

TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE,
1912–1936: PIONEERS OF ELT

VOLUME I: WREN AND WYATT

Percival Christopher Wren, *The "Direct" Teaching of English in Indian Schools*, 1912

H. Wyatt, *The Teaching of English in India*, 1923

VOLUME II: HAROLD PALMER

The Principles of Language-Study, 1921

The Oral Method of Teaching Languages: A Monograph on Conversational Methods, 1921

The Bulletin of the Institute for Research in English Teaching, no. 1, 1923

Memorandum on Problems of English Teaching in the Light of a New Theory, 1924

The Reformed English Teaching in the Middle-grade Schools, 1927

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The Oxford English Course: Reading Book I, Part II, 1933

The Oxford English Course: Language Book I, Part II, to be studied with Reading Book I, Part II, 1933

VOLUME V: TOWARDS CARNEGIE

Michael West, *The Construction of Reading Material for Teaching a Foreign Language*, c. 1927

Harold E. Palmer, *Specimen of One Complete Unit in the 'Reader System'*, 1927

Harold E. Palmer, *On Learning to Read Foreign Languages: A Memorandum*, 1932

Michael West, *On Learning to Speak a Foreign Language*, 1933

Harold E. Palmer, *The Institute for Research in English Teaching: Its History and Work*, 1934

Harold E. Palmer, *The Grading and Simplifying of Literary Material: A Memorandum*, 1934

Harold E. Palmer, 'The history and present state of the movement towards vocabulary control', 1936

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VOLUME V

TOWARDS CARNEGIE

Selection and new introduction by
Richard C. Smith

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME V

Overview

This volume brings together a variety of texts which illustrate developments in the period 1927–36 when independent work carried out in Asian contexts began to be 'brought home' to the UK and the USA and collaborative efforts were undertaken in the UK and USA by Harold Palmer, Michael West and Lawrence Faucett towards production of the 'Carnegie Report' (Faucett *et al.* 1936). Palmer, we should remind ourselves, did not leave Japan definitively until 1936, whereas West had returned from India in 1932, and Faucett from China and Japan in 1931 (see Appendix to the 'General Introduction' in Volume I). However, from 1931 onwards, Palmer's research work increasingly took on an 'international' flavour as he made extended visits to the UK and USA and began to engage in debates relating to West's work on reading, the associated 'Reading Method' in the USA, the work of American statistical lexicologists, and the promotion by C. K. Ogden and his agents abroad of 'Basic English'. West had already met with acclaim in the North American context for *Bilingualism* (1926), and in 1933 he accepted a lectureship at Toronto, where he developed his own critique of Basic and added to the commercial success he had begun to achieve with Longmans by compiling the *New Method English Dictionary* (West and Endicott 1935), following on from a *New Method Conversation Course* (1933b) which reflected his developing interests in the teaching of speaking. Finally, Faucett – the 'third man' in this story – was awarded a Carnegie Fellowship in 1932 which took him to Turkey, back to the 'Far East', and thence to Africa, but in being sent on the latter journey in particular he was clearly being prepared for a new 'central' role at the University of London Institute of Education. In the meantime, his *Oxford English Course* (1933) had begun to help Oxford University Press rival West and Longmans in the newly discovered international market for EFL

materials. When, in 1934–5, Palmer, West and Faucett met together in the USA and UK to jointly compile the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* (the 1936 ‘Carnegie Report’), the foundations for UK/US propagation of EFL were beginning to be more firmly established.

Below we provide further background information relating to the works included in this volume, considering in turn developments in the areas of ‘Experimental materials writing’; ‘Palmer on reading, West on speaking’; ‘Basic English’; ‘The development of new word-lists’; and ‘The Carnegie Conference and Report’.

Experimental materials writing

The centralizing developments overviewed above were rapid, and it is important to remember that in 1927 the focus of attention of Palmer, West and Faucett was still mainly on problems of English teaching in their chosen Asian contexts, in relative isolation both from one another and from obvious ‘central’ (UK/US) interests.

Faucett was perhaps the most internationally focused at this stage – his (1927) *The Teaching of English in the Far East* (in Volume IV) presents a survey of conditions in a variety of Asian countries and, in 1927, on his way back to China from PhD studies in Chicago, he developed materials for the World Book Company in the Philippines and sought out West in Bengal. However, a new university position was awaiting him near Beijing, and he quickly reimmersed himself in localized materials writing and teacher training in the context of the ‘Yenching Institute for Research in English Teaching’ which he founded there on Palmer’s Tokyo model. With his move to Japan in 1930 Faucett’s relationship with Palmer became closer, and his research work and the materials he developed became better-finished and more universal in application, but still at this stage his materials were being published in and for the Far East, not for a UK or US publisher (see Volume IV).

