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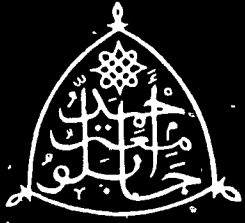
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# INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION



AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY  
ZARIA  
NIGERIA

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## ENGLISH in the PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Edited by  
**B. W. TIFFEN**

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PREFACE

The papers contained in this publication were presented and discussed at an Institute Board of Studies in English meeting held in Zaria on March 6th, 1968.

The theme "English in the Primary School" was chosen because it is becoming more and more apparent that the primary schools as they exist at present are not turning out pupils with adequate English language skills. It was thought appropriate to focus attention on this problem and to consider ways and means in which the situation could be improved.

B.W. TIFFEN.

THE BACKGROUND TO ENGLISH

IN

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL<sup>(1)</sup>

by

Brian Tiffen.

1. The aims of the primary school

One of the basic dilemmas of the Nigerian primary school is that it is difficult to be sure what it is for. Is its aim to educate a small proportion of children to go on to post-primary education? Or should it cater for the majority, who will have no further schooling? Or should it attempt to provide a suitable education for both categories of pupils? And if so, is this practicable?

This dilemma affects English language teaching and policy. Is the vast amount of time spent on learning English necessary for the majority of children who will proceed no further than the primary school? Could not this effort have been directed elsewhere, to fitting them into the society in which they will live? And as for the minority, do they have a sufficient grounding in English to enable them to pursue post-primary education satisfactorily? The general opinion of principals is that they do not. So, the primary schools in fact fall between two stools.

It is difficult to find an answer to this problem within the framework of the present system. One solution, which is worth investigating, is to syphon off the ablest children at the end of the fifth year of primary school and to send them to special schools where they would receive a high quality education, with the main emphasis on the English language skills necessary for secondary and ultimately higher education. The majority would then stay on at their primary school for the remaining year and would receive an education that was largely vocational.

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(1) This paper is a revised extract from my English Language Teaching in Northern Nigeria : a Survey. Institute of Education Occasional Paper No.1, June 1966.

But at present the aims of the primary school appear to be geared to the minority. The Handbook for Inspectors<sup>(2)</sup> has this to say:-

"All-round proficiency in English is the most important academic aim of the primary course (African Education, 1953).

Since secondary and technical education are perforce carried out in English, it is important that the children break through the language barrier while still at the primary school. If they fail to do this, they will encounter serious problems of communication in post-primary institutions. Moreover, in most trades and industries, English is, at the moment, the means by which the pupil has most ready access to the general fund of knowledge and experience available to the world and recorded in books. If teachers fail to help their pupils through the language barrier, and in rural areas the task is often a difficult one, the pupils are gravely handicapped".

## 2. English as a medium

The passage quoted above makes mention of the language barrier which children have to break through if they are to profit from their work. How is this to be achieved? There are, basically, two schools of thought concerning language policy for primary education in Africa. Dating from the 1920's and stemming largely from the recommendations of the Phelps - Stokes Reports, the policy until recently has been to teach through the medium of the vernacular language in the first few years of the primary school (English being taught as a subject) and then in approximately the fifth year to switch to English as the medium of instruction.

In 1958, however, Northern Government policy began to veer towards the other school of thought, i.e. the introduction of English as a medium as soon as possible in certain areas. By 1965 the Ministry of Education felt the time had come to make this the official policy in all parts of the North. The relevant Ministry circular reads as follows:-

"..... I realise of course that many primary schools have a substantial commitment to other English courses, Nevertheless I hope that when

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(2) A Handbook for Inspectors. Ministry of Education, Kaduna.

a change is possible, the introduction of 'Straight for English' can be brought about. In my opinion, it offers great advantages in Northern Nigerian schools and will produce better results than the alternative courses". (Letter No. SIP.60/II/A95 of 17th June 1965)

There seems little doubt that the policy is now taking effect although there are some areas, for example Bornu, where this is not the case at present.

However, one cannot but have some reservations about the way the policy is being introduced. Changing from teaching English as a subject to using English as a medium as soon as possible in the primary school is not simply a question of switching from, say, the New Oxford English to the Straight for English course. It involves considerable rethinking on the part of the teacher about the nature and purpose of language teaching at this stage, and is, above all, concerned with creating the right classroom conditions so that the children want and need to use the language. It is closely linked with infant teaching methods, as the writers of the Peak course for Kenya realised. For all these reasons, the Straight for English course is not always being used as its authors intended. And, in any case, the Straight for English course is not strictly an English - medium course. It does not attempt to integrate all the school 'Subjects'.

There seem to be two approaches towards remedying the situation. First, training colleges must ensure that all their students are familiar with the Straight for English course and that they are taught how to teach it before they leave the college. Secondly, there is a need for reorientation courses for all practising teachers who have recently gone over to the new course or who are about to do so in the near future. It is not enough simply to expect teachers, many of whom are untrained, to use the new course effectively without some preparation.

### 3. The teachers

Upon the quality of the teaching in the primary school all else depends. It is here that the foundations are laid and it is here that the most skilled teachers are required. Good quality primary education produces good quality pupils in secondary schools, university and beyond. Yet the picture is somewhat disquieting. If it is accepted - as I think it must be - that the Grade II teacher's certificate, obtained after



five years at training college on top of seven years' primary schooling, is the minimum satisfactory qualification, then most primary school teachers must be considered under-qualified. In 1967, 29.1% of primary school teachers possessed Grade II or above (this figure also includes referred grade II) and with the drive to increase the output of teachers from the training colleges this percentage will almost certainly go up. But even so, we cannot escape the problem of quality. The best primary school teachers tend to leave primary school teaching altogether. They obtain their 'A' levels through private study, enter the university or other higher institutions and are lost to the primary schools for ever. One cannot blame them, the present salary structure being what it is. But the setback to education - at all levels - is enormous. It means that the foundations of education are being laid by the less able Grade II teachers, often with limited teaching experience, or by the bulk of the primary school teaching profession - the under-trained Grade III teachers or the untrained primary 7 leavers.

The lack of educated and trained teachers in primary schools has important consequences for the teaching of English. First, many of the teachers who introduce the English language to their pupils do not themselves have a sufficient command of the language to teach it properly. As a result there is often undue dependence on the course book and usually too little attention paid to the importance of oral English. And secondly, the large majority of teachers have had little, if any, training in the methods of teaching English as a second language. This is unfortunately too often true of the products of teachers' colleges as well.

The situation, then, in the primary schools is a serious one. There are, however, at least two ways in which the problem could be tackled. First, we must inject well educated teachers back into the system. The products of the advanced teachers' colleges at Zaria and Kano are the obvious people to provide this stimulus. These holders of the Nigeria Certificate in Education, who are being trained to teach in the junior forms of secondary schools and training colleges, may well find it difficult to retain their posts in a few years' time when more graduates are available. Why not train them now - or at least some of them - to be efficient headmasters and headmistresses of primary schools? This is where they are really needed and where many of them, who have not themselves had a secondary education, would probably feel more at home.

Secondly, there is the problem of the Grade III teacher, the backbone of the teaching profession in the primary schools. Many are disillusioned and apathetic because prospects for

advancement have until recently been limited. However, as from January 1967 a scheme known as TISEP - Teachers' In-service Education Programme - has given Grade III teachers the opportunity to prepare as external candidates for the Grade II Certificate examination. This project is being developed through the joint efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Education, Peace Corps, Ohio University, University of Wisconsin, the British Council and other interested parties. Teachers are receiving tuition by Peace Corps Volunteers through special classes and vacation workshops, combined with correspondence courses. It is hoped in this way to give encouragement and help to large numbers of teachers and, in so doing, to raise the standard of teaching in primary schools.

#### 4. Teaching problems

Most primary schools are ill-equipped for the purposes of teaching young children. Rarely is there enough money to buy anything but the barest essentials such as chalk, pencils and exercise books. All this, of course, hampers English language teaching. Heavy, out-of-date furniture, ranged in long rows facing the teacher is hardly the kind of environment required for lively language teaching. There is usually nowhere to pin charts, pictures, magazine cuttings or children's work on the classroom walls. Hardly ever does one find a flourishing, interesting and well-presented classroom library or reading corner. There are usually no paints, no brushes, no matching cards, no counters, no toys. And yet all these aids and stimuli are essential for children coming mainly from non-literate homes. The burden of education can rarely be shared equally between home and school in the Nigerian setting. Here it is the school which must more than make up for what the home cannot provide.

The writer and two others recently made a detailed study of English language teaching in 39 primary school classes. Here is a summary of some of our findings:-

- (a) Oral English. - This is reasonably well taught in the first year or two but after that language work tends to be far too book-centred. This may be partly due to the fact that probationary teachers (i.e. Primary 7 leavers) are often placed in class 3 or 4. In addition, the material in the course books in use often becomes too difficult too quickly. This applies both to structures and to vocabulary. Pronunciation is rarely taught effectively and often occurs during the reading lesson.

- (b) Reading - In general the standard of reading is low. This is due to a variety of reasons. The "look-say" method is often continued for far too long and children are not taught the sound-letter relationships of English properly. This often results in children in class 3 and above parroting whole pages of their course books. There is generally too much reading aloud round the class and too little silent reading. In addition, for reading purposes classes are usually treated as homogeneous units and very rarely are children put in groups or given individual attention where necessary. In a large number of cases it was found that children did not complete the requisite course book in one year. This meant that in the following year they started a new course book, which was written on the assumption that the previous year's had been covered.

And finally there is a great lack of supplementary reading material. Very few classes possess any reading material over and above the course book. This means that in seven years' many primary school children read only seven books, and as stated above, even these are not always completed. The need for supplementary reading material is urgent. Every primary school class should have a small reading corner, consisting of some 40 suitable books. Unless children are exposed to books at the primary school stage they will probably never learn to read properly. The effects of being deprived of books are felt right through secondary and even higher education. And as for those children who have no further schooling after primary 7, many of them relapse into illiteracy or near-illiteracy, simply because their reading experience and ability is not enough to sustain them once they leave school.

- (c) Writing - In general the standard of handwriting is high. However, the actual content of written work is often poor because children are made to do 'compositions' long before they are ready for it. Far more controlled writing is required.
- (d) Course books - In many cases the course books are too difficult for the children, especially those used at the top of the primary school. This also goes for many of the supplementary readers that are advertised as being suitable for primary school children, but which are, in fact, far more appropriate for the junior forms of secondary schools. And finally, there is the question of availability of books. Many schools, especially

those in rural areas, have inadequate numbers of pupil's books for their children and teachers themselves are sometimes without a copy of the teacher's handbook. The problem of the organisation and supply of course books is a difficult one to solve in an area the size of the North of Nigeria, but there is no doubt that children and teachers in some schools are handicapped because of it.

5. The expansion of primary education

There is a growing feeling that the Northern States must 'catch-up' with the rest of the country as far as Western-type education is concerned. While there is an obvious need for expansion there is always the possibility that there may be demands for a very large and rapid increase in the number of primary schools. But this has its dangers.

Western Nigeria, after the 1955 free primary school education scheme, has already experienced this, and many people have come to regret the decline in standards. A rapid expansion of primary education without an expanded teacher training programme in advance could lead in the North to the sort of situation that the Banjo report<sup>(3)</sup> described in Western Nigeria in 1961:-

"One of the most valid complaints has been in the standard of English acquired by the end of the six-year course ..... The teaching of English is allocated no less than ten periods of the whole forty-period week for six years, but it seems that the standard which is reached by the end of it is very low. The headmasters of the secondary modern and the secondary grammar schools testified to the falling standard of English since the inception of the scheme".

Falling standards in English make the work of secondary schools and training colleges doubly difficult. Even as it is, some training colleges feel that their students' command of English is inadequate upon entry and have devised remedial courses to help overcome this. It is hoped, therefore, that quality will not be sacrificed to quantity. Expansion there

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(3) Report of the Commission to review the educational system of Western Nigeria. Government Printer, Ibadan, 1961.

must be, but expansion at all levels simultaneously. Many African countries have lately concentrated mainly on expansion at the post-primary level, as this is considered to have the biggest pay-off in terms of educated manpower.

The picture of the primary school painted in the last few pages is not a cheerful one. But the primary school is the Cinderella of the education system, and has been neglected. Yet everything goes back to the primary school. It is time attention was focussed on solving some of its problems.

THE SIX YEAR PRIMARY COURSE

by

Saidu Gwarzo

The decision to curtail the primary course to six years means, at worst, throwing away a year's work or compressing a seven year syllabus into six years. A revision of the syllabuses is possible and it is better, for even before the decision there was growing dissatisfaction with the primary curriculum. Nowhere is this revision more desirable and urgent than in English which as the medium of instruction, the language of government, commerce and industry, the only means of communication and social intercourse among the different linguistic groups (especially the educated classes) and the vehicle of international communication, waits only for the accolade as Nigeria's 'lingua franca'.

