predictable that the number of words been taught in the primary school not exceeds 1000 words. Relying on the this fact, it was assumed that the Intermediate student had introduced to words from the list of 1st 1000 WHF, as well, the outcomes showed that FIETB depended on the 1st 1000 WHF in 86.8% with 8.7% on the 2nd 1000 WHF and 0.4 of AWL list, likewise were the outcomes of types (words without repetition) and groups (word families) (See Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1 *Lexical Profile Statistics for the FIETB*

Level	*(Token) All words*		*(Type)Words without repetition*		*Word families*	
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*
1st 1000 WHF	13227	86.80	992	62.23	577	53.23
2nd 1000 WHF	1325	8.69	342	21.46	250	23.06
AWL	65	0.43	22	1.38	19	1.75
N/A	622	4.08	238	14.93	238	21.96
Total	15239		1594		1084	

Figure 1 *The Percentage of Token, Type, and Families for the FIETB*
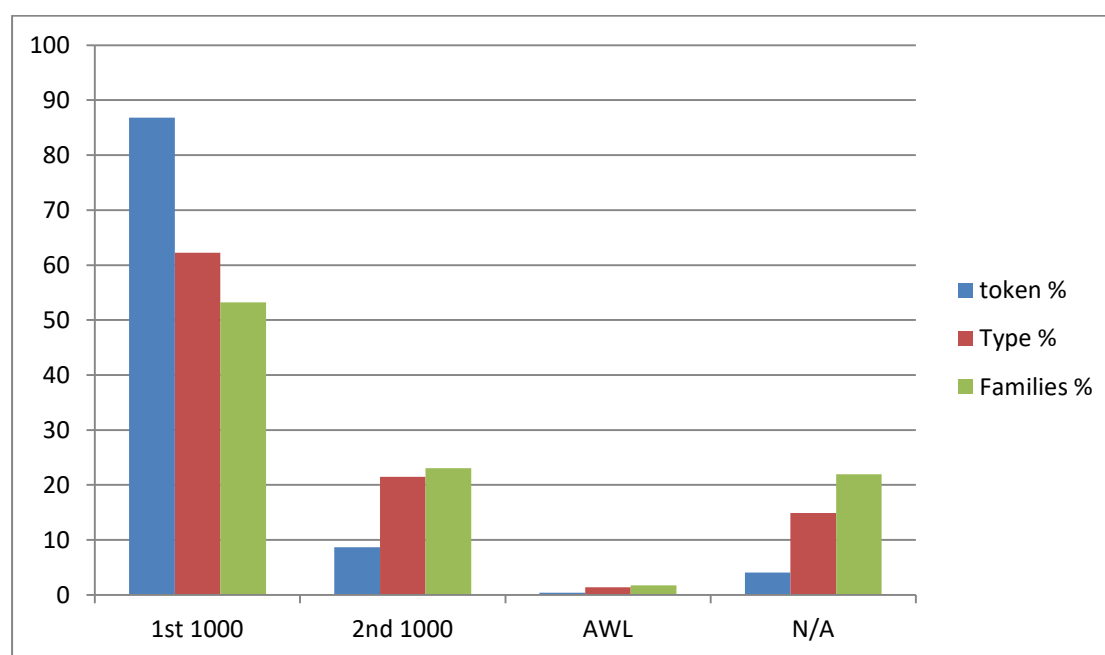
The outcomes of the moderated text (without proper nouns and compound words) showed the highly representative of word families of the 1st 1000 WHF then of the 2nd WHF and so on, but at the same time there still 0.4% of coverage depended on AWL and 4.1% of coverage depends on the Not Available (N/A) words, while in fact the students deal with the whole text (immoderated) and according to that the percentages of coverage were changed. (See Table 2)

Table 2 *The Coverage Percentages of the FIETB*

Level	Immodertaed words		Without Countries & Nationalities		Without Compound words		Moderated words	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1st 1000 WHF	13149	85.2	13142	86.7	13234	85.3	13227	86.8
2nd 1000 WHF	1290	8.4	1290	8.5	1325	8.5	1325	8.7
AWL	65	0.4	65	0.4	65	0.4	65	0.4
N/A	926	6	662	4.4	886	5.7	622	4.1
Total Coverage	15430	94.0	15159	95.6	15510	94.2	15239	95.9

Finally, in order to investigate the recycling of vocabulary, the number of occurrence were counted down for words occurred less than 5 times in the textbook, and found that 1506 words were never recycled or hade poor recycling especially the words of AWL list (See Table 3).

Table 3

The Low Recycled Words (Less Than 5 Times Repeated)

Level	FEITB
1st 1000 WHF	226
2nd 1000 WHF	157
AWL	14(of 19)
N/A	209
Total	606

Discussion of the Results

According to the data interpretations, the following findings have been reported:

1- The FIETB (the sample of this study) depend on the 1st and 2nd 1000 WHF which, according to experts, is highly recommended for the sample of the study. This result goes in line with Foster and Mackie (2013), Konstantakis and Alexiou's (2012), and Milton and Vassiliu (2000).

2- The findings reveal that 4.1% of the running words of the FIETB are not found in the 1st , 2nd 1000 and AWL that means they are of low frequency. The total number of N/A words, according to AntWordProfiler, is 622 words. Although these words covers 4.1% of the running words of the textbook , nevertheless they still oddly selected especially when they accompanied 606 words without adequate recycling,

that increases the burden on the students with less benefit. This result goes, relatively, in line with Jahan et al. (2019), Thompson and Sealey (2007), Konstantakis and Alexiou's (2012), Milton and Vassiliu (2000) and Catalán and Francisco (2008).