Faucett’s developing interest in problems of vocabulary selection in the early 1930s clearly related to his ongoing experimentation in materials design, and the same had been true for both West and Palmer. The first text in the present volume – West’s *The Construction of Reading Material for Teaching a Foreign Language* (undated, but probably published in 1927 or the early part of 1928) – was issued only locally in Bengal, as Bulletin no. 13 of Dacca University. It provides a bridge for understanding the link between the reading experiments reported in *Bilingualism* (1926) and the equally experimental process of constructing *The New Method Readers (New Series)* which were published in India in 1926–7 (see Volume III). As this pamphlet shows, West was becoming

more aware of the potential relevance of his ideas both outside India and in the teaching of languages other than English, but the grounding of these ideas in perceived local needs is still evident. At the same time, he was clearly willing, like Faucett, to look beyond his own experience for ideas, and he refers to a number of sources of external influence in this pamphlet (including Daniel Jones, whose personalized advice on phonetic symbols he was, however, to reject in favour of a ‘simpler’ system (p. 10)). One source he acknowledges only briefly here (for the ‘Frequency Vocabulary’ (p. 23) on which he based his selection of target lexis) was the American statistical lexicologist Edward Thorndike’s (1921) *The Teacher’s Word Book*. This was to be a major source also – in combination with Ernest Horn’s (1926) *A Basic Writing Vocabulary* (cf. Faucett and Maki 1932) – for Faucett’s *Oxford English Course* (1933), and ultimately for the Carnegie Report itself (Faucett *et al.* 1936).

Palmer, while engaging in his own materials production activities for the Japanese secondary school context in 1926–7, was – and continued to be – much more reluctant than either West or Faucett to acknowledge the relevance of existing word counts. His work in writing a series of ten classroom texts – the *Standard English Readers* (1926–7) – in time for submission to the Japanese Department of Education by the end of 1927 was considerably more intuitive, and perhaps more rushed than that of West; as a result, there are some overlooked errors even in the *Specimen of One Complete Unit in the Reader System* (1927b) – included in the present volume – which was produced to publicize these textbooks and their accompanying materials to Japanese teachers. The textbooks themselves were intended to focus on ‘plain English’ in contrast with the literary register typically featured in existing Japanese readers, but otherwise the innovations involved here are mostly external to the texts themselves, relating to their role in a proposed ‘Reader system’ which is designed to assist Japanese teachers in innovative teaching. This system, as first expounded in an article in the *IRET Bulletin* (Palmer 1926a), had its origins in a realization that the IRET Reform programme as originally envisaged ‘was likely to prove difficult to carry out in the average Middle-School classroom’ (p. 2). Thus, ‘further efforts in the way of course-designing were necessary in order to reduce to a minimum the difficulties experienced by teachers in coping with the unfamiliar problems presented by modern methods’ (*ibid.*). Palmer’s solution was a compromise between the kind of oral work he instinctively favoured and the reader-centred nature of typical teaching in all subjects, not only English, in Japanese schools (this compromise paralleled a growing realization that reading and writing needed to be admitted as pre-eminent

goals, as discussed in our Introduction to Volume II and below). Thus, as exemplified in the *Specimen of One Complete Unit*, the companion books to each reader served the function of supporting teachers in oral (question-and-answer) work centred on the text, and 'Direct Method' written work (that is, graded exercises which did not involve translation). The 'Reader System' was the product of a three-year period of collaborative experimentation in developing reformed methods specifically for and to some extent with Japanese school teachers, and was intended as a starting-point for further trialling and feedback in the Japanese context. Palmer was not, at this stage, at all concerned to make claims for appropriateness in other settings.

Palmer on reading, West on speaking

From out of his work compiling the *Standard English Readers* (1926–7) and identifying overall goals of instruction in the Japanese context (see his *The Reformed English Teaching* (1927a), in Volume II), Palmer had come to a new consciousness of the importance of reading. During a long visit to the USA in 1931–2, he also became more aware of the predominance of the 'Reading Method' in that context, and of the impact West's ideas were having on modern language teaching there. It was partly in a spirit of international rivalry with West, then, that Palmer began to develop and publicize his ideas on the teaching of reading, as expressed primarily in his (1932a) memorandum *On Learning to Read Foreign Languages*, included in the present volume. His emphasis on basing the teaching of reading on prior development of spoken language abilities (requiring what he calls here an 'articulating-gesticulating teacher' (p. 30)) reflects his much stronger attachment to the Reform Movement/Berlitz tradition than that shown by West and the North American Reading Method protagonists. As part of his new focus on reading, and his related engagement in issues of vocabulary selection (discussed further below), Palmer also began to work in the 1930s on the production of supplementary readers for extensive reading. Again, this can be seen partly as a response to perceived needs in the Japanese context, but also, partly, as a response to West on a more international (particularly, American) stage.