2. The present primary school English syllabus is not only scarce but out of date in content and approach. It is in fact so rare that the course books in use have replaced it. It is therefore not surprising that some people frown at the idea of producing a new syllabus, arguing that the course book is enough guide in the hands of the present primary teachers.

3. For obvious reasons the course book is not a syllabus and should not replace it. For one thing a perfect text-book is yet to be produced. The majority of the course books currently used in schools are to a large extent the result of publishers' pressures on individuals claiming (or made to claim) to be in a position to produce material suitable to children in this country. Teachers' dependence on them is perpetuating credulity in the written word and depriving them of some initiative to introduce supplementary material. Training teachers in the use of a particular course is throwing them into confusion or a state of helplessness when the books are not readily available. To base teaching on a course book as teachers do is to limit what the children should learn. When a better course appears on the market schools are urged or forced to change to it. Where the Ministry allows schools to choose their course books, differing standards, approaches and emphases are the result. To do away with these disadvantages and run away from a text-book centred teaching, a syllabus is required. Teachers in the making should be trained in using it and encouraged to produce appropriate teaching material based on it. Authors and publishers should have access to it in order to produce appropriate textual materials.

.../10

4. The preparation of such a syllabus can be approached in two ways. A scheme should be produced to enable teachers to teach English as a tool in the pursuit of learning and as an alternative medium of communication. The alternative is an integrated curriculum based on English as the medium of instruction. As the latter is a long way off yet, the work on the syllabus going on now contents itself with the first approach which, in any case, is the prelude to the second. Whatever the approach, the syllabus should have the following aims of teaching English:-

- (a) To enable the primary school child to understand a native speaker of English, speaking in a language appropriate to the age, language experience and competence of a child in a second language situation.
- (b) To make the child intelligible to a native and other English speakers.
- (c) To enable the learner to read and comprehend speedily, and easily, works in English suitable to his age, experience and proficiency in the language.
- (d) To enable the child to write purposefully-and for an audience-and clearly.
- (e) To prepare the learner to carry on his education or participate in the economic life of his country, unimpeded by language difficulties.
- (f) To train the pupil to think in English and express his thoughts and ideas in English.

5. A draft syllabus for primary one with these aims in mind and along the lines mentioned, has already been produced. It was presented at the meeting of the sub-committee set up by the Board of Studies. Its main feature is that it attempts to supply the primary child with the language he requires for communication and learning mathematics and physical education - two subjects thought to be easy to teach in English in the first year. The teaching is essentially situationally based, since topics are selected as the basis for teaching language patterns etc. The following are examples of the topics selected:-

- (1) Greetings and Courtesies.
- (2) About Oneself - to introduce pronouns and teach the verb "to be", thus satisfying the youngster's tendency to talk about himself and achievements.
- (3) Useful classroom commands - to help understanding and response (even if it is non-verbal).

- (4) Identification - to help the child ask such questions as "Is this a ....?" etc.
- (5) Possession - to introduce such patterns as "I have a ....."; "I have got ..." which children need badly.
- (6) Description - to introduce colour, size and shape and help develop powers of discrimination; useful for the new maths.

Some notes to guide teachers go with most of the topics.

6. The draft has, in addition to the language pattern section, vocabulary, reading and writing sections. The vocabulary section is based on the vocabulary which it is considered will facilitate communication, analysing environment, enriching experience and learning the school subjects taught in English. The list given as an appendix begins with words found in, and associated with classroom and school (where first contact with English is made) and goes on to home and town or village. Advice is given to the teachers not to teach words in isolation but by demonstrations and in situations.

7. Although the syllabus is split into sections, it is not intended that one section should be taught to the exclusion of the others. It is hoped that the rigid distinction existing between reading and writing should be relaxed so that a single lesson can be planned to teach more than one skill.

8. Work on the syllabus for the remaining years is in progress. Material is being collected on the child's language needs in the successive stages of primary education. This material will be analysed and compared with the surmises and pronouncements made on the language children need for various purposes, by persons engaged in infant and primary work whose suggestions and criticisms have been useful. Their help is hereby acknowledged.

9. The draft syllabus emphasises oral work in the early years; plans for the later years shifts the emphasis to reading and writing, the two skills which the learner will need more for his post-primary education or for his job.

10. I realise that it will be nigh impossible to thrust any new syllabus into the hands of the present primary school teachers and expect them to teach from it successfully without textual and supplementary materials. Therefore when the syllabus is finished (or parts of it are ready) publishers should have access to it with a view to producing appropriate material. The teachers' colleges should start training their students in how to use it and how to



produce supplementary materials. Refresher courses for teachers in situ to introduce them to the new syllabus are essential. Promising ones among them should be given further training and appointed as specialist teachers with a little increment. It is envisaged that putting the new syllabus into effect will entail the use of more equipment and audio-visual aids, such as radio, television and gramophone records, pictures and text-books as well as supplementary reading material. A list of such equipment, sources and costs will be given as supplementary to the syllabus; acquiring them by schools using the syllabus will not be mandatory. The production of cheap basic textual materials as well as audio-visual aids is an area where foreign assistance may be sought, perhaps along the lines of the U.N.I.C.E.F. scheme or the recommendations of the Ford Foundation Report "English Language Teaching in Nigeria".

11. The search for a national language or an official language has triggered off unhappy events in different parts of the world. Already in Nigeria, which has inherited English and accepted it as the 'lingua franca', there are people beginning to complain about falling standards and the poor performance in it of the products of the country's institutions. They naturally ask why a "foreign" language should hamper the progress of their children in life. These rumblings are a forerunner of things to come unless the content of English courses in Nigeria's institutions is altered to reflect the needs of the country, which depends on the English medium for its development as well as its participation in the scientific and technological civilisation of the twentieth century. The primary school is the best place to start the change, for as the Ford Foundation Report puts it, "the heart of the English language teaching problem lies at the primary level where the pupil has his first introduction to English".

INVESTIGATION INTO THE  
"STRAIGHT FOR ENGLISH" COURSE

by

B.W. Tiffen, B.R. Tabachnick and D.J. Williams.

1. Aim

Partly as a result of a request from the publishers for feed-back material to incorporate in the proposed revision of the Straight for English course, and partly because we ourselves wished to find out how the course was being used, the writers visited 11 Primary Schools in Plateau Province between 18th and 22nd April, 1966 (Week 13 of term).

The aim of these visits was to investigate:

- (a) whether the detailed Teacher's Books were understood by the teacher;
- (b) whether the teachers used them;
- (c) whether the pace of the course was related to the children's abilities.

We wish to make it clear that the object of this paper is not to criticise the publishers, but to record our findings of the way one particular course was being handled by both teachers and pupils in rural Primary Schools. This paper is, in fact, a shortened and less detailed version of our report to the publishers.

2. Summary of Visits

(a) Types of schools visited:-

Voluntary Agency	6
Native Authority	4
Demonstration School	1
	<u>11</u>

(b) The following number of classes were observed using the course:-

Class 1	9
2	11
3	11
4	8
	<u>39</u>

.../14

3. The Teachers

(a) Qualifications

40% of the classes were being taught by unqualified teachers. The Grade III Certificate can be considered the absolute bare minimum requirement for teaching the Course satisfactorily. Probationers were heavily weighted in classes 3 and 4. The status of the teachers observed can be summarised as follows:

Type of Teacher	Class I	2	3	4
Grade II	-	-	1	1
Grade III	7	8	5	2
Vern. trained	-	-	1	-
Probationer	1	2	4	4
Student	1	1	-	1

(b) Teachers' Spoken English

Teachers were assessed subjectively by at least two of the observers.

Assessments were as follows:-

<u>Good</u>	<u>Acceptable</u>	<u>Poor</u>
3	15	14

These figures do not tally exactly with the number of teachers shown in (a) above. This is due to two factors:-

- (i) In a small number of cases one teacher was responsible for the teaching of English in two classes, and consequently his spoken English was only judged once.
- (ii) Some classes were being taken by Teachers' College students on vacation. Their English was not assessed.

Of the 14 teachers whose performance in spoken English was rated as poor, 9 were probationers.

(c) Use made of Lesson Notes in the Teacher's Book

4 teachers had no copy of the Teacher's Book to teach from. 4 teachers had books but made little or no use of them. 9 of the teachers tried to follow the book in rote fashion, but were not altogether successful, mainly because too much time was spent on the first two or three steps of each lesson, particularly conversation. 3 teachers were rated as using the book satisfactorily.

5 teachers were considered to have adapted the lesson notes successfully. to the needs of their particular class. 4 teachers misunderstood them completely. For example, one teacher thought that only one page of the Pupils' Book should be read in one week. Consequently he was somewhat surprised to find that the new words listed in the Teacher's Book to be learnt did not correspond at all with the page the children were on! Another teacher obviously did not understand the use of italics. For instance on p.104 of T.B. 3 we find:

Revise nothing, something, anything. Include:

:.....

The teacher concerned revised 'include' as well, not realising it was not related to 'nothing', 'something' etc.

4. Course Books

(a) Teacher's/Pupils' Books - Spoken English

On the whole we have very little to criticise on the way the teaching of oral English is presented in the earlier books. We found that the explicit instructions seemed to be understood by the teachers and the situational drills using objects etc. were generally followed.

However, while the situational drills are very good, more in the way of substitutions and pattern drills could well be indicated and practised by the class as a whole. It would also be helpful if certain terms were amplified. 'Teach .....' is all too common, and no clear way of doing it is indicated in that lesson.

The children's performance in spoken English was in the majority of cases satisfactory for the stage they had reached. We devised simple tests based on the oral work that should have been covered in the first five weeks in each class. Children were selected at random and were asked to respond verbally or to perform some action. The results of these tests are as follows (average scores per class, maximum possible 10 marks):-

Class	1	2	3	4
	7.8	5.8	5.6	4.7

It will be noticed that Class 1 scored highest and that there is a gradual decrease as far as Class 4. Assuming the tests we gave to each class were of comparable difficulty, there are two possible explanations for this. First, the oral English material in the Teacher's Book gets progressively too difficult too quickly. Second, Class 3 and 4 tend to be taught by probationers and hence teaching is poorer on the whole than in classes 1 and 2. While the first explanation cannot be ruled out, it seems likely that the second explanation is an important factor.

It also seems that not only does the material get too difficult too quickly, but the rate of introduction of new words is far too rapid. Also, many of the new words introduced are either comparatively rare, or are unlikely to be used by children using this course.

(b) Teacher's/Pupils' Books - Reading

We have pointed to the acceptable standard of spoken English as evidence that the course as presented through the Teacher's Book must be considered quite successful. We discovered the standards of children's reading to be very poor, decidedly below the level of their spoken English, and far from the standard set by the Teacher's Books or the difficulty of the Pupils' Books. We can only conclude that the course should be considerably revised before it can be considered adequate to the task of teaching primary children to read. This is in fact being done (see Postscript).

Each of the Teacher's Books begins with an introductory statement which includes some general remarks on teaching reading. The discussion in Books 1 and 2 is too sketchy as it stands to be of much use. For example, Book 2, p.7, "Simple questions to test comprehension" gives no help in the preparation of suitable questions. This lack is remedied in Book 3 (p.xvi) where sample questions are presented. But it is more difficult to test the comprehension of younger, less able, readers than of older, better ones, and the greatest need for help is in the earlier school years.

It is doubtful if the discussion, even when it is quite useful as in Books 3 and 4, does the job planned for it when it is placed at the front of the book. Arranging the first few reading lessons so that each one introduces in a considerably elaborated form one of the types of reading activities listed in Book 2, p.7, might place these where they are far more likely to be read, and in a context where their immediate use and relevance contributes to understanding.

It was noticed that many teachers, especially the less qualified, had difficulty in understanding the steps in a reading lesson in the Teacher's Book. The more elaborate treatment of the steps should be in simple language, as indeed all the Teacher's Books should be. The discussion of reading in the Preface to Book 3 is still too complicated to be read and understood as it stands given the qualifications, or lack of them, to be found among teachers as described earlier. All this contributes to make the Teacher's Book less helpful than it might be for teaching reading. It should be made clear, however, that more help is given to teachers, and a more intelligent discussion of teaching reading appears, than is available through other courses commonly in use in the Northern States of Nigeria.

On a more technical level, children are introduced to sound-spelling correspondence early in the course. Week 18, Lesson 2 (Book 1B) is an early example. From that point there are frequent 'phonics' exercises, though these tend mainly to be of one type, the list of words containing a specific phoneme to be drilled. Unfortunately, little impression seemed to have been made by these suggested exercises upon the actual teaching of reading. 'Pattern Reading' seemed to be the most understood and most used technique for teaching reading. The result was to produce two related reading-ills. First, the learning of words by the purest look-say methods was extended far beyond its usable limit. Teachers in Classes 3 and 4 were encouraging children to remember words as separate entities. Children were parroting whole pages, while demonstrating inability to read pages which they had covered some weeks before. Second, there was little effort to test comprehension, and indeed little evidence of children's being able to get much meaning from what they were 'reading'.

