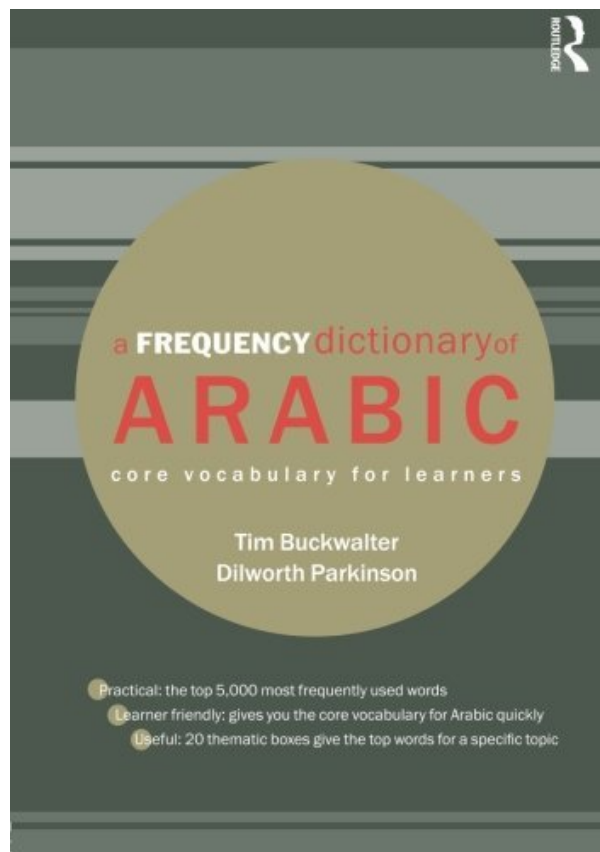
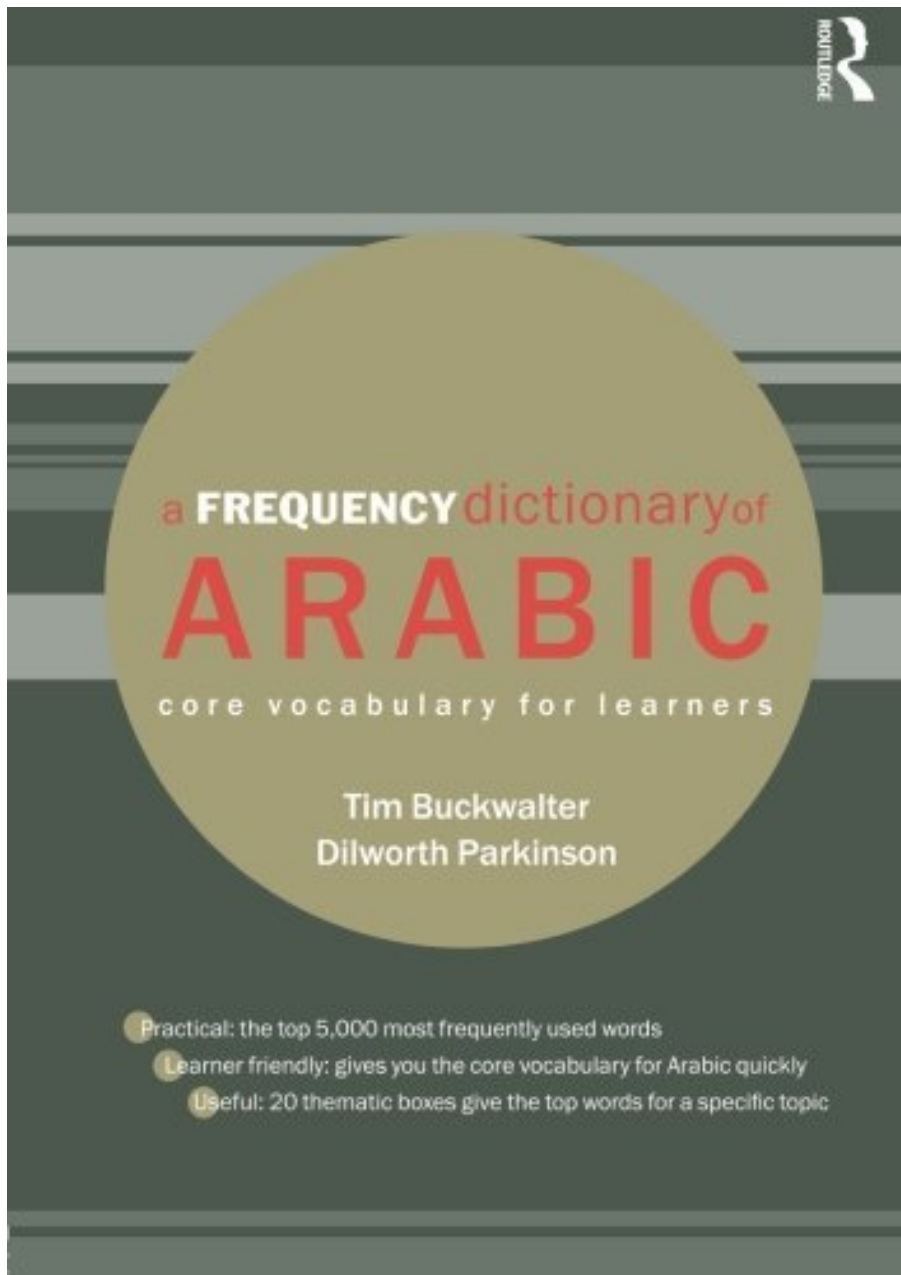


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A Frequency Dictionary of Arabic is an invaluable tool for all learners of Arabic, providing a list of the 5,000 most frequently used words in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as well as several of the most widely spoken Arabic dialects.