In parallel, West was developing his ideas on the teaching of speaking, again for a mixture of motives, including – by this stage – commercial imperatives. Just as Palmer's increasing focus in the 1930s on vocabulary selection, the teaching of reading and the production of supplementary readers constituted a second phase of his work in Japan, West's shift of emphasis to speaking constituted a second stage in his own overall work.

Nevertheless, speaking was not an entirely new interest for West, despite his earlier emphasis on reading. He had carried out some experiments in Bengal with 'lesson-forms' designed to maximize 'pupil talking time', and already had the intention of producing materials for productive skills as early as 1927 (cf. West n.d. [1927?]: 27). In his (1933a) book *On Learning to Speak a Foreign Language* – included in the present volume – West presents the results of his research on lesson-forms (Chapter III), but his main concern here is to show how a 'speaking vocabulary' might need to differ from the 'reading vocabulary' he had used for the *New Method Readers* (Chapter IV), and how such a vocabulary could be constructed (Chapter V). These ideas were at the same time put into practice in a new (1933b) course for Longmans, *Learn to Speak by Speaking*, also known as *The New Method Conversation Course*.

In 1931 West and Palmer met for the first time, and, following West's move to Canada in 1933, the spirit of firm but friendly rivalry between them was transformed into one of collaborative enquiry, also involving Lawrence Faucett. The main reason for this was their common opposition to the apparently hegemonic claims of Basic English, to which we now turn.

Basic English

It was primarily the perceived need to respond to the challenge posed by Basic English which led to the important collaboration between West and Palmer, and between them and Faucett in the mid-1930s, despite the continuing differences on points of methodology between the first two men in particular. As Stein (2002: 16) notes, 'The history of *Basic English* has still to be written', and its impact on the development of English as a foreign language teaching has, for this reason, perhaps not yet been fully recognized (though see Howatt 1984: 250–5). Basic English ('Basic' being an acronym for *British-American-Scientific-International-Commercial*) was an ingenious attempt to reduce English to its essentials for purposes of international communication. The claim of its inventor, Charles Kay Ogden (1889–1957), was that English could be reduced to 850 words (including only sixteen verbs) and a few simple grammatical rules, all of which could be written on one sheet of paper (Ogden 1930). Basic does not appear to have been established specifically as a contribution to the teaching of English as a foreign language, but rather as an international auxiliary language along the lines of Esperanto. Following initial publication of the Basic English word-list, Palmer for one appeared content to tolerate its claims so long as these did not interfere with the Reform programme he was developing for Japan. However,

Basic had supporters in high places, and the 'propaganda' associated with it escalated rapidly in the early 1930s, partly via a network of agents established in particular in China and Japan (indeed, Ogden's chief agent in Japan was none other than Okakura Yoshisaburo, an influential Japanese teacher educator who had always been a thorn in the side of Palmer's reform efforts).¹ From around 1932–3 onwards, then, Basic appeared to represent a significant challenge to the vocabulary lists being developed within the Institute for Research in English Teaching (see below), and Palmer took to criticizing Basic with increasing frequency.

Although at first sight the advocacy of Basic English as an international auxiliary language appeared to be peripheral to the field of English as a foreign language teaching, it was increasingly presented as serving as a useful replacement for 'full English' in education systems worldwide. Teaching materials and dictionaries began to be produced (being published by Ogden's Orthological Institute in London under the imprint of Kegan Paul), and these directly challenged the international relevance of existing materials based on more conventional limited vocabularies (notably, those by West and Faucett). In the early 1930s West, like Palmer, became increasingly concerned about the challenge posed by Basic English. Following his move to Toronto, West published a detailed critique of Ogden's Basic English vocabulary list (West, Swenson, and others 1934) which was broadly supported by Palmer.² This brought forth an immediate point-by-point rebuttal by Ogden, termed by him a 'counter-offensive' (Ogden 1935), in which he lambasted West, and, to a lesser extent, Palmer, accusing them among other things of deceit, hypocrisy and profit-seeking.

West's increasing advocacy of English as a 'world language' at this time possibly had as much to do with a perceived need to counter the claims being made for Basic English as with heartfelt commitment. In co-opting one of the main premises associated with Basic – that is, the argument that in the unstable world order of the 1930s English and the English-speaking peoples represented the only hope for continuing enlightenment (West 1933a: 1; cf. West 1934) – West's sentiments appeared to be of quite a different order from his earlier advocacy of vernacular 'language rights' in Bengal (see Volume III). By laying emphasis on the world's need for English, West succeeded in gaining Carnegie Corporation sponsorship, both for his critique of Basic English (West, Swenson, and others 1934) and – more importantly – for the 1934–5 conferences on English 'as a world language' in New York and London (see below).