The pacing of reading is too fast. Pages 1-8 in 'Toma and Tani', for example, are covered in a week. No reading course in Britain or America would dare to spend so little time and space on the first formal reading experience as pages 1-18 of 'Toma and Tani' represent, even without taking into account the fact that English is a strange language to these children. It would be unrealistic to expect the 46 pages of 'Toma and Tani' to prepare children for Book 2, and our researches bear this out. In no class 2 could as many as half of the children read Book 2 at the appropriate place according to the week in which they were examined. For most Class 2s the percentage was below 30. Few classes were able to finish any of their readers in one year. With only one exception, they were given the reader for their year even when they had not completed the Pupils' Book of the preceding year. Recommendations for overcoming the problem of pacing are outlined in the Summary at the end of this section.

Children mature at different rates; they learn at different rates. Although there is frequent mention in the Teacher's Books of individual differences among children, the organisation of the Teacher's Books strongly encourages lock-step movement at a pace too fast for most children. In all but one class, all children were reading at the same place in the same book and as a single group. It would be extremely helpful if each book included a detailed explanation of the techniques involved in dealing with individuals and groups in a class who are at different reading levels.

In this connection it would also be most helpful if in all books from Book 2 upwards there were notes and detailed explanations on the techniques of remedial reading. In most classes, apart from Class 1, teachers have to cope with children who, for one reason or another, are nowhere near where they ought to be in reading ability. In one particular Class Four that was observed, for example, twenty out of the forty children were not capable of reading beyond 'Toma and Tani'. This is by no means untypical.

It has also been noticed that one of the great difficulties encountered when children use only one book is the tendency to memorise words and sentences according to their position on the page, and the page they appear on, rather than according to the shape of the letters. The wide use of other, supplementary, readers (see below) would help in this, of course, but it might be helpful to include in Books 1 and 2 at least some detailed explanation of the kinds of apparatus that can be made, such as matching cards, self-corrective apparatus, drawings from the book with suitable sentences from the book under them, etc. We note below the use of flashboards, and though it is probably true that just as flashboards, are not used very much, nothing else will be, it is probably worth it for the few who will make use of it, especially if constant reference is made to such apparatus in the notes.

#### Summary of Suggestions for Reading Work

1. More reading material needed:

- (i) more in the actual course book
- (ii) supplementary readers more closely integrated into the notes (see below).

2. A slowing-up of the pace of progress - i.e.

1st year	-	material	at	the	level	of	1st	half	of	Bk.	1.
2nd year	-	"	"	"	"	"	2nd	half	"	"	"
3rd year	-	"	"	"	"	"	Book	2			
4th year	-	"	"	"	"	"	Book	3			
							etc.				

3. A reduction of vocabulary taught.
4. A more detailed explanation of apparatus it is possible to make, and encouragement to do so.
5. Detailed instruction on individual and group reading, both remedial and normal, for different ability levels is needed.
6. A much greater stress on the phonic method, with much more detailed explanation, would seem highly desirable.

(c) Supplementary Readers

According to the Teacher's Books, supplementary readers are required from Year 2 onwards. Discounting a Demonstration School at a Teachers' College, which has excellent reading corners, only five of the remaining 36 classes visited had any supplementary reading material whatsoever. Children in 31 classes, therefore, only had the Pupils' Book for reading matter. As in nearly all cases the course book was not completed by the end of the year, this means that most children read approximately three-quarters of one book a year. In most of the schools visited, it is probably true that there would be no other reading matter for any of the other subjects.

This serious situation is not altogether a question of lack of money, though that is an important factor; it is symptomatic of an attitude towards reading. The necessity for wide supplementary reading is simply not recognised by teachers.

The Teacher's Book therefore must, we think, pay more attention to convincing teachers of the need for children to read as widely as possible outside the Pupil's Book.

(d) Vocabulary Work

It has already been noted that the introduction of new matter and vocabulary proceeds at too rapid a pace. An examination of the actual vocabulary introduced in the five books so far available seems to indicate that there are many words introduced at the various stages which are not necessary. They may be either too rare to warrant inclusion at that stage, or they refer to objects and activities which the average child is not likely to encounter, or which may be positively un-African.



In this last group come those words which are sometimes loosely used for some specifically African object, although that object bears little relationship to the English article. What is more, the English word has just not been accepted by Nigerian speakers. A fairly obvious example is 'porridge'. In most cases in normal speaking, the vernacular word ('tuwo' in Hausa) is used by English speakers, and we have never heard anyone use the English word.

5. Equipment

(a) Flashboards and Wall Charts

Of the 39 classes visited, 5 only had wall charts, 7 had flashboards. One school had both wall charts and flashboards, but they were kept in the staff room and did not appear to be used.

(b) Condition of Books

Many children had Pupils' Books in an advanced state of decay. Teachers took no steps to repair them as they had no sellotape etc. to do so. Consideration might be given to producing books with a stronger binding. School managers appear to work on the principle of ordering one complete set of Pupils' Books every two years. If they disintegrate after one year children are bookless for the whole of the following year.

(c) Organisation and Supply

Without doubt the grant-in-aid system for primary schools does not leave much over for books and equipment once the teachers' salaries have been paid. However, part of the problem of lack of books and equipment lies in the supply system. Time and time again we were told, 'The Manager hasn't supplied us with books'. The fault may, of course, equally well be with the teachers or headmaster himself, who does not order the right books, or does not order in time. Nevertheless, the question of organisation and supply may well be worth investigating.

One final point. Would it not be a good idea to 'throw in' a few supplementary readers or wall charts free if the school bought, say, a set of Pupils' Books? Or perhaps even better, could not schools be recommended to buy one Pupils' Book to be shared between

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two pupils? The money thereby saved could then be spent on building up a class library and equipment. As things are at the moment, owing to lack of money, poor organisation and supply, etc., it seems doubtful whether many schools can possess Pupils' Books and supplementary readers and wall charts/flashboards. And without all these things the Straight for English course is less successful than it might otherwise have been.

## 6. Conclusion

Straight for English is probably the best course used in Northern Nigeria at the moment, and is a great advance on others normally available. Its two great weaknesses seem to lie:

- (a) in its treatment of reading - the inadequacy of material, the too great rate of progress, and the lack of recognition of the different abilities of the children who need individual or group work rather than class work.
- (b) in the general speed of presentation, which results in:
  - (i) too much being presented in a year
  - (ii) too little constant review and practice
  - (iii) too advanced work in Books 5 and 6.

If these weaknesses could be resolved, we feel that the course would be even more useful than it is at present.

## 7. Postscript.

We understand that ~~the~~ Straight for English course is to be revised in the light of these recommendations to the publishers. The revision will probably be along the following lines:-

(PB = Pupils' Book)

- \*First half of present PB 1 will become new PB 1.
- \*Second half of present PB 1 will become new PB 2.
- Present PB 3 will become new PB 4.
- Present PB 4 will become new PB 5.
- Present PB 5 will become new PB 6.
- \*\* Present PB 6 will become new PB 7.

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\* These refer to levels of difficulty. The new PBs 1 and 2 will contain at least as many pages as the present books, but fewer new words and structures will be introduced. The same amount of reading material will be maintained.

\*\* It is probable that the new version of PB 6 will be a combination of the present PBs 5 and 6.

TEACHING THE USE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS  
TO METHOD CLASSES IN ENGLISH  
IN GRADE II COLLEGES

by

David Williams

The teaching of English Method in the various Teachers' Colleges in the Northern States today is likely to fall into two parts, ie.:

- (a) the general theory of teaching English as a second language, according to modern E.L.T. methods.
- (b) using the available primary school course books.

It is unlikely that there will be a considerable divergence on the best method of teaching the students how to use the course books as they are. Clearly, the best method to employ here is that of actual use - demonstration by the tutor, and as much practice teaching as possible by the students.

Considerable difficulty, however, is likely to occur when endeavours are made to combine the teaching of the course book with the more theoretical general E.L.T. methods. To the best of the writer's knowledge, there is no course book on the market at the moment which incorporates all the commonly accepted E.L.T. methods that are current today.

In all fairness it must be said that course books are improving, and that new methods are being used, as is clear when one compares a course book written in the last few years with, for example, the original Oxford English Course in use ten or twelve years ago. Nevertheless, there still has to be a considerable adjustment in the primary school classroom, and the teacher who is blindly faithful to his course book is not likely to do the best he could do for his pupils.

It is possible that some ardent exponents of the new methods may advocate a complete renunciation of printed text books, and may expect the Grade II teacher not only to construct all his own material for the pupils in his own area, but also to make a comparative analysis of his own language and English, in order to be aware of the difficulties his pupils may encounter. This, though ideal, is quite unrealistic, except perhaps for an extremely small minority of those teaching in primary schools. The rest, if deprived of the course book, would, either through disinclination or lack of ability, make complete shipwreck of their attempts to teach English in this way.

The purpose, then, of this short paper is to try and suggest routes which tutors might explore in helping students to navigate the somewhat perplexing currents between the Scylla on the one hand of slavish devotion to the course book, and, on the other, the Charybdis of the unfettered use of E.L.T. methods with no reference to any course book whatever.

E.L.T. methods must therefore be introduced as a supplement to the present course books, and the task of tutors in Teachers' Colleges seems to be to show students how they may use the course book intelligently, supplementing and expanding where necessary, and facing the problems that are likely to occur in the classroom.

The remainder of this paper will seek to suggest some areas in which this may be done.

### Oral Substitution Drills and Dialogues

The majority of course books do not give sufficient practice in either the structural items or the lexical items which are taught. This, of course, is inevitable if the resulting book is going to be at all reasonably priced. But if it is conceded that the learning of a language is a process which involves an alteration of linguistic habits, then it is clear that habits can only be changed by means of a great deal of repetitive practice; in other words, by means of drills and dialogues. In teaching structures the structure needs to be repeated many times, substituting the lexical items as much as possible, so that a great deal of varied practice can be given in the one structure. Most courses only point the way to this, if they give any advice at all. It is the task of tutors to teach students to read these signposts correctly, and to follow the way that they point.

### An Example

An example may be taken here from Book 4 of 'Straight for English', which seems to be the best of the courses at present available. On page 42 of the Teacher's Book (Week 2, Lesson 9), Step I reads as follows:

Teach above and below. Take the book in one hand, the ruler in the other. Hold the book above the ruler. and say:

"I am holding the book above the ruler. I am holding the ruler below the book."

Then hold the ruler above the book and say:

"Now I am holding the ruler above the book. I am holding the book below the ruler."

Repeat with other objects and ask the class:

"Am I holding the pencil above the stone or below the stone?"

(Ans: You are holding the pencil above/below the stone.)

This, as far as it goes, is admirable. But there is always the tendency for students and teachers to teach what is written, and no more. Students need to be taught to expand the above note to something like this:

1. Get six or eight different objects that can be clearly seen from the back of the class.
2. Take two of them at a time, and hold them one over the other, saying the appropriate sentence each time. Ask questions, and answer them yourself, as follows:

Here is a book and a ruler. Look where I'm holding the book. I'm holding it above the ruler. It's above the ruler. The book is above the ruler. I'm holding the ruler below the book. It's below the book. The ruler is below the book. Where's the ruler? It's below the book. It's below the book. Am I holding the ruler above the book or below the book? I'm holding it below the book.

Repeat this with the other objects, and with different combinations of the objects many times. Get children to come and hold the objects, and continue to talk about them.

3. Start asking questions of individual pupils as follows:

Tchr: Am I holding the pencil above or below the stone?  
I'm holding it below the stone. John, am I holding the pencil above or below the stone?

John: You're holding it below the stone.

Repeat this with a number of pupils, with different objects.

4. Ask these questions of the whole class.
5. As soon as possible get one half of the class asking the question, and the other half giving the answer, the teacher holding up different objects to give the cue:

A: Is Mr... holding the bowl above the spoon or below the spoon?

B: He's holding it below the spoon.

6. If time, practice this in groups.

(Note: Steps 2 and 3 in 'straight for English' 4, pp. 42 and 43 deal with the practising of this in groups, and making it into a guessing game.)

It is necessary to teach students how to make up substitution and situational drills and dialogues, and how to use them in class in a variety of structural situations. While a variety of substitutions should be encouraged, it is useful to point out to many of the slower students that a limited repertoire of subjects (John, Mary, the Chief, the clerk, my father, the children, etc.) and action verbs which can be easily demonstrated or illustrated (went for a walk, listened to the radio, worked on the farm, wrote a letter, rode a bicycle, read a book etc.) can be used in many different structures.

It has been shown how a text book lesson can be and should be expanded from the brief advice that is already present in the book. But on a number of occasions there is no advice given at all. Often, especially in the later books of a course, lists of 'useful phrases' or constructions are given, and there are no instructions on how to teach them. This is found in a number of books of the New African English Course, and the Sixth books particularly of the New Oxford English Course and the Straight for English Course. In Straight for English Book 6, for example, in the Teacher's Book, the attention of the teacher is drawn to various lexical and structural items in the Reading Passage for each Unit, but the only instruction at the head of this section is 'Note Carefully'. Although one can perhaps appreciate the reasons of economy in space which have prompted this lack of direction by the writer of the course book, it is clearly the task of the tutor in the teachers' college to show his students how this list can be turned into a series of meaningful and successful drills.