Based on a 30-million-word corpus of Arabic which includes written and spoken material from the entire Arab world, this dictionary provides the user with detailed information for each of the 5,000 entries, including English equivalents, a sample sentence, its English translation, usage statistics, an indication of genre variation, and usage distribution over several major Arabic dialects.

Users can access the top 5,000 words either through the main frequency listing or through an alphabetical index arranged by Arabic roots. Throughout the frequency listing there are thematically-organized lists of the top words from a variety of key topics such as sports, weather, clothing, and family terms.

An engaging and highly useful resource, A Frequency Dictionary of Arabic will enable students of all levels to get the most out of their study of modern Arabic vocabulary.

A CD version is available to purchase separately. Designed for use by corpus and computational linguists it provides the full text in a format that researchers can process and turn into suitable lists for their own research work.

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Most helpful customer reviews

21 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

Now we know what words we should all learn

By Tim Peverill

I am an Arabic teacher and curriculum creator (at the Gulf Arabic Programme in Oman) with about 20 years of experience as an Arabic language learner, and I think this dictionary is one of the best resources a serious Arabic student can invest in. But for one flaw (see below), it would have received 5 stars. There are a number of reasons I gave this work 4 stars (and almost gave it 5!)

1) This dictionary seems to be based on the most complete word frequency study yet. I have to disagree with the reviewer who didn't like the inclusion of words from various dialects. Since these words are being used in written contexts by literate people, it is important to know them. The number of them included in the dictionary is not so great as to overwhelm the data or the user who is unfamiliar with them. For example the word Jaab (he brought) is listed as 1046, which is not all that frequent. However, in most dialects one would hear it dozens of times every day.

2) Plurals and genders are included.

3) The definitions cover the semantic range of the words including useful expressions and common idiomatic usages. For example HaaDir means present (time), attending, participant, and even OK in dialect.

4) There are supplementary lists that give the most common words in areas like religion, health, communication verbs, movement verbs, form I verbs, etc. Vocabulary research shows that after learning the first 1000 most common general words in a language, it is good to start specializing in vocabulary on the topics you need. Even though the average literate person knows at least 20,000-40,000 words in his mother tongue, he may use some of them once in a month or may not encounter some of them for years. In this study of over 30 million words, for example the word for building (binaa' - number 400) occurs about 10,000 times, and the word for trip (riHla - number 1009) occurs about 3500 times, but the word for wing (janaaH - number 2000) occurs less than 1500 times and the word for joining (Damm -number 5000) only occurs 167 times. In other words, word #2000 occurs almost 10 times as often as word #5000, and word #400 occurs 60 times as often as word #5000. So from these examples how important it is to focus efforts on learning the most common words, especially since vocabulary usage takes so much more time to master than mere comprehension.

5) There is an index where words are listed in order under their part of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, etc. Many people find that learning vocabulary in categories can help to aid memory.

6) Another index lists the words according to root making it easy to find words.

So what is the one flaw? An English to Arabic index would have been great. So if I wanted to know, for example, what's the most common word for 'food'? Akl? Ta9aam? ghidhaa? I could have been able to see each entry and determine which word to use in which context and which word is used most often.

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

Useful tool for students of Arabic

By J. E. S. Leake

Very good to have a new frequency list, particularly one covering varied genres of Arabic prose, as this one does. It is, however, unfortunate that the authors have tried to add spoken Arabic into the book - this ends up inevitably as a gimmick, reducing the written vocabulary. If they could have put the spoken data into a separate section, that would have been much more helpful; better still a separate book with individual dialects treated both individually and as a group - I certainly should have bought that. Still that's not what is being offered.

The words in the book were selected from five collections (corpora) of Arabic words of about five million words each. They were categorised as follows:

- (1) News
- (2) Newspaper editorials and essays
- (3) Formal prose in magazines and journals on science, arts and religion
- (4) Internet discussion forums
- (5) literature

An additional corpus of about three million words containing spoken Arabic was also used. This was mostly mono-dialectal dialogue in Egyptian, Iraqi, Levantine, Gulf and Algerian dialect.

I do like the way that words are later presented by root and by grammatical category. The little snippets of prose that allow the student to place the word in a genuine context are also most helpful.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

First of its kind

By Timothy

That I am aware, this is the first of its kind in Arabic. It draws from a corpus of MSA and various colloquials, including material from newspapers, literature, internet forums and speech. The list is organized by lemma, each lemma being ordered according to its coverage and raw frequency (c*f). Each lemma is also described by a part of speech, a gloss and an example sentence. Where multiple uses are associated with a single lemma, multiple glosses are provided. Coverage and frequency are also listed.

Within the pages of list are a number of thematic sublists for items like animals, transportation and clothing. The book also has two indexes: one alphabetical, the other by part of speech.

I rated this a 5 because it actually is quite good, and also because there's nothing else like it out there for Arabic yet. It's a valuable book both for learners (as the title claims) and also for curriculum designers who want to base their vocabulary on frequency.

One of this book's authors is Parkinson, who is the same author who wrote *Using Arabic Synonyms*.

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