Ultimately, Basic English failed to take over EFL teaching, partly –

and paradoxically – due to the 'kiss of death' given by Churchill's advocacy of it in the wartime years (Howatt 1984: 255). However, throughout the 1930s it was widely promoted from the UK outwards, and both West and Palmer felt they had to act to hinder its spread into education systems, in defence of their own originally more context-sensitive and pedagogically motivated achievements. This was to be the unwritten rationale for the Carnegie conference, but before then West, Palmer and Faucett had all been separately devoting considerable attention to vocabulary limitation, partly under the impetus of their own materials writing work, but increasingly also, it seems clear, in a spirit of rivalry with Basic.

The development of new word-lists

As has been explained above, Palmer moved away from his original focus on the spoken language towards the written language and issues of lexical selection primarily as a result of being in a Japanese context where readers needed to be produced in 'plain English'. The second, 'lexicological' research phase of his work in Japan was also ushered in by an explicit request for greater specification of the contents of instruction in middle schools at the 4th Annual Conference of IRET in October 1927 (Anon. 1928). Palmer's (1934a) *The Institute for Research in English Teaching: Its History and Work* – in this volume – situates the research which was then undertaken, while his (1936a, 1936b) lectures on 'The history and present state of the movement towards vocabulary control' – also reproduced here – make clear additionally that his interests in lexis extended back much further, and were not purely an outcome of his work in Japan (nor – he implies here – his opposition to Basic).

As we have begun to see, it was as a basis for their materials writing that both West and Faucett first became interested in issues of vocabulary selection, while Palmer's interest in this area – as revived in Japan – seems to have largely developed *out of the Standard English Readers* (1926–7) and related requests for better definition of the Japanese middle-grade syllabus. Thus, whereas West and Faucett were largely content, at least at first, to refer to existing word-lists (that of Thorndike in the case of West, and a combination of those by Thorndike and Horn in the case of Faucett), Palmer, from the first, preferred his own subjective assessment, based on experience and experimentation, of what vocabulary items would be most useful to secondary school pupils.

When Faucett moved to Japan from China in 1930, Palmer's work to develop his 3,000-word list for Japanese middle-grade schools was already well under way, although the actual work of selection had been delayed

while Palmer sought an adequate definition of 'the word' for vocabulary limitation purposes. His preliminary selection was issued at the IRET Convention in the same year under the title later borrowed for the 1936 'Carnegie Report', *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection* (Palmer 1930). Faucett, for his own part, was at this time particularly interested in the possibilities of combining two well-known word-lists previously obtained by 'objective' means (that is, according to frequency counts) – those of Edward L. Thorndike (1921) and Ernest Horn (1926) – while keeping in mind requirements of 'range' of usefulness. He suggested to Palmer that statistics derived on this basis could be helpful in solving the problem of how to divide IRET's 3,000-word list into radii corresponding to the five middle-school grades. With some reluctance it seems, Palmer engaged in work in 1930–1 to validate Faucett's suggestion. In the end, Palmer retained his doubts about the supposed 'objectivity' of the lists drawn up by statistical lexicologists in the USA, and expressed these doubts in his 1931 *Second Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection*, while acknowledging Faucett's contribution (Palmer 1931: 26). Faucett himself, however, had remained undeterred in his own research efforts, and – with a Japanese colleague, Itsu Maki – continued his work on combining the Thorndike and Horn lists. The fruits of this research were published in 1932 in Tokyo (and, later, also by Oxford University Press) as *A Study of English Word-values Statistically Determined from the Latest Extensive Word-counts*. The word-list contained in this work was to be one of the two main foundations – along with the IRET word-lists – for the important 'Carnegie Report' (Faucett *et al.* 1936).

One of Faucett's insights with which Palmer concurred (cf. Palmer 1931: 26) was that range of usefulness should be an important criterion for word selection, not only raw frequency. Faucett and Maki discovered that in combining Thorndike's and Horn's lists, with appropriate deletions corresponding to the limited ranges of the respective corpora, 1,500 to 2,000 words stood out which should be considered a good working minimum vocabulary. This research was soon to be applied in Faucett's (1933) *Oxford English Course*, with its division into four stages according to vocabulary radii of 500 words each (see Volume IV). However, Palmer (1932c) reviewed the Faucett–Maki–Thorndike–Horn word-list rather unfavourably at the time of its publication, criticizing it for not defining the nature of a 'word' adequately and emphasizing that such lists needed to be validated by means of practical work in text simplification.