Problems: It is all too easy for Method lessons to be arid and divorced from the Primary School classroom. The tutor should always bear in mind the problems that are going to beset the teacher in the classroom - bearing in mind too that often, if the directions in the book cannot be followed exactly, some teachers are at a loss what to do. Students in the Teachers' Colleges should be encouraged to think out the solutions to these problems for themselves.

For example, the use of 'Which' (interrogative) is first taught in 'Straight for English', Book 2, pages 252-3. Problems such as the following might well be set a class in a Teachers' College for solution or discussion in class:

(a) Suppose that when the teacher asks, "Which arm am I holding up?" (Step 3) the pupils fail to understand? Suppose they answer 'Yes' as if the question had been 'Am I holding my arm up?' How would you make the meaning clear by using other words, gestures, objects, etc.?

(b) (See top of page 253). Suppose in your classroom every girl is wearing a clean dress, and no boys are wearing black shoes? What sentences would you use in place of those in the course book? How would you choose them?

(c) How would you (i) teach the children themselves to ask the question, 'Which boy.....?' and (ii) satisfy yourself that they had learnt it?

(d) 'Which' is revised on page 256 (Step 1 - Conversation). Does this revision give the pupils practice in using 'which'? If not, how would you give them the chance to use it?

### Reading

Usually very little detailed guidance is given on reading, after the first stages. The tutor therefore needs to be very explicit in the details he gives students. It is suggested that four main areas need to be covered in detail, to show students how they may deal with the reading material in the course books.

- (a) Students should be trained to test each pupil's reading ability. There are far too many pupils in primary schools today who read poorly because they are expected to read material which, for one reason or another, they are unable to read, and consequently they get no practice with material which they can read. As far as the present writer is aware, there is no course which deals with this problem of individual readers being at different stages - they all assume that the class moves forward as a united body, which is quite unrealistic. Students must be taught the need for individual pupils to be dealt with individually in their reading - or if not individually, then in small ability groups. They must be taught as well that it may be necessary for some pupils to go back one, two or more books to where they are, in fact, able to read, and work on from there. (It should be noted that in a normal primary school there should be no difficulty in arranging the timetable so that one class may borrow the readers of lower classes.)
- (b) Allied with this problem is that of Comprehension. Students must be shown how to use the Reading Passage so as to help their pupils' understanding, and to test it. They should be taught how to supplement the usual 'Comprehension questions' with their own questions, and with various activities concerned with reproducing the passage in one way or another. They should be shown how to look for words and phrases which the children may not understand, and how to drill these. Tutors should take specific reading passages as examples, and discuss with students how they can supplement existing materials.

For example, the Comprehension work in Book 5 of 'Straight for English' is very spasmodic. In Chapter 6 there are only questions on the first page of the story, though general instructions for testing comprehension are given on page 11 of the Teachers' Book. A tutor could well take this chapter as an example with the students, and make them do the following:

1. Prepare 20 questions on the rest of the story.
2. What reproductive activities can you think of in connection with the story? How would you organise them?

Suggestions: Retelling the story  
Retelling it from the point of  
view of one of the characters.  
Acting it

3. Many pupils do not understand the structure 'Let us ...' (p. 44 1.3). What practice would you give them?

etc.



- (c) In most courses too much reading aloud is indicated. It should be taught that the amount of reading aloud should be reduced as the individual, group or class become more competent in their reading. By class Six or Seven reading aloud should be minimal, and the main purpose of it should be to give practice in the various aspects of spoken English - but not to test or give practice in reading. This is something that needs stressing very much, as so many students in Teachers' Colleges have been brought up on this method of reading aloud, and they tend to revert to this when they start teaching again.
- (d) The use of Supplementary Readers and Class Libraries needs to be emphasised continually, the following points being made:
- (i) All Supplementary Reading should be silent.
  - (ii) Class Libraries should be strongly recommended as:
    1. They give a wide range for the children to choose from - children can therefore read what they like.
    2. There can be a wide range of difficulty, so that each child can read something that he is able to read. (The aim of such reading is to give practice in what is known, rather than to learn new material.)

#### Composition

Again, so often little guidance is given here, and students need to be encouraged to use various kinds of guided composition for themselves. It is interesting to note here that the composition work in Book 6 of 'Straight for English' is much more 'guided,' and, in the writer's opinion, much more suitable for the class for which it is intended, than the same kind of work in Book 5. The New Oxford English Course uses the 'Discussion' technique almost constantly in the later books, and students here need to be taught how a greater degree of guidance can be given following up this way - e.g. by discussing the topic, and then writing a composite composition on the board. All the pupils write this composition, being guided to a greater or lesser extent as the needs of the class demand.

It should also be noted that most courses start 'free writing' much too early and students should be warned of this.

#### Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation Drills

As far as the writer is aware, no Primary School course in general use deals with these matters in any way except incidentally. Students therefore need to be taught to supplement this by various pronunciation, intonation and stress drills, such as some of those in Hill's 'Drills and Tests in English Sounds' and Stannard Allen's 'Living English Speech'.

### Grammar

All the courses at present available seem to bring in a certain amount of formal grammar in their later stages, though there is variation in the exact stage when they start introducing it. It is still a matter of considerable controversy as to when, if at all, grammatical terms should be introduced. This is not the place to enter into this controversy theoretically, but rather we must discuss what to do with the material we have in the present courses. The following procedures may be suggested to students:

- (a) Ignore the teaching of formal grammar at any stage before Class Six. If this cannot be done, then the simplest and most basic terms only should be taught, and then only as a convenient description of certain groups of words.
- (b) In Classes Six and Seven, if not taught before, the basic terms may be taught, but again, only as convenient terms. The best use that can be made of these sections in the course books is to use them as spring-boards for remedial drilling on the usage of such material as is presented. For example, in Book 6 of the New Oxford English Course, page 42 (towards the bottom) we find "The '-ing' form (of the verb) is used in three ways" - which are then listed. These three ways can then be drilled by various oral drills. It is by no means essential that the pupils be able to describe the three ways the '-ing' form of the verb is used - but they should be able to use them.

### Remedial Work

This aspect of the teaching of English has received comparatively little attention - and yet it is vital in the present stages of teaching the language in Primary Schools. It is common knowledge that the first year, at least, in post-primary institutions is spent in correcting errors, and teaching material which should have been dealt with in the primary school. The majority of courses available today have lists of structures and lexical items taught. Students in our Teachers' Colleges should be taught, if not how to test each item, at least to be aware of what has been taught, and how to construct drills to eradicate bad linguistic habits that will have been learnt, and to instil good ones. The only remedy, it seems, to this wrong learning is continual practising, by means of drills, of the right way. Students therefore need to be constantly confronted with the kinds of situations they will meet in their schools, and taught to provide solutions in the form of drills. Such questions as the following could be asked:

- (a) Most of your pupils say, "I stop reading this book yesterday." What would you do?
- (b) Most of your pupils say, "I leave here since last year". What would you do?

etc., etc.

### Visual Aids

Students need to be shown how simple visual aids can be used to help in English teaching, in supplementing the course books. Here are a few examples. Readers of this paper will undoubtedly be able to think of many more.

Drawing pin figures. Students should be taught how to draw simple pin figures on the board - more elaborate ones, perhaps, on card. These could be used, for example, in 'Straight for English' Book 4, page 157, Step 2. A scattered group of simple pin figures could supplement the use of pupils in teaching further and furthest.

Flannelgraph The use of cut-out pictures in telling a story can help to make the story live, and also be a great help when the children come to re-tell the story, either orally or in writing. An example of such a story can be found in 'Straight for English', Book 4, pp 103-4.

Glove Puppets A simple glove puppet with a papier-maché head can be useful in illustrating conversations. An example can be found in 'Straight for English', Book 4, p. 140, Step 1. This step could be made much more lively and interesting if the teacher and the glove-puppet greeted each other in the appropriate way, with a clock-face on the blackboard to show the times.

Simple pictures of actions e.g. hoeing, cooking, reading a book, riding a bicycle, etc. These can be used as 'cues' in various substitution drills. Other, slightly more elaborate pictures, can be used to bring various situations into the class as a basis for a drill. For example, a drawing of a pin man lying on the ground by a bicycle could be used for the following structures:

While John was cycling down the road, he fell off his bicycle.

If John had been careful, he wouldn't have fallen off his bicycle.

John is cycling along the road.

John cycles to school every day.

etc. etc.

All these points mentioned above need to be taught as exemplified in specific lessons in the course book that is being taught. Specimens of each kind of lesson demanded by the course book should be gone through in detail. There are, of course, numbers of ways in which this can be done, and each tutor will undoubtedly vary his methods according to the nature of the lesson. In some cases he might go through a lesson with his class. In others, he might set the class to prepare beforehand ways of teaching a lesson, and it can then be discussed. He might start with a technique, and then apply it to several lessons in the course book - or he might start with the lesson, and then show how that demands a particular technique.

In all this, the aims should be the same - the teaching of the students to teach thoroughly the materials presented in the different courses, and to use the course books intelligently. The tragedy at the moment is that there is so much good material in the books, and yet the teachers do not seem able to draw out and teach this wealth of material with which they are presented. It is surely the task of tutors in Teachers' Colleges to show their students how they can best teach the material before them, by supplementing the necessarily limited techniques presented in the course books with materials and techniques adapted to the needs of their individual classes. It is only in this way that we can hope to increase the efficiency of the teaching of English in this country.

ENGLISH - A TOOL FOR EDUCATION  
compiled by  
Margaret Rogers.

From material submitted by Carol Robson, Educational Editor, London, and investigations made during a recent tour of Northern Nigeria by Margaret Rogers.

1.0 Curriculum review

On the eve of the Commonwealth Education Conference in Lagos the Newsletter of its Education Liason Committee was circulated. It contained an account of a Conference of African Educators who met to discuss curriculum development. The article contains two passages of particular relevance to any Board of English Studies. They are the writings on the wall which we cannot afford to ignore. They are a challenge to all concerned with African education, but especially to those responsible for the teaching of English.

- 1.1 The Conference noted that "it is clear that there is, in Africa, a genuine demand for the introduction of modern curricula geared to the local needs and to the development of inquiring minds, scientific attitudes and linguistic facility among the children. The most pressing needs are seen to be in primary education (which is the only education most African children get); here the long term goal is considered to be the development, in each country, of a fully integrated curriculum based on discovery and activity methods, and related to the pupils' environment.
- 1.2 The Conference felt that "social studies properly taught would help the pupil understand his environment, develop the ability to think clearly and help fit the child for life in society." They also emphasised the vital importance of developing the child's command of the language of instruction (usually English) throughout the curriculum".
- 1.3 It is very easy to be cynical about Conference pronouncements, easy to feel that those who pass grandiose statements can have no real appreciation of the problems involved. We are all aiming at the development of lively minds, clear thinkers, and equipping our pupils to take his place in society. That we are not succeeding well enough with the majority of our school learners is also a fact with which no post-primary institution would disagree. Perhaps if we examine the present position and the curriculum aims afresh we may see that the aims of the CREDO (Centre for Curriculum Renewal and Educational Development Overseas) can be realised in the not too distant future. We should remember we are discussing the basic i.e. primary education which is all the majority of the children of Nigeria will get for many years.

2.0 Importance of language to the new approach

If activity and discovery methods are to be successful, language skills are absolutely basic. These methods imply that all the children are actively involved in a 'learning by doing' activity for as much of the school day as possible. A fully integrated curriculum approach means a lowering of subject barriers, leading to a reduction of the subject role of English. But Centres of Interest and Projects will require language, and the teacher will need to be continually concerned with teaching the language needed.

2.1 Again, language is important in that the pupil-teacher relationship which this approach requires involves frequent discussions and comment. For project work involves a reduction of class instruction, and requires group and individual work proceeding at different levels and rates. To ensure comprehension of the language needed for this, and to provide prompts for recall, a stock of visual aids will be necessary (see paper on 'Aids for Language Teaching'). Understanding and control of the written language is also necessary, in that the frequent use of references in project work will mean the developing of good reading and recording skills. Thus language skills are necessary at every point, and the teacher needs to be continually aware of this.