3- According to the findings, the recycling of vocabulary for the sample of the present study seems to be not considered when designing the course; this goes in line with Catalán and Francisco (2008).

4- The number of word families is 1084 word which, according to experts, is insufficient number comparing to the required amount of 8000 word families.

Conclusions

The study comes up with the following conclusions that answer the questions of the study:

1- The Iraqi FIETB has 622 words that are not of the first 2000 WHF and AWL which load an extra burden on the shoulders of students with words they may not get great benefit of.

2- "English for Iraq" course has its qualitative faults concerning vocabulary, which need to be reconsidered and re-evaluated.

3- Although Iraqi FIETB depends on the first two thousands WHF according to reliable corpora of BNC and COCA but it still has considerable amount of lower frequency words, nevertheless the AWL words which, according to experts, are more suitable for upper secondary school and university texts.

4- There are 606 words either have insufficient recycling or have never recycled especially with the advanced words of AWL list which actually needs recycling more than the other words.

4.4 Recommendations and Suggestions

1- It is recommended that "English for Iraq" course is to be re-evaluated and modified in order to supply students with more suitable vocabulary that accord their level; the first two thousand WHF are highly recommended to be more depended on in designing intermediate English courses.

2- In designing EFL course, it is recommended to put in consideration the process of word recycling especially with new and advanced words.

2- English course designers are recommended to use benefit of WHF lists, with assistance of concordance programmes, when designing English courses or textbooks for EFL learners.

3- Teachers are recommended to emphasize on WHF more than other words and put them in consideration when to omit some material of the textbook according to necessity.

4- Researchers are suggested to do more studies on vocabulary supplement with other levels of primary or upper secondary schools in a try to figure out the quality and quantity of vocabulary to be supplied to peoples and students in order to equip them with the much and quality of vocabulary that would allow them to deal with academic texts after graduation.

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تحليل معجمي لكتاب اللغة الانكليزية المنهجي للصف الاول المتوسط لمدارس العراق

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الملخص:

إنَّ لِتَعَلُّم مُفرَدَات أيِّ لُغَة أَثَرا كَبِيرا عَلَى إِكْسَاب تِلْكَ اللُّغَةِ ,فَقَدْ أَكَّدَ الْكَثِيرُ مِنَ اللغويِينَ وَالْعُلَمَاء عَلَى أَهَمِّيَّةِ الْمُفْرَدَاتِ فِي الْكَفَاءَةِ التواصلية ,حَتَّى أَنَّ بَعْضَهُمْ عَدَّهَا قَلْبُ اللُّغَة. وَمِنْ أَفْضَلِ أَسَالِيب تَعَلُّم الْمُفْرَدَات, هُو التركيز عَلَى الْكَلِمَاتِ الْأَكْثَر تَكْرَارًا.

هَذِهِ دِرَاسَةٌ تَعْتمِدُ عَلَى الْمُتُونِ, وَطَرِيقَة التَّحْلِيلُ الْمُتَّبَعَة فِي الدراسة الحالية, هِيَ اسْتِخْدَام بَرْنَامَج حاسوبٍ مُزَوَّد بِقَوَائِمٍ, مَعِدَةٍ مِنْ مُتُونٍ مَوْثُوقَة (BNC, COCA و AWL) مِنْ أَجْلِ مُقَارَنَتِهَا بمتونٍ أُعِدَّتْ مِنَ النُّصُوصِ الَّتِي يُرَادُ تَحْلِيلُهَا . فِي هَذِهِ الدِّرَاسَة تَمَّ اجراء تَحْلِيلٌ مُعْجَمِيٌّ لِكُتَاب اللُّغَةِ الإِنْجِلِيزِيَّةِ الْمَنْهَجِي للصف الاول المتوسط فِي الْمَدَارس الْعِرَاقِيَّةِ (من الان فصاعدا FIETB).

استُخدِمَ بَرْنَامَج (AntWordProfiler) كأداةٍ رئيسيةٍ و بَرْنَامَج (Range) كأداةٍ مساندةٍ مِنْ أَجْلِ تَحْلِيلِ مُتُون الْكُتُبِ المَنهَجِيّةِ لِمَعرِفَةِ أن كَانَ هَذَا الْمَنْهَجُ يُوَفِّرُ لِلطَّالِبِ الْمُفْرَدَاتِ الْمَطْلُوبَة مِنْ دُون اسْتِخْدَامِ كَلِمَاتٍ قَلِيلَةِ التَّكْرَارِ, مِما يُسَبِّبُ عِبئاً إِضَافِياً على الطَّالِبِ. فضلا عن ذلك تَمَّ التَّحقُّق مِنْ التَغطية وفصائل الكلمات ومِنْ حُصُولِ إعادة تَدويرٍ مُنَاسِبةٍ لِلمُفردات.

وَاظهَرَتْ نَتِيجَةُ هَذِهِ الدِّرَاسَة أَنَّ FIETB (الإنجليزية مِن أجل العِراق) تَحْتَوِي عَلَى الْكَثِير مِنَ الْمُفْرَدَاتِ قَلِيلَةِ التَّكْرَارِ, عَدَدٍ قليلٍ مِن فَصائِلِ الكلمات وَتَغطيةٍ بِحُدود ٩٠% مَعَ إنعدام أو عَدَم كِفايَةُ إعادَةُ تَدويرٍ. وَأَخِيراً تَمَّ تَقديمُ بَعْض الإستِنتاجات والتَوصيات وَالمُقتَرَحات.

الكلمات المفتاحية (تحليل معجمي, المدارس المتوسطة, الكتاب المنهجي, الكلمات الاكثر تكرارا).