By 1932 Palmer was himself hard at work writing simplified extensive reading materials for publication in Japan within the radii defined by the *Second Interim Report*. Palmer's efforts in this area were by now just as 'experimental' as those of West had originally been (cf. West n.d.

[1927?]) and had continued to be for the development of his new 1,000-word 'speaking vocabulary' (West 1933a, in this volume). This experimental orientation is evident in Palmer's *Memorandum Concerning the Grading and Simplifying of Literary Material*, which was originally published in 1932 and reissued in 1934 under a slightly shorter title (it is the latter edition which is included in the present volume (Palmer 1934b)). This memorandum not only summarizes succinctly many of the considerations which had led up to the development of the IRET word-lists and which were informing further, ongoing research into collocations and construction-patterns (see below), it also indicates the extent to which Palmer felt existing word-lists (including IRET's own) should be treated as provisional and submitted to rigorous testing and modification via attempts to write simplified materials within their limits (see especially pp. 50–2).

Primarily, as private correspondence between Ogden and Palmer shows,³ it was the latter's experimental orientation which seems to have brought him increasingly into conflict with Ogden: originally, it seems, Palmer had offered to collaborate with Ogden in 'testing' the Basic word-list in the Japanese context, but Ogden was resistant to any suggestion of modification, increasingly annoyed by Palmer's public statements about the limitations of Basic, and suspicious of what he saw as Palmer's attempts to 'imitate' Basic, for example in IRET's 600-word vocabulary (Palmer 1932b) for 'elementary reading' and later 1,000-word vocabulary ([Hornby and Palmer] 1934). However, the former word-list was clearly derived originally – with localized priorities in mind – from IRET's *Second Interim Report*, while the latter word-list may have been just as much an attempt to rival West's (1933a) 1,000-word 'speaking vocabulary' as an affront to Basic.

The debate on Basic English 'blew up' in 1933 in the Japanese context, being carried on increasingly acrimoniously in the pages of IRET's *Bulletin* and *The Japan Chronicle*, a Tokyo-based English-language newspaper. By 1934 Palmer was firmly in West's camp, and connections with Ogden had been severed. In the same year West published his full-frontal attack on Ogden *A Critical Examination of Basic English* (West, Swenson, and others 1934), to which reference has already been made above. In the following year he issued his *Definition Vocabulary* – apparently an attempt to 'improve on' Basic periphrastic principles and an accompaniment to his and Endicott's (1935) *The New Method English Dictionary*.

Following on from his earlier linguistic emphasis on the need to define 'the word' correctly (and Ogden's failure to do so was just one of his criticisms), Palmer was at this time extending his research work into

background investigations of collocations and the – for him – related domain of (grammatical) construction patterns. Reports of these investigations were published in 1933 and 1934, respectively (Palmer 1933, 1934d), the first well in time to inform the discussions of the Carnegie sub-committee (see below), the latter at least in enough time to place construction patterns (later to be called ‘structures’) on the Carnegie Conference agenda, even though they were not to be discussed in detail there.

As Palmer was at pains to emphasize in his (1936a, 1936b) lectures on the history of the vocabulary control movement (in this volume), he had not originally become interested in vocabulary limitation as a result of Basic English, and it seems clear that West and Faucett, also, originally developed their own interests in this area out of needs for serviceable word-lists in the writing of textbook materials. Nevertheless, there seems no doubt that without the impetus provided by the rapid rise of Basic English there would not have been such urgency in the attempts of Palmer, West and Faucett to draw up an alternative ‘authoritative’ word-list at the Carnegie Conference. Overlaid on this attempt was to be an agenda of propagating English as a second language worldwide which, as we have already implied and shall further discuss below, seems to have reflected the influence of the Basic English movement, and perhaps underlying Carnegie Corporation interests, rather more than the original, relatively modest and localized intentions of Palmer, West and Faucett themselves.

The Carnegie Conference and Report

The Carnegie Conference of October 1934 was the first ever international (UK–US) conference to bring together experts on English as a foreign language teaching. It involved a deliberate attempt to set the agenda with regard to the lexical contents of EFL materials worldwide, with an explicit intention of spreading English ‘as a world language’ on a basis of UK–US collaboration.

Apart from the stimulus provided by (opposition to) Basic English, another apparently peripheral influence needs to be considered as an explanation for the coordination of efforts which took place in 1934–6, and that is the growing interest of American foundations in problems of English as a foreign language teaching.