### 3.0 Present methods of language teaching in Northern Nigeria

At present, even where English-medium is advocated, English is taught in Nigerian primary schools as one of several subjects in the curriculum. There is little or no correlation between the language taught in the English lesson and the skills, concepts and ideas taught in the other subjects. There are several courses available for teaching English as-a-subject-Straight for English and the New Oxford Course being two of the most widely used. These courses are based on the theory that to teach a language one must analyse it into its component parts - structures, patterns, etc. - and then begin to build these one on another in an orderly manner, drilling each item thoroughly before the next is attempted. One begins with the easiest structures and tenses, and progresses to the more complex ones. The order in which items are introduced is based on linguistic analysis such as that made by A.S. Hornby in his 'The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence Patterns'. This is an excellent book, but one of the most vital sentences in it is often ignored. It will be found on page xi of the Introduction, and reads: 'The teaching items set out in this book are those considered suitable and desirable for the first stage of an English course for children of 10 or 11 years and upwards.' (NB The children Hornby is referring to would have had 5 years of schooling and would be literate in their own language). There is a footnote: 'Children under 10 will probably be taught by quite different procedures.'

Courses based on an analysis like Hornby's are used with great success for teaching English as a subject to children who are of an age where they can consciously build up a mastery of patterns and vocabulary, but Hornby is right - primary school children cannot be taught in this way. Young children do not learn in this way. They learn by doing.

### 4.0 Incompatibility of traditional approach with integrated curriculum needs

It is an interesting, if depressing exercise to examine one of the Arithmetic courses. Take for example the two Oxford Courses. In the Oxford Arithmetic course the following activities are recommended for the early stages:

Sorting shells, stones, nuts etc. by size and colour;

Collecting interesting objects;

Arranging sticks or rods of various lengths;

Using a posting box with holes of different shapes and sizes.

What language is being taught at the equivalent level in the New Oxford English Course? If we take the first nine stages in the third edition, we find the following patterns:

What's this?  
 It's a ....  
 No it isn't  
 Is it a .....?  
 This is a/the ....  
 This is a/the ....

What are you doing?  
 I'm touching a/the ....  
 What's that?  
 Touch a/the ....  
 I'm pointing to a/the ....

There is a miscellany of object names to be used with these patterns:

basket, bird, book, box, hen, pencil, bag, chair, dog, goat, table,  
 ball, bottle, stone, church, house, mosque, shop, tree, blackboard,  
 door, floor, roof, wall, window, ground, school, sky, sun, bean, bus,  
 car, lorry, pen, pet, tin, train, baby, boy, girl, man, woman.

It would be possible to carry out a very limited kind of sorting activity with this language: (This is a bean, that's a stone, this is a bean. Is this a bean? No it isn't. It's a stone) But the basic mathematical idea that the authors of the arithmetic course are trying to convey through these activities - the ideas of number - cannot be learnt in this language because it involves plurals, and plurals are not taught in the Oxford English course until Stage 29. Similarly the important mathematical ideas of shape and size cannot be learnt, in this language, because no adjectives are introduced until Stage 44, at the very end of the first year's work - and then it is only adjectives of colour that are introduced.

4.1 The reason for this is, of course, that the two courses were never intended to correlate. Oxford Arithmetic is intended to be taught in the vernacular, and the New Oxford English Course was not written for English-medium teaching. But Straight for English, which is being used in English-medium schools presents a remarkably similar picture - plurals are not taught till Weeks 17-20, adjectives of colour are used in Weeks 13-16, but round and square do not appear anywhere in the first two year's work. A footnote in Week 20 states that the children should have learnt the number names in their arithmetic lessons, though how they have been able to achieve this without the use of plurals, or such items as 'How many are there?' is not at all clear.

Number names up to 10 are taught in Stage 30, and 11-20 in Stage 32. Oxford Arithmetic teaches 1-5 with pages 1 and 2 of the Pupils Book, and by the end of the first year, the children are doing sums which involve the use of numbers up to 100.

4.2 It seems clear that even without a fully integrated curriculum it would be desirable for a closer correlation between the language taught in the English lesson and that required for other subjects.

4.3 In East Africa, the two Peak Courses developed at the Special Centre for Curriculum Development in Nairobi with the help of British Council personnel, did pioneer an attempt to do this. Recent news from Lusaka tells of another adaptation of the Peak material being produced by Teachers' Workshop activity there. The Peak material introduced "formulae" i.e. structures and lexis taught and used specifically in a subject context e.g. "make a straight line", "make a circle" (P.E.), "Add", "How many?" "take away" etc. (Number). Teachers are given subject vocabulary in Years One and Two for Health Education, and stories connected with the History syllabus have been written in simplified language.

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Even so teachers are given no guidance in either structure or registers of lexis for the Centres of Interest prescribed, nor is there material in the form of visuals or textbooks for group and activity methods to be organised. Also the patterns and structures still follow the Hornby grading order. It is worth noting, however, that far less time is spent on the present continuous tense in the Peak course than in the Oxford or Straight for English Course in Nigerian schools.

## 5.0 Other problems relevant to Nigerian education

There are four constants in education, the learners, the teachers, the content of curricula and the materials and medium through which the curricula is conveyed.

### 5.1 The learners

- (a) 90% of all Primary School learners will receive little or no further education.
- (b) Those who do enter any Post-primary Institution will be required to pursue their education in a second language (English) with a skill increasingly similar to that of English mother-tongue learners at the same educational level.
- (c) Those few who go on to Tertiary Education have to perform in complete parity with their mother-tongue equivalents to achieve parallel academic awards.

### 5.2 The teachers

Rapidly expanding and changing educational systems always face the problem of finding sufficient well-trained teachers. This is inevitable and it is pointless to ignore it. Three factors, therefore need to be considered :

- (a) For some considerable time to come many teachers will have inadequate skills in English, general background and teaching techniques.
  - (b) The rival demands for educated personnel will cause many of the best teachers to leave the classroom; certainly those with higher academic training are unlikely to be numerous at Primary level.
  - (c) The presence of expatriate staff often means a lack of continuity in the staffing of institutions.
- These things are likely to continue for some time. In considering any curriculum reform it is unrealistic to ignore them.

### 5.3 Curricula

- (a) Present syllabi are subject-orientated.
- (b) Several indicate that discovery and activity methods should be used. The new mathematics syllabus gives a great deal of guidance to the teachers on organisation of the content, concept



training, apparatus and pupil activities.

- (c) No guidance is given on the language needed.
- (d) In spite of even the more enlightened syllabi, most lessons seem to take the form of class instruction.

#### 5.4 Medium and materials

- (a) Present texts, other than the English course, are frequently in short supply.
- (b) Very little good visual material is available.
- (c) Many texts are in unnecessarily complex language.
- (d) Very few teachers are able to revise and rewrite unsuitable texts - a highly sophisticated skill.

#### 5.5 Problems inherent in curriculum reform

##### (a) Language considerations

What is needed here is an entirely new approach. Instead of saying, "Here is the corpus of language to be taught, as laid down by the linguists, into what 'subject' situations can each of these items best be fitted?", the course-maker must consider first what the child is expected to learn, and then ask himself what language he will need if he is to learn these things. The 'subject' of the school curriculum must dictate the content and form the subject matter of the English course, and the structures and patterns selected for teaching must be those that the child needs in his learning of these subjects.

At Primary One and Two, for example, the syllabus demands that the children shall learn Reading, Writing, Number, P.E., Handwork. Each of these subjects involves placing the children in a number of different learning situations, in which they will perform a number of different activities. These situations are both 'subject-learning' and 'language-learning' ones, so there is no need for an English course to invent separate situations and activities for the learning of language. Having discovered what situations the children are going to be involved in, the next step is to consider what language is needed in, and appropriate to, these situations. This is the language that should be taught and used at this particular stage. Such a language analysis must be free from preconceived notions of the 'ease' or 'difficulty' inherent in language items. However often an item may have been listed as one of the basic patterns of the English language, it should not be taught unless it is appropriate to, and useful in, one of the educational situations in which the children will be placed. Gaps can be filled at a later stage: the important thing at the beginning is that the language used should have immediate relevance and meaning for the child in a situation. Course materials planned bearing in mind the language needed for education will indeed make the language a tool for education.

## 5.6 Curriculum considerations

### (a) Research needs

- (i) An examination of the concepts and skills children are expected to acquire during their primary school years, and of the basic language needed for the acquiring and expression of these. Can the principle that young children learn best through activity and in meaningful situations be applied to the learning of English in Nigerian primary schools? Is it possible that the usual methods of drilling of structures and tenses tend to divorce language and meaning, and is therefore undesirable at the early stages? Should the formal 'English lesson' therefore be abolished, and English be taught only in and through the activities and situations appropriate to the other subjects in the curriculum?
- (ii) An examination of the teaching materials and aids needed in the change from formal to activity, discovery methods, and an integrated curriculum content.
- (iii) Investigation into a format for these materials to allow for the problems of teachers (discussed in 5.2) to be overcome. Two factors are already clear :-
- (a) teachers have difficulty in using the teachers' books, firstly because of their bulk and because of the large number of cross references to previous lessons, and secondly because a teachers' book is by nature separate from the actual teaching material; (this may perhaps be solved by putting the teacher's instructions on the teaching material itself, perhaps in smaller print on the back of card material);
  - (b) we need carefully planned visuals which can be used in a variety of ways (see paper on 'Aids for Language Teaching'). Perhaps a teaching kit of small booklets, workcards etc. would be more satisfactory and allow for greater flexibility of approach than the present Pupils' Book, Teachers' Book system.
- (iv) There will need to be active co-operation of many disciplines; the linguists, methodologists, psychologists, subject specialists and experts in communications media will all need to contribute.

## 6.0 Other factors to be considered

### Time factor

All over Africa, Boards of Studies like this, linking their joint activities with the work of CREDO will make major contributions towards curriculum reform by reporting on local needs and efforts. No immediate changes, except those of awareness, are likely.

## 6.1 Materials

In the light of the problems of the teachers and the lack of suitable materials to effect a change of curriculum approach, informed educators (Boards of Studies for example) will need to offer guidelines to the compilers of courses.

Bad teachers are made worse by inadequate materials. Good teachers are often driven out of the school by frustration.

Good materials can be made and can be designed to aid the teacher, despite his difficulties, to change his teaching in line with the terms of the CREDO statement. There seems to be no possibility of change until suitable materials are available.

## 6.2 Proposals for the Board of English Studies

- (a) One immediate practical step could be a joint project with the work group on the new mathematics syllabus to work out the language needed both by the teacher and the child. Perhaps the "formulae", in the Peck sense could be formulated.
- (b) Contact could be established with the English Medium Centre, Lusaka, and their material studied.
- (c) Perhaps the most important step this Board can take is to examine and define the relative roles of English and the vernacular. No one in African education wants to see the destruction of vernacular languages. Defining the relative roles in the educational system of the first and second languages should help both. Can the vernacular be used, as the medium for creative self-expression, story telling and drama? Would English, then be more closely defined as the tool of education? To effect the curriculum changes discussed in this paper, it would seem that the definition of these roles is essential.

By A.M. Shaw

1.0 Introduction: This paper is an attempt to put visual aids in the perspective of the Nigerian primary school.: to concentrate on the needs on some of the kinds of teaching aids which are practical at this level, and on their preparation, application at different levels, and uses. No apology is made for the absence of any mention of the hardware - overhead projectors, cine-loop projectors, film-strip and slide projectors, tape-recorders and gramophones or television. TV is only available in limited areas; tape-recorders and gramophones and the different types of projectors are not available in primary schools, and, until much more money is available for primary education and local maintenance facilities are set up, it is quite unrealistic to think in terms of such equipment. If we confine our attention/what has been shown to be feasible in primary schools here, we must realise that it is not realistic to expect the teachers to make equipment which is complicated or costs them money. Even the usual 'a few shillings' represents money, and is likely to alienate most teachers in primary schools. Teachers may enjoy making complicated teaching aids in Training College, but they are unlikely to have the time or inclination to do so after they have started to teach. We therefore confine ourselves to simple aids which require only materials which may reasonably be expected to be found in the schools, and local waste materials, and which may easily be prepared by the teacher and/or the children themselves.

Finally, we are aware of how little we know about many aspects of visual aids here, and the paper concludes with an outline of some of the areas in which research is urgent.

2.0 Language in situation: If someone approaches you and says: 'Bu taşları kutuya koyarmısın?', you are unlikely to react unless you understand Turkish. If however he points at the stones you are playing with and at the box they belong in or shows you a picture of someone putting stones in a box, you may understand that he is asking you to put the stones in the box. If after some parallel situations he points at some pens and says: 'Bu kalemleri kutuya koyarmısın?' you will probably already understand that he is asking you to put the pens in the box. The situation, together with your previous experience of similar situations, is sufficient to make the meaning clear. You may soon be able to make similar requests yourself.

2.1 We learn to understand and use language best through situations, and the job of the language teacher or materials writer is to organize situations in such a way that learning may take place. Some situations will occur naturally in the classroom environment, and the more the teaching is based on activities, the more such situations will occur. Conversely, the activities themselves will create the need to communicate which in turn will help to motivate the learner.

2.2 But not all of the work in the classroom is based on the classroom environment itself. Often the teacher needs to convey ideas from the outside world. This may often be done by dramatisation. It may also be done by using teaching aids - pictures, objects, models, charts, plans, maps and so on. Many activities involve such aids, which will in turn give meaning to the language required for the activities.