The Carnegie Corporation had already become involved in this rapidly developing field, appointing Faucett as a Research Fellow (from 1932 onwards), sponsoring West, Swenson and others’ (1934) critique of Basic English, and financing the establishment of a Colonial Department at the

Institute of Education in London which was later to provide the setting for the first year-long EFL teacher training course, again with the involvement of Faucett. Partly, a sense of rivalry with the Rockefeller Foundation – which had thrown its weight behind Basic English (Fosdick 1952: 250) – may help to explain the Carnegie Corporation’s support for West, but its motives in explicitly wishing to promote the development of English as a ‘world’ language are unclear and require further investigation.

An advance notification of the conference in IRET’s *Bulletin* (Anon. 1934a) states that it had been convened by West ‘under the auspices of the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations’ and that its object was to ‘discuss in general “The Use of English as a World Language,” and, in particular, problems of Vocabulary Limitation and Text Simplification’ (p. 18). In a later report, Palmer (1934c: 8) repeated the idea that the conference had been called ‘with a view to discussing plans that might further the propagation of English as a second language’. Palmer, like West, seems to have temporarily laid aside his previously expressed (e.g. Palmer 1926b) objections to the dominance of English as an international language in favour of participation in the conference. As has already been suggested above, the major reason seems to have been a perceived need to rival the claims of Basic English in this area.

As reported on p. 1 of the *Interim Report* itself (included in this volume), the conference was held during the week beginning 15 October 1934 in New York, and lasted for five days (according to Anon. 1934b). Although presented initially as being jointly sponsored by the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations (Anon. 1934a, cited above), it was predominantly a Carnegie affair, as revealed in the list of participants on pp. 1–2 of the *Interim Report* and in subsequent reports on the conference (which only mention Carnegie), for example Palmer (1934c). The convenor was F. Keppel, president of the Carnegie Corporation, who had recently approved financial support for the establishment of an Oversea Division at the Institute of Education, London (which was represented by Faucett). Aiken, Thorndike and Fife (who was to chair the meeting) were attached to Columbia University, whose Teachers College Carnegie was also supporting, and which was to serve as a model for the Institute of Education in London. Fred Clarke of McGill University was also there – he was soon to accept a post at the Institute of Education, under direct Carnegie sponsorship, and was in 1936 to become its Director. Arthur Mayhew, the official representative of the Colonial Office in London and a former colonial administrator in India, was editor of the influential journal *Oversea Education*, and was to host the follow-up meeting in London in June 1935. Notable by his absence, of course, was Ogden.

In advance of the conference an agenda had been circulated to participants which was reproduced in the August–September 1934 issue of the IRET *Bulletin* under the heading ‘Towards “Simplified English”’ (Anon. 1934a). This agenda makes quite clear that the purpose of the conference was mainly to discuss issues of vocabulary limitation in relation to questions posed by the contemporary propagation of Basic English. As Palmer (1934c: 8) reports, at the conference the focus of discussion became clearer and more concrete, and it was agreed that ‘Steps should be taken to ensure the most suitable first vocabulary for beginners; this should be based partly on considerations of frequency, and partly on those of range, universality, utility, etc.’. He also records that the IRET work on collocations had received attention, and it was agreed that no vocabulary could be complete that ignored such units as collocations, compounds, derivatives or semantic varieties. Learning-effort was also considered (*ibid.*).

A ‘technical’ sub-committee was then formed to ‘make a preliminary investigation’ (Palmer 1934c: 8) and ‘to draw up an agreed limited English vocabulary to be submitted to the full conference at a later date’ (Anon. 1934b). The committee was to be composed of Faucett, Palmer and West, with Thorndike and Sapir acting as consultants (Palmer 1936b: 22).

The committee spent the following two weeks – starting in New York, and continuing at the University of Ohio, with a stop-over in Chicago (*ibid.*) – working out the general principles of selection (Anon. 1934b) and drawing up a preliminary report (Palmer 1934c). According to Palmer (1936b: 23), the sub-committee used as a basis for discussions the IRET 3,000-word list and the analysis of the Thorndike and Horn vocabularies made by Faucett and Maki (1932). By 5 November, the committee members are said to have ‘reached substantial agreement’ (Anon. 1934b). However, they decided to ‘circularize a certain number of those having some experience in word-list compilation in order to obtain their views on certain words figuring in the list of “doubtfuls”’ (Palmer 1934c: 8). It seems likely that this refers at least partly to the stop-over in Chicago, when the committee ‘had the opportunity of conferring with Dr. Algernon Coleman and others who were responsible for the compilation of similar vocabularies for French, German and Spanish’ (Palmer 1936b: 22). The next meeting, when the committee was due to submit its report, was arranged for the following June. In the interim, each member was assigned further research tasks: Palmer’s assignment – in conjunction with IRET – was a more detailed and complete study of collocations, West was to undertake the lay-out and itemization of the agreed vocabulary, and Faucett was to classify the words of the ‘suspense’

and ‘doubtful’ lists. On his return to Japan Palmer entrusted the work on collocations to A. S. Hornby and his wife, and their work was later to be specially commended (Palmer 1936b: 23).