- 2.3 There are two ways of approaching language teaching in the primary school. One is to take English as a separate subject. The language is analysed into structures and lexical items, these are graded according to criteria of difficulty, teachability and so on, and we then look for situations to teach them, make them meaningful, and give practice in their use. This approach, which is the one most widely used in Nigerian primary schools, usually starts from the child's home environment, using also everyday actions which can be performed in the classroom and objects which can be brought in. (For a critique of this approach, see the paper by Margaret Rogers). If this approach is used, teaching aids must play an important part in bringing into the classroom situations from the outside world. One drawback of this approach is that the child, so far from gaining a sense of security from basing the learning of the new language on an environment familiar to him, may be confused by learning to say in a second language things which he can already say in his own language: this may easily lead to the setting up in his mind of misleading or confusing translation equivalents.
- 2.4 The other approach is based on the fact that English is the language of the school. (This of course varies depending on the extent to which the vernacular is used at a given stage as the language of instruction). In this case, the educational activities in which the child is involved require language, and can at the same time be organised to provide the situations on which the learning of this language may be based. This means that the child is learning a new language to deal with new situations, and the type of conflict mentioned in paragraph 2.3 is to a large extent avoided. If this approach is adopted, it means that a wide range of educational situations are used for language teaching, and that a great many new concepts need to be presented in the new language. This clearly creates the need for all kinds of teaching aids to be used, for the aids and activities must in themselves communicate, since the language is at first unfamiliar, and act as a prompt for recall, and on basis for further practice. This implies that all the apparatus used for teaching whatever is taught in English is in fact apparatus for language teaching.
- 2.5 In this paper, both these approaches are taken into account. The first because it represents the actual situation in most primary schools in Nigeria today, and is reflected in most of the materials available the second because in many areas it may be the approach chosen in the future.
- 3.0 The Nature of Associations: Before going any further, it is necessary to consider briefly the nature of associations in language learning. The formation of such associations may take two forms, of which the second is the most desirable:

- i. English word - vernacular word - IMAGE

Example:

Elephant - giwa -



- ii. English word {  
 (Vernacular word) ( - IMAGE

Example:

Elephant



(Giwa)

In the second, the vernacular word is in brackets because the pupil may not know a vernacular equivalent for some of the English words he learns. The first is less desirable because it works through a process of translation, which is both roundabout and often misleading. The second is preferable because it involves a direct association between the English word and whatever is referred to.

- 3.1 We must infer from this that, in order to avoid the pitfalls of the first type of association, we must present the English language items we wish to teach in situations real enough for a direct association to be formed, (and in a context of English strong enough to minimise interference from the vernacular).
- 3.2 Observation of primary schools here shows clearly that what goes on much of the time both in English and other subjects is not communicating. The teacher, for example, is teaching geography, but the pupils are not learning: he is not even communicating for a lot of the time. What the pupil is experiencing is a stream of language a great deal of which conveys nothing to him; it may embody new words for familiar things, and also new and unfamiliar concepts. Only some of this can be conveyed merely by more careful control of language: the new language must be given direct roots in experience. In a lesson about the Nile, the word flooding must occur. If the lesson is to be understood at all, the concept of flooding must become real for the children. Activities and teaching aids may be the only way of doing this in an area where flooding does not normally occur. And this is only one example of what occurs all the time both in language and subject teaching. If more attention is not devoted to the establishment of meaning through teaching aids and other means, the child will never acquire the background to enable him to understand the language in which he is being educated. And this applies to structures no less than to lexical items.
- 4.0 Types of Teaching Aid: Before going on in Section 5 to describe some of the ways in which teaching aids may be used for the purposes which have been described, it is worth listing the kinds of teaching aids we consider relevant and practical. The main ones will be the following:

- i. Pictures and symbols. As will be seen from Section 5 below, both pictures and symbols have many different uses, which will vary at different levels and at different stages of learning and maturation. The blackboard is the most readily available vehicle for pictures, and low blackboards round the walls give children the opportunity of producing their own pictures. Drawing paper and sugar paper are obviously suitable materials, but where these are not available, old magazines and newspapers, kitchen paper, and brown paper are perfectly satisfactory substitutes. And if all else fails, there is usually some sand available near the school. Paints may be made from local dyes, and chewed sticks used for brushes, if paints, chalks and crayons are not available. Charcoal is another medium which should be readily available. Felt pens are an obvious asset for the teacher, but they are neither cheap nor readily available everywhere.
- ii. Objects, models, and local materials: Whether the 'pure' language teaching approach (see 2.3) or an activity-based English Medium approach (see 2.4) is used, all of these may form the basis of language learning in a variety of ways. Some of the local and waste materials which may be used are listed in appendix A. The handling of objects for a purpose, and the making and use of models is much more likely to produce in the child the kind of involvement which will, among other things, lead to successful language learning, and also give opportunities for speaking which will both help to establish new language and give opportunities for using and reinforcing language already learnt. Local clay, cornstalks, tins, waste wood, and other local materials listed will be useful in making models.
- iii. Charts plans, diagrams etc. The materials suggested for pictures and symbols can also be used for the preparation by teacher and children of charts plans, diagrams, maps simple graphs and so on, on which a great deal of language practice may be based. Clearly, charts may themselves include a large element of language and will not be confined to pictorial, symbolic or diagrammatic representation. A visual may well include, for example, a substitution table or dialogue, or it may illustrate some of the language required for a register (area of activity given or language use, e.g. the farm, trades, transport etc.). A weather chart, for example (see Lee and Coppen, pages 53 and 82), is an example of a substitution table.
- iv. Movable aids: e.g. flannelgraph (see Appendix B.)
- v. Clock: Full instructions for making a clock-face with movable hands may be found on pages 89 and 90 of 'Simple Audio-visual Aids to Foreign-language Teaching', by W.R. Lee and Helen Coppen, Oxford University Press. It may be noted that although desirable, the cellophane is not absolutely essential.
- vi. Puppets: A clock-face may also be built up on a flannelgraph. Pages 85 - 87 of the same book give instructions in the making

iv cont'd of puppets. This should certainly be done by the children themselves if at all possible.

vii. Flashboards and flashcards: These aids are more concerned with the teaching of reading, and are not within the scope of this paper.

5.0 Uses and procedures: Most of the uses described below can be applied to either of the approaches mentioned in 2.3 and 2.4. Their application to the situation where English is a separate subject is self-evident. In the case of English-medium teaching (2.4) it is worth noting both that the actual content material used is part of the material of the activity, project or reading material, and that the language teaching procedures mentioned are an integral part of the content-teaching procedures: It is often neither desirable nor possible to isolate the two from each other. Thus in the carrying out of a project, the preparation or collection by the children and/or teacher of pictures, charts and other relevant materials, their use as the basis for oral and written work, and their development by the teacher for use in conjunction with both guided composition and comprehension material are all part and parcel of the same process.

### 5.1 Language Drills

i. Presentation of new or remedial items. At this stage, it is all important that the teacher should make absolutely clear the meaning of the items to be drilled. Here both dramatisation and the kinds of teaching aids mentioned may be used, either in conjunction or independently of each other. If a visual is the sole means of establishing the situation, it needs to be very clear, and to emphasize just those aspects of the situation which are relevant to the structure being presented. It may be, for example, in preparing for tense drill, that pictures will need to be used in conjunction with a clock or calendar-chart, in order that the time-factor should be clear. The picture itself will probably be better understood if it confines itself to the minimum of detail necessary for understanding. (Here we need to know a great deal more about the understanding of pictures by children at various stages of learning and maturation. If as is likely several pictures are used, each one may be presented before or after a dramatisation of what it represents. (For an example of how this might be organised, see Appendix C for lesson notes).)

Objects of various kinds may of course also be used as the basis for language drills - comparisons and structures involving countables and uncountables are just two examples of items which could be drilled through the use of objects. (It is worth including the children themselves in this category of objects - for comparisons such as 'flatter/thinner/taller/shorter/etc. than....', for example.)

A chart will probably have grown out of work done already and by the time it is used for language drills its meaning should be clear to the children.



All kinds of charts are suitable for language drills: time-charts of various kinds (e.g. related to history, the seasons, an agricultural or industrial process and so on) may be used for tense-practice. maps and plans may be used to practice tenses and prepositions as well as many other structures; graphs and diagrams may also be used for teaching and drilling a wide variety of structures. (See lesson notes in Appendix D for examples).

This type of practice will probably be based on a substitution table or substitution dialogue. The purpose of the presentation stage is to give the children the opportunity of hearing and in some cases saying the items which are being practised, and to make quite sure that they understand the meaning.

Puppets may also be used in this stage; they are particularly useful to the teacher in presenting a conversation. He may also present the conversation together with a (pre-rehearsed) bright pupil, with or without puppets.

A flannelgraph offering opportunities for a series of examples of a structure may form the basis for language drills e.g. for the teaching of prepositions.

ii. After initial presentation, as a prompt for drills (See Appendix C)

When a structure has been presented, all kinds of teaching aids can be used as prompts for recall and production of the examples presented, and later on in the drill to prompt the making of new sentences using the same structure. A good drill should be a rapid series of repetitions of the structure by the pupils. After presentation, the procedure may be:

- a) Repetition after the teacher (in chorus and individually)
- b) Production in response to a verbal or visual prompt (" ")
- c) Further practice in groups or pairs in response to visual prompts.
- d) Freer application of the structure to a wider range of situations, possibly using new prompts. This also acts as an informal test.

It is clear that, if the drill is to proceed rapidly enough, and if the work in (c) is to be practicable, the value of dramatisation is less than in the initial presentation stage; the teacher should, in stages (a) and (b), only need to point to the visual prompt to get a response; stage (c) is likely to degenerate into confusion if there is no visual prompt to help; in stage (d), some dramatisation becomes both feasible and often desirable.

After the initial presentation, the use of symbols as prompts is also possible at least as soon as the children have learnt to accept and interpret symbols. Experience suggests that this can be done at a fairly early stage, though further research is necessary.

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The appeal of the visual material itself may be an important factor in motivating the child to read, though little is as yet known about what factors may contribute to this. (see Section 7).

#### 5.6 Language-learning situations in other subjects or activities.

Apart from the use of aids in the types of work listed in 5.1 to 5.5, work in other subjects, project work and activities will give rise to many language learning situations where visuals of various kinds including models and objects, need to be used to clarify meaning, present situations and give practice. They may or may not be fed into drills, guided composition, creative writing or other more obviously language-learning situations, but they must certainly be regarded as an important part of language learning as well as content learning.

#### 6.0 Factors governing the Preparation and Availability of Teaching Aids

It is clear that, since we cannot reasonably expect either the teachers or the children to obtain or make all the aids they need, since materials are limited, and in view of the somewhat limited background of most teachers, the ideal solution would be to provide a basic stock as part of a teacher's kit (see Paper on 'English a tool for education', Section.....).

6.1 Where however the task falls on the teacher, certain ideas and possibilities should be borne in mind. It must be the job of the Training College to train him in their preparation and use. Here it is important that priorities are clearly established. While in training, students often spend many happy hours making teaching apparatus of an elaboration and polish quite out of proportion to its function: when they leave Training College, they usually find that they have neither the time, the inclination or the equipment and materials to do this. While it is important that visuals should be clearly understandable, and relatively neat, and that lettering should be neat and legible, it is self-defeating to train students to use elaborate lettering techniques, or to produce highly finished pictures for teaching purposes. A few with genuine enthusiasm and talent may continue to do so after they have finished their training: the majority will not. The evidence of this is clearly to be seen in almost any primary school: what teacher-made visuals are on the walls will be found to have been there for a long time, and most frequently to have been put there by student-teachers during teaching practice. There is thus a need to train the students to produce the visuals and apparatus they require with the minimum of effort and the simplest materials compatible with their effectiveness. In some cases the art tutor clearly understands this and puts it into practice; in others the methods tutor may have to collaborate with him; in yet others, it is the responsibility of the methods tutors. A few students will be able to combine function and effectiveness with Art: but in most cases the priority should be clearly stated.

(See Section 7). However, apart from symbols, almost all the aids mentioned in (5.1.i) may be used as prompts. It should however, be noted that whatever is used should be large and clear enough for all the children in the class or group involved in the practice to see.

## 5.2 Guided Composition (See Appendix E)

Guided composition may be of various kinds, and may grow out of various kinds of work, for example, out of pure language drills, in which case it may often take the form of the writing of short conversations; out of project work, in which case it may take the form of recording what has been seen or done; or out of story-telling, where it will be a form of reproduction. It may be done at any level after the mechanics of writing have been mastered, and will range from a label or short sentence to a paragraph or series of paragraphs. In almost every situation there will be oral preparation of some kind: it may be inherent in the work out of which the writing arises, or it may be an additional element.

In addition to the oral preparation and any preceding work, the guidance may take two forms: firstly, verbal, in the form of a skeleton text and/or a question or series of questions; secondly, non-verbal, in the form of a visual or series of visuals (or occasionally dramatisation); often the best way is a combination of these two kinds of guidance.

The visual prompt may again take most of the forms listed for language drills in (5.1.i and ii). The most usual form is probably the single picture or a series of pictures symbols; but the various kinds of charts, graphs, diagrams, maps and so on are an equally good prompt. In story-telling, the flannelgraph is also very useful both as an aid to comprehension and as a prompt for recall (the ~~pieces~~ may be given to the children for the writing stage: they would need to be working in groups of 10 or less).

Similar considerations apply when the end-product is oral composition.

## 5.3 Story-telling (for listening comprehension) (As for guided composition).

## 5.4 Creative Writing

Although creative writing will probably only become possible in the later stages of language learning, it is worth noting that both pictures and objects may be used as stimuli. Pictures and friezes done by the children themselves may be very useful for this purpose, in addition to those collected by the teacher and children from magazines and other sources. (Other stimuli, such as music, poetry, and drama, are outside the scope of this paper).

## 5.5 Visuals in books and on card material

These are very important, both to focus attention before reading (as for example on the S.R.A. reading materials), and to help the child understand the meaning of what he is reading.

The appeal of the visual material itself may be an important factor in motivating the child to read, though little is as yet known about what factors may contribute to this. (see Section 7)

5.6 Language-learning situations in other subjects or activities.

Apart from the use of aids in the types of work listed in 5.1 to 5.5, work in other subjects, project work and activities will give rise to many language learning situations where visuals of various kinds, including models and objects, need to be used to clarify meaning, present situations and give practice. They may or may not be fed into drills, guided composition, creative writing or other more obviously language-learning situations, but they must certainly be regarded as an important part of language learning as well as content learning.

6.0 Factors governing the Preparation and Availability of Teaching Aids.

It is clear that, since we cannot reasonably expect either the teachers or the children to obtain or make all the aids they need. since materials are limited, and in view of the somewhat limited background of most teachers, the ideal solution would be to provide a basic stock as part of a teacher's kit (see Paper on 'English a tool for education', Section.....).

6.1 Where however the task falls on the teacher, certain ideas and possibilities should be borne in mind. It must be the job of the Training College to train him in their preparation and use. Here it is important that priorities are clearly established. While in training, students often spend many happy hours making teaching apparatus of an elaboration and polish quite out of proportion to its function: when they leave Training College, they usually find that they have neither the time, the inclination or the equipment and materials to do this. While it is important that visuals should be clearly understandable, and relatively neat, and that lettering should be neat and legible, it is self-defeating to train students to use elaborate lettering techniques, or to produce highly finished pictures for teaching purposes. A few with genuine enthusiasm and talent may continue to do so after they have finished their training: the majority will not. The evidence of this is clearly to be seen in almost any primary school: what teacher-made visuals are on the walls will be found to have been there for a long time, and most frequently to have been put there by student-teachers during teaching practice. There is thus a need to train the students to produce the visuals and apparatus they require with the minimum of effort and the simplest materials compatible with their effectiveness. In some cases the art tutor clearly understands this and puts it into practice; in others the methods tutor may have to collaborate with him; in yet others, it is the responsibility of the methods tutors. A few students will be able to combine function and effectiveness with Art: but in most cases the priority should be clearly stated.

- 6.2 Many professional artists and illustrators keep a folder of drawings and pictures of things they may need to draw. The Training College might well work on the same lines, and see that each student has either a folder or an exercise book full of simple line drawings of the kind of things he may need. Practice should be given in blackboard drawing as well as in the production of pictures on paper (including newspaper etc.). Each College should ideally be equipped with at least one room with blackboards all round the walls, to give the kind of practice that is needed. (Ramshaw's 'Blackboard Work', O.U.P. gives guidance on this).
- 7.3 Finally, students should be trained to use all kinds of waste materials, both in producing their own teaching aids, and in helping the children to make their own models and apparatus.
- 7.0 Areas for Research: The appeal, understanding and effectiveness of visual aids in Africa in general, and in different parts of Nigeria in particular, is a field in which very little research, if any, has been done. Our own limited observation shows that some illiterate adults, even in urban areas where they would seem to be exposed to a great deal of visual material, have great difficulty in interpreting pictures; it also shows that Primary Four children can accept and appear to understand symbols. In addition, it would seem to indicate that children in primary schools here can be trained quite quickly to understand visuals which their previous experience has not equipped them to look at with understanding. But we require information which is a great deal more precise. We need to be able to relate the degree of maturation to the understanding of different types of visual: to be able to say at what stage a child of average intelligence is capable of understanding a given type of visual, and how much exposure or training is necessary and possible to enable him to do this; and if training is needed, what forms it should it take?
- 7.1 We also need to be able to say what kind of visuals appeal to Nigerian children in a given area, and at what ages or stages of maturation. Do they like black and white as much as colour, or are they not really aware of the difference? Do they like full and detailed representations of familiar scenes, or are outlines sufficient? What colours do they prefer?
- 7.2 Here it is well to bear in mind what must always be the guiding factor of such research: the purpose of the visual, which is the education of the child. What appeals most need not necessarily be what is best for the purpose, and the purpose is clearly the priority.
- 7.3 Without expert knowledge and experience of the psychology of perception, it is difficult to lay down areas for research with any exactitude. From the point of view of a language teacher and educationist, however, it would seem that we need to find the answers at least to the following questions; from the points of view both of appeal and understanding. They need to be answered for children of different backgrounds and at different levels of maturation and to be related to the degree of exposure and training.

These questions may most simply be stated as a series of oppositions:

- (a) Full representation v. matchstick figures.
- (b) Part v. whole.
- (c) Symbol v. natural representation.
- (d) Coloured (what colour) v. black and white.
- (e) Detailed v. simple.
- (f) Familiar v. unfamiliar

These are probably only a few of the many questions which need to be answered. But if we have the answers to these questions, we can at least set about the task of preparing visuals on a firmer basis than that of the kind of assumptions we have generally made, which have not always proved to be correct for all groups of children.

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Blackboard Work, by H.G. Ramshaw, OUP. (This contains instruction on simple techniques of Blackboard drawing, and also on how to set up a blackboard room).

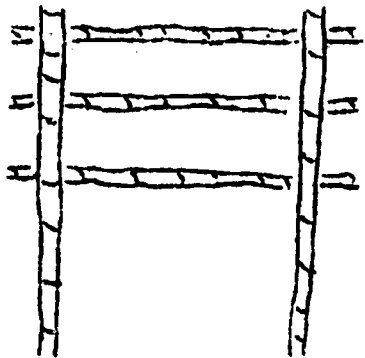
APPENDIX A

List of local materials, compiled from the work of Maureen Parry, of Gindiri Training College, and Carol Robson, educational editor, London

Sand	Water
Clay(or other modelling materials)	Old newspapers and magazines (also for pulp)
Pebbles	Cartons, boxes, matchboxes
Mudbricks	Packets
Stones	Tins
Cornstalks	Bottles
Sticks	Bottle-tops
Bamboo	Pots
Cane	String or rope
Leaves	Raffia
Flowers	Wire
Seeds(large or small)	Thread
Seed pods	Beads
Beans	Wax
Fruit stones	Cloth scraps
Straw	Corks
Fibre (e.g. sisal)	Old tyres
Palm leaves (inc. fan-palm)	Vegetable dyes
Shells	Market dyes

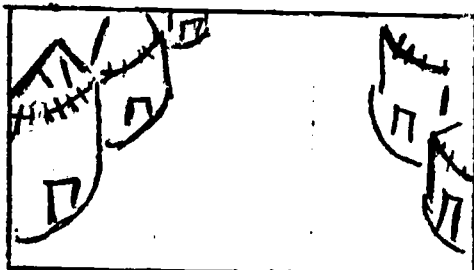
**Making a flannelgraph out of local materials.**

1. Make a frame (the right height for the children) out of guinea corn stalks. Square lashings can be used for the joints:



Width: about 3 feet.

2. Attach to the upper part a large piece of cardboard (e.g. a dismantled cigarette carton). It can be fastened with string through holes in the cardboard tied around the corn stalks.
3. With drawing pins attach to the cardboard a piece of rough white cloth (e.g. Farin Hausa which is very cheap and woven in strips that are sewn together). The cloth may have a background sketch on it as scenery e.g.



4. Figures: figures to place on the flannelgraph can be drawn on card, cut out from magazines etc. They should then be backed with a scrap of rough cloth. This can be very effectively stuck on with glue made by boiling cassava flour.
5. The frame can now be leant against a wall. Figures when placed against it will adhere to the cloth.

Use of the flannelgraph for E.L.T.

1. Stories can be told by children and teacher. One character in a story can be represented in many different poses to suit the story. Children can also make their own figures.



2. For structure teaching e.g.a) 'too'

Teacher: Here is a mango tree.  
Here is Idirisu. Idirisu is trying to pick a mango.  
Can he pick it?

Class: No.

Teacher: It is too high for him to pick.

Teacher: Here is Samuel. He is trying to pick a mango.  
Can he pick it?

Class: No.

Teacher: It is too high for him to pick.

When the class have heard enough to be able to say 'It is too high for him to pick', the dialogue will change as follows:

Teacher: Can he pick it?

Class: No.

Teacher: Why not?

Class: It is too high for him to pick.

b) Conditionals of the type: 'If it rains, I will go home'.

Teacher: Here is Angela.  
Here is her mother  
Here is her sister  
Angela is running home from the stream with a pot of water.

If she falls, she will break the pot.  
If she breaks the pot, her mother will be angry.  
If her mother is angry, she will cry.  
If she cries, her sister will comfort her.

What will happen if she falls?

Class: She will break the pot  
etc.

When the children are ready to say the whole conditional sentence, they can do so by using the flannelgraph and telling the story themselves.

A language drill using a series of pictures as prompts

Aim: To practise the Past Continuous Tense

What was X doing when you saw him/her?

He was mending the roof  
cutting down a tree  
building a wall

She Cooking some food  
Washing clothes  
pounding yams

Apparatus: Pictures showing the above actions:



Step 1: Presentation: Teacher calls out a child. 'Pretend to mend the roof...Yes, that's right.....What is he doing?'  
Class: 'He is mending the roof'  
Teacher: 'Now go and sit down. Did you see him?'  
Class: 'Yes, we did.'  
Teacher: 'What was he doing when you saw him? He was mending the roof.' (Teacher repeats several times).  
: 'Here is a picture of him mending the roof.'  
Do the same for each action, but do not yet ask the children to repeat the pattern.

(etd -

(A language drill using a series of pictures as prompts - ctd)

Step 2: Repetition and imitation: Divide class into sections A and B. 'Did you all see them working?' 'Yes, we did.' 'What was (Audu) doing? (Section A repeat after me)'. Section A repeats question. Teacher points at picture of man mending roof. 'Section B, repeat: He was mending the roof' (Section B repeats after teacher).

Do the same with all the other pictures, letting both sections ask and answer the questions. Vary from time to time by getting rows and individuals to repeat instead of sections. Build up the substitution table on the board if necessary as you go along. (as in 'Aim' above)

Step 3:

As Step 2, but instead of asking the children to repeat, the teacher only points at the section which is to ask or answer the question, and also at the picture.

Step 4

When the teacher thinks the children have learnt the pattern, he may rub out all or part of the substitution table on the board, and continue as in Step 3.

Step 5: Group or pair work:

- i. Demonstration, with group leaders or individual pairs. Drill continues based on pictures as above.
- ii. Children do the drill in groups or pairs.