On 11 June 1935 the conference was reconvened at the Colonial Office in London (Palmer 1936b). There were three meetings (*ibid.*), the main purpose being ‘to consider the report of [the] committee, and to make arrangements for the issue of a tentative word list’ (*ibid.*). Those present were Fife, Keppel, Mayhew, Palmer, Thorndike and West, with Sir Percy Nunn, Director of the University of London Institute of Education, participating as an observer (Faucett *et al.* 1936: 3). The work of the committee members was approved, and ‘it was decided that their individual contributions should be collated and that the resultant Report should be provided and circulated at as early a date as possible’ (Palmer 1936b: 23).

To this end, from June to November ‘the committee worked intermittently sometimes together sometimes individually, their chief activities being to determine questions of range, derivatives, collocations and semantic varieties, and generally “dragging liabilities out of concealment”’ (*ibid.*). On 12 November the manuscript of the *Interim Report* was handed to the printer, and it was published in the early part of 1936, together with a questionnaire, ‘for criticism from those with some competence in the matter’ (*ibid.*). Although Faucett had been absent, probably due to illness, from the June meeting (see our Introduction to Volume IV), it seems that he was subsequently active in preparing as well as disseminating the *Interim Report* (Anon. 1937). Palmer, having spent more than six months in the UK, did not return to Japan until after Christmas, and by this time he had secured – due to the good offices of West – a promise of employment by Longmans, which he was to take up in the spring of the following year.

Faucett, having recovered from his illness, now became the main point of contact for the feedback received from overseas in relation to the *Interim Report*’s word-list (see our Introduction to Volume IV). It was, however, the Institute of Education as a body, rather than Faucett individually, which had taken on the responsibility of administering the Carnegie grant for the costs of publishing the list (this grant was also supposed to provide for the expenses of ‘further conferences on the use of English as a world language’ (Jeffery 1953: v)). When Faucett again fell ill just prior to the 1936–7 academic session, it was made clear that the work would go on, and that feedback was still welcome and should continue to be addressed to the Institute (Anon. 1937). As Jeffery (1953: v) notes, by 1939 arrangements had been made for revision of the General Service list, and, with the agreement of the Carnegie Corporation, West

was invited to carry out the work. However, the war intervened, and it was not until it ended that any progress could be made. West is then said to have 'laboured hard at the formidable task' (ibid.), and the revised list was eventually published in 1953 under his sole name. The revised list benefited from the addition of semantic frequency counts by Irving Lorge of Columbia University, but, as Howatt (1984: 257) has suggested, the omission of the preliminary matter explaining principles for selection (contained in the 1936 *Interim Report*) somewhat masks the fact that it had originally been designed for purposes of text simplification as opposed to more 'general' use. It is unfortunate also that the cooperative nature of the original enterprise was thereby insufficiently acknowledged. The 1953 *General Service List* was published by Longmans, under subsidy from the Carnegie Corporation, and was to have a significant, often unacknowledged influence on the lexical contents of many EFL courses published thereafter. As Jeffery (1953: vi) notes in his Foreword, the publication of the *General Service List* marked a fitting culmination to a period during which lexis had been at the fore. As he also noted, 'structural problems' were by then becoming the new focus of concern.

Returning to 1936, by the end of this year the Institute of Education had a new Director in the person of Fred Clarke (1880–1952), who had himself been present at the 1934 Carnegie Conference in New York and had subsequently come to the Institute (from McGill University, Canada) under a separate 1934–7 Carnegie grant. As cited more fully in our General Introduction (Volume I), in November 1936 Clarke wrote to the President of the Carnegie Corporation to express his awareness of the growing importance of EFL, terming what the Institute could presently do, even at best, as 'no more than a mouse nibbling at a mountain'.⁴ Nevertheless, in separate correspondence, he hoped shortly to be able to report on positive developments.⁵ Interestingly, indeed, it seems to have been mainly a combination of Carnegie sponsorship, Faucett's success in teaching the first year-long teacher training course at the Institute in 1935–6 and the efforts of Fred Clarke – all of them representing 'winds of change' from North America – that forced a recognition of the need for placing EFL teacher training on a firmer foundation in pre-war Britain. (The British Council, founded in 1934, only became actively involved in the promotion of EFL around 1938–9.) With effect from the 1937–8 session a new Division of English Teaching was created at the Institute with Percival Gurrey at its head (Anon. 1937), and this was to be the basis for the leading role the Institute took in promoting ELT professionalism in the post-World War II era.