Step 6: Testing and further practice:

Audu, Ade, James and Bala, come out here. Audu, clean the board; Ade, draw a picture; James, read this book; Bala, practise with this football. Can you see them? Remember what each one is doing. Go and sit down. Ladi, ask the question:

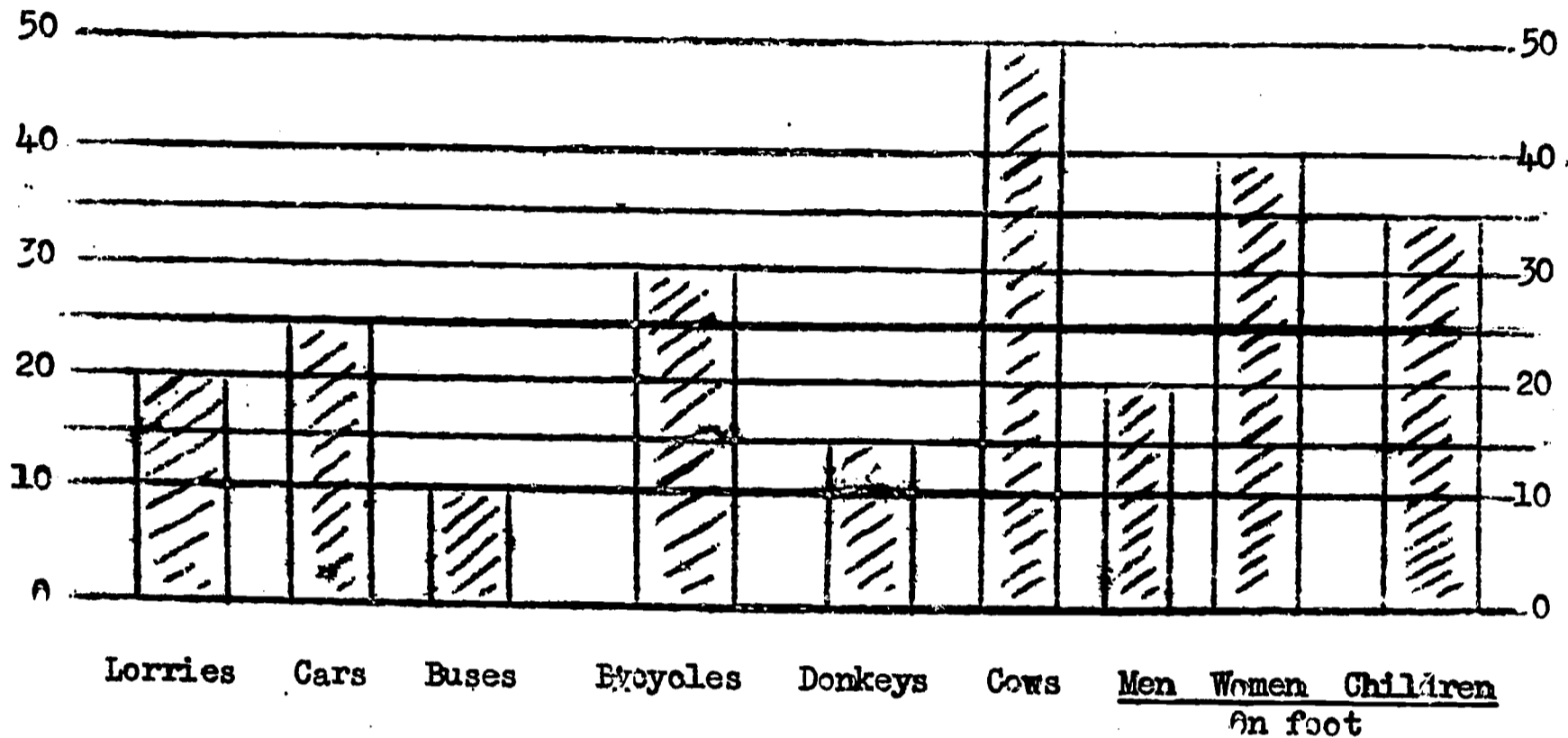
Ladi: 'What was James doing?'  
Mary: 'He was reading a book.'

And so on.

2

Lesson Material based on a simple Graph

This is a graph based on observation of the numbers of people, animals and vehicles which passed along the road opposite the school:



The following are some of the patterns which could be practised with this graph:

- a) How many ...s did you see?  
I/We saw ...
- b) Did you see more -s or -s?  
I/We saw more -s than -s.
- c) Which did you see least of, -s or -s?  
I/We saw least -s.
- d) Were there as many -s as -s?  
No, there were less.  
Yes, there were the (same number.  
(more.
- e) How many more ) -s were there than -s?  
less )  
There were ... more ) -s than -s.  
less )

Lesson material based on a calendar chart of the farmer's year

This is particularly useful for practising the tenses, Active and Passive. The following are some of the patterns which may be used:

- i. When does the farmer } .....?  
do the farmers }  
He/They ....(s) in July/the rainy season/etc.
- ii. What does the farmer/do the farmers do in .....?  
He/They.....
- iii. What happens in .....?  
The ..... is .....ed (Passive)
- iv. Is the ..... planted in .....?  
sown  
harvested  
etc.  
Yes, it is// No, it isn't; it is .....ed in ....
- v. It is (July). What are the farmers doing?// What is happening on the farms?  
They are -ing.....// The ..... is being/are being ....(Passive).
- vi. It is (July). Are the farmers -ing?  
Yes, they are// No, they aren't; they are -ing ....
- vii. It is (July). Are the/Is the ....(s) being ....(Passive)?  
Yes, it is/they are.  
No, it isn't/they aren't, but the .... is being/are being .....
- viii. I went to look at some farms in (August). (What were the farmers doing?  
(What was being done?)  
They were -ing.// The .... was/were being .....
- ix. If you were a farmer, what would you do in (May)?  
I would.....
- x. What have the farmers been doing this week/this month/in the last two months?  
They have been -ing ....
- xi. What have the farmers done since (March)?  
They have ....
- xii. What are the farmers going to do next month/the month after next/in.....?  
They are going to ....
- xiii. What is going to be done next month/the month after next/in .....?  
The ....is/are going to be.....

(otd -

xiv. Imagine you are a farmer. What did you do last year/from (April) to (October)?

First I .....

Then

After that

Next

When I had....

APPENDIX D (ctd) (3)

Lesson Material based on a collection of stones

- a) Is this stone heavy/light/large/big/small/rough/smooth/sharp/round?  
Yes, it is.// No, it isn't. It is .....
- b) Are both (of) these stones big/rough/grey?  
Yes, they are.// No, one of them is .... and the other is ....
- c) Are all (of) these stones heavy/etc.?  
No, some of them are, but the others are .....  
most rest  
a lot/few
- d) How many big/etc. stones have you got? I have got....
- e) How many of the stones are brown/sharp/etc.?  
.... of them are.
- f) Which of these (2) stones is heavier/lighter/etc.?  
This one is heavier/etc. than that one.
- g) Which of these stones is the heaviest/lightest/etc.?  
This one is -er than that one, but this one is the -est.
- h) (If weighing is done):  
How heavy is this stone//How much does this stone weigh?  
It weighs....
- i) Have you got any .... stones?  
Yes, I have.  
Can I have one/some, please?  
Yes, here you are.  
Thank you.

A Lesson on the Pilgrimage to Mecca, using Symbols and leading to Guided Composition.

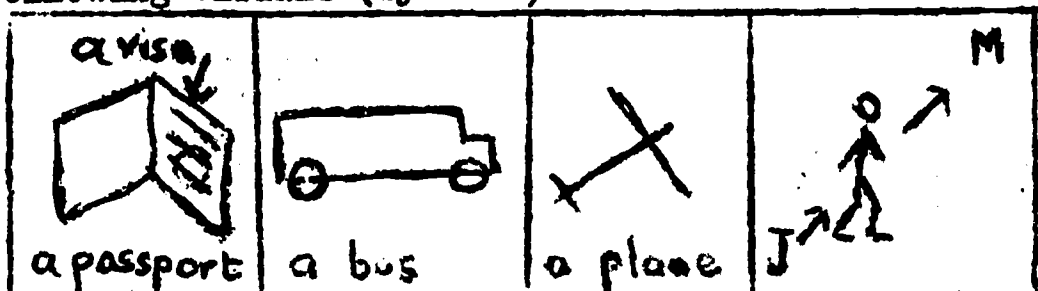
by Margaret Rogers

Level: Primary 3 or 4

- Aim:
- i. To teach children about the pilgrimage to Mecca, giving them the language they need.
  - ii. To practice:

He  
 want(s) to do something  
 must  
 They

- Apparatus:
- i. A passport (with visa) if possible, or a small book as a substitute.
  - ii. A rough map, showing the route from the place where the Primary School is in Nigeria to Mecca via Jidda and Kano.
  - iii. The following visuals (symbols):



- iv. The following substitution tables (for teacher's use only):

Mr....	wants	to go to Mecca
My father		
I	want	
My brothers		
All the men in my village		

He		get	a passport
I	must	take	a visa
They			a bus to Kano
			a plane to Jidda

	he		
Then	I	must walk from Jidda to Mecca	
	they		




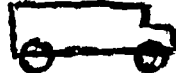


Step 1 Convey the content to the children, using the visuals and the language of the substitution tables.

Step 2 The whole process is dramatised, with the children repeating the commentary (again based on the substitution tables) after the teacher.

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Step 3 Repeat the dramatisation, with the children giving the commentary with a different subject and pronoun. The teacher gives as little help as possible, and might use the visuals as prompts.

Step 4 Oral: The following can then be built up on the blackboard, with the children doing as much of the work as possible:

If		wants to go to Mecca,
he must get		and 
— — — —	take	 to Kano,
— — — —		 — Jidda.
Then		from J — — — to M — — —

The children then do the exposition orally

Step 5 The children write the composition.

NB This might be developed for both oral and written work in future lessons, for example by introducing conversations, e.g. asking for the passport, buying the tickets, having the passport checked, and so on. The Simple Past could also be practised by having the Alhaji tell his story after this return.



THE FORD FOUNDATION ENGLISH LANGUAGE SURVEY  
AND

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

by

Brian Tiffen.

1. The Problem

In May and June 1966 the Ford Foundation, in conjunction with the National Universities Commission and the Federal Ministry of Education, Lagos, carried out a special study of the English language teaching situation in Nigeria as a whole. The survey team consisted of Nigerian, American and British specialists, and the team examined ELT problems at all levels of education, from the primary school to the university and beyond. The Report (1) was published in September 1966. This paper summarises some of the basic findings and recommendations made with regard to ELT at the primary school level.

The first paragraph of the opening chapter of the Report states plainly and unequivocally the team's concern at the quality of English language teaching in the early years of schooling:

"There is indeed an ELT problem in Nigeria. The introduction of English as a subject in the early years of schooling followed by its use as a medium of instruction shortly thereafter places demands on the primary teacher which he or she simply is not equipped to handle. Since the common practice is to assign teachers with the lowest levels of training (70% of the 87,000 primary school teachers are Grade III or lower) to the lower classes of primary, most Nigerian boys and girls are exposed to extremely poor English at the start and either they fail to learn the skills necessary to use it as the language of learning, or they form bad habits which interfere seriously with learning of the language at later stages of schooling. In most instances, both of these circumstances apply. As a result, learning of other subjects in the primary curriculum occurs slowly, and time and effort must be diverted to remedial work at post-primary levels. Nigeria can hardly afford this sort of educational wastage at a time when so much is being expected from the educational system."

The Report goes on to state that "the critical nature of the ELT problem at the primary level is not fully recognised". Attention is mainly directed towards the secondary schools and teachers' colleges. Few teachers' colleges have ELT - trained staff. The task of upgrading the 60,000 poorly qualified primary teachers (i.e. those with less than Grade II qualifications) is so great and complex that it leads to a situation of apathy and helplessness.

2. The Training of Teachers

Turning to the problem of inadequately prepared primary teachers the Report outlines two needs: (a) to upgrade the skills of teachers already in service and (b) to improve the ELT content of teachers' college programmes. The team realised the difficulties involved in the first approach viz.

(1) English language Teaching in Nigeria - An assessment of the situation with recommendations for action. September, 1966.

the sheer weight of numbers, but suggests that large numbers could be reached by correspondence study, short courses, programmed self-instructional materials, radio, discs, tapes and, where practical, TV. It would be necessary, by means of tests and screening devices, to identify those teachers for whom such training programmes would be worth-while.

As far as the teachers' colleges are concerned, they could help in the following ways: more should be done to improve the English language skills of the Grade II teacher-in-training; less attention should be paid to literature; more could be done with such work as speed reading devices, graded reading kits and language tapes; one of the practising schools near each college should be developed into a model school for demonstrating new methods and materials; each college should take on in-service training responsibilities for teachers in all the schools it uses for teaching practice.

As an interim arrangement which could help to improve instruction in primary schools, the best and most qualified teachers should be assigned to teach English in the lower classes of the school.

### 3. Instructional Materials

Four main points are stressed:-

(a) The almost total lack of supplementary readers and library resources gravely handicaps the development of good reading habits and attitudes.

(b) The basic textual materials need to be cheaper and more attention should be paid to linguistics and modern methods of language teaching. Teachers' handbooks need to be written in simple language generously illustrated with visual aids.

(c) The problem of textbook distribution needs to be looked into. Ministries might consider bulk wholesale purchases and the idea of textbook rental schemes might also be explored.

(d) There should be a much closer link-up between the level of the English courses and books used in subjects other than English.

### 4. Introduction of English

A major research effort is needed to determine the most effective approach to the introduction and teaching of English and its uses as a medium of instruction. If certain approaches can be shown to be superior to others they should be introduced into all schools. But until there are sufficient data to support this change the team recommends "continuance of the present system of introducing English as a subject during the first year, and of phasing into English as a medium of instruction after teaching it as a subject for 2 - 3 years".

### 5. Conclusion

As was said at the beginning of this paper, the team found that the quality of English teaching and learning in the primary school affected all levels of education. Let me finish by quoting once more from the Report:

"Above the primary level the team explored the ELT situation at the secondary and post-secondary levels, in teacher training colleges, in vocational and technical schools, in civil service training centres, and in other out-of-school programmes. Consistently and without exception the particular problems reached back to the low quality of English teaching in the primary schools."

How much longer can we continue to neglect English in the primary school?