Conclusion

We have ended this collection with the 1936 'Carnegie Report', as this seems to mark an important turning-point in the development of EFL teaching as a recognizable pursuit or 'profession'. At the beginning of the period covered by these volumes EFL teaching was not distinguished from English as a mother tongue instruction, although ideas were beginning to be imported from the earlier Reform Movement in modern language teaching (cf. Wren's (1912) emphasis on the 'Direct Method'). Primarily it was Palmer who indicated most strongly the specificity of English as a foreign language teaching, in particular following his move to Japan. West and Faucett also made significant individual contributions in their doctoral theses and as materials writers and teacher educators. However, it was only when Palmer, Faucett and West came together under the auspices of the Carnegie Conference that problems of EFL teaching came to appear more central (this development can be traced in the growing interest in the field shown in the period 1934–6 in the journal *Oversea Education*, published by the British Colonial Office).

One characteristic of the period had been attempts to codify or 'standardize' English as a foreign language overall, beginning with pronunciation (Jones 1917) and grammar (Palmer 1924), then shifting into lexis in the 1930s as summarized in this Introduction. Only later (in the post-war years) did 'structures' become the main area of focus, but this development, too, was prefigured in the period under review by Palmer's (1934d) *Specimens of English Construction Patterns*. There was a growing consciousness that standardization was necessary, in response to the challenge posed by Basic English and perceived needs to spread – and perhaps more importantly (cf. Brutt-Griffler 2002) *control* the spread of – 'English as a world language' in an unstable world. Given the present-day interest in issues of English as a world language, and problems of 'linguistic imperialism', this early period of developments towards ELT would appear to repay further study, with a focus on contents of instruction.

In this set of volumes, however, we have focused overall on methodology and materials design, and the way ideas developed primarily in Asian (but by no means only colonial) contexts began to be imported into the UK. Subsequently they were re-exported, beginning with West's *New Method Readers* and continuing with Faucett's *Oxford English Course*. Thus, the period saw the beginnings of a UK publishing 'centre', with the foundations being laid for later massive exports. Although before the war it was Faucett and West who attained most commercial success, ultimately it was to be Palmer's ideas which were most influential, as

mediated by Hornby in the post-war years. That, however, is another story (see Howatt 1984: 260–65; Smith, forthcoming).

The way ideas were first developed in overseas contexts before being imported into Britain for re-export is a particular characteristic of the period which we have identified. We have also been concerned to emphasize the roots of these pioneers' work in attempts to come up with 'appropriate' solutions in particular overseas contexts, rather than simply to impose alien ideas (Wren (1912) was an exception in this respect). Of course inappropriate 'a priori' ideas were not absent from the thinking of Palmer, West and Faucett, but an appreciation of contextual factors may have helped bring them together in opposition to Ogden's much more blatant attempt to dominate and apply ideas in a top-down, 'centre' to 'periphery' fashion. This tradition of pragmatism and adaptation was one strand in the work of the period which was to some extent driven underground by the rise of 'linguistics applied' in the post-war era. At the same time, in the work of the same pioneers, particularly West and perhaps Faucett, we can see the beginnings of the commercial motivations which also became dominant in the post-war years.

Tensions between experimentation and prescription were tending to be resolved by 1936 in favour of prescription through institutionalization and the growth of EFL publishing for export. Nevertheless, the situation was complex, and motives unclear perhaps even to those involved. Certainly, the following claims which accompany the *Interim Report* appear to have been made in a genuine spirit of enquiry, and were prophetic of the research and development work which has continued to be one characteristic of ELT, along with its less savoury (hegemonic) tendencies: 'No list, however thoroughly and frequently revised, can ever be regarded as prescriptive' (p. 4) and 'Clearly, a wide field of work lies waiting for co-operative study' (p. 3).

Notes

- 1 According to Stein (2002: 16), 'At the outbreak of the Second World War [Basic] had representatives in more than twenty countries, some 150 books in and about *Basic English* were in print, [and] some of its courses had been pop popd into Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, and Spanish'.
- 2 Palmer is cited as being in agreement with almost all of the Report's contents, under a note headed 'Authorship' at its beginning.
- 3 I am grateful to W. Terrence Gordon for letting me see relevant correspondence between Ogden and Palmer.
- 4 Fred Clarke [Director of the Institute of Education] to Dr. F. P. Keppel [President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York], 13 November 1936, in Carnegie file, Institute of Education Archive.

- 5 Clarke to Lt. Col. Sir James Barrett, 24 November 1936, in Carnegie file, Institute of Education Archive.

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